

NSW Guide to Activation Public Spaces



NSW Department of Planning
and Environment

March 2022





Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning and Environment acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and rich contribution to society.

Aboriginal people take a holistic view of land, water and culture and see them as one, not in isolation from each other. The NSW Guide to Activation is based on the premise upheld by Aboriginal people that if we care for Country, it will care for us.

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NSW Guide to Activation – Public Spaces

Image on front cover: Barangaroo Reserve, Sydney.
Courtesy Infrastructure NSW

Artwork (left) by Nikita Ridgeway

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*Image: Barangaroo Reserve, Sydney
Courtesy Infrastructure NSW*



Introduction

Overview

In a highly globalised world, places intensely compete for investment, employment, knowledge, events, and people. To attract, retain, and enhance human and social capital, we must create liveable, enriching and desirable places.

At a local level, and particularly in the COVID-19 recovery era, there is a renewed focus on maximising the availability and quality of public spaces within walkable distances of homes, local centres, and precincts.

In both this global and local context, activation of public spaces is a key strategic priority.

We developed this document as part of the New South Wales (NSW) Government's Priority for Greener Public Spaces, which is being achieved through creating more, better, and activated public space. In line with this approach, the NSW Government wants to increase the number of people regularly using public spaces, appropriate to the spaces. We recognise that public spaces are diverse, and that the balance of busy space and quiet space will be unique to each place.

Public spaces

Public spaces are our streets, open spaces and public facilities. They are publicly owned or of public use, accessible to and enjoyable by all for free.

Public spaces are the heart of our communities and can define the lived experience and wellbeing of everyday life. The careful design, delivery, and management of public spaces is essential.

Connection to Country

All public space in NSW is on Country, which is at the core of every Aboriginal person's identity and sense of belonging. It is the place from which Aboriginal language and culture is derived, which determine families, kinship, and communities. Aboriginal people are the Traditional Custodians of all public space in NSW.

Purpose of guide

We have prepared this guide to give you information and tools for improving the activation of public spaces.

The guide covers:

- Public space activation and its benefits
- Three key enablers for activated public spaces
- Practical tools for a range of audiences and practitioners to maximise activation in a way that is appropriate to the space.

This guide is complemented by a secondary document titled *How to prepare an activation framework* for public spaces. It contains additional guidance to maximise activation in a way that is appropriate to the space.



Who is this guide for?

This guide aims to help anyone who is interested in, involved in, or responsible for, activating public spaces. This includes:

- government (for example, elected representatives, activation practitioners – refer to the categories below)
- business (for example, businesses operating within or near public spaces, developers delivering public space)
- community (for example, local residents, visitors, workers, students, groups, and clubs)
- strategic practitioners (for example, strategic planners and designers)
- regulatory practitioners (for example, statutory planners and policy makers)
- administrative practitioners (for example, development managers)
- operational practitioners (for example, construction and asset managers)
- tactical practitioners (for example, place and events managers).



Vivid Festival The Rocks, Sydney. Courtesy Destination NSW

What activation means

When a public space is activated, a diverse range of people feel welcome there and use the space for a variety of purposes, making it vibrant and lively. People develop a sense of ownership of the activated space, which encourages them to look after it and spend more time there. Activation, as related to public space, is typically used interchangeably with the terms vibrancy, animation, liveliness, or programming.

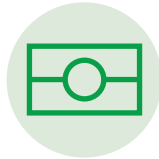
Activation is about people and the social life of public space. Activation refers to the level of human activity in public spaces, and can be measured by the:

- number of people present (also known as ‘footfall’ or ‘visitation’)
- time spent by the people present (also known as ‘dwell time’)
- diversity of people present.

Places can be activated by inviting people to use them on a permanent or temporary basis. Invitations include using visual cues, pleasant amenities and opportunities to safely enjoy the outdoors, socialising and other activities.

Public spaces are social spaces

Public spaces should be welcoming and inclusive. People can connect with each other in these social spaces, building community resilience. Activation of public spaces should consider:



Connection to Country – All public space in NSW is on Country, which is at the core of every Aboriginal person’s identity and sense of belonging. It is the place from which Aboriginal language and culture is derived, which determine families, kinship, and communities.

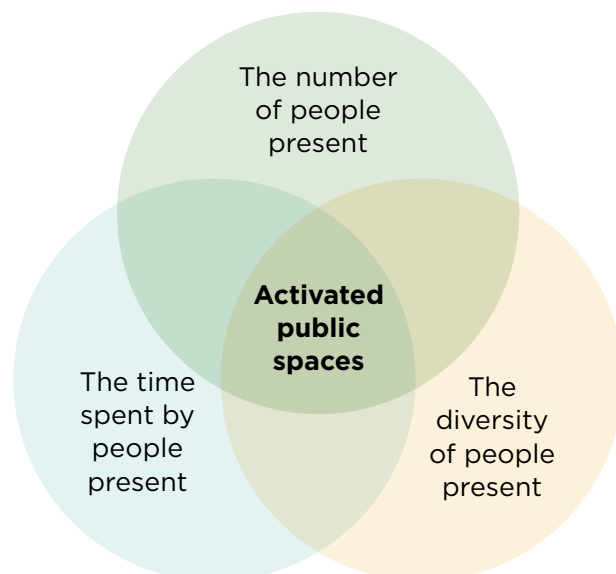


Equity and inclusion – Inclusion in public spaces and in the processes of planning, designing, managing and activating them is central to creating equitable public spaces and ensuring all people can access the benefits they provide.



Community engagement – Engaging the community as active participants when planning, designing, managing, and activating public space will help ensure that it reflects their values, needs, and aspirations.

