

Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner

Regional Night-Time Economy Program

Program guidelines

October 2025



Grant program details

Grant program milestone	Details
Opening date and time	16 October 2025 9:00AM AEDT
Closing date and time	20 November 2025 2:00PM AEDT
Application outcome date	Early February 2026
Program period	From the execution of funding deed to final acquittal
Bootcamp period	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cohort 1: one-day event between April – June 2026• Cohort 2: one-day event between July – August 2026
Grant funding period	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cohort 1: 1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027• Cohort 2: 1 September 2026 – 31 August 2027
Decision-maker	Secretary, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, or delegate
NSW Government Agency	Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner
Type of grant opportunity	Open, competitive
Grant value (total available funding for the grant and the available individual grant amounts, excluding GST)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$2,000,000 total grant funding available across both cohorts• \$100,000 - \$200,000 individual grant amount
Enquiries	Regional-NTE-Program@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au

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Grant program overview

This document contains information about the Regional Night-Time Economy Program and how you can apply. You should read this document in full before you apply.

It sets out:

- the purpose of the Regional Night-Time Economy Program
- how the Regional Night-Time Economy Program is structured
- eligibility requirements
- how applications are assessed
- how funding recipients will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations for the Regional Night-Time Economy Program.

The Regional Night-Time Economy Program has been developed by the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner (O24HEC) and is jointly administered with Create NSW, both within the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (the Department).

The Program Guidelines (Guidelines) may be updated by the Department at any time. If this occurs, the revised Guidelines or any addenda will be published on will be published on the NSW Government Grants Finder website. Should there be an update to the Guidelines and your application is already submitted, you will be notified and be provided with an opportunity to modify your application.

Glossary

For the purposes of the Regional Night-Time Economy Program, the following terms have been provided to be drawn upon when applying:

- **Applicant** refers to the membership-based organisation that meets the eligibility criteria, as outlined in [eligibility criteria](#).
- **Business Collective** is the core project team that participates in the Regional Night-Time Economy Program and leads the delivery of the grant-funded project, as outlined in [eligibility criteria](#).
- **Cohort 1** is the group of Business Collectives whose grant funding period is from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027.*
- **Cohort 2** is the group of Business Collectives whose grant funding period is from 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2027.*
- **Equipment** refers to physical or tangible resources or property.
- **Grant funding period** is the period in which all initiatives funded under this grant must be delivered. For Cohort 1 it is from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027 and for Cohort 2 is it from 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2027.
- **Night-time economy** refers to economic activity taking place between 6pm and 6am.
- **Project** refers holistically to the funded activities that the Business Collective will deliver over the grant funding period to develop the night-time economy in the town centre or precinct.
- **Project Proposal** is the overview of the Business Collective's proposed initiatives, submitted as part of the application as outlined in the [assessment criteria](#). This will be developed into a comprehensive Project Plan as part of the capacity-building component of the Program.
- **Project Plan** is the comprehensive strategy and detailed plan for the Business Collective's actions and deliverables for the 12-month funding period. The Project Plan will be developed as part of the capacity-building component of the Program, building on the Project Proposal submitted as part of the application.
- **Uptown Grant recipient** is an entity/business collective that has previously been approved to receive funding under the Uptown Grant Program and executed an Uptown Grant Program funding deed, and comprises members that are substantially the same, and that represent the same town centre/precinct. The decision on whether an applicant is an Uptown Grant recipient will be determined by DCITHS.
- **Venue** refers to both unlicensed and licensed premises.
- **Vibrancy Reforms** refers to a cross-government initiative developed in consultation with key agencies, industry, councils and stakeholders to bring vibrancy back to NSW's night-time economy and community.

* Applicants can indicate a Cohort preference based on the grant funding period that best suits their 12-month Project Proposal.



Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery, Broken Hill. Image: Destination NSW



Lost Lanes 2019, Wagga Wagga. Image: Destination NSW

Program purpose and objectives

The purpose of the Regional Night-Time Economy Program (the Program) is to encourage local business collaboration and support the development of vibrant night-time economies in regional NSW. The Program will also support actions under the NSW 24-Hour Economy Strategy to foster collaboration and create vibrant, diverse and coordinated precincts.

The objectives of the Program are to:

- increase capacity and confidence of regional business collectives to identify and leverage existing local economic and cultural opportunities
- strengthen coordination between local businesses to deliver collective initiatives with a shared vision and strategy
- increase the number of collective initiatives in regional NSW that promote and support more vibrant town centres and precincts.

The intended outcome of the Program is that business collectives are supported to deliver collaborative initiatives that develop their local night-time economy.

Background

From February to April 2025, the O24HEC consulted with stakeholders across NSW to better understand the needs and priorities of regional business communities in relation to their local going-out economy. Stakeholders consulted included representatives from local businesses, industry groups and councils.

The consultation identified that regional urban centres often have inconsistent and/or underdeveloped night-time economies, with activity spiking during specific periods (for example, around a major event, season, or at certain times of the day) but remaining uneven at other times.

Stakeholders identified that this inconsistency was a barrier to long-term business viability and impacted the experience and perceptions of vibrancy for consumers in regional towns, whether locals or visitors.

The consultation has informed the design of this Program.



About the program

The Program is an integrated capacity-building and funding program that supports business collectives in regional towns to leverage existing opportunities and deliver collaborative initiatives that develop their local economies from the day into the night.

See [delivering collective initiatives](#) and [leveraging opportunities](#) for more information.

The NSW Government has committed \$2 million in grant funding for a pilot round of the Program, with \$100,000 to \$200,000 (excl. GST) in funding for eligible Applicants (see [eligibility criteria](#)). Costs can support project coordination, marketing and promotion, and events and activations.

The Program has space for up to ten successful Applicants in this pilot round, split across two cohorts of five. The grant funding period for Cohort 1 will be 1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027 and the grant funding period for Cohort 2 will be 1 September 2026 – 31 August 2027.

As part of the application process, Applicants can indicate their preferred cohort based on the grant funding period that best suits their 12-month Project Proposal, although their preference is not guaranteed. A provisional Program timeline for both cohorts is included in [program structure](#).

