

The background of the cover features large, overlapping circular cutouts. One cutout shows a person in a white sweater and jeans holding a blue shopping bag. Another cutout shows a person's legs in jeans and patterned shoes. A solid blue semi-circle is on the left side.

YOUR BUSINESS SHOPFRONT IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINE

An initiative of Dubbo Regional Council



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wiradjuri people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, work and play and their continued care of the land, water and sky. We pay our respects to Elders past and present of the Wiradjuri Nation and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians.

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Disclaimer

1. This guideline is not a statutory document. It has been prepared as a toolkit to assist business owners within the Dubbo Regional Council Local Government Area to improve their building facades, following feedback received from the local business community.
2. Images, graphics and other illustrations depicted in this guideline are for demonstration purposes only and are not intended to represent a specific design or existing business.
3. The specific circumstances of your business frontage and location, and business needs should be considered alongside design principles described in this document.
4. Business and building owners should consider any requirements under Council's Local Laws, Policies or Planning Scheme.
5. Submission of a development application, copying or recreating any design from the examples or illustrations in this guideline does not guarantee approval. Each development application should consider site specific elements and constraints along with street and neighbourhood context. Each application is assessed on individual merit against statutory planning and building assessment provisions.
6. Dubbo Regional Council does not provide funding for shopfront improvements directly. You can search our Funding Finder for potential grants or you can look at which low-cost options the shop keeper/tenant and landlord can enact together as a first step with this Business Shopfront Improvement guideline as a resource to help you get started. Council provides a range of useful business tools via its website to help small businesses across the region.



Transforming our regional centres: building a thriving community for you, your customers, and the Dubbo region economy

Enhancing your shopfront can entice customers to travel farther and spend more. Your Business Shopfront Improvement Guideline offers simple updates to attract more customers.

Dubbo Regional Council does not directly fund shopfront improvements. This guideline has been developed in response to feedback from local businesses, which identified uncertainty about what changes could or could not be made to shopfronts. In response, Dubbo Regional Council has prepared this toolkit to provide businesses with clear, cost effective ideas and practical resources to refresh their shopfronts.

These guidelines are for you if you're asking:

- How can I make my business frontage more appealing and inviting?
- Can I improve how my signage communicates with customers?
- How can I enhance access to my business?
- How can I make my business stand out on the street?

What type of improvements could you consider making?



Improving access



Paint the building frontage



Upgrade your signage



Add awnings and shade devices



Improve lighting

Why make changes to your shopfront?



Provide financial savings and gains

- Enhance visibility and communication with your clientele.
- Boost foot traffic and sales.
- Create welcoming, aesthetically pleasing environments that convey higher value for your goods and services.

Increase foot traffic and dwelling time

- An inviting business environment and customer comfort lead to longer browsing times, increasing the likelihood of sales.
- Remove or reduce access barriers to ensure everyone can comfortably visit your business.

Save you energy

- Selecting the appropriate colours and cladding for your business facade can mitigate environmental factors like intense afternoon sun or wet weather.

Make a plan to review and refresh

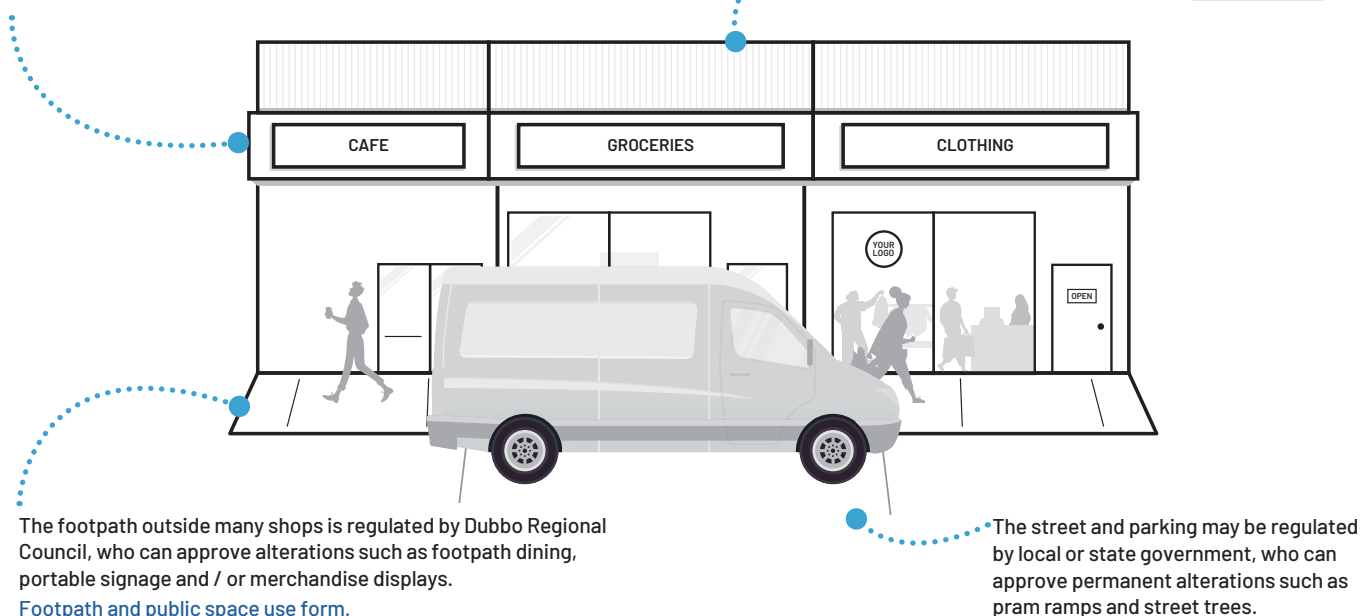


What can you change?

