

# Community Recovery Plan

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## Quarterly Report #2



*The City's Christmas marketing campaign featured a bike-riding Santa touring local businesses to show off our vibrant range of retailers who received a Covid-19 relief grant. The City granted a further \$3.8M to local businesses in the quarter to help them adapt to new ways of trading and adopting new business models in the wake of the pandemic. Chris Moore (pictured), owner of Omafiet's Dutch Bicycles survived 2020 using a City of Sydney grant to adapt his business model and develop the business's website. In the lead up to Christmas, 20% of his sales were online.*

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# Where are we now?

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## State of the city update

### Note regarding this data

Currently only limited up-to-date data is available at the City of Sydney level on the impact of Covid-19 and much of the data is at different points in time. This is particularly so this quarter with many collecting agencies deferring data release until later in January 2021. The current situation continues to evolve rapidly – making much of the available data quickly out of date. Every attempt has been made to present the most recent data.

- **City Output (GDP):** Compared to December Quarter 2019, the quarterly modelled City Output is down about 3.0%. Whilst perhaps a little ahead of expectations, this is cumulatively a total decline of about \$7 billion since pre-Covid-19. The restoration of international visitor caps and the emergence of new, more transmissible strains will see growth momentum ease in Q1 2021, with potentially a further \$1.5- 2 billion decline (compared to 2019) expected.
- **JobKeeper:** According to the latest statistics from the Taxation Office, over 20,000 businesses with a registered head office in the City of Sydney are still receiving the JobKeeper payment. This remains the highest number for any LGA in Australia.
- **Employment:** The ABS Payroll Tax Data Index for the end of the calendar year shows a decline of about 7% since Feb/Mar which is only exceeded Australia-wide by City of Melbourne with a decline of 10%, within major urban areas. Regional parts of Queensland and Victoria also suffered in early January from the interstate mobility restrictions and other parts of Sydney were affected by ‘lockdown restrictions’.
- **Workforce:** Transport authorities indicate that transport patronage remained 40-50% down on 2019 numbers. This is confirmed by City of Sydney pedestrian count figures (-49%), Opal card usage (-44%) and Property Council estimates of office occupancy levels 46% of pre-pandemic levels in early December. Anecdotally, many businesses are requiring staff to return to work-offices more frequently in January.
- **Industry Impacts:** Given the City economy’s reliance on tourism (both international and domestic) and visitors, as well as the hospitality sector, the industries most affected by decreased employment (Australia-wide) between March and December 2020 (the latest available data) are:

- Arts and Recreation Services decreased by 10%
- Accommodation and Food Services decreased by 17%

Notably these industries also have the highest proportion of local residents employed and so the impact on the City is likely to have been even greater. However, this was an improvement on the results of June-September quarter.

- **Spend:** Confidential spend data sighted by Council indicates that for the period from March to the end of December (compared to the same period in 2019):

- Total retail spending decreased by 21%
- Total retail spending by international visitors decreased by 83%
- Total retail spending by domestic consumers decreased by 10%
- Spending at eating places fell by 22%
- Spending on accommodation fell by 70%
- Spending at clothing stores fell by 4%

Again, this was a significant ‘improvement’ on the quarter-on-quarter decline in the September quarter, indicating growth in the October-December period, generally in the order of about 20% in comparison.

- **International Students and Travel:** The re-imposition of caps on international arrivals represents the largest immediate threat to economic recovery facing the City and is likely to slow and delay recovery further.

As an illustration, the latest arrivals data for November (Australia-wide) indicated that, compared to 38,000 international student arrivals in November 2019, there were just 150, of which 90 came to NSW. Whilst it is estimated that approximately one-third of existing international student enrolments are still residing in Australia (albeit without income support and/or employment in casual jobs), this indicates the likely impact on on-site campus numbers. Significantly, this also impacts on local businesses and shops servicing the resident student community.

## Confidence

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

In fact, the December figure was the second highest for over 7 years. Business Confidence has now increased strongly for three straight months and is up 38pts (+44%) since September. Business Confidence is now 19pts higher than a year ago in Dec 2019 and is 10pts above the long-term average. On a state-based level, NSW now has the highest Business Confidence of any state at 128.2 up 34pts (+36%) since September.

- **Consumer Confidence:** Consumer confidence has also increased compared with the September Quarter. In fact, Consumer Confidence levels in November and December were the only times in 2020 that the levels exceeded the corresponding 2019 levels. The December figure was the highest since September 2019.

- **Recent Trends - ‘Green Shoots’ of Recovery?:** With the decline in new Covid-19 cases indicating greater success in addressing the health crisis, there has been a substantive tentative increase in confidence levels in recent times.

Consumer confidence in Sydney is now at its highest level in more than 15 months. By far the largest contribution came from confidence in ‘current economic conditions’ which has jumped almost 20% over the latter part of September (albeit from a low base).

This is reflected in spending in the city which (while still substantially down compared to a year before) is significantly less than the full pandemic decline in total retail spend and spending by domestic consumers. This may continue to expand as workers and shoppers become more confident of the health situation.

## Community Recovery Plan – Quarterly Report #2

However, the likelihood of minimal international travel in 2021 and the subsequent impact on the food, hospitality and visitor-dependent businesses means the overall rate of further recovery is likely to be slow. In addition, the employment impact may spike again when JobKeeper ends for these businesses in March, unless selective assistance is continued.

