

Creative City – Cultural Policy Discussion Paper Submission to the City of Sydney

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Tourism & Transport Forum

Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) is the peak national advocacy body for the tourism, transport and aviation sectors. It is a CEO forum representing the interests of 200 leading Australian institutions and corporations in the private and public sectors.

TTF uses its experience and networks to influence public policy outcomes and business practices, and to assist the delivery of major tourism, aviation and transport-related infrastructure projects. Our members' interests include tourism, accommodation, major events, cultural institutions, aviation, land and maritime transport, investment, property development, finance, retail, hospitality and education.

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
RECOMMENDATIONS	5
IMPROVING ACCESS, CREATING MARKETS	6
1. Improving transport access	6
a. Light rail	6
b. Taxis	7
c. Harbour Hopper Cultural Ribbon Ferry	7
d. Customer information	7
2. Creating markets	8
a. Aboriginal Knowledge and Cultural Centre	8
b. Industry partners for promoting indigenous experiences	9
FOSTERING PRECINCT DISTINCTIVENESS	10
1. Activating our precincts	10
a. Collaboration between land managers	10
b. Organic precincts	10
c. Fine grain development	11
2. Wayfinding	12
a. Sydney Cultural Ribbon	12
GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT	13
1. Branding	13
a. Culture gives a city its 'distinct appeal'	13
b. Opportunities to support exporting culture	13
2. Global cultural networks	14
a. International exhibitions and events	14

Executive summary

Sydney is one of the world's great cultural cities with a diverse offering of galleries, museums, performing arts centres, restaurants and bars. People travel to experience difference and Sydney's unique cultural offering is a key motivator. Sydney is the most popular destination in Australia for cultural and heritage visitors¹, with 60 per cent of international visitors to Sydney participating in a cultural activity during their stay².

TTF commends the City of Sydney for developing the *Creative City – Cultural Policy Discussion Paper*, as the strength and vitality of Sydney's creative sector and tourism industry are intertwined. Cultural tourism is important to Sydney's visitor economy, attracting high-yielding visitors who spend more and stay longer than the average traveller³. In addition, our cultural institutions provide visitors with experiences and insights to our way of life, creating a cultural connection. The tourism industry also plays a key role in supporting cultural institutions, providing an alternate source of revenue to build and grow programs.

The diversity of creative precincts in Sydney, from Sydney Opera House and surrounds to Walsh Bay and Barangaroo, is a key feature of our cultural landscape. Ensuring these precincts remain active will require mix-used development and collaboration between the city's different land owners. Navigation between and around these precincts requires a consistent wayfinding strategy and TTF commends the city for the development of the *Wayfinding Report*. How our cultural offering is incorporated and promoted in wayfinding tools needs to be considered.

Connecting visitors with the city's key cultural events and precincts through improved transport access will also be integral to increasing patronage. TTF recommends continued development of the CBD and South East Light Rail and implementation of a hop-on-hop-off Cultural Ribbon ferry service. The establishment of an Aboriginal Knowledge and Cultural Centre will enable visitors and locals to engage in and increase their understanding of Sydney's indigenous heritage.

Sydney's international image is shaped by its people, precincts and culture. The connections between the arts and tourism sectors should be leveraged to promote the city's international image, which in turn builds global cultural networks.

¹ NSW Government Visitor Economy Action Plan 2012

² Tourism Research Australia, *International Visitor Survey (IVS)* and *National Visitor Survey (NVS) Dec Quarter 2012*

³ Tourism Research Australia, *International Visitor Survey (IVS)* and *National Visitor Survey (NVS) Dec Quarter 2012*

Recommendations

IMPROVING ACCESS, CREATING MARKETS

- Make the CBD and South East Light Rail network the lifeblood of the city, operating 24 hours per day on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights
- Work with the state government to ensure a bus service for the Walsh Bay cultural precinct and Barangaroo is included in NSW government's broader revision of metropolitan bus routing
- Establish a designated secure taxi rank at the northern end of Macquarie Street
- Work with institutions along the Cultural Ribbon to develop a hop-on-hop-off Cultural Ribbon ferry service
- Work with the state government to improve the delivery of customer information for expanded transport options
- Support the establishment of a dedicated cultural centre to foster greater engagement, understanding and interpretation of Australian culture and heritage
- Partner with Destination NSW and Tourism Australia to leverage opportunities to develop authentic and engaging indigenous cultural experiences

