

# Community Recovery Plan

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## Quarterly Report #4



*Anne Ascharsobi, Director of Social and Environmental Impact at Xero talking about getting businesses to do more good at Raising the Bar 2021- Light Rail Edition, presented by the City of Sydney. This event was part of a program where leading Sydney visionaries, entrepreneurs and thought leaders gave talks on trends, innovations and cutting-edge ideas that our shaping our future. Programs such as Raising the Bar are key elements of the City's recovery plan to support business innovation as they adapt to the future.*

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# Where are we now?

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## State of the city update

### Note regarding this data

Currently only limited up-to-date data is available at the City of Sydney level on the impact of Covid-19. Much of this data is collected or reported at different points in time, given different publication lags. The current situation continues to evolve – making much of the available data quickly out of date. Every attempt has been made to present the most recent data.

This is particularly important this quarter given the city was experiencing steady recovery for the majority of the period, until a lockdown was announced on 25 June with the spread of the Covid-19 Delta strain throughout Sydney. Even just one week of lockdown saw a dramatic decline in spend and confidence which will be lasting impact into the next quarter. For the sake of consistency in reporting, this report concentrates on the overall period. However, where possible relevant data on the immediate situation post lockdown is referenced to provide current context.

For the period April – June 2021:

- **City Output (GDP):** For the majority of the quarter, the array of data generally relating to the aggregate domestic national economy has been positive, particularly in respect of the labour market. This continued the momentum of the beginning of 2021 as economic activity continued to recover. However, not all industries have benefitted equally. The City of Sydney economy (having been impacted hardest initially) continues to lag other places less reliant upon international visitation and hospitality.

Compared to the March 2020 quarter, the quarterly modelled City Output is down about 4.0% annually in real terms, despite growing in the majority of the quarter and weathering the withdrawal of policy support as domestic consumer spending continued to recover. This maintains the strong 'improvement' on the September quarter 2020 result but still represents a cumulative decline of over \$8 billion since pre-Covid.

However, the lockdown and tightened movement restrictions at the end of the quarter is estimated to cost the city economy about \$250 million per week. This means growth in the quarter has probably declined by about \$ 500 million or around 0.4%.

The continued lack of international visitors, the uncertainty of lockdown period and the continuation of mobility restrictions and delays in the vaccination process could well see growth momentum continue to ease into Q1 2021-22, with potentially a further \$1.5-2 billion decline by the end of the September quarter.

- **Employment:** Nationally, the ABS Payroll Jobs Data index shows an increase in employment over levels at the start of the pandemic. The City of Sydney index shows a decline of about 0.2% since February 2020 which is an improvement on the 2% decline recorded in the January-March quarter. However, it is the largest decrease recorded within any of the major urban areas in Australia, matched only by City of Melbourne.
- **Workforce:** Transport authorities indicate that patronage on public transport for quarter four increased, although it is still 40% down on numbers in 2019. This is confirmed by City of Sydney pedestrian count figures (-42%), Opal card usage (-40%), UberMedia-Roy Morgan Mobility Index (-53%) and Property Council estimates of office occupancy levels of 67% of pre-Covid levels in early June.

However, where data is available since the lockdown and restrictions have been reintroduced, mobility has declined significantly. Monthly Opal data tap-offs in the city declined 29% from May to June to be over 52% less than pre-Covid; daily pedestrian count data fell by over 52% in the last 4 weeks to 11 July, where counts were approximately 10% of pre-Covid numbers.

- **Industry Impacts:** Despite the ABS data showing an increase in national employment since the onset of the pandemic, given the City economy's reliance on tourism (both international and domestic) and visitors, as well as the Hospitality sector, industries most affected by decreased employment (Australia-wide) between March 2019 and June 2021 are:

- Arts and Recreation Services decreased by 5%
- Accommodation decreased by 14%
- Food Services decreased by 12%

These industries are disproportionately concentrated in the City of Sydney local area so the impact on the local economy is likely to have been even greater. However, these results were an improvement on the results of January-March quarter.

- **Resident Impacts:** Notably these industries also have the highest proportion of local residents employed and so the impact on the City resident-workforce was considerable. According to the Small Area Labour Statistics, the unemployment rate for local residents for March 2021 (the latest available figures) was 6.5%, more than double the rate of March 2019 as over 6,000 City of Sydney residents lost their jobs. Unemployment in the City of Sydney went from one of the lowest rates in Sydney and Australian residents to one of the highest.
- **Spend:** Confidential spend data sighted by Council indicates that for the period from March 2020 to June 2021 (compared to the same period in 2019-20):

- Total retail spending decreased by 15%
- Total retail spending by international visitors decreased by 78%
- Total retail spending by domestic consumers decreased by 5%
- Spending at eating places fell by 8%
- Spending on accommodation fell by 42%
- Spending at clothing stores fell by 10%

Again, this was a significant 'improvement' on the quarter-on-quarter decline in the March 2021 quarter, indicating growth in the April - June. However the cumulative total gives an understanding of the impact on cash flow of city businesses and their economic viability following the end of JobKeeper and other support arrangements.

However, the data can be further subdivided to determine the momentum of the quarter and the initial impact of the lockdown from 25 June through to 4 July.

Since the beginning of April 2021 to 25 June:

- Total retail spending increased by 1.4%
- Total retail spending by international visitors increased by 19%
- Total retail spending by domestic consumers increased by 1%
- Spending at eating places rose by 6%
- Spending on accommodation rose by 31%
- Spending at clothing stores fell by 6%

Since the last week of June to 4 July:

- Total retail spending decreased by 62%
- Total retail spending by international visitors decreased by 91%
- Total retail spending by domestic consumers decreased by 52%
- Spending at eating places fell by 78%
- Spending on accommodation fell by 89%
- Spending at clothing stores fell by 61%

- **International Students and Travel:** The reduction of caps on international arrivals represents a continued threat to economic recovery facing the city and is likely to slow and delay recovery further. Hotel occupancy in the city centre for the quarter increased to over 50%, up from 30% recorded earlier in the year, but still much less than 85% pre-Covid. The lack of international visitors particularly impacts the restaurants, hospitality and arts sectors.

The international student sector continues to be heavily impacted by the travel restrictions. This sector is particularly important for the city economy as each student spends an average of \$25,000 per trip – six times the spend of the average international traveller. Just over 200 students arrived in NSW in May 2021, compared with 40,000 international student arrivals in February 2020. From March 2020 – May 2021, on-site enrolments in higher education and English language courses in NSW (many of which are offered in our local area and adjacent localities) declined by over 52,000 (48%). This was only partially offset by an increase of 13,000 in on-line enrolment – a net decrease of 28%. Significantly, this particularly impacts on local businesses and shops servicing the resident student community.

## Confidence

**Business Confidence:** Not surprisingly, business confidence declined significantly through the pandemic period. Between February and the end of September, the Index of Business Confidence has fallen by 18.2% and by 22.6% compared to September 2019. However, in response to the economic recovery as well as prospective budget measures, it rose dramatically from November. That momentum of confidence continued into 2021.

In fact, the May 2021 figure was the highest for 10 years, having increased 3.4% over Q4. Business Confidence has now increased strongly for nine straight months and is up 43pts (+50%) since September 2020. As at March 2021 it was 23% higher than in February 2020 and is 14pts above the long-term average. In NSW, the index for June was 137.1, well above the long-term average and an increase of 36% on a year ago.

