

Sydney Busking Code



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The Basics

In Sydney, busking acts are grouped in three categories. Each category has its own set of performance conditions. Busking activities are approved under the Local Government Act, which provides the legal framework for regulating public performances within designated local areas. All individuals engaging in busking are expected to adhere the established busking code, which sets out standards for conduct, performance, locations, hours and noise levels. The purposes of the code is to ensure that busking remains a safe, respectful, and enjoyable activity for both performers and the public.

Low Impact Act

If your act does not:

- Need more than 2m² performance space
- Require an audience to gather, wait and watch
- Include “naturally loud” instruments such as drums, bagpipes, pan pipes or brass instruments, does not involve amplification
- Include higher risk activities like acrobatics or juggling sharp objects

You have a Low Impact act and may busk for up to 2 hours per location per day.

Extended duration Act

If your act:

- Is quiet, non-amplified and non-musical, and
- Involves creating a work of art continuously over a long period of time such as pavement art or durational performance art

You have an Extended Duration act. As long as your pitch isn't restricting other people from using the area around you, you can perform for up to 8 hours per location per day.

High Impact Act

If your act:

- Needs more than 2m² performance space;
- Encourages an audience to gather, wait and watch;
- Uses “naturally loud instruments such as drums, bagpipes, pan pipes or brass instruments, involves amplification
- Includes higher risk activities like acrobatics or juggling
- Features 5 or more performers

You have a High Impact act and may busk for up to 1 hour per location per day.

You'll need to speak to the City of Sydney about an act assessments before you can get a permit to busk. High Impact acts often need more space, hence there are less places where they can perform. Keeping acts to 1 hour duration provides more performers with access to limited larger performance spaces and breaks up the impact of louder acts on our neighbours.

Where to busk

You can establish a busking pitch on any public land in Sydney that meets these criteria:

- There is enough open space for you to conduct your performance plus a further two metres for pedestrian flow on at least to sides of your pitch
- The site is not being used by an approved event or gathering
- You are at least 100 metres from another busker or an approved event or gathering, or special busking site
- Your pitch and audience does not block access within 5m to the entry or exit of any building, street, carpark or thoroughfare
- If the location is a Special Busking Site with set pitches and a booking or queuing system, you observe the conditions of the site (see Special Busking Sites on Page 9)

Making and managing your pitch

The pitch is your stage – keep it looking clean, well laid-out and professionally put together.

Minimise clutter or any unnecessary items that might be a trip hazard.

For Low Impact Acts, keep your equipment near to you and encourage your audience to gather close.

For High Impact Acts, consider laying a rope on the ground to show the audience where you want them to gather.

You want them as close as they can be, while still safely outside your performance area.

Equipment and infrastructure must not be left unattended at any time. Infrastructure left unattended at a pitch is not accepted as an approved queuing system.

For Pavement Artists, use chalk that is entirely removable by water or draw onto a removeable canvas placed over the pavement. Make sure there are no slip hazards and no trip hazards by taping down any edges.

Volume

Performing too loudly can negatively affect neighbouring homes and businesses and drive your audience away.

Buskers who play too loudly earn less money as crowds keep a distance from the performance. Pushing your audience away with high volume also adds to congestion and crowding in pedestrian zones, so people are less likely to hang around and watch your performance.

Ensuring that your performance cannot be heard at 50 metres from your pitch is essential. Busking Pitches can be 100 metres apart, and the sound of your act should not affect another busker's performance.

The following are guides to help you monitor if your act is at the right volume. Be aware that an authorised person from Council or Police can tell you to lower your volume or stop performing at any time and you must follow their instruction.