Applicants who meet the assessment criteria but are not ranked among the top ten most competitive applications may be placed on a waitlist for consideration if any additional spaces become available. These waitlisted applications will be considered ‘unfunded applications of merit’ and ranked.

This round of the Program is a pilot phase, providing an opportunity to test the approach, learn from the outcomes, and assess its effectiveness. Insights from this round will inform decisions on the Program’s future roll-out.

Delivering collective initiatives

Through this Program, business collectives will deliver initiatives that develop their local economies from the day into the night.

The focus of this Program is the night-time economy, which refers to economic activity taking place between 6pm and 6am. Applications might also include initiatives that fall outside of this period.

Types of collective initiatives might **include but are not limited to**:

- developing new experiences to address off-peak periods
- curating new activations to capitalise on a major event
- expanding and diversifying offerings to reach new audiences
- extending activity to cater to local consumer demand (e.g. collective late-night trading).

See [eligible grant activities](#) for more details.

Types of initiatives that are **not supported** by this Program include:

- business as usual (BAU) activities for any party associated with this application
- existing programming, events and festivals delivered by any party associated with this application
- infrastructure, such as physical signage, lighting, installations, and rejuvenation of shop fronts or footpaths.

See [ineligible activities](#) for more details.

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that all insurances required are in place for any activities or initiatives delivered under this Program. Successful Applicants will be required to show proof of insurance upon request of the O24HEC.

Leveraging opportunities

When developing these initiatives, Applicants **must** identify existing opportunities in and around their town centre or precinct that can be leveraged.

Examples of opportunities that business collectives can leverage through the Program **include but are not limited to**:

- Cultural opportunities, for example
 - major or local events (e.g. music festivals, sporting events, special markets)
 - First Nations and/or multicultural offerings
 - cultural assets and icons (e.g. art galleries, museums, landmarks)
 - tours and trails (e.g. biking trails, historical tours).
- Economic opportunities, for example
 - local industry strengths (e.g. wineries, tourism)
 - population change and new consumers (e.g. increased number of fly-in fly-out workers, students, families moving from larger cities)
 - underutilised night-time potential (e.g. existing strong daytime economy, underutilised infrastructure, establishment of a Special Entertainment Precinct).

- Did you know that hosting live performances might allow venues to trade for an additional two hours? Read more about [Vibrancy Reforms](#)
- Did you know that certain events can be registered as Special Events, meaning later trading for licensed premises can be accessed for both the 24 hours before and after the event itself? Read more about [Special Event Extended Trading](#)
- Learn more about [Special Entertainment Precincts](#)

The Program recognises that every region is unique and that opportunities may differ from one town centre/precinct to another. Applicants are encouraged to use the above list as a starting point to identify opportunities for their town centre or precinct, but these are examples only and might not be relevant to every local context.

Case studies: collective initiatives that leverage opportunities

Case study one

An annual music festival is held just outside of Town A, attracting over 10,000 people to the area for the weekend. The festival begins on Saturday, but visitors begin arriving on Friday.

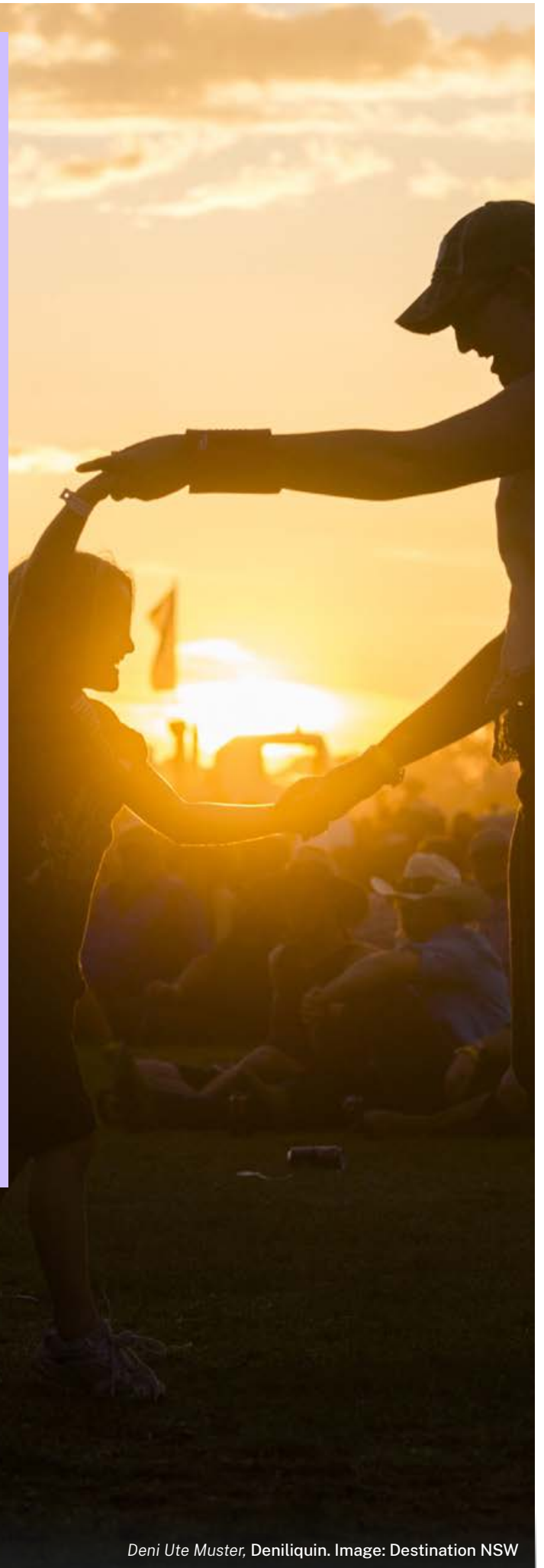
Businesses in Town A collectively curate a program of venue activations on Friday night and Sunday night to encourage festival visitors to spend more time in the town centre. For instance, offering deals on food and beverage, or hosting live performances.

