

Lost Lanes

Places to Love Case Study:
Wagga Wagga City Council

Revitalising the city centre to support local
business recovery and the night-time economy





Acknowledgement of Country

The NSW Government acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past and present.

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

Aboriginal peoples take a holistic view of land, water and culture and see them as one, not in isolation to each other. This Places to Love Case Study is based on the premise upheld by Aboriginal peoples that if we care for Country, it will care for us.

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Light art installation as part of the Lost Lanes Festival in June 2021.
Image courtesy: Matt Beaver for NSW Government



Local kids enjoying an interactive laneway installation.
Image courtesy: Matt Beaver for NSW Government



Project at a glance

A series of creative interventions and pop-up events transformed the Fitzmaurice and Baylis Street precinct, revitalising the night-time economy and expanding the traditional street and retail area into a vibrant CBD.

This case study outlines the approach Wagga Wagga City Council and the NSW Government took in partnership to trial and test enhancements in Wagga Wagga's city centre.

Project vision

To create vibrancy and activate public spaces across the CBD and transport hub precinct through temporary and semi-permanent change, driving social connection, while also supporting the city centre's retail sector through the COVID-19 recovery phase.

Places to Love

Places to Love is a collaborative program between NSW Government and councils to trial demonstration projects that improve walkable access to, and the quality of, local public spaces, particularly in streets and transport hub precincts.

In 2020-21, six councils partnered with the program, including Wagga Wagga City Council for the reimagining of the CBD.

These demonstration projects trial quick and low cost approaches to make public spaces more vibrant and active using pop-ups and semi-permanent changes to test ideas and build the case for longer-term change.

Places to Love is a rolling program with opportunities for other councils to be involved in the future.



What was implemented?

2,200 m² of activated public space

11 artists and contractors engaged **4** public artworks

9 musicians and producers performing live **3** laneways transformed

8,500 attended Lost Lanes Festival

2.1 km of streets connected and activated

1 modular bicycle/scooter pump track **3** activation locations

6 pop-up boxes and augmented reality activation for Christmas **5** bike racks installed

Key outcomes

Through conversations with local businesses and residents, Council learned about local issues and ideas for the city centre.

Council has since undertaken further improvements in Fitzmaurice Streets, including the addition of fairy lights on 98 lamp posts, 42 new up lights, and 200 metres of footpath lighting.

This project provided baseline data to inform the City Centre Master Plan project, which will ensure new development and design supports and encourages activation in the city centre.

228 community surveys conducted

Over

260% increase in pedestrian traffic

Approximately

98% of respondents rated the quality of the public spaces **medium** to **high** after activation

Image courtesy: Matt Beaver for NSW Government

Project description

Aims and objectives

This project aimed to use creative and play-based interventions to transform under-utilised street-based public spaces in a transport hub precinct. It aimed to increase foot traffic and customer spending, building the case for longer-term change within the city centre to deliver sustainable vibrancy.

The primary objective was to collaborate with local businesses to build capacity for local urban renewal by commissioning artists, makers and creatives to rework the laneways to become more appealing spaces to visit and spend time.

Council worked with the NSW Government to trial and test enhancements to better connect two shopping precincts – Fitzmaurice and Baylis Streets – over several months. Four laneways located along Baylis and Fitzmaurice Streets received makeovers with public art, street furniture and pop-up performances.

Various enhancements to Baylis Street were used to encourage the community to spend more time in the precinct.

In December 2020, a temporary augmented reality experience took users on a Christmas themed adventure in the public space. An outdoor dining nook was created in an underutilised space, complete with a mural, greenery and furniture.

Additional bike racks were installed along Baylis Street, as well as a mobile bicycle/scooter pump track, to encourage cycling and increase walkability during the project. The activations culminated at the City's Lost Lanes Festival in June 2021, which was attended by thousands of community members.



A blank wall on the corner of Baylis and Tompson Streets has been transformed with a new mural reflecting local life. Image courtesy: Matt Beaver for NSW Government

“ The Wagga Wagga city centre hosts a strategically significant cluster of retailers, professional and government offices, and business-to-business services that play a key role in contributing to Wagga Wagga’s standing as the major regional capital of southern NSW and the economic and employment life of the Riverina-Murray.

Our community has experienced significant social impacts as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Places to Love program, we have been able to create places for social connection and provide opportunities for local artists.

The initiatives undertaken through the Places to Love demonstration project have been the catalyst to informing our City’s longer-term vision

and strategy to revitalise our central precinct as the city grows towards 2040.

