

THE CITY AFTER DARK

Cultural Planning and Governance of the
Night-time Economy in Parramatta



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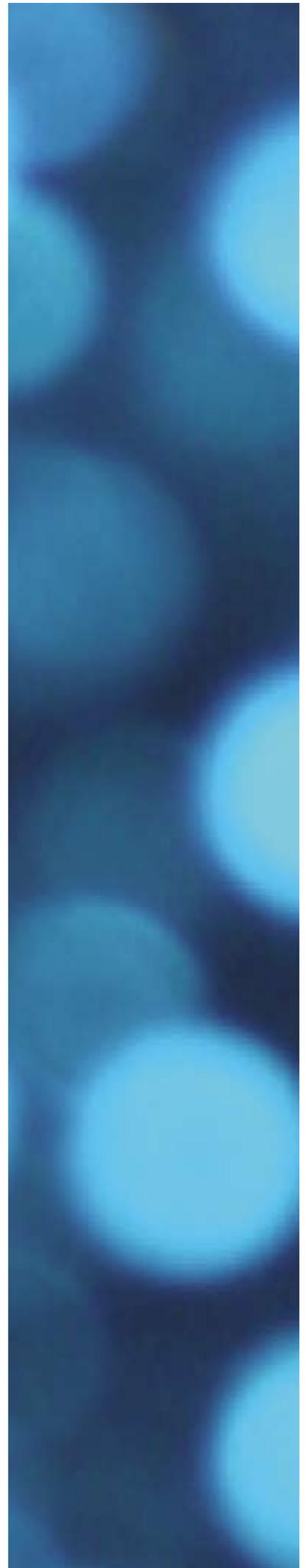
Prepared for Parramatta City Council

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executive summary

Overview

The development and management of the night-time economy is one of the most important issues facing cities around the globe. It needs to be addressed in a range of different contemporary urban locations across Australia, including all state capitals and, less obviously, in regional centres.

Parramatta, though part of the Sydney conurbation, is a significant city in its own right, with a night-time economy that has undergone growth and evolution over the past decade. Its developing night-time economy has been received with a typical mix of optimism about economic, cultural and social benefits as well as anxiety about law and order, social strains, and the dynamics of participation and exclusion.

The pilot project reported here examines the development, culture, experience and governance of the night-time economy in Parramatta in order to help develop policy-making for the long-term economic, cultural and social sustainability of its urban night-time leisure spaces.

Parramatta has adopted an arts, culture and creativity-led strategy of reinvention, yet its city-regeneration policy and planning agenda to this point have been largely 'day-centric' in focus.

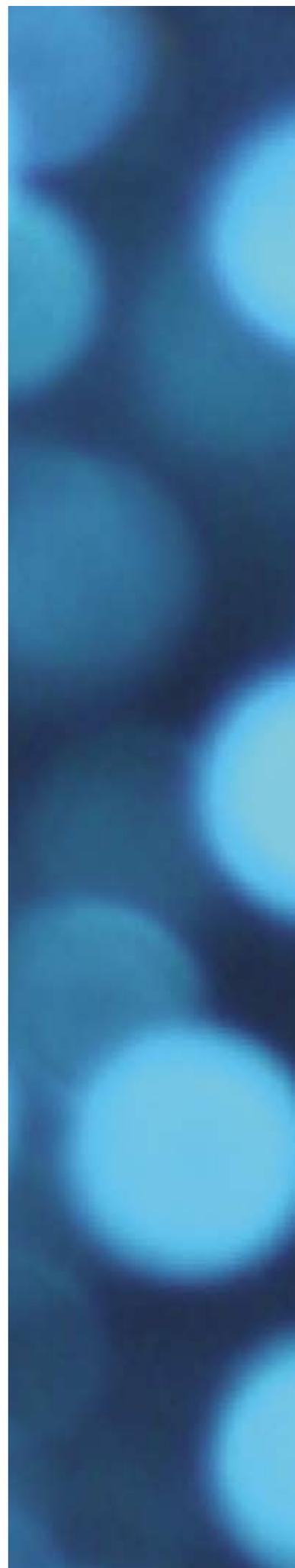
The research undertaken for this project has direct application for Parramatta City Council in its continuing activities of re-shaping the cultural profile of the city, and in dealing with some of the difficulties of reconciling the aims of fostering the '24-hour' city situated in an arts and cultural framework with the often alcohol-based popular pastimes that attract substantial leisure investment, a large number of participants, and some troubling social and cultural problems.

This research also seeks to contribute to wider discussion and debate, within universities and the public sphere, about how the cultures of cities are shaped, and the extent to which cultural planning can influence, or even 're-make', urban life.

A multi-method approach combining observational fieldwork, key informant interviews, focus groups, and policy and documentary analysis was used to determine dominant practices, spatial distribution, patterns of activity, and governance and regulation of Parramatta's night-time economy.

The major findings of the project reveal the ways in which the city's night-time culture is constrained by a range of factors, including the linear and concentrated flow of pedestrian traffic, the segmentation of leisure sites and activities, the under-use of public space, and (often exaggerated) perceptions of danger and risk.

By increasing understanding of the experience and management of Parramatta's night-time economy, its findings will help to promote the city's cultural life, and the safety and protection of both leisure participants and neighbouring areas and communities.





Key findings

1. Parramatta has a limited night-time economy.

This is mainly concentrated in a narrow corridor between the train line and the Parramatta River, with Church Street acting as the main thoroughfare. The potential exists for a more complex, dynamic, and diverse nightscape in Parramatta encompassing economic-based consumption, but also a more broadly conceived social and cultural 'economy' opening up Parramatta after dark for communities to actively and safely co-exist.

2. Parramatta's night-time economy operates within spatial constraints.

In both a conceptual and practical sense there are limited connections and interactions between different city spaces. The spatial organisation of the nightlife precinct is predominantly organised around Church Street, which hosts the majority of cafés and restaurants and is thus the principal site of the evening dining that bridges the day-time and night-time economies (which can also be divided into segments, such as 'evening' and 'late night'). Church Street connects the major entertainment and leisure facilities of the shopping centre, nightlife precinct and the Parramatta football stadium, and links them with infrastructural transport services such as the train station and bus interchange. This spatial arrangement is effective in providing access to the nightlife precinct and produces a fairly high volume of pedestrian foot traffic through the café/restaurant strip at certain times of the day and night. There is, however, a major drop-off in pedestrian activity beyond the Church Street thoroughfare and its main intersections.

3. The key late-night entertainment venues are rather sparsely located and dispersed, with irregular surges between licensed premises.

In comparison to the degree of lighting and the level of pedestrian presence within Church Street during the evening dining period, these areas between key venues may be rather bleak and even perceived as dangerous by people passing through them. The lack of effective lighting and a clearly established thoroughfare between PJ Gallagher's and either the Roxy or Church Street means that the range of possible pathways between these venues dilutes whatever pedestrian traffic there is, minimising the potential benefits of what is called 'natural surveillance'. The lack of a 'circuit' – either a well-established linear string or a multi-directional flow – between venues that organises the passage of pedestrians, tends to dissipate opportunities for a dynamic exchange between sites and activities within Parramatta's night-time economy. Unless changes to this spatial arrangement are well planned and supervised to encourage a diversity of uses and activities, an undesirable heavy flow and concentration of groups of late night drinkers moving along specific streets between licensed venues is produced.

4. There is a noticeable absence of a coherent and integrated night-specific placemaking strategy.

Signage and street furniture are clearly day-centric in design – with Parramatta City signage unlit and thus civic sites unbranded. The consequences of the lack of an integrated night-specific theming are several. First, the limited lighting and other amenity that does exist is the result of diverse and competing commercial interests, each venue or establishment concerned only with the appeal and amenity of their own small space. Thus, Parramatta City Council has yet to seize the opportunity to establish the nightlife precinct as a uniquely branded and unified leisure site. Second, the civic spaces (Church Street pedestrian mall, Prince Alfred Park) mainly become thoroughfares at night, with people seeking to pass hurriedly through them rather than spend time within them.

5. An opportunity exists to make more creative use of civic spaces for diverse after-dark uses with an arts/culture emphasis.

In the absence of regular, local arts/culture based activities there will be greater focus on the commercial spaces of the nightlife precinct and associated increases in alcohol consumption around which these venues are mainly based.

6. Assumptions concerning general danger and risk on the streets of Parramatta at night are often misperceptions.

Personal risks do exist after dark, but can be exaggerated, especially in the media, and so among those who rely on them for information. There are real police problems with drinking-related disputes and assaults in Parramatta CBD, but these are not widespread and they are heavily concentrated in or near a specific cluster of late-night drinking venues. A significant opportunity therefore exists for the management of night-time economy participant perceptions that will help prevent the self-fulfilling risk assessment that 'abandons' certain spaces as unsafe, thereby further emptying them after dark and making them feel more desolate and dangerous. There is a potential for night-time placemaking exercises to increase perceptions of safety in certain sites. The newly opened section of Church Street displays the types of lighting that create a feeling of safety and a sense of civic space. The pedestrianised section of Church Street would produce greater benefits if it was established as a night-specific civic space simultaneously creating a non-commercial space for the experience of nightlife, and ameliorating fear associated with a significant 'black spot' in the city's pedestrian flow lines.

7. Significant opportunity exists for sports events to be integrated with the night-time economy.

Given the undoubted capacity of the Parramatta Stadium to produce high volumes of pedestrian foot traffic, there appears to be little coherent approach to leveraging sporting events for the overall benefit of the night-time economy across the Parramatta leisure precinct. The leisure/sports nexus remains to be fully exploited in the creation of vibrant night-time culture outside the stadium.





Recommendations

The researchers are conscious that the night-time economy is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon that cannot be easily modified to produce a singular outcome – even if one were desired. Indeed, its unpredictability means that unintended outcomes are often produced, and the solving of problems in one area may transfer them to another. Nonetheless, the following summary recommendations are offered as a means by which Parramatta might engage with its night-time economy in a more holistic, strategic way.

1. Parramatta needs to guide the development of its night-time economy in a manner consistent with the overall aim of creating a diverse, vibrant after-dark culture that will both attract and retain residents, visitors and tourists within the city.
2. Night-time economy planning and policy formulation should articulate more systematically with other policy domains, including: Development Control Plans, late night trading, homelessness, crime prevention, drug and alcohol safety, diversity, and cultural planning.
3. The unproductive divide between cultural planning (stimulation) and crime prevention (regulation) needs to be more effectively dissolved by re-conceiving them as inevitably linked responses to the multiple uses of urban space.
4. The following strategies for developing Parramatta's night-time economy should be considered:
 - More extensive and considered use of public space after dark.
 - Diversification of licensed venues by encouraging a limited number of smaller, more intimate establishments.
 - Introduce night-time placemaking markers to increase perceptions of safety and leisure identity in selected sites, such as Church Street Mall and Prince Alfred Park.
 - Develop the leisure/sports nexus more fully in the creation of vibrant night-time culture outside the main sports stadium.
5. This scoping study has focused on Parramatta's CBD. Further case studies of the wider Parramatta Local Government Area (LGA), notably of Granville and Harris Park, would highlight issues specific to these emerging night-time economy spaces and allow for a precinct-based approach.
6. Parramatta City Council has pedestrian activity and flow data covering day-time hours for key CBD sites. Further research, concentrating on the period post 8pm, would provide a more complete picture of the rhythms of Parramatta's day-time and night-time economies.

1. introduction

The night-time economy

The night-time economy is a concept that refers to the range of leisure activities and experiences associated with patterns of collective night-time socialising and entertainment, including drinking, eating and creative practice (Hannigan, 1998: 3). More broadly, the night-time economy is a striking manifestation of the intricate and dynamic relationship between the social, cultural and material economies of cities with an emphasis on leisure and lifestyle (Lovatt & O'Connor, 1995).

The concept of the night-time economy has gained increasing currency since the 1990s in seeking to encapsulate changes to the organisation and practice of after-dark life, especially in urban settings. Different rhythms of work and leisure, and of the uses of city spaces, as well as the increased economic significance of the services sector (especially of tourism), has promoted the idea of a 24-hour city with more fluid and diverse leisure pursuits, particularly of a 'cultural-intellectual' nature (Rowe, 2007).

