



NIGHT TIME ECONOMY STRATEGY

Promoting the Safety,
Vibrancy and Functionality
of Yarra at Night

2014 - 2018



WURUNDJERI ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners of the country within the council's boundaries. Today they remain the custodians of the cultural heritage of this land.

Yarra City Council also acknowledges that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lived, worked and contributed to the cultural heritage of Yarra.



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GLOSSARY

Night Time Economy

The term Night Time Economy (NTE) captures certain social and business activities happening at night. These include: non-hospitality and non-entertainment related economic activities such as cleaning services, education, government services, retailing, baking and other forms of food preparation, and logistics activities.

The emergence of the NTE as an idea within planning and urban governance dates from Britain in the early 1990s. Academic and policy research suggests that many cities over the past two decades have deliberately fostered NTEs as a renewal strategy, often in combination with 'cultural planning' or 'creative cities' strategies.

Amenity

Amenity means the things that people appreciate about their urban environment. Amenity can be tangible like a shopping centre or a park, and it can be an intangible thing, like a feeling of safety or sense of community.

Night Time Entertainment Precincts

Night time entertainment precincts, refers to a concentration of businesses open after 5pm.

Night Time Activities

- Food and beverage led activities
- Gaming venues
- Retailing (Post 6pm)
- Accommodation
- Performance venues
- Film, theatre, live music opera, etc.
- Cultural institutions
- Sporting and leisure
- Adult entertainment

Source: REMPLAN 2013

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Yarra is renowned for its dynamic night life spread across a number of precincts, principally Collingwood and Fitzroy (Smith, Gertrude, Brunswick and Johnston Streets) and Richmond (Victoria, Church and Swan Streets and Bridge Road). In addition at night, activities such as leisure and recreation, libraries, parks, sports and arts operate.

Yarra's Night Time Economy (NTE) contributes 8.4% of jobs to Yarra (2,976 jobs), with the economic benefits of the NTE estimated to outweigh costs at a ratio of 2:1 (REMPPLAN 2013). However, a dollar figure cannot be placed on all costs. A lively night life can on occasion create nuisance impacts and negatively impact upon perceptions of safety.

Over the course of 2012 and 2013, an extensive program of research and consultation highlighted the following concerns with the NTE:

- traffic congestion, inadequate public transport and private taxis and contested car parking,
- reduced amenity in public spaces impacted by noise levels, increased volumes of rubbish and on occasion, public urination and vomiting, and
- problems with anti-social behaviour specifically associated with night activities and the negative impacts this has upon perceptions of community safety and general quality of life.

An additional 20,000 residents are expected to move to Yarra in the next 15 years (id. Forecasts 2014). Some will be living in new residential development in these night precincts, which is likely to escalate tension between entertainment and residential needs.

This strategy has been developed to address this. It involves a four year program of activities to improve entertainment precincts and modify the way services are delivered outside business hours and to advocate to other agencies and levels of government to do the same. Key objectives include:

- safe NTE: at night public spaces are well-kept and people behave respectfully,
- vibrant NTE: at night there are a range of people and ages, and a diversity of facilities and activities, and
- functional NTE: at night entertainment precincts accommodate people at peak times, attract people to walk, cycle or use public transport and have adequate public amenities and infrastructure.

Achieving these objectives will require subtle changes to current practice, while others will demand real innovation and will be trialled and evaluated before being implemented.

Drawing on lessons from across Australia and abroad, Council will work with residents, traders and other partners to deliver its vision of a safe and enjoyable Yarra at night, attractive to all ages and interests.



Figure 1: Principal night time precincts in Yarra

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. CONSULTATION AND RESEARCH

Efforts to better plan for activities in Yarra at night formally began in 2012 with the publication of the Discussion Paper: *Planning for our Night Time Economy* (Yarra City Council 2012a). The paper investigated the factors that can make Yarra’s night time precincts safe and functional, including:

- ease of people and vehicles moving within the precincts,
- ability of people to get home later at night,
- appearance of public places used at night,
- diversity of night time activities available,
- unreasonable noise close to residential homes, and
- anti-social behaviour and negative perceptions associated with night activities.

Council used the Discussion Paper to conduct community consultation. Council consulted with residents, traders, visitors and other stakeholders about their opinions of the ways to address the issues arising from the NTE. This feedback was then reported in the *Results from the Consultation and Research program* (Yarra City Council 2013b). A summary of the consultation undertaken over three months in 2013 is shown below in the table.