FOSTERING PRECINCT DISTINCTIVENESS

- Continue to work collaboratively with adjoining land managers to deliver improved visitor experiences in the city's cultural precincts
- Ensure City of Sydney planning policy creates the right environment for precincts to evolve over time
- Work with development proponents to encourage 'fine grain' development in planning policy to encourage diverse creative precincts
- Work with Destination NSW and Sydney's cultural institutions to develop a dedicated wayfinding tool incorporating cultural content and product, print materials and digital media to support the city's Cultural Ribbon

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

- Leverage promotion and branding opportunities provided by Brand Australia to promote Sydney's creativity, arts and culture to international audiences
- Partner with iconic Sydney-based cultural institutions to leverage the branding value of their international touring programs to create global cultural networks
- Partner with Destination NSW to implement recommendations of the Visitor Economy Taskforce pertaining to culture and the arts

Contents

Improving Access, Creating Markets

1. IMPROVING TRANSPORT ACCESS

The role of transport in improving access to cultural events in the city cannot be understated. Providing frequent, reliable and safe access to and from cultural precincts throughout Sydney will be vital to the continued viability of our creative city.

a. Light rail

The CBD and South East Light Rail will be critical in connecting key cultural precincts around the city, improving the connectivity of the CBD in an unprecedented manner both in terms of service performance and quality of customer experience. To ensure that the benefits of the light rail can be fully realised, services should operate 24 hours per day on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights to ensure visitors can travel quickly, easily and safely at all times. This will also support the City of Sydney's objectives outlined in the *OPEN Sydney Strategy and Action Plan 2013-2030*.

RECOMMENDATION

- Make the CBD South East Light Rail network the lifeblood of the city, operating 24 hours per day on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights

b. Buses

Walsh Bay is a rapidly growing cultural hub however its success has been limited by accessibility issues. While TTF acknowledges that a light rail extension servicing this area is not tenable in the short term; it is therefore important to consider revision of bus routes to better service this emerging visitor precinct. This should be done as part of the NSW Government's broader revision of metropolitan bus routing.

RECOMMENDATION

- Work with state government to ensure a bus service for the Walsh Bay cultural precinct and Barangaroo is included in NSW Government's broader revision of metropolitan bus routing.

c. Taxis

Taxis are a popular choice of transport to and from cultural institutions, particularly with performance-based events in the evening. For this reason it is important to have enough taxis to meet demand and to provide taxi ranks in key cultural precincts to facilitate the safe dispersal of visitors.

Circular Quay East is a key cultural precinct in Sydney. An increasing number of visitors frequent the precinct for performances, dining, and leisure activities. While a diverse group of visitors creates a hive of activity, it can cause bottlenecks when visitors vacate the area, especially during the peak post-theatre hours in the evening.

To address this issue, a taxi rank is needed at the northern end of Macquarie Street to help transport visitors from the destination safely and seamlessly. The area is already a popular destination for taxi pick-ups; however, no designated taxi rank exists to allow taxis to queue prior to making contact with patrons. As a result, visitors wanting to leave the precinct face unnecessary delays and taxi drivers are being fined for picking up patrons in this vicinity. TTF recommends City of Sydney (the City) establish a designated taxi rank at the northern end of Macquarie Street to facilitate the safe dispersal of theatre-goers, tourists, diners, and visitors.

