

Vibrancy Reforms

Tips for unlicensed businesses
to create more vibrant places



The NSW Government's Vibrancy Reforms make it easier for businesses, cultural organisations and councils to activate local places, support live music and events, and grow the night-time economy.

By reducing red tape and introducing more flexible planning, licensing and regulatory pathways, the reforms provide greater flexibility for businesses to attract customers, activate their premises and participate in local events.

Through the Vibrancy Reforms, unlicensed businesses can:

- host low-impact live music and entertainment more easily
- access extended trading during special events
- reduce compliance costs and administrative burden
- attract more customers and contribute to vibrant local centres.

Use the checklist below to identify practical opportunities for your business.



La Bottega, Leichhardt. Photo: 24-Hour Economy NSW

1 Support more live music and entertainment

Key reform

- A wider range of live music and arts performances, including comedy, theatre and book readings, can be held indoors and outdoors without development approval, subject to development standards and event frequency limits:
 - not before midday in any zone
 - by 8pm in residential zones
 - by 10pm in areas adjoining residential zones
 - by midnight in all other zones
 - up to 2 events per week

Benefits

- Greater flexibility in how indoor and outdoor spaces can be used.
- Opportunities to attract new customers and increase visitation.
- Enhanced customer experience and activation of business premises.

1 Support more live music and entertainment (continued)

Enabler

- Changes to the Codes SEPP, Part 2, Division 1, subdivision 15AB.
- Indoor and outdoor entertainment can happen as exempt development, subject to development standards and event frequency limits.

Examples

- A café hosts a weekly acoustic music session in its courtyard without requiring additional approval.
- A bookstore runs author talks or poetry readings using amplification.
- A gallery incorporates live music into exhibition openings.
- A clothing retailer hosts a fashion show with live entertainment or a DJ.

2 Additional temporary trading hours during special events

Key reform

- Councils can allow eligible unlicensed businesses to operate for extended hours during council declared special events.
- This applies to unlicensed businesses such as restaurants, cafés, shops, community facilities, entertainment facilities and takeaway food and drink premises.
- Extended trading can be approved for the duration of the event without requiring businesses to amend existing development consents.
- These arrangements are separate from NSW Government declared Special Events that apply to licensed premises.

Benefits

- Increased opportunities to meet event-driven demand.
- Greater economic activity during festivals, celebrations and community events.
- More vibrant and active local centres during special event periods.

Enabler

- Changes to the Codes SEPP, Part 2, Division 3, subdivision 14.
- Councils can, by resolution, declare extended trading hours for unlicensed businesses at any time of day during a special event. This is separate to the Special Events declared by the NSW Government for licensed premises.

Examples

- A takeaway food business remains open later during a street festival or agricultural show.
- A cafe opens earlier to cater for participants and spectators attending an early morning sporting event.
- A dessert bar extends its operating hours during a cultural festival or community celebration.

3 More outdoor dining opportunities

Key reform

- Businesses can use private land and car parking spaces for outdoor dining without development approval.
- Food and drink premises with outdoor dining areas on private land or at registered clubs can increase patron capacity without modifying their development consent:
 - up to 20% for venues approved for up to 100 patrons
 - up to 15% for venues approved for more than 100 patrons (up to 50 additional patrons)
 - up to 30% within Special Entertainment Precincts (up to 100 additional patrons).

Benefits

- Increased customer capacity.
- Greater flexibility in the use of available business space.
- Enhanced street activation and customer experience.

Enabler

- Changes to the Codes SEPP, Part 2, Division 1, subdivision 20B.
- Venues with outdoor dining can automatically increase patron capacity within prescribed limits without modifying development consent.

Examples:

- A café converts part of its car park into a permanent outdoor dining area.
- A restaurant adds outdoor seating during busy weekends, festivals or local events.
- A farm café expands its dining offering through additional outdoor seating.

4 Special Entertainment Precincts

Key reform

- Councils can establish Special Entertainment Precincts with locally tailored trading hours and sound management settings that support live performance, hospitality and entertainment activity.
- Community and stakeholder engagement helps ensure precinct settings balance the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.

Benefits

- Greater certainty through consistent trading arrangements, with approved venue trading hours aligned to those established for the Special Entertainment Precinct.
- Increased confidence for long-term business investment and programming through greater regulatory certainty.
- Increased opportunities to participate in a vibrant local economy

Enabler

- Changes to the Local Government Act 1993, Chapter 8, Part 3, section 202D.
- Councils can establish Special Entertainment Precincts with locally tailored trading hours and sound conditions to encourage live performance and vibrant going-out precincts.

Examples

- A café extends its evening trading hours and introduces a dinner service.
- A fashion retailer benefits from increased foot traffic generated by a more active evening economy.
- A bookshop hosts regular evening events and community gatherings with greater flexibility.

Business action checklist

Consider how your business could:

Host live music, performances or cultural events

Use indoor and outdoor spaces for customer activations

Take advantage of extended trading opportunities during special events

Increase outdoor dining capacity

Partner with local cultural organisations, artists or performers

Participate in precinct-wide events and activations

Promote your business as part of the local visitor and entertainment economy

More information

Vibrancy Reforms snapshot

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/business-and-economy/office-of-24-hour-economy-commissioner/vibrancy-reforms>

Changes to liquor licensing

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/business-and-economy/liquor-and-gaming/liquor-licensing/sound-regulation-for-licensed-venues/key-changes-under-vibrancy-reforms>

Planning and the night-time economy

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/night-time-economy>

Incentives for live music and performance venues

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/business-and-economy/liquor-and-gaming/liquor-licensing/sound-regulation-for-licensed-venues/incentives-for-live-music-and-performance-venues>

Fact Sheet: Reforms to Venue Sound Management Regulation – Automatic Removal of Certain Noise Related Conditions (Liquor & Gaming NSW)

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2025-12/fact-sheet-automatic-removal-of-certain-noise-related-conditions.pdf>

Going Live: Venue Guide for managing sound

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/business-and-economy/office-of-24-hour-economy-commissioner/vibrancy-reforms/seps/going-live>

Information for Businesses and Community: Special Entertainment Precincts

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/business-and-economy/office-of-24-hour-economy-commissioner/vibrancy-reforms/seps/information-sheets>

Purple Flag

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/business-and-economy/office-of-24-hour-economy-commissioner/purple-flag>
