

Annual Report 2024-2025

Night-Life Economy Commissioner



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Queensland
Government



About this report

Communication objective

This annual report provides information about the Night-Life Economy Commissioner financial and non-financial performance for 2024-25. It has been prepared in accordance with the *Night-Life Economy Commissioner Act 2024*.

The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible information and services to Queenslanders from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. To talk to someone about the Night-Life Economy Commissioner Annual Report 2024-25 in your preferred language call 1800 512 451 and ask to speak with the Department of Housing and Public Works.



www.qld.gov.au/languages

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Letter of compliance

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Office of the
Night-Life Economy
Commissioner

Department of
Housing and Public Works

17 September 2025

The Honourable Sam O'Connor MP
Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth
Level 33, 1 William Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
housing@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister

The Night-Life Economy Commissioner Annual Report 2024-2025

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2024–2025 for the Night-Life Economy Commissioner.

This report complies with the requirement under section 21 of the *Night-Life Economy Commissioner Act 2024*, that the commissioner must prepare and give to the Minister, within 3 months after the end of each financial year, a report on the functions performed by the commissioner during the financial year.

Yours sincerely

John 'JC' Collins AM
Night-Life Economy Commissioner

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Profile

The Night-Life Economy Commissioner (the Commissioner) is a statutory position that reports directly to the Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth (the Minister). Prior to machinery of government changes in November 2024, the Commissioner reported to the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Training and Minister for Skills Development.

The Commissioner is supported by the Office of the Night-Life Economy Commissioner, within the Department of Housing and Public Works.

Under the *Night-Life Economy Commissioner Act 2024* (the Act), the main purpose of the Commissioner is to provide a central point of contact in relation to matters affecting the night-life economy and advocate on behalf of and make recommendations relating to the night-life.

The Commissioner complies with the Queensland Government's governance and accountability requirements, which are administered on the Commissioner's behalf by the Department of Housing and Public Works.

The Commissioner

John "JC" Collins AM was appointed as the Commissioner under the Act on 27 September 2024, following a nation-wide merit-based recruitment process.

The Office of the Night-Life Economy Commissioner

The Queensland Government permanently established the Office of the Night-Life Economy Commissioner (ONLEC) under the Act. The main object of the Act was to establish the ONLEC to:

- (a) work with night-life businesses, including businesses operating live music venues and businesses located in entertainment precincts, to create a vibrant and safe night-life environment; and
- (b) support, promote and advocate for key aspects of the night-life economy, with an emphasis on partnerships that encourage the growth, sustainability and vibrancy of night-life businesses.

The ONLEC was initially supported by the former Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, and subsequently supported by the Department of Housing and Public Works. The Commissioner and the ONLEC received corporate services and other support throughout 2024-25.

The functions of the ONLEC for financial year 2024-25 is included in the Department of Housing and Public Works Annual Report 2024-2025.



Jurisdiction

Under the Act, the main functions of the Commissioner are to:

- (a) to provide a central point of contact in relation to matters affecting the night-life economy; and
- (b) to provide information and advice to night-life businesses and to refer night-life businesses to entities that provide advisory or support services; and
- (c) to raise awareness about —
 - (i) issues affecting the night-life economy; and
 - (ii) compliance with legislation affecting the night-life economy; and
 - (iii) best practice in relation to other matters affecting the night-life economy; and
- (d) to conduct inquiries as the Minister directs into matters affecting the night-life economy; and
- (e) to advocate on behalf of night-life businesses to—
 - (i) the State, the Commonwealth, another State or a local government; or
 - (ii) any other entity involved in administering a matter relevant to the night-life economy; and
- (f) to work collaboratively with other persons appointed on behalf of the State who are involved in administering matters relevant to night-life businesses; and
- (g) to work collaboratively with the equivalent of the commissioner in other States or the Commonwealth to enhance conditions for night-life businesses; and
- (h) to report to the Minister about a particular issue or a general matter relating to the night-life economy or the commissioner's functions; and
- (i) to perform any other function given to the commissioner under this or another Act.

