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OUTDOOR DINING COMING SOON

Summer is coming and outdoor spaces are being opened up for alfresco drinking and dining just in time for the warmer weather with the NSW Government slashing red tape to allow quicker approval times for venues.

Minister for Customer Service Victor Dominello said government agencies are getting the “Alfresco Job” done, allowing the new measures to be rolled out first in The Rocks from 16 October and in the city from November 1 for a 12-month pilot.

“We have cut through red tape to make this happen in a very short timeframe,” Mr Dominello said.

“We’re working with City of Sydney and Place Management NSW, the landowner for The Rocks, to condense what was previously a three-month process involving multiple agencies, into a single application that takes a week.

“An amendment to the Liquor Regulation will also allow expanded liquor licence boundaries to be approved in as little as three days - a process that previously took up to 51 days.”

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes said cafés, bars, restaurants and hotels will be able to apply for an outdoor dining licence without needing to get a planning approval, making things easier for business owners.

“The pandemic has had a devastating effect on the hospitality industry so this solution will not only keep our communities safer, but draw people back into the city so we can support local business and boost the economy,” Mr Stokes said.

“What we’re doing is getting out of the way - making processes simpler and easier for business owners to quickly take advantage of our unbeatable summer climate and set up outdoor areas for patrons to enjoy.

“We are doing this by trialling policy changes that mean a planning approval will not be needed for restaurants, bars and cafés to extend their business to outside areas.”

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said while The Rocks and City of Sydney will be the first areas to take up the new outdoor dining opportunities, they won’t be the last.

“Councils across the State are being encouraged to examine how they can fast-track outdoor dining area approvals at their end while ensuring public amenity and safety,” Mrs Hancock said.

“We’re exploring introducing further changes so that all councils can take advantage of the new arrangements and implement similar streamlined processes in time for summer.

“By slashing government approval times, we want businesses and councils to work together to identify spaces for outdoor dining. For example, there might be an unused car park next to your premises, or some sunny pavement out the front of your restaurant – these could be perfect spaces to apply to use.”

Consultation is now open for feedback on the proposed changes to the codes SEPP to allow pubs, small bars and cultural venue with a food or drink outlet to participate in the outdoor dining trial in the City of Sydney.

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