Through the creation of inviting spaces and the activation of laneways, Council has been able to demonstrate and provide places that offer passive recreation and social connection.

The deliverables and findings from this project will inform our future strategies and intention of growing a vibrant and engaged city that creates longer term benefits for our whole community.”



Councillor Dallas Tout
Mayor of Wagga Wagga



Lost Lanes Festival street activations.
Image courtesy: Matt Beaver for NSW Government

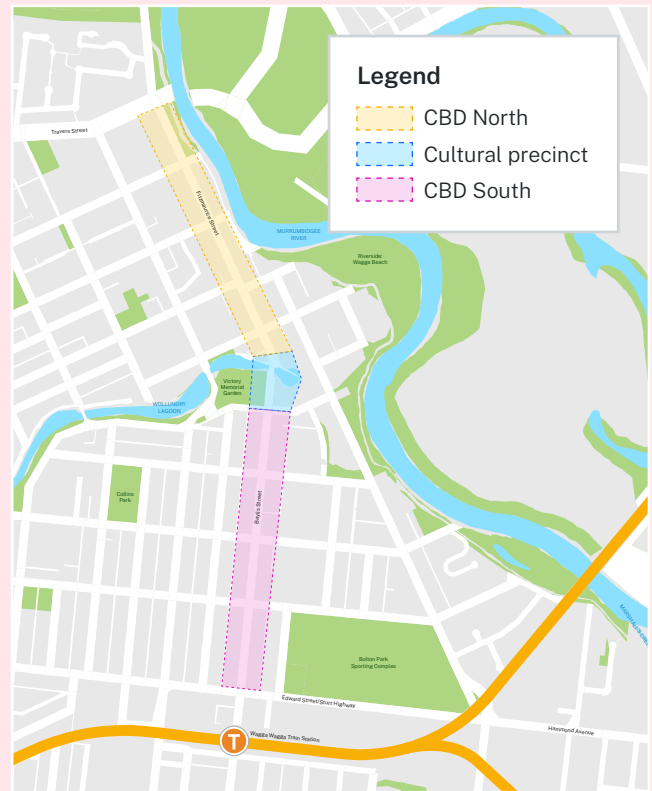
Project location

The city centre, comprising of Baylis and Fitzmaurice Streets, is the largest and most vibrant precinct in the city. It contains a mix of transport options, retail, employment, education and leisure uses. It is enriched by an assortment of historical and contemporary buildings and spaces.

While the city has several commercial centres, Wagga Wagga's CBD surrounds Baylis and Fitzmaurice Streets and stretches approximately two kilometres across the city centre from the train station. As shown in Figure 1, this area is characterised by three distinct zones: Baylis Street (CBD South); Cultural Precinct; and Fitzmaurice Street (CBD North).

These streets have wide footpaths and on-street parking, as well as other off-street parking spots that are accessible via several laneways located along the street.

Revitalisation will promote the Wagga Wagga city centre as a central place for retail, culture, recreation, and business activity.



Strategic alignment

The Places to Love project aligns with Council's vision, as defined in the Community Strategic Plan 2040, that by 2040 Wagga Wagga will be a thriving, innovative, connected and inclusive community.

Other Council documents, including the Wagga Wagga Cultural Plan 2020-2030, Events Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2024, and Recreation, Open Space and Community Strategy 2040, propose

strategies that contribute to making Wagga Wagga an accessible, vibrant and welcoming place to live and visit.

The project celebrated public spaces by transforming the city streets into live performance and art spaces over a series of music pop-ups and the Lost Lanes Festival.

Colourful artworks and street painting helped transform Wonderland Lane. Image courtesy: Matt Beaver for NSW Government



Design and delivery

As shown below, concepts were developed for each of the laneway activations in response to their character and place. Council collaborated with local businesses on designs and locations.



All images courtesy: Wagga Wagga City Council

Community and stakeholder engagement

Council adopted a multi-stakeholder engagement approach to establish project buy-in early in the process and to help meet community expectations.

Council leveraged existing partnerships and activation projects, such as *Live Local. Be Local*, to re-engage the community following the COVID-19 pandemic and together generate new ideas for the CBD, including with Wagga Wagga Business Chamber, Charles Sturt University, Eastern Riverina Arts, and Wagga Wagga Tourism Partner Program.