The businesses collaborate with the event organisers to promote the activations, improving the experience for festival attendees by providing them with entertainment outside of the main festival hours, whilst ensuring that local businesses see the benefits of the increased visitation.

Case study two

Town B has seen a recent influx of families moving to the town from larger cities, bringing new residents looking for family-friendly activities year-round.

Businesses in Town B come together to better cater to this demand. They organise a program of events for the local community, such as a monthly 'family-day' across the town, with activities spanning from the early morning to the night-time. The businesses consider how to collectively activate public spaces for the events, working closely with local council and taking advantage of recent regulations passed through the Vibrancy Reforms. This includes temporary road closures for outdoor dining and performance, temporarily expanding liquor licence boundaries, and outdoor dining on private or public land.



Deni Ute Muster, Deniliquin. Image: Destination NSW

Program structure

The Program is an integrated capacity-building and funding program. The capacity-building component is designed to support the planning and delivery of the grant-funded project.

A one-day in-person bootcamp will be held locally for each successful Applicant. At least six representatives of the businesses in the Business Collective are required to attend.

Successful Applicants must also participate in online workshops. The minimum number of participants required from each Business Collective to participate in the online workshops will be specified by the O24HEC.

Bootcamp and workshop topics may include:

- vision and storytelling
- strategic planning
- programming and diversification
- understanding the policy landscape (e.g. the Vibrancy Reforms and Special Entertainment Precincts)
- marketing and promotion.

As part of the Program, Business Collectives will be supported to produce a Project Plan and strategy for how they will develop their night-time economy over their 12-month funding period. This work will involve refining and detailing the Project Proposal submitted as part of this application (see [assessment criteria](#)). This Project Plan, building on the Project Proposal, will determine the Business Collective's actions and deliverables for the 12-month funding period.

The 12-month funding period will depend on which cohort the Business Collective is part of.

As part of the application process, Applicants can indicate their preferred cohort based on the grant funding period that best suits their 12-month Project Proposal. O24HEC will consider the nominated cohort as part of the application assessment process; however, has the discretion to consider an application as part of the other cohort where this may represent a better outcome for the Program against the Program objectives. Applicants are to indicate in the Application Form where they do not want to be considered for the other cohort.



Program timeline: Cohort 1

Five successful Applicants will participate in Cohort 1 of the Program.

A provisional Program timeline for Cohort 1, with key milestones for both the capacity-building and grant, is included below. The O24HEC reserves the right to amend any of the below dates, at its absolute discretion.

Date	Milestone
April – June 2026 <i>Exact dates TBC</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• in-person bootcamp• first grant payment received (80% of the total funding amount)• development and submission of 12-month Project Plan
1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• grant funding period• delivery of Project Plan• online workshops and ongoing coaching/capacity-building• second grant payment received (remaining 20% of the total funding amount) – upon submission of Progress Report
July – August 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• grant acquittal

Program timeline: Cohort 2

Five successful Applicants will participate in Cohort 2 of the Program.

A provisional Program timeline for Cohort 2, with key milestones for both the capacity-building and grant, is included below. The O24HEC reserves the right to amend any of the below dates, at its absolute discretion.

Date	Milestone
July - August 2026 <i>Exact dates TBC</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• in-person bootcamp• first grant payment received (80% of the total funding amount)• development and submission of 12-month Project Plan
1 September 2026 – 31 August 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• grant funding period• delivery of Project Plan• online workshops and ongoing coaching/capacity-building• second grant payment received (remaining 20% of the total funding amount) – upon submission of Progress Report
September - October 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• grant acquittal

Grant value

A total of \$2,000,000 in grant funding has been committed for this round of the Program. Applicants can apply for between \$100,000 and \$200,000. All grants are exclusive of GST.

Selection criteria

The **Business Collective** is the core project team that participates in the Regional Night-Time Economy Program and leads the delivery of the grant-funded project.

Eligibility criteria

Applicant

To be eligible, an Applicant **must** be a **membership-based organisation** (“the Applicant”) that:

- is one of the following entity types:
 - Incorporated Association
 - Company Limited by Guarantee
 - Non-distributing Co-operative
- represents a town centre or precinct in an eligible LGA (see Section [Eligible Local Government Areas](#))
- has an applicable Australian Business Number (ABN)
- is registered for GST
- has a bank account with an Australian financial institution
- is solvent
- can execute a funding deed with the NSW Government if the application is successful
- has a membership register
- has a governance framework in place, e.g. a constitution or rules.

The NSW Government cannot provide Applicants with legal, business or financial advice about entity types.

Business Collective

The Applicant must identify the core project team (“**Business Collective**”) that **must comprise at least six (6) local businesses** that:

- each have a different ABN
- are based in the identified eligible LGA
- represent any of the following sectors:
 - accommodation
 - arts and culture
 - entertainment
 - festivals and events
 - hospitality
 - live music
 - retail
 - sport
 - tourism
 - wellness
- confirm a representative from their business will attend the in-person bootcamp as outlined in [program structure](#)
- sign the Consent Form (included as a template with the application form), which confirms:
 - that the business agrees to be included as part of the Business Collective; and
 - that the business accepts privacy, confidentiality and conflict of interest requirements.

Council Letter of Endorsement

The application must also include a **Letter of Endorsement from the relevant local council organisation**, which:

- is from a senior staff member (e.g. Chief Executive; General Manager) of the council (the letter **must not** be from an elected official such as a councillor)
- confirms that the council is aware of the contents of the application prior to submission
- confirms the council’s support for the initiatives proposed in the application (see [assessment criteria](#))
- provides the contact details of a relevant staff member that can be contacted about the application.

If the Letter of Endorsement is not available at the time of application, Applicants must provide evidence (e.g. email correspondence) confirming that the council are in the process of obtaining formal endorsement from a senior staff member. The final Letter of Endorsement must be submitted to the O24HEC as soon as it becomes available and may be required prior to any funding decision. The Department will not consider the application if it does not satisfy all the eligibility criteria.