Activation refers to the social life of public spaces

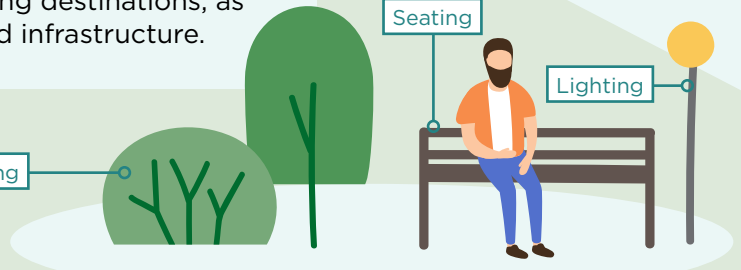


Activation includes both permanent and temporary invitations



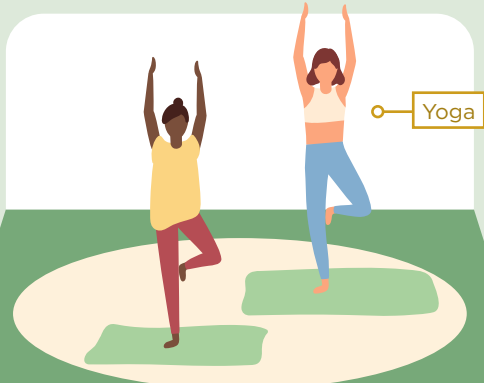
Permanent activation

Public spaces have a baseline level of activity that occurs naturally across various times of the day, week, and year. This can be greatly affected by their location and surrounding destinations, as well as the amenity and infrastructure.



Temporary activation

Public spaces may also offer more temporary activation to attract people. Ideally, these incentives to use public spaces give people opportunities to connect, acknowledge culture, and be included.



Principles for the successful activation of public spaces

The principles for activating public space are consistent with those set out in the [NSW Public Spaces Charter](#):



1. Open and welcoming

Activation should welcome people of all ages, genders, abilities, cultures, religions, incomes, and backgrounds.



6. Healthy and active

Activation should support physical and mental health.



2. Community focused

Activation should be a participatory process that helps people socialise and take ownership of public spaces.



7. Local business and economies

Activation should support local businesses and economies.



3. Culture and creativity

Activation should share stories, values, history, perspectives, and personal expression.



8. Safe and secure

Activation should enhance the safety of public spaces.



4. Local character and identity

Activation should build on the existing character of the place, its heritage, and its people.



9. Designed for place

Activation should make public spaces more comfortable and usable, and balance the needs for activity and for rest.



5. Green and resilient

Activation should embody sustainability and promote ecological awareness.



10. Well-managed

Activation should be managed with appropriate resources and funding to ensure quality outcomes.

What to consider when activating public spaces

To activate a public space successfully, consider:

Having a vision and creating a legacy

Coordinate activation within the framework of an overarching vision, objectives, and target outcomes for the space or precinct.

Relationship to context

Activation should complement and make the most of the location, movement, activity, routines and demographics of people using adjoining land and transport networks.

Accessibility

An activated public space is easy to access by all, day or night, and weekday or weekend. To support the activity of people, make walkability and cycle movement a priority. Include pedestrian links to, from and through the space. There is access for events and servicing, as appropriate.

Physical form

An activated public space is comfortable, attractive, safe, and flexible for a range of uses. There is appropriate infrastructure and amenities for daily use as well as events, as appropriate.

Community role and use

An activated public space offers a balance of permanent activation as well as temporary, planned, and curated activation to attract a diversity of people, both locals, and visitors. This includes opportunities for recreation, cultural and community expression, social connection, relaxation, and eating. It spans across the day and night, as well as weekday and weekend.

Active programming of events

Appropriate resources are allocated to the programming, production, and implementation of events year-round appropriate to the space: from large-scale performances, sports and exhibitions, to community events such as markets and fairs, through to activities such as buskers and pop-ups.



The Station Scooter Track, Newcastle. Courtesy of Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation

Why you should invest in activation

Public spaces in NSW represent a significant social, cultural, economic, and environmental value created by successive generations of NSW communities.

Our streets, open spaces, and public facilities are part of a network of public space across NSW. Public spaces that are connected, legible, and allow people to engage in public life easily, make an area liveable.

This includes streets for people that are safe, attractive, and comfortable public spaces for movement and gathering. Public facilities include public libraries, museums, galleries, civic and community centres, showgrounds, and indoor public sports facilities.

As social infrastructure, these public spaces contribute to community identity, inclusion, and cohesion. Access to high-quality and free services has a direct impact on the social and economic wellbeing of citizens.

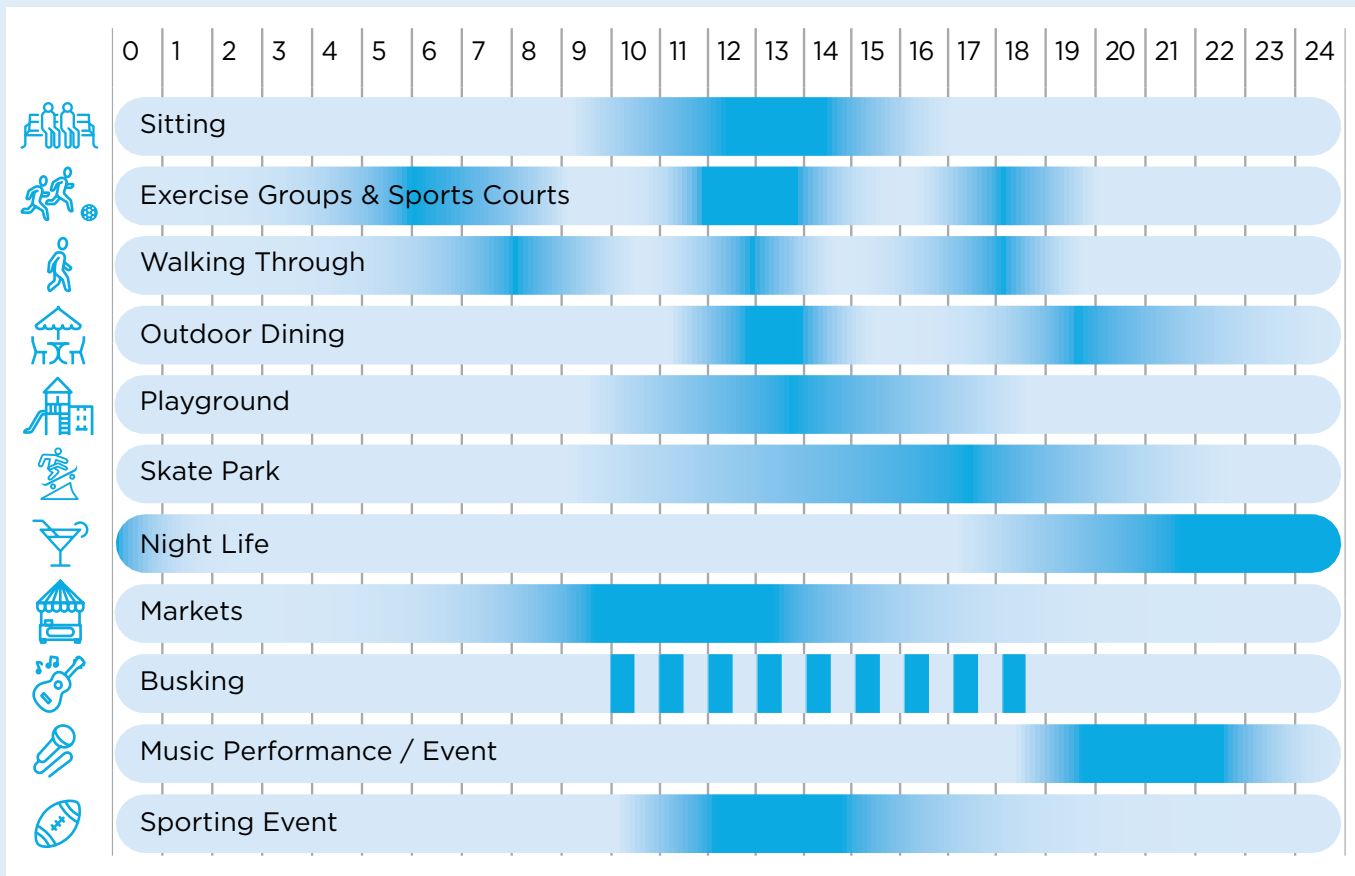
Activation can amplify the value of public spaces and their community benefits, as appropriate to