The development and management of the night-time economy is one of the most important issues facing cities around the globe. It needs to be addressed in a range of different contemporary urban locations across Australia, including all state capitals and, less obviously, in regional centres. The night-time economy has the potential to deliver great cultural, social and economic benefits to Australian cities. However, it may have major costs in terms of social disruption and disputes, assaults and serious injuries that drain public criminal justice and health resources. Developing and managing the night-time economy, therefore, is a key imperative for any city that is looking to integrate effectively the various dimensions of working, domestic and leisure life.

Study area

This pilot study examines the culture, experience and governance of the night-time economy in the regional city of Parramatta.

Parramatta is a city of 148,324 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006) approximately 24 kilometres from the Sydney CBD and the demographic centre of the Sydney conurbation. It is a focal point for the Greater Western Sydney Region, which has a large, growing population of almost two million.

Parramatta's population is culturally and linguistically diverse, with the non-English speaking population almost doubling over the past fifteen years. According to 2006 Census figures, 40.3% of Parramatta's population was born overseas and 48.8% of residents speak another language other than English at home. Parramatta's population is also characterised by a higher proportion of older residents than the metropolitan average, with 21.5% of residents across the Local Government Area (LGA) now aged 55 years and over, although the city centre is "relatively young" with a "higher proportion of 20-39 year olds", and also more ethnically diverse than the LGA (Department of Planning, n.d.).

Parramatta is a regional city with a mix of business, government, retail, cultural, entertainment and leisure activities, which are all "a focal point for regional transport and jobs" (Department of Planning, 2005: 92). It has also been successfully developed as Sydney's second commercial hub: "Parramatta, nominated as the second CBD for Sydney in 1968, has been one of the successes of Sydney's centres policy" (92).



	Number	%	NSW %
Males	74,280	50.1	49.3
Females	74,043	49.9	50.7
Australian citizens	116,036	78.2	85.8
Indigenous	1,203	0.8	2.1
Australian born	76,703	51.7	69.0
Overseas born	59,715	40.3	23.8
Total population	148,324	100.0	100.0

2006 Census statistics.



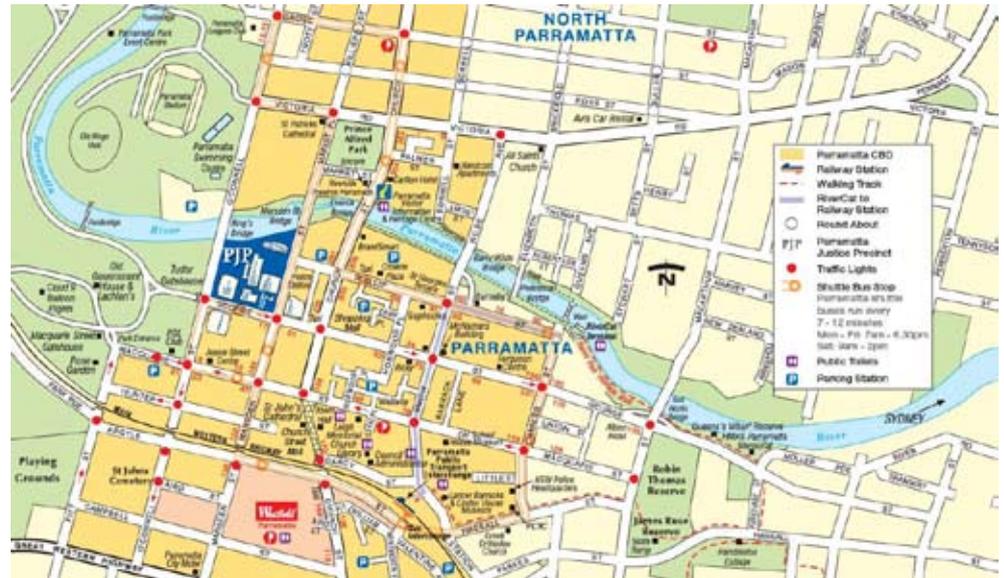
The Justice Precinct, artist's impression.

“Parramatta’s renaissance continues with the launch of a new web portal today that will assist those seeking premium jobs in one of the fastest growing commercial sectors in New South Wales.”

Parramatta City Council website, July 2008

Over the past decade the city centre (see map below) has not only become a business centre for the Western Sydney region, but increasingly it is taking on metropolitan functions, particularly in relation to finance and business, justice, and administrative services.

Parramatta CBD



Map supplied by Cartodraft Australia Pty Ltd www.cartodraft.com.au

From a cultural planning perspective there has been a direct need to “answer that call of being the second CBD” (Interview, Cultural Planner, Parramatta City Council, November 2007), with Parramatta City Council investing in a large program of revitalisation aimed at fulfilling the need for more cultural infrastructure for the city for the next 10 to 20 years, and thereby generating the region’s social capital and promoting its economic vitality. The recently completed *Parramatta Twenty25 Strategic Plan* (2006b) defines a 20-year trajectory for Parramatta to become the “Leading City at the Heart of Sydney” (3).

According to David Borger, the former Mayor, Parramatta wishes to renew itself by seeking “to curb the brain drain of our creative young people to the bright lights and urban villages of Sydney, to counter outdated images that western Sydney is some kind of cultural desert” (Borger, 2007). Current Mayor, Paul Barber, similarly argues that:

“no longer can we be tagged as an unsophisticated backwater of the West. As more and more people travel to Parramatta to eat, shop or be entertained . . . they see a city which is vibrant and culturally sophisticated”. (Barber, 2008)

Parramatta City Council’s *Arts Facilities and Cultural Places Framework* ‘Parramatta: Identity, Contemporary Culture & Prosperity’ (2005) advocates a culture-led rejuvenation of the city. However, while there is some cultural and creative activity in the city, and a developing cultural infrastructure (although, as yet, no civic art gallery), Parramatta has a residual image as a place where culture is not a central element of its civic life.

A vibrant night-time economy is an important part of a city’s cultural fabric. But Parramatta’s city regeneration policies and planning agendas have been largely day-centric in focus and application, and it is timely to consider the development and sustainability of its night-time cultures and spaces. With Parramatta’s cultural structures and rhythms currently undergoing significant transition – for example with usage changes associated with major redevelopments such as Civic Place and the Justice Precinct – there will be an acceleration of the growth and intensification of the challenges of its night-time economy.

A flourishing night-time culture is pivotal to the future growth of Parramatta. Its 2008 'New Work City' campaign emphasises a vibrant 'night-life' and 'arts/culture' as 'city attractors' (Parramatta City Council, 2008). Parramatta City Council has a role to play in creating a climate for a dynamic, diverse and multi-purpose night-time economy in which public culture and commercial culture intersect. In the planning image of Civic Place at right, a well-known feature film (difficult to identify here, but it is *Gladiator*) is playing on a large screen above an outdoor dining space, with pedestrians promenading beneath the stars. But how can the film be watched comfortably without seats, would the film sound disturb the diners, or the promenaders the film viewers? Thus, it can be seen from this small example that an idealised image of Parramatta's night-economy cannot be easily realised without considered cultural planning and strategic investment. This report sets out to make a contribution to that cultural planning process in Parramatta.

Research aims

The interconnected aims of this project are to:

- Provide a case study analysis of the night-time economy in Parramatta in order to contribute to the development of its policy-making for the long-term economic, cultural, and social sustainability of urban night-time leisure spaces while protecting neighbouring areas and communities.
- Develop an interdisciplinary framework for understanding the night-time economy that transcends the conventional dichotomy of stimulation and control.
- Provide a theoretically and empirically-informed understanding of urban leisure patterns in the night-time economy that addresses issues of diversity and inclusiveness in cultural participation and planning.

In combination, these strands of investigation can foster a sophisticated understanding of contemporary urban leisure cultures and the relationship between diversity, governance and the city.

The research has application for Parramatta City Council in its continuing activities of reshaping the cultural profile of Parramatta, and in dealing with some of the difficulties of reconciling the aims of fostering the 24-hour city within an arts and cultural framework with the alcohol-based popular pastimes that attract leisure investment, a large number of participants, and some troubling social and cultural problems.

Cultural planning & policy background

A cultural planning approach to the night-time emerged in Britain in the 1980s against the backdrop of inner city decline and anti-social leisure practices that contributed to concerns about the city after dark. Paradoxically, cultural planning advocated the promotion of the night-time economy as the solution to the fear of crime and urban desolation. In particular, it stressed the positive economic, social and cultural benefits to be gained from culturally-focused urban regeneration strategies and the creation of lively, viable and creative public and commercial spaces in the heart of the city (Bianchini, 1995; Mulgan & Worpole, 1986).

The demolition or 're-adaptive use' of heritage buildings and former industrial spaces was often also part of these strategies, creating new leisure and residential spaces and fostering a wider 'gentrification' effect by forcing some communities and businesses out of the area. It has now become evident that the creation and governance of the night-time economy through cultural planning frequently produces unintended outcomes that can undermine its core objectives.



Civic Place, artist's impression.

"Parramatta boasts quirky street stalls, the convenience of Westfield, multicultural fine dining, a vibrant night life, year-round arts festivals, beautiful parks, sporting complexes and easy access."

New Work City website, July 2008



Cultural planning, as a set of strategies wielded by local councils and businesses with the intention of promoting and producing a certain type of night-time economy, must now battle against the reality of the night-time economy that it has helped to produce. The urban decline that instigated cultural planning initiatives to revitalise city centres has not been corrected overall, but merely restricted to enclaves of deprivation or ‘danger’ in an urban patchwork (Thomas & Bromley, 2000). Different urban spaces promote, and are marked by, different types of fear and anxiety, but there may be no measurable decrease in the overall perception of danger in public places (Hubbard, 2003).

Nevertheless, the ideal of vibrant, safe and diverse cultural spaces at the heart of urban centres and the night-time economy has not disappeared. On the contrary, it is precisely due to the centrality of these ideals that regulation rather than either stimulation or control is being given a new emphasis. Within the night-time economy literature the focus is increasingly now on the need to manage or regulate the night-time economy by fostering diversified night-time attractions, such as theatres, cinemas and shops which appeal to different gender, age and cultural groups (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002).

At the same time, a new emphasis on ‘place management’ is emerging within cultural planning as a strategy for achieving a middle ground between stimulation and control (Stevenson, 2004). But little is known about how to negotiate the conundrum of the night-time economy as both a solution and a problem.

Night-time economy policy development has been a priority across the United Kingdom, with major metropolitan and regional cities and a range of smaller towns developing strategies for managing night-time activity. The City of London’s *London Plan* (2004), and supplementary best-practice guidance for managing the night-time economy (2007), are comprehensive benchmark examples. London boroughs such as Camden (2004) and Hackney (2007), with distinctive nightlife precincts, have also developed local night-time policy strategies, as have regional cities such as Gloucester (2005) and Leicester (2005) and a host of smaller towns such as Newquay (2005) and Cheltenham (2004).

A small number of Australian local governments have developed night-time economy policies and strategies. More often than not, though, the night-time economy is only fleetingly referenced in planning and policy documents. For example, a ‘Cultural Development Analysis’ of Penrith and St Marys town centres recommends developing a “common [planning] approach to managing mixed use and the night-time economy” (Mills, 2005: 10).

Routinely the night-time economy is referenced in terms of its economic impact. When social implications are cited, ‘social’ is usually deployed as a byword for community safety and security – for example, “in order to have a flourishing retail or night-time economy, the community needs to feel it is safe and exists in a secure environment” (Fremantle City Council, 2007: 10). The *Inner Melbourne Action Plan* registers support for “the entertainment roles of activity centres [at night] but also highlights the need to minimise amenity impacts on adjoining residential areas” (City of Melbourne, 2006: 28).

Brisbane City Council has one of the earliest articulations of the night-time economy and ‘culture’, where culture is used to describe diversity and/or art. Its *Valley Music Harmony Plan* (2004) argues for a stronger relationship between “the music-based entertainment industry” and the night-time economy, both of which are “important for a creative and prosperous Brisbane” (4).

As part of a broader policy to “enhance cultural life and tourism precincts” the *Sydney Metropolitan Strategy* (2005) recognises a central role for the “night economy”. In a reversal of the usual case for minimising amenity impacts, the Strategy recommends that established “entertainment and nightlife clusters” should be protected to “ensure that incompatible uses such as residential development do not impact on the ongoing viability of such clusters” (Department of Planning, 2007: 139).

