Community Improvement District (CID) Accelerator Program

Guidelines

November 2026



CID Pilot Program (Round 1)
Murwillumbah District Business Chamber Ltd launch event
Credit: NSW Government

Grant Program Details	
Opening date and time	24 November 2026
Closing date and time	4:00pm on Friday, 26 February 2027 (AEDT)
Application outcome date	Between April – May 2027
Project delivery timeframe	For successful applications: • By 31 May 2029 – Category D activities only (CID proposal development) • By 31 May 2030 – Category A, Category B, and Category C activities
Program evaluation timeframe	From June 2030
Decision-maker	Executive Director, Active Transport, Design and Activation, Transport for NSW
NSW Government Agency	Transport for NSW
Type of grant opportunity	Open, competitive
Grant value (total available funding for the grant and the available individual grant amounts, no GST payable)	Grant program total value: $5,000,000 Individual grant amounts: up to $500,000
Enquiries	Community Improvement Districts Team Active Transport, Design and Activation communityimprovementdistricts@transport.nsw.gov.au

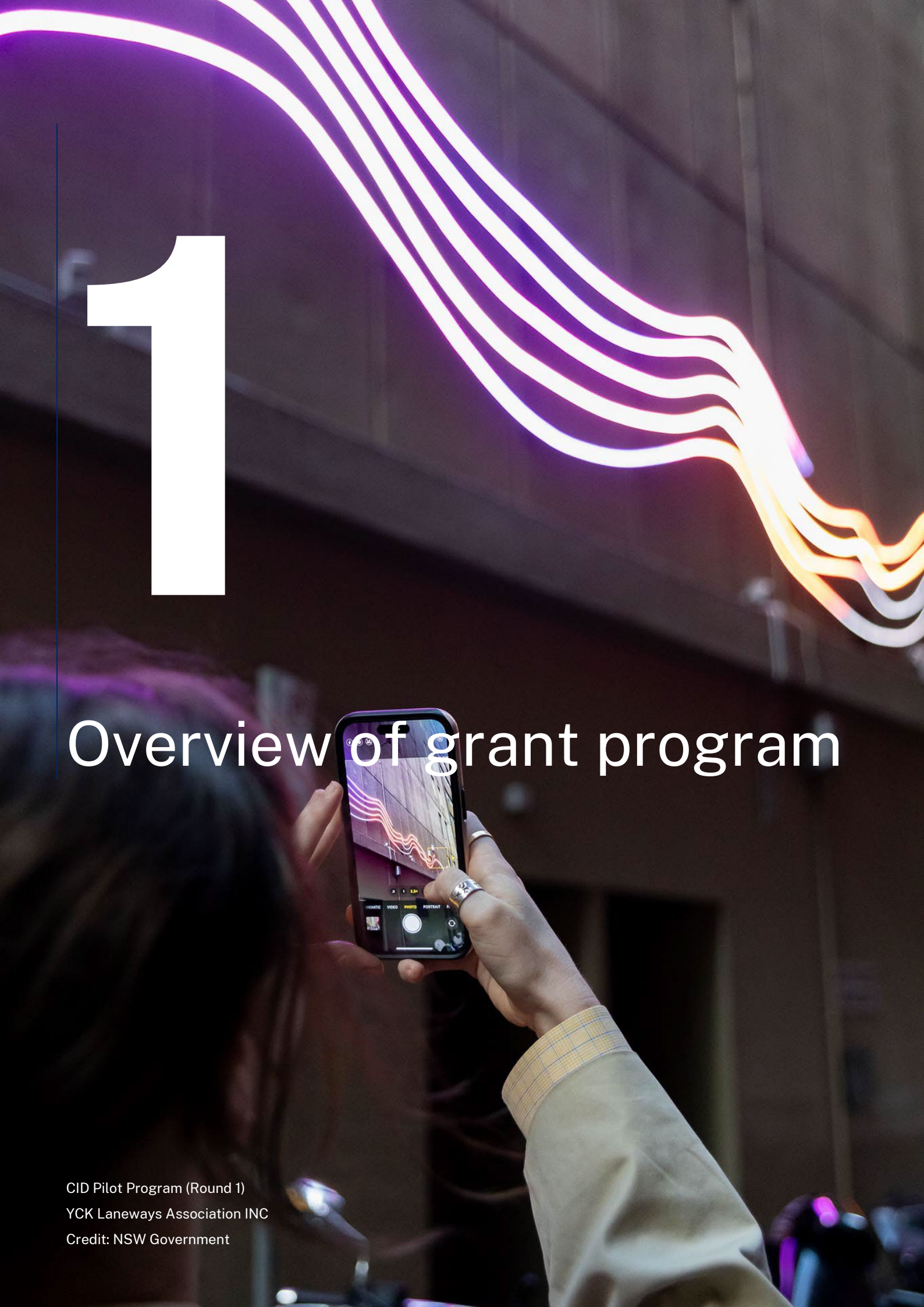
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1

Overview of grant program



CID Pilot Program (Round 1)
YCK Laneways Association INC
Credit: NSW Government

1 Overview of grant program

Transport for NSW invites eligible NSW councils to apply for funding through the Community Improvement District (CID) Accelerator Program, in partnership with one or more CID proponents or prospective CID proponents.

The CID Accelerator Program will be available to NSW councils, the Lord Howe Island Board and the Unincorporated Far West Area (collectively referred to as councils). It will support councils to build the capacity and capability required to implement the CID legislative framework, while strengthening partnerships to progress the development of CIDs within their LGAs.

1.1 Program context

The NSW Government has committed to restoring vibrancy across NSW as a key election commitment, supported by a significant regulatory reform agenda. As part of the Vibrancy Reforms, Transport for NSW has developed a new policy to enable Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) to be set up in NSW. CIDs are a key element of the broader Vibrancy Reforms, helping to create vibrant, liveable, and desirable places while stimulating local economies.

CIDs are place-based partnerships between local government and the community, led by local businesses, to support and grow local economies and foster community collaboration. They help create liveable, enriching, and desirable places while stimulating local economies.

CIDs are an internationally recognised model for businesses and community to work together to achieve a common goal and improve their local area. They can maximise the vitality and quality of public spaces and give businesses an opportunity to become involved in conversations about how place is managed.

The *Community Improvement Districts Act 2025* (CID Act) and the *Community Improvement Districts Regulation 2025* (CID Regulation) establishes the legislative framework for the creation and operation of CIDs in NSW. Under the CID Act, Transport for NSW, constituted under the *Transport Administration Act 1988*, is the Authority (CID Authority) responsible for administering the legislative framework.

Councils' role in the CID Journey

Under the CID Act, councils play critical roles (see **section 1.4**) in the establishment and operation of CIDs in their local government area (LGA), including:

1. **Council as a host jurisdiction:** The Minister for Transport must declare the LGA as an area subject to the CID Act before a CID can be established in the area.
2. **Council as a consultee:** Prospective CID proponents (see **section 6.1** for key terms and definitions) must consult with the relevant local council(s) before submitting a CID proposal.
3. **Council as a landowner:** Councils may choose to opt-in eligible council-owned land within a CID and participate as levy-paying landowners where appropriate.
4. **Council as an information holder:** Councils maintain public registers and record systems under the *Local Government Act 1993*.
5. **Council as an approver:** Under section 14 of the CID Act, following a successful ballot, the Authority must seek the views of affected councils. A CID cannot proceed to final approval without council support.
6. **Council as a partner:** Once a CID is approved, the CID entity must enter into an agreement with each local council within the CID boundary. The Agreement must specify key CID entity and council contacts, council consultation and approval arrangements, and a dispute resolution process.

1.2 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the CID Accelerator Program is to support councils take all the steps needed to accelerate CIDs for their community including implementation of the CID Act by enabling councils to build the capacity, capability and partnerships required to establish and support CIDs within their LGAs, including supporting prospective CID proponents to progress towards development and submission of CID proposals to the Authority.

Eligible councils can apply for **up to $500,000 (no GST payable)** to undertake legislative readiness, CID proposal development, partnership formation, organisational capability building and other eligible activities that support implementation of the CID Act and progression of prospective CIDs.

The objectives of the program are to:

- Accelerate uptake of the CID legislative framework across NSW by supporting councils to operationalise the CID Act.
- Build council capability and organisational readiness to understand, apply and facilitate implementation of the CID legislative framework within their LGA, supporting future CID development.
- Encourage collaboration between councils, businesses, property owners and communities to identify and progress the establishment of priority CIDs.
- Increase the pipeline of prospective CIDs capable of attracting and managing locally generated investment for place, economic and community improvements.
- Support prospective CID proponents to progress the development of CID proposals and associated documentation, with a target submission date for a CID proposal to the Authority by 31 May 2029.

