

StreamBox

>: Welcome to today's webinar. I'm Peter Evans the Council engagement manager at OLG and I will be your host today. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands and waterways on which we meet and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. I would acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands and waters our online audience joins us from and pay respect to their Elder past, present and emerging and extend that to all First Nations guests joining us. In the session today you will hear from the Hon Victor Dominello, MP, minister for customer service. A few housekeeping matters, this session has closed captions, you will see this on the right-hand side of the screen. If you want to access captions individually, use the closed captioning link in the web links pod. If you have any questions during the session please post them in the chat pod and finally remember if at any time you experience audio issues and you have already followed the steps in the audio help instructions, log out and log back in again, it seems to work. I will hand over to Tim Hurst the deputy secretary for local government planning and policy.

>: Thank you, Pete. Welcome to Mayors, councillors and general Meggers to the next in the series of webinars. Today the Minister for Local Government has asked the minister for customer service to talk to us about current issues in are react creating the -- reability rate ising the state's economy and in particular some of the initiatives around outdoor dining. The format for today's webinar will be a short briefing from the minister on the government's current initiatives and then we will go and dedicate the remainder of the time to a question and answer session. We have already received quite a lot of questions from councils that have come in in advance of the meeting and we will go through those first. Then we will move to questions that are submitted online through the chat pod. We will try to get through as many of the questions as possible today during the webinar. Thank you again. I will hand over to the minister. I begin by acknowledging country. There has been a lot of movement in the last six months in particular during the pandemic in relation to how the government

is working with local councils to try and activate in a COVID-safe way businesses, including slashing a whole lot of red tape. Because we realise that in the midst of the pandemic we had to get the health issues under control but then we also had to look at the health of the economy. Small businesses in particular were doing it really, really tough. Some of the things we did, we set up an outdoor dining Task Force. We did that because A, we have the natural weather conditions, apart from the stormy weather this week, New South Wales is blessed with great weather. It seems strange to many people that we can have great al fresco dining experiences all around the world in particular in Europe and we have a better climate, yet we are locked away indoors. Given the fact that Health were increasingly saying to us that outdoors is far, far safer than indoors, we thought we could get a2 square metre so why not set up an alfresco Task Force to encourage this. We start the the Task Force in mid-October. By mid-November and indeed by 1 December we had businesses up in the Rocks and in Darling Harbour, because they are controlled by a -- Place Manage number New South Wales. So that was easier to move. Since then we have had other councils come on board including City of Sydney, Parramatta, Northern Beaches and I understand Coogee or Randwick councils have also come on word and showing positive signs. Based on the feedback I have received so far, foot traffic is up significantly, sometimes up to 75 per cent. Sales are up by 45 per cent. Again, in the context of a pandemic where small businesses have been really hurt, this has been a Lifeline for them. Another thing that we have introduced recently is the 24-hour economy that came into parliament on 11 December. In the words of many industry stakeholders this has been the biggest reform to the -- in terms of the night-time economy for generations. One of them was just telling me at a function recently that this is a 5 in 50-year event in terms of the magnitude of the reform. She gave me an example of, in the past the Fringe Festival wanted to put an opera singer in every hairdresser or barber shop as part of the Fringe Festival, and they would have had to go through so much red tape it wasn't worth their while. Now as a result of the reforms we swept through -- can I hasten to add that these were reforms done in

true collaboration. A shout-out to John Graham from the Labor Party and Kate from the Greens. Alex from the Independents. This was genuine bipartisan support. That's why I'm super proud of the reform, it will stick and it will have longevity. The reforms mean that the Fringe Festival, if it wants to get people out singing, that is, getting the arts engaged in venues, they can now do that so much easier rather than going through a whole lot of approvals. The third thing we have done to support businesses and create a COVID safe environment, focused around the QR check in feature that the service app team developed. Again, that is something that we need to work more closely with the local governments. Because so many of the inspectors are out there on the beat doing the hard yards. It would help immensely if the businesses were compliant. One of the easy tells is, have they got a QR feature at the and front. If they don't, then they have to have it digitised. Paper is gone. It's got to be digitised. But if they don't have QR, then A, they should and, B, encourage them to go to service because of all of the privacy settings. And far superior customer experience. I might stop there. I'm sure there is lots and lots of questions. Again, I want to thank the local government sector for your leadership and your collaboration. If there is any silver linings coming out of this wretched thing called COVID it's the fact that when we collaborate together we can move mountains and we have demonstrated that in New South Wales, so thank you.