# Summary of the plan

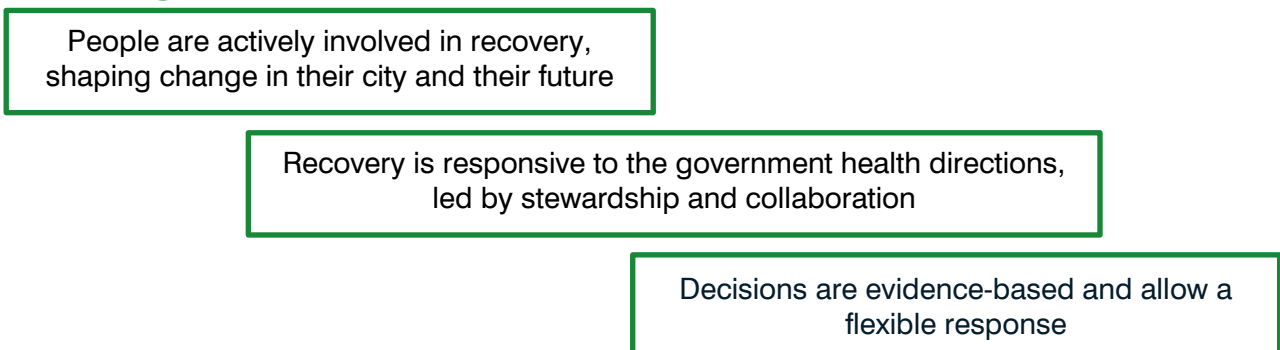
## Recovery goals

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



## Guiding principles



# What we have done

This section provides an overview of activity under each of the recovery plan actions for the period 1 October - 31 December 2020:

	Total Actions	Actions Underway	Activity this Quarter
Business as usual/transformed actions:	39	39	39
New actions:	18	18	17
<b>Recovery plan total actions:</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>56</b>

## Action Area 1

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

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

#### What we are doing to support recovery

- 1.1 Prioritise our business concierge service to support businesses to open and operate safely
  - 382 contacts to business concierge service October – December 2020 comprising 175 calls and 207 emails.
  - The majority of enquiries relate to eligibility for the Covid-recovery grants program.
- 1.2 Continue the acceleration of the capital works program to upgrade city streets, parks and playgrounds
  - Parks renewal stimulus package: LGA North. \$1.96M of \$2.4M of accelerated landscape works completed by 4 head contractors (plus subcontractors/suppliers also supported). Projects underway include:
    - Infrastructure, planting and turfing packages in northern parks
    - Ada Place wall deconstruction and fence installation
    - Prince Alfred Park rainbow pathway
    - Sandringham Gardens Drainage Works
  - Parks renewal stimulus package: LGA South. \$1.3M of accelerated landscape works commenced:
    - Turf projects in Rosebery, Waterloo, Redfern
    - Rubber soft-fall projects in Rosebery, Darlinghurst, Elizabeth Bay, Surry Hills, Erskineville, Redfern, Darlington
    - Landscape projects in Waterloo, Woolloomooloo, Fitzroy Gardens, Selwyn Street closure
    - Paddington War Memorial surrounds

## What we are doing to support recovery

- 1.3 Clean public places and streets to a high standard
- Waste collections have continued as per regular schedules with minimal missed collections despite the increased waste generated by residents staying at home.
  - Held recycling events in Q2 with Covid-19 safety measures:
    - Household Chemical Cleanout – 17 October
    - Recycle It Saturday – 5 December
  - Commenced Home Recycling Trial allowing residents to have items collected from their front door and recycled via RecycleSmart.
  - Cleansing operations were increased in areas identified with high pedestrian traffic flows; including transport hubs, hospitals, schools and commercial businesses such as grocery shops, medical centres and pharmacies. Additional focus on cleaning of egress points, walkways, handrails, seating and street litter bins in these areas.
  - Where areas were identified as ‘hot spots’ by NSW Health, cleansing crews attend the immediate area to the identified premises removing any illegal dumps, steam cleansing footpaths, street furniture and emptying and cleaning street litter bins.
  - Additional mobile street litter bins have been provided outside hospitals and testing venues to assist with the removal of additional waste generated by people attending for testing.
- 1.4 Promote safe alternatives to single-use items to address emerging waste issues
- As part of National Recycling Week, the City partnered with Mirvac to deliver 4 recycling pop-up events at their Broadway and Tramsheds shopping centres. Residents were encouraged to bring their old batteries, light bulbs, mobile phones and soft plastics for recycling to these events and were educated about safe reuse options.
- A recycling ‘sorting challenge’ activity offered deeper engagement and the opportunity for participants to win one of two Mirvac sponsored zero-waste prize packs featuring reusable products, including stainless steel lunchboxes, reusable drink bottle, silicon zip-lock bags, reusable produce mesh bags and bees-wax wraps.
- 221 people attended and City outreach officers engaged directly with 196 people and collected 26.5kg of recyclables.
- Planning commenced to deliver ‘Better Buying’ pop-up stalls each week from Feb – Mar 2021 to promote safe alternatives to single use directly to the public.



**What we are doing to support recovery**

1.5 Communicate that Sydney is safe, clean and open for business

- Weekly meetings with NSW Government (dept of customer service and dept of health) to ensure coordinated approach to delivery of timely and clear public health alerts on City channels.

City staff provided feedback to the NSW Government on the negative impact businesses can experience when they have a confirmed Covid-19 case visit their premises. The City’s recommendations and discussions have led to several changes in government communications and the development of toolkits for businesses and local councils to support businesses to get back on their feet and open as quickly as possible.