- If you cannot hear any background noise during your performance, you are playing too loud
- If your audience is gathering more than 3 metres from you, you are playing too loud
- If you can see that your audience is shouting to speak to each other, turn it down
- If your performance can be heard 50 metres from your pitch, you're playing too loud. Get a friend or fellow busker to walk 50-60 paces from your performance and see if they can still hear you. If they can, turn it down
- If you find that no one is paying you any tips, try reducing your volume and see if people become more comfortable approaching you
- If somebody living or working in a building near you complains that they can hear your performance over their own conversation, you are playing too loud. Remember, you can reach a compromise but you could have your permit reviewed if you refuse to turn your volume down when directed by the Police or the City

Content of your act

Sydney buskers are ambassadors for the cultural life of the City and values we celebrate: diversity, generosity, respect and inclusion.

Buskers do not tease, humiliate or harass anyone. Sydney buskers are some of the best in the world. We have innovative, original, expertly performed acts. You must have a varied repertoire and never repeat the same material during a set. If you do not have enough content to fill your time at a pitch without repeating anything, then trim your set to the amount of material you have and move to another pitch.

Sales

The sale of a busker's own music, video, artwork or merchandise is encouraged, but it has to be supplementary to your performance. You can't spruik your products or get someone else to sell them on your behalf. You are at a busking pitch to busk, not to conduct a market stall, and if somebody happens to approach you to buy your music or mech, it's a bonus.

Special Busking Sites

Special Busking Sites have additional conditions or operating systems. All Special Busking Sites are limited to 11am – 10pm, 7 days a week.



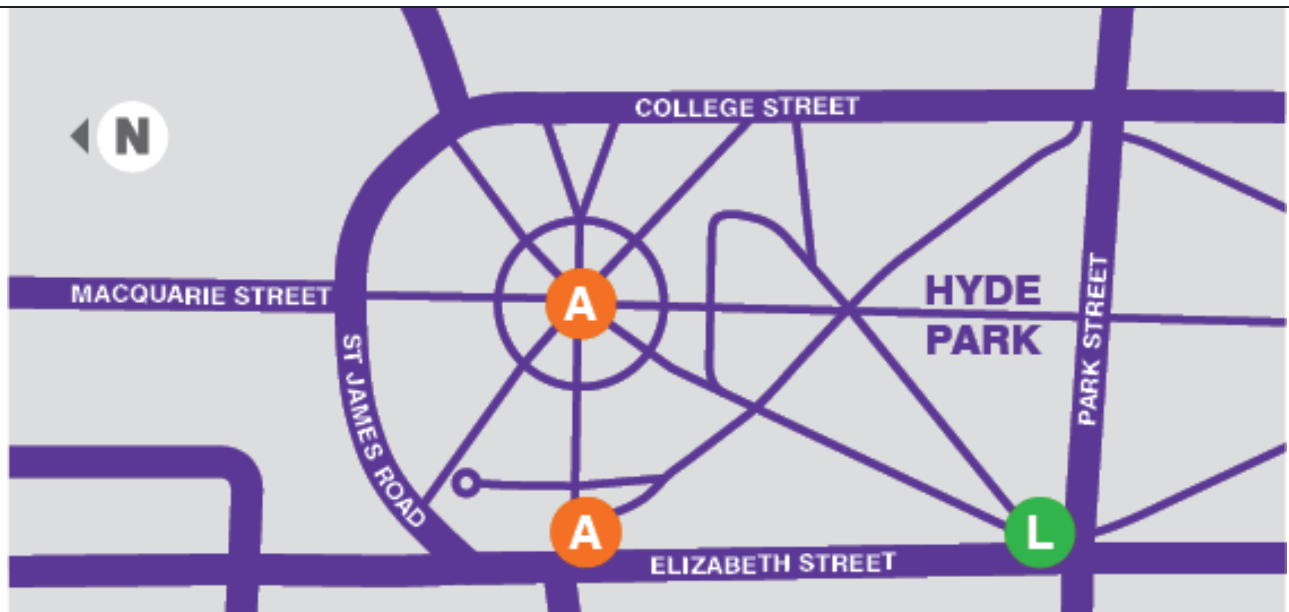
Martin Place

There is one pitch in Martin Place on the Eastern side of the Pitt Street Intersection, facing Pitt Street. All acts are limited to 1 hour duration.