Street facing shops / businesses

Sophia rents this store for her cafe. There are many fun things she can do to improve her cafes shopfront, such as signage and window displays. With permission from the building owner she can change structural features too.

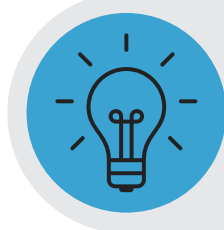
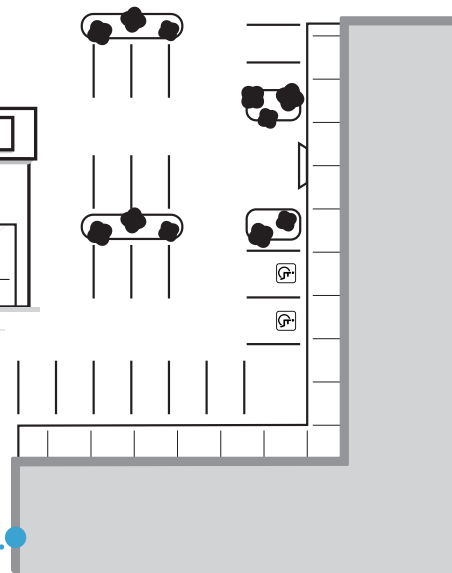
Steve owns the building and runs his grocery store. He can upgrade all structural and non-structural elements of the building as long as he has the required [DA or permits](#).



Strip malls / shopping centres

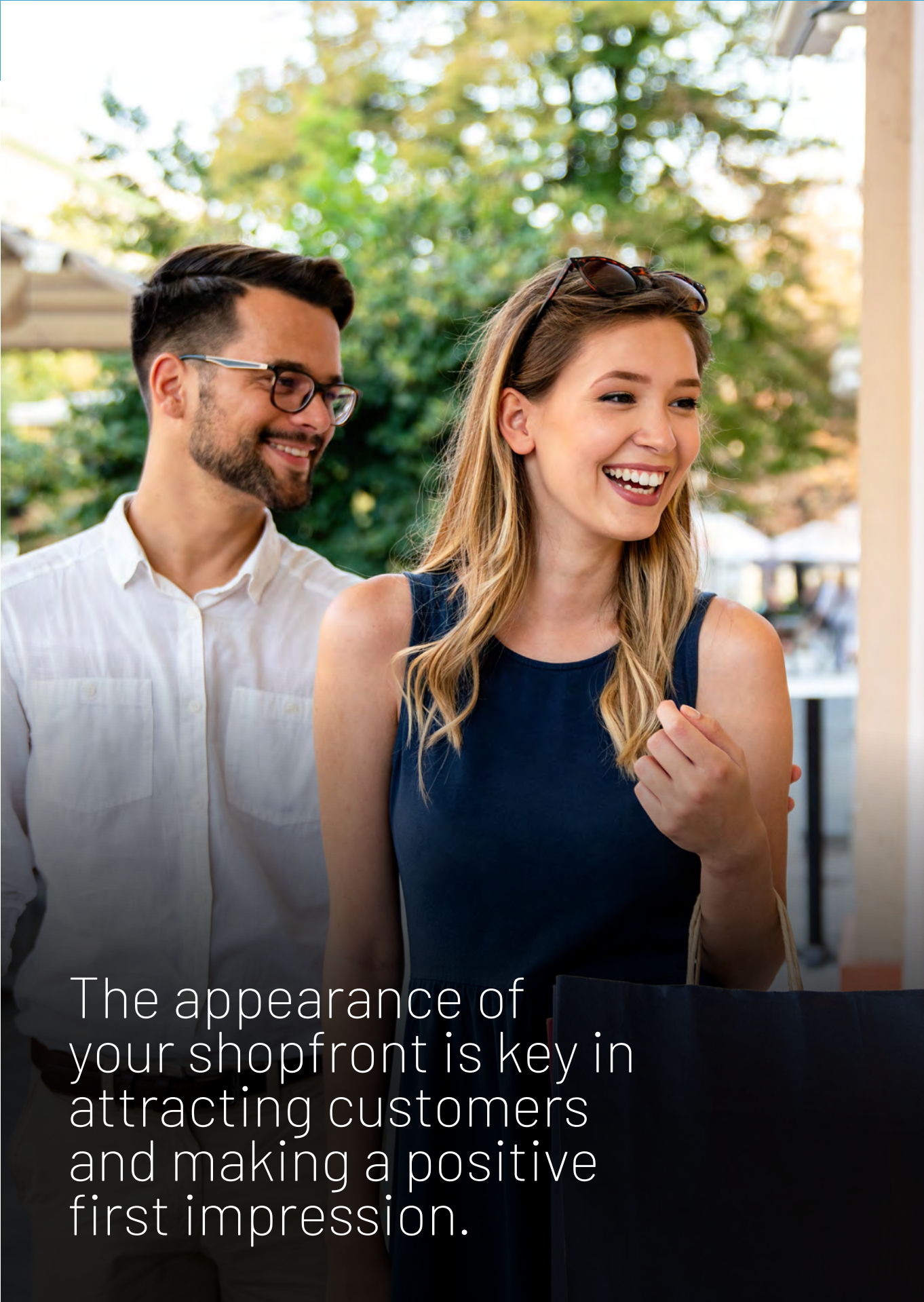
Bob rents this store from the complex owner and he can change all non-structural elements. To upgrade structural elements like the wall, he needs to seek permission from the complex owner.