>: Just a reminder to our online participants, if you could put any questions you have for the webinar into the chat box, and we will try to get to them as we go through the session. Minister, quite a few of the questions relate to the operation of the planning system. I appreciate it's not -- it's not necessarily something you are going to be able to answer. Perhaps if I can pose the question first and then depending on how you feel with it, I might be able to assist with some of those answers too.

>> >>: Sure.

>> >>: I might go straight into the questions. The first question we have is from Albury council: How can we make it easier to activate outdoor dining with liquor licence in --

>: I used to be a lawyer by trade. I love my technology. My focus is putting customers at the centre of everything. I might hand over to you there terms of the details.

>: I did say some of these questions were fairly technical. So Albury council, the good news is that outdoor dining is permissible in an alcohol-free zone. The office of local government publishes outdoor dining guidelines and there are also ministerial guidelines on alcohol-free zones. When your council issues a permit for outdoor dining in an afz you have to impose conditions on a licencee such as a restaurant operator about the requirements of the afz. We suggest you include in there some conditions about a clear delineation, cordoning off the area and otherwise how to control the licensed area from the alcohol-free zone. At this stage we're not proposing to make any changes to the way that alcohol-free zones work because we think it should be within a council's discretion to manage the service of liquor under a liquor licence within an afz in an outdoor dining area. The next question we have is from Northern Beaches Council. NBC asked: Is there any discussion about amendments for events needing DAs and a fast-tracking process to ensure they're not hindered in a quick recovery from COVID as restrictions ease?

>: Again, Tim, I might throw to you, because you are an important member of the Task Force. In terms of what the agency experts were discussing, where that has landed. Can I use this opportunity to say that it is the intention of the government to make sure we consolidate a lot of the reforms of the Task Force to make them permanent. We're seeing in particular with patrons that they are very much enjoying this new mode of outdoor dining experiences. So, we want to make sure that some of the reforms we have done are institutionallised. In terms of that specific question, if you don't mind answering it?

>: Talking to our colleagues in DPIE, they tell us that this is under consideration and they are certainly aware of the opportunity in this area. The DPIE planning people tell us they are hoping to put out some further information on this in the near future. I think the answer there is to watch this space. It's something that is acknowledged for some further

follow-up.

>> >>: Excellent.

>: Just a reminder about putting any further questions that you have into the online chat box -- minister, we have a question that's come through about the COVID safe app. We get fantastic feedback from the councils who have taken that up as a way of managing venues. The question is: What are the next steps that Service New South Wales is looking at to improve the effectiveness or functionality of the COVID safe app? Can you give us an insight into that?

>: Thank you for the question. The team there is constantly upgrading it and finding improvements based on customer demand. For example, we get realtime feedback. It's anonymous. We get realtime feedback from customers saying, "You can do this or that? We prefer this or that". One of the common themes was, "We would like a feature" added so you can add ... another feature they would have liked is a check-out feature, which makes sense. If you could narrow the window of moments you could have been in an affected area it enables more time for the great people at contact tracing to devote that time to the harder issues. We have added that feature. We are constantly on the look-out to see where else we can improve. The beauty about getting your Service New South Wales app -- there are about 2.6 million people that have now downloaded the app -- is that apart from getting your COVID safe check-in and all of the features associated with that, we can now start issuing push notifications in relation awhole range of things. For example, if you have had a COVID test that's come back negative, you can get notified. I really do encourage people to download the app, 2.6 million people have already done that. No doubt more will come. In addition, when we roll out the dining discover vouchers right across New South Wales in the first quarter of next year we will use the QR features and it will go through the Service app. That is another reason to encourage people to adopt.