Table 1: NTE Consultation: methods and the number and type of participants during 2013

Methods	Survey	Online Forum	Pop up	Submissions	Twitter
Participants: number & type	492 respondents (of 2,400 surveys sent) 92% residents 8% traders	31 participants (of 561 unique visitors) 51% residents 53% female	135 participants 40% residents Average age 30 50% female	95 submissions of which 70 asked to light up Citizen’s Park. Mainly residents	15 individuals

Source: *Consultation and Research program Yarra City Council 2013b*

The feedback was consistent with Council's existing knowledge based on internal data, (Metropolis Research 2012) research and experiences in other municipalities. Three main themes became apparent, which form the strategy's three objectives. Participants' feedback broadly reflected that:

- People enjoy visiting Yarra's night precincts and choose to live in Yarra because of the diverse choice of food, good quality bars and pubs, the unique and vibrant atmosphere of people and activity, offering of live music and for some people, the local community vibe.
- At times these activities reduce some residents' enjoyment of their neighbourhood and impacts on their perceptions of safety. For example, they experience noise from passers-by because visitors' cars are parked nearby, see empty beer bottles and food wrappers and witness disrespectful behaviour.
- There is a strong desire to see precincts rendered more functional (and civil) through better and more public spaces (e.g. piazzas, wider footpaths) and facilitating the mobility of people in, around and out of precincts (e.g. more late night transport options, public and private, cycling facilities, visitors not parking in residential side streets).
- There is confidence that anti-social behaviour could in part be mitigated by diversifying the activity in precincts (i.e. other activities besides dining and drinking) and by Council opening up its own unique assets (e.g. town halls, parks, libraries and art spaces) for community use.



Alongside the consultation program, Council commissioned a *Cost Benefit Assessment of Yarra's Night Time Economy* (REMPPLAN 2013). REMPLAN was charged with determining data sources and developing a framework for measuring the NTE and delivering a first assessment of the economic costs and benefits associated with the Yarra Local Government Area NTE.

The benefits of the NTE are estimated as employment in a range of sectors and associated revenue and spending. The costs of the NTE are to do with servicing the NTE such as health, noise and the policing of anti-social and criminal behaviour. The benefits and costs derived from the economic modelling are displayed below in Table 2. The results from the costs benefit assessment found that the benefits outweigh the costs of the NTE by a ratio of 2:1.

Table 2: Benefit and Cost Analysis of Yarra's NTE

	Benefits	Costs
Methodology	Estimated in terms of Output / Revenue; Employment; Wages & Salaries & Value-added	Estimated as proportion of industry sector output that is specifically associated with servicing or managing the NTE
Jobs	2967	957
Revenue/Output	\$333.1 million	\$120.1 million
Wages	\$96.2 million	\$60.2 million
*Value-added	\$150.5 million	\$75.2 million

Source: REMPLAN 2013

*Value-Added data represents the marginal economic value that is added by each industry sector in a defined region (REMPPLAN 2013).

The report found that the NTE contributes almost 3,000 jobs, which is equivalent to 8.4% of jobs in Yarra. These jobs generate \$112,282 per worker. Over 50% of these jobs are in restaurants, cafes and takeaway outlets. The total value generated from Yarra's NTE is \$665 million per annum.

2.2. POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

This strategy has regard to local government legislative functions, regional projects and Victorian legislative responsibilities and policies.

2.2.1 Local government legislative functions relevant to the NTE

The strategy's focus is on improving Council's functions to service the NTE. Four legislative functions from the *Local Government Act 1989* Section 3E are relevant for managing the NTE.

Table 3: Local government legislative functions relevant to the NTE

Local government functions	Adapting to a NTE
Provide community Infrastructure	Pedestrian-friendly zones to cope with peaks in activity areas, lighting to activate spaces and increase perceptions of safety
Conduct strategic and land use planning	Guideline to ensure appropriateness of type of activity and number of people permissible in an area
Advocate and promote proposals in best interests of community	Develop an inner city Council position on late night transport issues
Provide services and facilities	Libraries, arts programs, facilities for hire to facilitate community participation

2.2.2. Partnerships

Council commits to work with partners to achieve the strategy's objectives and strengthen its advocacy positions. Partners identified below are those with relevant interests, legislative responsibilities and policies in the management of the NTE.

Council has limited powers, specifically in relation to alcohol regulation, policing and public transport. It will continue to relay community concerns and desires to decision makers on these three state functions by deepening relationships with state government agencies and capitalising on opportunities arising through:

- *Reducing the alcohol and drug toll: Victoria's plan 2013–2017*, a whole-of-government strategy to reduce risky drinking and other drug harms,
- *Department of Health North-West Region Whole-of-Government Alcohol and Other Drugs Hotspots Project*, and
- the freeze on new late night liquor licences in four inner city municipalities including Yarra, valid until 30 June 2015.

The Inner Melbourne Action Plan and associated forums will continue to be a key platform for intelligence gathering and collaboration between inner city Councils and the State Government.