Ineligible applicants

Business collectives or entities that have previously received funding under the Uptown Grant Program (**Uptown Grant recipients**) are not eligible for the Program. See [glossary](#) for the definition of an Uptown Grant recipient.

Eligible Local Government Areas

For the purposes of this Program, regional NSW includes all non-metropolitan LGAs, in line with the NSW Budget 2025-26.

The town centre or precinct must be located within one or more of the following LGAs:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Albury City Council | 32. Federation Council | 64. Narrandera Shire Council |
| 2. Armidale Regional Council | 33. Forbes Shire Council | 65. Narromine Shire Council |
| 3. Ballina Shire Council | 34. Gilgandra Shire Council | 66. Oberon Council |
| 4. Balranald Shire Council | 35. Glen Innes Severn Council | 67. Orange City Council |
| 5. Bathurst Regional Council | 36. Goulburn Mulwaree Council | 68. Parkes Shire Council |
| 6. Bega Valley Shire Council | 37. Greater Hume Shire Council | 69. Port Macquarie-Hastings Council |
| 7. Bellingen Shire Council | 38. Griffith City Council | 70. Port Stephens Council |
| 8. Berrigan Shire Council | 39. Gunnedah Shire Council | 71. Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council |
| 9. Bland Shire Council | 40. Gwydir Shire Council | 72. Richmond Valley Council |
| 10. Blayney Shire Council | 41. Hay Shire Council | 73. Shellharbour City Council |
| 11. Bogan Shire Council | 42. Hilltops Council | 74. Shoalhaven City Council |
| 12. Bourke Shire Council | 43. Inverell Shire Council | 75. Singleton Council |
| 13. Brewarrina Shire Council | 44. Junee Shire Council | 76. Snowy Monaro Regional Council |
| 14. Broken Hill City Council | 45. Kempsey Shire Council | 77. Snowy Valleys Council |
| 15. Byron Shire Council | 46. Kiama Municipal Council | 78. Tamworth Regional Council |
| 16. Cabonne Council | 47. Kyogle Council | 79. Temora Shire Council |
| 17. Carrathool Shire Council | 48. Lachlan Shire Council | 80. Tenterfield Shire Council |
| 18. Central Coast Council | 49. Lake Macquarie City Council | 81. Tweed Shire Council |
| 19. Central Darling Shire Council | 50. Leeton Shire Council | 82. Upper Hunter Shire Council |
| 20. Cessnock City Council | 51. Lismore City Council | 83. Upper Lachlan Shire Council |
| 21. Clarence Valley Council | 52. Lithgow City Council | 84. Uralla Shire Council |
| 22. Cobar Shire Council | 53. Liverpool Plains Shire Council | 85. Wagga Wagga City Council |
| 23. Coffs Harbour City Council | 54. Lockhart Shire Council | 86. Walcha Council |
| 24. Coolamon Shire Council | 55. Maitland City Council | 87. Walgett Shire Council |
| 25. Coonamble Shire Council | 56. Mid-Coast Council | 88. Warren Shire Council |
| 26. Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council | 57. Mid-Western Regional Council | 89. Warrumbungle Shire Council |
| 27. Cowra Shire Council | 58. Moree Plains Shire Council | 90. Weddin Shire Council |
| 28. Dubbo Regional Council | 59. Murray River Council | 91. Wentworth Shire Council |
| 29. Dungog Shire Council | 60. Murrumbidgee Council | 92. Wingecarribee Shire Council |
| 30. Edward River Council | 61. Muswellbrook Shire Council | 93. Yass Valley Council |
| 31. Eurobodalla Shire Council | 62. Nambucca Valley Council | |
| | 63. Narrabri Shire Council | |



Tweed Regional Art Gallery, South Murwillumbah. Image: Destination NSW

Eligible grant activities

Only eligible activities may be funded from the proceeds of a grant under the Program.

Eligible activities are set out in the table below.

Funding category	Eligible activities	Eligible costs
<p>Project coordination</p> <p>Funding may be used for coordination, administration and engagement to support local collaboration and the delivery of the project.</p> <p>A minimum of 25% of the total allocated grant funding must be spent on project coordination for the Business Collective’s activities.</p>	<p>The coordination function will be expected to undertake activities including project management, administration and business development, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coordinating the Business Collective (including the project administration, record keeping, reporting, business engagement, etc.) • being the main contact point for the Business Collective and for the O24HEC (and Create NSW as the grant administrator) and for local council • community and stakeholder outreach and engagement • growing the number of businesses involved in the Business Collective and encouraging more local businesses to participate in the collective initiatives • delivering the Business Collective’s Project Plan (to be developed during the Program) • ensuring activities that are funded under the proceeds of this grant are delivered • ensuring reporting requirements are met. 	<p>Costs under project coordination may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • salary/wages and entitlements for employees specifically engaged for the project, i.e. the direct employment of a staff member to manage the coordination of the Business Collective and its activities • contract employment of a staff member(s) to manage the coordination of the Business Collective and its activities • third-party professional services to manage the coordination of the Business Collective and its activities, e.g. bookkeeping systems, legal fees.

Funding category	Eligible activities	Eligible costs
<p>Marketing and promotion</p> <p>Funding may be used to market and promote the Business Collective’s initiatives to increase consumer awareness and engagement with the town centre/precinct.</p>	<p>This activity may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advertising and/or marketing campaign for initiatives developed by the Business Collective • public relations activities. <p>Applicants should consider environmental sustainability for any marketing/promotional activities and/or events and activations, such as avoiding the production and use of single-use items, where appropriate.</p>	<p>Costs under marketing and promotion may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design and production costs • social ads • advertising fees • PR agency costs • influencer fees • promotional material.
<p>Events and activations</p> <p>Funding may be used for events and activations which involve at least three local venues to increase vibrancy in the town centre or precinct.</p> <p>Multi-venue participation is compulsory. These events must be distinct from any existing BAU programming for the participating venues.</p>	<p>This activity may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • event planning • talent sourcing • event production • event delivery • private transport initiatives to support better access. 	<p>Costs under events and activations may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • artist fees • AV and staging equipment hire • programming and production development fees • free shuttle bus to and from activations.

