

# COVID Safe Public Space Guide

The guide for NSW's public space managers



As part of the *COVID Safe Public Space Guide*, we've collected case studies demonstrating the different ways that councils and state government public space managers are working to support the community, helping us to stay active, connected, healthy and safe during and beyond the pandemic.

Some great examples are included in this guide.

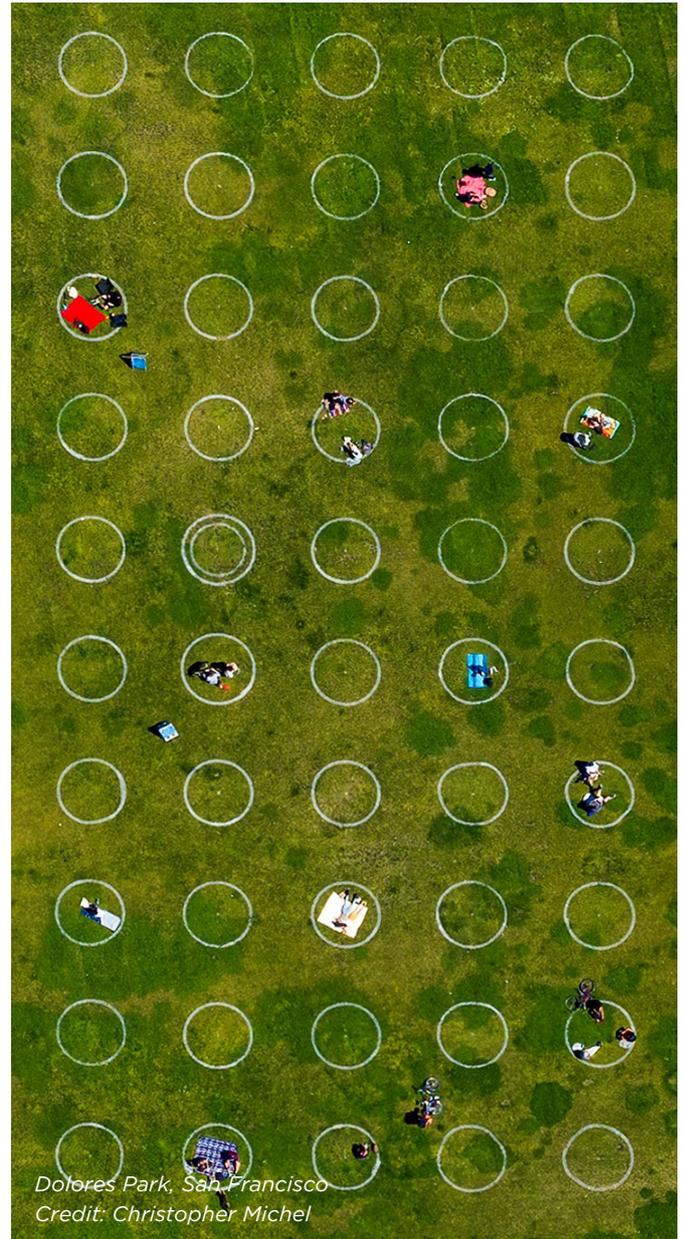
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# Our Parklands and Open Spaces

*Mounted Police  
Credit: City of Canada Bay Council*



## The Bay Run – Canada Bay Council ^

The popular Bay Run became a focal point during the pandemic for people wanting to be out in the open and exercise. To manage the situation safely, Canada Bay Council established a Continuity Management Team, which coordinated Council’s response to the pandemic. Council also worked closely with the Local Emergency Management Committee, made up of representatives from the local emergency services, NSW Health and Council.

They placed two mobile variable message signs at opposite ends of the Bay Run, installed public safety signage at regular intervals, arranged for two patrolling Rangers to provide education on COVID Safe practices and also arranged NSW Police patrols at peak times, including the use of the Mounted Police. As a result of these measures, the Bay Run remained open for use to our local residents and visitors.



## Telopea Park – Buxton, Wollondilly Shire Council >

Telopea Park in Buxton now has free WiFi and smart sensors to gain insights about park and facilities usage. The data gathered helps council design, invest in and maintain Telopea Park. During the pandemic, these technologies provide added benefits, helping council understand how many people visit, the size of groups using the park and even how many use the hand sanitiser station. Wollondilly Shire Council and the NSW Government co-funded this smart park project as part of a trial delivered under the Western Sydney City Deal.