- Content articles on City of Sydney News promoted via City’s social channels and to over 14,000 weekly email digest subscribers:

Page Views:	Q2	Total
• Public health alerts as required:	33,195	37,317
• Covid-19 – how we’re responding:	1,480	139,652
• Covid-19 page on CoS website:	2,217	2,217
• Become a Covid-19 safe small business:	105	692
• New Covid-19 rules for businesses:	105	1,515
• Mandatory changes to business check-in:	547	547
• Download the Service NSW app for check-in:	404	404
• Going out – tips for a safe & fun night:	175	978
• Face mask recommendations:	534	2,092
• How it feels to be back in the theatre:	294	294
• Covid-19 restrictions to ease:	303	303

1.6 Work with NSW Government on city management initiatives such as mobility and transport, temporary footpath widening, cycleways, change signal timing, lower speed limits, travel demand planning and reprioritisation of roads

- The City opened online applications for outdoor dining in new spaces, including reallocated road space on 30 November. As at 15 January, 92 applications have been received, of which 42 relate to reallocated road space (such as Pitt St, Barrack St, Foster St, Stanley St, Crown St, Goulburn St and Lower Fort St) and 50 relate to reallocated footway space. Of these, 46 have been approved, 8 not approved/withdrawn and 38 are being assessed.

The initiative is receiving positive feedback on social media.

- The City continues to successfully advocate to the Minister for Transport and Transport for NSW for the installation of 40km zones on Oxford St, Moore Park Rd, Pyrmont Bridge Rd and in Pyrmont, Ultimo, Darlington, Camperdown and west Paddington.

**Other actions we will take**

1.7 Review and determine if current fee waivers should be extended to continue to support activation of space for community life, cultural participation and commercial use while maintaining accessibility

- Fees waivers extended to March 2021:
  - The City has assisted 3,347 businesses this financial year with relief of inspection, registration, application and administrative fees for health and building regulatory and compliance activities such as food premises, temporary food stalls, mobile food vendors, skin penetration, cooling towers and annual fire safety statements.
  - Footway dining, market permits and filming fees on grounds of hardship.
  - Return of venue hire and banner fees for bookings that have been unable to proceed.
  - Waived/discounted venue hire fees for events that were able to proceed

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

	Fin YTD	Since commencement
Fees waived	\$557,935	\$ 649,034

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

	Since commencement
Filming fees foregone	\$ 161,059
Market rental waived	\$ 60,361
Venue hire cancellation fees waived	\$1,383,646
Venue hire fees waived/discounted	\$ 187,625

- Waived footway dining fees:
 

	Since commencement
Fees waived	\$1,236,641

- Rent relief on commercial properties extended to December 2020.  
Rent relief on commercial properties (excluding QVB):

	Apr – Dec 2020
Total rent relief forecast	\$5,237,649
Total rent deferral estimate	\$5,300,000

1.8 Invest in the pedestrianisation and activation of south George Street

The 9,000m2 of additional pedestrianised space has been activated with decorative road painting, roving musicians and temporary seating to encourage pedestrians to use the additional space and disperse crowds on footpaths.

## Other actions we will take

- The City has held ongoing conversations with businesses and property owners on the newly pedestrianised section of George Street since the initiative was announced. Formal consultation on the permanent closure was conducted from 23 September to 21 October 2020, which indicated the majority of people support the proposal. Comments supporting the proposal welcomed the opportunity to improve pedestrian access, the local amenity and outdoor activation and dining.
- The proposal was endorsed by Council on 14 December 2020. Construction will be completed stages and is expected to start early 2021.
- The initiative is viewed as a positive step in the recovery by providing space for physical distancing, creating new outdoor space for businesses to utilise, improving the look and feel of the street for people and a project that will help reinvigorate the southern CBD.
- A risk assessment for outdoor dining on south George Street has been submitted to the light rail operator for endorsement. Once approved, the City can work with businesses on George Street to provide outdoor dining.

## Action Area 2

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

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

### What we are doing to support recovery

2.1 Direct existing grant support towards addressing emerging community issues and funding those most in need

- A new round of Covid-19 recovery grants for community services to meet the needs of vulnerable residents impacted by the pandemic opened for application from 29 October to 7 December. Applicants were able to apply for up to \$50,000 with organisations applying through a collective impact model able to apply for more.

In total for this program:

- Grant applications received: 77
- Grant applications supported: 23
- Value of support requested: \$3,423,320
- Value of support invested: \$800,000

- As part of the grants pre-assessment process, all staff assessing applications were briefed on the City’s new unconscious bias reference guide developed in consultation with City’s Indigenous leadership team and workforce planning & diversity advisor.
- The Covid-19 community services grant guidelines included funding priorities for applications that:
  - Build capacity and empower the community to address sustainable food security.
  - Have collective impact approaches with multiple organisations partnering to achieve a shared goal.
  - Meet the needs of and are led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
  - Support vulnerable community groups including temporary visa holders, social housing residents and people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

2.2 Continue to provide online and face-to-face programming with a focus on supporting health and wellbeing, digital literacy, social inclusion, reskilling and employment

- Provided 269 sessions of virtual community groups online for 10,775 people following the reduced operation of libraries and community centres.
- The City continues to develop programs that support the outcomes of this action such as:
  - Children’s Storytime and Rhymetime in Auslan
  - Craft and art classes
  - Digital and computer courses
  - Physical activity programs such as yoga, after dinner walks, boxing, bootcamp and Zumba.