If the application is successful, we will ask Applicants to verify the project cost and request evidence of costs such as supplier contracts, quotes, invoices and receipts. We may request financial reports and credit checks from independent third-party service providers.

Applicants must demonstrate value for money by ensuring project costs are reasonable and reflective of market rates. We may use industry cost benchmarks to assess whether costs are reasonable.

The Department will make the final decision on whether a claimed cost is eligible or reasonable and only pay the reasonable amount in its sole discretion.

All eligible costs will be paid exclusive of GST.

Ineligible activities

The following activities are ineligible for funding from the proceeds of a grant under the Program:

- the purchase or lease of land or property
- rent and utilities
- venue hire
- activities, equipment or supplies that are already being supported through other sources
- financing costs, including interest and debt financing
- maintenance and repairs
- capital works
- fundraising/prizes
- education or training costs
- any and all costs incurred before the grant funding period (i.e. 1 July 2026 for Cohort 1 and 1 September 2026 for Cohort 2)
- activity that takes place before, or after grant funding period (i.e. 1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027 for Cohort 1 and 1 September 2026 – 31 August 2027 for Cohort 2)
- any and all costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation, including any costs associated with creating and/or registering as an eligible entity type
- activity that constitutes the normal course of business for any party associated with this application, not related to eligible grant activities
- activity that is unrelated to the town centre or precinct
- hospitality costs associated with BAU activities such as membership meetings.

The above list of ineligible activities is not exhaustive.

Application requirements

To be considered for this Program, applications must:

- be sufficiently detailed and specific to allow consideration against the assessment criteria
- provide a completed application form and associated templates
- be submitted by the deadline.

Failure to provide this information may result in the application being deemed ineligible or non-conforming and may not be considered at The Department's absolute discretion.

The application form will include access to the following templates which will be mandatory to use:

- Project Proposal
- Consent Form – each business in the Business Collective must sign this form.



Goulburn NSW. Image: Destination NSW

Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed against the following five assessment criteria:

- project purpose and alignment
- Business Collective composition
- governance
- community and stakeholder outreach
- project proposal.

Criteria	Description and what needs to be provided	Weight
Project purpose and alignment	<p><i>Demonstrate that the Business Collective has considered the current state of the town's going-out economy, what a successful night-time economy would mean in the town's context, and how this Program can support the Business Collective to increase vibrancy into the night.</i></p> <p>The response should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an overview of the town's going-out economy and any challenges it faces in relation to night-time vibrancy • the Business Collective's vision and objectives • how the purpose of this Program aligns with the Business Collective's vision and objectives. 	20%
Business Collective composition	<p><i>Demonstrate the robustness of the Business Collective's composition and the relevance of the businesses to the vision and proposed initiatives.</i></p> <p>Responses must provide details of at least six (6) local businesses in the Business Collective, including the name, address, sector, and relevance to the Business Collective's vision and initiatives.</p> <p>When assessing relevance of the businesses in the Business Collective, consideration may be given to the proximity of the businesses to the identified town centre/precinct and how the sectors represented are related to the Business Collective's vision and objectives.</p>	10%
Governance	<p><i>Demonstrate the robustness of the governance frameworks that are in place for the membership-based organisation (the Applicant) and how they support collaboration with the Business Collective.</i></p> <p>Responses must provide a description of the governance arrangements that are in place for the Applicant and how they support the Business Collective.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a constitution in place; has a sub-committee been established? • What are the roles and responsibilities of the businesses in the Business Collective? • How will decisions be made? • Who is authorised to communicate decisions? 	10%
Community and stakeholder outreach	<p><i>Demonstrate that the Business Collective is committed to engaging with and building support from stakeholders and the wider community for their vision and the proposed initiatives.</i></p> <p>The response should explain who the Business Collective plans to engage with beyond the businesses already part of it and why, including plans to increase the number of local businesses involved.</p> <p>This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations community and organisations (see enquiries and application help for NSW Aboriginal arts & culture protocols) • arts and cultural organisations • local businesses that are not currently part of the Business Collective. <p>If outreach has already commenced, responses should include an update on the status of this engagement. Letters of support from stakeholders may be included in the application, where relevant.</p>	10%

Criteria	Description and what needs to be provided	Weight
<p>Project proposal Template provided</p>	<p><i>Demonstrate that the Business Collective has considered the opportunities for increased vibrancy at night-time, how collective initiatives can be developed and delivered to leverage these, and how to promote these initiatives to the target audience.</i></p> <p>The opportunities and collective initiatives proposed in this application will be developed into a comprehensive Project Plan as part of the capacity-building component of the Program.</p> <p>Responses will need to provide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a list of opportunities to leverage for increased night-time vibrancy, with a description for each <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Business Collectives can determine how many opportunities to include, based on their local context – (see leveraging opportunities for examples of opportunities that might be relevant). 2. a breakdown of the collective initiatives that the Business Collective proposes to deliver to leverage these opportunities, including for each: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the name and description of the initiative – which opportunity/opportunities the initiative leverages – proposed dates (noting that initiatives must be delivered within a 12-month period) – estimated cost breakdown, including funding category (i.e. project coordination, marketing and promotion, or events and activations – see eligible grant activities) – target audience – key outcomes expected. <p>If the initiative(s) relies on an opportunity owned by a party outside of the Business Collective (e.g. external event organiser), a Letter of Support should be included. If the opportunity-owner is the local council, the Letter of Endorsement (detailed under eligibility criteria) should reference their support for the initiative(s).</p> 3. an overview of how the Business Collective will promote these initiatives to its target audience and which existing promotional platforms and channels will be leveraged to do so. <p>A Letter of Support from the platform or channel owner should be included, if not owned by the Business Collective and/or Applicant.</p> <div style="background-color: #2c3e50; color: white; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Reminder: The focus of this Program is the night-time economy, which refers to economic activity taking place between 6pm and 6am. Applications might also include initiatives that fall outside of this period.</p> </div>	<p>50%</p>



Deni Ute Muster 2024, Deniliquin. Image: Destination NSW

Where an Applicant does not provide the required information identified above, the Department reserves the right to:

- provide the Applicant with the opportunity to provide the required information within probity requirements
- assess the application on the basis of the information provided
- deem the application to be non-conforming and decline the application.

