



R&CA is the national industry association representing the interests of more than 47,000 restaurants, cafés and catering businesses across Australia. The café, restaurant and catering sector is vitally important to the national economy, generating over \$37 billion in retail turnover each year as well as employing 450,000 people.

Over 92 per cent of businesses in the café, restaurant and catering sector are small businesses, employing 19 people or less.

R&CA broadly supports the NSW's government proposals in the Explanation of Intended Effect to make it easier and more affordable for restaurants and cafes to offer outdoor dining to patrons.

Cutting red tape and offering incentives to venue operators to offer outdoor alternatives will not only help operators to keep up with changing consumer tastes, but it will also help keep patrons safer from COVID-19 with better ventilation.

This is especially important given that many small businesses are recovering in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is important to keep in mind when, according to IBISWorld, restaurants, cafes and caterers have lost \$10 billion in bookings and events since the start of COVID-19.

Therefore R&CA welcomes initiatives that will help restaurants, cafes and caterers thrive in post-pandemic economy.

On 13 August 2021, R&CA provided a submission to the NSW Government, entitled the "RoadMap to Dine In" which called for a variety of strategies to be explored by the NSW Government that would help transition to outdoor dining simpler.

### **1. Cash grants to support re-opening**

To supplement the existing cash grants that are available, hospitality businesses allowed to reopen will need significant further assistance to be able to meet the cost of re-opening including stock ordering and other upfront costs.

R&CA believes that hospitality venues should be able to access re-opening grants of \$15,000 for small business and \$25,000 per larger business under a hospitality specific top-up to previously approved businesses.

Previous grants have been eaten up by bills due during the lockdown, and the overwhelming majority of hospitality businesses will be cash broke when allowed to reopen.

## **2. Outdoor Dining Program**

To assist businesses in making the transition to outdoor dining under a Roadmap, R&CA believes that the below should be made available immediately to assist businesses with meeting the significant cost of moving to outdoor dining:

- Fast-tracking outdoor dining permits to ensure businesses have the permits to set up outside (72hr turn around) and consideration of making permanent licences granted during the pandemic.
- Having the State Government waive or meet the cost of permits to local governments (costs can range between \$15-\$75 dollars per sqm of outdoor space) meaning a licence for an outdoor space of 40sqm could be as high as \$3,000.
- Standardising rules for outdoor dining to assist operators with multiple and ensure compliance is simple. Turbocharging outdoor dining space by making un-used outdoor space available to nearby hospitality venues.
- Make outdoor dining for restaurants and cafes development exempt.

## **Takeaway Alcohol Changes**

Finally, NSW must make current temporary takeaway alcohol laws permanent in order to keep up with changing consumer demands. R&CA's 2019-2020 Benchmarking Report, which surveys hundreds of venue operators, have indicated that before the pandemic, 8 percent of their trading was going to takeaway sales. During the height of lockdown that reached an understandable 100 percent. After lockdown that has settled on 30 percent. This is a clear sign that consumer tastes have changed and that policy must be made by the NSW Government to keep up with this change.

R&CA is calling for restaurants, cafes and caterers to have the ability to apply for a liquor licence that allows them serve up to 2.25 litres with a substantial meal.

This will not only provide consumers with more choice, but it will follow the lead of countries like the US and Europe, as well as Australian states like Queensland, Victoria and South Australia.