In February 2025, the Minister for Housing and Public Works and the Minister for Youth issued a Statement of Expectations to the Commissioner, as provided for under section 19 of the Act, containing expectations of the performance of the commissioner's functions, including to produce a Night-Life Economy Strategy by the end of 2025.



Commissioner's message

I am pleased to present the Night-Life Economy Commissioner's Annual Report 2024-25. Since appointment as Commissioner in September 2024, the ONLEC has provided advocacy and awareness raising for night-life businesses in Queensland and shaped policy and outcomes for the community.

Queensland's night-life contributes billions to the economy annually. Employment figures from February 2024 show core night-life businesses in Queensland employed approximately 211,600 employees in Accommodation and Food services and 49,900 employees in Arts and Recreation services¹.

Our vision is to enhance the night-life in Queensland. This vision is supported by our service pillars for a night-life that is:

1. Vibrant
2. Safe
3. Business-friendly.

Our actions uphold the Queensland Government's objectives for the community through:

- Planning for Queensland's future through setting up the night-life to be ready for the world stage
- Providing Queenslanders with a better lifestyle through a stronger economy.

Highlights

During 2024-25, I provided a central point of contact in relation to matters affecting the night-life economy.

In consultation with the Night-Life Economy Advisory Panel (the Panel), I advocated on behalf of night-life businesses to the State, Commonwealth and Local Governments and made recommendations for improvement.

With the support of the Department of Housing and Public Works, the ONLEC worked with Queensland Government agencies, such as the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR) in the Department of Justice, Queensland Police Service, Department of Education and Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation to enhance the night-life sector.

¹ Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed



Overview of advocacy actions

During 2024-25, I advocated for a vibrant, safe and thriving night-life economy by:

- providing input into the Griffith University safe night precinct review
- consulting on the Department of Justice red-tape reduction initiative
- advocating to the Queensland Small Business Commissioner on issues affecting businesses in the night-life sector
- contributing solutions to the Local Government Red Tape Reduction Taskforce
- meeting with 134 stakeholders, comprising of 69 Night-Life Economy (NLE) businesses and an additional 65 sector stakeholders to understand barriers facing vibrancy and safety
- connecting 49 businesses in the sector with information and support mechanisms provided by the Queensland Government.

During 2024-25, the ONLEC also began shaping the Night-Life Economy Strategy, to be provided to the Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth by the end of 2025.

Opportunities for the future

I will continue to undertake my role in accordance with the Act and the Minister's Statement of Expectations. I am committed to exploring opportunities to enhancing Queensland's night-life to ensure it's vibrant, safe and business-friendly.

I am dedicated to providing a well considered Night-Life Strategy to the Minister for consideration.

Our priorities for 2025-26 include:

- designing policies to enhance the night-life, in consultation with delivery partners
- with delivery partners, delivering a toolkit for Local Councils to support activation
- continue to bring recommendations to the Queensland Government, Federal Government and Local Government to enhance the night-life sector
- continuing to be a central point of contact for the night-life sector.

I look forward to continuing to collaborate with government, industry, and Queensland small businesses

John Collins AM

Night-Life Economy Commissioner



Performance

Activity Snapshot 2024-25

Overview of the Commissioner engagement, advocacy and support activities as at 30 June 2025.

The Commissioner advocated for sector interests:

6	Letters of advocacy
7	Referrals to services
14	Forums and workshops attended and participated
7	Committees and general meetings attended by the Commissioner ²
4	Advisory panel meetings chaired by the Commissioner ³
38	Advocacy actions (Total)

The Commissioner provided information to sector stakeholders and the public:

15	Media interviews
4	Speaking engagements ⁴
49	Connecting with government resources ⁵
134	Stakeholder meetings ⁶
12	Local Government Areas (LGAs) visited ⁷

² Includes Small Business Roundtable, Deputy Mayor's Night Time Advisory Group, Safe Night Precinct meetings and Liquor Accord Meetings

³ Includes the Night-Life Economy Advisory Panel, and Queensland Government Night-Life Economy Steering Committee.

