

Special Business Rates Funding Information Session

City Centre / Darby Street

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Economic Development Lead

Wednesday 13 August 2025



City of
Newcastle

Acknowledgement of Country

**We all sit on Awabakal and Worimi land
'Niirun Yalawa Awabakal and Worimi burrei'**

City of Newcastle (CN) acknowledges its Local Government Area (LGA) sits within the Country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples. We acknowledge that Country for Aboriginal peoples is an interconnected set of ancient relationships. We acknowledge the custodianship of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples and the care and stewardship they have performed in this place since time immemorial.

**Always was, always will be Aboriginal land
'Wunyibu wunyibu warra wunyibu wunyibu kuumba
Guuri burrai'**



Housekeeping

- Microphones turned off please
- Q&A session at the end
- Presentation will be made available on website after today

Agenda

- Overview of Special Business Rates Funding
- Special Business Rates Funding footprint
- Application Process including:
 - Eligibility Criteria
 - Ineligible Applications
 - Assessment Criteria
 - Submitting Your Application
 - Key Dates
- Celebrate some of our successful applicants
- Top tips when applying for grants
- Question and Answer session

Overview

- The City of Newcastle collects Special Business Rates (SBRs) from businesses in:
 - ❖ Newcastle City Centre / Darby Street
 - ❖ Hamilton
 - ❖ Mayfield
 - ❖ New Lambton
 - ❖ Wallsend
- SBR funds are exclusively reserved for the promotion, beautification, and economic development of these business precincts.
- Funding for projects is administered through a competitive application process.
- This year we have a budget of \$880,000 to fund projects

The Application Process

Eligibility Criteria:

- Registered organisation with an ABN (ACN) or Not-for-profit organization
- Demonstrated partnership with the community
- Project will benefit businesses in the SBR precinct
- Strategically aligned to Newcastle 2040 Community Strategic Plan
- One application per project
- Maximum of 20% for administration and project management
- Publicly accessible location or provide evidence of consent from property owners
- Projects on private property require 25% minimum contribution from applicant
- Have appropriate insurances and obtain regulatory approvals
- All CN fees and charges to be paid by applicant (eg event license fees, traffic costs, venue hire) and outstanding acquittals finalised and approved

The Application Process

Ineligible Applications:

- Late or incomplete applications
- Applicants with debts, or overdue / non-compliant acquittals from previous CN funding
- Projects with a religious, political or sectarian purpose
- Funding for retrospective projects
- General fundraising appeals
- Purchase of land or buildings
- Funds for prize money, gifts or awards
- Profit-generating activities
- Projects seeking funds for travel, meals or accommodation costs
- Projects assessed to hold an unacceptable risk profile