Sydney City Council is among those Councils with a more sophisticated and substantive account of its night-time economy, but a divide between cultural planning and crime prevention still characterises its approach. Research was conducted in 2006 which looked into night trading and licensed premises across the city, with a *Late Night Trading Development Control Plan* drafted in 2007 (City of Sydney, 2008). Up until this point there had been “no planning policy that applie[d] to the entire City of Sydney which include[d] provisions to regulate the operating hours of late night trading premises or how these premises [were] managed” (City of Sydney, 2007: 1). A recent study of Oxford Street as a “cultural precinct” operates with a broader definition of the night-time economy, underpinned by the principle that culture and participation can be a major driving force in urban renewal (Montgomery, 2007). But resolving safety and security issues in the area is still seen as the province of the police.

Integrating cultural policies and crime prevention strategies is necessary, then, to achieve a tenable balance between pleasure and safety.

The Parramatta context

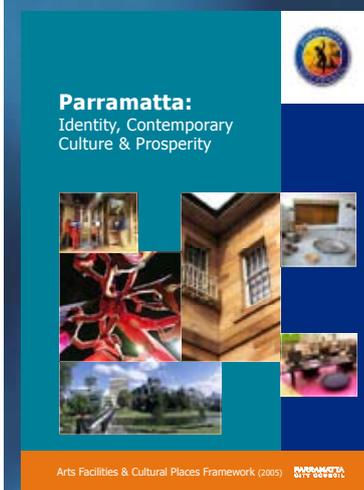
Parramatta has adopted an arts, culture and creativity-led strategy of reinvention.

Parramatta City Council’s *Arts and Culture Framework* (2005) uses a cluster model to map the “urban structure and placement of facilities in the city”. Cluster 1 Civic Place, conceived as a “Cultural Consumption and Meeting Place”, is linked to Cluster 2 “Cultural Production and Creative Industries” by the Church Street corridor of “Retail and Café Culture”, with Cluster 3 a “Long Term Creative Hub” in the North Parramatta/Cumberland Hospital zone (see map below).



Analysis of the Urban Structure and Placement Facilities in the City.
Image courtesy of Parramatta City Council.

It is stated that the Framework is “restricted to ‘arts facilities’ within the cultural context of Parramatta, Western Sydney, and the Greater Sydney area” (3), and its goal is “to promote and develop Parramatta as a cultural city of high standing” by means of revising its heritage identity, fostering creative industries, and creating “new cultural expressions” through a “synthesis of traditional and contemporary cultures” (18). Among the proposals are the creation of affordable working spaces for artists and the integration of library, gallery and museum developments in the major Civic Place project incorporating Church Street (25), but there is no mention of such concepts as the night-time economy (all references to the economic are in the context of creative industries) or to the concept of the 24-hour city that is frequently paired with it.



“You’ve still probably got the five largest cultural institutions in Australia within four or five kilometres of the CBD of Sydney. It’s time now that government looks a lot broader, particularly on population spread.”

Cultural Planner,
Parramatta City Council,
November 2007.

The night-time economy has been broadly identified as important to the growth of the city. In community and stakeholder forums for the *Dreaming Parramatta* Program and Summit in August 2005, for instance, “several residents and stakeholders mentioned that 24-hour activity is important to the prosperity of the city, as well as to its liveability”, envisaging a future “active nightlife and economy” (Parramatta City Council, 2006a: 23).

Parramatta-specific planning and policy issues, initiatives, development and management strategies of relevance to the night-time economy project include:

- Parramatta Artists’ Studios
- Urban Design Strategy and Framework
- People Centred Places Strategy
- Small Spaces Strategy
- Public Art Policy
- Creative Industry Clusters
- City Development Program
- Civic Improvement Plan
- Parramatta Sport and Recreation Plan
- Crime Prevention Plan

After-dark activities that take place in the central business district of any city influence the image and liveability of that city, and can also make valuable contributions to the local economy. Parramatta City Council has a role to play in promoting a night-time economy that is sustainable and inclusive. After-hours spaces should be safe, welcoming and vibrant, and accessible to a diverse range of people in a variety of different ways.

2. background & rationale

Development of the night-time economy

Since World War II, there have been major changes to the fabric of everyday life (Harvey, 1994) with relatively regimented lifestyles being challenged and sometimes replaced by new, flexible work and leisure arrangements and the return of inner-city living.

The deregulation of the labour market has progressively replaced day and shift work with multiple work rhythms which are task oriented, contractual and casual, producing new urban leisure and cultural needs and rhythms (Gregson *et al.*, 1999). The centre of cities are, concurrently, being redeveloped for housing, restaurants, clubs, hotels, coffee shops, retail outlets, theatres and recreational facilities (Stevenson, 1998). Indeed, these residential, cultural and entertainment districts are central elements of the establishment of the urban night-time economy.

As a cultural form, the night-time economy has become symbolic of a *new cosmopolitanism* that some commentators and researchers see as contrasting with the narrow conformity of its day-time predecessor (Hobbs *et al.*, 2000). These accounts may exaggerate the level of change and the overall newness of night-time city cultures and their characteristics. But it is evident that in Australia and elsewhere, the range of activities and experiences within the night-time economy are important in terms of the expression and development of urban lifestyles and city identity, as well as investment, employment and consumer spending. Furthermore, this urban night-time cultural economy and its local stimulation have been viewed as very successful mechanisms for revitalising towns and cities once dependent on manufacturing and heavy industry (Stevenson & Paton, 1999). Yet, despite the major social, cultural and economic potential of the night-time economy, it is a source of dispute in media discussions, policy debates, urban planning, policing and public administration, which oscillate between supporting the stimulation of the night-time economy and arguing for highly restrictive control of it.

In different permutations the night-time economy involves partnership, competition and negotiation between complex forces of multi-level government, private enterprise and community interest groups responding to the historical and structural transitions that have affected cities around the world since the 1980s (Heath & Strickland, 1997).

In public debates and policy-making there have been two main opposed ways of appraising the emergent night-time economy. The first position views it as a benign and even highly beneficial development that has the potential to arrest the decline of the inner city and to create new forms of public social exchange and democracy in regenerated urban space. This view has an obvious appeal to many planners, central governments, local councils and business interests. But the image has often diverged from the emerging reality as the centrality of licensed venues and alcohol consumption in many inner-city leisure zones contrasts sharply with notions of sophisticated urban living and social diversity.

In a second view, questions of social order, policing and crime prevention have come forward with increasingly urgent demands to combat anti-social behaviour and violence by young people engaged in collective public drinking and 'clubbing' (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002). This position can even dovetail with a wholly sceptical view that the night-time economy is an increasingly pernicious intrusion into city life that hosts a range of anti-social and criminal activities, such as disorder, vandalism, assaults and alcohol-related injuries, illicit drug dealing and public sex work. It is these issues that most concern local residents and divide the views of the media, officials and police whose place in maintaining public order has been partly usurped by the expansion of private police engaged in a range of 'bouncing' and security roles across the urban night-time economy (Hobbs *et al.*, 2000).



What does previous research, most of which has been outside Australia, tell us about the direction and implication of night-time economies in cities and regional areas?

Key implications from the literature

The bulk of the research literature on the night-time economy oscillates between two dominant views: that of stimulating night-time leisure cultures and facilities on the one hand, and controlling or regulating them on the other. Two main bodies of academic literature have been influential in explaining and informing both the development and regulation of the night-time economy – one from cultural planning and the other from crime prevention.

Cultural planning

According to cultural planning advocates, the successful facilitation of vibrant night-time economies and entertainment precincts could:

- Provide solutions to law and order problems;
- Develop cultural and community vitality;
- Rejuvenate depressed inner city precincts;
- Improve local economies (through tourism and employment growth); and
- Create more opportunities for the production and consumption of art and culture.

Attracting people to the reimaged city centre for a range of social and cultural practices is regarded as essential to balance disorderly night-time activity (see Landry *et al.*, 1995). It was in this context that the idea of the '24-hour' (Worpole, 1992) 'creative' (Landry, 2002) city gained currency.

The desire to overcome negative perceptions of public safety and encourage new night-time sociability partly modelled on European public nightlife, prompted a range of deindustrialising British cities in the 1990s to implement 24-hour creative city initiatives as central dimensions of their cultural revitalisation programmes (Landry, 2002).

In Australia, too, cultural planning strategies are being put together by many local governments to facilitate the creation of 'vibrant' urban centres that are attractive and accessible to all members of the local community during both the day and night (Stevenson, 2005).

Crime prevention

The crime prevention literature, however, usually regards the night-time economy as problematic and stresses issues of public order, safety and the apparent necessity of increased surveillance.

Crime data and statistics drawn from police and hospital reports have prominence as background material for local, state and national policy initiatives addressing problems in the night-time economy and prevention of public disorder, assaults and injuries (Briscoe & Donnelly, 2001; Finney, 2004). They are also the staple fare of local media stories about violent crime and anti-social behaviour that are often misleading or exaggerated.

The influential nature of this approach suggests that, despite the recent proliferation of night-time leisure options in urban settings, regulatory bodies remain preoccupied with problems resulting from socially entrenched cultural practices that revolve around alcohol consumption. Australian research and policy practice has tended to focus on:

- the nature of the relationship between alcohol use and public violence;
- the potential of server intervention strategies, local Liquor Accords; and
- venue 'hotspots' and stricter regulation of 'bouncers' (Tomsen & Homel, 1991; Homel & Tomsen, 1993; Homel *et al.*, 2001).

It is apparent that these different approaches can have an opposed and, therefore, confusing influence on public policy and debates about the night-time economy. The main issue, therefore, is how cultural planning and crime prevention concerns can be brought into alignment.

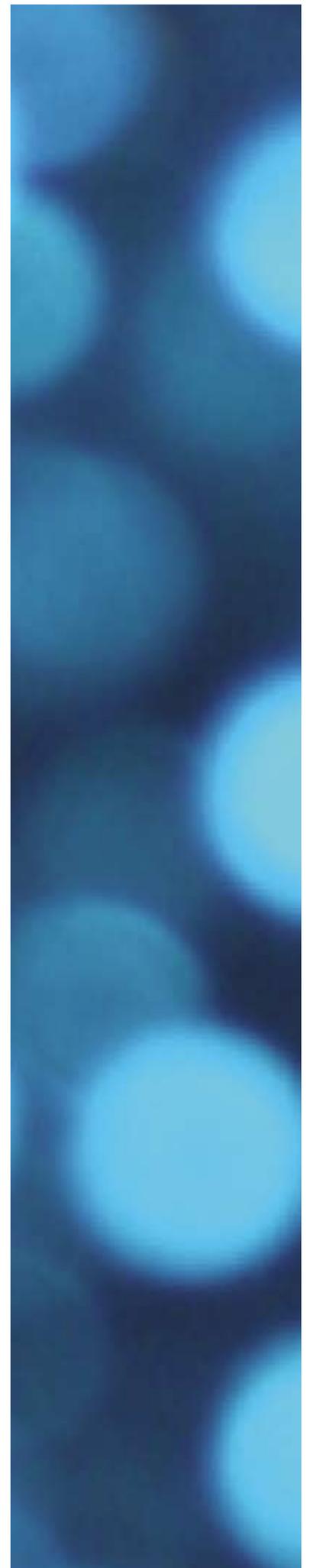
Stimulation and regulation

Little regard has been paid in discussions of the night-time economy to such factors as the democratic use of public space or to the rhythms of urban leisure cultures as they are played out in different parts of the city at different times of the day and night (Hayward, 2004).

The ideals of civic culture and public life at the heart of the cultural planning promotion of the night-time economy contrast starkly with the contemporary emergence of two (globalised) monocultures within many urban spaces (Stevenson, 2004). While there are calls to regulate one of these monocultures – that based on young people, alcohol consumption and disorder – the emergence of the other based on enclaves of middle class consumption and gentrified housing and its own patterns of social exclusion, homogeneity and intolerance has largely escaped critical scrutiny.

In particular, it is apparent that many young people and those of low incomes have been marginalised by night-time cultural economies built and planned exclusively around the extensive purchase of paid leisure, which is more pronounced in spheres of middle class consumption (White, 1993). In these circumstances, broader social diversity in participation can be seen as a threat to the security and safety of 'respectable' citizens. At the same time, in a night-time cultural economy of limited scope built around heavy group drinking in pubs and clubs and patronising fast food outlets, the attractions of a relaxed social atmosphere are monopolised by groups of young men (Tomsen, 2005).

Matters of participation and exclusion coalesce differently around issues of safety and fear in public space. Groups like gay men and other men repelled by scenarios of masculine aggression, many women (including lesbians), older people, and longstanding or new inner-city residents, may feel marginalised by this outcome. Appreciating this cultural complexity is important to the development of the night-time economy in all locations – not least the demographically diverse city of Parramatta.