However, the business confidence result was based on interviewing conducted before the Sydney-wide lockdown and the latest restrictions were introduced in several states. There is no doubt that business confidence in NSW will be severely negatively impacted, particularly if the lockdown is further extended and restrictions further tightened. As an example, Victorian business confidence dropped 16 pts in June as the state confronted a new outbreak of cases and went into a two-week lockdown in early June 2021.

- **Consumer Confidence:** Consumer confidence has also increased consistently from August to May. However, weekly confidence surveys in late June and early July highlight the fragility of such consumer surveys.

Interestingly, there seems to be a strong correlation between confidence in Sydney and Melbourne, irrespective of which city is dealing with community transmissions of Covid-19, lockdowns and restrictions. A review of the specific city data since March 2020 shows that though there is a sharp decline in confidence in the particular city where a lockdown is imposed, consumer sentiment movements tend to be similar in both cities and there was no great divergence even during Melbourne's prolonged lockdown in 2020.

Thus, in the week ended 22 June when Sydney had its mini-lockdown (ahead of the major lockdown in July), consumer confidence actually rose by 5.2% after Melbourne's restrictions eased and the ABS revealed that the national unemployment rate had fallen to 5.1% (its lowest level since February 2020). However, the next week as the lockdown was extended, Sydney consumer confidence fell 4.6%, and then by 10 per cent in the next week ending 6 July after multiple major cities were placed into lockdown.

The economic factor underlying confidence was indicated by the next week ended 13 July when Sydney consumer confidence rose by 3.7% after the government announced income support to those in lockdown.

**Recent Trends: a “Desert Storm” among the “Green Shoots” of recovery:** Overall, the run of data over the quarter had been positive, with the labour market weathering the withdrawal of policy support and consumer spending continuing to recover.

However, the immediate outlook has deteriorated markedly, with Sydney going into a fourth week of 'hard' lockdown, that looks likely to be further extended.

The uncertainty of future outbreaks means that until we reach vaccination coverage levels of 75-80% of our population, our cities could be subject to further 'quick and hard' lockdowns. This could have significant economic impact on businesses, consumers, and workers.

The likelihood of minimal international travel in 2021 and even 2022, and the subsequent impact on the food, hospitality and visitor-dependent businesses mean the overall rate of further recovery is likely to be slow, and the employment impact may spike again.

The closure of construction sites will have significant impacts and employment implications.

In summary, the September 2021 quarter represents another critical period in the City of Sydney recovery with several challenges ahead including:

- End of current lockdown
- Uncertainty from the possibility of new Covid-19 cases and lockdowns
- The mental psyche of the community
- Ongoing lack of international travel
- Vaccination program rollout and supply issues
- Other supply chain issues as other countries contend with repeat waves of Covid-19
- Relaxation of restrictions potentially leading to complacency and cluster outbreaks
- Fragility of consumer confidence

Against these challenges is the resilience of the domestic economy and the momentum of confidence levels of business and consumers and the capacity of the city to attract workers and visitors back into the city centre.

# Summary of the plan

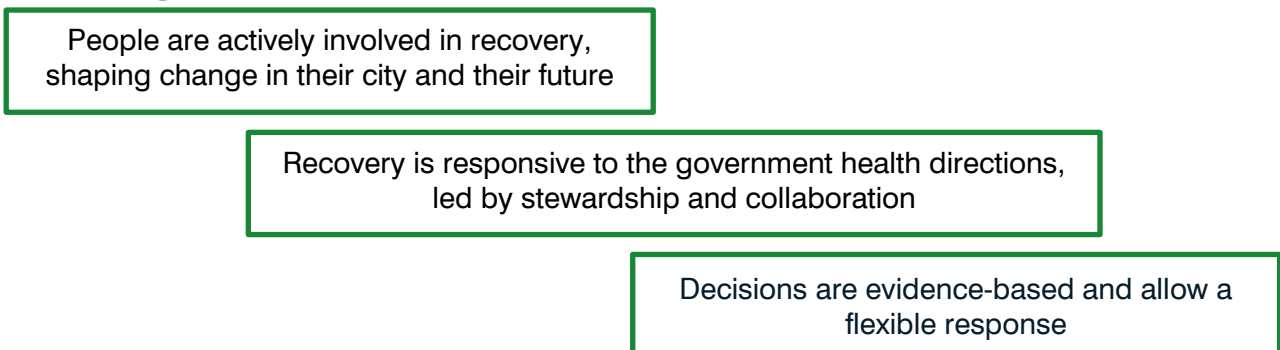
## Recovery goals

- Recovery is inclusive and equitable
  - Recovery supports a resilient economy and community wealth building
  - Recovery is a catalyst for a green and sustainable future
  - Recovery is strengthened by a robust and diverse cultural sector
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## Action Areas



## Guiding principles



# What we have done

This section provides an overview of activity under each of the recovery plan actions for the period 1 January - 31 March 2021:

	Total Actions	Actions Underway	Activity this Quarter
Business as usual/transformed actions:	39	39	38
New actions:	18	18	14
<b>Recovery plan total actions:</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>52</b>

## Action Area 1

### Safely manage public places and streets to support community life and business

People can move in and around the city safely because space is re-allocated and businesses can successfully reopen.

#### What we are doing to support recovery

- 1.1 Prioritise our business concierge service to support businesses to open and operate safely
- There were 107 contacts to the business concierge service in quarter 4 20/21 and 1,178 since commencement as follows:
 

	Q4 20/21	Since Commencement
Calls:	32	511
Emails:	75	667
  - The majority of enquiries are about the City’s grants program and Covid-related business programs.
  - In April, the City implemented a new contact system enabling the creation of an inbound call queue for business. In addition to providing an enhanced service for business enquiries, this function provides the City with greater business intelligence about inbound calls.
- 1.2 Continue the acceleration of the capital works program to upgrade city streets, parks and playgrounds
- Parks renewal stimulus package: LGA North. \$2.4M of accelerated landscape works completed by 4 head contractors (plus subcontractors/suppliers also supported). Projects completed in Q4 include:
    - Infrastructure, planting and returfing packages in the CBD, Millers Point, Glebe, Haymarket, Chippendale, Camperdown, Surry Hills, Pyrmont, Forest Lodge and Ultimo.



## What we are doing to support recovery

- Parks renewal stimulus package: LGA South. \$1.25M of \$1.3M of accelerated landscape works completed by 2 head contractors (plus subcontractors/suppliers also supported). Projects completed in Q4 include:
    - Lacrozia Playground, Darlinghurst
    - Lillian Fowler Reserve, Newtown
    - Turruwull Park, Rosebery
  - Other completed projects in Q4 include:
    - New skate plaza at Federal Park, Forest Lodge opened in July
- 1.3 Clean public places and streets to a high standard
- Waste collections have continued according to regular schedules with minimal missed scheduled collections despite more waste being generated. Although domestic general waste generation decreased slightly in Q4 as more people returned to their offices to work part-time of full-time, the waste generation is still higher than pre-pandemic level for all domestic waste streams. Due to another lockdown starting in late June, all waste streams, especially commingled recycling, recorded an increase in June in comparison to the previous two months in the quarter.
  - A Recycle it Saturday event was held on Saturday 19 June with 589 attendees and COVID-19 safety measures in place.
  - The Home Recycling Trial continued which allows residents to have items collected from their front door with a contactless pick up and recycled via RecycleSmart.
  - Cleansing Operations are monitoring for 'hot spots' in the LGA as identified by NSW Health. When 'hot spots' are identified within the LGA, cleansing crews attend and service the immediate area. This includes removing any illegal dumps, steam cleansing footpaths, street furniture and emptying and cleaning street litter bins.
  - Additional mobile street litter bins around hospitals and testing venues have been deployed as required.
  - Cleansing operations have amended weekend cleansing schedules to prioritise areas with high pedestrian activity during the new lockdown restrictions.
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**What we are doing to support recovery**

