



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on Economics,
Industry and Recreation

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Canberra's Night-Time Economy

Submission number: 013

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From: [Tadija](#)
To: [LA Committee - Economics](#)
Subject: NTE Submission
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Dear Committee Members,

I welcome the opportunity to respond to the inquiry by the Standing Committee on Economics, Industry and Recreation of the ACT Legislative Assembly into Canberra's night-time economy (NTE).

I have been operating licenced venues in Canberra's CBD for over a decade.

This submission focuses on the current operating environment for licensed venues in the Canberra CBD. Many of the observations outlined reflect ongoing discussions between industry participants and the ACT Government regarding the sustainability and performance of the NTE.

The night-time economy includes a wide range of activities, with late-night hospitality and entertainment venues forming a key component. The ability of an entertainment precinct to attract visitors—particularly during major events—and to encourage local participation is closely linked to the overall strength of the venue ecosystem which fundamentally rests upon the City and its infrastructure.

When a diverse mix of venues is operating unencumbered, the CBD becomes a destination in and of itself. Increased visitation supports stronger trading conditions and contributes to a vibrant and active city environment.

At present, several factors are supressing participation and operating conditions.

The primary pressures affecting the CBD NTE include:

- Garema Place upgrades
- Garema Place hotel development
- Light Rail Stage 2A works
- Commonwealth Avenue Bridge Renewal Project
- Lyric Theatre project
- Increasing payroll costs – expansion of Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes to the Hospitality industry)
- Major Increases of insurance and other operating costs
- ACT Courts car park redevelopment

- Cost-of-living pressures affecting discretionary spending

These factors have influenced foot traffic patterns, access to parking, and general movement through and, into the CBD.

Construction activity has also affected infrastructure conditions and wayfinding between venues. There are also changes in perceived amenity within the precinct. Businesses have observed increased operational complexity associated with safety management, staffing, and customer movement across the CBD.

At the same time, broader economic conditions have contributed to reduced average customer spend and increased operating costs, particularly in relation to goods and insurances.

In response to these conditions, venues have adjusted staffing levels and reduced trading hours to align with current demand and costs – or in some cases, ceased operations entirely.

Several government and support initiatives are assisting the sector:

- CBR NightCrew provides on-the-ground support and is a critical piece of the NTE ecosystem.
- Ride-share access at the bus interchange have supported transport and public safety outcomes.
- Event and marketing micro-grants to businesses have helped encourage visitation.
- Outdoor dining permit waivers for businesses directly impacted by construction activities provides support to businesses able to access the measure.
- Liquor licence fee reductions for low to medium occupancy venues have delivered targeted support, however further measures are needed to ensure equitable support reaches all affected venues.
- Canberra Metro has provided clear communication regarding construction timelines and impacts.

The ACT Government's investment in the city is substantial and is expected to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the night-time economy.

In the short to medium term, construction activity and broader economic conditions are negatively shaping operating environments for NTE businesses. Continued collaboration between industry and government will help support the transition period and position the CBD for future growth.

Kind regards,

Tadija Miladinovic