The expected outcomes of the program are:

- Increased awareness and understanding of the benefits of the CID model across the local government sector.
- Increased council capability, governance arrangements and resources dedicated to CID implementation.
- Increased locally generated investment capacity through future CID entities, supporting economic development and place outcomes.
- Improved local economic resilience, centre revitalisation and place activation outcomes across participating LGAs.
- Greater consistency and quality in CID planning, governance and stakeholder engagement activities.
- Stronger partnerships between councils, businesses, property owners and local communities.
- Progression of prospective CIDs from early development towards the target of developing and submitting a CID proposal to the Authority by 31 May 2029.

1.3 Grant value

The CID Accelerator Program has a total funding pool of $5 million.

Eligible applicants may apply for grants of **up to $500,000 (no GST payable)**.

Co-contributions are encouraged but are not mandatory.

Portion of funding allocated to CID proposal development (Category D)

Successful council applicants must allocate **at least 30%** of their approved grant funding as financial support to the nominated prospective CID proponents or to develop their CID proposals (see Category D activities in **section 2.1**), unless Transport for NSW approves an exemption or reallocation.

Where the maximum grant of $500,000 is approved, the minimum allocation is $150,000. For grants below $500,000, the minimum allocation is 30% of the approved grant amount.

Councils may allocate more than 30% at their discretion, provided the expenditure is consistent with the approved project and eligible funding categories. This is encouraged where Council proposes to work with multiple CID proponents or where the relevant CID proposal has a significant amount of parcels of land, e.g. greater than 125 parcels.

Where multiple prospective CIDs are nominated, the minimum 30% allocation applies to the total funding amount The council may distribute this funding between nominated prospective CIDs based on their respective needs, maturity and proposed activities, as set out in the approved application and funding deed.

Category D exemption and reallocation

Applicants may request an exemption from the requirement to allocate funding to Category D activities, or approval to allocate less than 30% of the total funding amount requested where they can demonstrate that:

- the full financial allocation is not reasonably required by the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents or
- redirecting part of the allocation to another eligible funding category would more effectively support implementation of the CID Act and development of the nominated prospective CID or CIDs.

Any exemption or reallocation request must be supported by satisfactory justification and is subject to approval by Transport for NSW.

1.4 Why councils are the eligible applicants for the CID Accelerator Program

Councils are the eligible applicants for the CID Accelerator Program because they have a distinct role in enabling the development and establishment of CIDs within their LGAs. Under the CID Act, councils have roles at multiple points in the CID pathway, including enabling the legislative framework to apply locally, being consulted during the development of a CID proposal, considering whether council-owned land should participate in a proposed CID, providing relevant local information, and determining whether to support a CID proposal.

The Program therefore positions councils as local enablers of CID development, working in partnership with prospective CID proponents, business landowners, businesses and communities. Councils are not able or expected to become CID proponents or CID entities. Councils are not required to prepare or submit a CID proposal on behalf of a CID proponent, but can work in collaboration with them.

Funding provided to successful councils may support eligible activities delivered by the council, a prospective CID proponent or another delivery partner, including financial support provided to nominated prospective CID proponents in accordance with the CID proposal development allocation in section 1.2. All delivery and funding arrangements will be subject to the approved application, funding deed and applicable council requirements.

Figure 1 illustrates the different roles councils may play across the CID journey and the rationale for councils being the eligible applicants for the CID Accelerator Program.

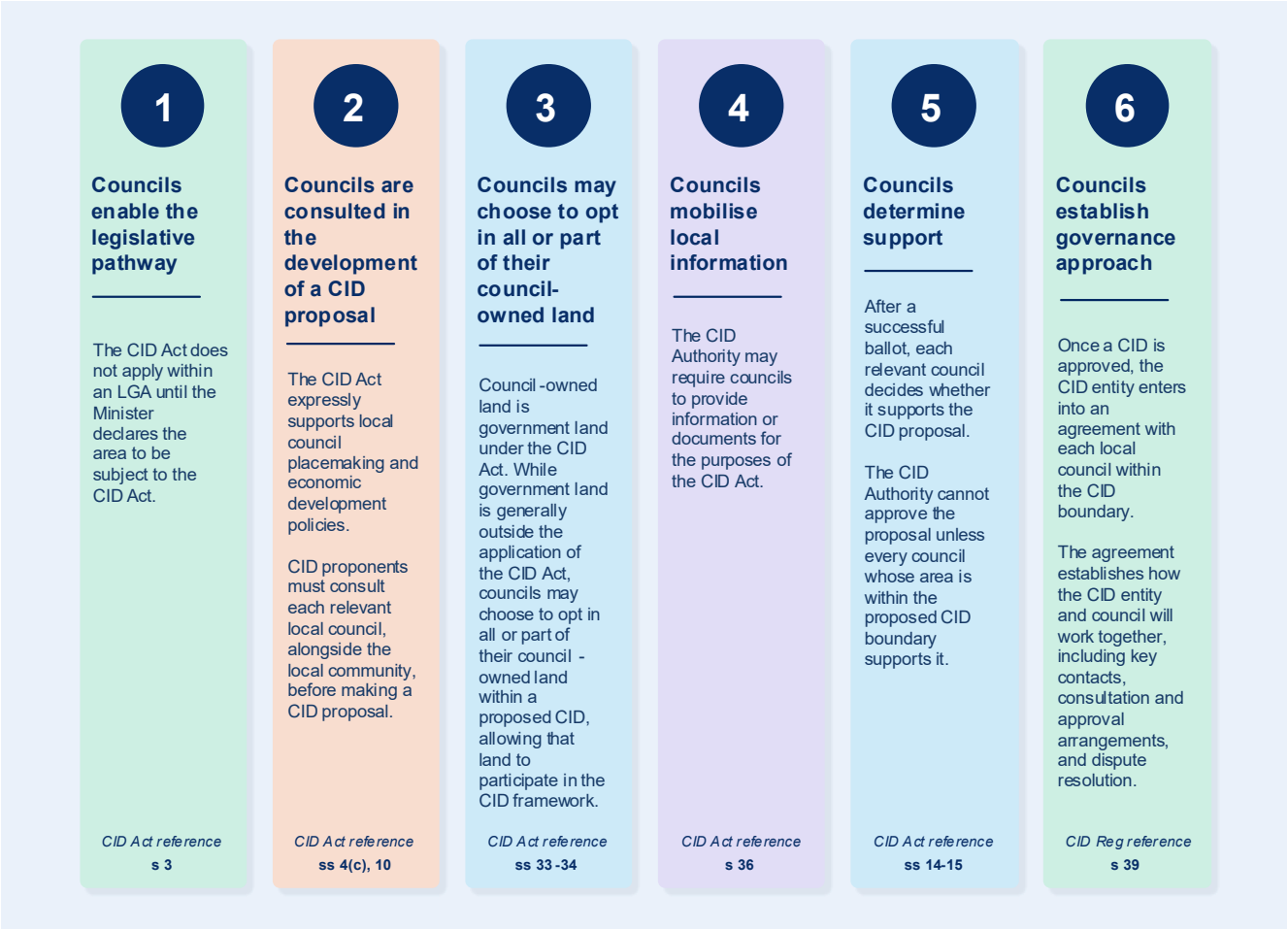


Figure 1. Council roles across the CID journey

1.5 Key summary facts for councils participating in the CID Accelerator Program

The CID Act is standalone legislation. While it relies on certain concepts from the *Local Government Act 1993*, it does not alter local government rating arrangements or council responsibilities under that Act.

The CID Accelerator Program provides grants of **up to $500,000 (no GST payable)** to eligible councils to support implementation of the CID Act and preparation for future CIDs.

Participation in the CID Accelerator Program means that councils must:

- complete the required steps to enable the CID Act to apply in their LGA
- nominate at least one prospective CID willing to work with the council on future CID development
- provide financial support to the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents equivalent to at least 30% of the approved grant, unless Transport for NSW approves an exemption or reallocation, and provide any additional financial or non-financial support identified in the approved application
- undertake activities that build capability, governance arrangements, partnerships and organisational readiness to support future CIDs
- support the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents to progress towards the target of developing and submitting a CID proposal to the Authority by 31 May 2029, including achieving agreed project milestones appropriate to the maturity and circumstances of each prospective CID
- help establish the foundations for future CIDs capable of attracting and managing additional locally generated investment for place, economic and community improvements
- receive grant funding of **up to $500,000 (no GST payable)** to deliver approved eligible implementation activities.