- 1.4 Promote safe alternatives to single-use items to address emerging waste issues
- To reduce reliance on single-use items and encourage safe reuse, City staff are engaging directly with the public at local pop-up stalls on how to safely choose reusable items over single-use items and how to ask your local café for a “contactless pour” into a reusable coffee cup. Staff provided face to face education at 17 stalls and engaged with 591 city workers and visitors during lunchtime in Martin Place and 588 morning commuters in 3 locations near local cafes and transport hubs in Erskineville, Forest Lodge and Redfern.
  - The City is partnering with the Responsible Cafés network to provide education and engagement about safe alternatives to take away cups and containers for local cafés and their customers. In May Responsible Café educators approached 102 cafés to engage with staff and encourage acceptance of reusable cups and provided education posters to promote the uptake of reusable cups and containers.
  - The City is partnering with Plastic Oceans Australasia to deliver a primary school waste avoidance program. 14 local primary schools are registered and 261 students and teachers are participating in the program. In April and May 3 face to face school workshops were delivered to 51 primary students and 8 secondary students to enable them to form student-led groups to help tackle single-use plastics in their schools. They learnt about waste avoidance methods and how to recycle right. The program is planned to continue throughout term 3 (Covid-dependent).
- 1.5 Communicate that Sydney is safe, clean and open for business
- Visits to the City’s Covid-19 page on the City of Sydney’s website peaked on 26 June as new stay at home orders were announced in response to the worsening Bondi cluster. Results of bespoke content produced for the Bondi cluster will be reported in the next quarterly report.
  - Content articles on City of Sydney News promoted via City’s social channels and to 15,600 weekly email digest subscribers:
 

Page Views:	Q4	Total
• Public health alerts as required:	7,852	61,677
• Covid-19 page on CoS website:	2,990	6,161
• Face masks required in City venues:	736	5,398

## What we are doing to support recovery

- 1.6 Work with NSW Government on city management initiatives such as mobility and transport, temporary footpath widening, cycleways, change signal timing, lower speed limits, travel demand planning and reprioritisation of roads
- Transport for NSW and the City of Sydney delivered 7 pop-up cycleways under the Covid-19 public health orders. In May Council approved retaining the pop-up cycleways on city streets for a further two years.
  - Transport for NSW and the City worked collaboratively to reduce speed limits on King Street and Wilson Street, Newtown; and Erskineville Road, Swanson Street and Copeland Street, Erskineville.
  - The City opened online applications for outdoor dining in new spaces, including reallocated road space on 30 November 2020. As at 30 June, 339 applications have been received, of which 124 relate to reallocated road space and 215 relate to reallocated footway space. Of these, 240 have been approved, 74 not approved/withdrawn, 18 are being assessed and 7 are on hold.
  - A survey of business participating in the outdoor dining program was conducted in March. 90% of respondents reported the alfresco dining to be beneficial or crucial to their business, 45% reported employing an additional 2 or more staff per week and 41% reported increasing staff hours by 10 or more hours per week. More than half (58%) reported an increase in turnover of up to 10%. The City has also received direct feedback from business praising the initiative and the work of City staff to successfully execute it. The success of this project was recognised at 2021 Greater Sydney Commission planning awards, with a commendation for City-shaping during Covid-19.

## Other actions we will take

- 1.7 Review and determine if current fee waivers should be extended to continue to support activation of space for community life, cultural participation and commercial use while maintaining accessibility
- With the exception of footway dining fees which have been extended until 2022, remaining fee waivers expired at the end of March 2021.
    - The City assisted 5,072 businesses this financial year with relief of inspection, registration, application and administrative fees for health and building compliance activities such as food premises, mobile food vendors, temporary food stalls, skin penetration, cooling towers and fire safety statements.
    - Footway dining, market permits and filming fees on grounds of hardship.
    - Return of venue hire and banner fees for bookings that have been unable to proceed.
    - Waived/discounted venue hire fees for events that were able to proceed

**Other actions we will take**

- Value of fees waived:
  - Waived inspection, registration, application and administrative fees relating to Health and Building regulatory and compliance activities, such as: food premises, temporary food stalls, mobile food vendors, skin penetration, cooling towers and annual fire safety statements:

	Fin YTD	Since commencement
Fees waived	\$891,297	\$ 989,276

- Waived filming fees, markets rental fees and venue hire cancellation fees:

	Since commencement
Filming fees foregone	\$ 260,614
Market rental waived	\$ 114,001
Venue hire cancellation fees waived	\$1,477,522
Venue hire fees waived/discounted	\$ 305,638

- Waived footway dining fees:

	Since commencement
Fees waived	\$2,464,610

- Rent relief on commercial properties (excluding QVB):

	Apr 20 – Jun 21
Total rent relief forecast	\$5,824,800*
Total rent deferral estimate	\$4,053,790

NB: Rent relief is provisional due to an additional waiver on commercial rent agreed on 20-Jul for Q4. This will be updated in next quarterly report.

1.8 Invest in the pedestrianisation and activation of south George Street

- Construction to convert the southern end of George Street to a pedestrian boulevard, creating 9,000m<sup>2</sup> of additional pedestrianised space began in March and is well-underway.
- Work between Bathurst and Goulburn streets is in the final stages with some paving, pit, poles and localised intersection works still to be completed. Construction south of Goulburn Street is planned to start from around mid-July.
- Work is progressing south block by block, towards Railway Square. Work on Devonshire Street in Surry Hills is planned to start in 2022.

### Other actions we will take

- A Community Liaison Officer has been appointed to work with local residents and businesses to ensure they are well informed ahead of works in the area. A community update was distributed on 15 June and construction notifications are hand delivered and emailed to George Street businesses. Regular updates will continue be provided to the community as construction continues.
  - The initiative is viewed as a positive step in the recovery by providing space for physical distancing, creating new outdoor space for businesses to utilise, and improving the look and feel of the street for people. It is considered to be a project that will help reinvigorate the southern CBD.
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## Action Area 2

### Provide equitable access to the essentials for safe and comfortable daily life for all residents

Address rising inequality within our community by advocating for and supporting access to essential services for all. This includes housing, food, community services, digital resources and skills development.

#### What we are doing to support recovery

- 2.1 Direct existing grant support towards addressing emerging community issues and funding those most in need
- While there were no specific Covid-19 recovery grants awarded during Q4, the City awarded 143 grants in Round 1, 2021-22 for a total of \$4,972,748. Nearly \$1.7M was awarded to support community services.
- 2.2 Continue to provide online and face-to-face programming with a focus on supporting health and wellbeing, digital literacy, social inclusion, reskilling and employment
- Provided 381 online and face-to-face program sessions for 44,263 people.
  - The City continues to develop programs that support the outcomes of this action such as:
    - 78 inclusive cultural programs delivered face-to-face, online and hybrid formats to 1,499 participants across the City’s library network
    - English, Mandarin and Bilingual Rhymetime and Storytime sessions. 41 sessions were presented to 839 children and adults from Glebe, Darling Square and Green Square library branches
    - Face-to-face creative workshops delivered from the Makerspace – 18 workshops in mediums such as laser cutting, 3D printing and Maker Time to 121 children youth and adults in this period.
    - Hybrid lunchtime talks series – accessible for both online and face to face audiences
    - Hybrid Wikipedia Edit-a-thon – accessible both online and face to face focused on adding images from the City’s archives to WikiCommons.
    - Art and Poetry packs for distribution to Meals on Wheels recipients
    - Be Connected digital literacy sessions
    - Online Auslan and English Storytime videos, featuring Deaf presenters as literacy role models
    - The Online Book Club series continued with 26 participants in 3 intimate online sessions.
    - Across all programming, 579 survey responses were collected from attendees with 85% of people reporting they felt welcome and included.