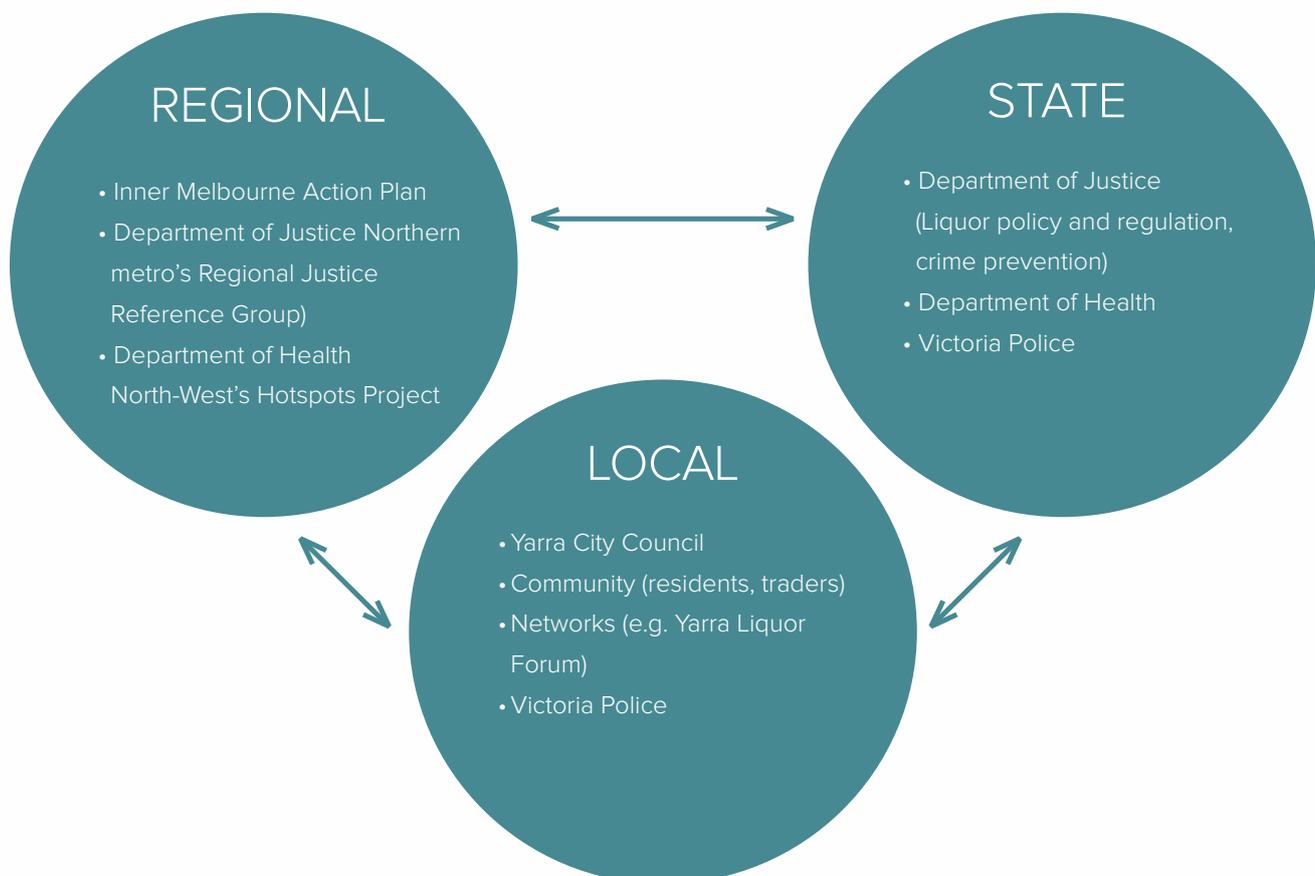


Figure 2: State, Regional and Local Partnerships in managing Yarra's NTE

2.2.3 Yarra City Council policies relevant to the NTE

This strategy has multiple dependencies and synergies with a number of Council strategies presented below.

Table 4: Council policies related to the NTE

Strategy	Relationship to the NTE
Council Plan 2013-17	One of the five strategic objectives is making Yarra More Liveable. Much of Yarra's significant residential development occurs in busy residential areas, and close to or in Yarra's entertainment precincts. This requires Council to better manage the conflict both from the hours and types of activity and residential neighbours.
Health Plan 2013-17	Includes a priority to reduce the harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs by improving the safety of Yarra's night time entertainment precincts through amenity enhancements and diversifying activity.
Urban Design Strategy 2011	Has a priority to design major activity centres through better urban design in streetscape and structure planning to accommodate public toilets, improved pedestrian friendly zones and bike parking and routes.
Tourism Strategy 2011-16	Promoting sustainable transport awareness and alternatives to visitors is one of its priorities, and enhancing amenity to ensure visitors have a safe experience of Yarra.

3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This strategy establishes a vision, objectives and actions to promote the NTE’s **safety, vibrancy and functionality** over the next four years. It is a strategic framework to inform and guide decisions that will affect and shape the NTE in Yarra.



Figure 3: Strategic Framework for managing Yarra’s NTE

Guiding principles

The strategy’s actions are underpinned by five key principles. Actions are:

- based on evidence,
- community and partner driven,
- delivering public value (the greatest possible benefit to all of community),
- sustainable (including flexible), and
- linked to Council policies.





Objective 1

A Safe NTE in Yarra

At night public spaces are well-kept and people behave respectfully.

3.1 A SAFE NTE IN YARRA

3.1.1. Issues

According to Council's own research, some in the community have negative associations, or experiences, of nightlife in Yarra that negatively impact on their perceptions of safety of Yarra's NTE. The two key issues impacting on people's safe experience of Yarra's NTE are: anti-social behaviour and reduced amenity.