Jessica owns the whole complex and she is responsible for all the buildings as well as common spaces including the footpath, garden beds and car park. She would also need to [obtain relevant permissions from Dubbo Regional Council](#).



Smart idea

Need advice for a heritage-listed building or shopfront? Get expert help for free. Before making any shopfront changes, book a session with [Dubbo Regional Council's Heritage Advisor](#). This free service can guide you on design, materials, and approvals - helping you enhance your building's character while avoiding costly mistakes.

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a white button-down shirt, and a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a dark blue sleeveless top, are walking outdoors. The woman is smiling broadly and holding a black shopping bag. They are in front of a blurred background of green trees and a building. The text "The appearance of your shopfront is key in attracting customers and making a positive first impression." is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

The appearance of
your shopfront is key in
attracting customers
and making a positive
first impression.

Your shopfront



A well-designed, visually appealing shopfront can not only draw in more customers but also enhance their overall satisfaction with your business. It sets the tone for what customers can expect inside and helps convey your brand's personality and values.

Tips for a visually appealing shopfront:

1. Embrace local character:

Compliment and contribute to the local identity by integrating elements that resonate with the area's aesthetic.

2. Paint and cladding:

Refresh your shopfront with a new coat of paint or cladding. Choose materials that improve aesthetics while considering any heritage requirements, insulation and noise control.

3. Colour selection:

Use lighter colours to passively cool your business and create a welcoming atmosphere. Incorporate your brand colours in signage for a unique street front character.

4. Decorative lighting:

Enhance the ambiance and visibility of your shopfront with decorative lighting. Consider solar-powered options for cost-effectiveness and ease of installation.

5. Be clean:

Maintain a clean and attractive shopfront by keeping it free from rubbish, regularly removing cobwebs and dust from windows and awnings and maintaining tidy garden beds. Consider anti-graffiti coatings to ease graffiti removal.

6. Keep it simple:

Simplify your signage to convey essential information clearly. Focus on what makes your business unique to stand out.

7. Keep it informative:

Display your address, 'Open/Closed' sign, and trading hours prominently. Showcase your community engagement, such as local memberships or acceptance of local gift cards.

8. Be social:

Promote your social media presence by displaying your website and social media handles on your shopfront. Encourage customers to follow you and provide reviews.

9. Be seen:

Ensure clear visibility and accessibility by keeping the frontage of your business unobstructed.



Smart idea

Coordinate with neighbouring businesses to collectively enhance the impact and style along your street, creating a more inviting environment for customers.

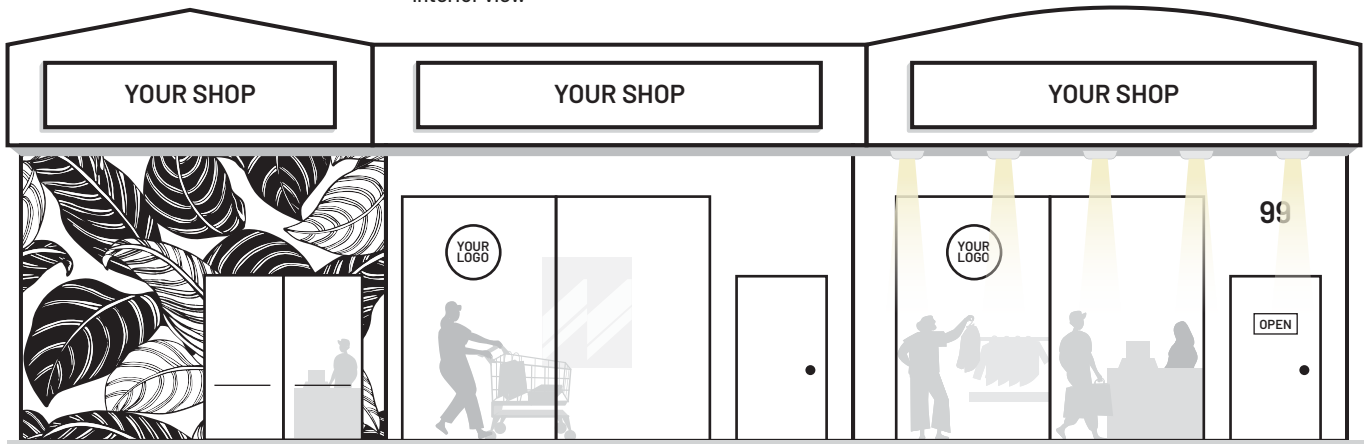
Shopfront tips

An inviting arrival

Awnings and verandahs are great for providing shade and weather protection, but some can cast your building frontage in darkness, blocking visibility to entryways and signage.