⁴ Includes presentations and participation in panel discussions (question-and-answer sessions) on the NLE

⁵ Connecting night-life economy business with Government resources, support mechanism and providing information

⁶ Including NLE businesses and sector stakeholders, including Government and Local Councils

⁷ As of June 30 2025, the NLEC visited 12 LGAs, meeting with NLE businesses, academics, local councils and chambers of commerce



Activities since appointment

During 2024-25, the Commissioner advocated for a vibrant, safe and thriving night-life economy by:

Undertaking a state-wide listening tour

The Commissioner conducted an extensive Listening Tour across 12 LGAs, including: Noosa, Sunshine Coast, Cairns, Townsville, Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Logan, Gold Coast, Mount Isa, Whitsunday, Ipswich and Brisbane.

The listening tour identified top issues affecting the sector to be:

- Liquor regulation
- Sound regulation
- Cost of doing business
- Business pressures and rising operational costs.

During the listening tour, the Commissioner met with over 134 stakeholders contributing to the night-life economy, including academics, local councils and chamber of commerce to understand key issues impacting the sector and opportunities to overcome the barriers, with the view to support policy development and initiatives to enhance the sector.

Key findings from the engagement highlighted the similarities and differences in regions in terms of the night-life sector and highlighted opportunities and issues. It has become clear that careful consideration needs to be given to the unique needs of each area when designing actions to enhance the vibrancy and safety of the night-life in each of the regions.

Establishing the Night-Life Economy Advisory Panel

The Night-Life Economy Advisory Panel (Panel) was established in January 2025.

Membership for the Panel was drawn from experts across the sector. The Panel has advised the Commissioner on ways to enhance the night-life sector, collaborated on issues and opportunities and provided expert advice relating to their sectors.

The Panel includes representatives from the night-life economy sector including operators, hotel and club industry association, night-life economy researcher, Safe Night Precinct personnel, performers, economic development leaders and event organisers and promoters. See appendix 1 for the full list of members.

- As of 30 June 2025, the Panel has met three times in accordance with the Terms of Reference.
- On 27 February 2025, the Commissioner chaired the first Panel meeting with the Honourable Sam O'Connor MP, Minister responsible for the night-life economy in attendance
- On 2 April 2025, the second Panel meeting occurred with the Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP, Minister for Education and the Arts in attendance
- On 25 June 2025, the Panel participated in a vibrancy workshop setting the foundation for innovative solutions to enhance sector growth.



Queensland Government Night-Life Economy Steering Committee

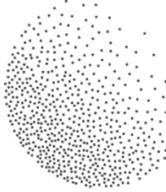
The Commissioner co-chairs the Queensland Government Night-Life Economy Steering Committee (the Steering Committee) with the Deputy Director-General, Policy, Performance and First Nations, Department of Housing and Public Works. The Steering Committee provides Queensland Government leadership and guides the passage of policies through Government consideration.

Public Briefing: State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee

On 5 February 2025, the Commissioner appeared before the Parliamentary Committee for a public briefing. A written briefing was also supplied to the Committee on the role and operation of the Commissioner. A recording of the proceedings is located on the Queensland Parliament website. During the public briefing the Commissioner answered questions from the Committee regarding the role of the Commissioner, stakeholder feedback to date, and future plans.

Night-Life Economy Strategy

The Commissioner has been actively shaping a Queensland Night-Life Economy Strategy through extensive stakeholder engagement, expert collaboration, and designing pilots for initiatives, ensuring it reflects the needs and aspirations of the sector.



Supporting a vibrant Night-Life Economy

Engagement activities

Throughout 2024-25, the Commissioner worked to support NLE businesses and sector stakeholders through advocacy, collaboration, engagement activities and the provision of information and advisory services.

The Australasian Liquor Licensing Authorities Forum

The Australasian Liquor Licensing Authorities Forum (ALLAF) provided a valuable platform for discussing the challenges and opportunities facing the night-life economy in Queensland and beyond. The event featured a speaker presentation from the Commissioner sharing insights to ‘vibrancy’ of the night-life economy, especially themes from discussions with other delegates and officials nationally and internationally. The presentation highlighted the importance of learning from national and international counterparts.