the spaces. Research shows that active public spaces are important in attracting residents, workers, and visitors. Activated public space extends active periods across the day and evening (see Table 1 below), and increases dwell times, which generates economic benefits.

More active and appealing public spaces foster greater attachment to place, reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour, and improve safety. Activation results in a greater diversity of people and cultural backgrounds, and the sharing and exchange of cultures, ideas, and personal expression. It also reinforces a more inclusive and representative community identity.

Activation can improve environmental outcomes for greenery, urban heat mitigation, water, biodiversity, and can increase personal awareness and stewardship.

Table 1. Example of time-mapping activation across the day and evening





Benefits of quality activation

A desire for activated, vibrant, and lively public spaces

is a consistent aspiration in community strategic plans, place visions, place strategies, and strategic place frameworks across NSW.

Social



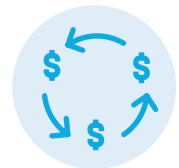
- Increased community connectedness and empowerment (planned and spontaneous)
- Increased physical and mental health
- Increased attachment to place, participation in, and stewardship of public spaces
- Increased equity (people of all ages, genders, abilities, cultures, religions, and backgrounds)
- Increased safety (perceived and actual) and reduced vandalism and anti-social behaviour

Cultural



- Increased sharing of stories, knowledge, history, and heritage across cultures
- Increased connection to the past, present, and future
- Increased individual expression, respect, awareness, and tolerance
- Increased sense of place and place identity
- Increased awareness for the arts and creative sectors

Economic



- Increased visitation (footfall) and dwell time
- Increased diversity of people present and active hours
- Increased place attraction and improved resilience
- Increased opportunities for social connection: innovation and creativity
- Increased opportunities for better property values and reduced vacancy rates
- Increased opportunities for labour productivity

Environmental



- Increased interaction in, awareness of, and stewardship of public space
- Increased opportunities to promote greener places, urban heat mitigation, and biodiversity
- Increased opportunities to invest in sustainable infrastructure that makes activation possible

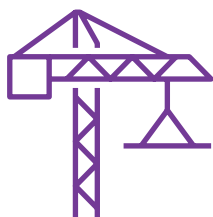
Enabling the activation of public spaces

There are 3 fundamentals to enable, facilitate, and promote the balanced and sustained activation of public spaces:



Effective and sustainable governance and management models

Governance provides the wider framework, structure, and direction for a quality management model to plan, curate, implement, promote, and manage public space activation.



Enabling infrastructure

Infrastructure is required for public space activation. This can include permanent infrastructure such as landscape features, seating, toilets, weather protection, signage, lighting, and other amenities, as well as infrastructure for temporary activations such as power, water, access, and event spaces, as appropriate.



Sustainable funding models

There a wide variety of funding models in practice in NSW that can deliver the ongoing funding required for operational activities.



Sydney Square Dance - The Festival of Place, Courtesy Cassandra Hannagan

Governance and management for activated public spaces



Darling Square, Courtesy ASPECT Studios and Brett Boardman



Governance provides the wider framework, structure, and direction for high-quality management of public space.

The governance and systems that underpin successfully activated precincts and public spaces vary greatly. So too do the responsibilities for activation management and its positioning within organisational structures.

The governance of most successfully activated public spaces focuses on the total place experience and overall outcomes, rather than individual disciplines or performance indicators. Strong collaboration is also essential to understand, share knowledge, and find creative and mutually feasible solutions.

There are many governance models and entities to deliver sustained activation of successful public spaces. This ranges from governments with overarching legislation, through to community-based organisations and businesses. While all can operate successfully, each has distinct qualities and challenges, and needs to be appropriate for the public space.

For more information about the role of government see 'embedding activation' (page 18 & 20).

Examples of governance models in NSW:

- Federal government (for example, the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust)
- State government (for example, Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation)
- Local government
- Trusts (for example, The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust)
- Private sector (for example, GPT at Rouse Hill Town Centre)
- Public-private partnerships and joint ventures (for example, King Street Wharf Darling Harbour)
- Chambers of commerce and precinct partnerships, alliances, or groups
- Non-government organisations, not-for-profit organisations, and community and volunteer groups (for example, Addison Road Community Organisation)
- Business improvement districts (for example, Gosford Business Improvement District)



There are diverse models for the management of activated public space. Management models can be thought of as a continuum ranging from maximum control on the part of the proponent (such as a public space owner, delivery entity, or manager) through to transfer of responsibility for activation, care, maintenance, and investment to others.

