

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Bridge Mall/Bakery Hill Property Owners and the City of Ballarat





INTRODUCTION

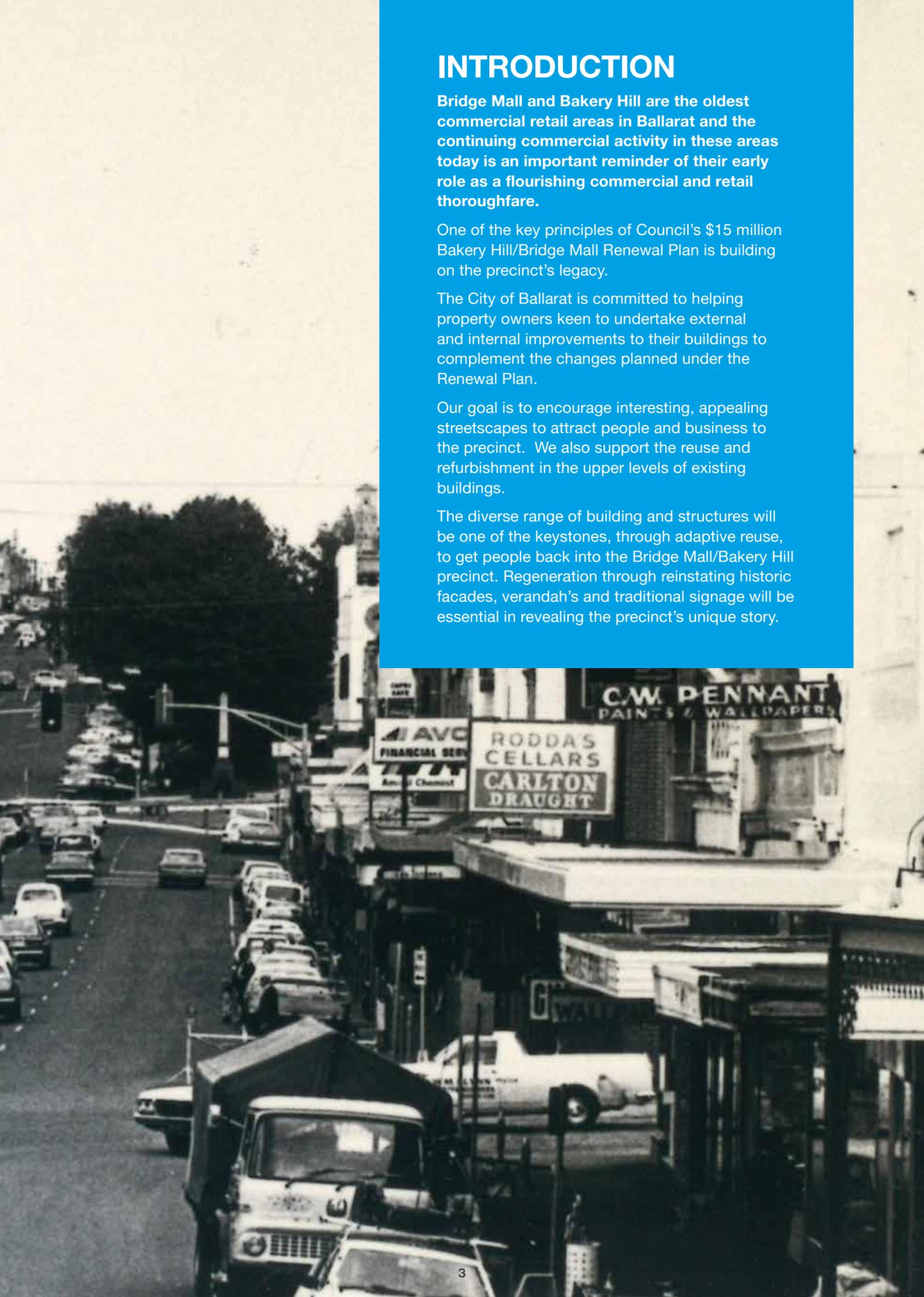
Bridge Mall and Bakery Hill are the oldest commercial retail areas in Ballarat and the continuing commercial activity in these areas today is an important reminder of their early role as a flourishing commercial and retail thoroughfare.

One of the key principles of Council's \$15 million Bakery Hill/Bridge Mall Renewal Plan is building on the precinct's legacy.

The City of Ballarat is committed to helping property owners keen to undertake external and internal improvements to their buildings to complement the changes planned under the Renewal Plan.

