

# Open for business: Dickson Shops

Guidance for local businesses and property owners during construction projects



**ACT**  
Government

**CITY  
RENEWAL  
AUTHORITY**

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The City Renewal Authority (City Renewal) is leading the transformation of central parts of Canberra to make it a captivating gathering place where creativity, work, life and leisure come together.



The City Renewal Precinct Program incorporates projects that aim to positively change perceptions of our City Centre and Dickson and enliven our public spaces by:

- Advocating for design excellence in City Centre and Dickson development.
- Delivering public programs and space activation to enhance the public experience.
- Upgrading precinct infrastructure and facilities.

Our projects are critical to supporting the growth of local businesses and driving economic activity – whether it be through creating better

access to businesses, improving precinct aesthetics or providing access and connection to public amenities.

We are committed to keeping the community at the heart of everything we do and keeping Canberra open for business. We know that construction can be noisy and disruptive for those who operate a business in an area that is undergoing work.

We have developed this guide to support and empower businesses and traders in Canberra during periods of construction as we reshape Dickson to meet growing needs.

# We're upgrading Dickson Shops.



## We're upgrading Dickson Shops.



Artists impression of the pedestrian boulevard connecting Dickson Pool and Taglietti Square



Artists impression of Taglietti Square

## The ACT Government is making improvements to public spaces at the Dickson Shops.

The project aims to create a safe, accessible, and welcoming shopping and community hub. Once completed, the improvements will help the Dickson Shops meet the needs of a growing population and attract visitors.

The improvements have been carefully designed to lift the quality of the public environment and complement the recent Woolley Street works, whilst still preserving Dickson's character.

The upgrades will include the following:

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Improvements to pavement, including a combination of new and recycled paving to enhance pedestrian safety.

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New lighting for a safer and more attractive area at night.

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Improved seating, more trees, and plants for a more comfortable and attractive environment to spend time in.

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Decluttering of Taglietti Square (library plaza) and installation of events power supply and water to provide an open and versatile space for events and gatherings.

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Re-use of existing sculptures and new playful elements.

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Stormwater improvements and enabling work to support CCTV.

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The upgrade responds to community concerns about the condition of Dickson Shops raised over the last several years. We first spoke with businesses and property owners about the project objectives in August 2022, consulted on concepts in late 2023, and held a public consultation over six weeks in March-April 2024. The final design is now complete and we are ready to begin construction.

Benefits to you and your customers:



**Safer**



**Greener**



**More comfortable**



**Easier to move around**

## The construction roadmap

At each stage of the construction, there are several considerations and suggestions that will help you plan for your business's ongoing success as the upgrade is delivered.



### Before

- Customer communication.
- Partner with other businesses.
- Project communication.
- Stock, supplies and lines of credit.
- Review business plan and customers.



### During

- Stay informed.
- Create friendly rapport with construction workers.
- Make the construction work for you.
- Access templates and tools to promote your business.



### After

- New promotions and advertising.
- Celebrate completion by hosting an event.

## Our pledge to you during construction

Where possible we'll avoid disruptive work during peak business periods.

We'll provide detailed work timelines well in advance so you can plan ahead.

We'll maintain clear and accessible pathways for the public to easily access your business.

We'll promote businesses through adequate wayfinding signs on site and online.

We'll implement strategies for managing noise and dust and parking provisions for construction workers.

We'll keep you informed through regular updates (newsletters, emails, face-to-face visits) to ensure you're always in the loop.

We'll prioritise customer access during business hours whenever possible, keeping your business open. We'll connect you with available government programs that can help mitigate construction challenges.



## Construction impacts



Taglietti Square

The Dickson Shops upgrade is a major construction project. It includes the replacement of stormwater infrastructure, the demolition of existing pavements, structures and street furniture to make way for the new paving, lighting, seating, bins, seating walls and landscaping.

During the upgrade, City Renewal and our project partners will work in accordance with all project approval requirements from the Planning Authority and the Environment Protection Authority.