Hyde Park

There are three busking pitches in Hyde Park North. One the paved area facing Market Street, adjacent the St James Station entrance. One on the paved area surrounding Archibald Fountain. One Low Impact pitch by the monument on the corner of Elizabeth and Park Streets.



QVB Forecourt

The Southern forecourt of the QVB may be occupied by one Extended Duration Act and either one Low Impact Act or one High Impact Act at any one time.



Pitt Street Mall

There are three pitches in Pitt Street Mall.

The Central pitch (outside MidCity entry), is for Low and High Impact acts only, limited to one hour per day.

The North (near King Street) and South (near Market Street) pitches are for extended duration acts only.

All pitches are allocated on a first-in basis.

No acts incorporating fire allowed.

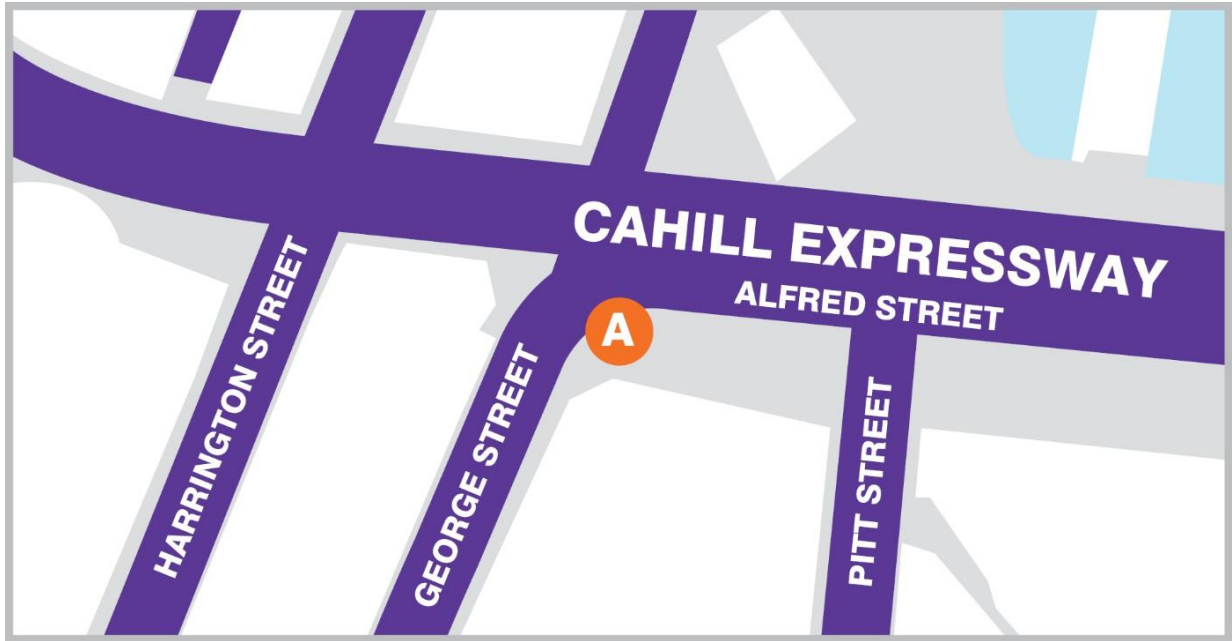


George Street

There are six Special Busking Sites on the George Street light rail corridor. No busking is permitted on George Street between Alfred Street (Circular Quay) and Rawson Place (Haymarket) outside of these sites below. All pitches are limited to one hour per day.

Herald Square

On the corner of George and Alfred Streets. This pitch is available for all permit holders.



Regimental Square

Between George Street and Wynyard Lane, the pedestrianised area. This pitch is available for all permit holders.