Our goal is to encourage interesting, appealing streetscapes to attract people and business to the precinct. We also support the reuse and refurbishment in the upper levels of existing buildings.

The diverse range of building and structures will be one of the keystones, through adaptive reuse, to get people back into the Bridge Mall/Bakery Hill precinct. Regeneration through reinstating historic facades, verandah's and traditional signage will be essential in revealing the precinct's unique story.







ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Ballarat Acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land we live and work on, the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung People, and recognise their continuing connection to the land and waterways.

We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

CITY OF BALLARAT IS ABLE TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING ASSISTANCE

- 1** Free heritage conservation advisory service with a qualified heritage architect (see page 8);
- 2** Low Interest Heritage Restoration Loan for restoring, repairing or developing heritage buildings (Page 10);
- 3** Heritage Restoration Grant for works including heritage façades and reinstatement of verandahs (see page 11);
- 4** Matched funding via the Shopfront and Façade Restoration Grant (see page 12);
- 5** Introduction to social enterprises to undertake long term lease of redeveloped second floor properties (Page 14);
- 6** Linking empty retail space with micro-creative enterprises and artists via Ballarat Evolve (Page 14);
- 7** Streamlined permit approvals process, advice and assistance via City of Ballarat Business Engagement Officer.



UPPER STOREY REDEVELOPMENT

Redevelopment and reuse of upper levels of buildings in the Bridge Mall is encouraged as part of the implementation of the Council's *CBD Strategy – Making Ballarat Central*. Many buildings in the Bridge Mall have vacant or underused upper levels and Council is seeking to assist owners with converting these into dwellings or other uses.

There are many benefits associated with redeveloping the upper levels of an existing building. Some of these include:

Environmental – One of the main environmental benefits of reusing buildings is the retention of the original building's 'embodied energy'. The CSIRO defines embodied energy as the energy consumed by all of the processes associated with the production of a building, from the acquisition of natural resources to product delivery, including mining, manufacturing of materials and equipment, transport and administrative functions. By reusing buildings, their embodied energy is retained, making the project much more environmentally sustainable than entirely new construction.

Social – Keeping and reusing historic buildings has long-term benefits for the communities that value them. Communities increasingly recognise that future generations will benefit from the protection of certain places and areas, including heritage places. Our lifestyle is enhanced not just from the retention of heritage buildings, but from their adaption into accessible and useable places.

Economic – There are several financial savings and returns to be made from adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Embodied energy savings from not demolishing a building will only increase with the predicted rise of energy costs in the future.

Promoting innovation – The adaptation of heritage buildings presents a genuine challenge to architects and designers to find innovative solutions producing some excellent examples of creative designs that retain heritage solutions.

Adaptive Reuse Booklet – Australian Government ¹



Suitable Buildings and Considerations

All buildings with vacant or underutilised upper levels are potentially suitable for conversion. However, there are some buildings that will be more easily and cost effectively converted. Things to consider when looking at converting an upper level space are:



Building structure - structurally sound.



Fire protection - fire rated escape stair, fire separation, sprinklers



Access and exit provisions – ‘front door’, rear access



Heritage – planning permits for exterior



Car parking – onsite or alternative arrangements e.g. shared parking



Sustainability provisions – energy star ratings



Amenity provisions – noise protection, rubbish bin location, open space areas

Permit Requirements

A planning permit may be required for an upper level redevelopment. Council planners and Council’s Heritage Advisor should be contacted early in the process to confirm whether a permit will be required. Council’s Statutory Planning unit can be contacted on 5320 5500.

Private building surveyors may be able to assist owners in developing cost-effective alternative solutions that achieve permit requirements.



HERITAGE CONSERVATION ADVISORY SERVICE

The program, 'Restore, Rejuvenate, Renew', provides an opportunity for the City of Ballarat to support owners with a dedicated heritage architect at no cost to the applicant. The architect will help them achieve outcomes to improve the appearance and usability of Ballarat's historic CBD buildings and streetscapes.

