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GPO Box 1603M
Melbourne Victoria 3001

Hotline (03) 9658 9658
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City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City

A framework for action

- Activation
- Infrastructure
- Regulation
- Partnership





Introduction

The City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City comes at a pivotal time. Over the past decade the city has attracted a diverse and vibrant mix of residents, visitors and business using the city 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This has underpinned economic and cultural development and has seen the city develop into an internationally recognised location in which to live, work, visit and socialise.

Melbourne's vibrant night time economy is a major contributor to its status as a world leading cultural city. However, as the city stays awake longer, there is a need to make policy and operational decisions to manage the competing demands of the groups who visit the city, as well as those who live and work there.

The City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City is a framework for action. It utilises principles of harm reduction, social and community wellbeing, economic prosperity, land use planning, public place design and management and service excellence. The policy develops a vision for the 24 hour city that acknowledges and addresses the varying needs of city visitors, residents and business. The aim is to employ this overarching vision across the breadth of the City of Melbourne's local government responsibilities. The policy is the result of significant work involving identifying and analysing issues, developing priorities for action, extensive research, and the broadest possible consultations with stakeholders.

The City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City sets out guiding principles that provide the City of Melbourne with a decision making framework, for a safer, more vibrant and diverse Melbourne. The framework will help ensure competing needs are balanced as the city moves from day through night and responses to city issues are integrated and coordinated.

Context

Melbourne, the economic and cultural centre of Victoria, has changed significantly over the past 20 years.

Initiatives such as State Government changes to the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998*, which encouraged development of the licensed industry; designation in 1999 of the Melbourne CBD as a 24 hour mixed use zone; the success of Postcode 3000 which transformed the city centre into a residential destination; and the broad aims of the Inner Melbourne Action Plan, have attracted residents, businesses and visitors to the city in record numbers.

- Between 2001 and 2007, the residential population of the City of Melbourne municipality increased by 60 per cent from 50,673 to 81,144 (City of Melbourne, 2008, p 2).
- Between 2001 and 2007, the number of residents in the Melbourne CBD increased by 124 per cent from 7,698 to 17,287 (City of Melbourne, 2008, p 2).

The number of daily visitors to the City of Melbourne has also risen significantly.

- Between 1998 and 2006, weekday visitors increased by 45 per cent from 494,470 (City of Melbourne, 2005) to 716,000 (City of Melbourne, 2006a).
- Visitors to the city in the evening have increased to around 336,300 people on Friday and Saturday nights (City of Melbourne, 2006a).

Partly, increases in the number of visitors to the city can be attributed to consistent growth in business and social space.

- Between 1996 and 2006, the Gross Regional Product, which measures the economic activity in a region, grew on average by nearly 5.4 per cent per annum for the City of Melbourne municipality, generating an increase in growth of almost 70 per cent (City of Melbourne, 2006b).
- Between 2000 and 2008 the number of licensed venues has increased in the CBD from 579 in 2000, to 934 in 2008, an increase of 61 per cent.
- Between 2000 and 2008 the number of licensed venues has increased in the CBD from 579 in 2000, to 934 in 2008, an increase of 61 per cent. This increase is similar to the increase in licensed venues across the state (Consumer Affairs Victoria, 2008).