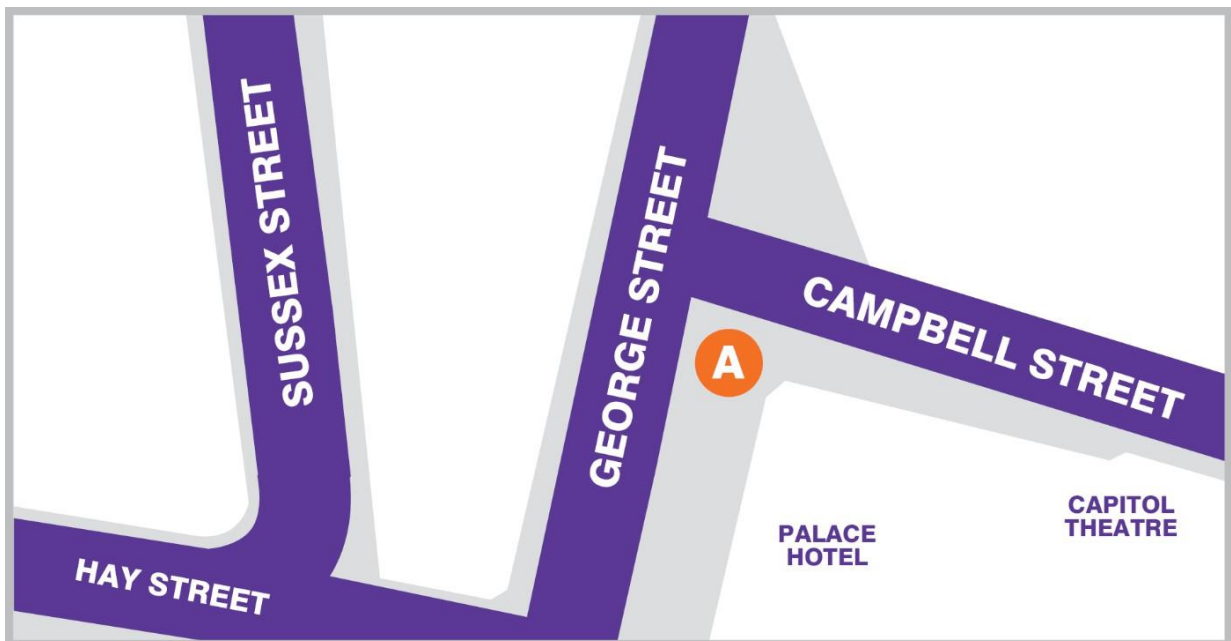
Regimental Square

One pitch for Low Impact Permit holders only, at the intersection of George Street and Wynyard Street, in front of the memorial.



Campbell Street

There is one pitch available for any act at the intersection of George and Campbell Streets. This pitch is available for all permit holders.



Town Hall

One busking pitch available at the Intersection of George and Park Street. This pitch is available for Low and High Impact permit holders only.



Barlow Street

One pitch available for any busking act at the corner of Barlow and George Streets. This pitch is available for all permit holders.



Code of Conduct

1. **We look out for each other.** Welcome newcomers and keep fellow buskers in check if they're over-stepping the expectations and obligations of buskers in Sydney.
2. **We have a right** and an opportunity to actively engage in monitoring and improving busking regulations and busking culture in Sydney.
3. **We work in cooperation with each other,** Local Government and the police to manage any issues that arise from a busker's performance or behaviour. We understand that the way we conduct ourselves may affect the reputation and livelihood of all buskers in Sydney.
4. **We are ambassadors,** for the cultural life of Sydney and its diverse, harmonious communities.
5. **We perform in public places,** to contribute something positive to those spaces. If our performance is having a negative effect on anybody, we do our best to remedy it.

For more information

For permit enquiries or to report busking issues, please contact City of Sydney Customer Service on **(02) 9265 9333** or **council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au**

Buskers wanting more information about the rules for busking in the City of Sydney can email **busking@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au**

city.sydney/busking