>: We don't actually have a question about the dine and discover vouchers. But perhaps, minister, you might want to let people know about this initiative.

>: This came interest an idea spawned in some of the other jurisdictions around the world to help businesses get back on their feet. It's basically government saying here is some money. Go out and spend it in areas that have been hit hard by the pandemic. Tourist areas or hospitallality. In the middle of the pandemic they were hit the hardest. We have adopted the same type of idea. The Treasurer to his credit said in the budget here is half a billion dollars. We will use that as economic stimulus to get people to -- to encourage people to get out and as we have branded it, to dine, i.e., help the hospitallality sector or to discover, that is, help broadly speaking the tourist sector. The reason we put it through a QRed system is we could break it into four parts. There will be four \$25 vouchers, two vouchers for typ -- dining and two vouchers for discovery. We could easily have done like government New Zealand the past have done around the world, "Here is \$100, go and spend it". Very difficult to oversight and manage. If somebody got the \$100 they might go to one restaurant. Spend 90 dollars of it and that's it. But with this, -- and it means they don't put their hand in their pocket. We are trying to create stimulus. We want you to get that you are hand in your pocket so you also spend money. That goes to confidence and the gross state product. So it's a cycle to get the economy up and running. That's why we have broken it into four \$25 parts. Sure, you could probably get a meal for \$25 but we want you to get a meal for \$40, use 25 of the voucher and 15 of your own money, that type of thing. We will pilot it early next year but with a view of at roll out state wide definitely in the first few months.

>: Thank you, minister. I was pre-empting some questions that I thought we might get about the voucher because of councils wanting to understand how it would work. The next question we have -- minister, you did cover this in your opening comments a bit. Now that indoor restrictions have eased under the public health order what are the additional benefits of outdoor dining that we should be pursuing and why should we continue to focus on it?

>: Well, for starters it's a general lifestyle choice. We have already seen, when it has been rolled out in the Rocks, in darling harbour and when

I was up in Manly the other day, I was there opening up a restaurant. Just seeing the people walking on the street saying, "How good is this?" When you go to Greece, Italy or Madrid, places with a great outdoor environment, they have got these things in place. I personally think it's, A, a great lifestyle choice. B, it also is great for tourism moving forward. We do want to create a place here in New South Wales where people can enjoy an al fresco experience as an option if they want it. We're just trying to provide more choice for people. I have no doubt that increasingly people will gravitate to that style of dining.

>: Thanks, minister. We just had a follow-up question about the vouchers that has come in online. The question here, I'm not quite sure which council this is from. They are suggesting that they might be harder to use within some rural shires, so people might go to regional centres and they are concerned about the money leaving the small town. But the most small towns can do meals at pubs and clubs. I think it's an observation more than a question.

>: That's a fair point. That's why we're working with the industry and relevant stakeholders to make sure we iron out all of the problems before ultimate roll out. Can I just give the call some degree of confidence that one of the sites we will first pilot in will be a remote area in New South Wales. Because we understand that that could be an issue. We want to pilot it there very early on in the piece.

>: That question was from Warrambungle Shire Council but I think it's indicative of a concern that other small rural shires might have.

>: It's a fair concern. Let's revisit where we have gone as a state.

Particularly in New South Wales over the last nine months. If I said to you nine months ago or even 10 months ago we were going to roll out a QR system, you know, digital, call it a QR system, we would mandate it and there would be universal adoption, no-one would believe it. Again, one of the silver linings from this pandemic is the agility of the people of New South Wales to adopt into technology. They have demonstrated that time and time again during this pandemic. If it is a black spot issue we will sort through that. But if it's a technology issue I think overwhelmingly people

are saying they have adopted. Having said that there will still be people that don't have smartphones. We will have to work out a way -- a way to make sure they still have vouchers in a physical form.

>: Thank you, minister. This is a question that says beyond footpath dining. What changes are there to cover festivals and one-off events?

I think you covered this also in your introduction.

>: Yes.

>: Are there any changes being made to support businesses where footpath dining doesn't work?