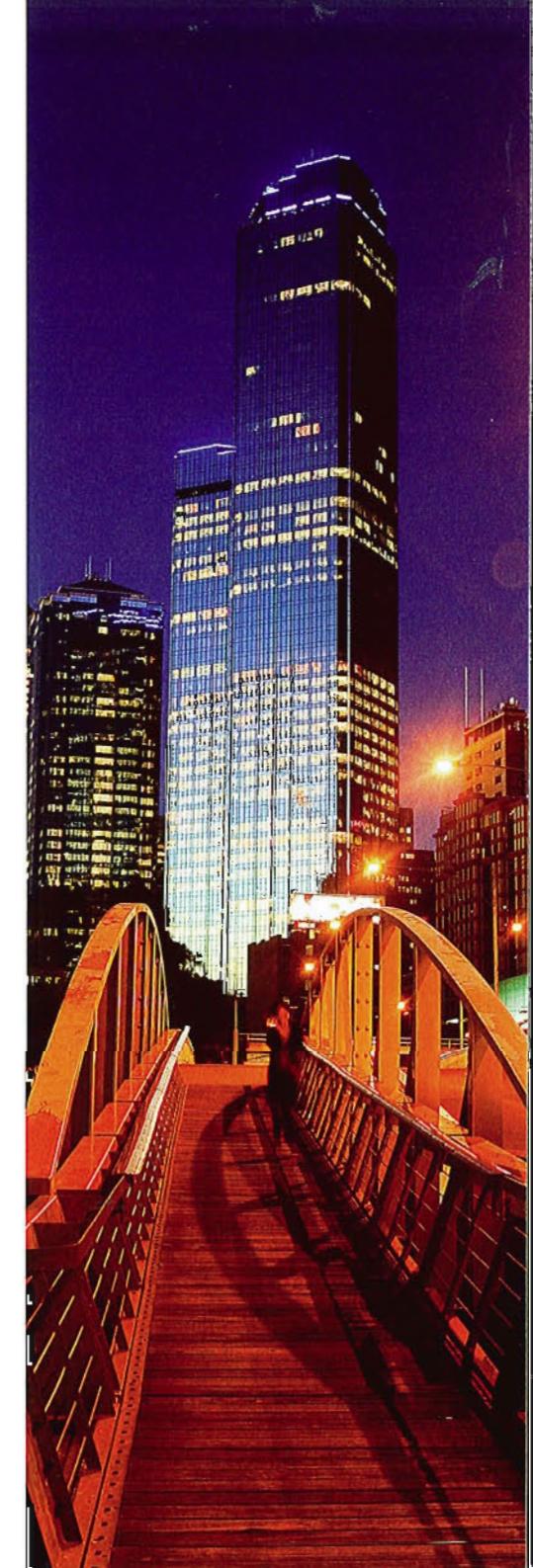
The growth of large events such as the Melbourne International Film Festival and Melbourne Comedy Festival, as well as major sporting events like the Grand Prix and AFL Grand Final have also contributed to increased visitation, particularly by those aged under 30.

The current average age of the inner city population is 28, compared with 45.5 in Victoria. (ABS, 2007a).

While there has been exceptional residential and business growth in the City of Melbourne over the past decade, similar increases in the level of crime have not occurred. Statistics indicate that the total number of offences in the City of Melbourne has been steadily declining, down from around 50,000 in 1999/00 to 29,531 in 2007/8 (Victoria Police, 2007a). Of these, property crimes represent the most significant reductions. While overall crime is down, the level of intra-personal violence and anti-social behaviour in the city has risen in recent years. Between 2001 and 2008, the total number of anti-social behaviour offences in public space increased from 7,026 to 7,874, a rise of 12 per cent (Victoria Police, 2007b).

Recently, Melbourne as a 24 hour city has received considerable attention. On the one hand, Melbourne is promoted as a lively global destination, where locals and visitors can engage with the city 24 hours a day and is the only Australian city to be designated a Safe Community by the World Health Organisation. On the other hand, some media reports present a picture of a dangerous and uninviting place fuelled by alcohol.

It is critical that the City of Melbourne recognises the important role it has to play in contributing to the 24 hour city, building on its successes but also responding to and addressing areas of concern. The City of Melbourne *Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)* clearly defines the CBD as a 24 Hour Zone. This planning framework encourages development of a vibrant mixed use area, with careful management to minimise negative impacts and recognition of the growing residential community within the central city (Clauses 21.08-1 and 21.02-2). In other words, this strategy is focused on balancing the needs of businesses and retailers with the expectations of residents and visitors. To complement the MSS, the *City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City* addresses the competing needs of the variety of city users and provides a framework to manage and resolve issues as Melbourne journeys through the hours from day through night.