Particularly for new precincts, management options should be considered in the context of development delivery timeframes. That is, the staging phase (before and during construction delivery), the launch and establishment phase (approximately 10 years after practical completion) and the mature phase (approximately 5 years after establishment). Specific, measurable, and realistic targets should be set for each of these phases.

We have provided examples of management models for you to consider for public space activation. The various models are not necessarily mutually exclusive; rather, they can be operated in various combinations, particularly in precincts of a size and type that demands diverse models. Public spaces may have multiple governance and management models for different aspects in operation that concurrently require coordination (for example, 'a site of sites' model).

...Valuing and respecting Aboriginal cultural knowledge and working with Aboriginal peoples should be a priority in managing public space...

NSW Public Spaces Charter
(Principle #10)

Examples of management models in NSW:

- Temporary management to deliver activated public spaces
- Direct management and operations to deliver activated public spaces
- Active (contract) management to deliver activated public spaces
- Passive (contract) management to deliver activated public spaces
- Transfer to an outside party to deliver activated public spaces
- Concession to a contractor for operational management to deliver activated public spaces

Sustainable funding for activated public spaces



Parramasala, Parramatta. Courtesy Destination NSW

We recognise the significant and ongoing government investment in the delivery and management of public spaces. Through research and consultation, we have identified that there are a range of other funding models currently used across NSW ranging from philanthropy to revenue generated from community titles. These models may prove useful in planning sustainable funding for free and publicly accessible activation. However, any funding model should be considered in the context of what is appropriate for the public space, and developed in consultation with the community, visitors, and other stakeholders to ensure maximum community benefit.

Capital planning is fundamental for the successful activation of public spaces in NSW. NSW Treasury defines capital planning as a strategic approach to physical asset planning and management, whereby an agency aligns its 10-year asset planning with its service delivery priorities and strategies.

Where there is a vision, strategy, or plan to deliver activated public spaces, a complementary funding strategy is highly recommended. In particular, temporary activation of public space often requires a package of operational resources to enable, facilitate, stimulate, coordinate, promote, and/or directly deliver. Across NSW, there are many examples of public space owners or managers adopting innovative funding models that are 'ring-fenced'¹ to support activation.

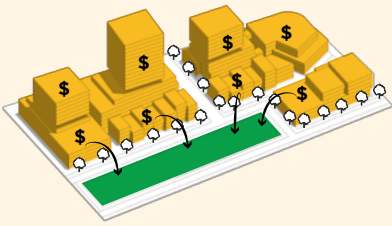
These funding options are not necessarily mutually exclusive; rather, they can be operated in various combinations, particularly in precincts of a size and type that demands diverse models. In mixed-use precincts, the economic case for activated public spaces is underpinned by better visitation, dwell time, exposure, and trade, increased location desirability and where relevant, a strengthening of rental and land values. The value 'created' is value that can be 'captured' and reinvested back into activation initiatives.

¹ Ring-fenced means a guarantee that funds allocated for a particular purpose, such as public space management and activation, will not be spent on anything else.

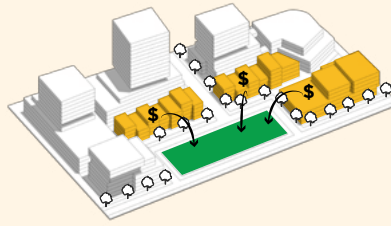
Other funding examples

- General rates via consolidated funds
- Returns for publicly-owned and operated on-site businesses
- Ring-fenced revenue generated on investments
- Rent surcharges on surrounding properties and/or occupancies
- Strata title levies (for example, common areas that are privately-owned but publicly accessible)
- Visitor entry fees (for example, some NSW national parks)

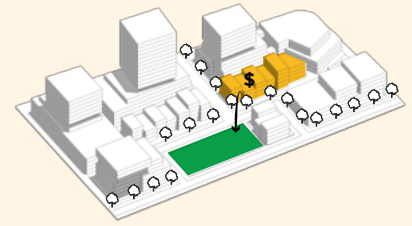
Examples of funding models in NSW



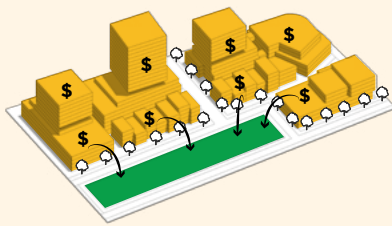
Recurring revenue from special rates levied on properties benefitting from public space
For example, Hunter Street Mall, City of Newcastle



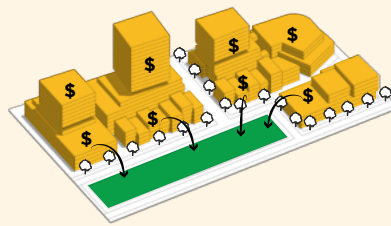
Recurring revenue from community title levies
For example, Rouse Hill Town Centre, Rouse Hill



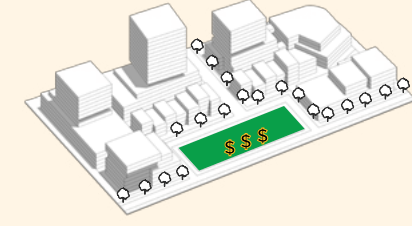
Recurring revenue from special self-imposed levies on adjacent properties seeking to optimise public space (ring-fenced)
For example, Emerging Business Improvement Districts



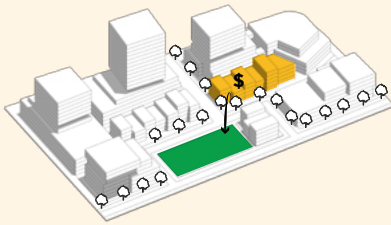
Recurring revenue from special rates levied on properties benefitting from public space (funds administered by a non-profit)
For example, Penrith CBD Corporation, Penrith City Centre