## What we are doing to support recovery

- 2.3 Manage community spaces, services and facilities to ensure safe, equitable and affordable access and participation
- Community venues reopened with reduced capacity and utilisation under Covid-safe plan requirements,
  - All City of Sydney libraries were re-opened with limited operating hours and services under Covid-safe plan requirements including mandatory check-in, contactless reserve and collect and maximum visit of 4 hours for the libraries, study desks and Wi-Fi.
  - A NSW Health pop-up testing clinic continues to operate from East Sydney Community & Arts Centre.
- 2.4 Increase utilisation of internet and digital access and participation through City libraries and community facilities and explore opportunities to support digital training and advocate for subsidised internet access beyond our own facilities
- Customs House, Surry Hills, Darling Square and Green Square libraries provide computer access with a 3-hour limit.
  - Digital literacy and skills programs across a range of topics such as coding, how to spot fake news, the dark web explained, Photoshop and cyber security.
  - The libraries’ digital collections including ebooks, music streaming services and online newspapers as well as computer and Wi-Fi facilities are actively promoted on the libraries page on the City’s website.
- 2.5 Work with other government agencies and organisations working in the homelessness sector to support those at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- Seven-day coverage provided by the City’s homelessness unit and public space liaison officers who continue to engage with people experiencing homelessness. Staff are providing rough sleepers with the most up to date information from NSW Health, along with information about service provision and accommodation available:
 

	Q2 20/21	Since commencement
• People supported to access temp accommodation:	50	53
• People supported to access long term housing:	62	137
- 2.6 Continue to leverage the City’s existing Supported Accommodation, Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund to create more affordable housing
- A review of fund policy and guidelines is underway to ensure it meets the requirements of the community in context of the pandemic and future community needs.  
Council approved a \$3M grant to Wesley Mission’s RJ Williams affordable housing development in Glebe.
- 2.7 Advocate to federal and state governments for increased investment in social and affordable housing as well as no forced evictions and tenants’ rights
- The City made a submission to the Review of the Management of NSW Public Housing Maintenance Contracts advocating for increased investment in new and old social housing stock, ongoing positive collaborations with the City to enhance safety, liveability and amenity of social housing

## What we are doing to support recovery

neighbourhoods and the importance of place based community development workers.

- At the December meeting, Council discussed their commitment to Aboriginal social and affordable housing targets for the Waterloo redevelopment. In relation to advocacy for social and affordable housing, Council resolved to:
  - Strongly advocate for public housing tenants living in the Redfern/Waterloo redevelopment area to be offered affordable or social housing within the LGA for the duration of the development.
  - Work to ensure new or renewed partnerships with community housing providers in the LGA deliver ten per cent Aboriginal affordable housing.
  - Formally advise the NSW Government of these decisions through the CEO and Lord Mayor.

2.8 Prioritise the provision of food security services for our vulnerable communities through partnerships, networks, grants and existing services

- Continued partnership with over 60 agencies to provide meals and food hampers across the LGA. Continue to provide on average 7,800 meals and 1,420 hampers every week.
- Delivered 11,401 Meals on Wheels meals to 247 residents and continued service uninterrupted.
- Team of redeployed City staff delivered 6,117 meals and 18 online shopping vouchers as part of the City’s temporary home meal delivery program to vulnerable residents, 56% of whom were under 65.
- Continue to support the OzHarvest free Supermarket in Waterloo who have extended the service to 5 days per week supporting an average of 1200 people per week.
- The City provided access to Green Square Community Hall to Viral Kindness for the packing and distribution of food to vulnerable people.
- Approximately 18 not for profit agencies and businesses supported through Covid-19 relief grants to provide food support to the community.

## Other actions we will take

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

- Continued to support the #feedsydney fundraising campaign for OzHarvest, including promotion directly to City of Sydney staff. Every dollar donated provides 2 meals. \$102,846 raised so far towards a goal of \$200,000.

**Other actions we will take**

- Working with volunteer and non-government agencies to link offers of donations and volunteers with organisations requiring additional support.

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

- No new activity scheduled this quarter.

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

- The City collaborated with StudyNSW on the Summer Engagement Program for international students, which provides online resources, programs and services to support international students over the summer period when education providers traditionally are closed.

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

- The City is collaborating with NSW Govt to ensure energy efficiency stimulus, incentives and support include strata communities and low-income communities.
- Work is underway with the Energy Savings Scheme to trial an increase in financial incentives for Owners Corporations to retrofit apartment buildings.
- The City is advocating for changes to strata legislation to drive improved building performance and cost-savings (note a Sustainability Infrastructure Bill to amend the Strata Schemes Management Act is currently with NSW Parliament).
- The City is promoting utility bill-support programs to our residents.

## Action Area 3

# Strengthen community cohesion to build the resilience of local communities

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

### What we are doing to support recovery

- |   |  |         |                    |           |             |
|---|--|---------|--------------------|-----------|-------------|
| <p>3.1 Provide grants that facilitate community engagement in City owned spaces and public places</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City is providing rent relief for childcare centre providers until 31 March 2021 for an approximate value of: <table border="0" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">Fin YTD</td> <td>Since Commencement</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$731,758</td> <td>\$1,058,758</td> </tr> </table> </li> </ul>  | Fin YTD | Since Commencement | \$731,758 | \$1,058,758 |
| Fin YTD   | Since Commencement   |         |                    |           |             |
| \$731,758   | \$1,058,758  |         |                    |           |             |
| <p>3.2 Provide residents with links to support services and practical assistance</p>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provided information and referral pathways to residents in a range of formats online and in print with links to relevant health, safety and support contacts.</li> <li>– Continued the community hotline which received 46 calls for requests to information or support.</li> <li>– Continued the welfare check-in service for vulnerable groups with 557 check-in calls made.</li> <li>– Completed the distribution of 26,500 city purchased reusable facemasks to vulnerable communities including: social housing residents, rough sleepers, boarding house residents, food distribution charity partners and young people engaged in City summer programs.</li> <li>– Coordinated the donation of 10,000 facemasks to charity partners through Viral Kindness.</li> </ul> |         |                    |           |             |
| <p>3.3 Support the provision of health and safety information to residential strata owners</p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City continues to leverage the significant government, community and strata networks developed through the Smart Green Apartments program and the Residential Strata Sustainability group to provide resources and support focused on pandemic management for high density strata communities via 8 e-newsletter publications to a database of 3,016 people.</li> <li>– The City participates in a working group convened by NSW Government to discuss ongoing issues for strata and community schemes in the context of Covid-19. The group creates tailored pandemic management collateral for start communities through the Fair Trading website.</li> </ul>   |         |                    |           |             |