City Rhythms

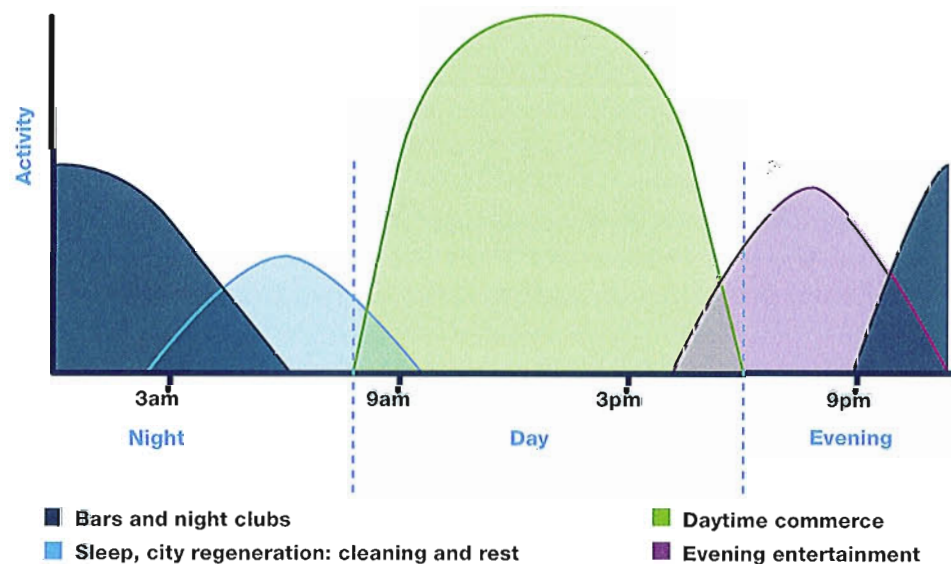
A 24 hour city policy for Melbourne does not seek to create an environment that supports continuous, high level activities throughout the entire day and night. The policy recognises that the city progresses through different rhythms over the course of 24 hours.

The rhythm of the city between 8am and 6pm is dominated by the hustle and bustle of commerce, people coming and going from nine to five jobs, people going to meetings, having lunch, attending university, and visiting tourist sites.

As people finish work, the city develops a more relaxed atmosphere, people meet for dinner, gather to see a show or visit a gallery. Around 11pm to midnight, the city's vibe changes. Many visitors and workers have left the city, while others gather to celebrate and engage in live entertainment, drink at the bars or socialise in clubs. The policy also recognises that the city is home to residents, many of whom need to sleep during this time, even while activity takes place. As the entertainment venues close and the city visitors go home, it is time for the city to rest and recuperate for the new day. Late-night shift workers finish their work, and the city cleaners enable the new day to commence afresh.

The *City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City* has been produced to support these rhythms.

Figure 1: Representation of Melbourne City rhythms



Scope

The *City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City* is an overarching policy that provides a coordination mechanism and decision-making framework for all other council policies that relate to 24 hour city issues.

The policy will provide a framework to guide all areas of the City of Melbourne in the development of its future strategic plans and actions.

While the policy places a particular emphasis on night time issues, it is designed to recognise the rhythms of a 24 hour city as it moves from day to night and back again. The policy is applied broadly to all users of the city through this time. This encompasses a range of businesses, including light industry, hospitality, transport, and the global finance industry, as well as city users such as residents, workers and visitors.

Numerous City of Melbourne plans and strategies address economic, social, cultural, environmental, land use, planning and health issues. They include the:

- Municipal Strategic Statement;
- Retail Strategy;
- Strategy for a Safer City;
- Municipal Public Health Plan;
- Future Melbourne;
- Waste Management Strategy;
- Arts Strategy; and
- Urban Design Strategy.

The *City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City* is the first document that sets out a vision for the city in full transit through day to night hours, acknowledging the importance of balancing competing needs during those times.

