

BULLETIN: 35/2021

SUPPORTING BUSINESSES WITH OUTDOOR DINING

COVIDSafe outdoor dining and entertainment initiatives have proved popular with Victorians and have given businesses further scope to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Victorian Government expects, and strongly encourages, councils to extend outdoor dining permits and support local hospitality businesses to operate in a COVIDSafe way.

Planning exemptions continue

The Victorian Government has supported outdoor dining through exemptions to planning laws and by fast tracking approval reforms.

These include exemptions from the need to obtain planning permits for construction of temporary buildings, the provision of car parking, and the sale and consumption of liquor – subject to conditions.

The turnaround for temporary liquor license applications was also fast-tracked from up to eight weeks down to just three business days.

VicRoads approvals will also continue to be prioritised for councils to enable safe on-road dining.

These exemptions will apply until at least 1 July 2022.

Issuing outdoor dining permits to businesses

Councils have an important role to play in supporting their local businesses as part of the pandemic recovery effort.

Businesses need guidance about how expanded outdoor dining will operate across councils that provides certainty and support for businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Victorian Government's expectation is that any additional costs or fees councils incur, or loss of revenue, as a result of expanded outdoor dining should not be levied on local businesses.

Local Government Business Concierge and Hospitality Support program

The \$7.88 million Local Government Business Concierge and Hospitality Support program enables councils to employ workers to proactively promote COVIDSafe practices through direct engagement with businesses.

COVID Business Support Officers employed using this funding are encouraged to work with businesses in high-risk locations like markets and shopping strips to help them to understand and comply with COVIDSafe requirements such as QR code check-in, physical distancing and cleaning.

Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Package deadline extended

Since the release of the \$87.5 million Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Package in September 2020, councils have used grants to set up outdoor dining areas and pocket parks, as well as waiving permit fees, streamlining processes and investing in lighting and other infrastructure.

For all councils that have not fully expended their funding by 30 June 2021, Local Government Victoria will support a time extension to 31 December 2021.

Carrying forward any unspent funding will facilitate successful implementation of the program across Victoria and will allow outdoor dining to be a more viable option over winter and into 2022.

To request a variation to extend the time period to expend funding please contact Local Government Victoria at LGV.Emergencies@ecodev.vic.gov.au

There are a variety of financial support packages for people and businesses impacted by COVID-19 including financial, job and business support.

For more information, visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au or call the Business Victoria hotline on 13 22 15.

Regards

Julie Reid
Executive Director
Local Government Victoria

Authorised by Emily Phillips, Deputy Secretary
Local Government and Suburban Development
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions



Jobs,
Precincts
and Regions