<b>Pedestrian detours</b>	Pedestrian detours will be in place during all stages of construction. These will be clearly signed with details of alternative routes. Access to shopfronts and businesses will be maintained during construction.
<b>Parking</b>	Where possible, construction vehicles will park away from the construction zone to minimise the impact on local parking for both staff and customers.  The project does include work within the Joan Kellett Way (Dickson Shops) carpark. There will be temporary impacts on parking when these works take place.
<b>Noise</b>	A certain level of noise as part of the construction is inevitable. Where possible, we will employ measures to help minimise impacts such as adjusting the timing of noisy works.
<b>Dust</b>	Dust from construction is anticipated to be minimal. Where higher dust activities occur, water will be applied to dusty surfaces to reduce dust generation.
<b>Vibration</b>	There will be some vibration impacts from excavation works. We will let businesses know when there will be significant excavation occurring.
<b>Traffic</b>	There will be minimal impacts to traffic on adjacent roads getting construction vehicles in and out of the construction zone. On occasion, stop and start traffic controls will be in place resulting in short delays.
<b>Site fencing</b>	Site fencing will be installed around construction zones to ensure the safety of the community and construction workers. Where possible, we can install creative hoardings or decorative shade cloth to minimise the visual impact.

## Understanding the impact

You know your business better than we do. While we can provide information about our construction program, you are in the best position to understand the unique and specific potential impact of construction on your business. This could include access for deliveries, your business trading hours or special events you have planned.

We can help provide answers to the following questions:

- Will my customer parking be impacted?
- Will my staff access be impacted?
- Will my deliveries be impacted?
- Will construction timing coincide with our events?

If you operate your business within the Dickson Shops area, it is almost inevitable that you will be impacted in some way by construction works.

While this guide focuses on some of the impacts and challenges of construction activities in the short term, it is important to keep in mind that construction works can ultimately increase the value of your business by improving the area and attracting more visitors.

Acting during the pre-construction phase may minimise the impact of construction works on your business.



### Before construction, we will:

- Ensure we know who the businesses and building owners in the precinct are and update contact details.
- Create project website page which can be updated throughout the project.
- Engage with you to look at ways we can help minimise impact.
- Provide you with pre-construction communication outlining the project details, start date and what to expect throughout the work.
- Doorknock prior to construction to let businesses know when construction will start.

### Plan ahead

- Review your stock. Consider if you need to adjust for a change in demand or to suit different customers such as trades people.
- Understand your cash flow, review your budget and think about additional budget items such as signage, cleaning and general upkeep.
- Check out some of the business activation tools that could help you schedule events, target customers or participate in precinct activation activities.
- Consider changes to trading hours and staff rosters, and adjust your expected customer numbers, once construction begins.
- Speak to the Canberra Business Advice and Support Service (CBASS) who can provide tailored advice on general business activities, finances, legal referrals, mental health and wellbeing, business growth and changing your business. Contact CBASS on (02) 6163 8301.

### Project communication

- Stay informed by checking the project website and ensure you are subscribed for project updates by contacting us at [cityrenewal@act.gov.au](mailto:cityrenewal@act.gov.au).
- Discuss the works with your staff including what you know about potential impacts.
- Communicate with customers and share project benefits with them.
- Speak with your suppliers to notify them of any changes to access for deliveries and project timeframes.

### Customer communication

Consider what information your customers will need to know during construction including what they can expect and how to reach you.

- Create or update your social media pages and Google Business page to ensure your customers know that you're still operating during construction.
- Post regularly to your social media pages and Google Business page to keep connected with your customers and answer any online questions.
- Put up signage in your business to inform customers of any changes during construction.

### Promotion ideas

- Use social media to promote your business and let customers know what's happening.
- Share your promotions or events with us and we can help share through ACT Government channels.
- Talk to your staff to see if they have any promotion or marketing ideas.
- Start a customer loyalty program.
- Approach similarly affected businesses to see if you can work together to develop area promotions.
- Speak to suppliers to see if they want to be part of a product promotion.

### Make the construction work for you

- Share and encourage ideas with your staff about how your business can maintain customer service during the construction period.
- Take advantage of the construction trade and tailor offers and services to construction staff.
- Use this period to get things done that you haven't had time to address.

### Ways other businesses have adapted during construction projects

- A cafe started using an ordering app for regular customers to pre-order coffees or food and invested in signage to promote the app during construction.
- A cafe adapted their menu to offer more takeaway food options in preparation for the temporary change of dining needs in the precinct.
- A restaurant added new menu items to offset potential impacts to outdoor dining and to appeal to increased numbers of construction workers in the precinct.
- A retail business invested in their website and online marketing to increase sales during the construction period.