3. the research process

Research phases & methods

This is a multi-method project incorporating several forms of data gathering. We compiled a data set of media, organisational, interview and observational material around a sample of the night-time economy of Parramatta's CBD. Basic statistical, content and discourse analyses were undertaken to identify and examine prominent features of Parramatta's night-time economy and the range of views that is held about it. A consultative group was formed comprising policy-makers and cultural planners. The group provided advice on key informants, facilitated access in the field, and afforded a ready feedback forum.

Interviews with key informants, documentary and official statistical analysis, and field observations were undertaken to identify and assess both the overt and subtle dimensions of the stimulation and control of the night-time economy.

The project involved four intersecting fields of information collection:

1. Document & policy analysis

To provide a detailed profile of the night-time economy we collated relevant media and public documents over the previous decade. Figures and information about economic activity, tourism, precinct and cultural plans, key events, injuries, assaults and disorder were sought from local business groups, Council officials, local police, licensing officials and contacts in the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

2. Semi-structured interviews with key informants

Interviews were conducted with key figures and stakeholders who have a significant role in relation to the planning, policy, management and debates relating to Parramatta's night-time economy and its associated activities. Selected business and venue operators, managers and employees, cultural planners, Council officials, Liquor Accord coordinators, and licensing police were asked for expert opinions or organisational and group perspectives.

3. Focus groups

Two focus groups were conducted with Parramatta residents. This group of informants was identified and recruited through Parramatta City Council's Residents' Panel, which currently comprises 2175 members who have volunteered to be involved in ongoing public consultations.

Research participants comprised a broad mix of participants with a recreational involvement in the night-time economy. Focus groups offered an open-response format where participants could discuss current policies concerning the regulation of leisure space, advantages and disadvantages of a 24-hour city, and issues of social inclusion and exclusion in the night-time economy.

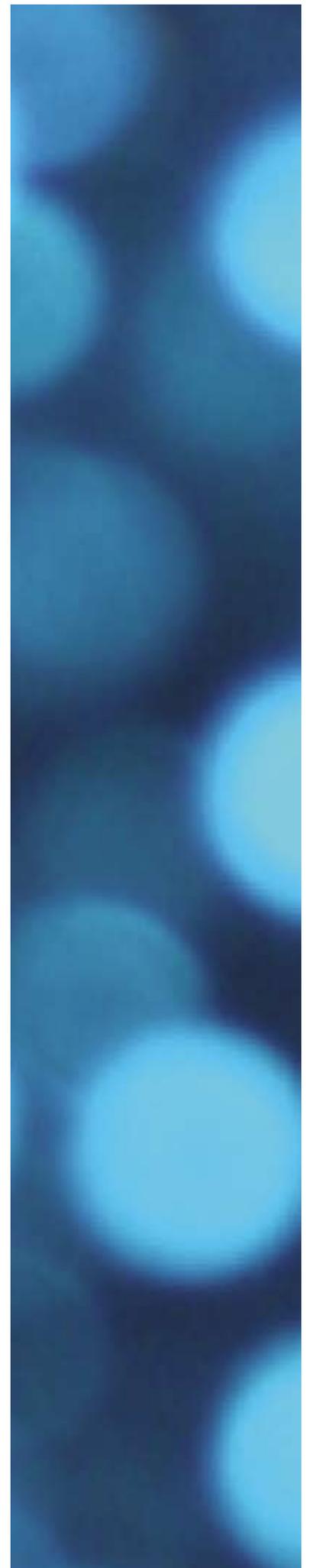
4. Observation

An ongoing series of direct observations was carried out at a range of times and days. This form of data collection brings the subject 'to life', providing a rich sense of the different cultures in the night-time economy, the range of activities and types of participation, enjoyment, civility and conflict. These observations give a more nuanced understanding of the links between pleasure and social disruption and can be cross-checked with information from key informants and other data sources. Most importantly, observations provide the local fine-grained *minutiae* of activities addressed in interviews and focus groups.

Analysis

The data from each stage of the research were compiled into an archive that cumulatively recorded results.

Initial analyses involved identifying themes and patterns by drawing upon existing literature and the conceptual framework of the project. As the research progressed final coding and discourse analysis was undertaken on the interview and focus group material and field notes. By identifying elements of discourses such as safety, diversity, inclusion and pleasure from interview material, the project gained an analytical understanding of the attractions, tensions and conflicts around night-time leisure and its regulation.



4. Parramatta's night-time economy

Overview

The following subsections elaborate a case study of Parramatta CBD's night-time economy in terms of:

- Dominant practices: what is happening?
- The spatial distribution of dominant practices: where is it happening?
- Participant profiling: who is involved?
- Dynamics of practices: size of groups, mobility and flows, inter- and intra-group interactions.
- Governance and regulation: signage and zones of illegality, visible police and private security practices.

Dominant practices

Parramatta has a limited night-time economy, operating in a relatively narrow corridor between the train line and the river, with Church Street acting as a thoroughfare. The earlier night-time (sometimes called the 'evening') restaurant economy tends to wane at around 10:30pm-11:00pm, with mainly middle-age, middle-class participants replaced by younger participants involved in activities organised more directly around alcohol consumption.

These activities are more intense in warmer months and on late week and weekend nights.

A key distinction exists between the evening economy (dominated by dining and featuring a greater participation of families) and the late-night economy (dominated by youth and featuring a heightened participation in alcohol-based leisure activities). The transition between these two phases of the night-time economy occurs at approximately 10pm on a Wednesday and Thursday evening and at 11pm on a Friday and Saturday evening. In the case of the latter, the night lasts long into the hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings, and even to Sunday lunch time.

Alfresco dining has been a success in Parramatta, with Church Street being the main dining hub and identified in the *Arts and Cultural Places Framework* (2005) as part of a "Retail and Café Culture" precinct. However, many comments in interviews and focus groups complained of a lack of a defined, vibrant café culture, while some noted the relative homogeneity of dining experiences along the Church Street strip. From a business perspective, one hotel operator commented that Parramatta's night-time economy was "very robust but at the moment fairly lineal". The clustering of activities around dining at the Victoria Road end of Church Street, then, was mainly seen as providing a critical mass of facilities but one characterised also by a certain 'sameness'.

It is possible that in the next few years a denser cluster of busy restaurants with longer hours of operation may ensue with the introduction of small bars legislation in New South Wales. Some local police sources have predicted that an increase in assaults and public disorder will follow such a change. Yet such an outcome would not be the inevitable result of a well-directed transition and re-direction of night-time drinking patterns.



Church Street pedestrian mall by day.

"Diversity is the key. There are a lot of pubs, basically the same [with] maybe a different flavour, but growth has been more of the same. I think a key thing that has come out of [our discussions] is, from the wine bar to a decent café kind of culture, just getting the breadth of diversity rather than greater numbers of the same thing."

Focus Group participant, January 2008.

Spatial distribution

The spatial organisation of the nightlife precinct is predominantly organised around Church Street, which hosts the majority of cafés and restaurants and is thus the site of the evening dining that bridges the day-time and night-time economies.

Church Street connects the major entertainment/leisure facilities of the shopping and nightlife precinct, and the Parramatta Stadium, and links them with infrastructural transport services such as the train station and bus interchange.

This spatial arrangement is effective in providing access to the nightlife precinct and produces a fairly high volume of pedestrian foot traffic through the café/restaurant strip. There is, however, a major drop-off in pedestrian activity only a short distance from the Church Street thoroughfare.

This spatial organisation has consequences for the transition to the alcohol-based, late-night economy. The key late-night venues are rather sparsely located. Among the largest of these, there is one positioned on Church Street (OneWorldSports), one (the Roxy) just off Church Street, and the third (PJ Gallagher's) positioned a substantial distance away on the other side of the railway line.

In comparison to the degree of lighting and the amount of pedestrian presence within Church Street during the evening dining period, these areas between key late-night venues can be considered as rather desolate. This circumstance increases feelings of unease and perceptions of risk, as well as increasing the likelihood of anti-social behaviour within these 'in-between zones'. Observational evidence of such behaviour includes vandalism and public urination on main streets that are not well-lit or populated. Several people moving through these largely deserted areas, particularly young women, displayed noticeable agitation or anxiety in relation to strangers in close proximity. The lack of effective lighting and a clearly established thoroughfare between PJ Gallagher's and either the Roxy or Church Street means that the number of possible pathways between these venues dissipate pedestrian traffic, thus minimising the potential benefits of natural surveillance.

There is a clear disconnection between the Church Street pedestrian mall and the 24-hour Church Street licensed premises. The pedestrianised section of Church Street is not really set up as a late-night dining or entertainment region, so in terms of night-time space it effectively becomes a thoroughfare between two more active areas of the CBD. On one side there is the space around the train station and the bus interchange, and on the other side the part of Church Street that is more active and open to vehicular traffic.

In terms of perceptions of safety the mall can be classified as a 'fear spot' for women, dominated by the passage of people from the station to pubs further down the street that become the epicentre of night-time activity. Church Street essentially acts as a transitional space and thoroughfare, evidenced, for example, in observing the large flow-through of football supporters after a Sydney Football Club game from one pole (the stadium) to another (the station). There were few apparent opportunities or efforts to encourage this large crowd to linger in Parramatta and participate in its night-time economy. Noticeably, the only 24-hour licensed premises in the area, OneWorldSports, did not attract visitors despite their affinity with the culture of sport.



Church Street pedestrian mall by night.

"From a business perspective I find it robust, there's a fairly sustainable late night economy. As far as the social aspect goes, I see it again as fairly lineal: the people who come out and use the economy post 8, 9, 10pm are predominantly 18-35 year olds."

Hotel Operator,
February 2008.



Church Street pedestrian mall following Sydney FC game, April 2007.

“We go down there [to the river] for the Thai festival, for all the festivals Parramatta Council puts on. If there’s any family activity we’re going to be part of it. The whole strip down there is just beautiful and so peaceful with the sunsets and all the lights that they’ve had on throughout the January festival. It was actually quite surprising to see how many more people are coming through.”

Focus Group participant, January 2008.

It is apparent that public spaces, especially parks and small urban precincts, are subordinated by the more commercialised, privatised spaces in Parramatta’s night-time economy. Several residents in the focus groups, especially those more likely to be involved in evening economy activities, felt that public space was under-utilised at night and would benefit from publicly provided leisure events and activities. The Church Street Mall (and civic space in general) was believed to have considerable potential for outdoor entertainment and activity that could animate the ‘dead spots’ within the after-dark pedestrianised zone. For example, night markets were mentioned in one focus group as having some appeal, as well as subsidised or free leisure centre provision.

Other under-utilised areas that had potential for the development of Parramatta’s night-time economy were identified, especially by the river, and including the Brandsmart development (now the subject of a comprehensive urban design strategy called ‘Riverbank’). The Parramatta River and environs was regarded as a considerable leisure asset, but one that was largely abandoned at night.

In contrast to under-utilised public assets, one area was considered ‘over-utilised’ by several residents within both the day-time and night-time economies. Westfield’s role as an attractor, and its effect on surrounding businesses and activities, was regarded by many as dominant. The ‘magnetic’ impact of the Westfield complex was felt by many of those consulted to lead to their ‘disappearance’ from the Parramatta streetscape, with a consequently negative impact on the more diversified and spatially dispersed elements of its night-time economy.

Participants

It was frequently observed that there was a lack of a ‘circuit’, being a well-established string of licensed venues that tends to organise pedestrian flows within the night-time economy. At first, the researchers surmised that this was a result of the lack of a clearly established linking route – usually dictated through lighting and other night-time placemaking measures. However, after repeated observations it became clear that intermingling between patrons of the key venues was very limited. Of course, there is some movement of consumers between pubs and clubs, but the majority of patrons seemed to display a high degree of venue loyalty. Any future development of a regular flow between licensed venues should ensure that this does not produce a mobile concentration or ‘pub crawl’ of aggressive, rowdy, and intoxicated drinkers.

Associated with this observation was an indication of ethnic/cultural/social patterning regarding the key sites. PJ Gallagher’s, unsurprisingly perhaps given its Irish theming, is dominated by an Anglo Celtic ethnic mix and also a slightly older age cohort. The Roxy is associated with a predominantly younger patron mix and plays host to the majority of Asian and Middle Eastern ethnicities, while an Asian and Polynesian clientele is predominantly found within OneWorldSports. While in no way absolute or determining, the ethnic/age differentiation of venues was clearly observable, and goes some way to explaining the lack of a ‘circuit’ and the absence of high pedestrian flows between the key late-night licensed venues.