Participation in the CID Accelerator Program does not:

- guarantee establishment of a future CID
- guarantee acceptance of a CID Proposal by the Authority
- guarantee progression to ballot
- guarantee a successful ballot outcome
- require a council to approve a future CID proposal
- bind or fetter future council decision-making
- replace statutory decision-making processes required under the CID Act
- replace the requirement for a CID proposal, Community Consultation Report, ballot, council support and Authority approval before a CID can be established.

Note: Submission of a CID proposal to the Authority by 31 May 2029 is the program target. Where submission is not achieved, the grant recipient will be expected to demonstrate satisfactory progress against the approved project, including completed activities, documentation, partnerships, governance arrangements, the reasons for the delayed proposal submission, and an evidenced pathway for further development.

Funding the development or submission of a CID proposal does not indicate or imply that the Authority will accept the proposal, that the proposal will progress to ballot, that a council will subsequently support the proposal, or that the CID will be approved. All statutory decisions will be made separately in accordance with the CID Act and CID Regulation.

About CIDs

- Once established, a CID entity:
    - is an incorporated association that delivers services, activities and projects that improve trading environments, place outcomes and economic performance
    - delivers activities that are supplementary to existing public sector service provision
    - administers locally generated investment within an approved district in accordance with the CID Act.
- Pursuant to the CID Act, Transport for NSW is the CID Authority responsible for administering the legislative framework, including the imposition of levies.

1.6 The grant program's relationship to the CID establishment process

The CID Accelerator Program supports implementation of the CID Act by assisting councils to establish the foundations required for future CIDs.

Funding is intended to support activities across the early stages of CID development and progression towards the target of developing and submitting a CID proposal to the Authority by 31 May 2029. The stage reached by each prospective CID may vary according to its maturity, local circumstances, stakeholder support and progress during the funded project.

This includes legislative readiness, district identification, stakeholder engagement, governance development, capability building, partnership formation, and activities and documentation required to develop a CID proposal in accordance with the CID Act and CID Regulation.

Eligible activities may be delivered by councils, prospective CID proponents or other delivery partners, in accordance with the delivery and funding arrangements set out in section 1.2 and the funding deed.

Successful applicants will be required to:

- complete the required steps to enable the CID Act to apply in their LGA
- nominate at least one prospective CID willing to work with the council on future CID development
- provide financial and other support to the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents in accordance with the approved application and the requirements in section 1.2
- undertake activities that build local capability, governance arrangements and stakeholder partnerships
- support the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents to progress towards the target of developing and submitting a CID proposal to the Authority by 31 May 2029, recognising that individual prospective CIDs may reach different stages by project completion.

Figure 2 illustrates how the CID Accelerator Program operates, including the respective roles of councils and prospective CID proponents, the funding and delivery arrangements, eligible funding categories and the program target for CID proposal submission.

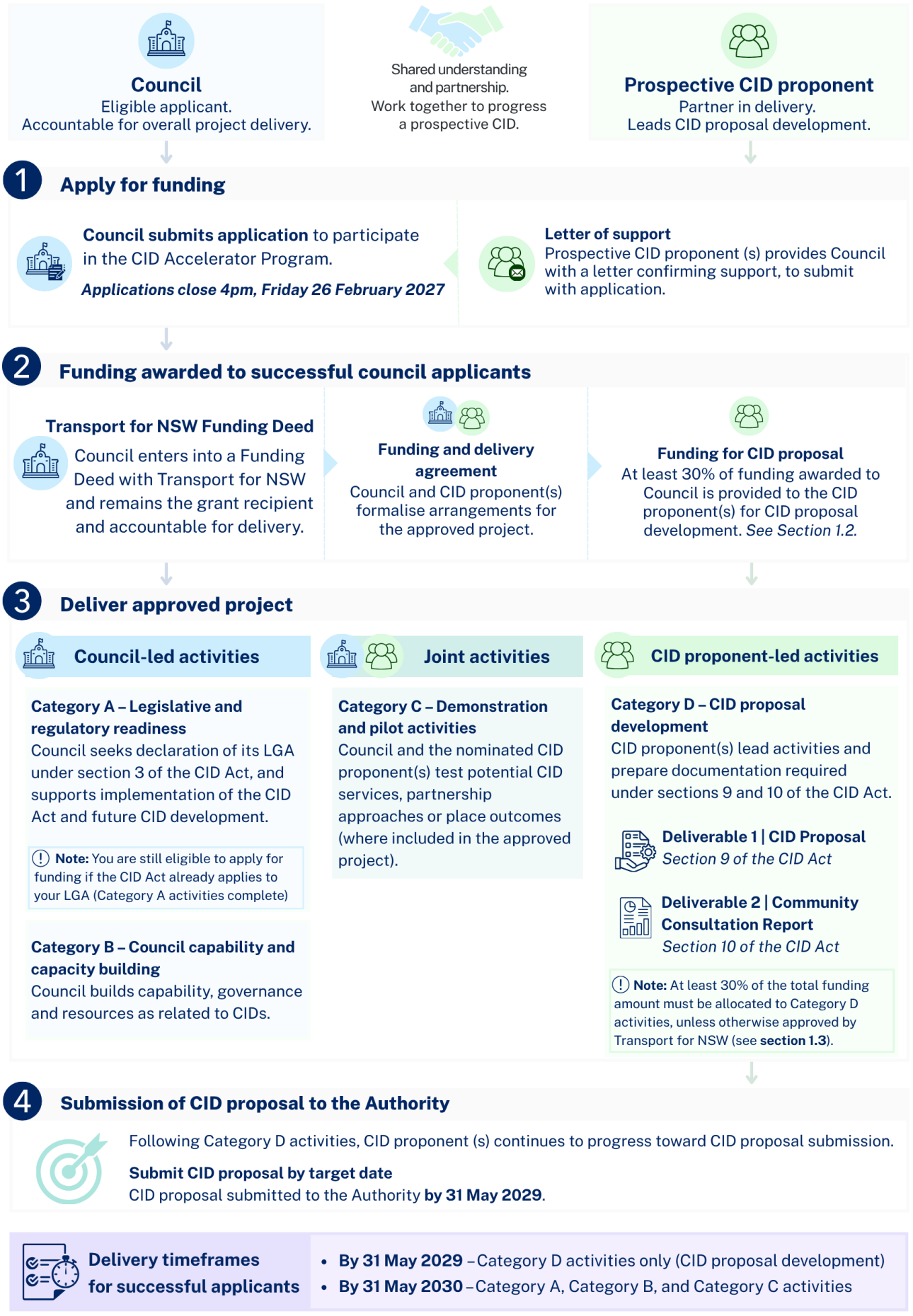


Figure 2. How does the CID Accelerator Program work? *Source: Transport for NSW.*

Note: **Figure 2** is illustrative only and provides a high-level overview of how the CID Accelerator Program may operate. If there is any inconsistency between **Figure 2** and the substantive provisions of these Guidelines, the substantive provisions of these Guidelines prevail. **For Category D, Council will work collaboratively with the CID proponent.**

Figure 3 illustrates the broader CID establishment and operation process and highlights where the CID Accelerator Program is intended to support councils in preparing for future CIDs.

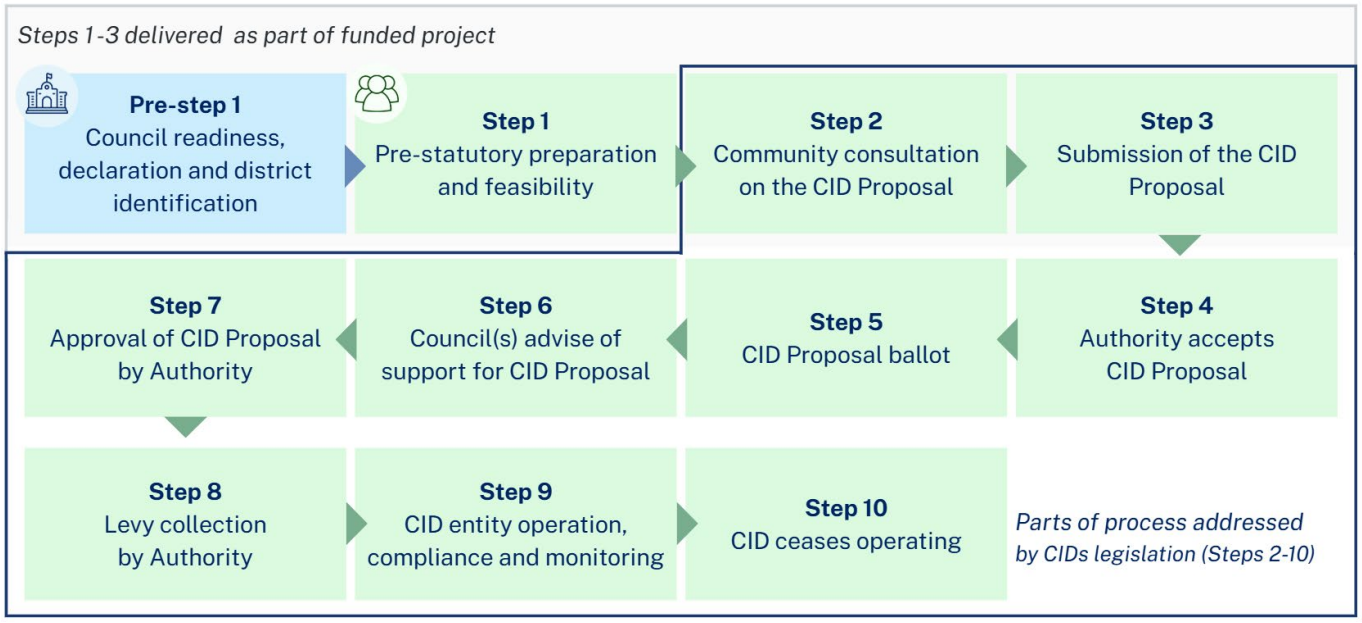


Figure 3. The 10 steps to setting up and running a CID in NSW. *Source: Transport for NSW.*