*Telopea Park, Buxton  
Credit: Wollondilly Shire Council*



## Case Studies



Play Street pilot  
Credit: North Sydney Council



### Street Play – North Sydney Council

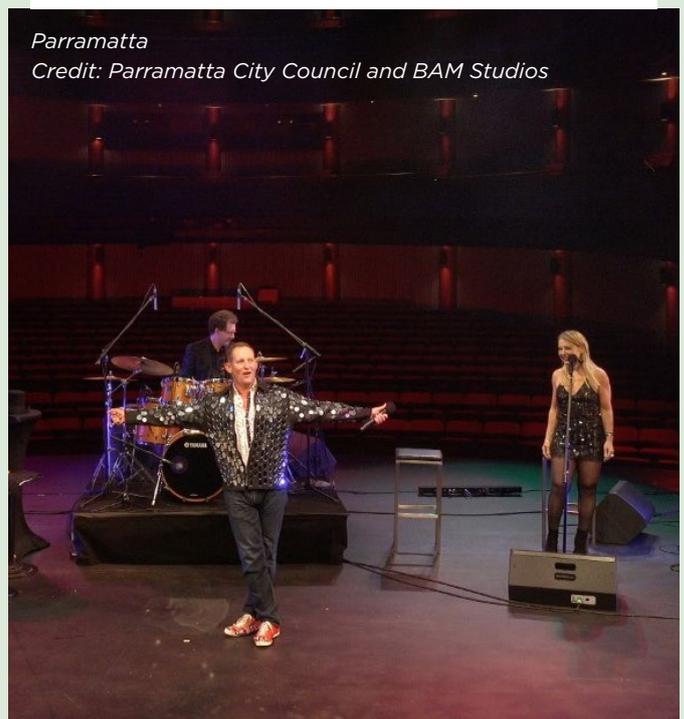
North Sydney Council's Street Play pilot received Streets as Shared Spaces grant funding to temporarily close streets to traffic so that road space could be 'opened for people'. In September 2020, the community were able to nominate streets via a public map. The agile program moved with community demand creating a series of pop-up street closures between November and December 2020 to accommodate where people wanted to see 'play' days. The sites were made accessible and promoted connectivity to schools, services and open space. Programmed entertainment like live music, arts and crafts, street cricket were some of the many activations run on the day including the commission of a mobile parklet that featured interactive games for kids of different age groups. The activities were all community led or initiated to ensure they were relevant and had a high level of community ownership. Feedback indicated the events were effective in building community resilience, both the planning and event days helped people to make new connections and networks within their neighbourhood that will likely increase the communities' capacity to respond to future challenges.

### Supporting community – Parramatta City Council

Parramatta's abundance of existing public spaces and facilities offer welcoming and safe destinations for residents, workers and visitors. Council workers have increased cleaning in high traffic areas, including playgrounds, fitness equipment, amenities, bin areas and water stations. Council's cultural hubs offer dynamic online programs and entertainment to people right across Australia, including Riverside Theatres' digital series of theatre and music performances, Parramatta Artists' Studios' Studio Conversations podcast series and City of Parramatta Libraries' story time video playlist. Council is also developing strategies to manage the long-term movement of people in, out and around the Parramatta CBD, including additional cycling and walking options and infrastructure to improve connectivity between destinations. COVID Safe consultation ensures the community still 'has a say' in Council decision-making with innovative engagements, such as the 'Open Spaces Scavenger Hunt' and 'Chalk to Us' socially-distanced discussion boards. Council continues to deliver public space upgrades to support local employment opportunities and the completion of projects that will deliver higher-quality public spaces now and post- COVID-19.