## During

### During construction, we will:

- Avoid construction work during peak business periods (where possible).
- Provide regular project updates on ACT Government websites.
- Provide you with a project phone number so you can reach out for support if needed.
- Provide practical tips and advice around how businesses can continue to operate and maintain access.
- Keep you informed about work schedules for upcoming work through project newsletters, emails and face-to-face conversations.
- Provide project updates and promote businesses on ACT government social pages.
- Provide in-person support from the City Renewal project team.

### Stay informed

- Make sure you're subscribed to project updates and are following relevant ACT Government social pages for project updates.
- Keep your staff informed. If you're not always onsite make sure they pass on any information that may be delivered during regular doorknocks.
- Attend community or stakeholder information sessions.
- Speak to the onsite project team if you have concerns or questions about construction.

### Promotion and marketing

- Continue to utilise social media and online marketing to advertise your business and the great things happening in the area.
- Has your customer base changed? Can you adjust your menu or services to tailor for increased numbers of construction workers in the area.
- Tailor your customer loyalty program for construction workers.
- Share details of services or menus to the construction team or consider targeted special offers.
- Consider offering local promotions. Potentially approach similarly affected businesses to find ways to work together.
- Be flexible. Try to respond to the change in customers including taking advantage of the increase in construction workers in the area.
- Utilise materials or advice provided in the Communication Toolkit.



Garema Place upgrade 2025

### Ways other businesses have adapted during construction projects

- A local bookshop collaborated with the project team to install wayfinding to help customers navigate pedestrian detours for their customers.
- A comic book shop hosted an event to celebrate 'World Comic Book Day'. City Renewal helped the business promote the event and supplied marquees.
- A takeaway food business started promoting and selling 'tradie deals' to take advantage of construction workers in the area.
- A group of similar businesses collaborated with the ACT Government to promote their business via social media for Valentines Day.



## After

### After construction, we will:

- Inform businesses that the work is complete and thank them for their patience.
- Promote the completion of the project to the Canberra community, this may be through paid advertising, social media and newsletters.
- Review the project and develop lessons learned for future projects.
- Share images and information about the transformation that businesses can use for promotion and celebration.

### Celebration and promotion

- Celebrate the project's completion with an event and share the benefits of the upgraded space to your customers.
- Use images of the transformed space to promote your business and invite new customers to visit.
- Review your amended business plans and whether anything has been particularly successful that could be useful in the longer term.
- Make the most of the upgraded space by planning an event, activity, or outdoor dining area.

### Review

We understand that there are often unforeseen challenges faced by businesses during construction.

- Some businesses may have clauses in their insurance policies to cover lost trade/income or landlords may agree to provide rent abatements or reductions for a period.



## Roles and responsibilities

There are several stakeholders that play a role in the design, construction and operation of Canberra's public places. The following is designed to help you access information about doing business during construction.

### Dickson Shops upgrade

- **City Renewal Authority:** City Renewal leads the Dickson Shops upgrade project, from planning and funding to construction oversight and public communication. City Renewal is also the primary contact for any general inquiries about the project. Email: [cityrenewal@act.gov.au](mailto:cityrenewal@act.gov.au).
- **Construction partner:** During construction Complex Co will be your direct contact for any questions or issues directly related to the construction program. Throughout the project Complex Co can be contacted on 0408 430 189 or by email at [dicksonact@complexco.com.au](mailto:dicksonact@complexco.com.au).

### Further information

The following agencies also play a role in the upgrading and operation of Canberra's public spaces.

- **City and Environment Directorate (CED):** Oversees services including road, stormwater and path maintenance, management of urban open spaces and tree planting and mowing. It also approves the design of upgrades including outdoor furniture, materials and plantings to ensure they are consistent with ACT Government standards and guidelines. Visit: [www.act.gov.au/directorates-and-agencies/city-and-environment-directorate](http://www.act.gov.au/directorates-and-agencies/city-and-environment-directorate).

- **Access Canberra:** Supports businesses through the management of a range of licences and permits, including outdoor dining permits, and providing tailored support to businesses through the Access Canberra Business Assist Team. The Access Canberra website is the front door for a range of services for people and businesses in the ACT. Visit: [www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au](http://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au).