2

Selection criteria



CID Pilot Program (Round 1)
Randwick Health & Innovation Precinct
Credit: NSW Government

2 Selection criteria

2.1 Eligibility criteria

Up to $500,000 (no GST payable) in funding is available to eligible councils to support implementation of the CID Act and build the capability, partnerships and organisational readiness required to establish and support future CIDs.

The Program has a total funding pool of $5 million. Funding is limited and Transport for NSW reserves the right not to allocate the full amount available or to offer applicants less funding than requested.

Applicant eligibility

Eligible applicants must

1. Be a NSW local council, the Lord Howe Island Board, or the Unincorporated Far West Area.
2. Commit to supporting implementation of the CID Act within their jurisdiction. Eligible applicants include both:
    a. councils whose LGA is already declared under section 3 of the CID Act, and
    b. councils seeking declaration of their LGA under section 3 of the CID Act.
3. Nominate at least one prospective CID, and:
    a. identify an organisation or group willing to work with the council to explore and progress development of the prospective CID towards the target of developing and submitting a CID proposal to the Authority by 31 May 2029, and
    b. demonstrate an existing relationship or evidence of engagement between the council and the organisation or group.
4. Commit to allocating at least 30% of the approved grant as financial support to the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents for CID proposal development, unless Transport for NSW approves an exemption or reallocation in accordance with section 1.3.
5. Nominate a suitably experienced project sponsor within council who will lead delivery of the project.
6. Be capable of entering into a funding deed with Transport for NSW.

Application requirements

Applications must

1. Include a written statement, authorised by the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer, or equivalent by agreement with Transport for NSW confirming:
    a. for councils whose LGA has not been declared under section 3 of the CID Act, the council's commitment to seek declaration of its LGA under section 3 of the CID Act, and support implementation of the CID Act and future CID development, or
    b. for councils whose LGA has already been declared under section 3 of the CID Act, the council's commitment to supporting implementation of the CID Act and future CID development.

    Note: Successful applicants whose LGA has not already been declared under section 3 of the CID Act will be required to submit a request for declaration in accordance with the requirements of the funding deed.
2. Provide sufficient detail to demonstrate alignment with the objectives of the CID Accelerator Program.
3. Clearly outline proposed activities, deliverables and project milestones, including an implementation plan and project budget that:
    a. identifies expenditure against each of the four funding categories

b. identifies the proposed financial allocation to each nominated prospective CID proponent
c. demonstrates that at least 30% of the requested grant is proposed to be allocated to CID proposal development by the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents, unless an exemption or reallocation is requested
d. identifies the intended stage of CID development to be reached by 31 May 2029
e. explains the pathway towards CID proposal submission, including intermediate milestones where submission may not be achieved within the project timeframe.

4. Provide sufficient information about the nominated prospective CID(s) including:
    a. location and potential CID boundary map, including a description of the economic and place characteristics
    b. legal entity of the prospective CID[1]
    c. pre-existing projects or services delivered by the nominated prospective CID
    d. alignment of the prospective CID proponent with council strategies and plans, and opportunities for future CID development
    e. evidence that the organisation or group associated with the nominated prospective CID is willing to work with the council to explore and progress future CID development towards the target of developing and submitting a CID proposal to the Authority by 31 May 2029. Examples may include:
        i. a letter of support, letter of collaboration, or equivalent,
        ii. memorandum of understanding,
        iii. partnership agreement, or
        iv. other documentation demonstrating a commitment to collaborate on future CID development.
    f. where multiple prospective CIDs are nominated, the information below must be provided for each prospective CID.

5. Identify the amount and proportion of grant funding proposed to be provided to the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents for CID proposal development, including how the funding will be distributed where multiple prospective CIDs are nominated.

6. Where an applicant proposes not to include Category D activities, or to allocate less than 30% of the requested grant to CID proposal development, include an exemption or reallocation request in accordance with section 1.3, including the amount affected, the proposed alternative allocation and satisfactory justification for the request.

Notes:

- Where a nominated prospective CID spans multiple LGAs, applicants must outline how collaboration with affected councils will be achieved and provide any available evidence of support. Applicants may also identify opportunities to refine district boundaries where this would support future CID development.
- Nomination of a prospective CID at the application stage does not constitute council endorsement of a future CID proposal or require the organisation or group identified in the application to ultimately become the CID proponent or CID entity. Governance arrangements, district boundaries and the appropriate proponent may be further developed or refined through stakeholder engagement and project activities funded under the Program.

[1] This may include, but is not necessarily limited to, an incorporated association, unincorporated association, company limited by guarantee or other legal entity supporting future CID development. Note that, if a CID is ultimately established, the *Community Improvement Districts Act 2025* requires the CID entity to be an incorporated association.

- Applicants are encouraged to nominate multiple prospective CIDs where they can demonstrate credible partnerships and the capability to progress them. The number and quality of prospective CIDs nominated may be considered as part of the merit assessment under section 2.2.
- Applicants may submit only one application but may nominate multiple prospective CIDs within that application.
- For Category D – CID proposal development, councils will work collaboratively with the CID proponents on the activities.

Eligible project types

Eligible activities are grouped into four funding categories.

Applications may include activities under Category A, Category B, and Category C where they directly support implementation of the CID Act and progression of nominated prospective CIDs.

Applications must include activities under Category D, unless Transport for NSW approves an exemption or reallocation. At least 30% of the approved grant must be allocated to Category D and provided as financial support to the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents for CID proposal development (see **section 1.2**).

Categories	Examples of eligible activities	Funding conditions
A. Legislative and regulatory readiness	• Preparation of a council request for application of the CID Act within the LGA, including supporting documentation, endorsed by the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer, or equivalent by agreement with Transport for NSW • Council governance approvals and resolutions • Executive and councillor briefings • Implementation planning and readiness activities	• No prescribed minimum allocation.

B. Council capability and capacity building	• Funding of personnel or staff positions, including salaries, staff expenses, or any staffing costs, where expenses relate directly to the delivery of the project (up to 10% of total funding or by negotiation with Transport)
	• CID-related:
	  ○ staff capability development
	  ○ governance frameworks and business cases
	  ○ implementation strategies
	  ○ operating procedures
	  ○ communications strategies
	  ○ workforce planning
	  ○ performance monitoring frameworks
		• Council personnel and staffing costs capped at 10% unless otherwise agreed by Transport for NSW.

C. Demonstration and pilot activities	• Small-scale pilot and demonstration activities to be scoped in partnership with the CID proponent(s) that builds stakeholder support for future CID development • Test or trial of potential CID services, place management approaches or partnership models • Enhancements or additional scope to planned or existing events, capital works or place-based initiatives where the funded component directly supports CID development, stakeholder engagement or demonstration of potential CID services or outcomes	• Must be clearly linked to future CID development. Funding cannot be used for the underlying cost of existing or planned events, capital works or place improvements, but may support additional or enhanced components where these directly support CID development and are clearly identifiable within the project budget.
D. CID proposal development (sections 9 and 10 of the CID Act) ***Note:*** *These activities are*	• District identification and proposed CID boundary development and mapping • Land and property information required for development of the proposal • Preparation of the proposed CID business plan • Governance and organisational development, including activities to support identification,	• Required funding category. Minimum 30% of the approved grant, unless Transport for NSW approves an exemption or Reallocation in

Categories	Examples of eligible activities	Funding conditions
expected to be led or commissioned by the nominated prospective CID proponent, with financial support passed through by the council. The council remains the grant recipient and is accountable for oversight, expenditure, reporting and delivery of the approved project. For Category D, Council will work collaboratively with the CID proponent.	formation or development of an appropriate CID proponent • Levy modelling and financial modelling • Preparation of information required to support a CID proposal • Statutory consultation and stakeholder engagement associated with development of the proposal • Preparation of the Community Consultation Report • Legal, financial, economic or other specialist advice directly related to preparation of the proposal • Preparation and compilation of a CID proposal and, where sufficiently developed, submission to the Authority • Responses to Authority requests for clarification or further information relating to a submitted proposal.	accordance with section 1.3.