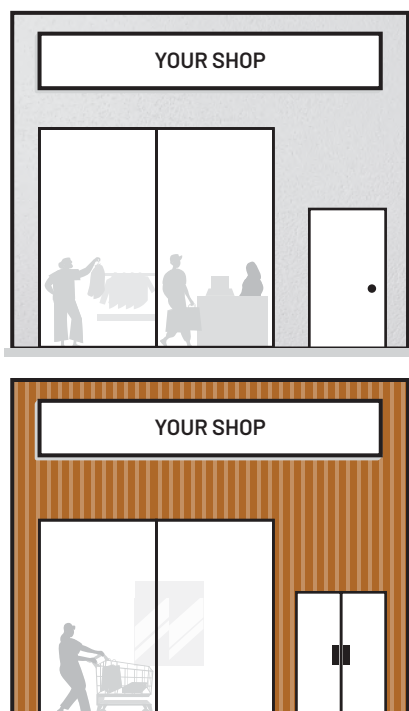
Consider lighting both the exterior when the frontage is heavily shaded, and the interior where window displays are visible. This allows customers and clients to view signage clearly and to see displayed merchandise.

- ✓ Avoid large, empty walls and consider a mural instead
- ✓ Clean, uncluttered shopfront doesn't compete with the interior view
- ✓ Consistency with signage and facade styles
- ✓ Lighting under awnings makes your shopfront visible



Freshen up

Facade cladding or render with a contrasting painted trim gives a modern update



A bold coat of paint can instantly enhance your shopfront and make your business stand out



Communication is key

Potential customers need a certain amount of information available to them, however, they don't need every detail listed on the front of the store.

Consider creating a QR code with access to your business website for extra information.

Refining the amount of information you display makes your frontage look clearer and easier to read.

Entice new customers inside for more information with window displays and an overall more inviting atmosphere.

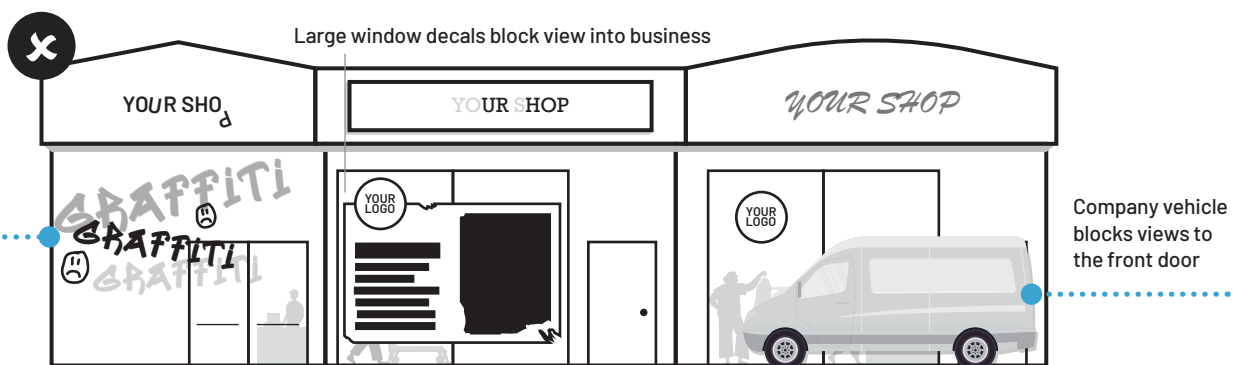
✗ Cluttered frontage with an unnecessary amount of information