>: We got the pop-up licensing options. Again, you might want to talk in more detail around that because you're in the middle of the Task Force. But this is an innovative type of thinking we need, blue sky thinking that we need increasingly over the years ahead. Because even though hopefully by this time next year the meat of the pandemic will be over, you know, hopefully we will get the roll out, but there will still be a lot of adjustment from an economic perspective. We need to make sure we remain agile and these pop-up licences are a classic example. In terms of future planning, of course we want businesses to open up and therefore open out. But we also want them to have the rooftop venues as well. When you are designing things, particularly different councils, where are the options to utilise an amazing rooftop space for outdoor dining options? Again, when I travel overseas particularly before my life as a politician, I used to have such great experiences dining outdoors on rooftops. I just think it's a great resource that we're not utilising particularly in a lot of the design thinking.

>> >>: Thanks, minister. From our perspective, we have been working with the liquor gaming and racing people. Liquor and gaming New South Wales. About specifically that pop-up licence. I would encourage you if a council has a question about pop-up licences to talk to liquor and gaming New South Wales or ring your council engagement manager at OLG and they can put you in contact with the right people there. We're on a theme now about liquor licensing. The next question was: Have any changes been made to support liquor applications for new businesses?

>: Yes. Again, Tim, you might want to go through it in more detail. One of the benefits of the Task Force is, for example, in relation to DAs coming through now, we have not -- we don't require the same length of time to go through the Council and then pretty much repeat the same consultation period with liquor and gaming. I think on average liquor and gaming were telling me that the average time it would take to process their part of the DA was about 7 weeks average. That's now been concitinated down to three days. Think you go through a council consultation which is important because you have to go through the community. But to think that the same period of time we're going to go through another sit of consultations is almost offensive. Liquor and gaming to their credit said, no, we can basic in a lot of the questions we need answered in the Council phase of the consultation and that way we can seriously shorten the second period. There's been a massive win from the Task Force.

>: Maybe, minister, just in terms of the technical elements, I have some notes here that talk about the provisions of the night-time economy bill and some of the practical changes. Councils might be aware that the changes took effect from 11 December. Some of those old live entertainment restrictions such as limits on the number of musicians on stage.

>: And mirror balls.

>: Types of musicians and instruments.

>: Genre.

>: Those are all gone from liquor licences. Councils have also been given new powers under the legislation to remove other types of conditions from the development consents -- consents. There are also changes to allow minors in certain circumstances into small bars.

>: Yes.

>: Trading on Christmas Day and Good Friday. S there is a list here. But these are all of the things the great bill did. Ongoing licence fee discounts. 30 minutes extra trading for certain venues having hi music performance as part of an arts and cultural event.

>: Which is fantastic.

>: These are all legislated and took effect from 11 December.

>: That's right. It gives councils more power now to ability proportionately in relation awhole lot of issues that previously they were shackled by some out dated, in my view, regulations that from Frankensteinian in nature and built one on top of the other to create a huge hindrance for industry. When people told me that we actually regulated the genre of music -- you know, the type of instrument that could be played. Even got down to mirror balls, I thought something went hay wear. There was no -- hay wire. There were so many cobwebs in the system it resembled a haunted houses of red tape. Thankfully this bill, shout out to all of the other political parties, with bipartisan support, I would say most of the cobwebs are gone. It's a great, great reform.

>: Thank you, minister. Next one, and I know it's an important question for councils. Is there a requirement for councils to waive fees and charges aas part of the outdoor dining changes because these charges are an important revenue source for our council?

>: Obviously that's a matter for councils. We know that whilst some individual councils have chosen to waive fees and charge force outdoor dining it's not a requirement of the process. We're trying to encourage councils to do whatever they can to support businesses. If they can, obviously, waive fees and charges in particular during this COVID-time that would be great.

>: It's important; it doesn't have to be a permanent waiver of fees and charges. You could trial it with businesses to see if they are financially capable of sustaining the fee moving forward with the increased foot traffic it generates for their business.