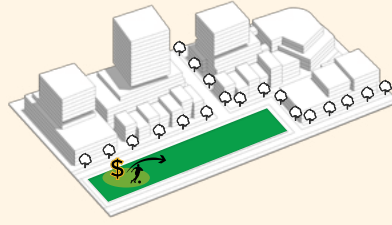
Recurring revenue from special levies on surrounding properties implemented by freeholders or head leaseholders (ring-fenced)
For example, Barangaroo, Sydney



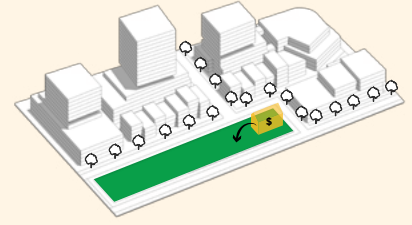
Recurring revenue from concessions for on-site businesses
For example, Coffs Harbour Showground, Coffs Harbour



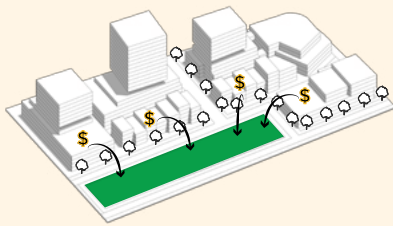
Recurring revenue from surrounding properties owned by the same entity
For example, Western Sydney Parklands, Blacktown, Liverpool, and Fairfield



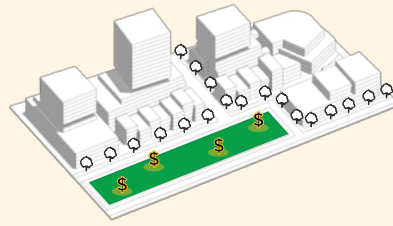
Recurring revenue from fees for certain usage of public space
For example, Stuart Park, Wollongong



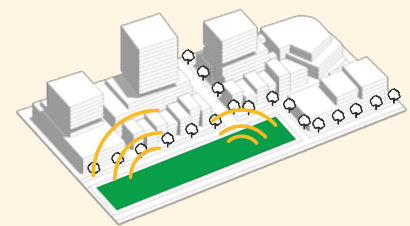
Recurring revenue from the sale of goods and services
For example, Blue Mountains Heritage Centre, Blackheath



Revenue or in-kind contributions from philanthropy, membership, fundraising, and donations
For example, Wendy's Secret Garden, Lavender Bay



Recurring revenue from longer-term leases and licenses to community, sporting, or cultural groups
For example, Addison Road Community Centre, Marrickville



Activation sponsorship and advertising
For example, City2Surf, Sydney

Note. Public spaces and precincts may have multiple funding models in operation concurrently.

Enabling infrastructure for activated public spaces

All public spaces require some level of infrastructure to support permanent and/or temporary activation, which will be dependent on the type of space and reflect the vision for it. Not all public spaces are the same. They are at different scales and support different activities.

Often they are also part of a network of public spaces that offer a diversity of experiences as a whole. It is important in early planning to consider how a space will be activated, the

appropriate level of activity and uses for it, and what will support this.

For example, public spaces that offer a range of activities for many diverse users will have extensive infrastructure needs, such as the specific access and amenities requirements for event spaces. On the other hand, local parks, and natural areas may require more limited, but critical, elements such as seating, lighting, and toilets.



Infrastructure to consider:



Identity and character

- Connection with Country and Culture
- Local character and heritage
- Place branding
- Materials and species selection



Comfort and amenity

- Sun, shade, and weather protection
- Furniture (seating, tables, shelters, bins, bike racks, bollards, fountains)
- Toilets
- Lighting
- Landscape
- Sensory (sound, smell, views, tactile)



Activity and features

- Sport and recreation (fields, nets, courts, exercise, games)
- Walking and cycling
- Water features
- Barbeques
- Public art
- Viewing platforms
- Playgrounds and skate parks
- Smart infrastructure (digital offer, device charging, WiFi)
- Event spaces



Accessibility

- Access to, from, and within the space (including supporting infrastructure) for all modes, ages, genders, abilities
- Emergency and service access
- Connections to surrounding areas and destinations
- Signage, information and wayfinding (physical and online)



Carrying capacity

- Spatial capacity (size, scale, configuration)
- Servicing capacity (power, water, height/weight limits, transport services, storage)