Perceptions of anti-social behaviour

Data shows that Yarra had the third highest alcohol-related ambulance attendances in the Melbourne metro in 2011/12. The peak time for these alcohol-related attendances was between 10pm and 2am and on Friday and Saturday nights (Lloyd 2013). These cases usually relate to alcohol

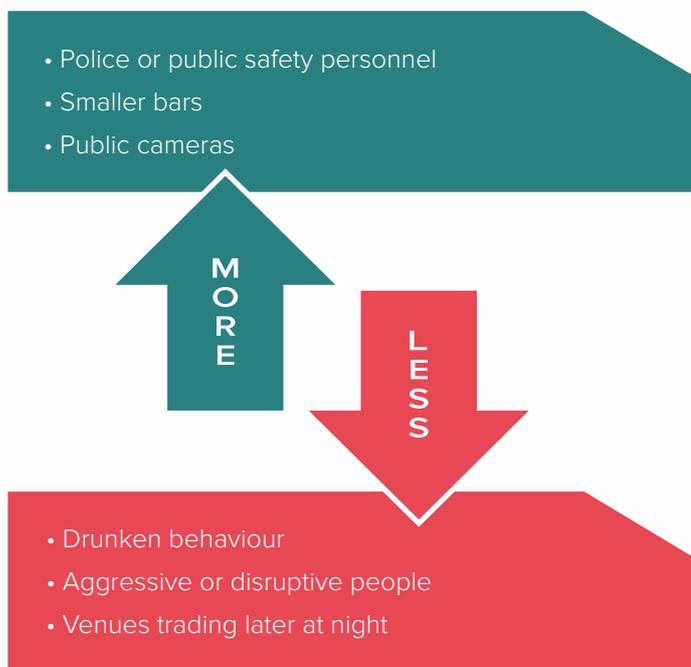
intoxication and poisoning, and may include alcohol related injuries. It is not known where such attendances took place (home, public, venues). For analytical purposes in Yarra there were eight incidents per approximately 281 licensed businesses open after 10pm (of which approximately 90 remained open after 1am). Compared to Yarra, in Port Philip, there were more incidents over fewer venues, and in the Greater Dandenong municipality, there were equivalent incidents across only a small number of venues. This is shown in Figure 4. To understand the extent of issue in the public realm more information about ambulance attendances is required, particularly the reason and location of attendances. Also limited in this analysis are the venues' characteristics such as size, type of music, standing capacity, etc.



Figure 4: Comparison of licensed venues and ambulance alcohol-related attendances on Friday & Saturday nights in 2011/12 (Annual Total)

Source: Trends in alcohol and drug related ambulance attendances in Melbourne: 2011/12, Turning Point and Interactive map of Victorian Liquor Licenses: general; late night general; late night on-premises and on-premises licenses, Victorian Commission for Gaming and Liquor Regulation

A survey of 135 visitors to Swan Street was conducted on a Friday night in April 2013 to gauge perceptions of safety. Of the people surveyed, 80% (of whom 40% were residents) reported feeling safe in the precinct at night. However people do have concerns about behaviour and activities at night. Responses from people participating in this survey along with other feedback provided to Council indicates that community wants:



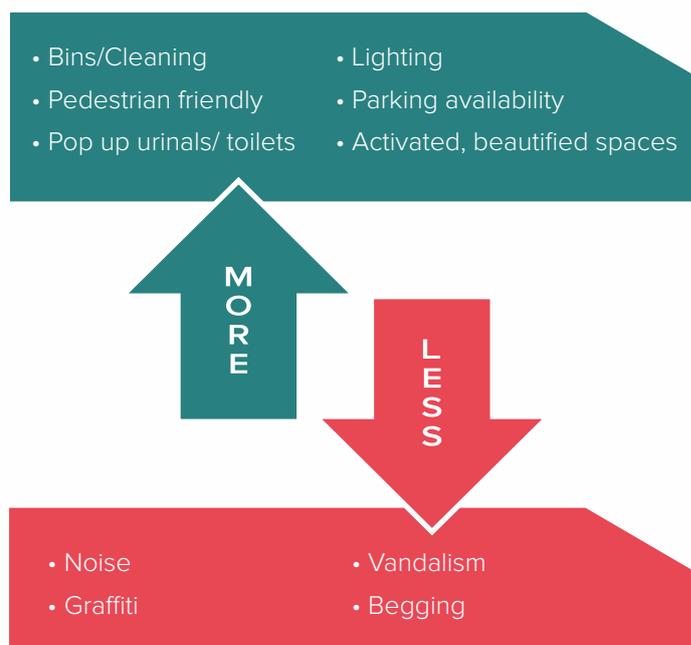
Other concerns noted included:

- groups of people on street
- being separated from friends
- criminal behaviour
- mainly males in some venues
- policing of Responsible Serving of Alcohol
- party buses
- people drinking before they go out

Reduced amenity

Council customer service data shows that residents are concerned about noise at night, which in part impacts on their feelings of safety. In both 2011 and 2012, Council received approximately 200 noise complaints related to entertainment venues. However, this figure is similar to the numbers Council receives about construction and commercial premises. Of those venue-related noise complaints, only about half were reported as an issue after 11pm. Most were about noise on a weekend.