Things to consider:

- improving the presentation of your commercial building
- opportunities to revitalise your building's redundant spaces
- making a contribution to Ballarat's renowned heritage streetscapes

As part of the Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan, the Council is committed to delivering a tailored conservation outreach program for private and commercial heritage property owners. This will involve a dedicated conservation architect working with owners to:

- Reinstating lost heritage features via façade and verandah restoration
- Help conserve properties
- Increase access and use via shop front restoration
- Assess regulations and controls

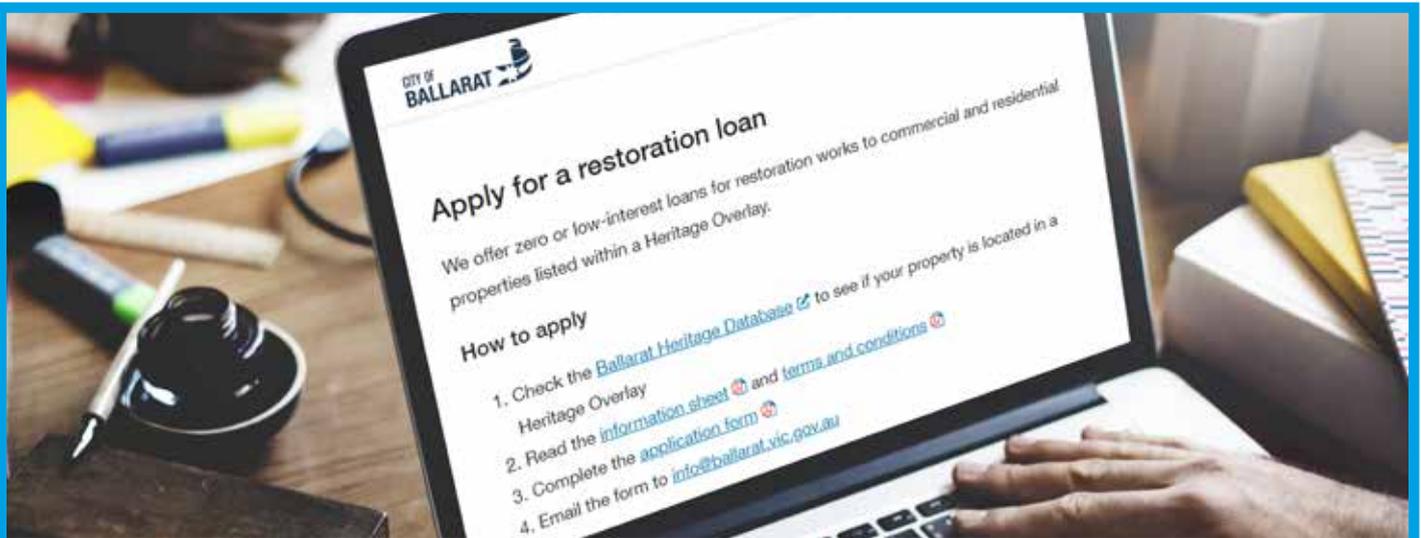
The following assistance can be provided:

- ✓ Help in scoping a project
- ✓ Heritage research
- ✓ Navigating planning system
- ✓ Advice on costings, contractors and permits
- ✓ Assistance with grant and loan applications
- ✓ Ongoing assistance through the project process

To see how a heritage architect can assist you in restoring, rejuvenating or renewing your building please call 0409 104 275 to organise an appointment.

Regeneration through reinstating historic facades, verandahs and traditional signage will be essential in revealing the precinct's unique story.





LOANS PROGRAMS

The loans program allows property owners to access public money that is paid back over an agreed period at a very low interest rate.

Low Interest Heritage Restoration Loans

The City of Ballarat provides low interest loans for heritage restoration to assist those who wish to restore, repair or develop heritage places within the Bakery Hill/Bridge Mall precinct. The Ballarat Heritage Advisory Committee (BHAC) and the City of Ballarat assess applications based upon the recommendations of Council Officers.

Public money funds these loans, so works that will benefit Ballarat's heritage and not just the user or owner of the venue is a basic requirement. These works fall into two main categories:

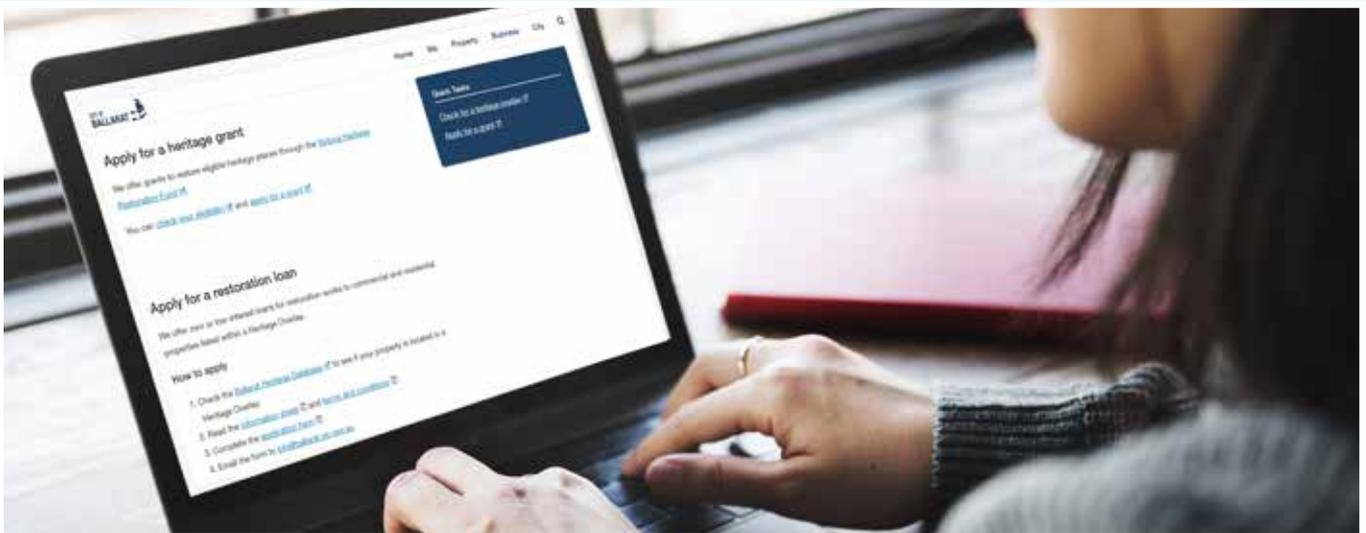
- Works that enhance the appearance of the place, especially those visible to the community, e.g. reconstruction of a front verandah, repainting in appropriate heritage colours; tuckpointing brickwork; reconstruction of appropriate windows; restoration of interiors that will be seen by the community, such as churches, halls and shops.
- Works that repair and maintain the place so that it stays in existence, e.g. rewiring, restumping, recladding the roof or walls, drainage, replacing rotten timber components, installation of new damp-proof barriers, repointing brickwork, rebuilding a damaged chimney.

There is no set amount for applications. Loans are generally in the order of \$5,000 to \$10,000 but funds are available for larger loans. All loans require Council approval and must be secured via a bank guarantee and paid back over an agreed period.

Current interest rates for Commercial and Non-Residential is 1.5% and for Residential properties 0%.

More information including application forms and terms and conditions can be obtained from the **Business Engagement Officer on 0409 104 275**





GRANTS PROGRAMS

This section covers grants for both heritage buildings and non-heritage buildings. For both grants the money is obtained from a fund. A grant is a monetary gift and the financial contribution is not required to be repaid.

Ballarat Heritage Restoration Grant

This grant provides financial assistance for conservation works to **places of identified historical significance** within the City of Ballarat. There are two funding rounds each financial year.

To be eligible for grants, proposed restoration works must apply to a place of identified historical significance as protected under a heritage overlay in the City of Ballarat, and must:

- Conserve the overall significance of the place;
- Involve works that are visible from a public place. Works to interiors are ineligible;
- Provide evidence that the work is of a reconstructive or restorative nature. Work by heritage conservation advisory service can help (Page 8). Speculative reconstruction works, where there is no evidence of the earlier appearance of the place, cannot access the fund.
- Be put forward by the property owner or a lessee who has the written consent from the owner and whose term of lease is longer than any completion deadline or loan repayment period.

Works that cannot access funding include:

- Repair and maintenance works (e.g. roof plumbing, re-stumping and repainting). However, these works may be considered for funding where the works form part of the larger scope of works to conserve the significance of the place;
- Works that have already commenced.

See Victoria's Heritage Restoration Fund website (vhrf.org.au) for complete list of exclusions.

Funding is assessed against basic criteria that is largely met by the building being located within the Bakery Hill and Bridge Mall precinct.

1. **Significance of the place**
2. **Need for the works**
3. **Community benefit**
4. **Recommendation by the Ballarat Heritage Advisory Committee**

Additional consideration will be given to projects that encourage heritage trade skills.

Grant levels are assessed on a case by case basis and are less than 50% of the cost of works recommended for funding. Grants are not issued in full until the entire scope of funded works have been completed and the Fund's conservation architect has undertaken all necessary inspections and approvals.

