

25.2 CBD PUBLIC PLACES PATROLS - TRIAL**Common No.:****Author:** Executive Manager Leisure and Regulatory Services**Authoriser:** General Manager Community and Regulatory Services**Attachments:** 1. CBD Public Places Evening Patrol Statistics

Section under the Act	The grounds on which part of the Council or Committee may be closed to the public are listed in Section 65(2) of the <i>Local Government Act</i> and Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations.
Sub-clause and Reason:	8(c)(iv) - information that would, if publicly disclosed, be likely to prejudice the interests of council or some other person.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an evaluation and recommendation following the recent 3 month trial of CBD evening public places patrols.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT the report be received and noted.
2. THAT Council refer an amount of \$289,272 to the 2020/2021 budget process for the consideration of establishing a dedicated CBD public places weekday patrol.

KEY ISSUES

- Regulatory Services conducted a trial of evening CBD public places patrols from 5-8pm on weekdays for the period October to December 2019.
- During the trial period Public Places Rangers visited 1,677 locations and observed 5,502 vulnerable people.
- Public Places Rangers directly engaged with 1,827 persons during the trial period and daily statistics were collected for each patrol.
- This report provides an evaluation of the trial and recommends Council consider establishing a dedicated CBD public places patrol.

BACKGROUND

As part of Council's discussions with the Northern Territory Government (NTG) and the Activate Darwin Board to address ongoing issues relating to anti-social behaviour in the Darwin CBD, Regulatory Services were directed to conduct a trial to provide evening CBD public places patrols.

The trial was designed to augment the existing public places patrols roster as well as enhance capability and collaboration of the Rangers with NT Police.

A feasibility assessment was first undertaken with the existing public places patrols re-assigned from 15 July 2019 to operate exclusively in the CBD from 5-7pm each weeknight. The feasibility assessment determined a clear need for service delivery in the CBD during early evenings.

The original request through the Activate Darwin Board was to deliver CBD patrols until 10pm each day, however, as this exceeded the span of working hours within the 2017 City of Darwin Enterprise Agreement, and in consideration of budget and existing resources, it was determined to limit the trial to 5-8pm for weekdays only for the period October to December 2019.

A consultation process was undertaken with Council Rangers to ensure they were provided all relevant information about the proposed trial and the effect it would likely have on their work environment. As part of the consultation, Human Resources issued preference forms to allow Rangers to provide their views about the impact of the trial including any impact to their family or care giving responsibilities. Human Resources also advised United Voice, the union representing the Rangers, and there were no concerns raised by the union.

Discussions were held with NT Police and a draft MOU was established, however NT Police advised they did not believe that an MOU was required for this arrangement but would assist with joint operations depending on operational demands.

DISCUSSION

The area of operation for the trial patrols was identified as the area from the Esplanade to Cavanagh St., to Daly St. and Harry Chan Avenue. The patrols moved throughout this grid on a continual basis until 8pm each evening, addressing by-law infringements and providing a general community presence and communication point for Council.

CBD Public Places Patrol Trial									
5pm to 8pm Patrol Statistics									
Date	Locations visited	Total No. Vulnerable People Observed	Total No. of Individuals Engaged With	Police Assistance Requested	Response Provided	Night Patrol (Larrakia) Assistance Requested	Response Provided	Ambulance Assistance Requested	Response Provided
October (5 weeks)	690	1900	678	24	12	10	6	0	0
November (4 weeks)	641	1743	585	17	4	4	3	1	0
December (3 weeks)	346	1859	564	20	18	10	6	3	3
Total	1677	5502	1827	61	34	24	15	4	3

During the trial period public places rangers visited 1,677 locations and observed 5,502 vulnerable people. There was engagement with 1,827 persons during the trial period and daily statistics for the trial are detailed in **Attachment 1**.

Evaluation

The trial clearly demonstrated the requirement for public place patrols within the CBD as part of Council's commitment to a multi-agency approach involving NT Police, Larrakia Patrol and other stakeholders to address anti-social behaviours throughout the CBD. During the patrols, Rangers actively engaged with vulnerable people, including rough sleepers, and regulated and attended to numerous anti-social behaviour and social issues throughout the CBD including illegal camping, drinking, anti-social behaviour, violence and medical emergencies.

At the conclusion of the trial an evaluation meeting was held with the participating Rangers. Rangers advised they had experienced a significant escalation of issues relating to violent behaviour, intoxicated and drug affected individuals in the period leading up to and post-Christmas. The Rangers further advised that they had significant safety concerns and did not feel they were equipped to undertake evening patrols past 7pm. Rangers reported that by 7pm, as daylight diminished, the anti-social behaviour, public consumption of alcohol and illicit drug usage in public spaces escalated significantly and became unmanageable and unsafe for Rangers, given their limited powers compared to NT Police.

There were several issues identified by the Rangers as to why the 8pm finish was considered operationally unsafe and of major concern:

- Increase in the CBD itinerant population and anti-social behaviour

- Increase in the number of incidents involving large groups and violent behaviour.
- Knowledge within the itinerant population that the Police response is limited, leading to situations where the main deterrent for dispersing and removing persons and alcohol is not available to Rangers.
- NT Police and Larrakia resources are unable to respond to all calls for assistance. The Rangers rely on NT Police and other stakeholders to effectively carry out public places patrols, they value their assistance but acknowledge these stakeholders are resource limited.
- Reputational damage – Rangers were frequently isolated with large groups and unable to action the situation as NT Police assistance was not available. Rangers were conscious of negative reactions and comments from other residents who witnessed rangers waiting for assistance and may perceive this to be inaction by Council.
- The evening CBD Public Places trial focused all public places patrols within the CBD from 5pm. This led to an increase in anti-social behaviour issues at suburban locations with numerous reports concerning East Point Reserve, Nightcliff Foreshore and Jingili Watergardens.