Residents' main concerns raised during the consultation were to do with nuisance impacts from night activity, such as litter, public urination, noise and visitors parking in local streets. Specifically, people want the look of public spaces at night improved and amenity impacts reduced. In particular more bins, cleaning, lighting and toilets were popular strategies. Suggestions included.



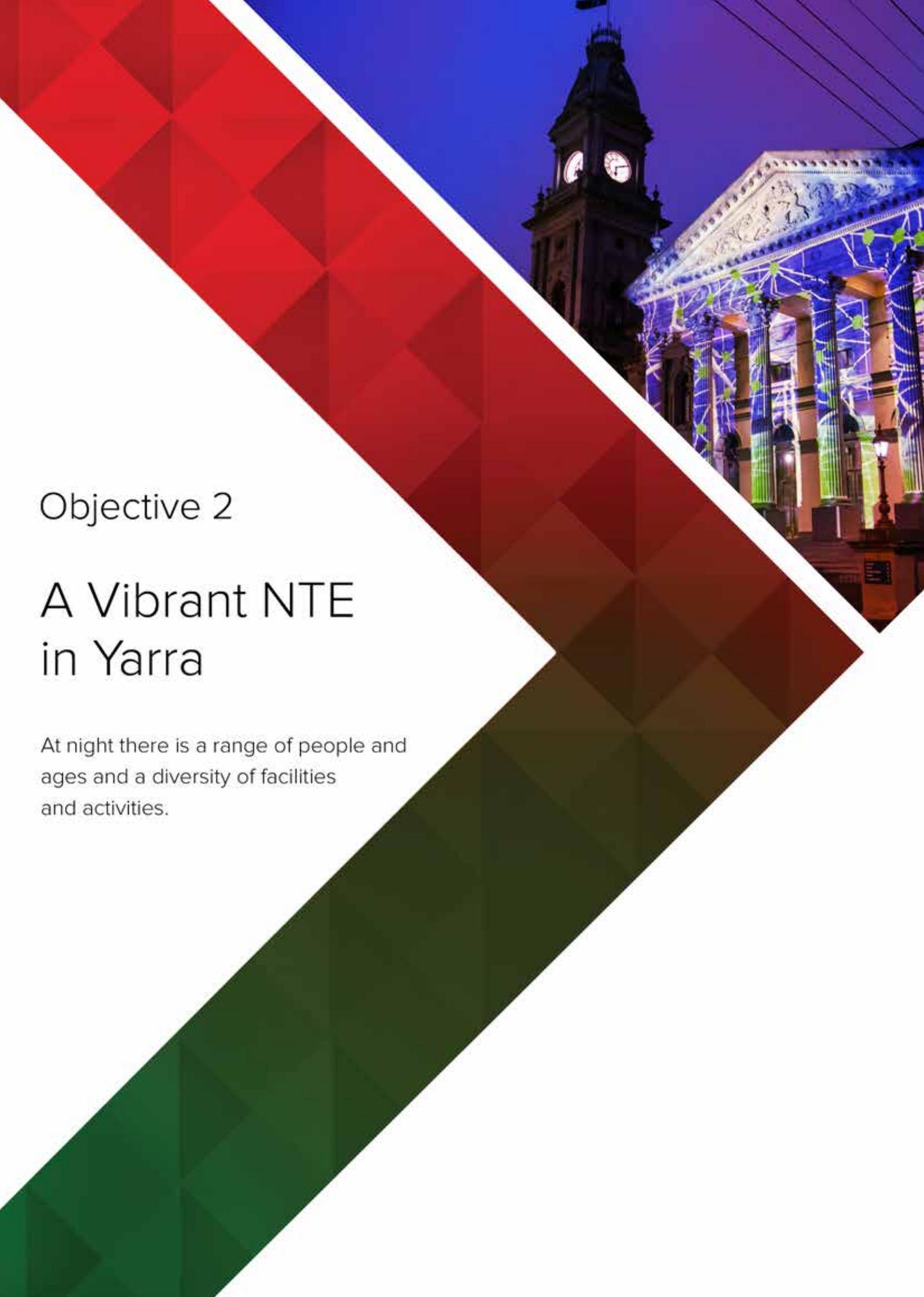
3.1.2. Actions

Council is committed to those actions where it can most influence. To improve safety, the most compelling evidence shows effective strategies are amenity improvements to ensure well-kept, attractive and busy public spaces. In addition managing precincts (concentrated late night activity areas) with necessary and additional services/ infrastructure (police, public transport, taxis, cleanliness) for peak times, and having diverse night time activities on offer are other effective strategies to enhance the safety of areas frequented at night (Matthews 2009; Sydney City Council 2011). These latter two strategies will be explored under Objectives Two and Three.