Ineligible activities

Funding cannot be used for:

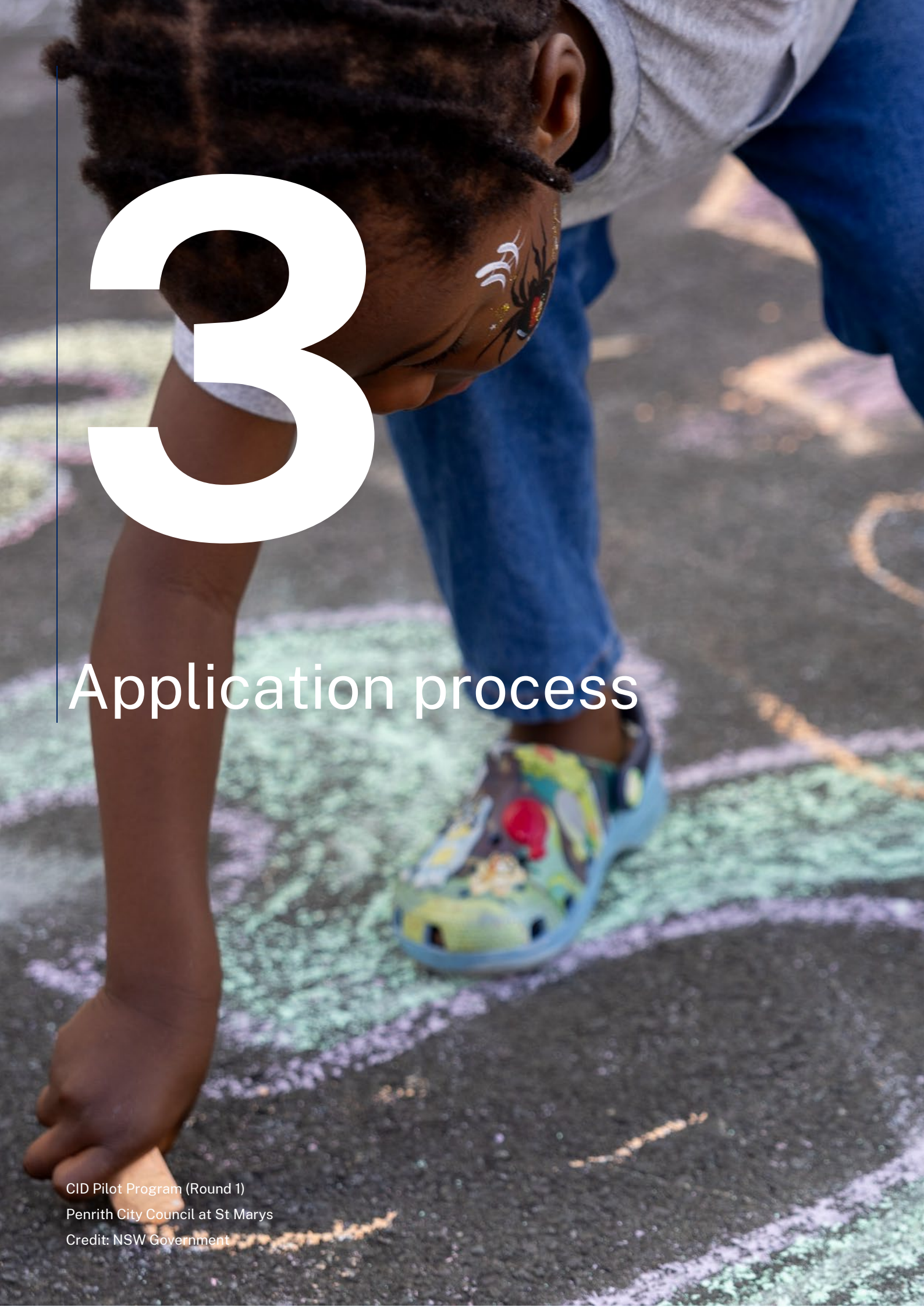
- capital works, permanent infrastructure delivery or asset maintenance, except for eligible enhancements or additional scope funded under Category C
- land acquisition
- ongoing expenditure or recurrent service delivery unrelated to the project
- retrospective costs incurred prior to execution of a funding deed
- projects or activities that do not directly support implementation of the CID Act or future CID development
- political, campaign or lobbying activities
- costs, or activities within the project, that have received, or are seeking, funding through another NSW Government grant program
- business-as-usual council operations and staffing costs not directly attributable to the project
- projects primarily focused on event delivery, place activation or place improvements that are not clearly linked to future CID development. Additional or enhanced components of planned or existing activities may be eligible under Category C where the funded component is clearly identifiable and directly supports CID development.

2.2 Assessment criteria

Criteria	Example evidence required
Strategic alignment (40%)	Evidence may include but is not necessarily limited to: • alignment with Program objectives • commitment to implementing the CID Act and how proposed activities will support implementation of the CID Act and future CID development • quality of nominated district rationale / existing partnership • anticipated benefits for businesses, property owners and communities • scale and breadth of the proposed approach, including where multiple prospective CIDs are nominated • extent to which the proposed allocation across the four funding categories supports implementation of the CID Act and development of the nominated prospective CID(s) • adequacy of the proposed financial support for each nominated prospective CID proponent • **Note**: Applications nominating multiple prospective CIDs may demonstrate greater strategic value where each nominated prospective CID has a credible rationale, stakeholder support and feasible pathway for progression.
Capability and readiness (30%)	Evidence may include but is not necessarily limited to: • governance arrangements • executive sponsorship • staff capability • council commitment • stakeholder support • maturity of proposed district • capacity and readiness of the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents to manage allocated funding and undertake CID proposal development activities • appropriateness of council oversight, accountability and funding arrangements
Deliverability (20%)	Evidence may include but is not necessarily limited to: • implementation plan • project schedule • risk management approach • procurement arrangements • credible pathway, milestones and indicative timeframe for progression towards the target of developing and submitting a CID proposal, including proposed outcomes if submission is not achieved by 31 May 2029
Value for money (10%)	Evidence may include but is not necessarily limited to: • budget • co-contributions • use of existing resources • expected outcomes relative to funding requested • reasonableness of the proposed distribution between the four funding categories • appropriateness of the proposed CID proposal development allocation, including the justification for any requested exemption or reallocation

3

Application process



CID Pilot Program (Round 1)
Penrith City Council at St Marys
Credit: NSW Government

3 Application process

3.1 How to apply

The CID Accelerator Program is an open, competitive grant program.

To apply:

1. Review these Guidelines, including the eligibility and assessment criteria.
2. Complete the application form via the SmartyGrants portal by **4pm, Friday 26 February 2027**.
3. Attach all required supporting documentation.

   Note: Applicants must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, including any relevant associations with Transport for NSW employees, assessment panel members or other persons involved in administering or assessing the Program. Conflicts of interest arising after submission must be disclosed promptly to Transport for NSW.
4. Submit the application before the closing date.

Only one application may be submitted per council. An application may nominate multiple prospective CIDs, provided the requirements in section 2.1 are addressed for each prospective CID.

Applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgement of receipt following submission.

Applications must be complete at the time of submission. Transport for NSW may, at its discretion, seek clarification or additional information from applicants during the assessment process.

Late applications will not be accepted unless Transport for NSW determines that exceptional circumstances apply.

3.2 Support available to applicants

To assist applicants, Transport for NSW will make available supporting information and resources, including frequently asked questions and guidance materials relating to the CID legislative framework.

Transport for NSW may also conduct information sessions, briefings or webinars during the application period.

For enquiries regarding the CID Accelerator Program or these Guidelines, contact:

Community Improvement Districts Team
Active Transport, Design and Activation
communityimprovementdistricts@transport.nsw.gov.au

Transport for NSW can provide guidance on the interpretation of these Guidelines but cannot assist applicants to prepare or strengthen individual applications.

4

Assessment process



CID Pilot Program (Round 2)
Parkes Shire Council
Credit: NSW Government

4 Assessment process

4.1 Assessment of grant applications

Applications will be assessed in accordance with these Guidelines.