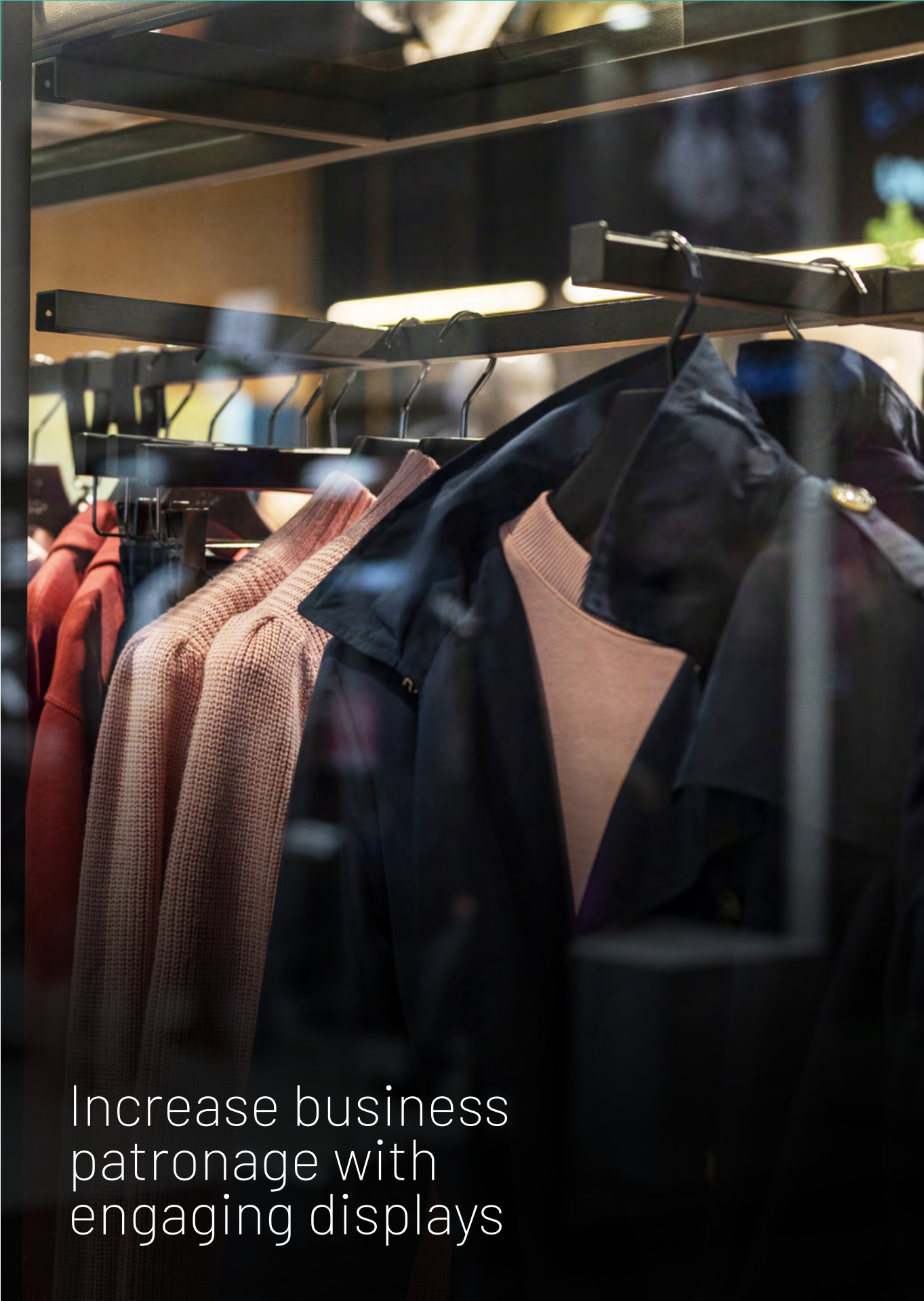


✓ Simplified information shown at a larger scale



Tidy up





Increase business
patronage with
engaging displays

Windows and doors



The visibility and accessibility of your business can greatly impact customer return rates.

Here are some tips:

1. Maintenance

Regularly clean and update signage, water plants, repaint, and refresh window displays to maintain an attractive shopfront.

2. Be welcoming

Enlarge windows and doors to create a more welcoming atmosphere. This allows customers to view your merchandise easily and feel comfortable entering your establishment.

3. Stand out

For businesses requiring privacy, use local artwork on windows instead of generic graphics or advertising. Translucent treatments like frosted glass maintain privacy while still allowing light in.

4. Visual merchandising

Create eye-catching window displays to attract customers. Personalise, rotate and update displays regularly to keep them interesting. Ensure windows are clean to showcase your merchandise effectively.

5. Looking inside

Visibility into your store can entice customers and make them feel safer. Illuminated interiors signal that you are open for business.

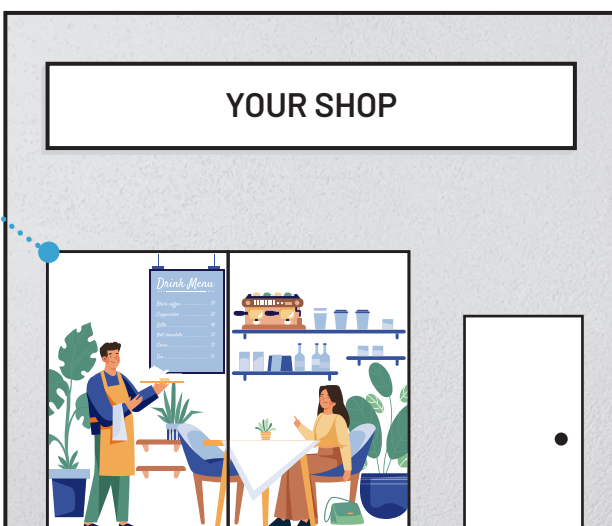
6. Accessibility

Ensure your store is accessible to all by providing ramps or level access, easy-to-open doors, and clear pathways at the entry and throughout the store.

7. Expand improvements

Extend improvements to the sides of your building, especially if you have a corner site or a wall facing a laneway. Consider adding artwork to make it more appealing.

Large windows with curated displays can entice customers





Online accessibility



Is your online shop accessible?

Just like a physical store, your online presence should be easy for everyone to use. An accessible website allows customers to browse, understand, and purchase from your business – regardless of ability, device, or assistive technology.

Designing for accessibility not only supports your community, it also improves customer experience, builds trust, and can increase online sales.

Here are some tips:

Make it easy to read

- Use clear, simple fonts and avoid overly decorative styles
- Ensure strong contrast between text and background
- Break up content with headings and short paragraphs

Make it easy to navigate

- Keep menus simple and consistent across all pages
- Ensure buttons and links are easy to identify and click
- Avoid cluttered layouts

Support all users

- Add alt text descriptions to images
- Provide captions or transcripts for videos
- Ensure your website can be used with a keyboard, not just a mouse

Make it mobile-friendly

- Ensure your site is easy to use on phones and tablets
- Check that text, images and buttons resize properly

Keep information clear

- Display contact details, trading hours and location clearly
- Use plain language to explain products and services

Australian standard: WCAG 2.2

Your website should aim to meet Australian accessibility requirements under the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.2](#). These guidelines help ensure your website is usable for people of all abilities, including those using assistive technologies.