**What we are doing to support recovery**

3.4 Advocate to ensure environmental sustainability is of high importance in fast-tracked urban renewal programs

- Advocacy has continued to NSW Government for environmental outcomes aligned to City targets in the following renewal projects:
  - Pyrmont Place Strategy
  - Circular Quay Renewal
  - Waterloo Estate
  - Waterloo Metro Quarter

3.5 Coordinate local emergency response through Local Emergency Management Committee

- The City continues to facilitate monthly meetings of the City of Sydney Local Emergency Management Committee to coordinate response and recovery activities.
- The City waived parking fees for essential workers and converted on-street parking for pop-up cycleways and workzones, foregoing revenue totalling \$515,181 in quarter 2 20/21 and \$1,508,228 since commencement, as follows:

	Q2 20/21	Since Commencement
Hospitals:	\$184,277	\$471,978
Cycleways:	\$ 50,558	\$102,737
Workzones:	\$ 14,948	\$ 47,650

	Q2 20/21	Since Commencement
Police:	\$187,290	\$646,035
Health:	\$ 5,372	\$ 11,356
Charity:	\$ 238	\$ 374

	Q2 20/21	Since Commencement
Police:	\$ 26,700	\$ 90,330
Health:	\$ 24,718	\$ 76,449
Charity:	\$ 21,080	\$ 61,319

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

- Resilient Sydney Ambassadors Network:
  - During the Covid-19 disruption, the Resilient Sydney office has hosted regular Resilience Ambassadors meetings to connect and equip all councils of Sydney to respond and recover.
  - Meetings in October and December were attended by >75% of Sydney councils and focussed on local activation investments for a resilient recovery, social cohesion to combat increasing racism in Sydney and protocols for managing summer emergencies during the pandemic.
- Resilient Sydney liaised with Resilience NSW in December 2020 to promote the Get Ready Business campaigns to businesses through councils in the lead up to the summer emergency season.

## What we are doing to support recovery

Councils have shared good practice emergency management and business continuity response planning when they needed it most.

- Resilient Sydney Platform:
  - The Resilient Sydney Platform Phase 2 was launched in December 2020 with new standardised datasets providing metropolitan wide environmental footprints to assist councils in community recovery planning and risk management. The Platform has over 200 users from councils across Sydney. (Action 13 of Resilient Sydney Strategy)
  - Resilient Sydney is collaborating with four NSW Government agencies to source standardised social cohesion and wellbeing data to monitor social resilience for every LGA in Sydney (Action 16 Resilient Sydney Strategy), which will support councils' recovery reporting.

## Other actions we will take

- 3.7 Empower communities to manage their own recovery by strengthening local connections through networks, events and forums, for example supporting community celebrations at the end of the pandemic
- The City's new rounds of Covid-19 recovery grants programs were designed to deliver resilience outcomes for communities, with a focus on recovery rather than emergency relief.
  - The City hosted a free online talk with Jess Hill, award-winning author of *See What You Made Me Do: Power, Control and Domestic Abuse*, to discuss the signs and impacts of domestic violence. The talk was scheduled on 2 December to coincide with the UN's 2020 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence to address the growing number of cases of violence against women during the global pandemic.
  - To acknowledge the importance of continuing annual community rituals and celebrations, the City provided information and advice on how to celebrate safely at Halloween, Christmas and New Year's Eve.
- 3.8 Facilitate capacity building workshops with the community sector and community led organisations to support their planning for the reopening of their services
- The City continued to host workshops with 60 agencies involved in food relief to discuss learnings, gaps and future collective impact to support food relief. The intention is to develop a collective operational plan to continue to provide food relief for the most vulnerable in Sydney.

**Other actions we will take**

- 3.9 Explore with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community the idea to facilitate a culturally sensitive commemorative event due to the impacts on participating in *Sorry Business* during the pandemic, and to provide an opportunity for support, collective reflection and acknowledgement for community members who have passed away.

  - The City supported the local Aboriginal community to host two community wakes in Redfern Community Centre. City staff assisted families in developing the required Covid-safe plans according to the current health orders and were present on the day to assist with monitoring safety requirements and support community members.
  
- 3.10 Celebrate the work of the community groups and volunteers including at the annual Lord Mayor volunteer thank you event

  - The City's Meals on Wheels volunteers were provided with a token of appreciation for their contribution to the community, including through the pandemic.

## Action Area 4

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

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

### What we are doing to support recovery

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>4.1 Direct existing grant support to sustain cultural organisations and stimulate development opportunities for local creatives</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City has provided Destination NSW with 123 banner locations in highly visible areas to promote the musical <i>Frozen</i> at the reduced government rate.</li> <li>– The City opened a new cultural sector innovation grant to support small to medium cultural and creative organisations to pilot new operational models, transform program or project delivery, collaborate and initiate innovative projects. Recommendations for these grants will be considered by Council in early 2021.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>4.2 Advocate to federal and state governments for targeted support for culture and no net loss of cultural space</p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– In October the City raised the need for more targeted support for culture and no net loss of cultural space in a submission to The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts inquiry into Australia’s creative and cultural industries and institutions.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>4.3 Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and knowledge sharing</p>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City’s annual NAIDOC in the city event was presented online on 14 November under the theme “Always Was, Always Will Be” to recognise First Nationals people have occupied and cared for this continent for over 65,000 years. The event supports the City’s commitment to reconciliation and shares the stories of the world’s longest living culture.</li> <li>– As busking started to return to the city streets in line with public health orders, the City can reboot support of cultural practice in the public domain by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers.</li> <li>– The City is working to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander grant applications by focussing on 4 key areas:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Application</li> <li>• Assessment</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