The assessment process consists of the following stages:

Stage 1: Eligibility assessment

Transport for NSW will perform an eligibility check of applications received against the eligibility criteria (see *Eligibility Criteria* - Section 2.1). Applications that do not satisfy all eligibility requirements may be deemed ineligible and may not proceed to further assessment.

Where possible, Transport for NSW will seek to remedy eligibility issues with the applicant. Councils will be given two business days to respond to requests for information/clarification. Where an application is still deemed ineligible or if the applicant has not provided the information requested, the application will not progress for panel assessment.

Stage 2: Merit-based assessment

Eligible applications will then be assessed and ranked against the assessment criteria by an expert panel of NSW government representatives to determine the suitability of each project for funding. Applications will be assessed against the program objectives and assessment criteria (see *Assessment Criteria* – Section 2.2).

The assessment panel may recommend part funding for projects if there is insufficient funding available for the whole project or where only a component of the project is considered suitable/eligible.

Broader factors that may be considered during the assessment process include the following:

- the extent to which the proposal aligns with Program objectives
- organisational capability and readiness
- project deliverability
- value for money
- geographic distribution of funding
- diversity of projects and approaches
- alignment with existing NSW Government policies and strategies
- the overall balance and strategic value of projects across NSW.

During the assessment process, Transport for NSW may ask applicants to provide additional information to assist in the assessment process. Advice may be sought from other NSW Government agencies to assist in the assessment of projects. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process.

Transport for NSW, at its sole discretion, can take other factors into account that may make an application ineligible for funding, such as any person, business or organisation that could cause reputational or other risk to the NSW Government.

Stage 3: Funding recommendation and approval

Transport for NSW will provide the assessors' advice and recommendations to the Executive Director Active Transport, Design and Activation as the delegated grant decision maker for consideration and approval.

The decision-maker may:

- approve an application in full
- approve an application with a reduced funding amount
- place an application on a reserve list
- decline an application.

The decision of the delegated decision-maker is final.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the assessment process.

4.2 Notification of application outcome

Applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application following completion of the assessment process.

Successful applicants will receive:

- notification of approval
- details of the approved funding amount
- information regarding the funding deed and next steps.

Applicants must treat the outcome of their application as confidential and must not make any public announcement or comment about the outcome until advised by Transport for NSW that the grant has been officially announced.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing and may request feedback on their application.

Any feedback on the outcome of the applications must be requested in writing. Any questions about grant decisions for this opportunity, send to communityimprovementdistricts@transport.nsw.gov.au.

4.3 Publication of grants information

Information about the grants awarded and grant recipient will be made available on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder no later than 45 calendar days after the grant deed takes effect. This information is also open access information under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW) (**GIPA Act**), which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information. All records in relation to this decision will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the State Records Act 1998 (NSW).

5

Successful grant applications



CID Pilot Program (Round 1)
Haymarket Alliance Inc
Credit: NSW Government

5 Successful grant applications

5.1 Grant Agreement

Funding deed

Successful grant applicants will be required to enter into a funding deed with Transport for NSW. The funding deed will set out the obligations of the recipient of the funding, including but not limited to the following:

- Regular project progress reports and other reporting requirements
- Milestones and payments
- Non-disclosure and non-disparagement
- Acknowledgement of the financial support by the NSW Government
- Not make any financial commitments until funding deeds are executed
- Monitoring and reporting
- Repayment of unspent funds
- Being responsible for any project cost overruns
- The minimum financial allocation to the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents, including the amount, purpose, payment arrangements, eligible expenditure, reporting requirements and any approved exemption or reallocation and
- Project completion and acquittal requirements.

The NSW Government makes no binding funding commitment to an applicant unless and until both parties sign a funding deed.

The funding deed will require the successful applicant to provide a copy of all relevant insurances, approvals and other supporting documentation relevant to the project or as requested by Transport for NSW.

Project management

Grant recipients must establish appropriate funding, collaboration or delivery arrangements with the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents. Councils are responsible for undertaking appropriate due diligence in relation to nominated prospective CID proponents and for determining, having regard to their own governance, procurement, financial management and risk requirements, what due diligence and risk management measures may be necessary before entering into funding, collaboration or delivery arrangements.

Unless Transport for NSW approves an exemption or reallocation, these arrangements must provide at least 30% of the approved grant to the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents for Category D – CID proposal development.

The arrangements must address, as relevant, matters including the amount and purpose of funding, eligible expenditure, agreed activities and deliverables, payment, acquittal, reporting, record keeping, unspent funds and project changes.

The council remains responsible to Transport for NSW for oversight, appropriate use of grant funding and delivery of the approved project.

The funding deed will establish project milestones appropriate to the maturity and circumstances of each nominated prospective CID. Milestones will support progression towards the target of developing and submitting a CID proposal to the Authority by 31 May 2029 but will not necessarily require submission where satisfactory progress can be demonstrated through agreed intermediate deliverables.

Intermediate deliverables may include confirmed governance arrangements, stakeholder engagement, boundary development, land and property information, levy modelling, a draft

business plan, consultation documentation, a draft CID proposal or an evidenced pathway and timetable for further development.

Consultation with key stakeholders

The grant recipient will be responsible for monitoring during the project and may be required to make adjustments to aspects of the project as needed in response to feedback from key stakeholders.

Evidence of consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders is an integral part of the project and is a requirement in the project milestones.

Project variations

Projects will need to be delivered in line with the funding deed and project plan. Grant recipients will need to request any changes to approved projects in writing to Transport for NSW. Change requests will be assessed on their impact on the purpose, scope, timing and conditions of the approved project, and will only be allowed once agreed upon by all parties through a formal variation. If approved, information on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder may be updated to reflect the project change.

Acknowledgement of funding

Grant recipients must acknowledge the funding contribution from the NSW Government in all communications and media for the project as per the requirements outlined at the Sponsorship and Funding Acknowledgement webpage.

For any funded events, the recipient must invite the Minister for Transport, local MPs, and Transport for NSW representatives to attend any funded event with no less than 20 business days' notice. To make the invitation, the recipient should access the Minister's web form and local MPs web forms.

Invitations to Transport for NSW representatives should be sent to communityimprovementdistricts@transport.nsw.gov.au. All invitations should note any formal proceedings taking place during the event.

5.2 Grant payment

Payment of funding will be conditional on the funding being used only for the project in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding deed.

Payment of funding will be made in accordance with the milestones and payment schedule set out in the funding deed and will be subject to compliance with the recipient's obligations.

Transport for NSW may link grant payments to evidence that the council has established and complied with the approved financial arrangements with the nominated prospective CID proponent or proponents.

Evidence may include an executed funding or collaboration agreement, payment records, expenditure reports, completed deliverables and acquittal documentation.

Transport for NSW may review expenditure claims and supporting documentation at any time during the project. Transport for NSW reserves the right to reject an expense, or seek further clarification where the expense:

- was incurred prior to execution of the Funding Deed;
- is not consistent with the scope of works set out in the Funding Deed;
- does not directly contribute to the objectives of the Program or is not being used for its intended purpose; or
- does not represent an ethical, efficient and effective use of public resources.

A final acquittal and project report will be required following completion of the project. Timing and requirements will vary at NSW Government's discretion, depending on the scope and risk of the project.

Unless otherwise stated, all sums payable under the CID Accelerator Program are exclusive of GST. If GST applies to goods or services purchased as part of your project, it is the recipient's responsibility to manage those GST costs within the approved funding amount.

The total funding amount payable under a funding deed for the Program is inclusive of GST, where applicable. GST will not be paid by Transport for NSW in addition to the grant amount.

Transport for NSW will not provide funding for GST in addition to the approved grant amount, nor will it provide additional funding to cover any GST costs exceeding the approved grant amount.

5.3 Unspent funds

Where funding provided to a nominated prospective CID proponent remains unspent, the council must not redirect that funding to another activity or funding category without prior written approval from Transport for NSW. Unspent funds may be required to be returned in accordance with the funding deed.