Key actions this strategy pursues are to ensure public spaces are well kept and encourage respectful behaviour. Specifically this refers to proactively engaging with traders and residents about Council's street cleaning services and with late night venues regarding compliance with planning permit conditions, and conducting ongoing maintenance of streetscape and public assets. Council will also build evidence, policies, positions and protocols on design of public spaces that promote respectful behaviours to support well-kept and respectful public places. In the meantime, Council will seek to trial and continue initiatives that build appreciation of public spaces used at night.

Immediate actions

- Trial and implement new data collection systems such as Wifi, pedestrian counts and parking sensors to help inform decisions about design of public spaces used at night
- Introduce a Live Music Protocol for venues to engage early with Council about any potential noise disputes



Objective 2

A Vibrant NTE in Yarra

At night there is a range of people and ages and a diversity of facilities and activities.

3.2. A VIBRANT NTE IN YARRA

3.2.1. Issues

The community generally reported Yarra at night as vibrant. People remarked they enjoy Yarra's night entertainment precincts because of the range and quality of food and entertainment options. Analysis of data and surveys undertaken by Council revealed people want to enhance its vibrancy through greater entertainment options at night. This would help minimise anti-social behaviour and the focus on drinking alcohol later at night.

Greater entertainment options

Economic analysis by REMPLAN (2013) of the businesses in Yarra's NTE shows a range of activities operating in Yarra after business hours. Using employment as a proxy for economic activity, food dominates economic activity as indicated by the number of jobs across the NTE in Figure 5.

This range of activities reduces later at night after retail outlets have closed. Visiting a pub or bar, or having a takeaway snack are often the remaining options open.

Residents, traders and visitors suggested Council can facilitate a range of entertainment options particularly in the arts and cultural area e.g. libraries, live music, performances, food-based festivals through Council-owned facilities and connections with community. Ideas for additional entertainment options included:

- bookshops/retail open later
- restaurant kitchens open later
- mix of businesses
- more live music
- more street art, performance and activities e.g. night markets, food trucks
- more services open later e.g. gyms, supermarkets

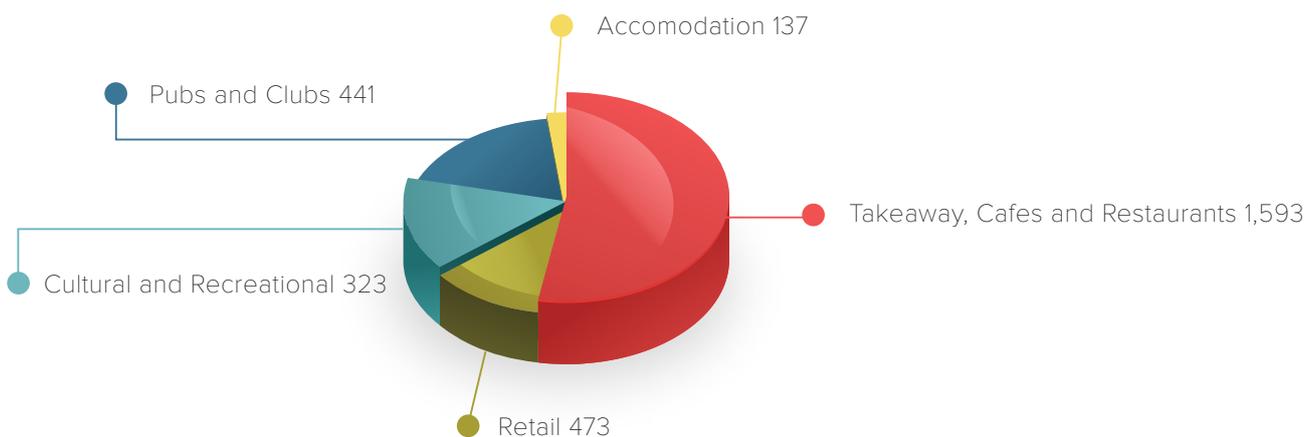


Figure 5: Number of jobs across 5 popular business sectors in the NTE

3.2.2. Actions

To improve vibrancy, some of the most compelling evidence shows that diversifying the range of entertainment options (retail, recreation, cultural) to attract various age groups and families is effective (Sydney City Council 2011). Providing a mix of attractions and routine activities (visiting a supermarket or gym) in the evening attracts a wider demographic into the area, which promotes social cohesion, vibrancy and deters crime (Hadfield, 2011). Further trialling of programmed free