The following activities took place to inform and engage with community ahead of temporary activations:

- Business stakeholder engagement through the Wagga Wagga Business Roundtable
- Briefings with land and building owners to seek consent and discuss concepts
- Business door-knocking in Baylis and Fitzmaurice Streets
- Notification to surrounding businesses and residents about the events
- Digital communications through social media and the *Live Local. Be Local* webpage
- Joint media releases with key stakeholders to raise community awareness
- Initial sentiment survey to understand community perceptions and values of the spaces.

Council commissioned an external market researcher to develop and conduct surveys face-to-face at the Lost Lanes Festival and online after the event.

This survey investigated the demographics, overall economic impact, event satisfaction, sentiment and value around the public spaces.

A total of 228 surveys were collected.



Top: Council worked with local businesses to reduce the impact of the event and artwork installation. Image courtesy: Wagga Wagga City Council. Bottom: People enjoying the pop-up dining space. Image courtesy: Matt Beaver for NSW Government

Evaluation

Council used the Evaluation Tool for Public Spaces and Public Life (Evaluation Tool). The Evaluation Tool was used throughout the project to document trends in pedestrian activity before and after project implementation.

Surveys were also conducted at each laneway activation before the Lost Lanes Festival.

The Evaluation Tool completed after activation showed a 260% increase in the number of people using the spaces. Surveys conducted showed a significant increase in the number of respondents who felt the spaces were of a medium to high quality.

The analysis demonstrated that the project has led to an increased connection to the space and social interactions, improving regular usage and sense of place.

228 surveys conducted

>8,500 people attended Lost Lanes Festival

97.8% of respondents rated the quality of the public spaces as **medium to high** after activation



Council and the NSW Government assessed the project area before, during and after using the Evaluation Tool. Image courtesy: NSW Government

The average count of people walking through and sitting in the space

Before	approx 20
After	approx 70



(Left to right) The Christmas augmented reality experience was complemented with pop-up boxes showcasing local businesses along the street; The pump track was installed in multiple locations and encouraged users to ride or scooter to the area; A series of music performances encouraged locals to sit and enjoy the laneways and create vibrancy. Images courtesy: Wagga Wagga City Council

Timeline

Project

2020

July

Places to Love partnership established

November

'Morning Light' mural created at Tompson St; Pump track sourced and installed at the first location; *Live Local. Be Local* website launches

December

Baylis Street mini-dining activation undertaken; Christmas augmented reality and pop-ups implemented

2021

January

Bicycle racks installed

February

Wonderland Lane creative treatment installed

March

Live Local. Be Local community engagement undertaken

March-June

ABC Laneway activation installed

March

Myer Laneway creative treatment installed

March-May

Pop-up performances in Myer Laneway

26 June

Lost Lanes Festival held

Post project

December 2021

Permanent fairy lights on lamp posts along Fitzmaurice Street installed

March 2022

New up-lights along the median strip on Fitzmaurice Street

April 2022

200 m of LED Bunker lights along the river levee pathway installed

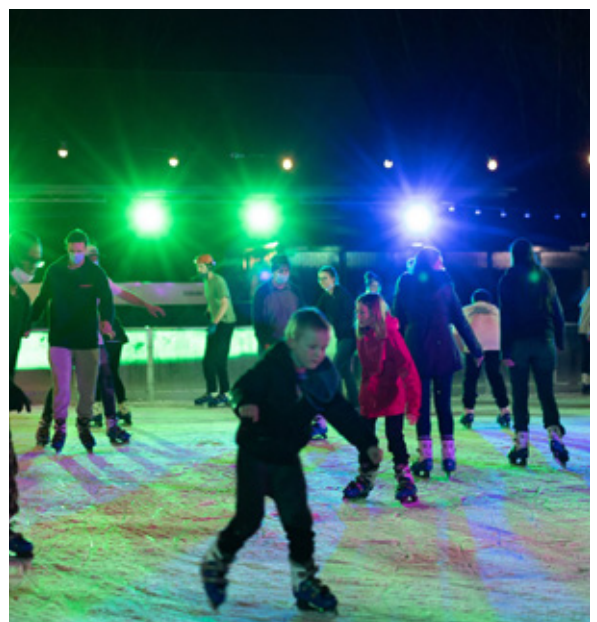
June 2022

A new permanent pump track installed in the village of Tarcutta after the successful trial

Cost breakdown

Wagga Wagga City Council used a lighter, quicker, cheaper approach with \$130,000 of funding for the Places to Love project.