Digital NSW: WCAG 2.2 is based on four key principles:

- **Perceivable**: Content can be seen or heard by all users
- **Operable**: The site can be navigated and used in different ways
- **Understandable**: Information is clear and easy to follow
- **Robust**: Content works across different devices and technologies

In New South Wales, meeting WCAG 2.2 Level AA is recommended as the appropriate standard for most businesses.

Improving accessibility helps remove barriers, reach more customers, and create a more inclusive and user-friendly online experience.



Smart idea

Treat your website like your digital shopfront. If customers can't easily find information or complete a purchase online, they may choose another business. A simple, accessible website helps turn visits into sales.

A close-up photograph of a light-colored wooden surface, possibly a counter or wall, with black 3D block letters attached. The letters spell out 'Order and pay here' in three lines. The lighting is warm, and the background is slightly blurred.

Order

and

pay here

What you say and how
you say it matters

Signage



Signage is a crucial way for businesses to communicate with the public. Ensure your communication is concise, effective, and clear.

Tips:

1. What to communicate

Identify the key elements of your business that need quick communication to potential clients or customers. Your business name (and its purpose if not evident) is usually the most critical information to convey prominently.

2. Text size

The size of your signage text should be based on the distance from which it needs to be read. As a guideline:

- Pictograms: 15mm height per metre of viewing distance
- Upper Case Text: 5mm letter height per metre of viewing distance
- Lower Case Text: 4mm letter height per metre of viewing distance

Choose a font that is easy to read from a distance; serif and script fonts can be challenging to read when enlarged.

3. Colour and contrast

Ensure your content stands out against the backdrop by using light-coloured writing on a dark background, or vice versa. Incorporating your company colours and logo in your signage design reinforces your brand identity.

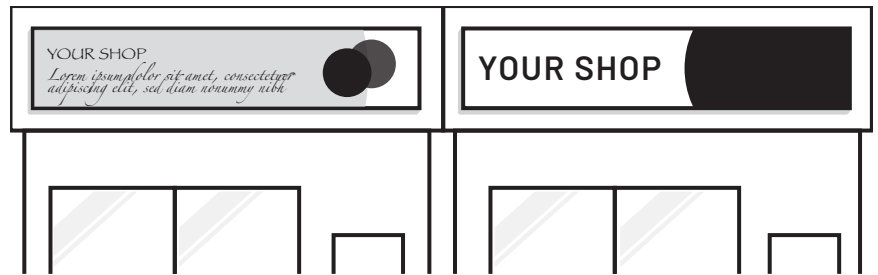


Smart idea

Make your signage clearer for people with disabilities by using specific fonts easier to read for dyslexic individuals and contrasting colour combinations for better readability by the vision impaired and colour-blind. [Visit Digital NSW.](#)

Fascia / facade signs

Fascia or Facade signs are often the primary sign viewed by people moving fast (driving) and from quite far away, therefore they need their message to be conveyed with just a glance. They can be illuminated to increase visibility.



- ✗ Small text on a pale or busy background lacks contrast
- ✗ Curly or cursive font can often be hard to read
- ✗ Small text cannot be read from a distance
- ✓ Bold, contrasting text will be easily readable from the street or carpark
- ✓ Imagery to communicate the type of business, not interruptive to text
- ✓ Simple design, with unfussy font

Window / decal signs

Window graphics have many benefits. They don't take up space, are often a lower cost option, and they can be changed or updated more frequently, allowing you to use them to advertise different aspects of your business.



- ✗ Large, opaque decal inhibits views inside
- ✓ Decal doesn't cover the whole window, or restrict visibility
- ✓ Signage communicates relevant business information

Hanging / awning signs

Hanging / awning signs are viewed best by pedestrians along the footpath as they run perpendicular to the front of the building.

They benefit from being viewed from both sides, doubling your potential audience. These types of signs have additional regulations and may require permission from Council.



- ✗ Different fonts, colours and graphic styles all competing for attention
- ✗ Temporary information such as sales and promotions should be served for less permanent styles of signage
- ✓ A simple logo that communicates what type of shop / business it is
- ✓ Text concisely communicates relevant business information
- ✓ Colour scheme reinforces the company and branding

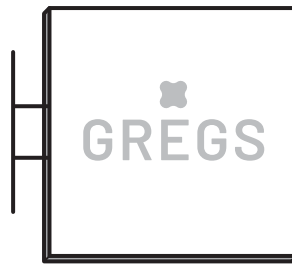
Smart idea

Include your awnings, signage, windows and pavement in your daily opening schedule. Keeping your shop front clean, clear and inviting.



Projecting signs

Projecting signs are a great space saving option. Similar to hanging signs, they are used primarily to notify pedestrians of your location. They are also a flexible day and night option as they can incorporate lighting.