5.4 Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

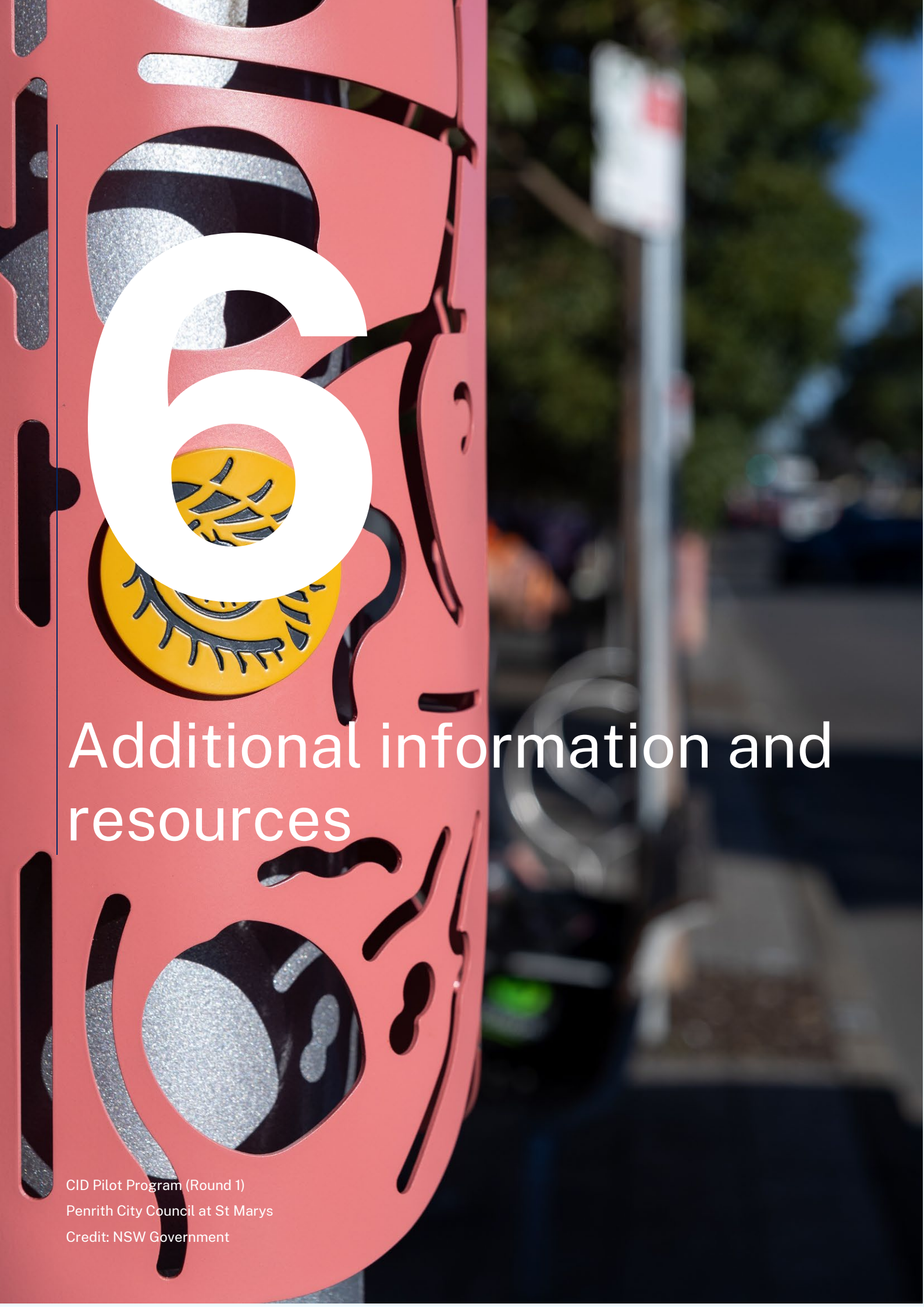
Successful applicants will be required to submit project progress reports to the NSW Government as outlined in the funding deed. Grant recipients will also need to provide a final acquittal report via SmartyGrants at the completion of project including a signed Statement of Expenditure.

Reporting requirements may include:

- expenditure against each of the four funding categories
- amounts provided to each nominated prospective CID proponent
- activities and deliverables completed using the CID proposal development allocation
- partnership, governance, engagement and capability outcomes
- preparation of statutory and supporting documentation
- progress towards the target of developing and submitting a CID proposal to the Authority by 31 May 2029
- where submission is not achieved, the stage reached, reasons for this and the evidenced pathway for further development.

6

Additional information and resources



CID Pilot Program (Round 1)
Penrith City Council at St Marys
Credit: NSW Government

6 Additional information and resources

6.1 Key terms

Term	Definition
Approved grant	***Approved grant*** means the total grant funding approved by Transport for NSW for a successful applicant.
CID entity	As defined in the CID Act, ***CID entity*** means an incorporated association specified in an approved CID proposal as the CID entity for a CID.
CID proponent	As defined in the CID Act, ***CID proponent*** means an incorporated association or an unincorporated association.
CID proposal submission target	***CID proposal submission target*** means the program target for a nominated prospective CID proponent to develop and submit a CID proposal to the Authority by 31 May 2029. The target guides project planning and milestones but does not guarantee submission, acceptance, progression to ballot or approval of a CID.
Council	For the purposes of this document, ***Council*** collectively refers to all NSW local councils, Lord Howe Island Board, and the Far West Unincorporated Area.
Prospective CID and ***prospective CID proponent***	For the purposes of this document, ***prospective CID*** refers to an early-stage CID initiative being explored or developed. A ***prospective CID proponent*** is the organisation or group associated with that initiative that will lead CID proposal development activities (see Category D activities in **section 2.1**). This may include an established organisation or group such as a business chamber or district collective.

6.2 Complaint handling

Any complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing. Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be sent to communityimprovementdistricts@transport.nsw.gov.au.

If you do not agree how Transport has handled your complaint, you may complain to the NSW Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the relevant department. Visit the NSW Ombudsman at www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

6.3 Decision-making and source agency

The Minister for Transport has approved the CID Accelerator program.

Transport for NSW will provide the assessors' advice and recommendations to the Executive Director, Active Transport, Design and Activation, Transport for NSW as the delegated grant decision maker for consideration and approval.

Transport for NSW is the sole agency responsible for administering this grant.

6.4 Access to information

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)

Applicants should be aware that information submitted in applications and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW). Information that is deemed to be commercially sensitive will be withheld. The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) makes government information accessible to the public by:

- Requiring government agencies to make certain sorts of information freely available
- Encouraging government agencies to release as much other information as possible
- Giving the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information
- Restricting access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

6.5 Privacy policy

Transport for NSW is required to comply with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1988. Transport for NSW collects the minimum personal information you voluntarily provide to enable it to contact an organisation and to assess the merits of an application.

Any information provided by you will be stored on a database that will only be accessed by authorised personnel and is subject to privacy restrictions.

The information will only be used for the purpose for which it was collected. Applicants must ensure that people whose personal details are supplied with applications are aware that Transport for NSW is being supplied with this information and how this information will be used.

6.6 Probity advice

An independent probity advisor will provide guidance to Transport for NSW and the assessment panel on any issues concerning integrity, fairness and accountability that may arise throughout the application, assessment, and decision-making process. This will ensure decisions are made with integrity, fairness and accountability, while delivering value for money for NSW.

6.7 Disclaimer

Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. The costs of preparing an application are borne by the applicant.

Participation in this grant program does not guarantee that a CID will be established.

Submission of a CID proposal to the Authority by 31 May 2029 is a program target and is not guaranteed. Where submission is not achieved, the grant recipient will remain responsible for delivering the approved project, demonstrating satisfactory progress against agreed milestones and accounting for the use of grant funding in accordance with the funding deed.

Establishment of a CID is subject to subsequent statutory and procedural requirements, including but not limited to:

- acceptance of a CID Proposal by the Authority
- support from the relevant local council(s)
- majority support demonstrated through a successful ballot and

- final approval in accordance with the CID Act and associated Regulation.

The State of New South Wales (including Transport for NSW), accept no liability for any costs, actions, or commitments incurred by applicants or proponents in anticipation of CID approval or establishment.

Legislative primacy

These Guidelines are intended to assist applicants in understanding the *Community Improvement Districts Act 2025* (CID Act) and *Community Improvement Districts Regulation 2025* (CID Regulation). If there is any inconsistency between these Guidelines and the CID Act or CID Regulation, the CID Act or CID Regulation prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

While Transport for NSW has taken reasonable care in preparing these Guidelines, applicants should make their own enquiries and seek independent advice where appropriate. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that any activities undertaken under the Program comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.

7 Appendix A – Why Community Improvement Districts?

7.1 Economic evidence from the CID Pilot Program (Round 1)

The CID Pilot Program (Round 1) preceded and informed the development of the CID Act, the CID Seed Funding Program and the CID Accelerator Program. The Pilot Program tested the CID model through participating districts and generated evidence about its potential place and economic benefits.

During the reporting period, participating CID pilot districts recorded retail turnover growth of 9.89%, compared with 3.98% across comparable NSW high street retail industries. This represents an observed growth differential of 5.91 percentage points, or approximately 2.5 times the benchmark growth rate.

Figure 4 compares reported retail turnover growth across participating CID pilot districts with growth across comparable NSW high street retail industries over approximately the same period.