What we are doing to support recovery

- During Q2, the City provided the following support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander grant applications:
  - 22 City staff who assess grant applications, including 12 who assessed the current round of Covid-19 recovery grants attended Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Respect training.
  - The City’s grants team provided a concierge to First Nations applicants to provide proactive support and follow-up.
  - A dedicated Covid-19 recovery grant information webinar was held for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in addition to the public webinar in November.
  - A public grant information drop-in service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities was offered at Redfern Town Hall.
  - First Nations staff assessed all applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants.
  - 2 verbal community services grant applications were received from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants which is the first time the City has offered this accessible applications option. Both were approved to receive grants.
  - 11 community services cash grants that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were approved at a value of \$262,916.
  - 6 CBD activation cash grants to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations were approved at a value of \$205,000.

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

- The City is providing rent relief for creative spaces, short-term empty property, creative accommodation grant and live/work Waterloo and William St tenants until 31 March 2021 for an approximate value of:
 

	Fin YTD	Since Commencement
• Creative spaces:	\$ 87,186	\$130,779
• Other cultural:	\$145,436	\$218,154
• Other social:	\$ 68,390	\$102,585
- All tenants are being provided proactive contract management support through a challenging period for the creative industries.

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

- The Open and Creative planning reforms, a set of measures to make it easier for small businesses to trade later, or host performances and shows were exhibited for community feedback from 19 October – 18 November 2020. Submissions are being reviewed and will be reported to Council in 2021. The reforms are also being reviewed against similar NSW Government reforms introduced in the Liquor Act Amendment in November.

## Other actions we will take

- 4.6 Facilitate opportunities for collaboration and capacity building to ensure cultural sector resilience and sustainability
- The Covid-19 cultural sector innovation grant guidelines included funding priorities for applications that:
    - Demonstrate effective strategies to transform operations and services during and beyond the current restricted trading environment.
    - Strengthen and sustain venues or workspace for the production or presentation of cultural products.
    - Assist with generating income despite ongoing restrictions on public events and programs.
    - Deliver programs or services that encourage active participation in cultural activity (such as workshops, classes, creative developments and residencies) and service diverse creative communities.
    - Build the capacity of the cultural sector by sharing skills, research and resources.
    - Work with diverse communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with Culturally Linguistically and Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and LGBTIQ+ communities.
- 4.7 Continue to explore opportunities for making space for culture in partnership with public and private sectors
- The Council of Capital Cities Lord Mayors have prioritised Making Space for Culture in their 2021 - 2024 strategic plan.
  - The City has an ongoing dialogue with Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences regarding the potential future use of the Harwood Building for creative industries as part of the Camperdown Ultimo innovation precinct.
  - The Bathurst Street Creative Hub is due to handed over to the City in late February 2021 for completion of the fitout and supply of the equipment. The City is currently completing the final stages of a procurement process to appoint an operator for the facility which is expected to open in late 2021.
  - The City contributed \$40,000 as a Knowledge Exchange grants to:
    - Left Bank for the Making Space for Culture Incubation program to connect the cultural and property sectors
    - Music NSW for a Live Music Venue Accessibility Pilot to support music venues through the process of improving accessibility and inclusion for audience members, participants and artists.
  - The City provided input to masterplanning for Waterloo and Pyrmont that includes making space for cultural infrastructure.

## Other actions we will take

- 4.8 Set up a working group comprising representatives of the cultural sector to agree sites for pop-up or future cultural activity and prepare a report to Council to approve these sites as Covid-19 recovery activity sites
- Working group comprising representatives from Sydney Festival, Belvoir Theatre, Sydney Opera House, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Anzarts Institute, supported by City staff established Cathedral Square as the most appropriate for an outdoor performance stage – the *Sunset Piazza*.
  - The City has partnered with the NSW government to develop a \$20M CBD reactivation program. This program is funding the *Sunset Piazza* program, curated by Sydney Festival. It will comprise 32 nights of live performances from local Sydney artists for 395 audience members per night (according to current public health orders) from late January – March 2021.
  - An EOI for community groups to perform on the *Sunset Piazza* stage opened in December and 34 submissions were received for a wide range of performing artforms including music, dance, poetry and singing.
  - In addition, roving performers activated the city centre around the chairs-in-squares sites to bring vibrancy to the city streets.
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## Action Area 5

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

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

### What we are doing to support recovery

- 5.1 Use our communications channels to promote shop local and visit local to residents, workers and visitors
- Continued option for online events to be promoted on What's On(line).
  - Leveraged What's On as primary event platform:
    - Events submitted: 1,401
    - Page views per month: 142,915
    - Sessions per month: 106,571
    - Email subscribers: 30,174
  - The 365 days of local economies partnerships with local publications have continued throughout the pandemic to support local businesses.
  - Shop local campaign focused on supporting local retailers for Christmas shopping. The City's marketing campaign featured a [bike-riding Santa touring local businesses](#) who received Covid-19 relief grants to show off the vibrancy of the local retail offering. The video alone reached 564,447 people and had 2,521 engagements with our post on facebook.
- 5.2 Continue to invest in local festivals and major events that demonstrate Sydney's vibrancy and encourage local Sydneysiders and others from around the state and country to visit
- The City's CBD 94 activation grants will fund a wide range of festivals, small events and programs that contribute to this action. Refer to action 5.7 for full details. Examples include:
    - *The Aboriginal Legal Services 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary*
    - *Alliance Française de Sydney X The Argyle Bastille Day celebrations*
    - *The National Maritime Museum's Ocean Spirit Rising program*
    - *Biennale of Sydney Waterhouse Community Space program*
    - *The Bulgarian Cultural Social & Patriotic Association Rodina Martenitsa Festival*
    - *Good Food Month, Sydney*
    - *Erth's Art Bomb in Alberta Street Laneways – an interactive family festival*
    - *Brickfields Live Music Precinct*
    - *The World Square Live Music Series*