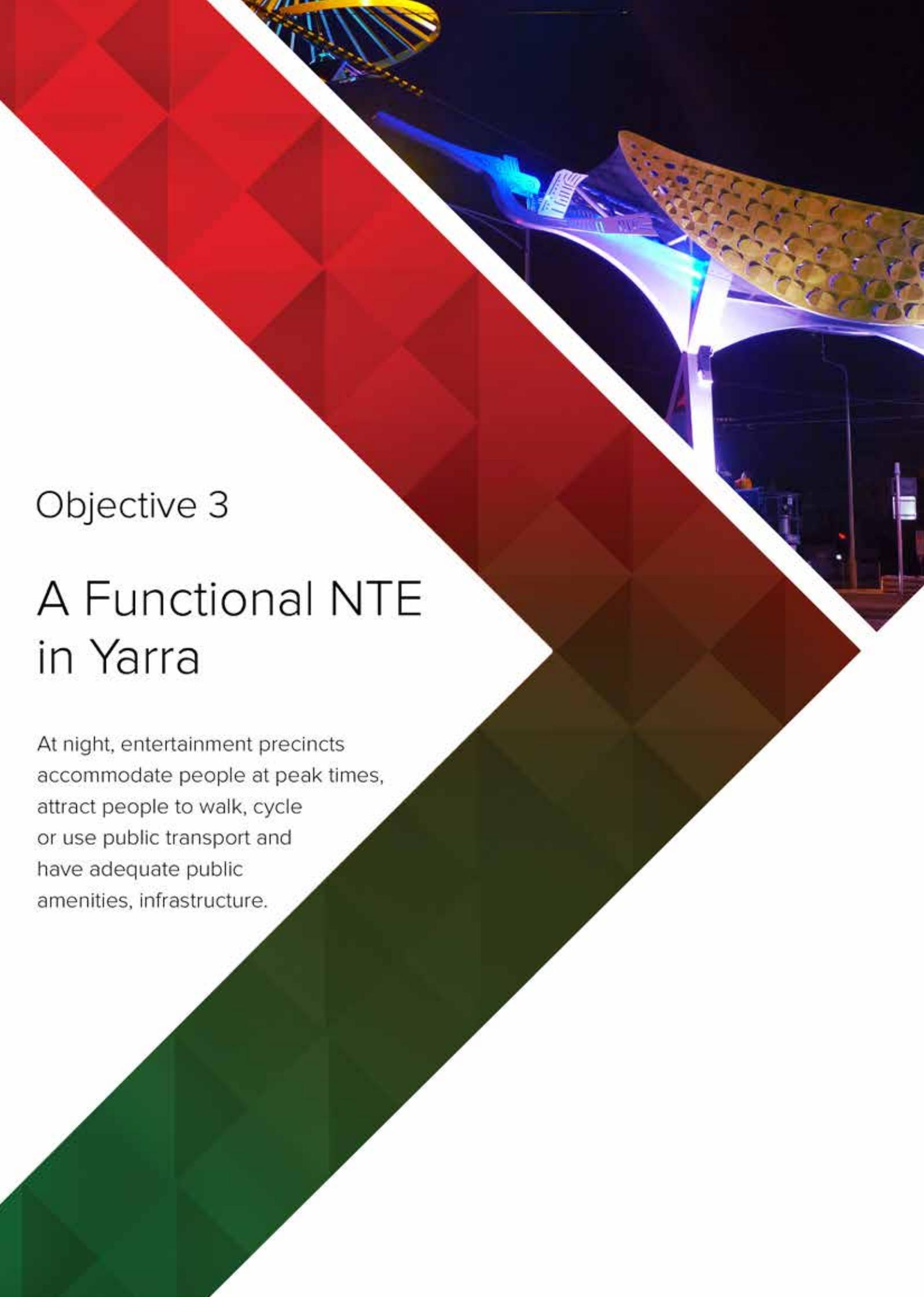
and community-based initiatives that appeal to youth and older people is part of diversifying the NTE.

Key actions this strategy pursues include facilitating diverse night time activities by encouraging community to put on activities that are of broad interest via community grants and events. To support the diversity at night, Council will conduct research into nature of demand for Council facilities and services, and potential for these to be available at night.

💡 Immediate actions

- Complete a proposal for a community grants stream on community strengthening through diverse activities and/or urban environment at night
- Establish a process for managing unplanned events at night





Objective 3

A Functional NTE in Yarra

At night, entertainment precincts accommodate people at peak times, attract people to walk, cycle or use public transport and have adequate public amenities, infrastructure.

3.3. A FUNCTIONAL NTE IN YARRA

3.3.1. Issues

According to data and surveys undertaken by Council, the community thinks that current services and infrastructure, such as toilets, public transport, taxis services and pedestrian friendly areas require improvement in and around Yarra's night precincts.

Later public transport services

Residents, traders and visitors reported they want greater variety of transport options later at night e.g. buses, cab share, venues that provide private transport. Such feedback is consistent with a problem highlighted in the recent Victorian Government Taxi Industry Inquiry. The inquiry found that between midnight and 2am on Saturday and Sunday mornings there is a taxi service shortage (Taxi Industry Inquiry, 2012). Their data shows that taxis are most heavily used by those who live closer to the CBD. Many visitors to Yarra are locals and some use taxis, based on anecdotes and data discussed below.

There are approximately 280 licensed venues open after 10pm and 90 businesses open beyond 1am in Yarra. Some of these later night venues have told Council that their patrons often rely on taxis or public transport services prior to 1am, to get home on Friday and Saturday nights.