The policy applies to the areas within the boundaries of the City of Melbourne; however a greater emphasis is placed on the CBD and other Mixed Use Zones in the municipality.





Relationship to other State and local policies

The *City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City* adheres to the broader *Annual Plan*, *Municipal Strategic Statement* and City of Melbourne endorsed strategies, plans and frameworks and is incorporated into *Future Melbourne*.

Where applicable, *City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City* has been designed to complement the general directions of existing State and Federal Government legislation. However, where policy conflicts exist, they will be addressed on a case by case basis.

Policy vision

City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City vision is that:

A safe, vibrant and diverse Melbourne balances the competing needs of the city as it moves from day through night.

Policy aims

The key aim of the policy is to balance activation with regulation and thereby promote a safe, vibrant and inclusive city that extends from the day into the night.

The policy also aims to support increases and/or improvements in:

- Non alcohol related entertainment in the evening to late-night hours;
- Venues and activities that cater for a diverse range of customers;
- Activities that add life to the city after 5pm;
- Innovative use of places and spaces in the evening;
- Ongoing development and management of public spaces;
- Improved services, including more effective night time public transport and pedestrian access;
- Perceptions of safety; and
- Responsiveness to issues raised by City of Melbourne constituents.

The policy aims to contribute to a reduction in:

- Anti social behaviour;
- Crime and violence;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Negative amenity impacts; and
- Alcohol and drug related harms.

Principles of the policy

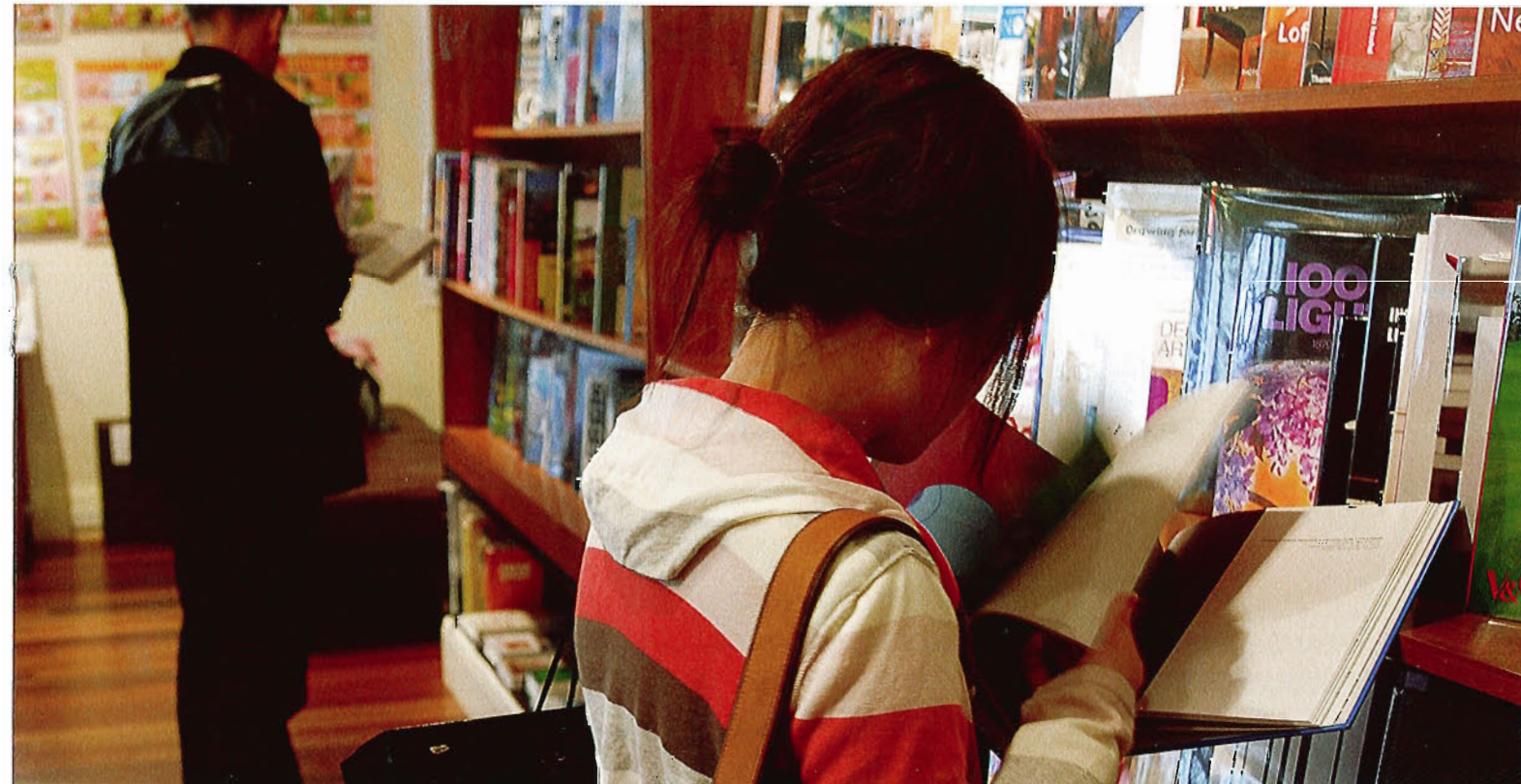
To balance the competing challenges of the 24 hour city, Melbourne will be guided in its regulatory, governance, policy, and service and program delivery by the following eight decision making principles:

1. A vibrant 24 hour city is built on mutually beneficial partnerships between a diverse range of stakeholders.
2. City safety is a priority which will be addressed by a range of harm reduction strategies, including a focus on the design and management of public space, crime prevention and local law compliance.
3. Planning decisions relating to social issues, land use and amenity will balance the needs of all stakeholders.
4. Infrastructure developments will meet the needs of a 24 hour city.
5. A diverse range of recreation, leisure and cultural activities will provide a variety of options for city users throughout 24 hours in Melbourne.
6. Melbourne will have a wide range of services available to city users that are appropriate, timely and accessible.
7. City users will be supplied with resources, information and customer services to support decision making.
8. Policy actions will be evidence based and continually monitored to ensure effectiveness, sustainability and value for money.

Priorities for action

The City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City identifies four priorities for action:

1. Activation and cultural context – activating a diverse range of areas and activities, supporting a diverse economy in the city, and working to facilitate the development of a safe, inclusive, and vibrant culture that respects competing needs and differences.
2. Infrastructure and physical context – ensuring public space is managed effectively and appropriate infrastructure develops to support the 24 hour city.
3. Regulation and operational context – applying appropriate controls to regulate the night time environment.
4. Partnerships – working with all stakeholders, including service providers, traders and businesses, Federal, State and other local governments; as well as local residents and communities, to ensure a holistic and consultative approach is taken to addressing the issues associated with the 24 hour city.



1. Activation and cultural context

Evidence from around the world has shown that through planned and controlled activation, city centres have become safer and more vibrant. The goal of activating Melbourne at night is to encourage a diverse and vibrant place for people to visit, socialise and work.

Encouraging people into the city at night will support economic prosperity and encourage businesses to develop and cater for customer needs.

As the city is a global business centre, some commercial activities take place at times which relate to business hours in other parts of the world, such as the USA and Japan. A wide range of emergency services keep functioning round the clock, and many servicing activities and deliveries are best done out of hours.

The City of Melbourne will work with stakeholders, including community members, to both facilitate and sustain the development of a friendly and attractive location that actively promotes a variety of activities, services and events. The *City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City* supports programs and partnerships to promote a night time culture based on equity, tolerance, respect and shared responsibility. The policy also recognises the need to balance night-time activity with the needs of city residents for rest and recuperation.

Recognising that city residents in the 24 Hour Mixed Use Zone need local government support on key social and amenity issues, the policy identifies responsibilities for increased information and services, improved resources and customer service responsiveness on the part of the City of Melbourne.

