

About Renew Australia



Renew Australia is a national not-for-profit social enterprise based in Melbourne. Renew Australia works to support communities around Australia to replicate, adapt and apply the groundbreaking model developed by the multi award winning Renew Newcastle project in NSW.

Renew Australia is based on experiences and strategies pioneered by Renew Newcastle. In 2008 Renew Newcastle was established as a low cost, low budget DIY urban renewal scheme that proved highly successful and nationally and internationally. Since 2012 Renew Australia has launched more than a hundred new creative projects and initiatives in privately owned buildings that were empty and disused.

What does Renew Australia do?

Renew Australia works with local communities to catalyse creative industries and improve main streets and central business districts by leveraging underutilised spaces and transforming them into creative hubs. We foster dynamic community engagement and cultural activity that stimulates economic and employment growth.

Renew Australia provides practical support and project management to local communities, all levels of government and private enterprise. We have developed contracts and insurance systems, presentations and consultation strategies, guides, support structures and a suite of tools to help local communities develop Renew programs and transform their vacant spaces.

How does the model work?

The Renew model supports and empowers local groups (a mix of business, arts and community leaders) to work with private property owners to kick-start local communities.

Specifically, the Renew model works to:

- Enliven and activate struggling streets and precincts by taking otherwise empty shops and offices and incubating creative initiatives in them
- Develop, promote to owners, and manage rolling short term license agreements that allows access to property while it would otherwise be vacant
- Manage and ensure that local Renew programs and individual creative projects have appropriate legal knowledge, insurance and governance to take over spaces
- Ensure that spaces are safe and compliant with relevant approvals, buildings codes, permitted uses and zonings
- Identify local artists, artisans, makers and creative communities, find and work with them, match projects to spaces, and manage their involvement so as to give them opportunities they would not otherwise have
- Promote and market the outcomes and the area.

Renew Australia has worked on the ground with communities, property owners, creative practitioners and this experience allows us to ensure that local communities have the best possible strategy and tools in place before attempting to embark on a Renew scheme. While the basic idea sounds simple enough, managing the legal responsibilities, the contracts, the insurance and the confidence of the local community and property owners can remain a major challenge. Renew Australia is designed to help local communities manage these issues.

“Docklands Spaces was incredible. It allowed me the opportunity to display my start up concept with minimal risk.”

- Cameron Joss, Docklands Spaces participant



What are the economic and social benefits?

Renew empty space activation projects contribute to local communities in cultural, economic and social ways. The Integrated Design Commission of South Australia commissioned an independent Economic Review of ‘Renew’ Projects conducted by SGS Economics and Planning that identified many benefits to the local community including:

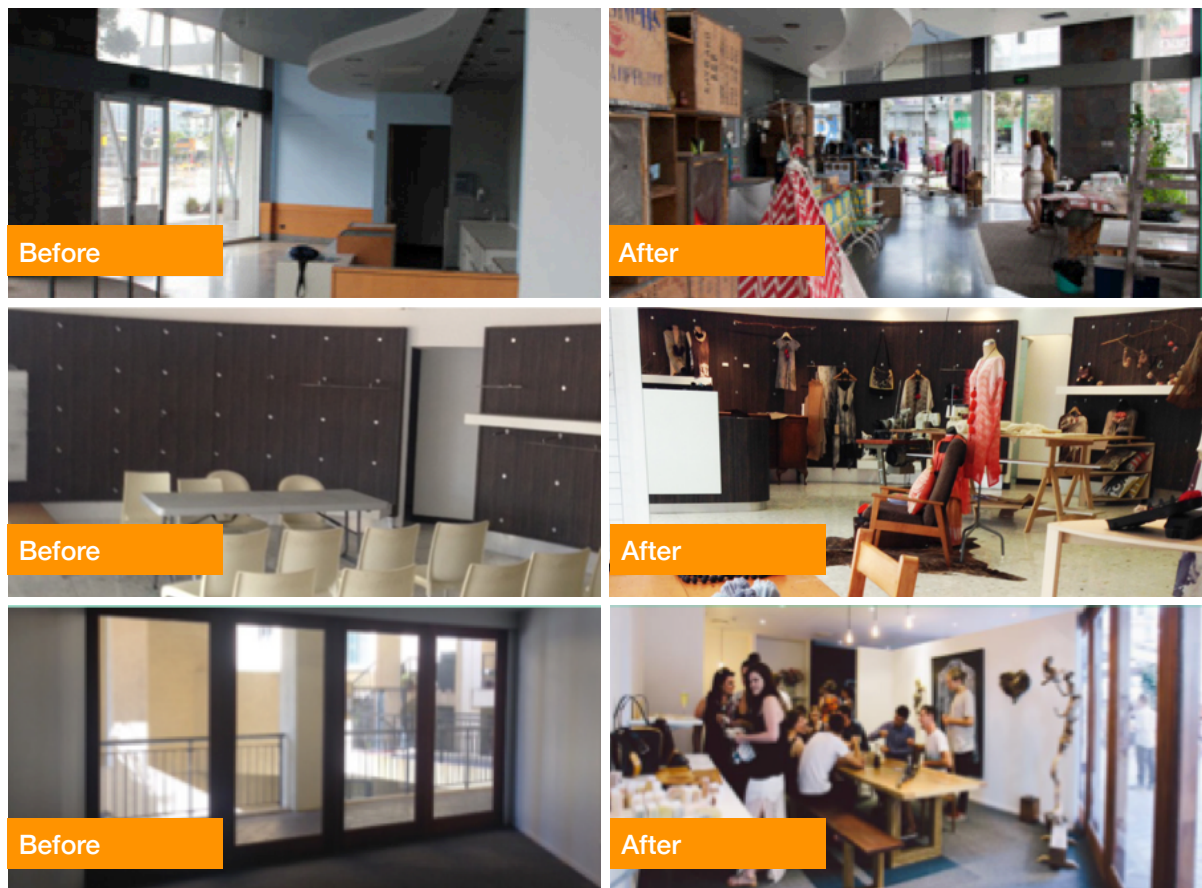
Benefits to local communities include:

- Avoidance or mitigation of blight and anti-social behaviour
- Improved business and community confidence
- Skills development
- Volunteer engagement
- Creation of intellectual capital, some of commercial value
- Creation of jobs
- Cost savings due to reduced maintenance
- Improved regional ‘brand value’, tourism and inward investment.

That report found that over a 12-month period Renew Newcastle had realised \$1.26 million worth of benefits for a total costs of \$117,000. They identified a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 10.8 and a net benefit of \$1.14 million in the period studied. The SGS study identified more than fourteen thousand hours of volunteer time had been invested in the community as a result of Renew Newcastle.

What are the benefits to property owners?

- The for lease or sale signs stay up, and your agent continues to promote the property to potential long term paying tenants
- Participants are on a 30-day rolling licence agreement; therefore, 30 days' notice can be given at any time
- The participants pay for utilities and look after the property whilst there. Renew Australia provides public liability insurance for the property
- The property is open, engaging and cared for, rather than boarded up or shrink wrapped, reducing the chance of vandalism, increasing the appeal of the property and assisting potential long term tenants visualise their own business in the space
- The owner's ordinarily empty property will contribute to creating a vibrant and marketable precinct to potential reducing the appearance of boarded up and vacant spaces.



...Creating vibrant and cared for spaces.

How can Renew Australia assist Byron?

Renew Australia can tailor a package to meet the needs of the Byron community. Our programs start at as little as \$3000 for our base Affiliate Membership.

The support that Renew Australia can provide includes:

- Training in the basics of the Renew model; managing empty space, convincing property owners to get involved, legal responsibilities, strategies and more
- Advocacy to property owners, business community, government and other stakeholders to build community support
- Running Expressions of Interest targeted to the local creative community and entrepreneurs, including filtering applications and curation of available spaces
- Inspiring and engaging examples and case studies of similar challenges in other communities
- Advice on setting up an appropriate structure to manage empty spaces within a local community
- Access to services including discount insurance, basic legal pointers, support with compliance and risk management and more for affiliated projects;
- Mentorship, networking and support from experienced practitioners so communities don't need to reinvent the wheel.

Renew Australia and Renew projects have worked with property developers, communities of management charged with caring for the publicly owned heritage sites, individuals, families, self-managed super funds and other small property owners to activate and attract interest to individual properties. Our past and current clients include the City of Melbourne, Places Victoria, Working Heritage, Creative Victoria, Cooma Chamber of Commerce, Inner West Council (Leichardt), and Harbour Town Melbourne.

We welcome the opportunity to work with Byron Shire Council and other key stakeholders to assess the viability of the Renew model in Byron and developing a local framework for creative space activation.