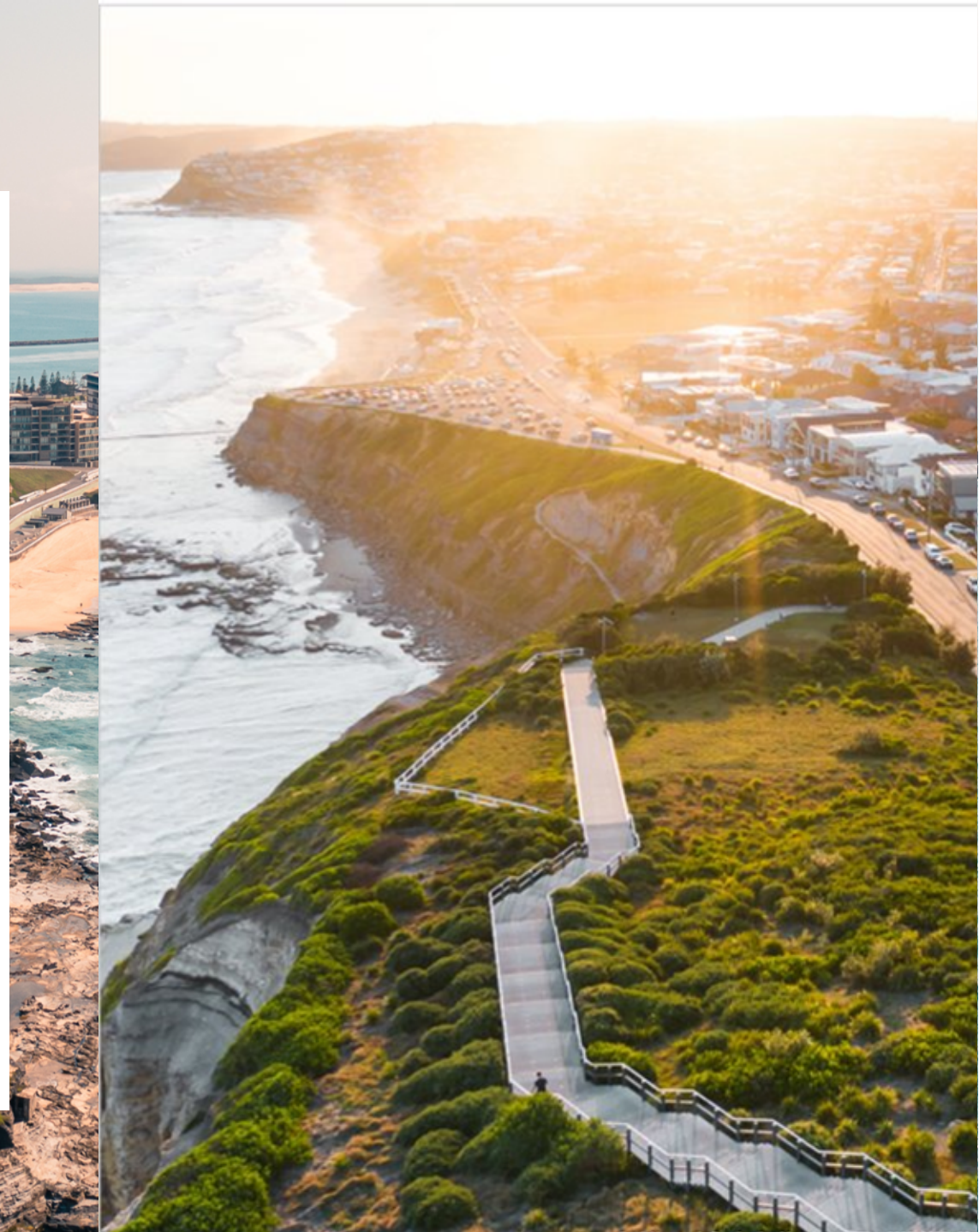
The Application Process

Assessment criteria:

- The project must support businesses within the relevant precinct
- Strategic alignment with Council's Strategies and Plans (including City of Newcastle's CSP - *Newcastle 2040* and UN Sustainable Development Goals)
- Capacity of organisation to deliver on-time and within budget
- Value for public money, including co-contributions from applicant and partner organisations
- Constructive collaboration and partnerships with key stakeholders
- Inform future activities in the precinct for economic and community development
- Demonstration of positive legacy and ongoing impact