Given these two factors; venues open after public transport services stop, and patrons relying on taxis, Council conducted a Yarra "mini census of patron transport" to acquire a more informed local understanding about late night transport services issues. The study took place over two nights on Friday 22 and Saturday 23 March 2013 with 560 patrons interviewed at three licensed venues across two entertainment precincts. The purpose of the study was to understand the demand for different types of transport, and where patrons live. Patrons were asked which mode of transport did they take, and will take home, their home postcode and planned departure time.

Findings indicate that half of the patrons interviewed rely on taxis to get home. The other half travelled by other transport modes. See the box below for further findings from this study.

Key findings from the Mini census of patron transport

There is a heterogeneous experience in people's choice of travel mode home. Across the three venues (the Corner Hotel and Bar 9T4, located on Swan Street, Richmond and the Laundry Bar on Johnston Street, Fitzroy) the most popular choice to travel home was by taxi (50% of patrons interviewed). Beyond that there was no obvious pattern, it varied across travel by car (19%), foot (18%), public transport (10%), and bicycle (3%). One explanation for the choice of taxi is people's planned time of departure; two-thirds (63%) of people staying beyond 2am planned on taking a taxi.

Choice of travel mode could be based on people's residence. There was a diversity of patrons' place of residence across the three venues. For example, of the three venues, the Corner Hotel – a specialist music venue – had the highest visitation from people who lived at least 20 kilometres away and the highest use of car as mode of transport.

By comparison, more patrons of the Laundry Bar lived within 10 kilometres, and more chose to travel there on foot.

Make more space for crowds

The community expressed that Council needs to improve space and crowd management in precincts. Crowds on busier nights are of concern as pedestrian traffic spills out onto roads and there are multiple uses of footpaths for queues into venues, dining, bike parking and street furniture. People want:

- pedestrian friendly precincts
- peak times in precincts managed
- safe taxi rank
- parking availability in precincts (rather than in side streets)
- more bike racks
- less concentrated pocket of venues
- separate bike lanes
- lower taxi fares

3.3.2. Actions

To improve functionality, evidence indicates that responses such as traffic calming measures, temporary road closures and footpath management enhance pedestrians' safety (Hadfield 2011). Research also shows that safe late night transport contributes to preventing violence and injury, and makes city centres more welcoming (Hadfield 2011).

Key actions this strategy pursues includes providing adequate public amenities and infrastructure to support the operation of areas frequented at night. For example, Council will review the infrastructure needs of our night precincts, such as public toilets and sustainable transport (cycling and walking). In addition, Council will establish a policy in the planning scheme that will guide decisions about types of activity in precincts that is desirable for community. Council will also advocate about late night transport issues through partnerships with inner city councils, and work with late night traders to explore barriers for their patrons who rely on transport to get home.



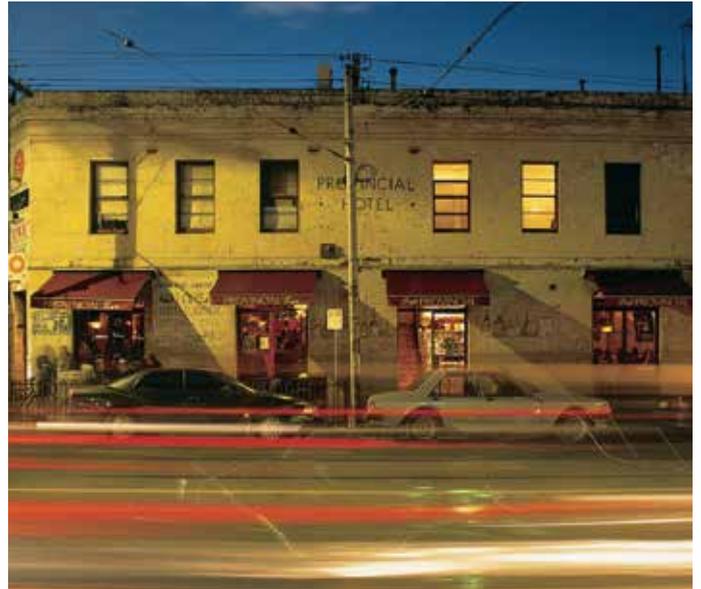
Immediate actions

- Review the public toilet strategy to consider the needs of night time entertainment precincts
- Prepare a planning scheme amendment to include a revised licensed premises policy

4. IMPLEMENTATION

Accompanying the strategy is an annual implementation plan of the actions to achieve the three objectives: a safe, vibrant and functional Yarra at night. Actions will be reviewed annually. The success of the actions will be measured against expected outcomes (Althaus, Bridgman & Davis 2007). An evaluation framework will be employed using new and existing data measured against the actions under each objective. Such data will include available data on demographic makeup, pedestrian volumes, congestion, migration, anti-social behaviour, complaints received, area attractors and transport usage patterns. Council will also monitor any shifts in perceptions of safety via the Annual Customer Service Survey.

The success of the implementation will also be based on building collaborative projects with other councils, local and state agencies and with the involvement of traders and residents.



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