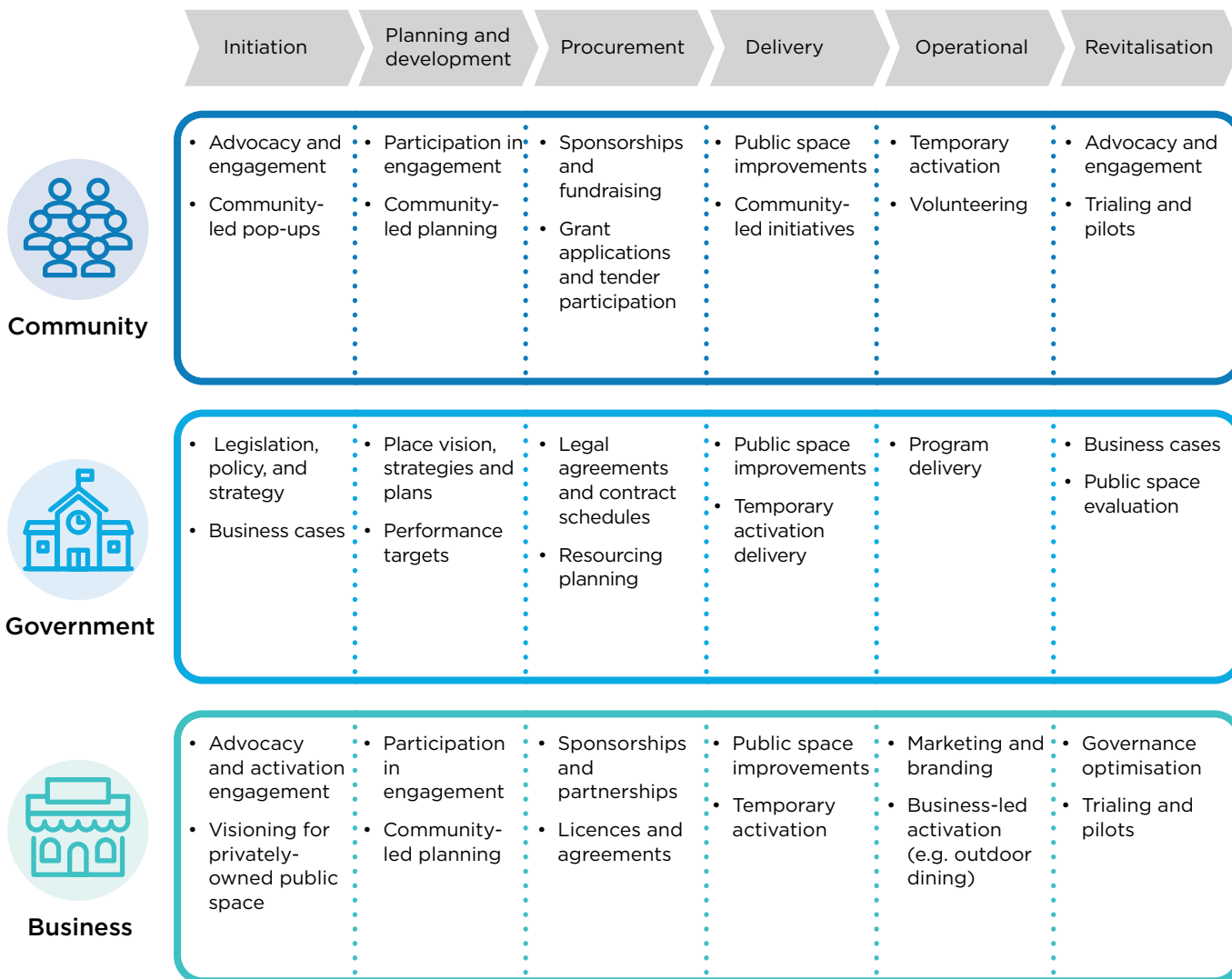


Darling Quarter, Courtesy ASPECT Studios and Florian Groehn

Embedding activation within public spaces

To realise the benefits of activated public spaces, consider different ideas across a full lifecycle from initiation through to procurement, delivery, operation, management and revitalisation. Across this timeframe, a range of practitioners and stakeholders spanning different sectors can each play an important role to enhance activation.

How sectors can embed activation in the public space lifecycle



How practitioners can embed activation in the public space lifecycle



Strategic
e.g. Strategic designers and planners
Refer p.21

Initiation	Planning and development	Procurement	Delivery	Operational	Revitalisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance planning Business case contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement Visioning, planning, and design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedules of requirements 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public space evaluation Business case contribution



Regulatory
e.g. Policy makers and statutory planners
Refer p.22

Initiation	Planning and development	Procurement	Delivery	Operational	Revitalisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory legislation (facilitate and enable) Policies and procedures (facilitate and enable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development assessments and conditions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice to navigate the relevant permits and approvals 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codes and policy reform



Administrative
e.g. Development managers
Refer p.23

Initiation	Planning and development	Procurement	Delivery	Operational	Revitalisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding planning Project development agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance targets/ indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asset management contracts and manuals Legal agreements 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public space evaluation Business case production



Operational
e.g. Construction and asset managers
Refer p.24

Initiation	Planning and development	Procurement	Delivery	Operational	Revitalisation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance and facility management resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handover Construction and contract management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Booking management Pre- and post-event operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handover



Tactical
e.g. Place and event managers
Refer p.25

Initiation	Planning and development	Procurement	Delivery	Operational	Revitalisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trialing and pilots Activation framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place vision and identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal and funding agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program curation and event management Marketing and branding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation and stakeholder feedback Trialing and pilots

Note. The tables above are illustrative and do not represent an exhaustive list. All practitioners have varying degrees of interest and engagement in delivering activation at different stages of the lifecycle.

Community

Community is a broad term to describe the public who are the main beneficiaries of activated public spaces.

Community encompasses local residents, workers, visitors, students, cultural groups, ethnic groups, social groups, clubs, and the like. Engaging the community early and throughout planning and delivery will support the delivery of activation.



Ideas for embedding activation

- Advocacy and participation in engagement activities.
- Using activation-related grants, funding, sponsorships, donations.
- Volunteering.
- Involvement in community-led initiatives (for example, Better Block, Town Teams).
- Supporting trials, pilots, and programs.

Government

In the context of this guide, government refers to elected members (local, state, and federal) and the overall operation and decision-making role of agencies and authorities. Practitioners that operate within government are discussed on the subsequent pages.

Governments typically have an important role in managing and optimising public land and assets, economic development and community wellbeing, all of which are related to better activated public spaces.



Ideas for embedding activation

- Development of strategic plans, initiatives, programs, priorities.
- Legislation and policy making to facilitate high-quality activation.
- Incorporating activation in business cases, budget allocation, grants, and funding programs.
- Cross-government alignment, partnerships, and coordination.

Business

Business includes the businesses operating within public spaces (vendors, event operators), businesses adjoining or near public spaces, commercial developers (creating new public spaces or precincts around spaces) and business representative bodies (chambers, organisations, associations).

Businesses can benefit from public space activation both directly (trade from footfall, sales) and indirectly (leveraging off strategic location, brand association, exposure, land value).



Ideas for embedding activation

- Advocacy and participation in engagement activities.
- Applying for activation-related grants, funding, expressions of interest.
- Contributing to funds, sponsorships, donations.
- Implementing and partnering in activation works, improvements, programs.
- Participating in trials and pilots.

Strategic practitioners

Engagement experts, strategic planners, precinct planners, urban designers, architects, landscape architects, transport planners, and the like

Overview

Strategic practitioners support co-creating visions, strategies and master plans for activated public spaces in the short-, medium-, and long-term. For the delivery of precincts, strategic practitioners are typically involved at the initiation, planning, design and revitalisation stages.



Sakura is a strategic planner

Council is planning a new town centre and the community wants the new public spaces to be activated with markets, buskers, and book fairs on a weekly basis. Sakura works with place and legal experts to identify the management and sustainable funding models to support the future administration and operation of the activities. Sakura prepares a council report that outlines a preferred option to manage and fund the future operational needs, in line with the community's vision for the activated public space.