The City of Melbourne aims to create an environment that actively seeks participation of a diverse range of communities. This includes ensuring a range of youth and family friendly activations are promoted. It also includes encouraging events that are alcohol-free and events that are affordable and accessible.

The City of Melbourne will continue and enhance its work to minimise the harms associated with alcohol and drugs use and the associated impacts on community safety. Actions are focussed on education, awareness and training for targeted groups; coordination of police and agency partnerships for improved support service outcomes; encouragement of responsible practice by licensees; and advocacy for improvements in late night services including transport.

2. Infrastructure and physical context

It is essential that infrastructure develop in parallel with the 24 hour city.

This includes providing and supporting the provision of accessible, responsive and appropriate services that meet the changing needs of residents, business, students and visitors to the city.

With more people visiting the city, it is essential that municipal and State Government infrastructure also evolves to meet increasing demands. This includes supporting additional public toilets where required, improving the design of public spaces for increased safety, reducing noise impacts and increasing resources and partnerships for the prevention of crime and violence. Municipal and other waste and cleansing services must also develop to meet the changing needs of the city.

The City of Melbourne is also committed to improving access to and from the city at night. This will involve advocating for 24 hour public transport as well as exploring innovative solutions such as the Night Rider bus, improvements to taxi services, car sharing services and other transport options.

The City of Melbourne will continue its leadership around innovative use of public spaces and will explore ways to ensure that these spaces are inviting, attractive and useful for people visiting the city at night and in the early morning.



3. Regulation and operational context

Regulation forms a critical part of the *City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City*. The policy seeks to better apply existing planning frameworks to regulate the night time economy.

This includes reviewing existing provisions in the Municipal Strategic Statement, local laws, and relevant State and Federal legislation. The process will work towards a better, consistent approach to assessing land use permits for premises and activities seeking late night trading in an approach that considers amenity and social impacts.

The review will also include an analysis of 24 hour activity on the waterways within and adjacent to Melbourne.

The *City of Melbourne Policy for the 24 Hour City* will explore legislative and regulatory frameworks in all states and territories across Australia to determine the appropriateness and effectiveness of factors such as:

- best practice management guidelines;
- social impact statements;
- introduction of entry restrictions;
- changes to planning laws as mechanisms to better manage licensed and non licensed businesses operating at night; and
- the cumulative impact of multiple, similar venues operating in the same area.

The City of Melbourne and regulatory agency partners will continue to jointly review land use and licensing permits requests.

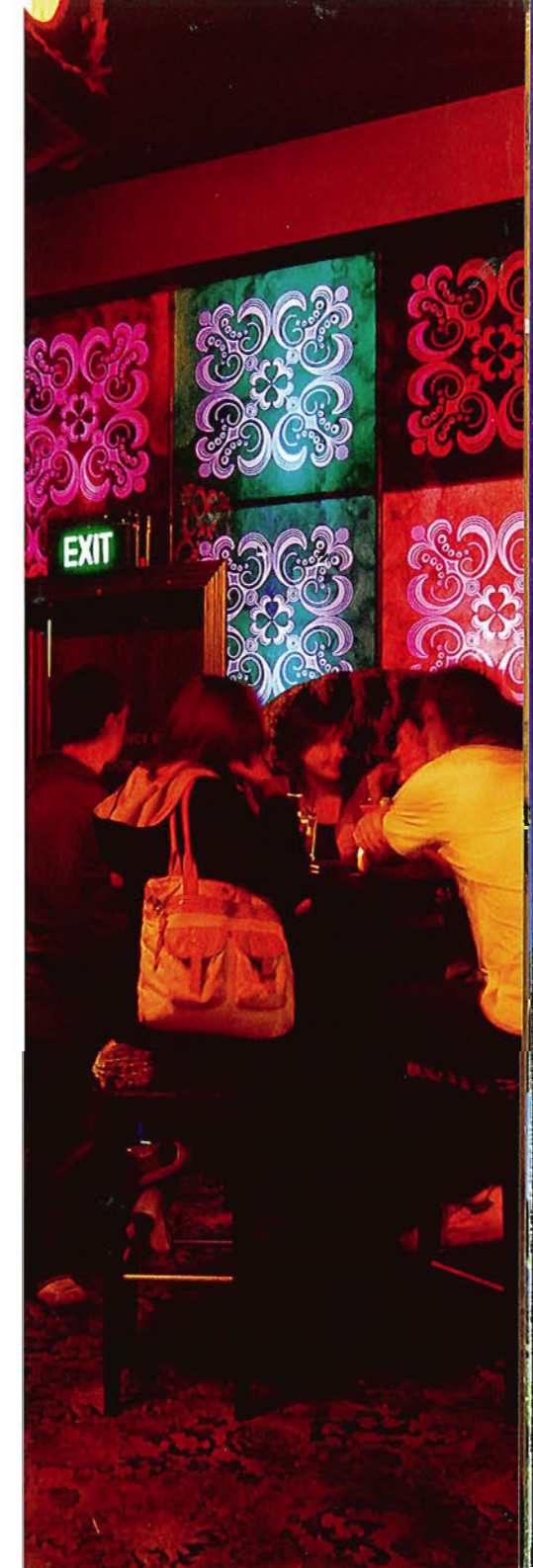
City safety is a priority which will be addressed with a broad range of strategies. The focus will be on increasing resources for crime prevention and local law enforcement including increased application of resources such as closed circuit TV.