Parramatta  
Credit: Parramatta City Council and BAM Studios



Wollemi National Park  
Credit: Destination NSW



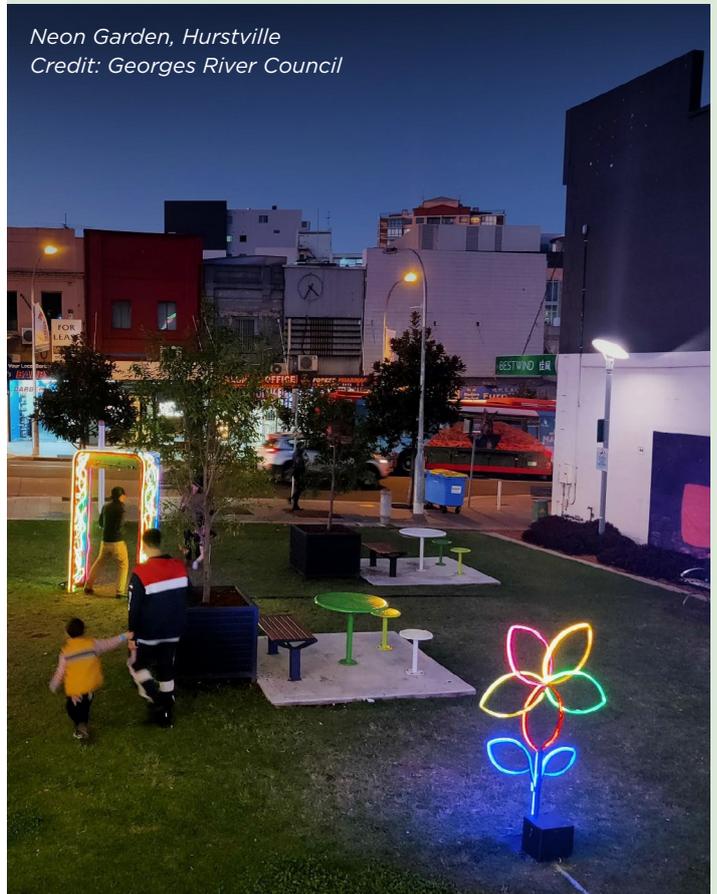
## Online booking system – NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

NPWS introduced a booking system ([www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/camping-and-accommodation](http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/camping-and-accommodation)) for all NPWS camping areas after conducting a risk assessment of every camping area to identify appropriate physical distancing capacities. Prior to 1 June 2020, only 65 campgrounds used an online booking system. NPWS added all remaining camping areas to the booking system in 8 days. This system captures all customer information if contact tracing is needed, controls numbers at camping areas and ensures physical distancing and hygiene protocols can be maintained. Over the past year, camping has been extremely popular with locals and interstate visitors. Stays increased around 25 percent over a normal year. In 2021 NPWS added improvements to the national parks website so visitors can easily find and compare available campsites over the busy summer months.

## Parklets, Hurstville – Georges River Council

The Hurstville city centre recently underwent public domain improvements through the Streets as Shared Spaces grant program. Stage one of the project saw the creation of additional space for pedestrians, achieved by reclaiming 150m of car park spaces along a stretch of Forest Road in December 2020, replacing them with a parklet containing seating, greenery and tables. In March 2021, Stage two focused on the Hurstville interchange ramp site and Memorial Square. The area included a pop-up park as well as advanced trees in planters, seating and tables, and a neon art installation, dubbed the “Neon Garden”, installed by artist Carla O’Brien. In April 2021, Stage three saw 11 advanced trees installed along Forest Road, Memorial Square and MacMahon Courtyard. The Courtyard has been transformed into a place of refuge for the community with seating and lighting installed around a large mural at the site. Festoon lighting and spotlights on the art have upgraded the area into a usable space well into the evening.

Neon Garden, Hurstville  
Credit: Georges River Council



# Our Beaches and Foreshores



## COVID communications – Northern Beaches Council >

Northern Beaches Council continues to employ a highly effective communications campaign, including an online COVID information hub, twice weekly electronic newsletter distribution to residents, regular business updates and responds to community concerns on social media 24/7. Council deploys Variable Messaging Signs across the region, lifeguards issue regular broadcasts across the patrolled beaches and Council installs and updates signage throughout its parks, town centres and beaches promoting health and safety messages.

COVID communications  
Credit: Northern Beaches Council



Redhead Beach  
Credit: Smart Beaches



## < Smart Beaches

Smart Beaches uses cutting-edge technology to create safer, smarter, better beaches by:

- Giving beachgoers more information
- Collecting data to help decision making and policy development for beach lifeguarding
- Collaborating with, and across, industry and government.