Ideas for embedding activation at the initiation stage

- **Governance planning** (for example, identifying governance models and recommending a preferred option that will allow activated public space to adapt to future needs)
- **Sustainable funding models** (for example, identifying sustainable funding models and recommending a preferred option that will ensure future operational support for activated public spaces)
- **Statutory instruments** (for example, collaborating with regulatory practitioners to implement a preferred governance model for public spaces through statute law, as required)
- **Business cases** (for example, collaborating with administrative practitioners to forecast activation-related operational budgets to inform strategic and final business cases)

Ideas for embedding activation at the planning and development stage

- **Community engagement** (for example, identifying and implementing a public participation process to inform a strategy for activated public space)
- **Place visioning and strategy** (for example, co-creating a vision and place identity for activated public space as well as the strategies for realising the vision)
- **Activation framework** (for example, coordinating the preparation of a holistic activation framework to plan, fund, implement, and manage activation of public spaces)
- **Master plans and concept plans** (for example, shaping plans for precincts and public spaces as well as plans and strategies that support activated public spaces)
- **Project briefs** (for example, influencing the drafting contained within brief requirements to ensure the planning and execution for activation can adapt to change)

Ideas for embedding activation at the revitalisation stage

- **Evaluation** (for example, measuring and evaluating public space activation against targets, indicators, and benchmarks)
- **Business cases** (for example, using insight and foresight to build a strategic or final business case for activation-related investment in underperforming public spaces)

Regulatory practitioners

Statutory planners, policy makers, and the like

Overview

Regulatory practitioners are enablers of sustained activation of public space. The consistency of activation objectives with policies, codes, rules, or regulations for public spaces will influence the number of people present (visitation or footfall), the time spent by people (dwell time), and the diversity of people present.

For the delivery of precincts, regulatory practitioners are typically involved at the initiation, planning and development, and revitalisation stages.

Ideas for embedding activation at the initiation stage

- **Statutory legislation** (for example, regulatory practitioners can work with legal practitioners to write into a bill a preferred governance model for a public entity that will own and/or manage activated public spaces)
- **Plan making** (for example, regulatory practitioners might write and amend varied state policies and/or local environmental plans to enable streamlined activation of public spaces)
- **Local government policy** (for example, regulatory practitioners might write and amend place-specific policies that include principles, procedures, and operating statements to enable sustained activation of public spaces)



Edward is a policy maker

Edward is leading reforms to align a precinct's rules and regulations with the activation objectives in its vision and activation framework. Edward initiates a review and collaborates with the community, industry, and an economic development team to identify the main regulatory barriers to enabling a more consistent program of street fairs, markets and community events in public spaces. Edward's review identifies that tweaking the local environmental plan, as well as simplifying processes for permits or approvals, would make activation easier.

Ideas for embedding activation at the planning and development stage

- **Development assessment** (for example, regulatory practitioners can ensure that proponents of precincts and other public spaces consider sustained activation models – governance, management, funding, and infrastructure – in their submission documents and as conditions of consent)

Ideas for embedding activation at the delivery and operational stages

- **Activation concierge** (for example, regulatory practitioners can offer a service that communicates how to simply navigate any necessary permits or approvals to activate public spaces)

Administrative practitioners

Development directors and managers, client representatives and consultants, and the like

Overview

Administrative practitioners oversee and drive sustained activation of public spaces at the start of a new project or a revitalisation project. They are often aware of the benefits of activation, that is, the number of people present (visitation or footfall), the time spent by people (dwell time) and the diversity of people present.

For the delivery of precincts, administrative practitioners are typically involved at the initiation, planning and development, and revitalisation stages.



Yvonne is a development director

Yvonne is delivering a new precinct. Her performance indicators include meeting program, budget, visitation, dwell time, and diversity targets, in line with the precinct vision. Yvonne's team is guided by the precinct vision and makes budget allowances for activation in business cases. They incorporate activation in legal agreements with development partners, contractors, consultants, or operators. Yvonne's team works with strategic and operational practitioners to ensure that they identify and implement a preferred governance and management structure, funding model, and the enabling infrastructure necessary to sustain activated public spaces.

Ideas for embedding activation at the initiation stage

- **Governance planning** (for example, administrative practitioners can identify governance models and recommend a preferred option that will allow activated public space to respond to future needs)
- **Sustainable funding models** (for example, administrative practitioners can identify sustainable funding models and recommend a preferred option that will ensure future operational support)
- **Project development agreements** (for example, administrative practitioners can set activation-related drafting – such as the minimum number of annual events or the introduction of an activation levy – into legal documents with development partners, contractors, consultants or operators)
- **Business cases** (for example, administrative practitioners can collaborate with strategic practitioners to forecast activation-related operational budgets to inform strategic and final business cases)

Ideas for embedding activation at the planning and development stage

- **Performance targets and indicators** (for example, administrative practitioners can ensure that measures of success include alignment to the precinct vision such as visitation, dwell time and diversity targets)

Ideas for embedding activation at the procurement stage

- **Legal agreements** (for example, administrative practitioners can future-proof the sustained activation of public spaces in the drafting of legal agreements with development partners, contractors, consultants or operators)
- **Expressions of interest and calls for proposal** (for example, administrative practitioners can ensure that they prepare a documentation package that includes activation-related requirements for third parties responding to an expression of interest or call for proposal)
- **Asset management contracts and manuals** (for example, administrative practitioners can ensure that activation-related requirements are included in contracts and manuals to support the sustained activation of public spaces)

Operational practitioners

Place managers, project managers, construction managers, asset managers, and the like

Overview

Operational practitioners are those involved in the daily functions of a public space. They are ideally placed to influence activation-enabling elements such as infrastructure delivery (power, water, storage), maintenance delivery, budget allocation, staffing, contract management, and the like.

For the delivery of precincts, operational practitioners are typically involved at the procurement, delivery, and operational stages.



