

COVID Safe Summer Guide

The guide for NSW's public space managers this summer



**> HELP US STAY
COVID SAFE**

Updated December 2020

Summer safety

NSW has a wealth of beautiful public open spaces. We love our beaches, open spaces and parklands but it's going to be a different kind of summer and we'll have to work hard to keep these spaces open and safe.

This guide provides more information for managers of public spaces as summer approaches. It supports current Public Health Orders and resources already on government's central contact point at www.nsw.gov.au

This guide explains what we are doing, and provides case studies, pointers and links to resources to help us stay safe in an anticipated busy summer across our parks, beaches and foreshores, destination precincts and streets.

What's in the guide

- Messages
- Our Parklands and Open Spaces
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- Our Local Streets, Plazas and High Street Businesses
- Our Events and Programs

Bondi Beach
Image: Destination NSW

Cover: Mackenzies Beach, Malua Bay
Image: Destination NSW

A message from the Premier and the Minister for Planning & Public Spaces

Parks and public spaces are integral to our way of life in NSW and they have been a lifeline during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to maintain our health and wellbeing. We thank the people of NSW for using our beaches, parks and streets responsibly during this period.

As we move into the summer months and the great outdoors beckon, we must redouble our efforts to keep our community safe. It's important to observe the public health advice and maintain physical distancing while enjoying the open air and the unique public spaces that make NSW such a special place to live. As popular locations attract more people, take the opportunity to discover some of our less frequented parks and community places.

The COVID Safe Summer Plan assists managers of beaches, parklands and public spaces with ideas on how to provide a safe summer for all. The Plan builds on significant investment by the NSW Government, including our \$250 million program to provide economic and jobs stimulus in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and deliver a legacy of safe, quality public space for all in our community.

Gladys Berejiklian
Premier of NSW

Rob Stokes
Minister for Planning & Public Spaces

A message from NSW Health

Australians remain safe and healthy each summer by swimming between the flags, applying the 'Slip!, Slop!, Slap!, Seek!, Slide!' principle, or checking the Fires-Near-Me app. In coming months, we need to adapt our COVID Safe practices to our usual safe summer rituals, including:

- Remembering to keep a towel length (1.5m) between you and other beachgoers
- Look out for the circles when enjoying our parklands and respect the space of others by maintaining 1.5m physical distance
- Limiting outdoor gatherings to the number of people in the current public health orders
- Avoiding crowded environments
- Remembering to wash your hands, and stay home if you're unwell
- Wearing a face mask when physical distancing can't be maintained
- Ensuring you have a COVID-Safe Plan for your business or community organisation
- Testing and self-isolating even if you have mild symptoms

A message from NSW Police

Beaches, parks and other public spaces are managed by councils so the community is urged to heed the advice of council rangers across NSW to ensure Public Health Orders are respected and the community remains safe. If a beach lifeguard, park ranger or a police officer asks a community member to move because the number of people in the location is above the allowed limit, we are asking that they please obey those instructions.

Compliance with the Public Health Orders is vital to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Suspected breaches can be reported to Crime Stoppers and the Office of Local Government has developed [general advice](#) to councils undertaking regulatory functions during COVID-19:

The government has established the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC), comprising experts from over 20 critical agencies including Police, Health, Education and Transport, which operates 24/7 to support the NSW's Government's response to COVID-19.