Following the trial period and evaluation, public places patrols have reverted to standard operational times with patrols ceasing at 7pm. Regulatory Services operate two dedicated public places patrols (morning and evening patrols) that service the entire municipality. Following the results of the trial, the public places patrol roster has been augmented to include a specific CBD public places patrol from 5-7pm. However, this is resourced through reducing other suburban and general By-Law activities which, based on Ranger feedback, will continue to result in increased anti-social behaviour in other hot spots outside of the CBD after 5pm.

The evening CBD public places trial highlighted the issues with anti-social behaviour in the CBD, and this is of key concern to all stakeholders operating in this environment. NTG through the Activate Darwin Board has deployed private security guards in The Mall and limited CBD areas from 8pm to 6am daily. With Council public places patrols returning to normal operational hours, the private security patrol start times should be re-aligned to avoid any gap in service delivery between 7pm and 8pm. This will be proposed by COD via the Activate Darwin Board.

NTG recently established a CBD Safety Coordination Committee to ensure that a collaborative and coordinated approach is achieved by key response agencies in response to community dissatisfaction with continued anti-social behaviour in the CBD. The General Manager Community & Regulatory Services represents City of Darwin on this committee.

The committee will work collaboratively to provide strategic advice on rapid response initiatives, program funding, policy and strategy implementation in relation to matters which will respond to addressing anti-social behaviour and safety issues in Darwin CBD.

In May 2020, it is anticipated that the NT Government's Better Pathways Centre (to be located at Frog Hollow) will commence operations to service an estimated 150 individuals who are sleeping rough regularly in Darwin. The facility is planned to close at 3pm which may have an effect on anti-social behaviour or reported location through the dispersal of patrons, but the extent of any effect is unknown at this time.

Given the results of the evening CBD public places trials, the key importance of reducing anti-social behaviour issues in the CBD and Council's commitment to a safer, vibrant Darwin, it is recommended that Council consider funding a dedicated CBD public places patrol to operate from 10.45am to 7.00pm Monday to Friday. The patrol proposed to service an extended CBD area to include Cullen Bay, Mindil Beach and The Gardens.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

The issues addressed in this Report are in accordance with the following Goals/Strategies as outlined in the 'Darwin 2030 City for People. City of Colour. Strategic Plan':

Goal

2 A Safe, Liveable and Healthy City

Outcome

2.1 By 2030, Darwin will be a safer place to live and visit

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY

City of Darwin has statutory obligation to cooperate with Territory and National Governments in the delivery of services for the benefit of its area.

Council has endorsed Policy No. 085 Compliance and Enforcement which provides the framework for the investigation and enforcement of regulated activities.

CONSULTATION

Internal

In preparing this report, the following City of Darwin officers were consulted:

- Management Accountant
- Fleet Manager
- A/Supervisor Regulatory Services Public Places
- Public Places Rangers

External

- Nil

BUDGET/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The budget implications for Council to consider a dedicated CBD public places patrol to operate from 10.45am to 7.00pm Monday to Friday are detailed below:

Human Resources:

The additional patrol team would require an increase to Council full time equivalent (FTE) staff of two full time rangers

Public Places Ranger	Annual Salary	Allowance for 7pm finish +15%	On cost 48.5%	Cost per Ranger	Funding requirement for additional patrol – 2 FTE Rangers
Level 3 Step 1	\$68,858	\$10,329	\$38,406	\$117,593	\$235,186

Patrol Vehicle

A patrol vehicle is requested with an initial capital outlay of \$38k and ongoing operational costs of \$16kpa.

Initial purchase for a dual Cab 2x4 utility Auto with canopy	\$38,000
Ongoing annual operational cost	\$16,086
Total	\$54,086

Total budget implications to fund a dedicated CBD public place patrol during the first year of operation:

Human resources – two rangers (ongoing)	\$235,186
Patrol vehicle -capital purchase (one off)	\$38,000
Patrol vehicle – operational (ongoing)	\$16,086
Total first year of operation	\$289,272
Total for ongoing years of operation	\$251,272

RISK

Nil

LEGAL

Regulatory Service Officers (Rangers) are authorised officers under the Local Government Act (Act) and regulate in accordance with the Act, Darwin City Council By-Laws and Council Policy. The role of the authorised person is to mitigate, guide, educate and enforce in order to uphold community standards and reflect the values and culture of Council.

ARTS, CULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Nil

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an evaluation and recommendation following the recent 3 month trial of CBD evening public places patrols.

RESOLUTION ORD001/20

Moved: Alderman Emma Young

Seconded: Alderman Simon Niblock

1. THAT the report be received and noted.
2. THAT Council refer an amount of \$289,272 to the 2020/2021 budget process for the consideration of establishing a dedicated CBD public places weekday patrol.
3. THAT this report and decision be moved into open

CARRIED 10/0

DRAFT