APPLICATION ASSESSMENT

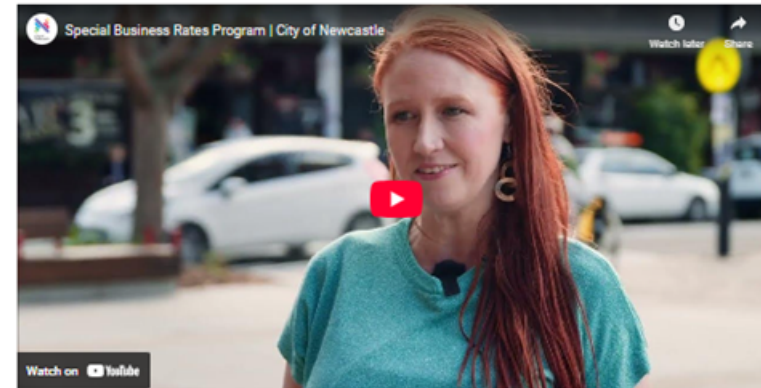
Criteria	Criteria Description	Weighting
Project supports businesses within the SBR Precinct	Supports the development of industries that increase the vibrancy and activity within the SBR precinct, events that increase visitation to local businesses, place activations that improve the amenity and vitality of the business precinct and promotions that attract people to the diversity of the precinct.	30%
Strategic alignment	The extent to which the proposed project supports Council-endorsed strategies and plans.	30%
Delivery	Ability to demonstrate the delivery of project outcomes can occur on time and within budget.	15%
Value with public money	Demonstrated value for money through careful consideration of costs, benefits, options and risk. Funding co-contributions from applicant and partner organisations are encouraged.	10%
Collaborations and partnerships	The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates constructive and cooperative relationships with other business operators and key stakeholders.	5%
Knowledge building capacity	The ability of the proposed project to capture information and learnings to inform future initiatives towards economic and community development.	5%
Legacy and ongoing impact	Ability to demonstrate the proposed project can continue to have a positive impact on local businesses and the community beyond the proposed project's lifespan.	5%



Submitting your Application

- All info on the City of Newcastle website:
www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/Special-Business-Rates
- Please read and understand the SBR Program Guidelines and SBR Expenditure Policy first
- Partnerships, networks and collaborations are encouraged
- Application form is online via Smarty Grants portal

Special Business Rates Program



Special Business Rates (SBR) are collected from businesses in Newcastle City Centre / Darby Street, Hamilton, Mayfield, New Lambton and Wallsend, and are reserved exclusively for the promotion, beautification and economic development of these business precincts. Annual funding for the most creative and innovative project proposals is distributed through a competitive application process.

Our 2025 Special Business Rates Suburban programs are closed for application.

SBR City Centre / Darby Street Funding Program

City of Newcastle is pleased to announce the opening of the 2025 Special Business Rate Expression of Interest (EOI) process for the City Centre / Darby Street precinct with approximately \$880,000 available in contestable funding.

This funding is open to businesses located in the [City Centre and Darby Street precinct](#).

We encourage you to attend our online information session to learn more about the SBR program, ask questions, and get insights into the application process. Once you have registered to attend the information session, you will be sent a Teams link to join the meeting.

- **Online information session:** Wednesday, 13 August 2025 (11am–12pm) - [click here to register](#)
- **Applications open:** Monday, 11 August 2025 (9am)
- **Applications close:** Sunday, 31 August 2025 (midnight)

[Click here to apply](#)

Before applying, please review supporting documentation and resources. This will allow you to check your eligibility and help you with the application process:

- [SBR Expenditure Policy](#)
- [2025 SBR Program Guidelines](#)
- [Special Business Rate Precinct Maps](#) - view the boundaries of each of Newcastle's business precincts where SBR rates are collected.

Key Dates

- Applications opened: Monday 11 August 2025 (9am)
- Applications close: Sunday 31 August 2025 (Midnight)
- Deliberation of Assessment Panel: Monday 22 September 2025
- Notification of outcome: End of September (subject to minutes being approved)
- Collaboration Forum: November 2025 – Date TBC
- Payment of partial funding: 4 weeks after receipt of signed agreement and invoice
- Acquittal reporting: within 45 days of project completion
- Payment of final funding: 4 weeks after notification of successful acquittal and receipt of invoice

Successful Applicants

- In 2024-25, City Centre / Darby Street SBR funding program supported 10 projects, events and promotions totaling \$839,533.