Other relevant factors and risks may also be considered, as determined by the Department, through its due diligence activities, in its sole discretion, including:

- assessment of the Applicant's management, its directors and officers and entities or individuals that exercise control over an Applicant against the eligibility criteria
- assessment of other factors that may cause Applicants to be unsuitable for support, such as any personnel or business activities that could cause reputational or other risk to the NSW Government.

The Department reserves the right to use any other resource, process or procedure available – which may include the use of third-party services – to assess any claims made by, or risks associated with, the Applicant or application.

Other funding programs

Applicants must disclose whether any aspect of their project has:

- received funding through another NSW Government funding program
- applied for funding through another NSW Government funding program with the outcome pending.

Applications may be reviewed to ensure that the Applicant is not seeking or receiving multiple sources of funding for the same project proposal.

Application process

How to apply

Before applying, Applicants must read and understand these Guidelines. The Guidelines, plus any alterations and addenda¹ will be published on the [NSW Government Grants Finder website](#).

To apply, Applicants must:

- complete the application form through the [SmartyGrants portal](#)
- submit the application through the [SmartyGrants portal](#)
- provide all information requested
- address all the eligibility criteria
- address all the assessment criteria
- include all necessary attachments and templates (see [application requirements](#))
- submit the application in accordance with the timelines outlined in [grant program details](#).

Applicants are responsible for ensuring the application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the Crimes Act 1900 No 40. We will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude the application from further consideration.

Applications are completed and submitted online via the SmartyGrants portal. Applicants will receive an automated email from SmartyGrants when the application is received. Applicants should keep a copy of the application and any supporting documents.

Applications will not be received after the closing date and time, unless there were technical difficulties outside of the Applicant's control that prevented the submission of the application.

Failure to allow sufficient time to prepare, review and submit an application is not considered a technical issue.

A technical issue could include major network outages or errors with the SmartyGrants platform.

If a technical issue has occurred, Applicants must contact the Department within 60 minutes of applications closing and provide the following:

- time-stamped error message/s (this may be in the form of screenshots with relevant meta-data) to support and verify the claim
- any other supporting documentation, which may include downloaded copies of the application form and any attachments.

Late applications due to technical difficulties will be reviewed and eligibility determined with absolute discretion by the Director, Programs within the O24HEC. Late applications will only be considered where the acceptance would not compromise the integrity and competitiveness of the process. Applicants will be notified on the outcome and next steps following the review.

One application per Applicant will be assessed. If more than one application is submitted, only the latest application will be considered.

If we find an error or missing information, we may ask for clarification or additional information from the Applicant that will not change the nature of the application.

If the Applicant finds an error in the application after submitting it, contact us immediately at Regional-NTE-Program@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au. We do not have to accept any additional information or requests from the Applicant to correct the application after the closing time. Applicants cannot change the application after the closing date and time.

¹ Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to closing times for applications, questions and answers (Q&A) documents and frequently asked questions (FAQ) documents.

Enquiries and application help

If the Business Collective's proposed activities involve working or engaging with Aboriginal communities, artists and/or arts and cultural workers please refer to the [NSW Aboriginal Arts & Culture Protocols](#) for guidance. Just as Aboriginal culture is living and continues to evolve, these Protocols have been developed to be a living document so please refer to that link for the latest version of the document.

The Department staff are available to provide technical advice and general information to potential applicants on the interpretation of these Guidelines, including the types of activity eligible for funding and support with the online application process. The Department staff cannot help directly with the application. To maintain a fair and equitable process, staff cannot edit or correct any applications or provide advice on the content or choices required against the Assessment Criteria.

For further information or clarification, please contact:

Department staff between 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday
at Regional-NTE-Program@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au

Please contact staff well before the closing date.

We may publish answers to questions on our website as frequently asked questions.



Yellowhouseart, Wagga Wagga. Image: Destination NSW

Assessment process

Assessment of grant applications

The Program is an open, competitive grant program.

This means that applications that satisfy stated eligibility, adequately satisfy assessment criteria, and are ranked as the most competitive applicants will be recommended for funding.

All applications are to be assessed through the staged process below.

Eligibility check

Applications will be checked for eligibility against the published eligibility criteria by the Department.

If eligible, the application will proceed to the next assessment stage.

If ineligible, the Applicant will be advised via email within 14 business days after the closing date and the application will not proceed to assessment.

The Department reserves the right to provide Applicants an opportunity to provide clarification or additional information regarding the eligibility criteria provided the principles of probity are not breached.

Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible unless otherwise determined by the Department.

Assessment stage 1

The assessment panel will assess all eligible applications against the published assessment criteria.

The assessment panel will be chaired by the Department and include representatives from across NSW Government. External experts/advisors may be invited to provide advice during any part of the assessment process.

Assessment stage 2

The assessment panel's scores will be amalgamated and presented at an assessment meeting to determine their final recommendations. They will consider the assessment criteria, distribution, range, and scale of the initial recommendations.

This may include prioritising applications and activities with outcomes that better meet the Program objectives or address and ensure equity and the best outcomes for NSW Government investment. For example, considering the geographic spread of funded Applicants, program risks, or the range in types of initiatives being piloted to ensure the key objectives of the Program are being met.

The Department may also request further advice and/or clarification from Applicants during the assessment process.

Applicants are not guaranteed funding, or the full funding amount requested even if the application meets the assessment criteria.

The assessment of applications will identify the top ten ranked applications. The allocation of cohorts might consider the preference identified by the Applicant in the application, in order of highest to lowest ranked (see [cohort allocation](#)). Applicants who meet the assessment criteria but are not ranked among the top ten most competitive applications may be placed on a waitlist for consideration if any additional spaces become available. These waitlisted applications will be considered 'unfunded applications of merit' and ranked.