## What we are doing to support recovery

- 2.3 Manage community spaces, services and facilities to ensure safe, equitable and affordable access and participation
- Free and low cost face-to-face programs continued in libraries along with continuation of hybrid events.
  - Accessibility and inclusion were supported through the provision of Auslan interpretation at live events, live captioning and alternative programming such as online Auslan and English Storytime, digital workshops and online webinars.
  - Most libraries remained open across 7 days, providing access to library collections, study spaces, venues and public access IT. Home Library Service also ran to a regular schedule.
  - Libraries were closed on 25 June due to public health orders.
- 2.4 Increase utilisation of internet and digital access and participation through City libraries and community facilities and explore opportunities to support digital training and advocate for subsidised internet access beyond our own facilities
- The library provided public access to computers at eight sites across the City in line with physical distancing requirements.
  - The City purchased 1,017 ebooks and 2,100 eAudiobooks to enhance and improve the online library collection. This online collection of eBooks and eAudio materials provides remote access to content such as popular fiction and non-fiction materials, junior, young adult and adult materials, to library members in the comfort of their home or anywhere with access to the internet.
  - The City trialled a new online platform, iVox books with library members and the community. The iVox app provides access to a range of animated talking picture books with 3D characters and scenes. Users tilt their mobile device to see characters in 3D and zoom in on characters and scenery. The animated books also provide text and audio for learning and literacy development.
  - Digital collections continue to see increased usage (up nearly 25% on the same period last year) and are being actively promoted in the libraries.
  - The Be Connected program launched in April, providing free one-to-one digital training sessions with qualified Be Connected library team members. Sessions include Absolute Beginners, Searching the internet, Using email, Using the online library, Connecting on social media and Getting started with video calls.

**What we are doing to support recovery**

2.5 Work with other government agencies and organisations working in the homelessness sector to support those at risk of or experiencing homelessness

- Seven-day coverage provided by the City’s homelessness unit and public space liaison officers who continue to engage with people experiencing homelessness. Staff are providing rough sleepers with the most up to date information from NSW Health, along with information about service provision and accommodation available.

People supported to access long term housing:

Q4 20/21	Since commencement
48	229

- The City joined with St Vincent de Paul Society, St Vincent’s Hospital and the Kirketon Road Centre to set up a vaccination hub for homeless people at the Oznam learning centre in Wolloomooloo. On the first day of the weekly four-hour clinic, staff vaccinated 120 people.
- The City continues to advocate for the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness. Activities included:
  - Co-chair of the Non-Residents Rough Sleeper Coordination Group
  - Member of the Aboriginal Case Coordination Group and Sydney Covid-19 Rough Sleeping Taskforce
  - Advocate for the needs of non-resident rough sleepers
  - Participated in the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors (CCCLM) Housing and Homelessness working group and represented them at the Legislative Assembly Committee Community Services inquiry into the Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places and the Federal Government Inquiry into Homelessness in Australia
  - Provided information to Hobart Council on the Emergency Response Protocol and updated the Protocol in response to the March rain event
  - Worked with partners to establish a Covid Vaccine hub for vulnerable communities
  - Continued to support the End Street Sleeping collaboration to develop the By Name List
  - Provided advice regarding Street Count and homelessness to eight councils, and the Department of Communities and Justice.



## What we are doing to support recovery

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|---|---|
| <p>2.6 Continue to leverage the City’s existing Supported Accommodation, Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund to create more affordable housing</p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– \$3M in support was provided through the Affordable and Diverse Housing fund to St George Community Housing for their Youth Foyer Project. This project will deliver 73 units of affordable housing near Victoria Park.</li> <li>– Council is negotiating with Bridge Housing to convert an unused Council-owned site on Bourke Rd Alexandria into 21 affordable apartments.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>2.7 Advocate to federal and state governments for increased investment in social and affordable housing as well as no forced evictions and tenants' rights</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City’s LGA wide affordable housing levy will come into effect in July 2021. The expanded levy has the potential to result in up to 1,100 additional affordable dwellings by 2036.</li> <li>– The City has prepared planning proposals for NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LaHC) sites at Cowper Street, Glebe and Elizabeth Street, Redfern and Waterloo Estate (South), Waterloo. The City seeks to maximise social and affordable housing at these sites. NSW Land and Housing have indicated that the Cowper Street, Glebe site will have a significant increase in social housing.</li> <li>– The Lord Mayor and City staff attended the NSW Parliament’s Public Accounts Committee’s public hearing on social housing maintenance on 10 May 2021 as witnesses to advocate for increased social housing, improved standards of living and dedicated placed-based coordination and support.</li> <li>– City staff continue to work in partnership with LaHC and Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) to improve safety and amenity in social housing communities. From March to May 2021 City staff conducted 55 site visits with LAHC and DCJ to identify areas for improvement.</li> </ul> |
| <p>2.8 Prioritise the provision of food security services for our vulnerable communities through partnerships, networks, grants and existing services</p>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Delivered 11,358 Meals on Wheels meals to 231 residents and continued service uninterrupted.</li> <li>– Continue to support the OzHarvest free Supermarket in Waterloo which is open 5 days per week supporting an average of 1200 people per week.</li> <li>– Approximately 10 not for profit agencies and businesses supported with \$300,000 Covid-19 relief grants to provide food support to the community.</li> </ul>  |

**Other actions we will take**

2.9 Work with charities to support their fund-raising to provide ongoing services to people in the local area

- Continued to support the #feedsydney fundraising campaign for OzHarvest. Every dollar donated provides 2 meals. \$112,108 raised so far towards a goal of \$200,000.

2.10 Advocate to the federal government for the continuation of financial and other support packages and broadening access to assistance

- The Lord Mayor wrote to the NSW Treasurer in June to seek hardship grants for small businesses impacted by the lockdown in June 2021 as a result of a Covid-19 outbreak, particularly those within the cultural and creative industry.
- City staff met with the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) to discuss their current ‘Raise the Rate’ campaign to increase JobSeeker and Youth allowance and to plan for future advocacy to reduce poverty and inequality within our communities.

2.11 Connect impacted international students to accommodation and mental health support services

International Student Hub Pilot project launched on 26 May. The City provided a \$100,000 grant to Sydney Alliance to establish the hub in collaboration with over 50 community, religious and charitable organisations. At the launch, Investment NSW announced a \$120,000 contribution to the project to support case management and coordination, helping international students to navigate services and support. The City’s contribution is focussed on community development initiatives including programs, consultation, advocacy, and research.

- A total of 409 international students participated in nine online events delivered by the City’s International Student Leadership Ambassadors to build employability skills, support health and wellbeing and link students with relevant services. Events included: Networking with International Student Leaders; The Law in Your Hand and Career Success Essential Workshops.