Our Parklands and Open Spaces

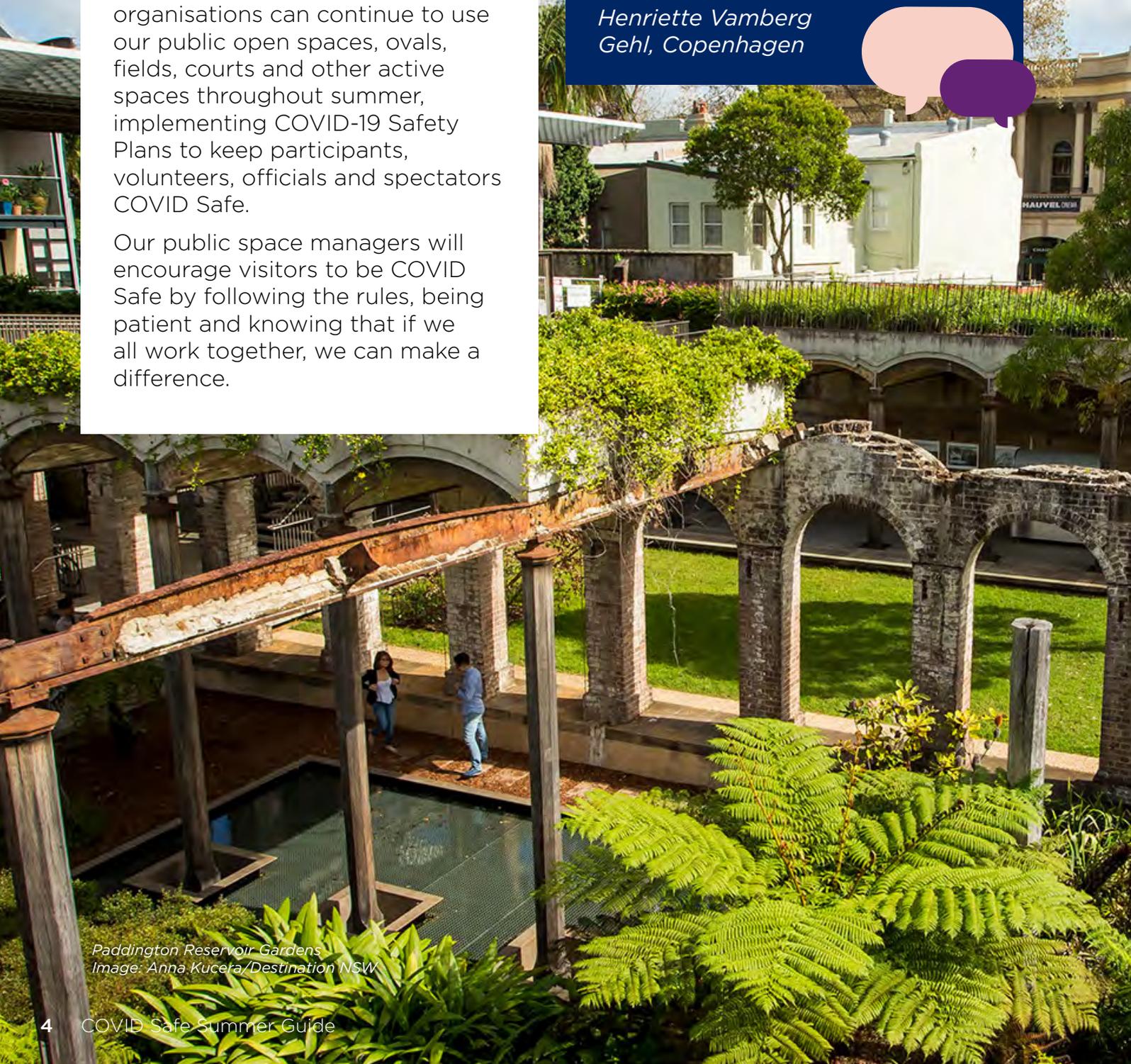
Our State-owned parklands and public open spaces remain open to the public, unless advised otherwise. The health and safety of visitors and staff is vital and gardens and parklands teams are implementing measures to protect the community.

Community sport and recreation organisations can continue to use our public open spaces, ovals, fields, courts and other active spaces throughout summer, implementing COVID-19 Safety Plans to keep participants, volunteers, officials and spectators COVID Safe.

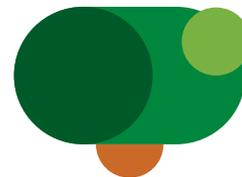
Our public space managers will encourage visitors to be COVID Safe by following the rules, being patient and knowing that if we all work together, we can make a difference.

“The COVID-19 crisis stresses the importance of exploring how public spaces can help combat loneliness – especially for those who are most vulnerable and are either concerned about going outside their home or are not able to easily connect virtually with family and friends.”

