How McArthur helped illuminate the visitor experience at Vivid Sydney 2026

NSW GOVERNMENT | Transport for NSW

McArthur
Best people fit. Making a difference.

TfNSW & McArthur: Vivid 2026

Vivid Sydney is Australia's largest festival of light, music, ideas and food, attracting millions of visitors across Sydney's CBD and harbour precinct each year. During the 2026 event, Transport for NSW (TfNSW) implemented significant transport changes to support increased patron movements, including bus relocations, light rail service adjustments, road closures and modified access arrangements across Circular Quay, Martin Place, Town Hall, QVB, Hyde Park and Darling Harbour.

To support customers navigating these temporary transport arrangements, McArthur was engaged to provide a dedicated Pink Shirt customer service and wayfinding workforce throughout the 23-day event period.

The deployment placed highly visible, customer-focused staff at critical transport hubs and pedestrian decision points, helping visitors confidently navigate Sydney's transport network while maintaining a positive customer experience during one of the city's busiest major events.

The Challenges

- Managing major transport changes across the network
- Supporting customer movements across a 6.5km event footprint
- Guiding visitors through alternative routes and services
- Assisting with wayfinding and crowd movement
- Monitoring issues and escalating incidents in real time

McArthur’s Solution

McArthur designed and delivered a dedicated Pink Shirt deployment model focused on visibility, mobility and real-time communication. A core team of 16 trained customer service professionals and team leaders was deployed across 125 roster placements, delivering approximately 795 rostered hours throughout the activation. Consistent staffing enabled the team to build strong location knowledge and improve operational effectiveness as the event progressed.

Staff were strategically positioned at high-demand customer decision points across Circular Quay, Martin Place, Town Hall, QVB/York Street, Hyde Park and the approaches to Darling Harbour. These locations were selected to align with areas where visitors were most likely to require assistance due to transport changes and increased pedestrian movements.

To maintain effective communication throughout the event, McArthur implemented a live WhatsApp reporting channel connecting supervisors, field staff and TfNSW stakeholders. The platform facilitated shift check-ins, crowd flow observations, incident reporting, customer sentiment updates and operational escalations in real time. Supported by roaming supervisors and experienced team leaders, this approach enabled rapid information sharing and a flexible response to changing conditions across the event footprint.

TfNSW & McArthur: Vivid 2026

Key Project Metrics, Highlights and Results

KEY PROJECT METRICS

100%
Shift fulfillment

5770+
Customer interactions

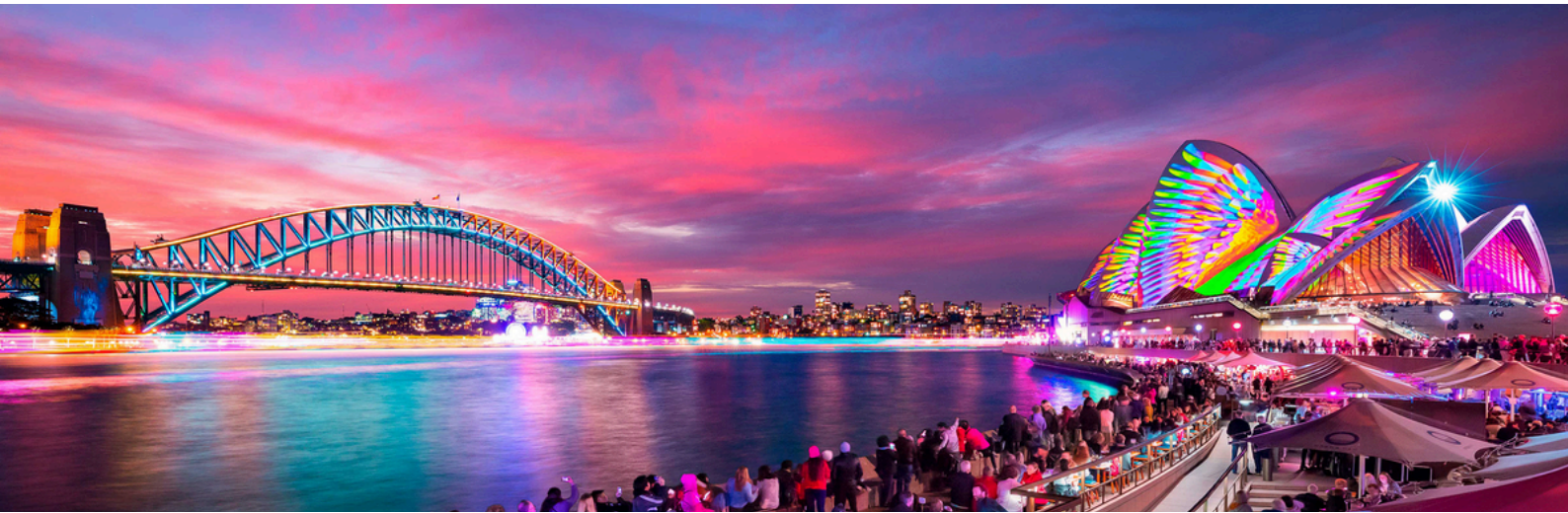
620
Deployment hours

90
Operational shifts

832
Real-time operational updates

Highlights

- Delivered exceptional customer service across key Vivid Sydney transport hubs.
- Maintained 100% workforce fulfilment across the deployment.
- Supported visitors through complex transport and access changes.
- Provided TfNSW with real-time operational visibility and reporting.
- Improved service efficiency and team performance throughout the event.
- Facilitated safe crowd movement and positive customer experiences.
- Demonstrated the value of experienced event staffing and leadership.

Lessons Learnt & Future Recommendations:

- Prioritise staffing at key transport decision points
- Position staff based on pedestrian flow and customer behaviour, not just transport infrastructure
- Maintain strong coverage at high-demand locations
- Leverage real-time reporting to quickly respond to changing operational and crowd conditions
- Retain experienced supervisors and team leaders to drive consistency and service quality
- Use frontline observations to identify emerging customer needs and operational challenges
- Use customer and crowd insights to inform future planning
- Combine visible customer service teams with clear communications to enhance visitor experiences