Smart Beaches digitises and automates beach safety data collection for data insights and better reporting. Connected cameras at Redhead and Blacksmiths beaches in Lake Macquarie and Manly and Shelly beaches use artificial intelligence to count and monitor crowd numbers, allowing lifeguards to manage beach safety. Lake Macquarie also installed new remote shark alert systems that broadcast public health messages when lifeguards are not on duty. The Smart Beaches program builds on the success of a pilot delivered by Lake Macquarie City in partnership with Northern Beaches Council and the University of Technology Sydney.

**People’s Loop – Parramatta Park >**

In 2020, the People’s Loop trial provided a dedicated car-free space for visitors to exercise while physical distancing along the beautiful Parramatta River foreshore. Temporary changes to the Park included altered access, parking, circulation, removal of cars from some internal roads, traffic control measures and signage. The two-month trial was highly successful with the community and regular park visitors, particularly on weekends, enhancing cycling and walking.

Visit [www.parrapark.com.au](http://www.parrapark.com.au)



*Parramatta Park  
Credit: Parramatta Park and  
Western Sydney Parklands Trust*

# Our Local Streets, Plazas and High Street Businesses



**Supporting coworking spaces at the revitalised Katoomba Civic Centre – < Blue Mountains City Council**

Blue Mountains City Council is revitalising the Katoomba Civic Centre through a Building Better Regions Fund grant, matched by Council to a total investment of \$1.5 million.

Major improvements include refurbishment of the old library to provide a coworking space (artist’s impressions are shown left), as well as new plantings, upgraded street furniture and art installations by local artists.

Coworking spaces are proving to be a cost-effective, flexible and innovative way to work, creating hubs where people can connect to others, network, share ideas and increase their creativity and output.

The development will support the high number of locals who leave the City daily to access jobs in Sydney, by providing a permanent remote working space, and the art installations align with the Blue Mountains’ status as an inaugural City of the Arts.

It will be a productive and contemporary use of a town centre space that will lead to a vibrant, attractive precinct for the whole community.



*Artists’ impressions of Katoomba Civic Centre  
Images: Blue Mountains City Council*

**Supporting local businesses  
- Georges River Council and  
Woollahra Council**

Georges River Council’s award-winning Economic and Social Recovery Program (ESRP) provided swift and strategic action to assist the community and deliver ongoing services. Council established an Expert Recovery Panel, comprising leaders in placemaking, economic development and city planning, to help guide recovery. A total of \$47 million was committed to ensure that the negative impact of the pandemic on the community and local economy was minimised. The ESRP comprised three phases: Immediate support; Revival (preparing for a relaxing of restrictions/total re-opening); and Discovery (celebrating re-launch of Georges River).

In recognition of how tough the pandemic and lockdowns have been on local small businesses and residents since March 2020, Woollahra Council committed to a range of financial measures, valued at more than \$7.9 million. These measures included waiving outdoor dining fees until two months after stay-at-home orders lifted, waiving rental payments for community tenants of Council properties until a month after stay-at-home orders lifted, and offering deferral of rental payments for small business commercial tenants of Council properties for the same period.

In October 2021 a \$115,000 revitalisation grant program was launched to assist businesses and non-profit organisations with innovative rejuvenation projects.



Coogee Bay Road  
Credit: Randwick City Council

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**Coogee Bay Road Shared  
Village - Randwick City Council**

Through the Streets as Shared Spaces grant program, Randwick Council temporarily closed one lane along the Coogee Beach business strip on Coogee Bay Road between Arden and Brook Street to address the impacts of COVID-19 and support the resilience of the local economy and community. This allowed traffic to flow through at a reduced speed as a one-way street, while providing additional space for businesses to continue operating and for pedestrians to maintain social distancing. The street activation built on the local beach and café culture through street art installations, buskers, play areas for children, and outdoor seating, providing an alternative place for people to dwell near the beach and support local businesses. The project was well received by both residents and business and was extended from an initial 3-month trial for another 3-months - with 79% of respondents rating the overall success of the project as good or excellent.