## What we are doing to support recovery

- 5.3 Continue to partner with Business Events Sydney to build the pipeline of business meetings for Sydney
- Business Events Sydney briefed City staff on their new domestic events strategy and marketing campaign to bridge the gap while international borders remain closed to business events. The campaign launched on 24 October with phase 1 running to the end of 2020. The campaign is designed to:
    - Profile Sydney to the domestic market through a three-phase marketing campaign.
    - Connect domestic planners and suppliers via a dedicated microsite which includes a supplier search platform.
    - Provide planners with a central authoritative resource library.
    - Attract events through a competitive bid process.
  - Business Events Sydney continues to build the pipeline of international events. 70% of meetings originally scheduled in 2020 have been rescheduled into future years. 85 meetings and incentives are confirmed from 2021-2026.
- 5.4 Continue to engage with the accommodation and entertainment sector to ensure sustainability is promoted and prioritised
- The City continues to focus on 3 primary goals:
    - Activate Upgrades:  
The City has continued to promote and offer subsidised building ratings to the sector through the provision of grants.
    - Build Capacity and Foster Leadership:  
The Sustainable Destination Partnership is the key platform through which the city builds the sector capacity and demonstrates leadership. The City conducted a workshop with the sector on renewable power purchase agreements.
    - Promote and Recognise:  
Ongoing promotion of Sydney as a safe and sustainable destination.
- 5.5 In line with health advice, welcome people back to Sydney through roaming ambassadors, maps and digital services
- The City is working with the NSW Government as part of an advisory committee for the development of a new Dine & Discover digital voucher scheme.  
  
Every NSW resident over 18 will be eligible for four \$25 vouchers to use at Covid-safe registered businesses. Two vouchers can be used for dining at restaurants, cafes, bars, pubs and clubs and two for entertainment and recreation including cultural institutions, live music and arts venues.  
  
To redeem, visitors scan their digital vouchers directly into an app at registered businesses.  
  
Pilots will be run in The Rocks and CBD during February. Statewide rollout will commence in March.

## What we are doing to support recovery

- 5.6 Advocate to state and federal governments for ongoing support for international students while they continue to be impacted by the pandemic
- In November a request was made to the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) to support international students and other temporary visa holders, who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough.

## Other actions we will take

- 5.7 Engage local creatives in the City’s programs and work with others to do the same to activate precincts to support local businesses, sustain local culture and drive footfall on main streets
- In November the City signed a \$20m CBD revitalisation program in partnership with NSW government which includes:
    - 32 nights of outdoor live performance at the *Sunset Piazza* in Cathedral Square.
    - An expanded rollout of the popular “chairs in squares” activation in Martin Place, Regimental Square and Pitt St with more locations to come.
    - Roving musicians throughout the CBD.
    - New outdoor dining on reclaimed streets and footways, facilitated by streamlined application processes and fast-tracked approvals.
    - The City has also commissioned 4 new temporary public artworks in laneways.
    - A major marketing #rediscoversydney marketing campaign to complement Destination NSW’s Love Sydney campaign.
  - The City has advocated for cultural institutions to operate extended hours during summer through the *Culture up Late* program. The Powerhouse, MCA, Australian Museum, Museum of Sydney, Justice & Police Museum, Hyde Park Barracks and the State Library of NSW are all offering evening programs.
  - A new round of Covid-19 recovery grants specifically to support the reactivation of the CBD opened for application on 29 October and closed 7 December.
 

The grant is designed to support creative activations within shops, retail centres, and venues as well as on footpaths and public space near businesses. There are opportunities for CBD-based activations by businesses in events, arts and culture, entertainment, tourism and accommodation, retail and hospitality sectors. Activations may include pop-up events, installations, exhibitions, DJs, live music performance, fashion shows, design talks, artistic performances and roving entertainment.

Applicants were able to apply for up to \$50,000 in support with sole traders limited to \$10,000.

Other actions we will take

In total for this program:

- Grant applications received: 171
- Grant applications supported: 94
- Value of support requested: \$6,065,240
- Value of support invested: \$3,000,000

- The Covid-19 CBD activation grant guidelines included funding priorities for applications:
  - From live music and cultural organisations, creative companies and cultural operators including sole traders.
  - From applicants that have not already received funding from the City this year or can demonstrate financial hardship due to Covid-19.
  - From Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants or partners.
  - That provide evidence of financial benefit for artists as part of their proposal.
  - That provide opportunities for live music and performance.

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

- “Love Sydney like you mean it” campaign launched by Destination NSW to promote Sydneysiders and intrastate visitors.
- The City is developing a major “rediscover Sydney” campaign as part of the CBD activation partnership with NSW Government. This campaign is being developed in consultation with Destination NSW to ensure an integrated approach. It will be launched in January 2021.

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

- At the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) Research Summit in November, the City presented 'Beyond Campus Life' as part of a panel discussion on support for international students during the pandemic and moving forward. 160 people registered for the virtual event.
- In December the City was invited to be part of the NSW Vice Chancellors Committee (NSWVCC) Student Wellbeing Working Group, which is working on pilot plans to safely return international students to campuses in NSW when it is possible to do so.

