

Back to work for a big '26



Paul Nicolaou

With Australia Day just celebrated by most and protested by some, Sydney is ready to clock on for a busy year.

Our national day is the traditional signal for the economic life of our wonderful city to emerge from its summer slumber.

Australia Day, with its crowd-pulling power, sets the scene for the big events that are so important to Sydney's economic wellbeing for the rest of the year.

As we shake off the holiday cobwebs, there are already worrying signs with news of businesses collapsing or shutting their doors.

However, there are also positives to suggest 2026 will be a good year for Sydney.

We can look forward to the

NSW government approving new leasing arrangements to allow the revamp of the Entertainment Quarter.

This alone will be a massive boost for the Moore Park precinct, making it an interconnected entertainment, events and sporting hub.

And this year will also see major infrastructure projects coming to fruition including the Metro extension from Sydenham to Bankstown.

We've already seen the transformative powers of the Metro but this combined 31-station link from Tallawong to Bankstown via the CBD will be a game-changer on steroids.

Sydney will also see the opening of the Western Sydney International Airport complementing Sydney

Airport's growth trajectory.

A big challenge facing Premier Chris Minns and his multi-portfolio minister John Graham is to breathe life into the visitor and night-time economy.

In this regard, credit where credit is due: the City of Sydney has hit the right note with its new policy to encourage street dining and precinct revitalisation.

Allowing five-year permits, replacing concrete "bunker" partitions with attractive street enhancing designs and reducing red tape are all big steps forward.

Here's to 2026 and a big year for the best city in the world.

Paul Nicolaou is executive director of Business Sydney