

What is The Festival of Place – Open Streets?

The Festival of Place Open Streets is a funding partnership program for eligible councils to temporarily close streets to cars and open them on a day or series of days for demonstration projects involving community events and activities.

How much funding is available?

The department is offering funding of up to \$500,000 to eligible councils.

Which councils are eligible for funding?

Greater Sydney councils in local government areas most impacted during the lockdown will be eligible for funding. These councils have been identified as: Bayside Council, Blacktown City Council, Burwood Council, Campbelltown City Council, City of Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland City Council, Fairfield City Council, Georges River Council, Liverpool City Council, City of Parramatta, Strathfield Council, Penrith City Council, and City of Sydney.

Why is funding available (only) to these Councils?

These councils in Greater Sydney were impacted by strict stay-at-home orders for as long as 12 weeks, restricting mobility in a number of communities and impacting the local economy and wellbeing of both businesses and the community. The Sydney CBD has been heavily impacted by the loss of workers, students and residents.

Are Councils required to provide contributing funds for their project?

No, but seeking other sources of funding is encouraged. When submitting a proposal, councils will need to decide whether they add existing council budgets to these projects.

What kinds of streets should we consider closing?

This program targets streets in major centres, in or at the heart of the centres close to services, retail and public transport if possible. Activations may also extend into surrounding laneways and public spaces, creating a sense of connectivity within the precinct.

Transport for NSW's considerations will include impacts on the road and transport network, property access, road safety, notification periods, any temporary adjustments to Opal card or bus stops for the event, other events happening the same day and suitable detours for the community to move around on the network.

Can council use the funding for activations in different locations or centres?

Councils may consider projects in a maximum of two urban centres. This is to ensure that the projects have maximum positive impact and ability to partner widely with a place focus.

When will activities take place and for how long?

Community events and activities can run for a day or a series of days between now and May 2022, as soon as an agreement is in place between council and the department, and the necessary approvals are obtained.

What kinds of events and activities will be supported?

The Festival of Place – Open Streets program is for community events and activities that are free and inclusive to all.

We want to see streets better reimagined as places for people, whether that's new walking paths, turning asphalt into art, providing pop-up parklets, or trialling a street closure to make more room for safe street play. Project examples could include:

- Converting a street/s into a space for an outdoor dining experience, allowing local bars, restaurants and cafes to expand into the street.
- Transforming the experience of a street through a placemaking activation e.g. bringing creativity and colour through painted streets.
- Opening a street or bridge for a community mural and a space for play and activities.
- Changing the way the street is used by providing greater pedestrian and bike access to the street.
- Creating a series of regular events that transform the street for events such as street outdoor dining and performances.
- Opening a street for a pop-up outdoor library and exhibition creating a new meeting place for people.

What do you mean by demonstration projects?

Demonstration projects are short-term projects that promote innovative and new approaches and help to build an evidence base. These projects are usually short term, quick response projects that test existing practices. In this program, demonstration projects will take the form of community events and activities that will allow people to take over a street or streets. Case studies will be produced, exploring the process, implementation and outcomes of the activations, contributing to an evidence base for place management.

Can funding be used for permanent infrastructure e.g. parklets?

Funding can be used to hire or purchase infrastructure like parklets, as long as council can demonstrate the longer-term intended use of these elements and how this contributes to place management outcomes. Council may also want to consider hiring event infrastructure, so that funding can be focused on activations and programming to deliver impactful activation for the community.

How will community be consulted on the projects?

Councils are responsible for consulting communities and businesses as needed, and are encouraged to reflect previous work with local communities and businesses to develop their proposals. Councils are best placed to know the local opportunities and constraints to respond to their specific COVID-19 recovery needs. It is acknowledged councils may need to take different forms of engagement in the current climate due to social distancing restrictions.

How is the Open Streets program different from other funding programs currently available?

Streets as Shared Spaces program:

- A program offering grants of up to \$500,000 to councils across NSW councils for trial projects that test permanent changes that strengthen the amenity, accessibility and economic vitality of a high street and surrounding area.
- Councils eligible for Open Streets are welcome to apply for funding under the Streets as Shared Spaces program, and may consider the same project location under both programs, noting that community events and activities in Open Streets will need to take place by May 2022, whereas Streets as Shared Spaces trials will need to commence by September 2022.

Summer Night Fund program:

- A program offering all NSW councils up to \$15,000 from the Summer Night Fund for free, COVID-Safe activations or events in public spaces in local centres.
- Councils eligible for Open Streets are welcome to sign up for funding under the Summer Night Fund program and to pool funds across both programs at the same site, if they wish.

Why is the department championing streets and delivering a funding program for closing streets?

Quality public space is essential for quality of life and to support economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits, and streets are one of the most important forms of public space. The NSW Government is seeking to increase the amount of quality public space with demonstration projects that transform and re-energise our streets during the day and as part of the 24-hour economy, to get NSW moving again.

This program supports the Premier's Priority of increasing the proportion of homes in urban areas within 10 minutes' walk of quality green, open and public space by 10 per cent by 2023.

How do councils manage COVID-safety?

Councils are responsible for ensuring events and activities are COVID-Safe. Any events or activities delivered through the Open Streets program funding will need to comply with current public health orders. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment does not issue the public health orders and therefore cannot provide any advice on those restrictions. Please refer to <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19> for current public health orders.

How has this program been funded?

This program is being funded as part of the NSW Government's Alfresco Restart Package.

What is The Festival of Place?

The Festival of Place is a celebration of public spaces across NSW. It celebrates our connection to place, 365 days of the year. As a requirement of receiving funding, we are asking councils to recognise The Festival of Place and the NSW Government, and share details of activations beforehand for inclusion on The Festival of Place website.

Who do we contact if we have questions?

Contact the team via email: PublicSpace@planning.nsw.gov.au.

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