Credit: Woollahra Council

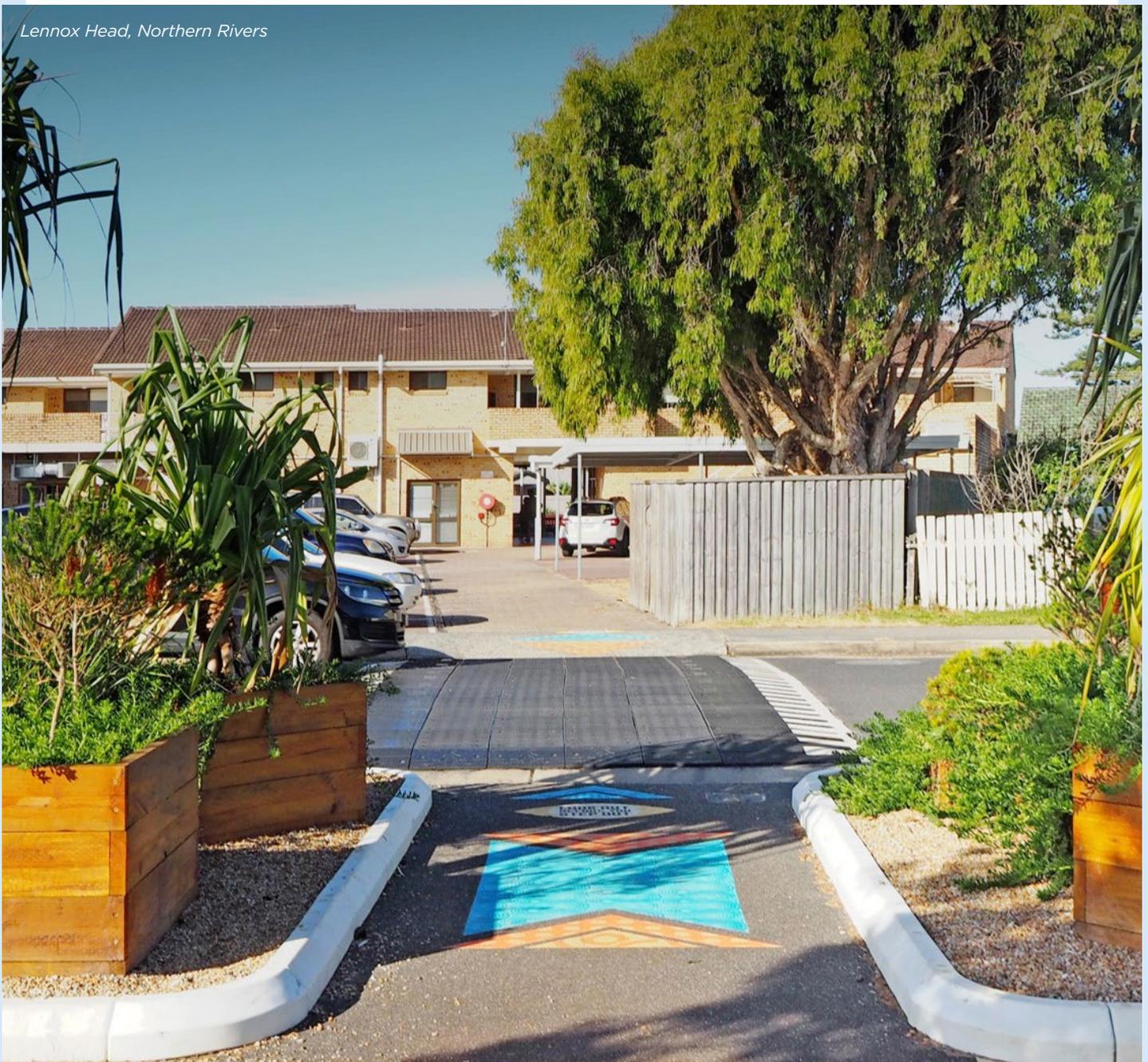
**A Slow Side Path Not a Fast Shortcut for Park Lane – Ballina Shire Council**

Ballina Shire Council has trialled traffic calming, streetscape and activation features to improve public space amenity and safety for pedestrians and cyclists in and around Park Lane, Lennox Head located within the town centre. The project was funded under the Streets as Shared Spaces grant program. Park Lane is a street parallel to the town’s main street and a popular shortcut for vehicles wanting to avoid the main street traffic; Council wanted to transform the shortcut into a safer public space. The activation tested traffic calming interventions and street scape features from ideas that

emerged from community consultation. These also included reflecting desire lines in new pedestrian crossing points, slowing traffic by using recycled rubber to raise thresholds and kerbs, creating a temporary roundabout, providing new bike facilities, using decorative paving treatments to make pedestrian routes visually legible, increasing vibrancy with a mural, constructing street gardens to improve amenity, installing solar bollard lighting to improve ambience and safety, and adding a parklet to provide a refuge for pedestrians. These interventions have resulted in an average speed reduction of 10km/hr along Park Lane.