Ballarat's heritage grants are administered by the National Trust. To find out if your property is eligible, visit vhrf.org.au/contact-us



SHOPFRONT AND FAÇADE RESTORATION GRANT

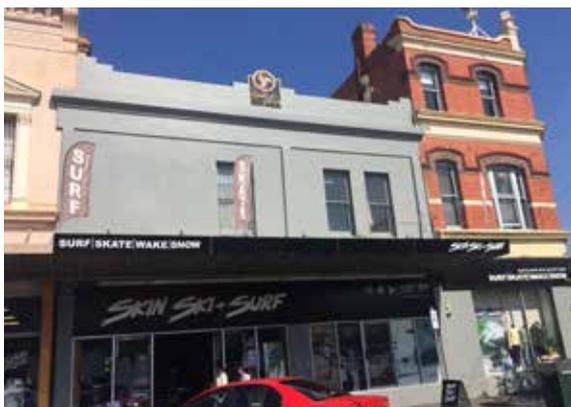
The City of Ballarat has established a Shopfront Improvement Fund (the fund) to work in partnership with Bridge Mall property owners and traders in order to lift the presentation of privately-owned buildings in the construction zone. The fund will form part of Council's Business Support Package during the Bakery Hill Urban Renewal works. The fund is open to all properties in the Bridge Mall precinct.

A total pool of \$400,000 will be made available over the life of the construction works.

The intent of the fund is to create a more interesting, appealing streetscape to attract people and business to the area.

The fund will look favourably upon projects that can demonstrate works which will benefit the city's presentation and the fund will enable works to be carried out by the owner or occupier (with owner's consent).

It is a requirement of the fund that the applicant must provide a minimum \$1:\$1 matched funding contribution to the value of Council's contribution up to a maximum of \$10,000 per application. The applicant may wish, of their own accord, to contribute additional funds beyond the matched contribution.



Examples of improvement which could be funded

- Façade painting; façade lighting; exterior walls; windows; doors; storefronts; entranceways; awnings/canopies;
- Removal of redundant signage, air conditioning units and hoardings;
- Removal of cladding from historic buildings;
- Minor repairs, maintenance or reinstatement of missing exterior architectural and/or artistic features;
- New, repairs and replacements of verandahs;
- Repairs to structural façade elements and awnings;
- Creative façade treatments (such as vertical gardens);
- Creative graphic design (to a maximum of \$1,000) and signage fabrication;
- Architectural/designer fees (to a maximum of \$1,000)
- Landscaping (to a maximum of \$1,000)
- Other external works that might be proposed by a landlord/business owner that reflects the intent and purpose of the fund.

APPLICATION

The following information should be submitted with an application for funding:

- Application form - filled out correctly with owner's consent;
- Written description of what proposed works will be undertaken. Re-painting applications should outline detail and location of colours, paint brand and name of paint colour;
- Successful applicants will be required to take before works photographs and final completed works photographs;
- Plan(s) drawn to scale of the proposed works. Re-painting applications should use the plan to indicate location of paint and colours;
- Before works take place appropriate planning permits must be obtained.

Terms and Conditions (Fund administration and eligibility):

- Applications will open 1 February 2021 and close three (3) months after completion of construction works;
- Funding applications must complete Smarty Grants online submission
- Works proposed must be visible from the street;
- Applicants must be or have proof of the building owner's consent;
- The application is for building improvement works in the eligible area;
- Applications for, and approval of funds under the scheme, must be made prior to the project commencing;
- Applications will be assessed against the scheme guidelines, at the assessment panel's absolute discretion. All applications may not be successful;
- Prior to commencement of works applicants must enter into an agreement with Council detailing the agreed schedule of works and grant sum. The applicant must have read, and agreed to comply with, the terms and conditions applying to the program;
- The applicant's proposed works are to be completed within six (6) months of signing the letter of agreement.
- The proposed works must be consistent with the design guidelines and heritage streetscape of the Bridge Mall;
- Council reserves the right to approve or refuse a grant application in terms of colour, material or method of execution as it considers appropriate;
- Only one application per property will be accepted. However, several business owners may jointly make a combined application;
- Applying does not guarantee a grant or a specific grant amount;
- Works are to be undertaken by a licensed local contractor;
- Applicants must be able to fund the costs of works up front as Council will provide its share of the funding at the completion of works;
- Any overrun in costs is not the responsibility of Council and extra funds will not be granted;
- Council will not grant funds retrospectively;
- Council will not provide funds for capital expenses (e.g. ladders, gurneys, scaffolding and safety barriers). Hiring of equipment is permitted when directly related to the project;
- Council will not provide funds for operational or administrative costs related to the project;
- Grants cannot be used to pay for business marketing or promotion;
- If successful, the applicant must provide a) Tax Invoice claiming the payment for the grant; b) Licensed contractor's invoice showing payment for the approved works; and c) Photographs showing before and after the approved activity.