The *City of Melbourne Policy for the 24 Hour City* provides an overarching strategic framework for implementation of the City of Melbourne's regulatory functions under the *Local Government Act* and the *City of Melbourne Act*.

In particular the following areas of action will be highlighted:

- Cooperation on, and implementation of, recommendations of the 2005 Inner Cities Entertainment Precincts Taskforce report *A Good Night for All*, to improve safety and amenity in the inner city late night entertainment precincts;
- Implementation of the 'agent of change' principle in relation to existing amenity rights, in particular when dealing with noise management issues in and around new or altered licensed premises;
- Actions required to endorse the City of Melbourne's *Draft Licensed Premises Policy*;
- Further research on the issue of saturation policy and cumulative impacts regarding licensed premises; and
- Analysis of provisions associated with regulatory policy from the State Government, such as the 2am lock out trial (June to September 2008), and incorporation of any positive results for regulating the 24 hour city environment of Melbourne.

The policy will also encourage and facilitate extended provision of support services where required. The City of Melbourne recognises the need to offer services that respond to the 24 hour city. Accordingly, it will extend its hours of operation in relevant departments such as customer service and enforcement. The City of Melbourne will develop an improved mechanism to deal with stakeholders' feedback about late night issues.



4. Partnerships

Shaping culture is an underlying tenet of the 24 hour policy. While all elements of the policy are designed to influence the way people engage with the city, partnership is the central pillar of this approach.

The City of Melbourne is committed to facilitating and utilising strong and effective partnerships between all city stakeholders.

The City of Melbourne will call upon the skills and resources of services providers, local and state government departments, enforcement agencies, the business community as well as the various groups, such as residents and visitors who use the city, to address issues associated with the 24 hour city.

As well as external partnerships, partnerships within the City of Melbourne will guide all phases of the policy and are critical to planning and implementation.

Monitoring and evaluation

Impacts of the application of *City of Melbourne's Policy for the 24 Hour City* will be monitored and evaluated.

The framework will take into account Melbourne's role as a municipality, as a state capital city, as an international cultural city which operates throughout 24 hours and the place of Melbourne's CBD as the largest entertainment precinct in Australia.

Improved data collection; City of Melbourne's own research on emerging trends and perceptions of safety; current work nationally and internationally; and new partnerships with academic researchers will be used to develop and provide an evidence base for the ongoing implementation of the policy. These data will also be used to keep abreast of major changes to the city's late night environment, including cultural shifts and changes related to State or Federal legislation.



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