RECOMMENDATION

- Establish a designated secure taxi rank at the northern end of Macquarie Street

d. Hop-on-hop-off Cultural Ribbon ferry service

One of Sydney's greatest features is its harbour and the institutions which lie along its Cultural Ribbon. TTF commends the City for acknowledging the Cultural Ribbon in *Sustainable Sydney 2030*, including its plan to improve the connectivity between cultural institutions. A ferry service which would run on a loop from Woolloomooloo (Art Gallery of NSW) to Circular Quay (Sydney Opera House and Museum Contemporary Art) to the Walsh Bay Cultural Precinct, Barangaroo and then Darling Harbour (Australian National Maritime Museum) is a unique solution which would improve connectivity and the visitor experience around the harbour. To ensure the sustainability of the ferry service, TTF recommends aligning temporary trial services with large cultural events such as Sydney Festival and Vivid Sydney to test the feasibility of a dedicated service.

RECOMMENDATION

- Work with institutions along the Cultural Ribbon to develop a hop-on-hop-off Cultural Ribbon ferry service

e. Customer information

Expanded transport options for cultural events and precincts will invariably require improvements to customer information, including both public signage and on mobile devices. Information on existing Night Ride bus services is currently inadequate. For example, the only Night Ride service information currently available at Town Hall

Station is situated inside the station, which is closed when the services operate. Additional and more frequent transport information is required to encourage public transport.

RECOMMENDATION

- Work with the state government to improve the delivery of customer information for expanded transport options

2. CREATING MARKETS

a. Aboriginal Knowledge and Cultural Centre

Most Sydneysiders and visitors have little opportunity to engage or increase their understanding of our city's indigenous heritage. While some quality indigenous tourism experiences are available, such as the Royal Botanical Garden's Aboriginal heritage tours and the Australian Museum's indigenous collection, there is still large and unmet demand for authentic indigenous experiences.

TTF commends the City on The Eora Journey project, particularly the Aboriginal Knowledge and Cultural Centre proposed for Barangaroo. The tourism industry supports the concept of a cultural interpretive centre at Barangaroo that would provide opportunities for locals and visitors to develop their understanding of modern and historic indigenous Australian culture, and a place to share stories and collections of indigenous art with a wider audience.

TTF envisages the cultural centre would not be a static museum or gallery, but an incubator for indigenous businesses and product development; a place for story-telling and interpretation, which provides workshop and education facilities to encourage constant and diverse forms of engagement with our culture and heritage. The purpose would be to reflect the plethora of Australian indigenous communities and promote understanding of their history, in addition to developing a greater understanding of modern day Australian culture. The activities of the proposed cultural centre would in turn support job creation and business development opportunities, particularly for indigenous Australians. The centre will also help meet international visitor demand for an indigenous experience in an accessible CBD location.

RECOMMENDATION

- Support the establishment of a dedicated cultural centre at Barangaroo to foster greater engagement, understanding and interpretation of Australian culture and heritage

b. Industry partners for promoting indigenous experiences

State and federal tourism marketing and event companies have spent significant resources promoting Australia's indigenous tourism experiences. The NSW government has announced Sydney will host one of Australia's largest indigenous festivals, *Corroboree*, in November this year. The festival will feature nine of Sydney's major arts and cultural institutions including Bangarra Dance Theatre, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney Opera House, and The Royal Botanic Gardens.

In addition, Tourism Australia last year supported an exhibition of Australian indigenous artwork at the Musée du quai Branly in Paris, profiling Australia's unique cultural heritage to an international audience. The exhibition, which featured work from the Papunya community in Central Australia, ran for four months. Tourism Australia provided a 12-page brochure on Australia's indigenous tourism experiences, a dedicated campaign page on Australia.com and a press trip for France's high-profile media.

Considering the extensive work by Tourism Australia, Destination NSW and the City of Sydney in developing indigenous tourism, it is important these organisations work together to maximise opportunities to develop authentic indigenous experiences in Sydney, and promote this work collaboratively overseas.