Applicant	Amount	Project
Flipside Dance	\$100,000	Acquist
Maher Initiatives Pty Ltd	\$145,000	Newcastle Food Month
Larissa Lupish Pty Ltd	\$60,000	Conscious Couture Festival
Fingers Crossed Creative Ltd	\$150,000	Winterheat CITYWIDE!
Bernie's Bar Newcastle Pty Ltd	\$15,733	100 Years of the Star Hotel
The Rogue Scholar Pty Ltd	\$26,800	Kindle Wellbeing Festival
Whale Chorus Incorporated	\$80,000	Shakespeare Under the Stars
Canvas Events Marketing PR Pty Ltd	\$137,000	Jackalope Block Party
Bandaid Bookings & Festivals Pty Ltd	\$45,000	West Best Bloc Fest
Hey Tilley Pty Ltd	\$80,000	2025 Darby Street Festival
Sauté Simmer Pty Ltd	\$60,000 (Year 2)	Reasons to visit Hunter Street Mall & Eastend Village



WINTERHEAT - 16 AUGUST





SHAKESPEARE UNDER THE STARS







WEST BEST BLOC FEST

SUNDAY OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND | 11AM-10PM
100 LOCAL BANDS | 12 STAGES | 9 VENUES

⚡ HARD-ONS ⚡

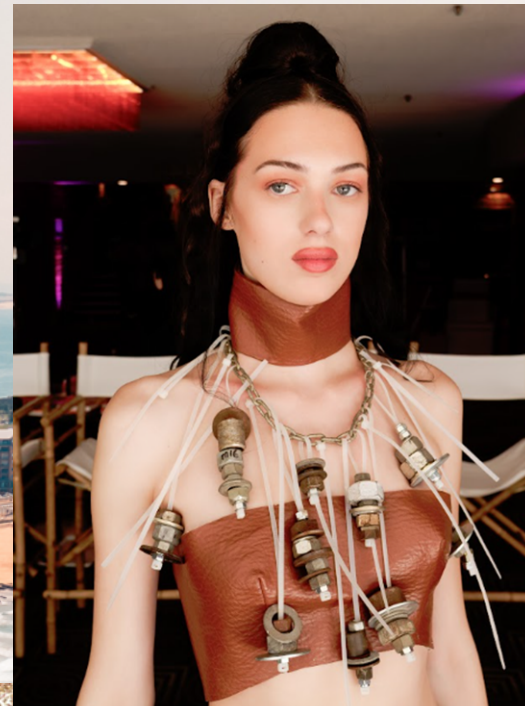
FLIGHT TO DUBAI | POLTERGEIST 9000
ADAM MILLER TRIO | G.U.N. | DEAD MALL
BANJO ULYSSES | BARDVARKK | C.H.L.O.E | CENTRAL
CITRUS | COLLECTOR | DANIEL MARCH | GOBLET
HEY LADY! | KRISP | LOUISE | LOW DEFINITION
MATT MCFARLANE AND THE DAPPER DILFS
MIDNIGHT CHICKEN | MIRAGE | MODEL AUDIO
RADARBACKWARDS | REGIKAY | ZEAL.H
MORE TBA







CONSCIOUS CULTURE FESTIVAL





Top Tips to Remember

- Don't base your business on grants or getting a grant. It is time-consuming, energy-burning work
- **Culture of expectation.** *Don't expect to get it because someone told you, about someone's friend who knew someone got it!*
- **It's not about you!** *(This will help once you get your head around it)*
- **Read the guidelines** *(see below)*
- **Reach out to the contact for the Grant or attend info sessions** *(sometimes there is a time limit for this)*
- **If you are going to apply, be thorough, don't be half-baked.**

Top Tips to Remember

- Co-write if you can, using a shared doc.
- Use your Words! Where are your mission statements, business plan, website etc?
- Show someone who is not familiar with what you do, and see if it makes sense
- Make sure the budget is considered and not too general
- Applying for grants is a business/organisational decision
- Don't forget, getting the grant isn't the end! Acquittal and reporting
- Have projects ready, that have been scoped and costed, on the shelf ready.

Support

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Questions?

Thank you for your time and Good Luck!