

Violence, drug use, vomit, urine, faeces – city traders demand action as Lord Mayor calls King William St ‘a disgrace’

By Miles Kemp, The Advertiser April 19, 2023-04-18

City traders are sick of dealing with violence, drug use and filthy streets – and now the Lord Mayor has lashed out at the appalling condition of the city’s main boulevard.

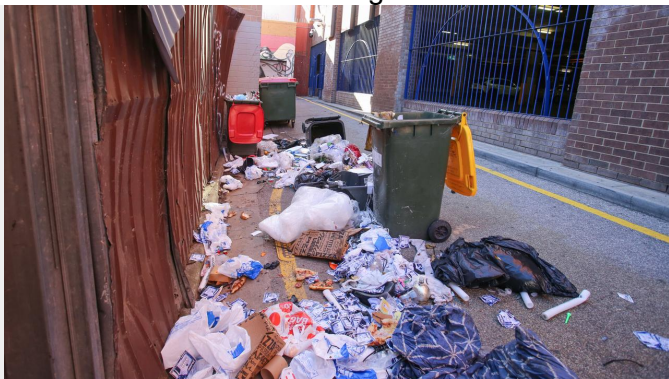
Lord Mayor Jane Lomax-Smith has lashed out at the state of Adelaide’s showpiece streets as The Advertiser reveals how traders are appalled at the level of violence, drug use, rubbish and human waste blighting the CBD.

At Tuesday night’s council meeting, Ms Lomax-Smith described King William St as a “disgrace” and “an embarrassment” during budget deliberations. She urged councillors to consider how they were going to fund major improvement projects.

“I think it is the least well-maintained main street that I have ever seen,” she said. “King Williams St is actually a disgrace. It is really in a shocking state. “We have to do something about the CBD because it is such an embarrassment.”

Council is considering a \$140 million spend on four key city streets, as traders also complain about hygiene and broken infrastructure. Of Gouger St, Ms Lomax-Smith said: “Blind Freddy can see it is in poor repair and in a disgusting state.”

Lord Mayor Jane Lomax-Smith says Adelaide City Council must generate more revenue to improve the condition of the CBD. Council has not revalued city properties for five years and has frozen its rate in the dollar for a decade, leaving finances in a desperate state of “budget repair”, she said. Ms Lomax-Smith said the council should reintroduce fees like outdoor dining permits which were waived during the Covid-19 pandemic. The move has cost council more than \$3 million in lost revenue. “The issue is now budget repair and that we charge for services,” Ms Lomax-Smith said. “It is unconscionable that we have not returned fees for use of city streets, it is unconscionable that parklands activities do not have a charge.”



The laneway behind the Dog and Duck in Hindley St is often littered with rubbish. Picture: Brett Hartwig

Traders slam police and council

Polled by The Advertiser yesterday ahead of a council debate on the issue, traders were not happy with the way police and council responded to problems outside their businesses.

And all were envious of Rundle Mall traders who have their shopfront areas scrubbed by machine every weekday, rather than once each week.

King William St Bean Bar owner Simon Robinson said early-morning violence and obvious drug-fuelled behaviour was almost a daily event.

Last year human faeces had been left in a next-door alcove for two weeks, out of reach of the council street-sweeping machine.

“Police haven’t been too bad but the last couple of times for crime and violence, they maybe took half an hour or so,” he said.

“The other morning there was a man just urinating at the tram stop.”



A street sweeper cleaning up Rundle Mall. Picture: Brett Hartwig

Deputy Lord Mayor Phillip Martin said a top priority would be for main streets to be cleaned more regularly. He said he had been asking for the council street cleaning schedule for years, and details were presented to the council meeting on Tuesday night. They show that basic sweeping is done daily, but footpath machine scrubbing is rare on many streets. "I'll be pressing our administration for more information. If the services haven't been reduced then my view is they need to be increased," Cr Martin said.

As The Advertiser on Tuesday talked to Marta Rog at her King William St convenience store On The Way, vomit left half an hour ago lay outside her store, where passers by stepped in it. "There are homeless people living outside, and others, they break our signs and put rubbish everywhere," she said.



Cleaning on Hindley Street on Tuesday, April 18. Picture: Brett Hartwig

Each fortnight O'Connell Street footpaths are scrubbed only once, Melbourne St is done on request, King William St twice, Rundle St twice, Hindley Street twice, Grote Street twice, Hutt St once, and Gouger St twice.

A council spokesman said services could be increased on demand and where there were problems. "There are many factors that determine how we prioritise and direct our resources which include, seasonal, weather, leaf fall plus cultural, festival and sporting events," the spokesman said. Hindley St Imprints owner Katherine Woehlert said the prevailing view was that "the city is only the Mall". "We get missed and forgotten about a bit," she said. "The 3am nightclub lockout has helped but my co-worker came to work today and a woman was urinating in the street. "We don't call council because we are not going to get an answer, although they are good at cleaning up the (drug) needles." Leigh St Barber shop owner Alec Mastrangelo said the area was cleaned regularly but hundreds of birds nested in one tree on the street. "They need to trim the trees back because you just can't keep up with the cleaning," he said. The tree is directly outside one of Adelaide's most prestigious restaurants, Shobosho.