CAFE

- ✗ Low contrast between the background and text colours
- ✗ Business name and logo doesn't communicate what the business does

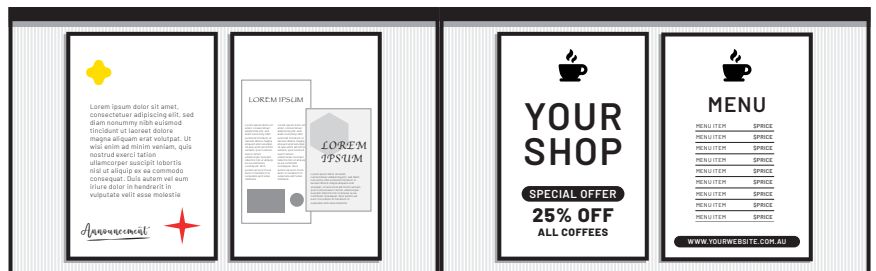


CAFE

- ✓ Consider simple logos or icons that are easily recognisable
- ✓ Lighting increases visibility and attracts attention
- ✓ Informs customers what is sold

Poster frame signs

Poster frame signs are a versatile, low cost option for displaying temporary information such as sales, promotions, menus or price lists. Weatherproof, anti-glare and lockable frames are available in a range of sizes to suit your needs. These types of signs have additional regulations and may require permission from Council.



- ✗ Too much information that is hard to read from a distance
- ✗ Mismatched graphic styles
- ✗ Posters/flyers don't fit frame correctly
- ✓ Temporary content such as sale information can be easily updated
- ✓ Colours and graphic styles are consistent
- ✓ Large, clear text is easy to read

A-frame signs

You may want to use a free-standing sign, like an a-frame sign on the footpath, to advertise your business. These types of signs have additional regulations and will require permission from Council.

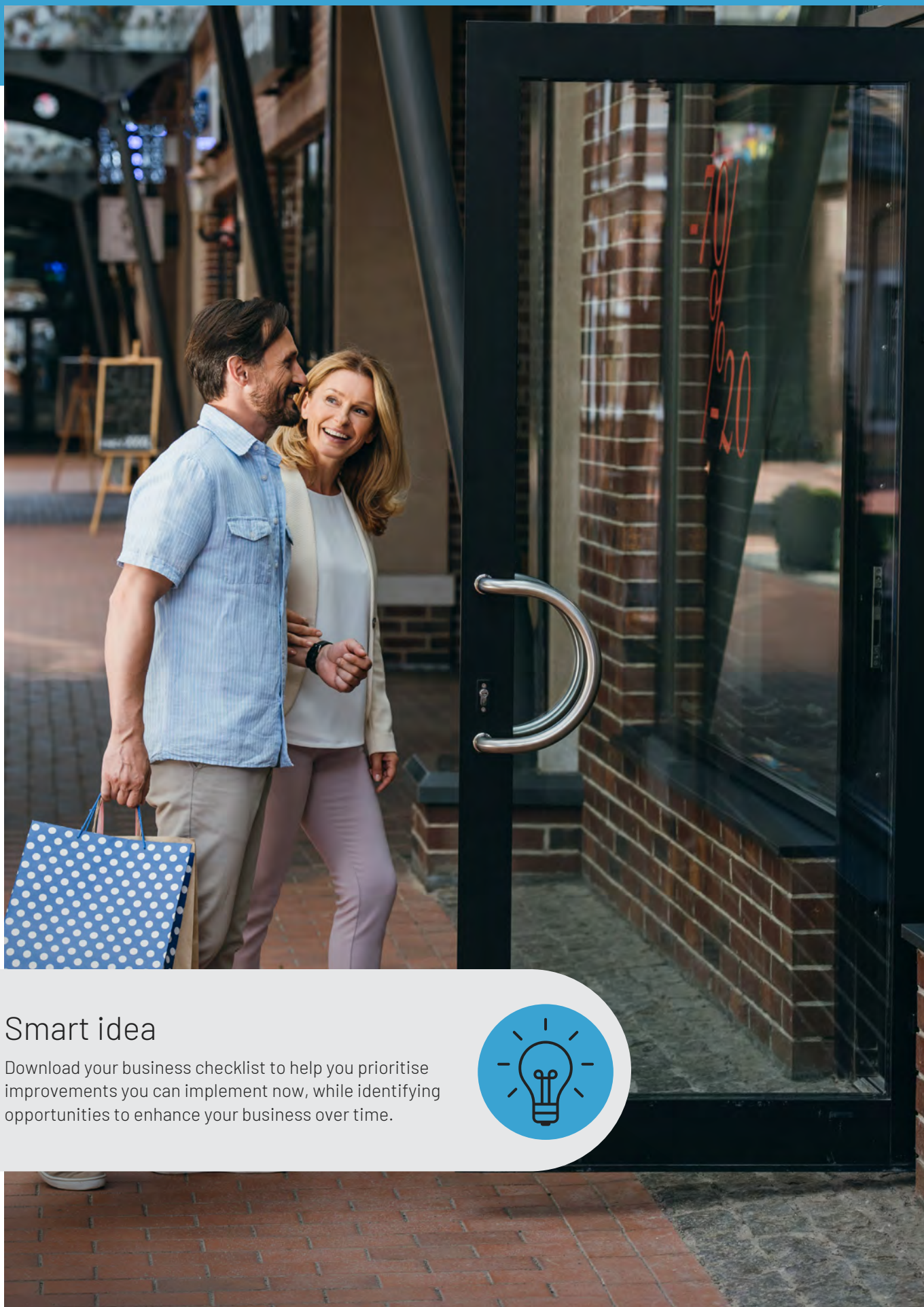
[Footpath and public space use form.](#)



Monument and pylon signs

Monument and pylon signs may be located on either public or private property. These free standing signs are subject to additional regulations and may require approval from Council. Where a sign is located on private property, consent from the property owner is also required. For more information on this type of signage, see the useful links section on page 21.