>: Councils are like state governments; we ultimately need revenue from businesses in terms of the rates they pay, in terms of the payroll tax they pay. We need to make sure that they are -- that they are on their feet as soon as possible. Whatever we can do from a government perspective, both council and state, we should dig in deep.

>> >>: Thanks, minister. Next question -- I think this has probably come from an inner City Council. I don't know which it came from. But it's about balancing multiple demands on open space. They are saying, how can

our council balance issues such as accessibility, economic recovery, commercial space, passive and active recreation and it's a significant challenge for our council with the use of open space increasingly contested.

>> >>: That's a fair question. Ultimately, local councils are best placed to manage this issue. That's the reality. You will get a council that has a Manly in their backyard, that has a high degree of businesses -- businesses and constituents that would appreciate this. But you might have other council areas that have an alternative view. But again, I don't want to have a one size fits all approach. It just doesn't work with the diversity of councils and people in New South Wales. Councils are at the grassroots and are best placed to manage this.

>: Thanks, minister. Next question is from a council that is keen for more information about how to make it work practically. Saying: Are there any case studies or successes in other areas that we can draw on to plan for this for our LGA?

>: In case studies in terms of --

>: I think they are just looking to see how it's being used already. I'm thinking perhaps the work the state has done in the Rocks and Darling Harbour and also with the City of Sydney?

>: That's where the pilot first started, Tim. Again, because place management is within state government, we can move faster in that regard. We have demonstrated in the Rocks and in Darling Harbour a significant increase in foot traffic and sales. Both of those translate to more jobs. Ultimately this is where we're trying to get to. We're trying to get to a position where we get people back in a COVID safe way. I guess if you want any insights in terms of -- I'm happy to share it -- insights in relation to how we have gone in the Rocks and Darling Harbour, there are two pointers of the success of this. And the popularity of this.

>> >>: Minister, I think that's a good point. Perhaps the office of local government, we could look at preparing some material on the success of the pilots and making that material available more generally to councils to understand how that was implemented. Albeit in a city context.

>: Definitely.

>: I might go back to an earlier question here. What is the government asking councils to do? I think this is about what is the specific role of councils in facilitating outdoor dining?

>: Obviously engaging with their stakeholders and businesses to see -- and explore opportunities -- for opening out. Because ... we have seen the problem in Sydney CBD which was a ghost town in the peak of the pandemic and now people are slowly coming back, which is great. But for New South Wales to succeed we need every member on the team to play their part. That's why we would be encouraging councils to do their piece. But there is a whole lot of other things. We're asking councils to work with liquor and gaming and police to facilitate the new process. There is a whole lot of other things that we will also lean on councils to help us out with. For example in relation to compliance. Again, I want to shout out to councils. I know that their council inspectors together with liquor and gaming and police, have been at the forefront in making sure we have had strong compliance in relation to COVID over the last three or four months. There are a whole lot of things that government will be collaborating and working with councils and asking for assistance on.

>: Thanks for, that minister. Just to re-- a reminder to our online audience from councils, if you have any questions you would like to put directly to the minister please put them in the online chat box and we will bring those questions forward for the benefit of everyone on the webinar today. Minister, I think this is a question tailored to you. I think some of the things you have said at the previous webinars. How can councils use technology to better support economic recovery in their own local government areas?

>: There is so much we can do. For example, I have already canvassed in relation to it from a pandemic perspective using your COVID check-in feature. That provides confidence and encouraging them to use the Service 1 figures which provides a far superior customer experience. If a customer is feeling confident, the business has got confidence in relation to their practices, then that's just going to attract more business and move the