*Henriette Vamberg
Gehl, Copenhagen*



*Paddington Reservoir Gardens
Image: Anna Kucera/Destination NSW*



What we're doing

- 1** Marking out safe distancing in our parklands and popular open space. From October, First Fleet Park in The Rocks, Tumbalong Park in Darling Harbour, Murray Gardens and the Crescent amphitheatre in Parramatta Park, will be marked to aid physical distancing, with more locations in Centennial Parklands, Botanic Gardens and Sydney Olympic Park marked in coming months
- 2** Promotion of a 'New Local' campaign on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Great Public Spaces website, raising the profile of alternative local locations and encourages the community not to overcrowd popular locations

Recommended actions for public space managers

- 1** Provide clear signage to promote Public Health Orders and use communication and broadcast systems to promote rules and disperse visitors (these tools can be linked to smart solutions to automate messages and alerts)
- 2** Spread out activities and mark safe distancing e.g. paint circles where people can sit
- 3** Ensure websites and social media remain up to date with latest local conditions and information at all public spaces, and encourage the community to check your website to plan their trip in advance as there may be a range of restrictions in place
- 4** Promote booking systems at areas such as campgrounds to control numbers and allow contact tracing, if required
- 5** Where possible, consider timed entry/pass systems and the ability to monitor numbers with smart technology, or change car parking arrangements and timing
- 6** Provide mobile sanitation stations at key locations, including playspaces and outdoor gyms, and increase cleaning of public utilities, especially public toilets
- 7** Consider making areas car-free to increase the ability for community to physically distance
- 8** Consider temporary activation with [food trucks](#) and physically-distanced eating or activated areas to spread where people congregate, and provide additional open space at busy destinations through temporary parklets
- 9** Use physical barriers, widen walking paths and redirect visitors along alternate paths when too many people are in an area
- 10** Provide rangers and ambassadors to educate visitors about physical distancing
- 11** Work closely with local police area command to manage overcrowding
- 12** Work with community sport and recreation organisations to implement their COVID Safety Plans for training and competition activities
- 13** Consider smart solutions like sensors, cameras (fixed or drone) or data from mobile network operators to count the number of people using public spaces, spot large gatherings and breaches of COVID Safe rules and predict peak times. These tools can provide visitors and compliance officers with real-time information

An idea from the Northern Hemisphere summer

Grass Circles, San Francisco, USA

An early, innovative idea encouraging physical distancing at San Francisco's Dolores Park has now been widely implemented as good practice. Circles on the grass provide a safe guide for park use during busy periods. Dolores Park has 177 circles with a 2.5 metre diameter, spaced 3 metres apart. The circles intend to enliven rather than detract from the park's design; park manager Phil Ginsburg calls it "behavioural art". Centennial Parklands, Royal Botanic Gardens and Sydney Olympic Park will mark similar circles this summer.



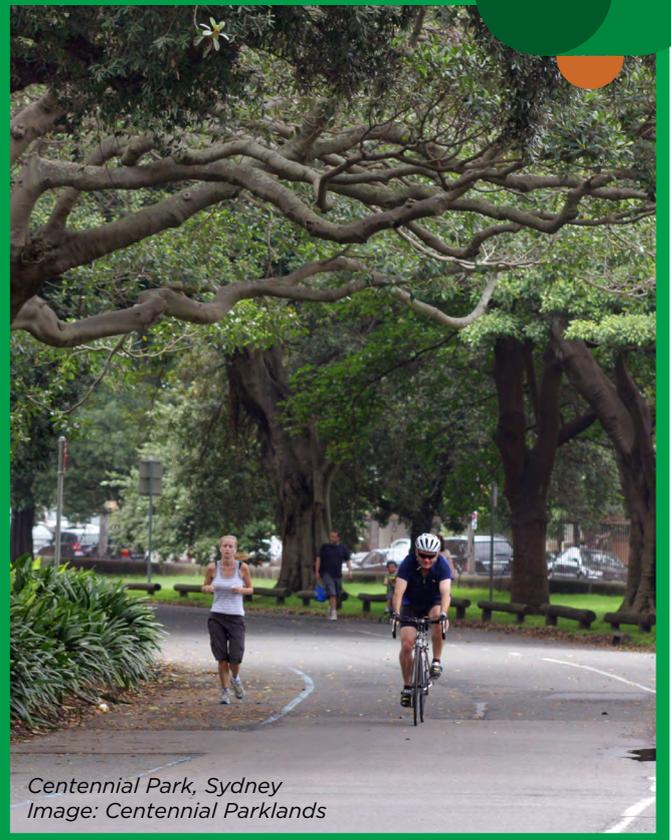
*Dolores Park, San Francisco
Image: David Paul Morris/Bloomberg*