Pedestrian activity in Parramatta at night is zone-related and, as noted earlier, there is not a great deal of pedestrian flow between different sites of consumption and activity. There are limited connections and interactions between different precincts in both a conceptual and practical sense. More generally, residents in the focus groups noted a tendency in Parramatta towards single, focused leisure activity, with little in the way of multi-directional flow between spaces and activities, and few opportunities for spontaneity.

In discussions with the researchers, community representatives saw wholly business-oriented, consumption-based understandings of the night-time economy as problematic, and raised issues around marginalised or 'invisible' communities and people in Parramatta at night, specifically:

- **Homelessness.** A significant population of homeless people exists in Parramatta with increasingly complex needs. With city redevelopment initiatives, especially around Civic Place, concern was expressed as to space available for homeless and at-risk groups. Respondents pointed out that there is a "fairly high" number of "economically marginalised" people on the streets mostly located in and around the pedestrianised mall on Church Street and surrounding side streets. Whether they are all homeless is hard to judge, although from the observations some clearly were. The proximity of homelessness and/or economic marginalisation and gentrified, consumption-based nightlife precincts (public and private space) raises questions for Council about appropriate strategies for inclusiveness and catering to the needs of diverse constituencies.
- **Prostitution.** The place of sex work and the sex industry in the mainstream night-time economy, including the co-existence of home-based and legal brothels and sex shops in Church Street, was briefly raised in community consultations. Sex work and the night-time economy are consistently connected throughout the world, and can be a source of tension between residents and the providers of sexual services.
- **A "family friendly" night-time economy.** This concept was favoured by those residents with children, and especially with regard to the evening. However, alcohol practices were seen to be unsuitable for families to witness, leading to calls for non-commercial or all-ages leisure provision.
- **Ageing population.** The over 55s demographic group is increasing in significance. Its manifestation in the form of consumers with increasing disposable income is of direct importance to the development of the night-time economy (for example, through patronage of the Riverside Theatres, high-end dining, and so on). Managing and integrating night-time economy spaces by different age cohorts – for example, under 25s and over 55s – is essential to create and maintain the dynamism and complexity that Parramatta seeks in its developing night-time economy.
- **Diversity and safety.** The night-time economy is conceived as a democratic space in which diverse consumers, participants and those 'just passing through' are able to intermingle and interact freely in a safe and inclusive manner. However, marginalised groups can perceive the night-time economy as threatening. For example, members of gay and lesbian communities often feel at risk of hostility or violence based on their sexuality. People below the legal drinking age, especially those 'at risk', are likely to find the night-time economy inaccessible and unwelcoming. Inclusivity of spaces, venues and activities in the night-time economy is an important goal if Parramatta is to go beyond its currently rather segmented and socio-culturally restrictive nightlife.

These areas of concern are clearly not comprehensive. For example, issues of race and ethnicity, including those involving indigenous people, were not emphasised in the consultations, which does not mean that they may not be significant within the experience of the night-time economy. During an observation, for example, two police officers casually observed that there were problems with and between groups of young men of various ethnic backgrounds (see below). The main point here is that the night-time economy is not a single entity with a clear structure and a consistent policy prescription in order to cater to need. Instead, it is a context in which different interest groups, perhaps with incommensurate needs, have a stake. Policies and practices addressing the night-time economy, therefore, require a high level of flexibility and subtlety, and require constant review.

"Most kids have nothing to do. They're bored. There's the [Riverside] theatre but teenagers are not going to go for that, and then way up here [at Westfields] is the cinema. There's that section of Church Street, where you have the restaurants and Brandsmart, but it's a wasteland from there to here. If you come out of the cinema and you're 15 years old and you're not going to go to a sit down meal what else can you do there? Absolutely nothing."

Focus Group participant,
January 2008

"To me safety issues aren't around time of day or time of night. You know my community is the gay and lesbian community, so if we get harassed it's about our identity."

Focus Group participant,
January 2008.

“You need to open the place up because we’re not using it . . . people just don’t go out during the night because there are huge no-go zones.”

Focus Group participant, January 2008.

Dynamics of practices

There is a clear disconnection between the parts of the city that are considered central in the day-time and those places that are dominant in the night-time economy. We are not seeing the same places transformed in time from day to night, but instead, the epicentres of activity shift from day to night.

Car culture and car dependency in Parramatta has a bearing on choice of night-time activity. Cars came up in two contexts in the research: first, the practice of car ‘hoons’ (as they were routinely described in the focus groups) driving in hotted-up cars with loud sound systems through the Church Street open air eating strip. This was not seen as a major problem in the focus groups, though, as car culture is widely seen as “synonymous with Parramatta”, and the practice as a familiar aspect of its urban fabric. Second, the large-scale reliance on cars when visiting Parramatta at night was seen as limiting the range of night-time activities by encouraging a focus on a single purpose trip, as close to the car as possible, with immediate departure at the activity’s conclusion (for example, having a meal or seeing a film). Availability of car parking was also discussed as a factor in dictating restaurant choice. Car reliance also favoured use of the Westfield Mall, with its large car parking space provided at low or no cost depending on the length of stay.

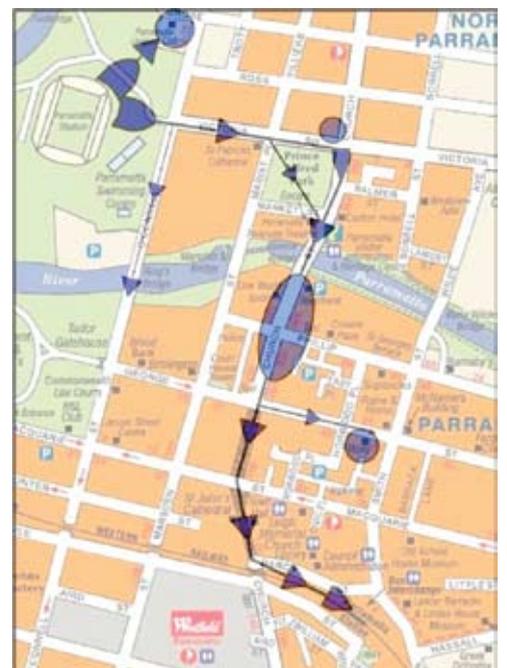
While there is a significant transport hub and a range of transport options available, there were negative comments in focus groups and interviews about the reach and timetabling of buses; lack of a comprehensive shuttle service after dark servicing key venues; and over-reliance on cars. The issue of dispersal is of particular importance here, with a substantial reliance on taxis requiring both the provision of adequate numbers of cabs and supervision of the taxi queue ‘flash points’.

Site Study: pedestrian flows following a major sporting event

The map of the Parramatta CBD (right) represents pedestrian flows away from a major sporting event held at Parramatta Stadium (Parramatta Eels versus Cronulla Sharks, September 2007).

The movements depicted in the map are limited to a specific time and place, nonetheless, the behaviour and mobility of pedestrians is logical given the spatial distribution of commercial venues and infrastructure within the Parramatta CBD nightlife precinct. Pedestrian flows observed here approximate the typical behaviours of participants following sporting events of this nature. Similar flows were documented on a separate occasion following a Sydney Football Club game (Asian Champions League) at the Parramatta Stadium in April 2007.

Arrows indicate the directions in which pedestrians travelled. The size of the arrow represents the volume of the flow. The circles and the dominant ellipse centred on the Church Street restaurant/bar strip identify sites where pedestrians stopped or lingered. The map indicates a number of specific



dimensions of the movement of people through the Parramatta nightlife precinct. Movement away from the stadium was in three major directions:

1. The most voluminous being towards the Leagues Club, but equally significant was a movement down Victoria Road towards the nightlife precinct. A smaller number of pedestrians moved down O'Connell Street and played no further part in area's nightlife.
2. A small subsection of the pedestrian flow cut through Prince Alfred Park. Given that pedestrians, all things being equal, tend towards taking the most direct route to their destination, it can be inferred that the lack of adequate lighting and an associated sense of risk in the Park is responsible for the majority of pedestrian actively taking the longer, but more appropriately illuminated, way around.
3. The major sites constituting destination nodes for the pedestrian flow were the following:
 - McDonalds on the corner of Victoria Road and Church Street was well patronised, indicating a desire for food following major sports events that can be leveraged more efficiently by the restaurants and cafés of Church Street through marketing and promotion at the sports events hosted by the stadium.
 - A small number of pedestrians diverted from the major flow towards the Roxy, while the majority of pedestrians moved towards the train station.
 - The primary destination for pedestrians was indeed the Church Street area, signifying a strong relationship between stadium patrons, commercial venues at the centre of the nightlife precinct, and also the positive attributes of the spatial arrangement of the nightlife precinct that acts to 'funnel' people towards the evening dining and late-opening venues.

Governance and regulation

With regard to governance, on the first night of observation in April 2007 there was a heightened, conspicuous police presence following the aforementioned football game. In a casual conversation, two police officers mentioned problems involving Polynesian and Lebanese young men, describing forms of 'hyper-masculinity' and performance of male bonding that sometimes could escalate into fights. Yet they were generally satisfied with the demarcation of responsibility for governance, with in-house control being the province of private security, and police concentrating on outdoor spaces, especially those beyond the immediate environs of licensed premises (unless called).

There was a highly mobile street presence of police in cars, on bikes and on foot alongside a police van parked in the Church Street pedestrian mall on Friday and Saturday nights. Little serious violence was observed in this location, perhaps due to this conspicuous police presence, although the causal deterrent effect can only be assumed. Infrequent violence was observed around the entrances to key venues, including PJ Gallagher's. On the observed occasions altercations between patrons were quickly controlled by the extensive private security working at each of the key venues. On only two occasions was the violence sufficient to warrant police involvement during the observations. The first took place at PJ Gallagher's, and the second outside Parramatta Leagues Club following a rugby league game. Both resulted in an individual being taken into custody. In informal discussions police officers 'on the beat' stated that overall Parramatta was not particularly problematic in terms of alcohol-related violence or disorder.

Private security tended to deal with the majority of incidents 'in house'. Thus, this aspect of Parramatta's night-time economy policing pattern is consistent with that described by Hobbs *et al.* (2003) in Britain, with private security staff, who far outnumber the public police force, assuming primary (at least initial) responsibility for the physical maintenance of order.

Assumptions concerning wide danger on the streets of Parramatta at night are largely a case of (mis)perception or, at least, of exaggeration of risk. Significant opportunities thereby exist for the management of participant perceptions. Claims in some media, especially local (Baker, 2007),





Parramatta City Council signage, Church Street pedestrian mall, April 2007.

“The only violence that I’ve experienced was more related to when people walk home.”

Focus Group participant, January 2008.

that Parramatta has one of the most dangerous night-time economies in the state, therefore, are likely to have a self-fulfilling effect of affixing a violent general stigma to the city.

Much media discussion of violence and danger in Parramatta’s night-time economy is alarmist, confuses figures or does not acknowledge problems with defining regions, and it also wrongly suggests or implies a shared level of risk by all people in all locations throughout the night. In fact, it is fair to say that the greatest danger of all is probably presented to the heavily intoxicated patrons of a small number of late-night venues.

Parramatta’s night-time economy has a concentration of disorder and drinking violence around a small number of venues. These operate very late at night and have all qualified as ‘high level’ problem premises under police use of the so-called ‘linking system’. While the linking system reports are problematic in the sense that high volume premises will more readily be classified as high level and the system itself may create a disincentive to report all incidents, the reality is that assaults and issues do arise from this small cluster of very late-night venues, justifying police interest, supervision of staff and security, refusals of entry, and enforcement of responsible service of alcohol practices.

There is a potential for night-time placemaking exercises to increase perceptions of safety in certain sites. The newly re-opened section of Church Street displays the types of lighting that create a feeling of safety and a sense of civic space. The pedestrianised section of Church Street could produce benefits if it was established as a night-specific civic space simultaneously creating a non-commercial space for the experience of nightlife, and ameliorating fears associated with a significant ‘black spot’ in the city’s pedestrian flow lines.

Indeed, there is a noticeable absence of a coherent and integrated night-specific placemaking strategy in Parramatta. Signage and street furniture are clearly day-centric in design – with Parramatta City signage unlit and thus civic sites ‘unbranded’. Street furniture, particularly in the pedestrianised mall, is also situated in either unlit spaces or at unappealing sites (directly adjacent to the road, for example). The same is true of the lighting in the Prince Alfred Park around the Gazebo and main bisecting pathway.