RECOMMENDATION

- Partner with Destination NSW and Tourism Australia to maximise opportunities to develop authentic and engaging indigenous cultural experiences

Fostering Precinct Distinctiveness

1. Precinct development

A key feature of Sydney's cultural landscape is the diversity of its precincts, from the world-renowned Sydney Opera House and surrounds, to the emerging Walsh Bay and Barangaroo precincts, to hidden creative precincts in Chippendale and Darlinghurst. There is a need to ensure these precincts continue to grow and prosper, providing experiences for locals and visitors alike to engage in our culture.

a. Collaboration between land managers

Sydney is a patchwork of interrelated precincts, often falling within the remit of multiple land managers. The City of Sydney, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, CityRail, NSW Parks and Wildlife Service, and NSW Maritime all have jurisdiction over some of the city's greatest places to visit. While this adds to the character of the city, it also makes the coordination and delivery of visitor experiences difficult. To create a cohesive and integrated plan to improve the city's creative precincts, the City of Sydney's vision needs to be integrated with the adjoining land managers and industry stakeholders.

In addition to this, for the efficient delivery of major projects and redevelopments, it is often necessary for one of the land managers to take the lead on projects. This leadership needs to be supported by other stakeholders to ensure the project is delivered in a timely fashion. TTF has continued to advocate for better coordination between both local and state government agencies to deliver better urban planning outcomes for critical visitor and commuter precincts like Circular Quay. The inter-governmental process must nominate and empower a lead agency to deliver key projects within precincts. The agency should also be required to report on project progress with all stakeholders to ensure project objectives are delivered as promised.

RECOMMENDATION

- Continue to work collaboratively with adjoining land managers to deliver improved experiences of the city's cultural precincts

b. Organic precincts

While precinct planning and policy is important for future growth, it must also be recognised that some of the world's greatest creative precincts - the Barbican Centre in London and Chelsea in New York City - grew organically over time. TTF argues that planning for cultural development must allow for organic growth over time. This requires planners not to over-plan cultural precincts and allow scope for flexibility in the medium to

long term, responding to new opportunities to develop new and innovative cultural institutions and performance spaces. Planning policy needs to encompass the fundamentals of access and safety while allowing flexibility and innovation so creative precincts evolve over time.

Planners should seek out and reserve sites for future cultural use and resist the temptation to fully master plan precincts. Planning for sites like Barangaroo Central should include the flexibility to develop new and innovative cultural spaces into the future, allowing for evolution of a precinct over time. This approach will ensure that the cultural institutions and performance spaces of the future may be accommodated within the CBD adding to existing iconic cultural precincts in Sydney. However, site preservation should look to the creative industries and cultural organisations as a temporary land use until a long-term dedicated use is determined. Short-term lease structures that allow cultural institutions to use these spaces until a future institution is developed and funded should be encouraged by the City through the cultural policy.

RECOMMENDATION

- City planning should reserve spaces for future cultural development in key locations such as Barangaroo, while encouraging short term activation through leases to cultural organisations and the creative industries

c. 'Fine grain' development

To encourage precinct diversity, 'fine grain' development should be incorporated in the City's planning framework. 'Fine grain' is a term that describes small scale spaces, which encourage a diversity of lower cost and often specialised activities within a precinct. This development type often encourages an environment of collaboration and ideas which is especially important in driving the development of a creative precinct. Smaller 'fine grain' development typology, with different industries such as technological, cultural, sports and arts forged together in the one place, helps to encourage the incubation of new and innovative ideas to support the growth of Sydney as an international destination for the creative industries. Smaller spaces also facilitate an important layer of economic diversity, helping to provide more affordable spaces for small start-up organisations to grow within a global city.

RECOMMENDATION

- Work with development proponents to encourage 'fine grain' development in planning policy to encourage diverse creative precincts

2. Wayfinding

The City of Sydney's *Sustainable Sydney 2030* strategy sets out the direction of creating 'A City for Pedestrians and Cycling' with targets to increase the walking mode share in Sydney. TTF commends the City on this initiative and the development of the Wayfinding Strategy Report. The report outlines some key initiatives that will benefit not only visitors, but also retailers, restaurateurs, and cultural institutions who benefit from increased patronage as a result of better informed visitors.

a. The Sydney Cultural Ribbon

Sydney's Cultural Ribbon is an excellent and unique feature of the city's visitor offering and will greatly benefit from improved wayfinding. Many visitors currently find it difficult to navigate between sites such as the Art Gallery of NSW and the Sydney Opera House, as well as the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and the Walsh Bay cultural precinct. An opportunity exists to further establish the Sydney Cultural Ribbon through a dedicated wayfinding tool incorporating cultural content, city events calendar, consistent signage, print materials, and digital media.