Description of activities	Cost
Activation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large scale mural Multiple laneway treatments Mini dining experience Mobile pump track Bike racks Augmented reality decals and pop-up boxes 	\$100,000
Community engagement activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost Lanes Festival activations and community surveys Web development and graphic design for <i>Live Local. Be Local</i> community engagement platform 	\$30,000
Approximate total	\$130,000



A pop-up ice rink was enjoyed as part of the Lost Lanes Festival in a street area.

Image courtesy: Matt Beaver for NSW Government

Outcomes and lessons learnt

This demonstration project has proven that small, low-cost temporary changes can have high community benefit, and bring vibrancy and activity to the city centre and transport hub precinct.

From December 2020 to June 2021, Baylis and Fitzmaurice Streets were transformed using temporary street furniture, public art, lighting, mini-dining pop-ups, creative laneway treatments and music, with thousands of people turning up to the closing event, Lost Lanes Festival.

Throughout the demonstration project, Council sought feedback from businesses and residents regarding improvements to amenities on Fitzmaurice Street.

The feedback informed enhancements that were delivered post-project along Fitzmaurice Street, delivered with funding from NSW Government's Your High Street program:

- Fairy lights installed on 98 light posts
- 42 up-lights installed in the median strip
- 43 LED bunker lights along the river levee pathway
- 10 parklets to be installed.

The Places to Love project has also provided baseline data and informs the proposed City Centre Master Plan project, which ensures new development and design supports and encourages activation in the city centre. When the Master Plan is complete, it will inform changes to Council's long-term financial plan, environmental planning instruments and economic development strategies.

Key learnings that Council can build on in future public space projects:

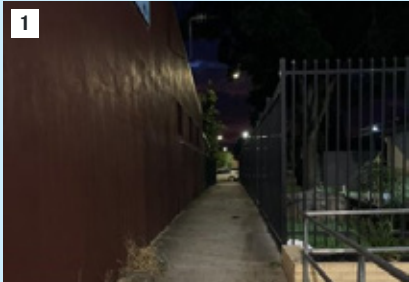
- Consider interventions in public spaces that are Exempt and Complying Development, meaning that fewer approvals are required to deliver activations.
- Use a cross-departmental model to deliver public space projects more efficiently.
- Ensure appropriate lead times for business owner approval in the planning stage. The time taken to gain formal building owner approval can impact timelines.
- Undertake early engagement with local business to gain support and mitigate any potential issues.
- Increase the radius of businesses to achieve broader participation.
- Consider detours or alternate routes for couriers and delivery drivers during road closures for events.
- Have minor agreements in place for ancillary services (e.g. power/storage facilities).
- Develop engagement and events that can be adapted if required, for example to COVID-19 Public Health Orders.
- Offer inclusive activities. E.g. the pump track encouraged people of all ages to engage with active transport options.

Locals enjoying the interactive elements in Wonderland Lane. Image courtesy: Matt Beaver for NSW Government



Photo diary

These photographs document the transformation of Baylis and Fitzmaurice Street precinct and adjacent laneways into an activated retail precinct with space for people to relax, vibrant pop-up activations and increased night-time safety. The precinct has become a destination and has activated the local area by encouraging people to enjoy spending time in their new quality public space.



- 1. **Before** – ABC Laneway
- 2. **After** – ABC Laneway activated with a garden
- 3. **After** – ABC Laneway activated with lighting
- 4. **Before** – Wonderland Lane
- 5. **After** – Colourful artworks helped to transform Wonderland Lane
- 6. **Before** – Unused nook between two businesses at 123 Baylis St
- 7. **After** – People enjoying the pop-up dining space
- 8. **After** – A pop-up dining space with a mural, lighting and furniture
- 9. **Before** – A blank wall at Tompson and Baylis St
- 10. **After** – A mural depicting local wildlife

1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 Images courtesy: Wagga Wagga City Council. 2 Image courtesy: Matt Beaver for NSW Government. 4, 9 Images courtesy: NSW Government



“

A highlight for me [was] working closely with our businesses, especially dealing with [and] liaising with business owners and also property owners to undertake these opportunities in our streets.

”

Council events officer

Temporary interactive lighting installation at the Victory Memorial Gardens encouraged play and connection in the CBD during the Places to Love project. Image courtesy: Matt Beaver for NSW Government

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Image on front cover: Lost Lanes Festival.

Image courtesy: Matt Beaver for NSW Government

Resources



For more information, please visit [Wagga Wagga City Council](#)



Visit our website to learn more about the [Great Places Toolkit](#) or email PublicSpace@planning.nsw.gov.au