2.12 Advocate to the NSW Government to direct energy efficiency support to low-income residents and strata communities in the local area

- The City is collaborating with NSW Govt to ensure energy efficiency stimulus, incentives and support include strata communities and low-income communities.
- The City successfully advocated for changes to strata legislation to drive improved building performance and cost-savings through simplification of the decision making around solar.
- The City continues to promote utility bill-support programs to our residents.
- The City is developing an electric vehicle guide for owners’ corporations.

## Action Area 3

# Strengthen community cohesion to build the resilience of local communities

Communities are connected, engaged and empowered to manage their own recovery and ready to respond to shocks and emergencies.

### What we are doing to support recovery

- |   |  |         |                    |             |             |
|---|--|---------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <p>3.1 Provide grants that facilitate community engagement in City owned spaces and public places</p>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City provided rent relief for childcare centre providers until 31 March 2021 for an approximate value of:                             <table border="0" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">Fin YTD</td> <td>Since Commencement</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$1,339,188</td> <td>\$1,666,188</td> </tr> </table> </li> </ul> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">This action is now complete</p>    | Fin YTD | Since Commencement | \$1,339,188 | \$1,666,188 |
| Fin YTD   | Since Commencement   |         |                    |             |             |
| \$1,339,188   | \$1,666,188  |         |                    |             |             |
| <p>3.2 Provide residents with links to support services and practical assistance</p>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provided information and referral pathways to residents in a range of formats online and in print with links to relevant health, safety and support contacts. There were 15,413 website visits to the City’s Covid-19 response webpage during Q4.</li> <li>– Continued the community hotline which received 61 calls for requests to information or support.</li> </ul>   |         |                    |             |             |
| <p>3.3 Support the provision of health and safety information to residential strata owners</p>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City continues to provide health, safety and resilience information through to strata communities through the Smart Green Apartments program and the Residential Strata Sustainability group. We provided resources and support focused on pandemic management for high density strata communities via 14 e-newsletter publications to a database of 3,434 people.</li> </ul>                                       |         |                    |             |             |
| <p>3.4 Advocate to ensure environmental sustainability is of high importance in fast-tracked urban renewal programs</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Advocacy has continued to NSW Government for environmental outcomes aligned to City targets in the following renewal projects:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Station Western Gateway</li> <li>• Waterloo Estate</li> <li>• Blackwattle Bay</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |         |                    |             |             |
| <p>3.5 Coordinate local emergency response through Local Emergency Management Committee</p>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City continues to coordinate the activities of the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC), including the response and recovery to Covid-19. This includes regular reporting on response and recovery activities and emerging issues. Progress update includes:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Sydney Resilience Risk Assessment complete.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |         |                    |             |             |

**What we are doing to support recovery**

- Revised Local Emergency Risk Assessment has been circulated for feedback by the LEMC.
- Revised Local Emergency Management Plan is in progress.

- The City waived parking fees for essential workers and converted on-street parking for pop-up cycleways and workzones, foregoing revenue totalling \$99,588 in quarter 4 20/21 and \$1,967,269 since commencement, as follows:

- Free on-street parking

	Q4 20/21	Since Commencement
Hospitals:	\$ 18,531	\$672,291
Cycleways:	\$ 19,200	\$161,815
Workzones:	\$ 283	\$ 62,017

- Free Goulburn St car park parking

	Q4 20/21	Since Commencement
Police:	\$ 41,242	\$732,660
Health:	\$ 1,020	\$ 17,187
Charity:	\$ 272	\$ 1,887

- Free Kings Cross car park parking

	Q4 20/21	Since Commencement
Police:	-	\$107,150
Health:	\$ 11,220	\$120,870
Charity:	\$ 7,820	\$ 91,392

**3.6 Work with the Resilient Sydney network to share best practice and establish cross boundary recovery initiatives**

- Resilient Sydney Ambassadors Network met in April share progress on resilience and recovery plans across metropolitan Sydney. Councils shared best practice on resilience risk assessments to inform emergency management planning, including during the ongoing pandemic.
- Resilient Sydney has commenced several metropolitan wide projects with the NSW state government to provide standardised data and template plans to councils on urban forestry, net zero planning and social cohesion and wellbeing – directing recovery investments into building a more liveable and safer city.

**Other actions we will take**

- 3.7 Empower communities to manage their own recovery by strengthening local connections through networks, events and forums, for example supporting community celebrations at the end of the pandemic
- In June 2021, the City and emergency response partners hosted a community education and launch event for the Emergency Preparedness Handbook for people living in social housing, where 150 people attended. The City translated this resource into 7 community languages to increase access to emergency preparedness messaging for CALD communities.
  - In May 2021 the City with domestic violence sector partners and NSW Police delivered an emergency preparedness workshop for over 55 professionals, from Domestic and Family violence agencies.
  - The City established four food relief agency subgroups, made up of 34 core agencies, to respond to ongoing demand across the LGA during the pandemic. The City delivered workshops in business continuity planning and supported the groups to develop local protocols outlining ways of working together for ongoing support and in response to a crisis. Of those who provided feedback:
    - 95 per cent strengthened networks and established partnerships with other food relief providers
    - 80 per cent have increased capacity to respond to food insecurity
    - 77 per cent have increased ability to respond to food insecurity in emergencies
    - 95 per cent are committed to continue participation in the collective response.
  - In June, Sydney Town Hall was lit-up as a show of support for the people of India as they faced the impact of Covid-19 across their country.
- 3.8 Facilitate capacity building workshops with the community sector and community led organisations to support their planning for the reopening of their services
- No activity scheduled this quarter.

**Other actions we will take**

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| <p>3.9 Explore with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community the idea to facilitate a culturally sensitive commemorative event due to the impacts on participating in <i>Sorry Business</i> during the pandemic, and to provide an opportunity for support, collective reflection and acknowledgement for community members who have passed away.</p> | <p>– The City supported the Aboriginal community to host eight community wakes in Redfern Community Centre. City staff assisted families in developing the required Covid-safe plans according to the current health orders and were present on the day to assist with monitoring safety requirements and to support community members.</p> |
| <p>3.10 Celebrate the work of the community groups and volunteers including at the annual Lord Mayor volunteer thank you event</p>   | <p>– No activity scheduled this quarter.</p>  |

## Action Area 4

# Protect and empower the cultural sector by prioritising the role of local creativity, cultural spaces, talent and knowledge

The resilience of our cultural sector is strengthened through involvement in recovery efforts, sustaining diverse cultural practice, protecting creative spaces and thriving community participation.

### What we are doing to support recovery

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| <p>4.1 Direct existing grant support to sustain cultural organisations and stimulate development opportunities for local creatives</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City awarded 28 cultural and creative grants and 25 festival and events sponsorships (both artform and village/community) as part of Round 1 2021-22 grants.</li> <li>In total for these 3 programs:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant applications received: 114</li> <li>• Grant applications supported: 53</li> <li>• Value of support requested: \$3,260,288 (cash &amp; VIK)</li> <li>• Value of support invested: \$1,827,869 (cash &amp; VIK)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <p>4.2 Advocate to federal and state governments for targeted support for culture and no net loss of cultural space</p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City is awaiting the outcome of The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts inquiry into Australia’s creative and cultural industries and institutions, to which the City made a submission last year.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>4.3 Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and knowledge sharing</p>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– As busking started to return to the city streets in line with public health orders (until the CBD lockdown commenced in late June 2021), the City was once again able to support of cultural practice in the public domain by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers.</li> <li>– The City is working to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander grant applications through:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Application</li> <li>• Assessment</li> </ul> </li> <li>– During Q4, the City Approved the following support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander grant applications:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 grant applications for Round 1, 2021-22 grants were received from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants and were all approved. The City awarded \$278,154 in cash and value in kind across festivals and events village and community grants, cultural and creative grants and sponsorship, knowledge exchange sponsorships and community services grants. Four of these were verbal applications.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

**What we are doing to support recovery**

- 15 additional grants that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were approved at a value of \$993,240 in cash and value in kind. This was across festivals and events artform as well as village and community grants, cultural and creative grants and sponsorships, knowledge exchange sponsorships, environmental performance grants – innovation, community services grants and matching grants.