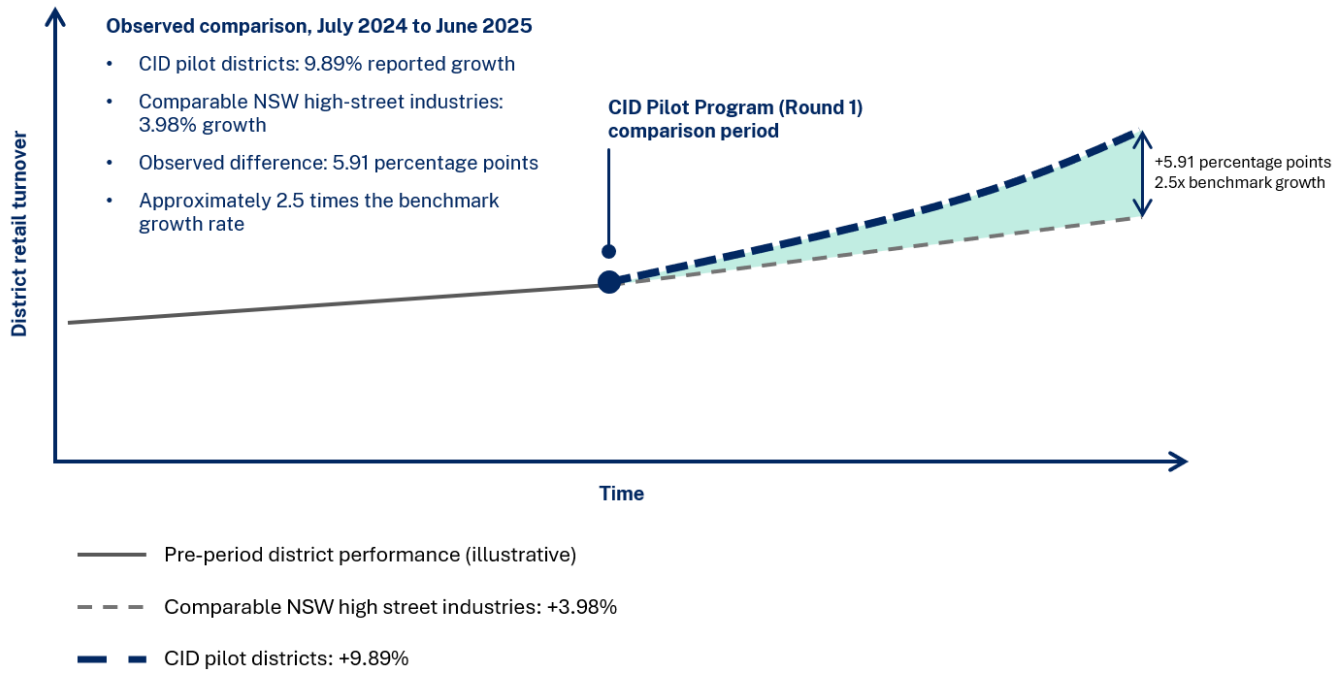


Figure 4. Observed retail turnover growth in CID pilot districts relative to the comparable NSW high street benchmark

Method and limitations: ABS Retail Trade, Australia (Table 11, NSW industry subgroup original series), adapted to create a comparable NSW high street retail benchmark comprising Food Retailing, Clothing, Footwear and Personal Accessory Retailing, Department Stores, Other Retailing, and Cafes, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services (June 2024 to June 2025); CID Pilot Program reported outcomes. Pre-period line and intermediate trajectories are illustrative.

To illustrate the potential scale of the observed differential, **Figure 5** applies the two growth rates to hypothetical districts with annual retail turnover of $10 million, $100 million and $1 billion. The scenarios assume that the relevant annual growth rates are sustained and compounded over five years.

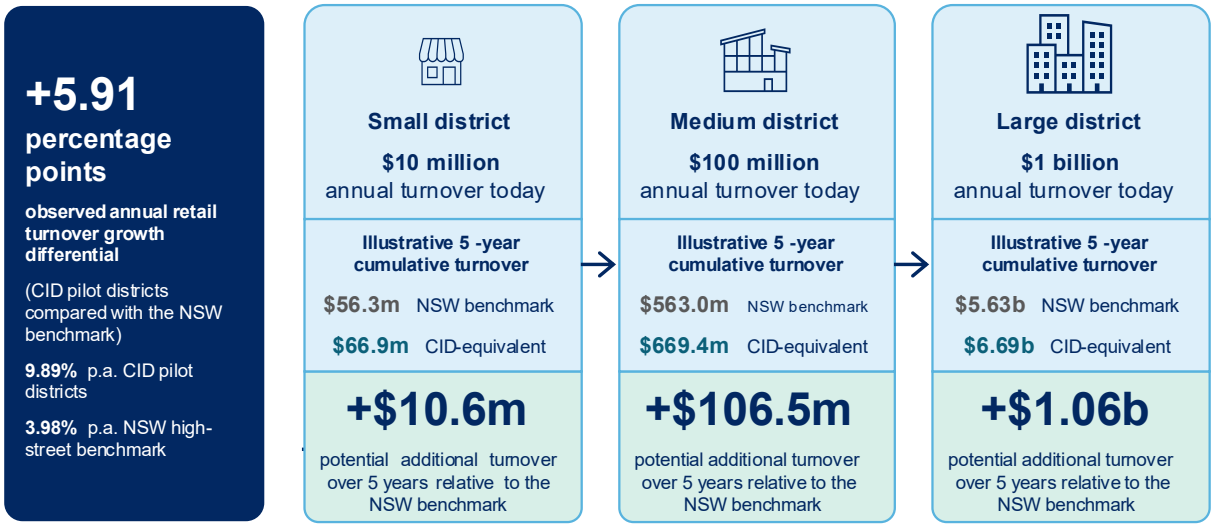


Figure 5. Illustrative additional turnover if CID pilot-equivalent growth were compounded annually over five years

Method and limitations: The scenarios apply annual compound growth of 3.98% under the comparable NSW high-street benchmark and 9.89% under the CID-equivalent scenario. Five-year cumulative turnover represents the sum of estimated annual turnover across Years 1-5. The CID-equivalent rate is based on average outcomes reported through the CID Pilot Program (Round 1) and is extrapolated over five years for illustrative purposes. The scenarios show potential outcomes only and are not forecasts or guaranteed results. Actual outcomes may vary according to local economic conditions, district characteristics, investment and program delivery.

Why use a five-year scenario?

Under section 15(7) of the CID Act, a CID approval expires after five years. A further CID proposal ballot is required to extend the CID levy. The scenarios therefore use a five-year period to align with the standard statutory approval term.

Figure 6 provides a broader overview of how the CID Pilot Program (Round 1) combined place-based initiatives, local partnerships and activation activities to support local economic outcomes.

Retail turnover was one indicator of the CID Pilot Program's impact. Participating partnerships also delivered a range of physical and non-physical initiatives intended to attract visitors, support local businesses, strengthen district identity and build local place management capability.

2.5x

Retail outperformance

CID pilot districts achieved **2.5 times greater** retail turnover growth than comparable NSW retail market movement.



Figure 6. CID Pilot Program (Round 1) activities, reach and reported economic outcomes.

CID Pilot Program (Round 1)
Murwillumbah District Business Chamber Ltd
Credit: NSW Government

A combination of place-based initiatives drive stronger local economies

Nine pilot partnerships delivered 77 initiatives across NSW, combining physical and non-physical interventions to make places more vibrant, welcoming and economically active.

Events and programming
Activated spaces drew more people to local centres.

Public art
Enhanced local identity and created more inviting places.

Wayfinding and signage
Improved access, connectivity and the visitor experience.

Streetscape and greening improvements
Made public spaces more attractive, comfortable and sustainable.

Street closures and place activation
Supported safer, more vibrant places and encouraged longer stays.

Partnerships and collaboration
Brought together government, businesses, property owners and communities.

District branding and marketing
Increased awareness and attracted new visitors to local centres.

Strategic planning and governance
Built local capacity and laid the foundation for long-term place management.

From activation to economic impact

The Program's initiatives created more reasons to visit, stay and spend, delivering measurable benefits for local businesses.

More activity and reasons to visit
Events, public art, improved spaces and place marketing.

→

Increased visitation and dwell time
More people in local centres, for longer.

→

More spending in local businesses
Higher foot traffic and greater customer activity.

→

Stronger retail performance
9.9% increase in district retail turnover.

→

2.5x outperformance
Compared with broader NSW retail market movement.

316,000+
attendees at events and activations

750+
local businesses represented

130+
people employed for project delivery

6,000+
community members engaged