economy forward. Getting onto the e planning -- I know that's pretty much been rolled out successfully as we speak. But that's just the beginning of the journey. In many ways. We're now working through the e-construction, particularly with minister Anderson and Commissioner David Chandler. That's a huge body of work. If we land this we don't just set ourselves up for leading the nation but honestly, leading the world on this, because of the emergence in the digital twins space and other things we're doing. Councils know probably more than most that we need to quickly get to a point where we have a deeper understanding of the actual construct of the building. I point to the Grenfell Towers and cladding issues and how hard it was to get to the bottom of that, to identify where the cladding came from, which buildings had it. To to could be cladding -- it could be cladding today or a defective pipe tomorrow. But increasingly we need more visibility around the construct of a property to protect the people we're elected to serve. That's another thing. I would also encourage them to have another look at the e-regulation space we're going to be working towards next year, again, look at e-regulation in the same way we have looked at e-planning. E-regulation will not be another government agency. It will just be a platform where we make it easier for businesses. Because there are about 28 different regulators in New South Wales. Plus council, I imagine. All of them are doing their own thing, working as hard as they can in their own swim-lane. But unfortunately it's like the goddess Dirga, a lot of hands but without a coordinating head and it makes it harder for small businesses. If we can all jump on to an e-regulator platform where everybody keeps their deep skill sets and identify but what we do is harmonise the operation so it makes it easier for the ultimate customer, i.e., businesses, we will drive far better outcomes for the people of our state. Just watch this space. I'm very, very close to making an announce. In relation to -- announcement. There will be a significant amount of money attached to smart places. As I said to the team I want the ideas coming up from councils to be bold. If our aspiration is to lead the nation and indeed be a world leader when it comes to smart places to live and digital service delivery, then our ambition has to be bold. When you

see the announcements in relation to the detail of the fund and criteria, give us your best and brightest ideas.

>: Thank you, minister. We are through the questions that were provided ahead of the session and also online. Just while we're waiting for some more questions to come through online, I have some material here supplied by Planning. I think it goes to the question about the financial impact on councils. Planning, the department of planning minister for planning and public spaces, Rob Stokes, has established a number of different funds that councils can access that could directly or indirectly assist them with some of these place activation and outdoor dining initiatives. I might quickly run over some of the programs and encourage ...

>: Thanks.

>: If there are councils online who are not aware of these or would like more questions, once again OLG can put them in contact with people at the department of planning about potential eligibility. Obviously the biggest is the public space legacy fund. This is \$250 million for new and improved public open space projects across New South Wales. It's available to councils that can implemented a program to -- implement a program of acceleration of DAs and rezoning proposals. Some of the other funds council similars might want to consider is the \$1.3 million dollar summer fund. This is an idea that came out of the summer summit. Every council in New South Wales can access \$10,000 through an EOI process to run creative events and activation that allow people to safely return to public spaces. It's also about boosting foot traffic in local centres to help revitalise local economies. Also available is the our parks for people program. This is a \$150 million program to build new parks and expand or upgrade existing parks. The recipients of that program have been announced including new parks in Leppington and Appen. A program I know has received a lot of interest, the 15 million streets are shared spaces program. Lots of councils have received grants to deliver quick temporary public space outcomes, to work with their community to provide a taste for some future or more permanent solutions. The department of planning has given some examples here of some of those grants. Bathurst Regional Council received

\$767,000 to show how CBD streets can be shaded and greened. They are using it to test pedestrianising areas around their town centre. Canterbury Bankstown council received \$1 million for 10 micro rooms in town centres across the local government area. They extend the idea of the home into the public domain of the city. Another good idea that's been funded through this program is Campbelltown City Council which received a million dollars for tactical urbanism interventions. I like the sound of that.

>> >>: Fantastic.

>: They are transforming Queen Street into a cool green spine for the city. If your council would like some more information about those programs, get in contact with the place, design and public spaces team at DPIE or talk to your council engagement manager and we can put you in contact with them. I'm having another look at the online chat box. We don't have any other questions that have come through just yet. Was there anything more you wanted to cover perhaps more broadly from your portfolio area while we have two thirds of the councils in the state online today which is a great turn-out.