POTENTIAL TENANCY PARTNERS

Government alone will not solve the issue of affordable housing. It will take a diverse funding mix to create a viable social housing model within Ballarat. Several social enterprises are looking at forming partnerships with property owners. They are wanting to apply their model of integrated care, service delivery and support in the Bakery Hill precinct.

These social enterprises have established corporate partners that will assist the property owner to refurbish the property at no cost to the property owners. By repurposing the unused space into a viable housing option, the social enterprises are looking at signing long term head leases, thereby managing tenancy and ensuring stability of rental security for the owners. Another benefit to consider is the capital gains and increase in value of the property for the owners at the end of the lease.

If you would like us to introduce you to interested social enterprises, **please contact the Business Engagement Officer on 0409 104 275.**

UTILISATION OF EMPTY RETAIL SPACE WITH THE HELP OF BALLARAT EVOLVE

Ballarat Evolve Creative Industries is a not-for-profit Incorporated Association working as a social enterprise and has enjoyed funding support from Creative Victoria, City of Ballarat, local landlords and Real Estate Agents. Ballarat Evolve links empty retail space with micro-creative enterprises and artists. With the redevelopment of the Bridge Mall we need to reimagine what this space could look like. Working with Ballarat Evolve will:

- Showcase your building and allow potential commercial tenants to re-imagine the space. By having the space filled, the creative tenant will help improve the look and feel of the space and may open the possibility of using the space in a different way to its original purpose;
- Bring increased patronage and diversity of offering to the area;
- Possibly lead to a start-up/micro-creative enterprise becoming a fully-fledged tenant. Ballarat Evolve can work with the occupant to help in this development. In this way Ballarat Evolve can be a stepping stone to getting their businesses off the ground;
- Decrease the likelihood of property crime through having someone actively in the building;
- Increase value of building;
- Allow the opportunity to show that you are supporting the local creative community.

Ballarat Evolve will make things as simple as possible. They will work with you to assist in the development of a workable and positive relationship with their tenant. The building insurance remains with the landlord, but the artists must have their own Public Liability insurance. Ballarat Evolve will act as a matchmaker to link you with an appropriate creative(s). This would be a consultative process. The successful occupant could in some cases pay a small stipend but would always pay for the utilities associated with the space, excluding the rates.

Having an artist, or micro-creative enterprise, utilise your space will not decrease the commercial opportunity of your property due to a 30-day licensing agreement being signed with the occupant, not a rental agreement. The aim of course is that those participating in the program will make the property more attractive to prospective commercial tenants.

Ballarat Evolve is supported by a range of different private organisations and individuals, including Real Estate Agents, legal personnel and a voluntary Board offering its services pro-bono.

“I’d encourage anyone to rent out their second-storey spaces. If you let it, you get a nice return and you’ve got someone looking after it. You also get an extra income.”

Theo Frangos (myBallarat - Winter 2020 Edition)



Additional resources

Economic Development Team

Council's Economic Development team works directly with local businesses to provide easy access to relevant information and offer the tools needed to successfully manage and grow business in the City of Ballarat.

The Economic Development team coordinates and supports the delivery of key initiatives and workshops that inform, educate and connect local businesses.

Contact Council's Economic Development team

✉ economicdevelopment@ballarat.vic.gov.au

Bridge Mall Business Association (BMBA)

The BMBA represents all shops that face onto the Bridge Mall from Grenville Street to Peel Street, including premises in Coliseum Walk and all ground floor tenancies in the Norwich Plaza. The BMBA focuses on promoting the Bridge Mall as the destination for local, regional and visitor shoppers through the various forms of media and collectively 'value add' to its members. It also provides a safe environment for businesses and the public by using CCTV cameras and security guard services.

Contact Bridge Mall Business Association

🌐 bridgemall.com.au

✉ bridgemalltraders@bigpond.com

☎ 03 5331 8948

References

1 Adaptive Reuse. Preserving our Past, Building our Future – Australian Government, Department of the Environment and Heritage, 2004

Re-discovering the Bakery Hill legacy, Bakery Hill and Bridge Mall Urban Renewal Project, July 2019

Ballarat Upper Level Reuse brochure, 2010, City of Ballarat

Ballarat Upper Level Redevelopment Guidelines, Technical Report, May 2010, Plan i'sphere, City of Ballarat



🌐 ballarat.vic.gov.au

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