

John Graham

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Media Release**Communities reclaim their streets for 130 events across NSW**

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Local streets are becoming the stage for community life across the state, with 130 towns and suburbs hosting free festivals, markets, food, live music, arts and cultural events.

As an antidote to the cost-of-living squeeze, all events under the NSW Government's Open Streets program are free entry, bringing people together for budget-busting, family-friendly fun.

From Campbelltown to Cootamundra, Moree to Molong and Narrandera to Newcastle - main streets will host winter markets, lunar festivals, Christmas events, music festivals, street parties and food markets.

The Moon Festival will transform the town centre of Cabramatta into a street party that celebrates South-East Asian culture with traditional dancers, costumes, live music, food and fireworks.

In Blacktown, the 4Elements HipHop Festival will see the main street and train station car park turned into a celebration of live hiphop.

Kurri Kurri will host their inaugural Kurri Curry Festival, a main street celebration of the local and regional curry making skills, along with light, fire, music and art workshops.

Trundle will host the ABBA Festival, Nyngan will host the Big Bogan Street Festival, and Parkes will turn Clarinda Street over to Australia's biggest Elvis festival.

This diverse line up of events are all recipients of funding from the Open Streets Program, that aims to activate local streets and public spaces, boost vibrancy and visitor numbers to communities and businesses across NSW.

Applications for local councils opened earlier this year, with the program so popular that the original funding pool was increased from \$4.7 million to \$8.7 million. Funding amounts range from \$7,000 to \$150,000 and have been awarded to 51 regional councils and 22 metropolitan councils.

All 130 events will take place between now and January 2025.

The program that saved the Dolly Parton Festival

The Dolly Parton Festival in Narromine was close to cancellation last month, but its Open Streets grant was increased, saving the event and making it free for the whole community.

Narromine Council had been successful in their initial Open Streets application for \$20,000 but due to lack of funding from other sources they were planning to cancel the event.

Through consultation with Transport for NSW, Narromine Council amended their proposal from a ticketed event to a free event, which made it eligible for the maximum amount available to councils of \$150,000. This was enough to save the event which will go ahead on October 12. Buses will be available from Dubbo and Trundle.

Open Streets and the vibrancy agenda

Open Streets is part of the NSW Government's Vibrant Streets Package, now a \$19.7 million investment to inject vibrancy into our streets and local spaces. The other key program in the package is the Permit/Plug/Play Pilot which gives local councils the tools to reduce the cost and red tape of closing streets for events. The aim of this program is to encourage councils to use their main streets for more events more often.

This package is part of the NSW Government's vibrancy and visitor economy agenda, which recognises that local communities and businesses know what works best in their towns and suburbs. Government supports these communities and businesses through programs like The Vibrant Streets Package, Community Improvement Districts and Uptown Grant Program alongside and regulatory reforms that make it easier to generate vibrancy and do business, including extending trading hours, outdoor dining and streamlining noise complaints.

For more information on the Open Streets program visit [Transport for NSW's Open Streets webpage](#).

Minister for Roads, Arts, Music and the Night-Time Economy, Jobs and Tourism John Graham said:

"Too often our main streets are something we drive through, rather than drive to. Our streets are a critical part of our public and social infrastructure. Great streets make great towns and centres and reflect the local community and culture.

"The Open Streets program is about temporarily transforming our main streets into vibrant and welcoming public event spaces.

"The colour and diversity of these 130 events celebrates the unique personality of each town or suburb. This is what our vibrancy agenda is all about, backing locals to create events and entertainment that works for their local community."

"Regarding the Narromine Dolly Parton Festival, we won't let any of our great country music festivals be cancelled without a fight and I am pleased the NSW Government could work long past '9 to 5' with Narromine Council to make sure the show will go on – and even better than people can enjoy it all for free."

Minister for Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales Tara Moriarty said:

"It's exciting to see over 75 regional towns and cities on the list of communities that will temporarily close their main streets for these celebrations.

"The fun, diverse range of regional events, from the Dolly Parton Festival to the Kurri Curry Festival, is testament to the sense of humour and imagination of regional communities across the state.

"Local people and local businesses know what works best in their communities, and the NSW Government is backing them to bring people onto the streets for all the fun and festivities.

"The cost of living crisis is hitting regional NSW too, so this is much welcome support of communities and also the families that can attend these events for free!"

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