The consequences of the lack of an integrated night-specific theming are several. First, the lighting and amenity that exist are the outcomes of diverse and competing commercial interests, each venue or establishment concerned only with the appeal and amenity concerning their own small space. Thus Parramatta City Council seems to be missing out on the opportunity to establish the nightlife precinct as a uniquely branded and unified leisure site. Second, the civic spaces (Church Street pedestrian mall, Prince Alfred Park) become thoroughfares at night with people seeking to pass hurriedly through them rather than spend time within them. This pattern of use and movement reduces the likelihood of arts/culture based activities, so encouraging an even greater focus on the commercial spaces of the precinct, and the alcohol-focused consumption underpinning these venues.

Safety and risk issues were priority discussion areas across both focus groups. While there was some tendency to emphasise personal or individual safety, especially in relation to perceived ‘no-go’ zones at night (civic spaces such as Church Street pedestrian mall and the underpass near the station were singled out here), there were broader comments on community-based safety issues, specifically with respect to the gay and lesbian community, young people and families, and the need for inclusive community capacity building remedies in concert with crime prevention initiatives.

Problems were identified with the dissemination of information about Council initiatives, and the role of Parramatta City Council in managing and developing the night-time economy. A reimaged Parramatta, it was remarked, required marketing, publicity and information flows to residents

and outside Parramatta LGA. This would require greater cooperation between Council and local business in the provision, marketing and promotion of innovative activities, such as under-age events and specialist cultural offerings (for example, the more effective use of the landmark Roxy venue and its large auditorium for film festivals, exhibitions and so on).

Thus, governance and regulation is not only about matters of control, but also planning and design that will enable Parramatta's night-time economy to diversify in terms of spaces, activities and participants.



Parramatta City Council signage, Church Street pedestrian mall, April 2007.

“What I’ve seen in other cities [around the world] is that where you have a good mix of the generations is where [the night-time economy] tends to work well.”

Focus Group participant, January 2008.

5. discussion

City culture

How can culture expand the night-time leisure dimension of Parramatta's city centre?

Parramatta City Council's uptake of cultural policies in the late 1990s and into the 2000s was very much in line with worldwide urban policy trends which sought to situate culture at the heart of efforts to stimulate new forms of public sociality and inclusion in regenerated urban space.

Parramatta City Council's first *Arts and Cultural Plan* (2000) recognised that there was a lack of publicly provided cultural facilities and recreational opportunities in the LGA. Parramatta residents had historically relied on community clubs (many of these sports-based) for cultural interaction. Over the last three years, under the current *Arts and Cultural Facilities Framework* (2005), there has been a sustained effort to offer different experiences for the broader community to be involved in arts and cultural projects. Such initiatives have included strategies to broaden audience capacity and activate participation in the public domain through, for example, Sydney Festival events, as well as the seeding of more grassroots cultural and artistic activity through the Parramatta Artists Studios.

Parramatta has started to integrate economic and cultural strategies for "achieving the creative city", although it has an undeveloped sense of the role of the night-time economy within that context. Recent UK studies envisage the night-time economy as part of a broader leisure and cultural economy whose goals should be to:

- support a diversity of attractions
- appeal to a diversity of participants
- establish a balance of uses
- encourage flexible spaces
- enhance cultural vitality
- boost safety and security
- improve the environment.

The character of the night-time economy and its attraction to different types of people will differ across metropolitan and regional towns and cities depending on such variables as catchment area, environment, safety, and infrastructure.

A sustainable and diverse night-time economy might be a function of a range of previously competing strategies. As this study has made clear, the night-time economy is principally envisaged as consumption-based. The consumption of a range of leisure, entertainment and cultural activities and experiences in the night-time economy will be an expression of lifestyle and identity. But the night-time economy and the practices of nightlife are not restricted to the cultures of consumption that dominate it.

Some focus group participants in our study expressed fears about licensed venues and alcohol consumption dominating Parramatta's night-time economy. This raises questions about any ongoing liberalisation of drinking venues. The British experience in the last decade has been that a radical de-regulation of public drinking has been a problematic 'quick fix' to build up local night-time economies and that a large number of cities and localities now live with the negative consequences of saturation from drinking venues and associated problems (Hayward & Hobbs, 2007).

Acknowledging that Parramatta does not have a static demography, several respondents in interviews and focus groups were concerned about social and economic inequities being aggravated by economic/consumption-based models of night-time culture.

There is a general awareness of, and receptiveness to, Council's efforts to change the profile of Parramatta, although some residents had an unrealistic view of Council's resources and powers. But our consultations uncovered tensions around the definition of 'culture', and how inclusive and accessible arts and cultural facilities, such as those associated with the Civic Place redevelopment, will be. Some respondents expressed the view that high-brow culture and art forms were out of place in Parramatta. In many ways Parramatta's current facilities and services operate within time and spatial regimes which may not adequately cater to changing lifestyles and needs of its residents and prospective visitors.

Formal cultural provision, through major cultural and sporting events, is one way of reaching a broader demographic and of catering for those who are currently marginalised from cultural participation at night, such as young people. Cultural infrastructure will include the usual line-up of bars, clubs, cafés and pubs on the one hand, and on the other cultural events and festivals, community groups, and evening classes. For policy makers, it is important to balance the social, cultural and economic forces behind the night-time economy.

Safety & diversity

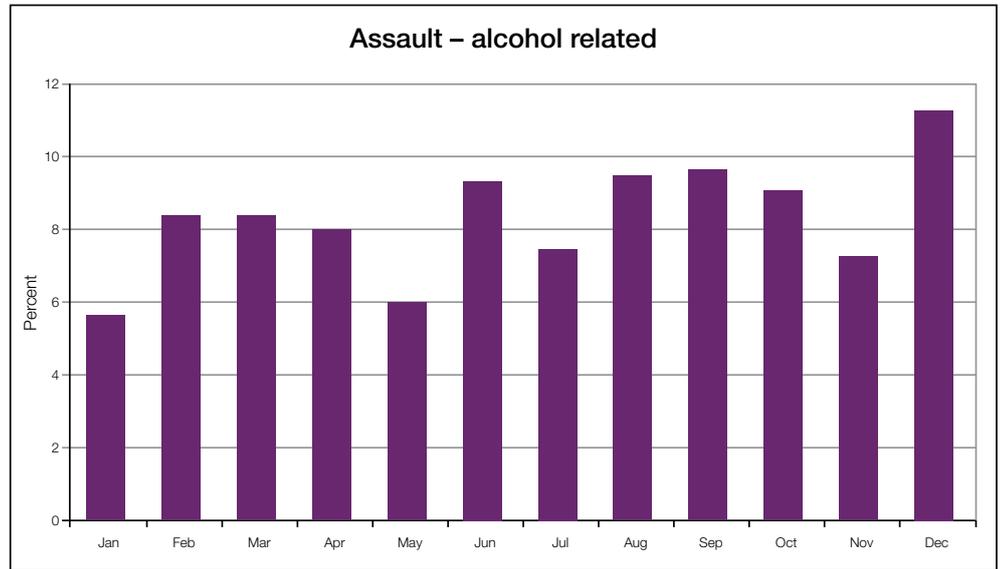
What style of regulation is most successful at ensuring safety and diversity and minimising conflict between different business and social interests?

Parramatta is a mid-range area in NSW for most crime including domestic and non-domestic violence. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) ranks Parramatta at 54 out of a total 143 LGAs across NSW in 2007. Until a few years ago, Parramatta LGA ranking was in the 60s. It is not certain if this will be a long term trend but there must be some caution about the drift upwards in the list.

Both recorded domestic and non-domestic violence are rising as a five year trend. The following graph, indicating seasonal variations in Parramatta, is surprising as these trends do not conform so fully to an expected high in summer and low in winter cycle. By contrast, times of violence offences that rise late in the week and the weekend and occur late or very late at night are to be expected (see graph overleaf). Nevertheless, it is clear from the data that there is a general relationship between violence, leisure and socialising and, particularly between socialising and heavy drinking.

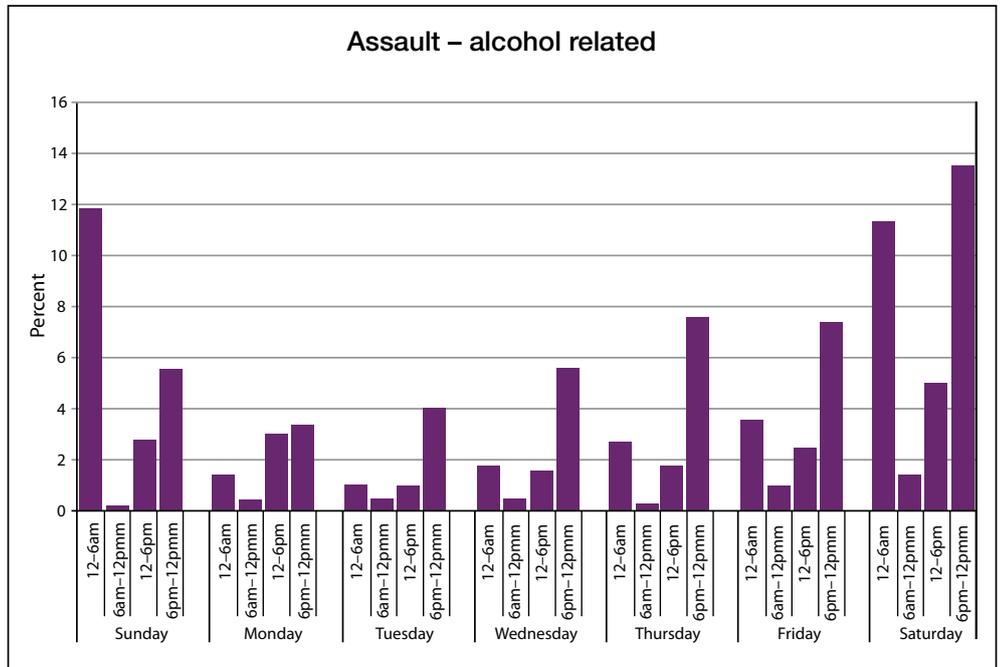


Proportion of alcohol related incidents by month



Source: BOCSAR Local Government Area Crime Report Parramatta 2006

Proportion of alcohol related incidents by time of day and day of week

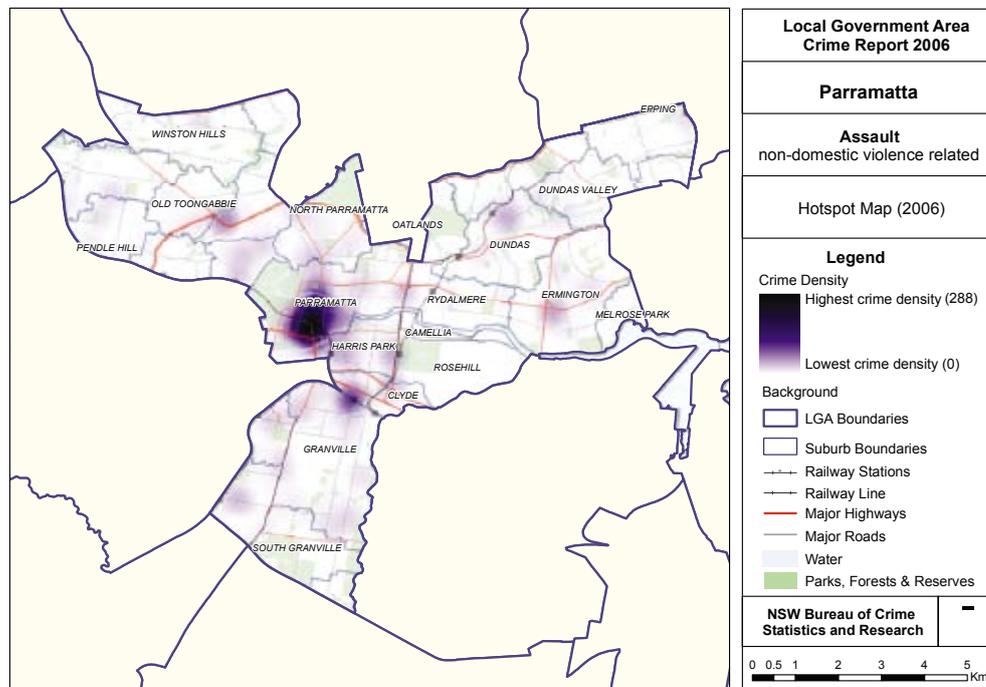


Source: BOCSAR Local Government Area Crime Report Parramatta 2006

BOCSAR mapping of crime by counting geo-coded criminal incidents suggests that residential crime (including most domestic violence) is concentrated in a number of 'hotspots' around the LGA, particularly just south of the Parramatta CBD.