4.4 Continue work to maximise opportunities for cultural sector in City owned spaces and community venues

- The City is providing rent relief for creative spaces, short-term empty property, creative accommodation grant and live/work Waterloo and William St tenants for an approximate value of:

	Fin YTD	Since Commencement
• Creative spaces:	\$129,182	\$172,775
• Other cultural:	\$224,882	\$297,600
• Other social:	\$103,504	\$137,699

- In total, the City has provided rent relief for Accommodation Grant Program recipients and creative tenants to the value of:

	Fin YTD	Since commencement
Rent relief	\$1,796,757	\$2,274,263

- This year 3,961 adults, youth and children participated in 218 inclusive cultural programs delivered in face-to-face, online and hybrid form across the City's library network. Programming included 32 participation programs, 44 interactive workshops with a digital citizenship focus and 142 programs supporting social connection. Online videos such as the Art and Maker series and Auslan and English Storytime have had over 13,600 views. Customs House re-opened to the public with Developing Sydney: capturing 1900 – 1920 exhibition.
- The Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact face-to-face programming. The Hybrid in-person and online event delivery model was developed in response to reduced venue capacities and to increase program accessibility and support social connection.
- Program highlights included a Lunchtime Conversation series with topics such as fake news, and Sydney's sly grog history; 12 online Auslan and English Storytime videos; hybrid delivery of the Wikipedia Edit-a-thon and development art and poetry packs for distribution to Meals on Wheels recipients.

4.5 Enable diverse local cultural infrastructure and activation through the City's Open and Creative planning reforms

- The Open and Creative planning reforms, a set of measures to make it easier for small businesses to trade later, or host performances and shows are still with the Department of Planning, Industry and



## What we are doing to support recovery

Environment and have not yet been sent to Parliamentary Counsel for drafting. Once drafting is complete, the reforms will be published and able to be implemented.

## Other actions we will take

4.6 Facilitate opportunities for collaboration and capacity building to ensure cultural sector resilience and sustainability

- As part of Al Fresco Sydney the City commissioned four temporary public artworks that reimagine city spaces. The artworks were installed from 7-22 January for 6 months. Given the popularity of these works demonstrated by letters of support and feedback from participants attending City Art tours (see below), the City is extending three of the artworks until March 2022.

The temporary artworks being extended are:

- WE ARE ALL ASTONISHINGLY WISE by Katy B. Plummer in Abercrombie Lane
- Giant Badges by Adam Norton in Barrack Street
- Barlow Street Forest by the Dirt Witches (Prudence Gibson, Lara Merrett, Caroline Rothwell, Rena Shein, Floria Tosca, Vivienne Webb).

The artwork EVER SUN by Rochelle Haley in Wilmot Street has been removed as adjacent building owners needed to replace a broken glass panel to their building and the cost to maintain, remove and reinstall the work was not feasible.

- As part of Al Fresco Sydney the City offered a program of free City Art Walking Tours to coincide with the City Art Laneways and to activate these new artworks, along with other works in the City's City Art public art collection and those commissioned by developers as conditions of development consent. The tours aim to draw people back into the City Centre and provide a way for the public to engage with some of the 200+ public artworks in the City Art public art collection.

Importantly the tours have also provided jobs (as tour guides) for 13 artists and art educators.

4.7 Continue to explore opportunities for making space for culture in partnership with public and private sectors

- The City has been reviewing the outcomes of the Oxford Street Strategic Review. Considering the results of early consultation and formulating changes to the planning controls to support and reposition the Oxford Street cultural and creative precinct.

4.8 Set up a working group comprising representatives of the cultural sector to agree

- Action complete

**Other actions we will take**

sites for pop-up or future  
cultural activity and prepare a  
report to Council to approve  
these sites as Covid-19  
recovery activity sites

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## Action Area 5

# Rebuild the visitor economy through promotion of our vibrant and safe city with activated main streets and nightlife

People in the city are supported to safely return to a 24-hour Sydney through a phased and integrated approach, with government and industry working together.

### What we are doing to support recovery

5.1 Use our communications channels to promote shop local and visit local to residents, workers and visitors

- Continued option for online events to be promoted on What's On(line). The number of events submitted to the platform increased 70% in Q4. This is a strong indication that more events are being programmed, both online and face to face.
- When stay at home orders were announced on 26 June, What's On reverted to What's On(line) and presented events that are being held online only.
- Leveraged What's On as primary event platform:
  - Events submitted: 3,941
  - Page views per month: 215,835
  - Sessions per month: 166,012
  - Email subscribers: 32,088
- The City worked in partnership with Concrete Playground on "Our Sydney," a shop local initiative to drive residents to support their businesses heavily impacted by the pandemic.

The initiative featured more than 900 local businesses across a series of 11 day & night guides (+185K page views); a series of 4 videos hosted by local creatives supporting businesses in the CBD (+610,000 views), and 11 lists of 'Reader's Choices' featuring nominations from Sydneysiders of their favourite day and night businesses, sparking passionate conversations on social channels about why we should all support our local businesses (the callout for Newtown nominations sparked 419 comments on social).

Overall, the campaign reached more than 4.3 million people. A Concrete Playground survey with more than 600 responses showed that 99% of readers agreed it was important to support our local businesses, and 92% of readers said that the 'Our Sydney' content encouraged them to visit a local business.

## What we are doing to support recovery

- 5.2 Continue to invest in local festivals and major events that demonstrate Sydney's vibrancy and encourage local Sydneysiders and others from around the state and country to visit
- The City has commenced planning for the major events program, beginning with NAIDOC in the City in July. However, with the Bondi Covid-19 cluster causing a Sydney-wide lockdown at the end of June, the decision has been made to move the event online.
  - Planning is currently underway for Sydney Christmas 2021, Sydney New Year's Eve 2021 and the 2022 Sydney Lunar Festival. The events will showcase Sydney's vibrant culture while ensuring the safety of all staff and participants in line with Public Health Orders.
  - The City's tours of public art have been extremely popular often booking out prior to being advertised. The City has received positive feedback and they have created the opportunity for more than 300 people to come back into the city and engage with the public art collection resulting in a dwell time of over 570hrs to date in the city centre and Chinatown contributing to the city's economy and activation following Covid-19 impacts.
- 5.3 Continue to partner with Business Events Sydney to build the pipeline of business meetings for Sydney
- City staff continue to meet regularly with BE Sydney team to understand the pipeline of events and how the City can leverage these events through the retail, tourism and hospitality sectors.
  - Through the ongoing support the City provides to BESydney the following outcomes have been achieved:
    - Whilst the global tourism market continues to navigate the impacts of Covid-19, BESydney has secured 10 events year to date which will attract 14,450 delegates and generate an estimated \$46M in direct expenditure to the NSW economy. For example, Sydney has been named as the host for the Australian Physiotherapy Association's (APA) national conference Physiotherapy 2023. This conference alone is expected to attract 1,800 delegates over three days in October 2023 at the ICC Sydney, with an estimated direct expenditure of \$4.8M. It is indicative of increasing confidence in the sector as organisers confirm in-person meetings.
    - BESydney currently has a total of 91 events with a combined estimated direct expenditure of \$513M secured between 2021 and 2026 spanning health, financial services, and technology, with 70% of meetings impacted by Covid-19 postponed into future years.