>: Just again one of the silver linings out of this is the pace of change, and the power of collaboration. If we genuinely want to drive our state moving forward we have to really pivot off the power of the local councils. Particularly with their grass roots connections. If -- the closer we work together the stronger we will be, there is no doubt about that. Our digital agenda for service delivery next year is so bold. There are a couple of other things that we're moving across that may have been of interest. Obviously we have spoken to e-regulation. Another big project that I'm working in partnership with minister Mitchell and Leigh on is an education passport. The reason I'm passionate about that is because 100 years ago people could only have one job. 50 years ago they might have two jobs. Now they might have four jobs. Increasingly people will have more and more jobs in the course of their life. Having labour market mobility, i.e., the ability to quickly move from one job to another is a sign of strength and resilience in an economy. What we are trying to do is create an education passport whereby whether you are at preschool, primary

school, high school, TAFE, whether you have done university or some other ancillary course, or indeed you have captained your high school team or football team, basically your education passport moving through. To authenticate that is my actual ATAR, this is my actual certificate from TAFE. Or this is my university qualification. Because increasingly we have seen more and more people having fake accounts. Having that and then being able to quickly move from employer to employer to create your own job is a big, big reform, that is micro economic in nature. It's something we will be working on. Particularly given the council's footprint on the ground they probably want to get involved with that next year. I have already spoken to e-construction. There that will be a massive piece next year. There is a whole lot of other things that we're working on in terms of the service pipeline to provide more integrated services for the people of our great state.

Keep an eye out on this space. One of the things that we have to work very, very closely with councils on is in the cyber space. I know councils have raised this before. But if I could ask them again just to make sure that they are vigilant around this. This is so easy to let your guard down on. We know there are lots of cyber criminals out there. We know that there are state actors out there. We know that the posturing is only getting more and more aggressive and more combative. We all have to be really striving for our A-game on this. We put in a record \$240 million investment over the next essentially now two and a half years to lift our cyber capacity. That record spend will cement us as the cyber security capital of the southern hemisphere in the next two and a half years if we're not already there. But again, we are only as strong as our weakest link. -- weakest link. Some councils or state agencies are stronger than others. We need to work together to make sure if somebody needs a capacity build, that we work together to lift us all up.

>: I know that cyber security in New South Wales has an active program reaching out to both employees of state government agencies but also council employees. The last time I met with them they said that around half of all of the people that they roll out their training to are actually employees of council.

>: Great.

>: Just encourage, if your council is interested in more information about cyber security risks and what you can do to manage it, that there is some introductory elements and some links to pom policies that -- policies that might help. I encourage to you contact cyber security New South Wales and see if you can book key people from your organisation into the training courses that they provide.

>> >>: Definitely. Seriously, it is going to be the topic of the next decade, without a doubt. Particularly with what is happening around the world. I really encourage councils to come on board.

>> >>: They are doing a great job with that money to raise awareness not just in the state government with councils. And they have the same mantra, that they need councils who are often integrated with or linked to state government systems to have the same or similar levels of protection of the data that the state government is trying to maintain. So that's why it's important that we got out and spread the message to those key people within councils.

>: Definitely.

>: Who can influence councils' cyber security outcomes.

>: Thanks, Tim.

>: All right. There are no further questions. Any final comments, minister?

>: No, I just want to again thank everyone for their collaboration this year. It's been a tough year for everyone. Lots of learnings from this year. Hopefully we play those forward. And just take this opportunity to thank you, Tim. The Minister for Local Government, dear friend of mine. And to all of the Mayors, councillors and the staff for their hard work, can I wish you all a very merry, happy, holy Christmas and in the worlds of REM, a 2020 filled with -- 2021 filled with awe and wonder.

>: On behalf of all of the councils on the webinar today I would like to thank you for making your time available to talk about these recent and relevant initiatives for councils. As I think councils would be aware, the office of local government puts out a regular council update. If your

council is not already subscribe the you can go to the OLG website, click subscribe and click council circular. We provide a lot of practical information to councils about issues both to do with COVID-19 and more broadly in terms of response and recovery and you can access them through the regular web and email communications that we provide. I would also encourage you to stay in contact with your OLG council engagement manager. They can answer any questions you might have and link you up with people in other agencies if you would like more information about anything have you heard today -- you have heard today. Thank you for your participation today. I hope it's provided you with the information you need to implement your COVID-19 response and to support your local economy. Thank you and good afternoon.