



Restaurant
& Catering

18 May 2021

The Hon. Dominic Perrotett MP
Treasurer
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

By Email.

Dear Treasurer

I write regarding the ongoing need for economic support for catering businesses across NSW as they struggle to recover from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Restaurant & Catering Australia (R&CA) is the national industry association representing the interests of over 48,000 restaurants, cafés, and catering businesses across Australia, including 1,485 catering businesses in NSW contributing \$875 million to the state. The café, restaurant and catering sector is vitally important to the national economy, generating over \$38 billion in retail turnover pre-covid each year as well as employing 580,000 people. Critically, over 93 per cent of businesses in the café, restaurant and catering sector are small businesses, employing 19 people or less.

R&CA delivers tangible outcomes to small businesses within the hospitality industry by influencing the policy decisions and regulations that impact the sector's operating environment. R&CA is committed to ensuring the industry is recognised as one of excellence, professionalism, profitability and sustainability. This includes advocating the broader social and economic contribution of the sector to industry and government stakeholders, as well as highlighting the value of the restaurant experience to the public.

Catering businesses across NSW, as distinct from function centers, remain significantly effected by the COVID Pandemic. The combination of the ongoing impact of restrictions, ongoing moves away from CBD working, lack of available staff are contributing to a lack of business confidence to book events or spend on external catering.

These catering businesses often run a large commercial kitchen at an offsite location, and then bring food to a certain location where it is either directly

served to guests or 'finished' by qualified chefs prior to service at an event, conference or meeting.

Many of these operators rely on patronage from corporate clientele, the ongoing uncertainty through the pandemic has drastically impacted these businesses, who have not been able to benefit from the recently Dine & Discover Program. R&CA believes there is a strong case for ongoing NSW Government support for these businesses in the upcoming Budget.

In the same way that the Dine & Discover program has been hugely successful in driving patronage to on-premise businesses such as restaurants and cafes, a similar program could be warranted in the catering space, focused on driving patronage from corporate clients for hospitality services such as staff lunches, catered meetings and conferences or staff development days withing the Sydney CBD.

Businesses could be provided with incentives, by way of vouchers or reimbursement, for providing these services to clients or employees, which would bring much needed patronage to struggling catering businesses as well as encourage businesses to hold in person events and meetings.

As it is expected that the Dine & Discover program will involve an underspend of sorts once it ends in June 2021, R&CA believes there is significant merit in re-purposing those funds to assist catering businesses in NSW who continue to suffer from the COVID-19 Pandemic, and whose recovery has not yet properly begun.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss R&CA's views in more detail, do not hesitate to contact R&CA's Head of Policy, Government & Public Affairs, Tom Green on 0448 781 213.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Wes Lambert', written in a cursive style.

Wes Lambert CPA FGIA MAICD
Chief Executive Officer
Restaurant & Catering Australia