What we are doing to support recovery

- The latest bid wins follow BESydney’s ‘*It’s got to be Sydney*’ campaign launch late last year, which positions Sydney as the number one Australian destination for business visitors.
- BESydney has been named the Host City Partner for national business events exhibition, *Get Local 2021*, the first major business events trade show in NSW since the pandemic and a key initiative to rebuild and grow business events across the region. The trade show connect buyers, exhibitors and industry. It will help them to identify business opportunities, drive lead generation, build relationships and grow their networks.

5.4 Continue to engage with the accommodation and entertainment sector to ensure sustainability is promoted and prioritised

- While the accommodation and entertainment sector continue to be heavily impacted by the pandemic, the City continues to focus on 3 primary goals:
  - Activate Upgrades:  
The City has continued to promote and offer subsidised building ratings to the sector through the provision of grants.
  - Build Capacity and Foster Leadership:  
The Sustainable Destination Partnership is the key platform through which the city builds the sector capacity and demonstrates leadership. The City conducted a workshop with the sector on renewable power purchase agreements.
  - Promote and Recognise:  
Ongoing promotion of Sydney as a safe and sustainable destination.
- A significant piece of work was completed to quantify emissions savings from the sector through the City’s environmental performance grant program. 85 Ratings and Assessments grants in the accommodation & entertainment sector with a total City investment of \$922,087.00 has unlocked \$4,862,238.69 in community investment retrofitting buildings and reducing carbon emissions by 5,545 tonnes per annum.

5.5 In line with health advice, welcome people back to Sydney through roaming ambassadors, maps and digital services

- The City is working with the NSW Government to promote the Dine & Discover digital voucher scheme. We have provided information for businesses on how to register and promoted the scheme to our local communities through the City of Sydney News website and enewsletters.
- It has not been feasible to recommence the visitor ambassador program while international borders remain closed.

## What we are doing to support recovery

- 5.6 Advocate to state and federal governments for ongoing support for international students while they continue to be impacted by the pandemic
- The Lord Mayor and Alex Greenwich MP wrote to the NSW Treasurer in June requesting the safe return of international students to Sydney. The letter also advocated for financial support for international student service providers, student travel concessions, targeted mental health programs and to develop dedicated quarantine facilities for international students.

## Other actions we will take

- 5.7 Engage local creatives in the City's programs and work with others to do the same to activate precincts to support local businesses, sustain local culture and drive footfall on main streets
- As part of the \$20 million AI Fresco City Project partnership with NSW Government, the City continued working closely with the 95 grant recipients of the \$3 million dollar CBD Activations Grant Program to safely bring people back into the city with an exciting program of creative and unique experiential activations.

By 30 June 2021, 55 of these grants had been successfully delivered, including the successful YCK Laneways Festival, a 6-week festival of music and cultural programming across 10 small bars around York, Clarence and Kent Streets (YCK). 10/10 of participating venues were satisfied or very satisfied with the results of the festival on their business; 9/10 saw an increase of 10%-50% on their Mon-Fri turnover and 8/10 an increase of 10%-50% over the weekends. Most participants also highlighted live music events as their most successful events during the festival. 8/10 venues stated that when health orders next allow, they will continue to program some of the events trialled during the festival on an ongoing basis, which will translate into job opportunities for creatives & performers into the future.

- The City supported Afterpay Australian Fashion Week (AAFW) through a Commercial Creative Sponsorship. AAFW took place during 31 May to 4 June 2021 at Carriageworks as well as various iconic locations around Sydney.

The event showcased more than 70 established and emerging designers and connected them to international buyers and media.

AAFW also provides employment opportunities for the wider events and creative industries, including event producers, tech and sound specialists, multimedia, security, catering, photographers, cleaning, and hair and makeup artists.

**Other actions we will take**

For the first time the program featured a First Nations runway show (supported by an all First Nations talent crew for both front and back of house) that showcased 8 of the nation's most talented and highly awarded Indigenous designers.

5.8 Partner with Destination NSW to develop a local and domestic visitor marketing campaign for Sydney, with focus on the cultural offering over the 2020–2021 summer

- The City continued its “rediscover Sydney” marketing campaign as part of the \$20M city centre revitalisation partnership with NSW Government, in consultation with Destination NSW.
- The objectives of the campaign are to:
  - Encourage residents, workers and intra-state visitors to the CBD to eat, drink, dwell or see cultural programming and activations
  - Encourage CBD businesses to take advantage of grants, relaxed outdoor dining rules
  - Build consumer confidence – the city is safe and open
- Marketing activity included outdoor, cinema, podcast and digital advertising, a digital content partnership, content reaching CALD audiences, extensive rich digital content creation shared and amplified across the City’s own channels. The City’s What’s On website provided the landing destination for all programming information.
- Destination NSW continues to run the “Love Sydney like you mean it” campaign to promote visiting Sydney to Sydneysiders and intrastate visitors.

5.9 Encourage and facilitate the return of international students back to Sydney in partnership with education sector

- Facilitated connection of industry experts with Australia China Business Council to stage a national symposium on international education on 9 June. The event was attended by hundreds of industry, government and academic representatives, including keynote address by The Hon Julie Bishop, Chancellor of Australian National University.
- 140 people attended the International Student Leadership and Ambassadors 2018-20 Graduation and 2021-22 Program Induction Ceremonies on 2 June.

## Action Area 6

# Support businesses and organisations to innovate and adapt, so that industries can evolve and grow

Connecting people to new ways of thinking and working, harnessing their creative capacity to solve problems, pivot and transform through skills development, new models and partnerships so more businesses can share in the benefits.

### What we are doing to support recovery

- 6.1 Facilitate dialogue with heavily impacted sectors to support their recovery
- The City conducted the latest Covid-19 Business Needs Survey to check in with businesses 12 months after the first survey in May 2020. The survey was live 31 May – 21 June and we received more than 500 responses from businesses across the LGA. The responses provide insight into business needs right before the current lockdown as respondents were asked what support they wanted most over the next - 12 months, ranked in order of priority:
    1. Financial support
    2. Marketing and promotion
    3. Clear and ongoing communication of ongoing support available for small business
    4. Less red tape and regulation
    5. Advocacy for business support across other levels of government and industry
    6. Events and activation of local precincts
  - The top need for business was the same as in May 2020, with financial support ranked number one, especially to cover costs like rent and wages, followed by marketing and promotion to bring people back into the streets (when restrictions allow). Events and activations dropped in priority from top four to top six.
- 6.2 Direct existing grant support for organisations, businesses and industry, including those dominated by women, to assist them to innovate, adapt and grow
- Council awarded 24 business support grants in Round 1 2021-22 grants at a value of \$572,208 cash in Q4. These grants support initiatives in live music and performance, night-time diversification and place and industry.
  - Examples of programs that received grants which support women include:
    - Sydney International Women's Jazz Festival 2021 - 2022 - Sydney Improvised Music Association was approved for \$50,000 through the festivals & events



**What we are doing to support recovery**

artform sponsorship. This ten-day music festival that celebrates women in jazz and activates venues across the local area, including development opportunities for musicians through its artist-in-residence and commissioning/mentor programs. The festival presents around 100 performances and employs approximately 350 musicians, creatives and educators, and collaborates with more than 25 partner organisations.