The following BOCSAR map depicting concentrations of non-domestic violence-related assault incidents shows a very dense concentration of such assaults around the CBD. The public information does not link this density in a direct way to any specific streets or premises, but it seems most likely that these are heavily focused within and around the drinking venues clustered in parts of the CBD.

Hotspot map for non-domestic violence related assault incidents



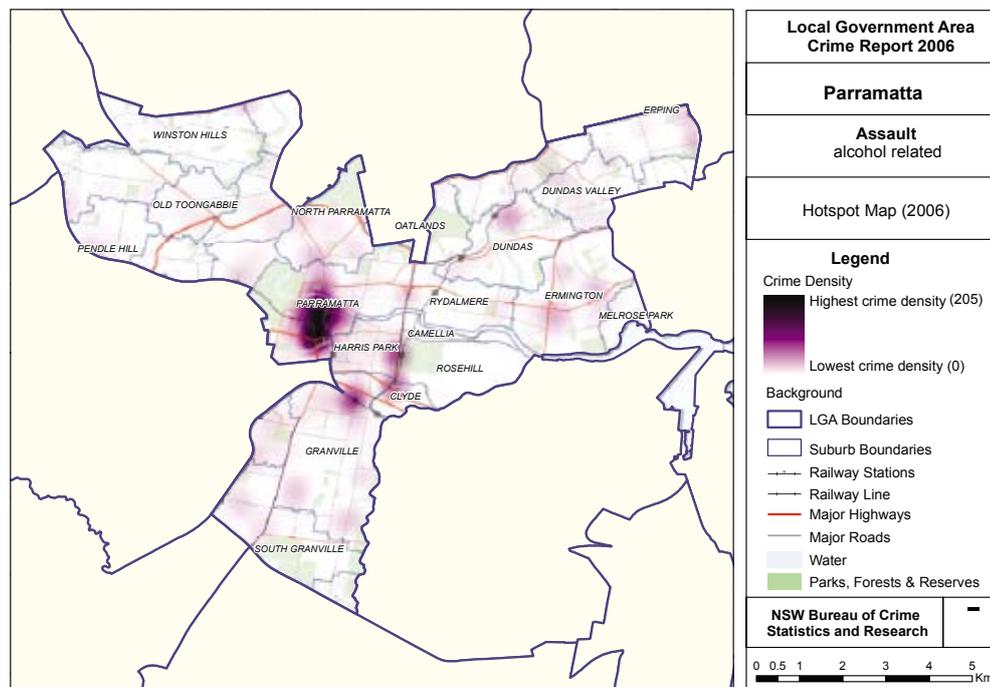
Source: BOCSAR Local Government Area Crime Report Parramatta 2006

In a breakdown of selected offences by premises type, BOCSAR data show 163 assaults on 'licensed premises' and a larger number occurring in 'outdoor/public space'. Yet the second category does probably include a large number of incidents involving people patronising licensed premises but not physically within them. 31.6% of non-domestic assaults in the LGA are recorded as alcohol-related and, as noted above, most of these are clustered around the CBD. It is generally accepted among criminologists that police records underestimate the relationship of assaultive crime to drinking. This will arise through such factors as doubt about whether or not victims, perpetrators or both have been drinking, been drinking a little or appear very intoxicated. Confusion about whether or not attacks in or near licensed premises that are part of the social process of collective public drinking but where nobody is drinking or drunk (for example, these could include assaults that result from aggression by security and venue staff) also occurs here.

There would seem to be some disjuncture between the broader reality and the perception of alcohol-related violence in Parramatta. In the focus groups there were limited experiential accounts of violence on the streets of Parramatta, but some discussion of anti-social behaviour especially in the North Parramatta "zone" around the Royal Oak Hotel, McDonalds and Prince Alfred Park. There was no discussion of ethnic-based crime or gang-related violence. The only demographic group singled out for substantive discussion was marginalised 'youth' – in the context of drug and alcohol use, and the lack of resources and community facilities to cater to youth (and not just after dark). However, fear of crime was a dominant theme of the participants in the focus groups.

The issue of fear of crime and alleviating fear is not quite the same thing as preventing actual victimisation from attacks. Authorities do have a responsibility to assure members of the public regarding perceived dangers of public space. At the same time, serious victimisation from drinking-related assaults is probably most heavily concentrated among less socially respected patrons of late night drinking venues, especially the small number that operate well into the early morning. If this occurs away from most citizens they may not feel a significant sense of threat but the violence is still problematic and sometimes extreme. As in many other places a significant number of homicides in the Parramatta LGA occur in or around licensed premises.

Hotspot map for alcohol related assault incidents



Source: BOCSAR Local Government Area Crime Report Parramatta 2006

There is an ambiguity, then, about the 'natural surveillance' idea of combating empty spaces by encouraging more people to pass through them. Fear will only be minimised rather than increased according to who is using the space and for what. If there is an increase in patronage of venues structured around very heavy ('binge') late-night drinking, a much greater sense of fear will follow increased numbers of people milling about at night.

Our research finds a surprising lack of formal liaison between emergency staff of local hospitals (where the victims of the worst assaults presumably arrive in significant numbers), police and other authorities, in the sense that this could be a link which more systematically records patterns and trends in emergency treatment relating to drinking and night-time leisure.

The most successful forms of regulation which will contribute to a safer night-time economy in Parramatta will involve a combination of:

- committed policing;
- adequate use and supervision of private security (including police checks to drive out inappropriate guards);
- a mix of different types of people (not just large and imposing looking males) as security officers;
- strict adherence to responsible service of alcohol practices; and
- close liaison between licensing police and the operators of all venues.

It would be a leading initiative if local licensing police established a close relationship with local hospital casualty staff to extract accurate details about patterns, trends, locations of violence, and victim numbers and characteristics. This requires compilation of detailed data and going beyond the orthodox practice of hospital staff reporting to police what they judge to be evidence of serious crimes. Knowledge of injuries and assaults derived from hospital records will cancel out some of the gaps in understanding that are due to reporting issues and disincentives to involving police that derive from the linking system.

Licensing police suggest that it is very late night venues that are the main problem – and that in recent years this has meant more pressure on licensing police in Parramatta. In their view, the ‘24-hour’ night-time concept is untenable, and all-night venues should be shut (by 3am, for example) for a block of several hours at least until the early morning. Recent moves by Parramatta City Council to extend alcohol-free zones in the CBD have been endorsed by licensing police as an amenity in the interests of the public domain (Bevin, 2008).

The licensing police are also very sceptical about the impact of small bars legislation. They believe that the legislation will have a pernicious impact, resulting in a larger number of intoxicated people in a plethora of new drinking locations (established premises, new small bars, and bars functioning as pseudo restaurants). This is a pessimistic view but, if correct, the police anticipate a significant rise in night-time economy drinking problems in the next few years. Our research would indicate, however, that this scenario is not inevitable and that any changes to Parramatta’s night-time economy in the wake of legislative change will depend a great deal on planning and effective regulation. However, it may be the case that police objection to the operation of very late-night venues has some empirical support, and consequently any future expansion of the number of these licensed venues could prove detrimental to Parramatta’s civic life.

Sport & leisure

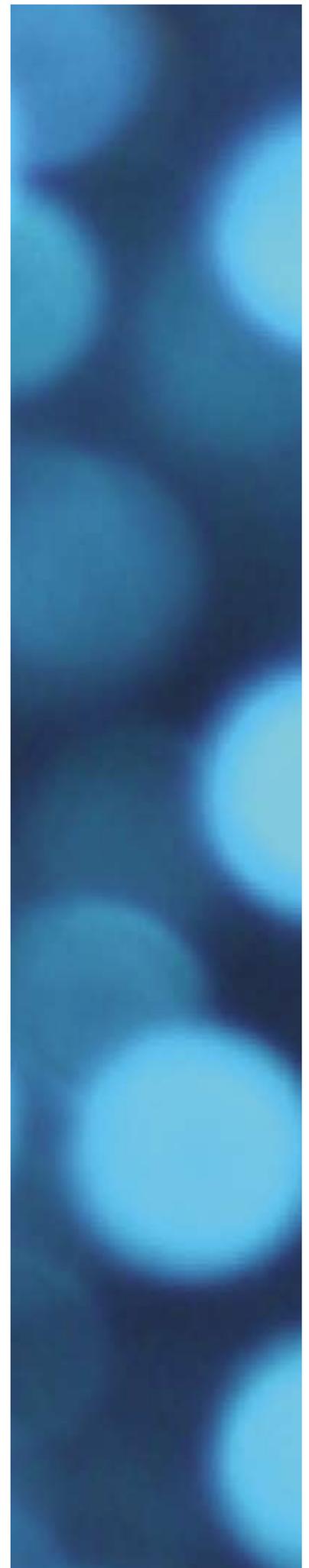
What role can sport play in the development of Parramatta’s night-time economy?

Parramatta’s cultural planning has concentrated mainly on elements of ‘café society’ and the visual and performing arts. Broadening the concept of culture to embrace sport, exercise and related activities – including spectatorship – can stimulate the night-time economy in ways that attract visitors and cater to the interests and needs of local residents.

As noted in the Introduction, Parramatta City Council’s *Arts Facilities and Cultural Places Framework* (2005) is “restricted to ‘arts facilities’ within the cultural context of Parramatta, Western Sydney, and the Greater Sydney area” (3), and its goal is “to promote & develop Parramatta as a cultural city of high standing” by means of revising its heritage identity, fostering creative industries, and creating “new cultural expressions” through a “synthesis of traditional & contemporary cultures” (18). Important though these proposals are, especially in developing anchor cultural institutions connecting library, gallery and museum sites in Civic Place and Church Street, they hinge on a rather traditional notion of culture as art. The night-time economy or the 24-hour city and their broad cultural dimensions are not mentioned. Outdoor sport and leisure is not mentioned, except briefly with regard to animation within parks.

Similarly, Parramatta City Council’s *Sport and Recreation Plan 2005-2010* (Stratcorp Consulting, 2005) is little concerned with culture and cultural activity, except in the sense of multicultural/ethnic demographic user groups. As with the *Arts Facilities and Cultural Places Framework*, art, creativity and culture are severed from sport and recreation. Furthermore, neither framework nor plan directly ‘speaks to’ Council’s promotion of Parramatta’s ‘24-hour economy’, which is found under ‘Business’ on its website, and bearing the statement:

While Parramatta is at its busiest between the hours of 8am to 6pm, its after-hours economy is quickly catching up. The cultural, entertainment and dining capitol [sic] of central Sydney, Parramatta’s rich diversity comes to the forefront after the office doors close for the day. (Parramatta City Council, 2006c)



“We would definitely like to be part of the change that is happening around here, and you know if there were certain types of events that the Council is trying to attract because it was more related to an image they were trying to create or construct, we would be happy to consider that. But we can only be proactive to a certain point.”

Parramatta Stadium employee,
October 2007

Instead of providing an integrated cultural picture of Parramatta before and after dark, individual links to ‘Cafes and restaurants’, ‘Retail shopping’, ‘Arts & entertainment’, ‘Heritage tourism’ and ‘Sport and recreation’ tend to reinforce the substantial, single-purpose segmentation of leisure activities in Parramatta that our research has noted.

While these issues are greater than those concerning the night-time economy, they reveal that sport and exercise participation and spectatorship are currently under-utilised components of it. For example, Parramatta’s main park, with its combination of facilities for structured and unstructured sport and exercise, and sport spectatorship, is utilised only occasionally for major events and is regarded by many residents as unappealing and dangerous after dark.

Parramatta Stadium, the city’s largest and best known sports venue, is readily accessible by foot to such spaces as the park, the under-utilised river frontage towards the ferry terminal, and the key night-time economy precinct around Church Street. The Stadium could be used, as has occurred in the past, for a wider range of events, both sporting and other. The Civic Place development, though, as its own publicity design shots reveal, is likely to draw traffic and activity from the northern end of the city (including the current ‘eat street’ Church Street precinct near the Riverside Theatres). A more strategic use of the culture/creativity/sport/exercise/leisure linkages would assist with the necessary re-balancing of Parramatta’s night-time economy that, as has been noted, already tends to cluster around limited sites, activities and participant groupings with little interaction between them.