## Action Area 6

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

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

### What we are doing to support recovery

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|-----|--|---|
| 6.1 | Facilitate dialogue with heavily impacted sectors to support their recovery  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Regular and ongoing engagement with stakeholders from all impacted sectors to ensure City staff remain informed and involved in supporting recovery.</li> </ul>  |
| 6.2 | Direct existing grant support for organisations, businesses and industry, including those dominated by women, to assist them to innovate, adapt and grow | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City’s new cultural sector innovation grant is designed to support small to medium cultural and creative organisations to pilot new operational models, transform program or project delivery, collaboration and initiate innovative projects. Funding is prioritised to applications that demonstrate effective strategies to transform operations and services during and beyond the current restricted trading environment.</li> </ul> <p>Recommendations for these grants will be considered by Council in early 2021.</p>   |
| 6.3 | Continue to support collaboration across the innovation precincts within the Camperdown Ultimo collaboration area  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City’s CEO chairs monthly meetings of the Camperdown-Ultimo Collaboration Area Alliance which represents all major partners in the precinct and represents the City on the Tech Central industry advisory group.</li> <li>– City staff from the economic strategy team are contributing to the development of an economic strategy for Tech Central within the collaboration area.</li> <li>– The Alliance is considering the opportunity for the collaboration area as a centre for excellence for medtech and pharma. This strategy will build on the significant assets and expertise in the precinct, while addressing biotech infrastructure gaps including wet labs where Sydney lags Brisbane and Melbourne.</li> </ul> |
| 6.4 | Implement the Central Sydney planning strategy to support a pipeline of development and investment certainty   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Central Sydney planning strategy and planning proposal were approved by Council and the Central Sydney planning committee in December 2020. The planning proposal will be forwarded to the NSW Government for drafting and finalisation of the planning controls and contributions plan.</li> </ul>  |

## What we are doing to support recovery

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|---|---|
| <p>6.5 Continue to use City procurement to support local businesses and a shift to a circular economy</p>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The City has finalised the returnable schedules of procurement documentation for governance, environmental outcomes, First Nations suppliers, corporate social responsibility and local buy.</li> <li>– Procurement conducted a webinar with the Association of Proposal Management Professionals to improve and assist local suppliers bidding for Council tenders.</li> <li>– The City of Sydney local suppliers database has been further refined.</li> <li>– The procurement team is developing a reporting mechanism to track local buy by post codes and divisions.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>6.6 Continue to support communities and businesses to accelerate their uptake of renewable energy to stimulate the green economy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There is 14.4 MW of rooftop solar installed in the City, including 270kW installed by the Power2U community program and 652kW through the Smart Green Apartments program. We continue to support the provision of solar feasibility reports, case studies and to promote offsite renewables through our sector programs.</li> <li>– The City produced online articles on GreenPower which received 9,652 views.</li> <li>– The City is accelerating access to renewables through innovation grants. For example, the Ultimo community is using a grant to develop a roadmap to 100% renewables and a Sydney-based clean tech company is developing a world-first energy software solution which is being trialled by 20 households to enable the purchase of renewable energy directly from the solar/wind farm.</li> </ul>                                  |
| <p>6.7 Continue to assist businesses and apartment buildings owners' corporations to implement retrofits for increased efficiency</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– In 2020, 32 ratings grants were awarded to owners' corporations and 89 apartment buildings now have a NABERS rating.</li> <li>– The City delivered an energy efficiency webinar to 45 residential building managers, and jointly with the Owners Corporation Network, delivered a webinar to 128 attendees on electric vehicle charging in apartment buildings to 128 attendees.</li> <li>– The City continued to educate and inspire residents and managers to take action through a range of other measures including the 2020 Strata Community Australia Gala Awards, that the City sponsors; a four-day online summit for apartment owners hosted by Your Strata Property; and a new grant that the City awarded to Strata Answers that will increase the provision of trusted information to residents on the fundamentals of strata living.</li> </ul> |

## What we are doing to support recovery

- Support for businesses is primarily delivered through activity of the Better Buildings Partnership and CitySwitch Green Office programs which included:
  - Report from CitySwitch on office energy at the Energy Efficiency Council annual conference.
  - Delivery of a tool from CitySwitch for better tracking of occupancy numbers and energy performance of commercial tenancies in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - Presentation by the Better Buildings Partnership of a safety study on the installation of batteries at the World Energy Forum.

6.8 Prioritise investment in City projects that provide significant local green economy benefits

- City projects in the LGA were fast-tracked including LED lighting and water management piping and metering.

## Other actions we will take

6.9 Produce skills development programs to enhance innovation, collaboration, digitisation and e-commerce

- In October, the City launched a new skills program “Reboot Series” delivered as a series of online webinars. The program has been developed in direct response to feedback received from businesses through a business needs survey conducted in June.

Key industry experts featured in the seminars included: Andre Eikmeier (co-founder Vinomofu) and Chris Wirashina (co-founder pedestrian.TV) who provided training in strategy, operations, finance and growth, digital marketing, e-commerce, customer relations, innovation and resilience.

The first 6 webinars were held from 12 October to 16 November 2020, attracting over 2,800 registrations with a total of 1,173 attendees (55% business owners and entrepreneurs, 29% professionals). The majority came from the retail and hospitality, tech startups, arts and culture and professional services sectors, which were most affected by the pandemic.

85% of responses to a post-event survey reported they gained new knowledge and skills, 88% stated the knowledge gained will help grow their businesses and more than 90% stated they would recommend the series to a friend or colleague.

All Reboot webinar videos are available to view online. The Reboot weekly series will continue in February 2021 for another 12 webinars.