The Commissioner reflected on their first months in the role, noting the significant challenges facing the night-life economy post-COVID-19. The Commissioner highlighted the Listening Tour, revealed consistent concerns, including rising operational costs, declining revenues, and regulatory challenges.

These findings underscored the urgent need for targeted support to revitalise the sector.

The Commissioner emphasised the critical role of the night-life economy in Queensland’s social and economic fabric, particularly as the state prepares for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Plans discussed include:

- developing a Night-Life Economy Strategy centred on vibrancy, safety, and business friendliness
- collaborating with an industry advisory group and a government steering committee to shape and implement initiatives
- raising awareness of the sector’s value and addressing regulatory burdens to support businesses.

The session concluded with a commitment to presenting the strategy for government consideration later in the year, ensuring Queensland’s night-life economy is well-positioned to thrive in the long-term.

This event reinforced the importance of collaboration, innovation, and strategic planning in revitalising the night-life economy, both locally and globally.



Enhancing the operating environment for business

Throughout 2024-25, the Commissioner worked to enhance the operating environment for NLE businesses in Queensland, through advocacy, collaboration, engagement activities and the provision of information and advisory services.

Supporting extended trading hours

To enhance the night-life sector, and bring Queensland into alignment with other jurisdictions, the Commissioner has advocated for Government to reduce regulatory burden relating to extended trading hours.

Sound reform

The Commissioner and the ONLEC consulted with the Office for Liquor and Gaming to influence decisions relating to streamlining to noise framework, as outlined in the *Liquor Act 1992*.

Collaboration to deliver outcomes

The Commissioner met regularly with Queensland Government agencies and Commissioners responsible for portfolios that intersect with the Night-Life Economy throughout 2024-25.

This included the Queensland Small Business Commissioner, the Queensland Mental Health Commissioner, Queensland Cross-Border Commissioner and the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming.

In 2024-25, the Commissioner participated in a range of activities to advocate for sector interests.

The Commissioner:

- advocated to Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR) regarding liquor licensing reforms (advertising drink prices, Easter trade and strengthened risk-based and demerit approach)
- provided feedback to the Queensland Small Business Commissioner's Red Tape Reduction program to reduce regulatory burden for NLE businesses
- contributed solutions to the Local Government Red tape Reduction Taskforce
- connected NLE businesses with information and existing support mechanisms, support examples include small business wellness coaches and mental health and wellbeing resources.



Promoting a night-life for everyone

The Commissioner advocated for a safe, accessible and inclusive night-life economy throughout 2024-25. The Commissioner provided feedback to State and Federal counterparts who hold portfolio responsibility for these matters.

Responsible Service of Alcohol training

Recognising the importance of inclusivity in the sector, on the Commissioner's advice, the ONLEC provided feedback to the Job Skills Council on updating Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) training. The proposed updates emphasise accessibility training, equipping staff with the skills to better serve patrons with disabilities. This aims to create a more welcoming and equitable environment across Queensland's night-life venues. By advocating for these changes, the Commissioner supports a broader cultural shift towards inclusivity, ensuring that all patrons, regardless of ability, can safely and comfortably enjoy Queensland's vibrant night-life.

Engagement with Safe Night Precinct and Liquor Accord meetings

The Commissioner attended Safe Night Precinct (SNPs) Board meetings and Liquor Accord meetings to gain a deeper understanding of local challenges and opportunities within Queensland's night-life economy. These forums provided valuable insights into community safety, venue management, and collaborative strategies for reducing alcohol-related harm. These meetings fostered partnerships with local businesses, law enforcement, and government.

Feedback to OLGR on SNPs

The Commissioner provided comprehensive feedback to the OLGR on

the operation and management of SNPs. Feedback was provided in multiple instances, including through the Griffith University safe night precinct review.