For example, the German city of Frankfurt am Main brought together key cultural institutions to develop a printed and online guide listing their cultural tourism product, opening times, cost of entry and a map of their locations. This initiative was also integrated with other tourism product including restaurants, cafes, and public transport, and was made available to visitors at information centres, hotel concierges, and online. TTF recommends the City of Sydney working with Destination NSW and Sydney's cultural institutions to develop a dedicated wayfinding tool for the Sydney Cultural Ribbon.

RECOMMENDATION

- Work with Destination NSW and Sydney's cultural institutions to develop a dedicated wayfinding tool, incorporating cultural content and product, print materials and digital media, to support the city's Cultural Ribbon

Global Engagement

1. Branding

a. Culture gives a city its 'distinct appeal'

Sydney has a strong calendar of cultural events, many of which are supported by the City, including Kaldor Art Projects, the Biennale of Sydney, and Chinese New Year. The World Cities Culture Report 2012, which identified Sydney as one of nine great cultural cities, indicated culture gives a city its 'distinct appeal'. Culture is a key factor in attracting visitors to a destination, not just temporary leisure travellers but business travellers and skilled workers. Examples of great cities of culture which are also major economic centres include London, New York and Shanghai.

The Australian government's national branding program, 'Brand Australia', was established in 2010 to aid Australia's international trade reputation in a range of industries including technology, agriculture and manufacturing. TTF believes an opportunity exists to brand Australia and its major cities as creative and innovative hubs. Sydney's cultural offering makes it an appealing place to visit and live, thereby contributing to the economic strength of the city.

RECOMMENDATION

- Leverage promotion and branding opportunities provided by 'Brand Australia' to promote Sydney's creativity, arts and culture to international audiences

b. Opportunities to support exporting culture

An opportunity exists to brand Australia as a creative and innovative culture through cultural institutions, and in particular, their international touring programs. Iconic Sydney-based performing arts companies, such as Bangarra Dance Theatre and the Sydney Theatre Company, are met with critical acclaim when they tour internationally. Sydney Theatre Company's production of *Uncle Vanya*, with Cate Blanchett and Richard Roxburgh, which toured to New York City, was very well received by both critics and audiences and featured in the 2012 Lincoln Centre Festival.

In addition, the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) loaned 26 paintings to the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) in Dublin for a *Sidney Nolan, Ned Kelly Series* exhibition from November 2012 to January 2013. These iconic Australian paintings were extremely popular, with the IMMA reporting visitation to the museum was five times higher than the average for that time of year.

International touring can provide significant economic benefits to a destination through an increased profile as well as the relationships developed with presenting partners and the global cultural network. Engaging in this network helps to build pathways for promoting Australian culture on the world stage with international audiences gaining an increased understanding of the diversity and quality of Australia's and Sydney's creative sector.

RECOMMENDATION

- Partner with iconic Sydney-based cultural institutions to leverage the branding value of their international touring programs to create global cultural networks

2. Global cultural networks

a. International exhibitions and events in Sydney

A key benefit of increasing Sydney's creative profile and engagement with the global arts community is that it becomes a more desirable destination to host international arts programs. Large international exhibitions and events result in increased visitation and economic benefit to Sydney. The Art Gallery of NSW's *Picasso - masterpieces from the Musée National Picasso Paris* exhibition in 2012 and the *2013 Kaldor Public Art Projects: 13 Rooms* are two examples of international exhibitions which were immensely popular with Australian audiences.

A key recommendation from the NSW government's Visitor Economy Taskforce report was to ensure there is a year-round, well-planned and coordinated events calendar for Sydney. The City of Sydney's continued support and partnership will be integral to delivering this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

- Partner with Destination NSW to implement recommendations of the Visitor Economy Taskforce pertaining to culture and the arts

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