Decision making

The Assessment Panel's advice and recommendations will be provided to the Secretary, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport or delegate for final consideration and approval.

In the event of all ten spots not being allocated through this Program, the O24HEC reserves the right to run a further open or targeted round for the allocation of the remaining funding.

Rescindment of grant

The Department retains the right to rescind a grant offer at any stage in the grant lifecycle, including after notifying successful applicants. The Department is not responsible or liable for any costs incurred by Applicants prior to the execution of a funding deed if a grant offer has been rescinded.

Probity advice

An independent probity advisor will provide guidance to the Department 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.

Notification of application outcome

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application under embargo as soon as possible after an application is approved. If the application is successful, we will advise the Applicant of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

Applicants who are not successful will be notified by email of the outcome of their unsuccessful application. Unsuccessful Applicants will have the opportunity to receive feedback on their application via an optional online feedback session with the Department.

Additional considerations

The Department may, at its sole discretion, and at any stage of the application or assessment process, do any or all of the following:

- require clarification or additional information from an Applicant
- change the scope or the requirements of these Guidelines
- amend the number of successful applicants accepted into the Program
- amend the number of successful applicants within each cohort
- amend the dates of the Program
- vary, amend (including by replacement) or terminate the application process
- assess other factors that may cause Applicants to be unsuitable for support, such as any personnel or business activities that could cause reputational or other risk to the NSW Government
- consider previous breaches of any NSW Government funding agreements entered into by the Applicant, its management, directors, officers, or individuals that exercise control over an Applicant.

Publication of grants information

The Grants Administration Guide (Guide) requires that certain information is published in relation to grants awarded no later than 45 calendar days after the grant agreement takes effect (see section 6.5 of the Guide and Appendix A to the Guide). This information is also open access information under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act), which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.

In accordance with these requirements, relevant information about the grants awarded will be made available on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder as soon as possible after the grant funding is approved or declined.

All records in relation to this decision will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998*.

Successful grant applications

Cohort allocation

Successful Applicants will be allocated to either Cohort 1 or Cohort 2, with consideration given to the preference indicated in their application. Cohort allocations will be made in order of ranking, with the preferences of the highest ranked Applicants given priority.

O24HEC reserves the right to make a recommendation of funding to successful Applicants across either of the two cohorts.

Funding deed

Successful Applicants will be required to enter into a funding deed with the Department prior to payment of the funding. The funding deed will be prepared by the Department and set out the obligations of the successful Applicant, including but not limited to monitoring and reporting, project scope, completion of milestones and payment, and permitted use of the funding.

The funding deed will require the successful Applicant to provide a copy of all relevant project approvals, insurances and other supporting documentation relevant to the project or as requested by the Department. The Department makes no binding funding commitment to an Applicant until both parties have executed the funding deed.

Capacity-building

The funding deed will include a mandatory requirement that representatives from at least six businesses from the Business Collective attend the capacity-building bootcamp, detailed in [program structure](#). If this requirement is not met the O24HEC reserves the right to terminate the funding deed. The funding deed will include a mandatory requirement that representatives from at least six businesses from the Business Collective attend the capacity-building bootcamp, detailed in [program structure](#). If this requirement is not met the O24HEC reserves the right to terminate the funding deed.

Under embargo

When Applicants are notified under embargo, they are not permitted to publicise the outcome until the official announcement has been made by the NSW Government. The embargo period is taken seriously and failure to comply may impact an Applicant's current or future funding eligibility.

Grant payment

Upon completion of the first deliverable, which is participation at the bootcamp, 80% of the funding will be paid. The remaining 20% will be paid upon approval of a progress report, which must be submitted to the Department.

The funding deed will include project scope of works and project conditions and set out payment milestones and the expected activities to satisfy each milestone. It is recognised that successful Applicants may update the Project Plan after the capacity-building bootcamp; however, Applicants should be aware that any amendments to the Project Plan should not represent a material change to the project which was assessed in the application and selected for funding.

Payment will not be made until any former outstanding acquittals have been submitted to the Department.

Please refer to [Contracts and Payments](#) information for the process regarding successful applications.

Acquittal

Successful Applicants will be required to submit final reporting on their project outcomes to acquit their funding. This reporting will include evidence of eligible activities and measures of success including reporting against indicators as required by the Department.

Funding recipients who do not complete satisfactory final reporting and/or fail to provide evidence of funds being expended for the purpose for which they were intended, may be required to repay funds.

Variations to the grant agreement

Any variations to the funding deed, including project scope or activities, location or timeframes outlined in the application form and Guidelines must be submitted for approval from the Department. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of the grant offer.

The Department has the sole discretion to approve or reject any variation request from a grantee where the funding deed has already been executed.

Unspent funds

Organisations must not use the funds provided by the Department for the project, nor any interest earned on the funds, for any other purpose beyond what the Department approved in the submitted application and in the funding deed. Organisations must not carry over funds provided for the approved project to other programs, events, or organisational operating budgets. All grant funds are required to be spent on the approved project and any unspent funds must be returned to the Department in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding deed.

Acknowledgement of NSW Government support

A communication pack will be provided to funding recipients containing approved key messages and multimedia to help promote the project and acknowledge the funding contribution.

All recipients of NSW Government funding should acknowledge this financial support in accordance with the Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines for Recipients of NSW Government Rebates available at nsw.gov.au/branding/sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgment-guidelines.

You must seek our written consent prior to any public announcement, marketing, press announcements, or official launch in relation to the grant.

Permission to use the NSW Government logo must be sought for all relevant materials related to funding provided to the project, prior to production. Whenever the logo is used, the publication must also acknowledge the NSW Government. If a funding recipient makes a public statement about a project funded under the Program, we require the funding recipient to seek permission to acknowledge the Program and the support provided.

Evaluation and audit

The Program will be evaluated to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may collect and use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also interview you or ask you for more information to help us understand how the Program impacted your Business Collective and community, and to evaluate how effective the Program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you up to three years after receipt of the final grant payment associated with the Program for more information to assist with this evaluation.