Feedback highlighted opportunities to enhance safety, streamline regulatory processes, and support local businesses within these precincts. Recommendations included improved communication channels between stakeholders, targeted harm minimisation strategies, and greater flexibility for venue operators to innovate.

By contributing to this consultation, the Commissioner reinforced a commitment to balancing public safety with the economic vitality of Queensland's night-life economy.

Night-life safety

The Commissioner met with ARUP Resilience, Security and Risk Team to discuss the importance of, and advantages to capturing women's safety perspectives on the night-life economy. The ONLEC also participated in the Safe Cities Safe Streets 'Walkshop' delivered by Zonta Club of Brisbane, University of Queensland and Queensland Walks (QWalks). The 'Walkshop' event focused on creating safer streets for women and girls. This collaborative workshop brought together community members, urban planners, and safety advocates to identify practical solutions for improving walkability and safety in public spaces. The ONLEC contributed insights on lighting, visibility, and community engagement strategies to enhance perceptions of safety. This initiative aligns with the commitment to fostering inclusive and secure environments within the night-life economy, ensuring that women and girls feel confident navigating urban areas during both day and night.



Directions form the Minister

Under section 19 of the Act, a Statement of Expectations was issued to the Commissioner by the Honourable Sam O'Connor MP, Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth on 20 February 2025.

During 2024 -2025, the Minister did not give the Commissioner any written directions under section 17 of the Act.



Financial statements

The financial statements for the Night-Life Economy Commissioner are included in the Department of Housing and Public Works Annual Report 2024-2025.

Separate financial statements are not required for the Night-Life Economy Commissioner.



Appendix 1: Night-Life Economy Advisory Panel Members

The Night-Life Economy Advisory Panel members, as of 30 June 2025:

John 'JC' Collins AM (Chair)	Night-Life Economy Commissioner
Andrew Baturó	Head Of Hospitality, DAP & CO
Lindsay Carroll	Interim Chief Executive Officer, National Retail Association
Jackie Cross	Director, Cross Promotions and Experience Gold Coast
Charlie Cush	Chief Executive Officer, Brisbane Festival
Aunty Bridget Garay	Arts And Cultural Consultant
Bernie Hogan	Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Hotels Association
Naomi Price	Co-Founder, The Little Red Company
Jacinta Reddan	Chief Executive Officer, Advance Cairns
Tim Richardson	Chief Executive Officer, The Ville, Townsville
Kris Stewart	Chief Executive Officer, QMusic
Dr Dominique De Andrade	Griffith Criminology Institute, Griffith University
Kelly Egan ⁸	Chief Executive Officer, Clubs Queensland
Peter McAloney	Chief Executive Officer, Chaplain Watch
Sharynne Wilson	Co-Owner, Moffat Beach Brewing
Max McBride ⁹	President, Taxi Council of Queensland

⁸ Proxy: Dan Nipperess, General Manager, Clubs Queensland

⁹ Proxy: Blair Davies, Chief Executive Officer, Taxi Council of Queensland and Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Taxi Industry Association



Appendix 2: Glossary of terms

Commissioner	The person appointed as the Night-Life Economy Commissioner in Queensland.
NLEC	The Night-Life Economy Commissioner.
Night-life business	Means a business that relies on the night-life economy in the State to ensure the financial viability of the business. <i>Example: entertainment venue, festival, hospitality venue, live music venue, theatre, venue promoting the arts.</i>
Night-life economy (NLE)	Means the economic activities occurring at establishments that provide services, mainly from 6pm to 6am, to persons for engaging in entertainment or leisure activities.
Advocacy actions	Actions aimed at influencing decisions, policies, or raising awareness about a specific issue.
OLGR	Office of Liquor and Gaming (Department of Justice, Queensland Government).
The Panel	Night-Life Economy Advisory Panel (the Panel).
The Act	<i>The Night-Life Economy Commissioner Act 2024.</i>
Minister	Minister for Housing and Public Works and the Minister for Youth.
ONLEC	The Office of the Night-Life Economy Commissioner.