- Pathways for Young Artists – The House That Dan Built was approved for \$32,806 through a knowledge exchange sponsorship. This pilot traineeship program establishes a best practice model for nurturing young female music artists. The House is a female-focussed music and multidisciplinary performance collective. It nurture cross-generational female voices and collaborations with professional artists, translating the hopes, fears and lived experiences of women and girls into mesmerising vocal performance.

6.3 Continue to support collaboration across the innovation precincts within the Camperdown Ultimo collaboration area

- The City’s CEO chairs quarterly meetings of the Camperdown-Ultimo Collaboration Area Alliance which represents all major partners in the precinct and represents the City on the Tech Central industry advisory group.
- In Q4 the Alliance participated in workshops initiated by the Greater Sydney Commission to develop a brand for the Tech Central precinct and a place collaboration tool to map the networking, physical and economic assets in the precinct. This online tool will facilitate connections and collaborations for innovation.
- As a member of the Western Harbour Alliance, staff participated in a kick-off meeting of the Western Harbour BIDCo steering group 3 year trial.

6.4 Implement the Central Sydney planning strategy to support a pipeline of development and investment certainty

- Central Sydney planning strategy and planning proposal were approved by Council and the Central Sydney planning committee in December 2020. The city is working with the NSW Government on the drafting and finalisation of the planning controls and contributions plan.

6.5 Continue to use City procurement to support local businesses and a shift to a circular economy

- Implementation of the social and sustainable procurement guidelines, supplier code of conduct, and returnable schedule on selected procurement activities is being monitored for effectiveness. The City is working with SSROC on further refinements.

**What we are doing to support recovery**

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| <p>6.6 Continue to support communities and businesses to accelerate their uptake of renewable energy to stimulate the green economy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Action is largely delivered through the flagship programs of the Better Buildings Partnership (BBP) and CitySwitch Green Office. In Q4 activity focussed on setting up governance arrangements with financial members for the new financial year.</li> <li>– A significant piece of work was completed to quantify the carbon savings achieved by commercial office sector through the City's environmental performance grant program. 25 Ratings and Assessments grants in the commercial office sector with a total City investment of \$249,489.00 has unlocked \$1,044,795 in community investment retrofitting buildings and reducing carbon emissions by 296 tonnes per annum.</li> <li>– As part of our continued efforts to increase onsite renewables uptake, we have published a guideline to installing solar in heritage areas, that balances the climate emergency response with heritage protection measures. This is a significant step forward in making it easier for residents and businesses to access renewables. The City is also accelerating the uptake of renewables access through innovation grants.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>6.7 Continue to assist businesses and apartment buildings owners' corporations to implement retrofits for increased efficiency</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The Smart Green Apartments program has reduced emissions by 24,030 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e per year, saved \$3.49 million in operational costs and installed 625kW of solar.</li> <li>– To date the City has invested \$752,054 through 122 ratings and assessments grants to strata buildings. This has unlocked \$2,214,588 community investment in building upgrades reducing emissions by 3375 tonnes and operating costs by \$653,971 per year. 381kW solar was installed. Nine new Ratings grants were awarded to owners corporations in Round 1 2021-22 grants.</li> <li>– Strata Leadership Network forums and the Strata Sustainability Reference Group were delivered quarterly focused on sustainability, resilience and Covid-19 support for high density communities.</li> <li>– The City supported 114 apartment buildings to get a NABERS rating with four procuring GreenPower.</li> <li>– 22 SGA buildings &amp; 31 grant buildings are participating in the City's food scraps recycling trial.</li> <li>– The City continued to advocate for improved minimum environmental standards for apartment buildings.</li> </ul> |

## What we are doing to support recovery

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| 6.8 | Prioritise investment in City projects that provide significant local green economy benefits | – No activity scheduled this quarter. |
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## Other actions we will take

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| 6.9 | Produce skills development programs to enhance innovation, collaboration, digitisation and e-commerce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City continued the delivery of the Reboot Webinar Series to help businesses adapt, innovate and thrive in light of the pandemic. The third series of six webinars was held from 17 May to 28 June and was tailored to small businesses, start-ups and creatives, with a focus on digital platforms and tools to reach new customers and retain existing ones. Key industry experts featured included: Matt Leach (Canva), Melinda Petrunoff (Facebook), Leah Harris (Spotify) and Adam Jacobs (THE ICONIC).</li> <li>– The third series was successful in attracting businesses from across sectors, including professional &amp; creative services (24%), retail &amp; hospitality (19%) and arts &amp; culture sector (17%).</li> <li>– Since launching in October 2020, Reboot has attracted a total of 6,916 business registrations to 18 events. 90% of attendees agreed the knowledge gained will help grow their businesses. The webinar series has also successfully added a total of 2,000+ new businesses subscriptions to the City of Sydney Business newsletter (a 40% increase of the original database). Recordings of the webinars are available on the City’s website and have so far attracted 1,300+ views.</li> <li>– On 28 April, the City delivered 'Raising the Bar – Light Rail Edition' in partnership with established global event organisers Raising the Bar and University of Sydney. The initiative saw 10 city bars and venues along the Sydney light rail route from Circular Quay to Surry Hills turned into ‘classrooms’ for the night hosting 20 events (two speakers at each venue).<br/><br/>All events were sold out in advance with 1,138 registrations, helping bring new audiences to our local businesses and at the same time democratising access to our local innovators and thinkers for the general public. Survey feedback showed 100% of respondents found the events met or exceeded expectations.</li> </ul> |
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**Other actions we will take**

- The 2021 Visiting Entrepreneur Program (VEP) was held from 1 – 10 June and focused on biotechnology and quantum technology as emerging sectors in Sydney's economy with a huge potential for global competitiveness into the future.

Speakers included Australian Chief Scientist Dr Cathy Foley and global visiting entrepreneurs Po Bronson, managing director of IndieBio the world's leading biotech accelerator; Nabiha Saklayen, co-founder and CEO of Cellino (awarded the first fellowship at the International Genomics Institute founded by Nobel Laureate Jennifer Doudna); and Quantum entrepreneurs Rebecca Krauthamer, CEO of Quantum Thought, and Ilana Wisby, founding CEO of Oxford Quantum Circuits (who in July 2021 announced the launch of the UK's first quantum computing-as-a-service).

- The program featured 5 international entrepreneurs and 28 local experts across 13 events hosted in collaboration with the local startup ecosystem. The full VEP program attracted more than 1,200 attendees. Post event surveys showed that 73% of respondents gained new knowledge and skills; and 75% of respondents agreed that the program raised the positive global profile of Sydney's startup ecosystem. Moreover, 54% of those thinking of entrepreneurship were inspired to start a new business because of the program.
- The City also supported the delivery of Asialink's Asia Business Event Series via a Knowledge Exchange Grant. The series of 3 events focused on:
  1. International education (30 March)
  2. E-commerce for retailers (20 April)
  3. Trade diversification (24 June).

The events attracted 139 attendees. Survey feedback showed 85% of respondents gained new insights and 71% feel more capable of capitalising on Asian opportunities. Moreover, 50% indicated they are now more likely to export or invest overseas.

6.10 Advocate to federal and state governments to invest in green economy as major generator of jobs

- No activity scheduled this quarter