The Department and the NSW Audit Office reserve the right to undertake an audit of Program funding and support within seven years. Tracking and reporting will be required as part of the funding deed.

All applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful, may be contacted to participate in interviews or surveys for evaluation purposes.

You consent to the use of information for this purpose by:

- the Department
- NSW Treasury
- the Minister or Minister's office
- the NSW Ombudsman and Audit Office of NSW
- office staff, consultants and advisers
- any agency or body of the NSW Government, or any other organisation or individual considered by the office to have a need or an entitlement to know that information (including any federal, state or territory agency or body), where that need or entitlement to know that information arises out of or in connection with the purpose above.

Additional information and resources

Complaint handling

If you wish to make a complaint, you may contact us between 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday at Regional-NTE-Program@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au.

In the first instance, complaints will be reviewed by the Department. If we cannot resolve the complaint within 20 business days of receipt, we will refer the matter to an internal review team within the Department who will advise of the next steps.

If the complaint is unable to be resolved, a complainant is able to refer the matter to the NSW Ombudsman for external review. Please note that the NSW Ombudsman will not consider a complaint unless the matter has been first raised directly with the Department.

Accessibility, inclusion and support

The NSW Government is committed to improving accessibility to all our funding programs.

If you are an Applicant with a disability and you require this information in a format which is accessible to you, or if you require this information in another language, you can contact us between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday (except on public holidays) at Regional-NTE-Program@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au.

The National Relay Service numbers are:

- **TTY users:**
Phone 133 677 then ask for (02) 9228 4578.
- **Speak and Listen users:**
Phone 1300 555 727 then ask for (02) 9228 4578.



Tamworth Country Music Festival Food Truck, Tamworth. Image: Destination NSW

Access to information

The GIPA Act provides for the proactive release of government information by agencies and gives members of the public an enforceable right to access government information held by an agency (which includes ministerial offices). Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

The NSW Legislative Council has the power to order the production of State papers by the Executive Government. Standing Order 52 provides that the House may order documents to be tabled by the Government in the House. The Cabinet Office coordinates the preparation of the papers – that is, the return to order. The return to order may contain privileged and public documents. Privileged documents are available only to members of the Legislative Council.

Note that documents submitted as part of a grant application may be subject to an application under the GIPA Act or an order for papers under Standing Order 52.

More information about the Department's practices for managing requests to access information under the GIPA and for publishing information is available on the Department's [information access guide](#).

You can also contact the Department by email or by post as follows:

Attn: Legal Officer (GIPA)

Office of the General Counsel
Department of Creative Industries,
Tourism, Hospitality and Sport

Email: information@dciths.nsw.gov.au

McKell Building, 2-24 Rawson Place,
Haymarket NSW 2000.

Ethical conduct

The Department will administer the grant in accordance with the published Guidelines and the principles and processes set out in the NSW [Grants Administration Guide](#).

The Department will implement measures and controls to enable a fair and transparent process and incorporate appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities, and other inappropriate conduct.

Conflict of interest management

Conflicts of interest are any factors that could compromise the judgement, decisions, or actions of a person or group of people.

Conflicts may arise if a party in the grants administration process, whether it be Department staff, assessment panel members, the Applicant or staff employed by the Applicant:

- has a professional, commercial, or personal relationship with a party who can influence the application selection process
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the Applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the applicant received a grant
- are involved in any other situations which could lead to unfavourable advantage.

Conflicts of interest for the Department will be handled as set out in the Department's Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Applicants will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest at any time, you must inform the Department immediately. Department staff can be contacted 9.00am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday via Regional-NTE-Program@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au.

Confidentiality

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

All third parties are required to comply with this confidential information clause. The Department may at any time, require the Applicant to arrange for the Applicant, the Applicant's employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to non-disclosure of the Department's confidential information in a form the Department considers acceptable. A breach in confidential information will result in legal action and/or termination of funding.

We will keep any information in connection with the funding deed or the application confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

1. You clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. The information is commercially sensitive
3. Revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

The Department will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- the assessment panel and other NSW Government employees and contractors to help the Department manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport so the Department can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other NSW Government departments or agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- comply with any relevant law
- the responsible Minister or Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the NSW Parliament.

The funding deed may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the funding agreement.

Privacy

The Department will collect and store the information you voluntarily provide to enable the implementation of this grant program.

The Department is required to comply with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIP Act). The Department collects the minimum personal information to enable it to contact an organisation and to assess the merits of an application. Applicants must ensure that people whose personal details are supplied with applications are aware that the Department is being supplied with this information and how this information will be used.

We treat your personal information in accordance with the PPIP Act and the Department's privacy policy. This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect;
- why we collect your personal information; and
- who we give your personal information to.

The personal information will only be used for the purpose for which it was collected unless an exemption applies.

Appendix A

Application Checklist

Your application will need to include the following:

the total grant amount requested

evidence that the Applicant meets the eligibility criteria, including ABN, membership register and evidence of governance arrangements

details of at least six (6) businesses in the Business Collective as outlined in eligibility criteria, including their ABN, business address and sector

signed Consent Forms from each business in the Business Collective, as outlined in eligibility criteria (template provided)

a Letter of Endorsement from a senior staff member of the relevant local council organisation (not an elected official, such as a councillor), as outlined in eligibility criteria, or evidence that endorsement is being progressed

a nominated key contact in the Business Collective for the application, including contact information responses to each of the assessment criteria, including a completed Project Proposal template

letter(s) of support from opportunity owner(s) (where relevant)

letter(s) of support from platform and/or channel owner(s) (where relevant)

letter(s) of support from the wider community and stakeholders (where relevant).

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The Department recommends that users exercise care and use their own skill and judgment in using information from this publication and that users carefully evaluate the accuracy, currency, completeness, and relevance of such information.

Users should take steps to independently verify the information in this publication and, where appropriate, seek professional advice. The assessment criteria are subject to change at any time at the sole discretion of the Department.

E: Regional-NTE-Program@24houreconomy.nsw.gov.au

W: nsw.gov.au/24houreconomy