Smart idea

Download your business checklist to help you prioritise improvements you can implement now, while identifying opportunities to enhance your business over time.



Your business checklist



Assessing your current building

- ☐ **INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY:**
 - Ensure information is easily readable from a distance.
 - Evaluate if your business entryway accommodates people of all abilities.
- ☐ **SIGNAGE LEGIBILITY:**
 - Use large, clear text for easy readability.
 - Assess the legibility of both graphics and text, considering viewer distance and speed.
- ☐ **VISUAL COHESION:**
 - Avoid mismatched graphic styles for a cohesive look.
- ☐ **VISIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS:**
 - Evaluate visibility into your shop through windows and doors.
 - Consider how your shopfront appears from the street or carpark.
- ☐ **CONTEXTUAL INTEGRATION:**
 - Consider how your shopfront contributes to or detracts from the local character.

Planning your enhancements

- ☐ **CONSIDER TEMPORARY CONTENT:**
 - Utilise easily updatable content for temporary information like sales.
- ☐ **REVIEW GUIDELINES:**
 - Assess applicable tips from this guideline for your business.
- ☐ **SEEK EXPERT ADVICE:**
 - Consult experts for guidance on construction, materials, lighting, signage, and branding.
- ☐ **UTILISE DIGITAL SIGNAGE:**
 - Consider digital signage for dynamic, easily updatable content such as menus and sales, attracting attention and engaging locals.
- ☐ **BUDGET PREPARATION:**
 - Prepare a budget considering both improvement costs and potential disruptions to your business operations.

Prior to starting works

- ☐
 - Obtain permissions / permits from relevant authorities to make the planned upgrades (where applicable).
- ☐
 - Check all building amendments are permitted by Council and your building owner (if applicable).
- ☐
 - Communicate upcoming changes and disruptions with your staff, customers and vendors. Frequent social media posts, putting up posters in store and updating your Google business page are a good place to start.



Frequently asked questions

New business

What if I have a new business or premises? Can I still use this guideline?

The guideline provides key principles and measures to improve existing shopfronts. These measures and principles are still applicable to the design of new shops and businesses.

Cost

How much will it cost?

Assess the level of investment relative to your own revenue and the potential return on investment. Considering your potential improvements in categories such as 'must do's', 'nice-to-have's' and 'future aspirations' and assigning a budget to each category can help you stage your upgrades as you grow.

Outdoor dining

Do I need an outdoor dining approval?

An approval is not required if your outdoor dining area is on private land. But to use Council footpath to expand your dining spaces, you need to submit an application for approval. More details can be found by scanning the QR code on the following page or visit the Dubbo Regional Council website.

Council property

What does Council maintain in my street?

Dubbo Regional Council is responsible for the maintenance, safety and cleanliness of CBD furniture, footpaths, roads, cycleways, bridges, signs and bus shelters.

DRC & Me

DRC&ME is Council's online platform that allows you to lodge requests and track them online 24/7.

<https://eservice.dubbo.nsw.gov.au/eservice/start.do>



Your Say

YOUR HOME, YOUR SAY, YOUR LGA.

View major works, project updates and community consultations for our Local Government Area; including Dubbo, Wellington and surrounding villages.

Share your ideas and opinions, have your say today.

<https://yoursay.dubbo.nsw.gov.au/>



Useful links



Business toolkit

Dubbo Regional Council is committed to supporting business at any stage and are hands on in providing practical support.

Your Business Toolkit is regularly updated and provides handy links to information, resources and training for you and your staff to easily access.

<https://www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au/business-investors/economic-development/your-business-toolkit>



Business resources

Thinking of starting a new business or need help running an established business?

Our Business Resources is where you can find information and links to support you and your business. Expand the sections below to get started.

<https://www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au/business-investors/economic-development/business-resources>



Funding finder

Explore various funding avenues for your business, including Dubbo Regional Council, RDA Orana and Service NSW.

<https://www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au/community-groups/grants-and-funding/overview/grants-and-funding-overview>



Stay in touch

We would love you to have access to all the information channels you feel are important for you and your business.

The QR code will lead you to a quick business registration form, where you can register yourself or your business along with any key staff members to receive newsletters, reports and offers throughout the year.



Dubbo Region Business Network

The Dubbo Region Business Network is a central hub designed to keep local businesses informed, connected, and supported. Available to registered businesses across the Dubbo region, the network brings together key information, opportunities, and practical resources in one easy to access place.

Whether you are starting out, expanding, or simply wanting to stay informed, the network helps you connect with the local business community and access support to help your business grow and succeed.

Why join the network?

- Stay up to date with local business news, opportunities, and events
- Connect with other businesses, industry partners, and support services
- Access information tailored specifically to the Dubbo region
- Save time by finding everything you need in one place

Join the Dubbo Region Business Network

To join or learn more, email the Economic Development team at ecdev@dubbo.nsw.gov.au



More Information

For more information please contact Dubbo Regional Council:

Visit: dubboregion.com.au/business

Email: ecdev@dubbo.nsw.gov.au

Call: (02) 6801 4000

Write To: P.O. Box 81
Dubbo NSW 2830

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this guideline is correct at the time of printing.