### Other projects in the area

There are several projects coming up in Dickson Group Centre that you may be aware of, in addition to Dickson Shops:

- **Dickson streetscapes masterplan:** Developed to be taken up in stages in the coming years. For example, Dickson Tradies will deliver part of it on Poppyfield and Badham Streets.
- **Section 72, east of the group centre:** City Renewal will prepare a master plan for this area over the next several years to coordinate future development.
- **Dickson Tradies development:** City Renewal intend to complete the majority of the Dickson Shops upgrade ahead of this development to limit impact on the group centre. Find out more via the project website: [www.thegreenatdickson.com.au](http://www.thegreenatdickson.com.au).

### Support for businesses

There are several services, programs and tools that you can access to help activate your business.

**Place Experience and Marketing activities:** The ACT Government funds projects and events that improve social connections, increase amenity, and foster our city as an attractive destination for locals and visitors.

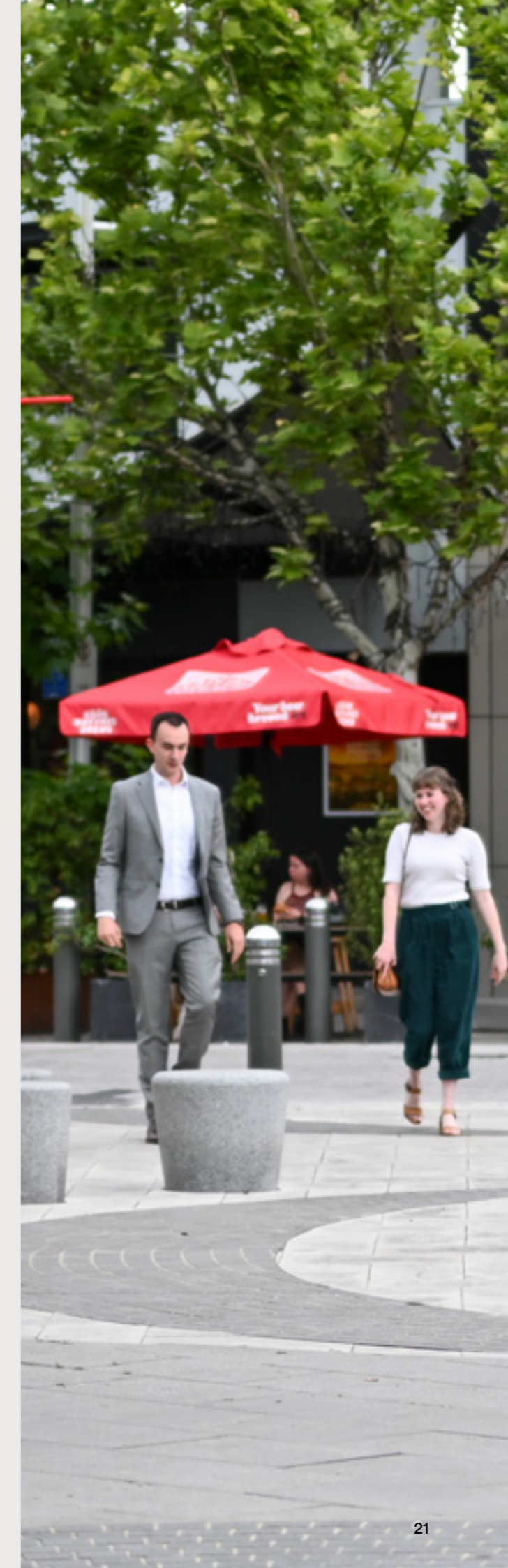
**Find out more about your customer:** The City Centre Consumer Segmentation Report could provide some new insights about visitors to Dickson to help you tailor your offerings. Please ask us for a copy by emailing [cityrenewal@act.gov.au](mailto:cityrenewal@act.gov.au).

**Government grants:** There are several grants, funding and initiatives offered by the ACT Government that can help support a range of businesses and organisations. Visit: [www.act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives](http://www.act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives).

**The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National):** TIS National is an interpreting service for people with limited or no English language proficiency and for agencies and businesses that need to communicate with their non-English speaking clients. Their services enable people with limited or no English language proficiency to independently access services and information in Australia.

Visit: [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au).