*Lennox Head, Northern Rivers*



**Local support - Northern Beaches Council >**

Council launched Back to Business, a new initiative to support recovery. Think re purposing of public space for hair dressers and beauty salons, increased outdoor dining and street merchandising. With over 120 applications of support the Program is leading the way on top of our Business Support Package totalling \$8 million (currently) providing flexible solutions, including 10 minute quick pick-up zones, support to enable any shift to takeaway food service and flexibility for round-the-clock supermarket deliveries. In addition, Council continues to provide fee waivers, including support for personal trainers to work in public parks and ongoing digital marketing campaigns to support shop local messages. To support the safe return to Council's face-to-face customer servicing, an online booking system enables customers to book to see the Duty Planner and/or a customer service officer. The principle: be pragmatic, flexible and make it easy for the customer to do business with us. We know life is tough enough.



*Credit: Northern Beaches Council*

**< Supporting local business - City of Parramatta**

City of Parramatta Council's COVID-19 Action Plan encourages its community to find new ways of engaging with the City while supporting their safety and wellbeing. Council upgraded its Parramatta CBD Parking and Business Finder to support local businesses during COVID-19. The innovative website helps people find businesses in the Parramatta CBD currently trading, as well as nearby, accessible free and short-term parking. Temporary parking changes include new five- and 15-minute areas for 'Click & Collect' trading in key areas. The Outdoor Dining Expansion program provides increased outdoor dining areas for local food and beverage retailers. Licence and hire fees as well as rents, including for outdoor dining, advertising, food stalls and temporary premises, have been waived **until the 31st December 2021** to help ease the financial pressure on retailers.



*Centenary Square, Parramatta  
Credit: Destination NSW*

# Our Events and Programs

## Narra-BRIGHT CBD Pilot Activation, Narrabri Shire Council

Early in 2021 the NSW Government's Summer Fund program supported councils to bring public spaces to life by running free, safe activations and events, creating more opportunities for people to connect.

Narrabri Shire Council used its funding to pilot a night-time activation, with light shows illuminating Maitland Street facades in Narrabri's CBD. The pilot complemented the NSW Government's Outdoor Dining trial, providing an opportunity to transform and enliven the public space, increasing foot traffic and dwell time in the centre at night. Council boosted evening trading by engaging 18 retailers creating 27 window displays along Maitland Street. The pilot saw a tripling of average daily sales during the 3-hour activation period.



Narra-BRIGHT CBD activation  
Credit: Narrabri Shire Council



Western Sydney Parklands  
Credit: Western Sydney Parklands



## Get Back on Track Challenge - Western Sydney Parklands

The Get Back on Track Challenge is a series of personal running and walking challenges set across 60km of tracks and trails in Western Sydney Parklands. People completed the routes at their own pace, in their own time, over the month of August, while physical distancing. The Challenge includes six routes in Blacktown, Fairfield and Liverpool ranging from 1.6km to 6.7km in distance - with options for all fitness levels and abilities. Participants can enter either free, receiving a downloadable participant bib and finisher certificate, or paid, with a finisher's medal, discounted entry into NAB RunWest and the chance to win spot prizes.

Visit [www.westernsydneyarklands.com.au/things-to-do/get-back-on-track](http://www.westernsydneyarklands.com.au/things-to-do/get-back-on-track)

## Great Southern Nights - various venues across NSW

In November 2020, Great Southern Nights delivered over 1,000 COVID Safe gigs in live music venues across NSW.

Performances by established, emerging and local Australian artists reinvigorated the live music sector while supporting musicians and venues. Artists included Jimmy Barnes,

Birds of Tokyo and Amy Shark and the event culminated in Australia's most significant music industry event, the ARIA Awards. Destination NSW and the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) partnered to deliver the event successfully in a COVID safe manner.

**> HELP US STAY COVID SAFE**

Visit [www.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nsw.gov.au) and for 24-hour assistance on Public Health Orders, you can call Service NSW on **13 77 88**.