
Shopfront Improvement Program

Guidelines



May 2025



Northern Grampians Shire Council
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Northern Grampians Shire Council's (NGSC) Shopfront Improvement Program provides professional support to business owners in the retail precincts to update their business branding and façade, which will improve the overall look of the retail precinct and boost economic growth in the Northern Grampians Shire.

Aims of NGSC's Shopfront Improvement Program:

- Support businesses to have clear and engaging branding and inviting shopfronts;
- Enhance the vibrancy and reactivate the retail precincts;
- Attract visitors that positively impact the Northern Grampians Shire visitor and tourism economy;
- Contribute to Northern Grampians' liveability and well-being; and
- Strive for continuous improvement and innovation.

General information

NGSC is committed to supporting small businesses and recognises the importance of such businesses, which seek to boost economic growth. Small businesses are a vital part of the local economy; they activate retail precincts and provide the community with goods and services, a place to meet and safety. Small businesses also play an important role in the visitor experience in the Northern Grampians Shire.

The NGSC *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-31* (the Strategy) states "Economic development is about delivering projects, programs or activities that create stronger conditions to improve our community's economic wellbeing and quality of life."

The Business Growth Program (the Program) is a tool used by NGSC to help deliver the Strategy. The Strategy and the Program acknowledge the need to:

- centre economic development as a whole of community business
- make the most of Northern Grampians' assets and competitive advantages in partnership with the community and other key stakeholders.

The Program has been developed to target key economic growth opportunities identified in the Strategy, based on evidence and community engagement.

NGSC has engaged Pop Creative Collective as the design consultant to work one-on-one with businesses to consult, design, seek and provide quotes, oversee installation and acquit the full project. Pop Creative Collective will give priority to local contractors to deliver the shopfront improvements where practicable.

The Shopfront Improvement Program was delivered to six businesses on Main Street, Stawell, as a pilot project in 2024. The project was deemed successful, and now future rounds of the program will be offered across other retail precincts in the shire. The program will be limited to certain shopping precincts in the shire, and a limited number of places will be available each year. All businesses in the shire are invited to attend the visual merchandising sessions hosted by Pop Creative Collective.

Information about the program will be communicated and promoted to the business community via Council's Business E-News, website, social media and corporate communication channels. The Economic Development Team will personally visit businesses in the selected precincts to invite the businesses to participate.

Shopfront Improvement Program priorities

The Shopfront Improvement Program will support and encourage businesses to:

- align with the objectives of the NGSC Business Growth Program;
- align with the objectives and deliverables of the NGSC *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-31*;
- have clear and engaging branding and inviting shopfronts;
- enhance the vibrancy and reactivate the retail precincts;

- strive for continuous improvement and innovation;
- contribute to Northern Grampians' livability and well-being; and
- attract visitors that positively impact the Northern Grampians Shire's visitor and tourism economy.

What improvements can be undertaken?

Successful businesses will work with Pop Creative Collective to update and improve shopfronts, including but not limited to:

- branding (logos and colour palette)
- signage
- painting
- shopfront displays

Pop Creative Collective will work one-on-one with businesses to ensure the best outcome is achieved within the budget specified.

Program funding

Businesses will be provided with up to \$2,000 towards the upgrades as part of Council's commitment to supporting businesses to be strong, innovative and sustainable. Funds will remain with Pop Creative Collective to acquit the project on behalf of the business. If total funds are not expended by the businesses with the improvements required, the funds will be returned to the NGSC.

Any out-of-pocket expenses are required to be paid by the business. This is not a requirement however, some improvements may not be undertaken if the costs are over \$2,000. The design consultant will work with you to deliver the improvements to your nominated budget.

Who can apply for the program?

Eligibility criteria

All applicants are required to:

- complete and return the expression of interest form to the NGSC's Economic Development Officer by the set date on the expression of interest form;
- demonstrate the business's need for the Shopfront Improvement Program;
- be a business in the retail precinct of the project area;
- be registered on the Australian Business Register;
- demonstrate the business's potential for long-term sustainability following Council's support;
- acknowledge that all designs and quotes will be presented to the business by Pop Creative Collective for approval before any works are carried out;
- be listed on the NGSC's Business Directory; and
- subscribe to the NGSC's Business E-News.

Ineligible applicants

Applications will be ineligible if:

- you are a franchisee;
- you are located outside the selected retail precinct;
- you do not have a street-facing, ground-floor shop; or
- you have completed shopfront improvements in the last 12 months.

Assessment criteria and decision-making process

Successful applications will need to:

- have a clear budget if willing to provide out-of-pocket expenses for the improvements.
- work one-on-one with Pop Creative Collective to achieve the shopfront improvement.
- ensure the improvements are completed by the required project completion date.
- if leasing and have a current lease agreement, specify the leasing term and contact details of the leasing agent/property manager.

Assessment process:

- All Shopfront Improvement Program expressions of interest (EOI) are reviewed and assessed by the Economic Development Team and Pop Creative Collective.
- The outcome will take into consideration the business's need for shopfront improvements.
- The outcome will take into consideration the business's initiative and potential to grow and expand.
- Applications will be assessed within one week after the EOI closes.
- Applicants will be notified of the assessment outcome in writing within two weeks of the application being submitted.

Program conditions if an application is successful

Successful businesses that will participate in the Shopfront Improvement Program are required to adhere to the following conditions:

- This program will only be for improvements to shopfronts and branding.
- Meet all statutory requirements determined by Council and other relevant authorities.
- Acknowledge the support of the NGSC to undertake the shopfront improvements.
- Participate in a program acquittal report and media to promote the benefits of the Shopfront Improvement Program.

Referenced Council Plan/Strategy

Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-31
Business Growth Program