**TIS National**  
24 hours a day, every day of the year



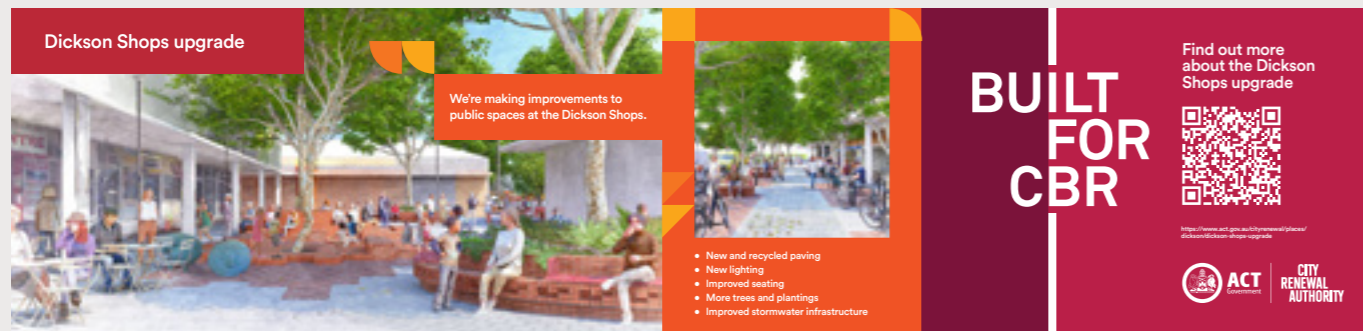
# Communication toolkit

We aim to equip businesses with effective communication tools to navigate construction with confidence. This toolkit includes some examples of the ways we can help you communicate with your customers and visitors to the area that can help keep your customers informed and excited about the future.

## Sample wayfinding signs



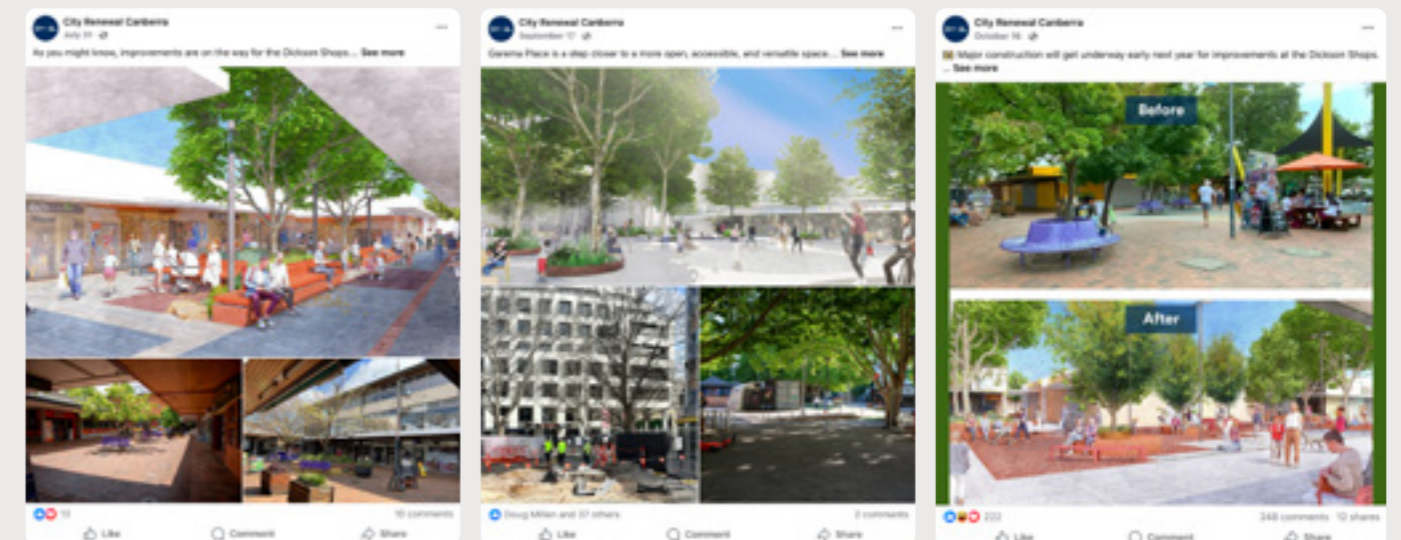
## Sample hoarding signage



## Sample project sign



## Sample social media



## Sample flyers





### Access Canberra Business Assist team

Provides free tailored support for any business type. The team offers dedicated phone or email support to help you find information about:

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How to register your business.