Mohammed is a place manager

Mohammed runs and maintains a key public space. He has noticed that young parents with infants have been regularly using the space. The parents group has created a semi-organised Saturday catch-up. As a result, there are different demands on the public space such as more picnics, more seating needs, and bins filling more quickly. As part of the minor works program, Mohammed suggests the upgrade of facilities to include a change table and a nappy bin. He also uses the next review cycle of the activation framework to update it to reflect the new audiences. This provides the foundation for budget allocation for a shade structure and some programming assistance for the Saturday meet-up group, as well as a greater focus on children's activities in the space.

Ideas for embedding activation at the planning and development stage

- **Maintenance and infrastructure planning** (for example, operational practitioners can consider options for better activation when upgrading or replacing infrastructure, as well as ensuring ongoing works and funding are in place to keep infrastructure clean, safe, and presentable)
- **Partnerships and suppliers** (for example, operational practitioners can consider activation objectives when selecting suppliers and partners)

Ideas for embedding activation at the revitalisation stage

- **Reviewing visioning and place identity** (for example, operational practitioners are well placed to assess the ongoing identity of a public space in line with its vision and objectives)

Ideas for embedding activation at the delivery and operational stages

- **Talent management** (for example, operational practitioners can make booking decisions of operators or performers that are aligned to the activation objectives for a public space)
- **Community engagement** (for example, operational practitioners can implement programs and resources to assist the community in activating the public space)
- **Activation frameworks** (for example, operational practitioners can implement or support the creation of a framework for activation)
- **Budgets** (for example, operational practitioners can influence budget decisions to ensure that activation is considered during budget allocation processes)

Tactical practitioners

Programmers, curators, event managers, public space managers, community members, business members, and the like

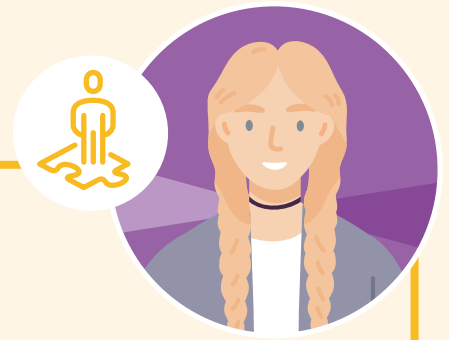
Overview

Tactical practitioners bring activation programs to life within a public space. They can use pilot projects to temporarily activate a public space with the intention of instigating longer-term positive change. Temporary activations are typically shorter-term, lower-risk, and highly visible. They can contribute to enhanced social capital between citizens and the building of capacity, particularly between partners.

For the delivery of precincts, tactical practitioners can be involved at any stage of the lifecycle including the initiation or revitalisation stages (for example, piloting a change that leads to a new or improved public space) and the operational stage (delivering programs, events, attractions, and interventions).

Ideas for embedding activation at the initiation and revitalisation stages

- **Place visioning and identity** (for example, tactical practitioners can use temporary pilot projects to test a longer-term vision for the public space, as well as build early community attachment)
- **Business cases** (for example, tactical practitioners can evaluate activation programs as evidence to demonstrate the need for further activation-related investment, or build the case for change)



Carly is a great neighbour

Carly lives in a small laneway. She reads about World Car-Free Day on Facebook and starts a conversation with her neighbours about whether they would be keen to join her in closing the laneway for a day. With some interested neighbours, she organises an event plan and books a meeting with her local council to investigate the process – permits and approvals needed, resources available. The event is a success, neighbour friendships are strengthened, and they are now looking at other ideas such as a mural. One of the neighbours runs a small gift shop around the corner and after experiencing the success of the event, has pitched an idea to the local business association and council about activating the space outside his shop on Park(ing) Day next year.

Ideas for embedding activation at the planning and development stage

- **Community engagement** (for example, tactical practitioners can seek community feedback or participate in community engagement forums to inform how activated public space can be achieved)

Ideas for embedding activation at the delivery and operational stages

- **Activation framework implementation** (for example, tactical practitioners can use existing frameworks, place strategies and resources to curate and inform public space activation)
- **Events, attractions, interventions, and activities** (for example, tactical practitioners can seek funding and support to lead the delivery of events and activities that activate public space)

Activation frameworks for public spaces

What is an activation framework?

An activation framework for public space is a coordinated way of delivering, managing, and evaluating enhanced activity. They can:

- provide tools for planning, facilitating, and managing activation
- guide activation to reflect the character, qualities, and capacity of the public space
- provide the framework to implement activation-related outcomes in public space visions and strategies
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in public space activation
- foster collaboration across disciplines within an organisation
- provide a reference point for future programming and curation of the public space.

The chart below highlights the key processes and elements that an activation framework should address.

Preparing the activation framework

Step 1: Get started

Step 1a Review the background

Step 1b Prepare a project plan

Step 2: Analyse the place

Step 2a Understand the character of the public space

Step 2b Understand the quality of the public space

Step 3: Plan the activation framework

Step 3a Define the vision and objectives

Step 3b Align the operating model with the vision

Step 3c Plan activation strategies

Step 4: Plan the evaluation

Step 4a Evaluate the action plans

Step 4b Evaluate the activation framework

Delivering the activation framework

Step 5: Activate the place

Step 5a Deliver the action plan: capital works

Step 5b Deliver the action plan: temporary activation

Activation Framework

- Public space analysis (background and context)

- Vision + objectives
- Activation strategies
- Action plans

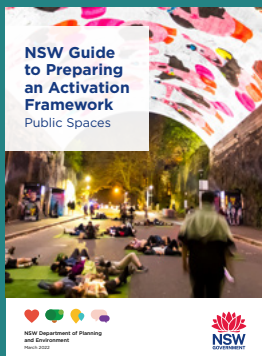
- Evaluation model

Why you need an activation framework

Successful activation requires collaboration and partnership from initiation, through to delivery, and ongoing management.

To align stakeholders, particularly in an organisational or partnership setting, it is crucial to adopt an activation framework. This will help incorporate activation into all parts of an organisation, including its management and governance structure, funding approach, strategy development, operational planning, marketing, engagement, and review processes.

If your organisation has adopted and put in place a specific activation framework, it is more likely to achieve activation-related outcomes for a public space.



*For more information refer to
NSW Guide to Preparing an
Activation Framework*

*Maitland Levee, Courtesy
Maitland City Council*



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