6. night-time policy futures

Planning

The activities that take place after dark in the central business district of any city play a significant role in shaping the image and liveability of that city. They can also have a major impact on the local economy. It is thus important for local councils to use the policy resources at their disposal to foster night-time spaces that are distinctive, sustainable and inclusive. This means ensuring that these after-hours precincts are used by a diverse range of people in a variety of different ways, simultaneously being spaces of work, home, leisure and creativity.

What is required to achieve such outcomes is an **integrated 24-hour planning framework** that:

- combines land-use, infrastructure, cultural, economic and social planning processes;
- supports both government and non-government service providers and local businesses;
- establishes and maintains effective communication with local communities;
- ensures that urban planning and development is not focused narrowly on specific locations and sites;
- addresses the way in which spaces connect and are used at different times of the day.

The challenge, therefore, for all councils, including Parramatta City Council, is first to determine, in consultation with the community, the mix of activities that should be encouraged. It should then utilise an integrated policy framework to foster these activities, ensuring that there is a balance between official cultural provision and the energy and unpredictability of the 'street'. It will also require the negotiation of formal and informal processes of urban policing and surveillance because a concern with personal safety is frequently a reason why people avoid the city after dark – something which was confirmed in this Parramatta scoping study.

The safest, most interesting and successful city centres are those which do not become abandoned at night and are not focused overly on a limited range of activities and venues. They are high density spaces that support a mix of uses. Managing diversity is not easy, but it is preferable to coping with urban desolation or the consequences of mono-leisure cultures.

As detailed in this report, Parramatta currently has a limited night-time economy which operates within tight spatial constraints. This means that there are many areas within the CBD which become abandoned and, thus, potentially unsafe after dark. An important task for the Council will be to open up its night-time economy by encouraging the higher population density of the area and diversifying the range of after-hours venues and activities that are located there. Council will also need to consider ways of forging stronger connections between the different parts of the night-time city by ensuring the spaces are well lit.

An integrated 24-hour framework links infrastructure, economic, cultural and social planning to address the development and use of its CBD. Such a framework will nurture three interconnected elements:

- People
- Place
- Creativity





People

The fundamental ingredient of a successful night-time economy is the presence of **people** – families, workers, and holiday-makers, people of different ages and from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. Vibrant and safe after-hours inner city precincts offer facilities that are attractive to, and used by, a range of people. They foster and cater for diversity.

Flourishing night-time precincts are also those that foreground the concerns and priorities of local residents – they should respond to the desire of the community for sites of leisure, residency and work. At the same time they should express something meaningful about the city, its history and its future that resonates with residents.

Councils and other authorities frequently adopt a 'law and order' approach to night-time urban safety, but the evidence suggests that the innovative use of cultural activities and programs, including imaginative lighting, urban animation through such initiatives as staggered shopping and business hours, and (where possible) programs of entertainment and events, are more likely to discourage crime than an increased police presence.

The task for Parramatta City Council is to use its urban, cultural and economic planning and policy responsibilities in combination to establish facilities that attract different people at different times of the day. Effective policy strategies might include those which:

- promote street festivals and displays;
- support local business to open longer hours;
- initiate zoning which encourages people to live and work in the inner city (for example, shop-top housing, student residences, inexpensive living and studio accommodation for artists – which currently exist in a limited form – as well as more expensive apartment development); and
- extends the opening hours of library and other cultural facilities (which in turn diversify their activities).

Using lighting functionally and as entertainment can also be effective in both beautifying the city and promoting security.

Place

A '**sense of place**' refers to the ways in which local histories and cultures are expressed and experienced in the urban environment by day and by night. A sense of place can be nurtured but it cannot be imposed. Using local policy measures to encourage a sense of place and create places that are vibrant is an important aspect of supporting safe and inclusive night-time cities. Such places are locations for a diversity of venues that are used regularly by residents and are meaningful to them in terms of their own lives and local histories.

Places are defined and expressed through inclusive public art, architecture and urban design, and by the presence of an assortment of retail outlets and public facilities. As discussed in detail in this report, it is necessary for Parramatta City Council to facilitate visual and physical connections between different parts of the city, with lighting and signage being especially important. Linkages should be physical (in terms of pedestrian pathways and view corridors) and symbolic (welcoming and inclusive). Places that currently 'work' by day are not necessarily places that 'work' at night.

The truncated linear flow of people within the night-time economy along Church Street could be countered by multi-directional flows that enhance place by:

- more systematic use of urban and parkland space at both ends of Church Street;
- diversification of activities for a wider range of groups;

- improved lighting and other safety enhancing amenities along Church Street and its adjacent streets;
- improved civic placemaking signage orienting users toward this enhanced night-economy; and
- anti-clustering policies that would encourage pedestrian flow towards new, different venues and facilities between the 'bookends' of Church Street.

Parramatta City Council is also encouraged to develop a coherent and integrated night-specific placemaking strategy as part of its integrated 24-hour urban cultural planning agenda. In particular, consideration should also be given to the possibility of establishing the pedestrianised section of Church Street as a designated night-specific civic space, which would help address what is currently a 'black spot' that becomes abandoned and unsafe at night. Strategies for fostering after-dark activities and space with an arts/culture emphasis should also be explored as part of night-time placemaking initiatives.

Creativity

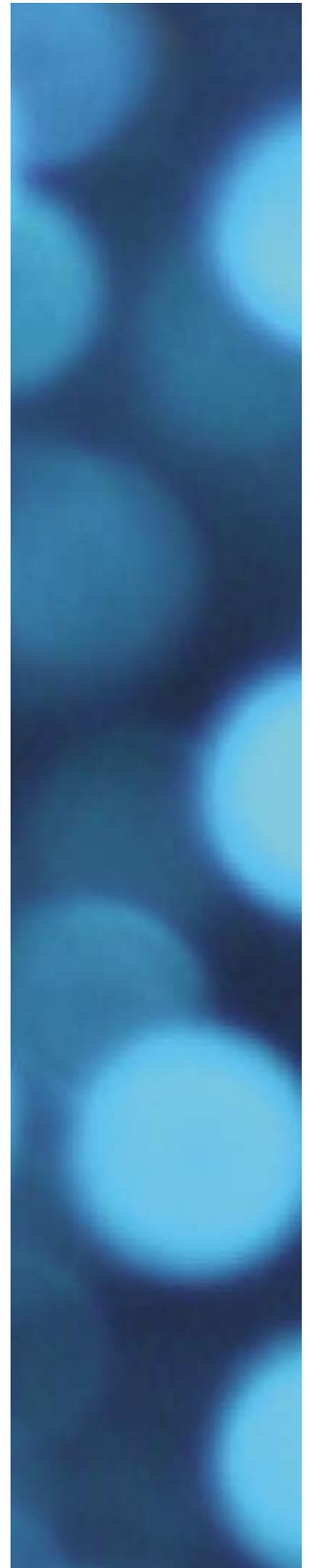
Creativity is a key ingredient of any successful night-time city and a central feature of an integrated 24-hour planning framework – creativity in design, activity and expression. The arts, in their traditional and non-traditional forms, have an obvious role to play in developing night-time economies that are culturally, socially and economically sustainable.

To this end, the establishment of inner-city cultural precincts can be a major initiative in providing the 'soft' and 'hard' infrastructure of the night-time city. Such precincts harbour venues for a range of activities, including performance and rehearsal spaces, galleries and artists studios, retail facilities, restaurants, and locations for street entertainment. Importantly, they will be places where art is produced as well as consumed/displayed and will be part of a broader branded and unified nightlife precinct.

It is necessary to think laterally about what art means in this context and to develop appropriate policy frameworks accordingly. The creative industries include much more than the traditional arts. For example, architecture and urban design can also contribute to the creative life of the city centre, as can a range of design, fashion and computing activities. A creative industry-focused night-time economy and urban strategy would involve initiatives that foster local production and distribution. The desirability of involving local tertiary education facilities in such initiatives should not be underestimated. This presence may take the form of student galleries, media centres and studio spaces, as well as student accommodation.

Parramatta City Council confronts a significant challenge as it works to develop its night-time economy and after-hours precincts. What is clear is that the established methods of policy, planning and management have not been wholly effective in creating diverse, vibrant and safe spaces. A new approach is required to foster the full range of social, individual and civic interests that comprise urban life, encourage the presence of people in the inner city after dark, and support place-based creativity in its widest sense. Council is advised to establish a policy and regulatory framework that is 24-hour focused and which transcends internal departmental divisions. It should aim to encourage further the co-location of residential, recreational, cultural and commercial spaces in the CBD.

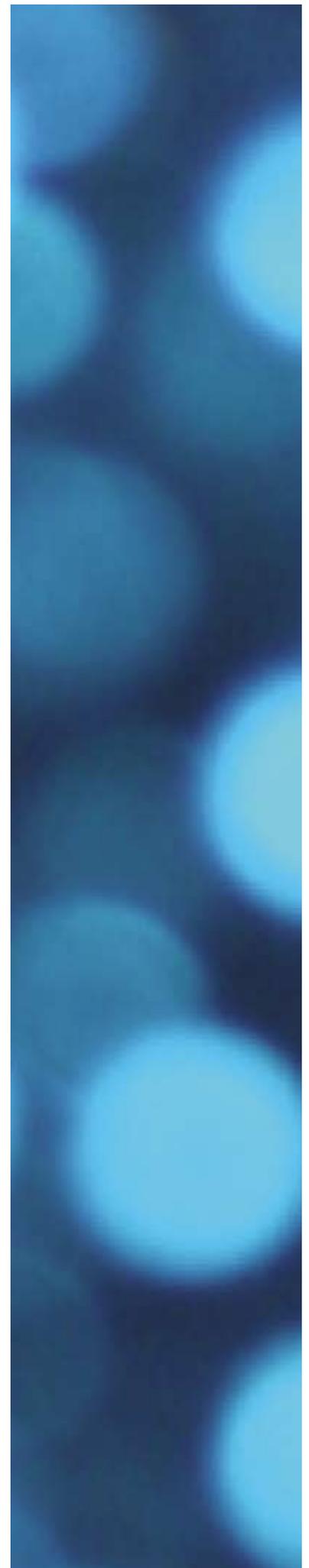
It is only by adopting an integrated and 24-hour focused approach to city centre planning and management that Parramatta will be able to develop successful night-time precincts and leisure cultures that are inclusive, distinctive and sustainable. Through a combination of imagination and judicious cultural planning, after-dark life in Parramatta can develop into a significant civic asset for residents and as a major locus of attraction for visitors.



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8. researchers & consultative group

Researchers

Professor David Rowe is the Director of the Centre for Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney. He has advised public and private organisations on issues including the arts, tourism and the culture industries, published widely on the subject of urban cultures, and convened three symposia on city imaging, urban and regional tourism, and the night-time economy. His books include *Popular Cultures* (Sage, 1995) and *Sport, Culture and the Media* (Open University Press, 2004).

Professor Deborah Stevenson has researched and published extensively in the areas of cultural policy and urban life, focusing in particular on cultural planning and the creative city. Her distinctive contribution has been in the examination of the nexus between urban planning and cultural policy through the lenses of sociology and cultural studies. This work has contributed to the ways in which governments use the arts and culture industries to revitalise cities and regions. Her books include *Cities and Urban Cultures* (Open University Press, 2003) and *Art and Organisation: Making Australian Cultural Policy* (University of Queensland Press, 2000).

Professor Stephen Tomsen researches in the areas of violence, crime prevention and urban safety. In 1989 he was the principal researcher on a pioneering ethnographic study of drinking-related violence in urban pubs and nightclubs reporting to the Australian National Committee on Violence. This research informed debates about community safety, drinking violence, the regulation of private security and the management of drinking venues in Australia, as well as later studies in Canada and the United Kingdom. He has recently completed (NSW Health and NSW Attorney-General's Department) funded research on young men's violence and the regulation of drinking venues and public space in the Newcastle/Hunter region. His books include *Lawyers in Conflict* (Federation, 2006) and *Violence, Prejudice and Sexuality* (Routledge, 2009).

Mr Nathaniel Bavinton is completing his PhD at the Centre for Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney on the production and use of space in the night-time economy. He is co-editor of *On the Bounce: The Challenge of the Night-Time Economy* (Cultural Institutions and Practice Research Centre, University of Newcastle). He is also a research officer on an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant on Sydney's night-time economy led by Professors Stevenson, Tomsen and Rowe.

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