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Potential licences your business may require such as liquor licences.

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Potential permits and approvals such as outdoor dining permits.

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Guidelines you need to meet your compliance responsibilities.

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Industry changes such as understanding the ban on single-use plastics.

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They also offer face-to-face appointments, including drop-in appointments and bookable appointments. Phone 02 6205 4400 or email [ACBusinessTeam@act.gov.au](mailto:ACBusinessTeam@act.gov.au).



### Canberra Business Advice and Support Service (CBASS)

CBASS is funded by the ACT Government. CBASS provides tailored business advice on:

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General business activities.

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Finances.

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Legal referrals.

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Mental health and wellbeing.

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Business growth.

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Changing your business.

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Email [CBASS@lighthouseinnovation.com.au](mailto:CBASS@lighthouseinnovation.com.au) or visit the website.



### CBR Business update

The CBR Business Update is a fortnightly e-newsletter that keeps you up to date with the latest business news and support in Canberra.

Sign up via the website. Visit: [www.act.gov.au/business](http://www.act.gov.au/business).



### Fix my street

An online tool that lets you report an issue to City Services, part of the City and Environment Directorate, for attention including:

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Paths and roads: Damage (potholes, blocked paths), safety concerns (speeding, faulty signals), accessibility issues, cleaning needs (debris, overgrown vegetation).

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Trees and shrubs: Dead trees, overgrown vegetation, weeds, vandalism, need for inspection, planting requests.

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Parks and public spaces: Damage to facilities (BBQs, toilets etc.), graffiti, safety hazards, litter, illegal dumping.

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Stormwater drains: Blockages, leaks, need for cleaning or repair.

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Streetlights: Damage, flickering/broken bulbs, requests for additional lights.

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Visit: [services.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/s/forms/fix-my-street](https://services.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/s/forms/fix-my-street).

## Who to contact



For more information email [cityrenewal@act.gov.au](mailto:cityrenewal@act.gov.au) or phone 02 6205 1878. If you're not receiving regular project updates, please let us know and we can update your contact details.

Stay informed with general City Renewal news and event at [www.act.gov.au/cityrenewal/subscribe](http://www.act.gov.au/cityrenewal/subscribe).

For more information about the Dickson Shops upgrades, go to [www.act.gov.au/cityrenewal/places/dickson/dickson-shops-upgrade](http://www.act.gov.au/cityrenewal/places/dickson/dickson-shops-upgrade).

## Additional resources you can access

Other resources you can access for information and advice include:

- Canberra Business Chamber.
- Community Councils.
- Residents and community organisations.
- Peak body and industry groups such as the Australian Retailers Association.

## Top tips



### Before construction

Other resources you can access for information and advice include:

- Attend stakeholder engagement sessions, voice any concerns you have.
- Stay informed by sharing your contract details with the project staff.
- Subscribe to the City Renewal Authority newsletter.
- Let your staff and customers know.
- Discuss with your building owner/landlord.
- Create or update a promotion and marketing plan.
- Speak to suppliers, review resources or stock and adjust.
- Work with your staff to encourage initiatives to maintain customer service.



### During construction

- Stay informed - [act.gov.au/cityrenewal](http://act.gov.au/cityrenewal).
- Collaborate with other precinct businesses.
- Offer promotions or deals.
- Adapt to a new customer base, connect with construction workers.
- Update or install new wayfinding signage - use some of the communication templates.
- Keep customers informed and utilise social media.
- If possible, be flexible with hours and delivery options.
- Speak to the construction team if you have concerns.



### After construction

- Promote reopening and celebrate.

## Dickson activation calendar

The following activities are funded in City Renewal's FY25-26 Place Experience and Marketing Action Plan.

- A new mural for Poppyfield Street, facing Cowper Street, December 2025.
- Dickson Christmas, December 2025.
- Canberra Lunar New Year, February 2026.
- Dickson Soul every Saturday morning, 10am-midday.
- Elevated cleaning and greening by the City Renewal Place Team.



Dickson Lunar new year







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