Ideas from our own backyard

Car-free weekends, Centennial Park, Sydney

In May, Centennial Park adopted car-free weekends to provide visitors with additional space for physical distancing, after an initial trial during Easter. This solution allowed visitors to stay safe while still allowing use of the park for fresh air, exercise and socialising. Pedestrians used vehicle routes, such as Grand Drive, for additional walking space. Cycling and controlled access for emergency and service vehicles and disability permits was still permitted. A vehicle-free zone was also trialled into August along Dickens Drive and Loch Ave.

Visit www.centennialparklands.com.au/about-us/park-notice



Centennial Park, Sydney
Image: Centennial Parklands

Monitoring spaces, Northern Beaches Council

A pre-pandemic planning team led early preparation with a comprehensive Pandemic Plan and Council's Incident Management Team worked 24/7 during the crisis. Council worked closely with NSW Police responding to high risk areas overseeing crowds. Council implemented pop-up alcohol-free zones to deter gatherings and provided additional Ranger patrols to manage physical distancing at skate parks, parks and playgrounds. We used smart technology to manage lighting controls for our sports fields and off-leash dog areas in line with COVID restrictions. Council implemented an enhanced public place cleansing program, including additional hand sanitisers and personal hygiene signs in public amenities. As some services were temporarily closed, staff were assigned as COVID Safety Officers to promote physical distancing in public places.



COVID Communications
Image: Northern Beaches Council

Our Beaches and Foreshores

Our beaches, from Eden to Tweed Heads, are beautiful assets, ranging from the world-famous Bondi and Byron Bay to secluded local destinations. We love our foreshores too, along rivers, creeks, lagoons and lakes, including at Penrith, Wagga Wagga, Parramatta and the great Darling River.

They are wonderful places to walk, swim, run, play, sail, kayak, surf and enjoy the water, so we all have a duty to keep them safe. That means avoiding crowds and following any restrictions.

Many of our beaches, and the majority of parks are managed by councils. We urge everyone to heed the advice of council rangers across NSW to ensure Public Health Orders are respected. If a beach lifeguard, park ranger or a police officer asks a community member to move because the number of people in the location is above the allowed limit, they should obey those instructions.

You can do your bit too: the length of a beach towel is a good guide for the minimum safe physical distance of 1.5m you need to keep between you and anyone you don't live with. The NSW Government will work with councils to spread this simple beach message - **keep a towel length between you.**

Eastern Suburbs Coastal Walk
Image: Hamilton Lund/Destination NSW

Your safety is our top priority when visiting our parks and beaches. Please remember to always keep 1.5 metres or about a towel-length space apart from others and do not gather in groups (larger than stated in the current public health orders).

If we follow the current Public Health Orders, we can all enjoy a great day at the beach. This won't be a normal summer, so if our beaches and parks look busy, please come back another time. Use that time to visit one of our wonderful local businesses - they need your support!

There's also many other things to see and do in Waverley, so from all of us here, please, help us help you stay safe!

*Matt du Plessis, Manager,
Lifeguard Services and Beach
Safety, Waverley Council*

Recommended actions for public space managers

- 1 Work closely with your Surf Lifesaving clubs to come up with ideas and options, for example including designated activity zones or staggering the start time of activities
- 2 Prior to warmer weather, work with the local police area command on your crowd management plan, including erecting of fences and staggered entry into public spaces. Local police will communicate plan of action as required
- 3 Consider beach ambassadors to monitor visitor numbers at beaches and beachside parks and provide friendly advice about physical distancing and other safety measures
- 4 Consider restricting beach or foreshore parking to encourage turnover and minimise crowding. Create additional public space in adjacent areas with street closures or parklets to support physical distancing and movement to and from the area
- 5 Use PA systems and variable messaging signs (VMS) at key attractor sites to provide COVID Safe advice. Where possible, these can be linked to smart solutions to provide real time information on crowding
- 6 Actively use social media and websites to keep the community informed of local conditions, closures and crowd redirection, and to encourage the community to check your website to plan their trip in advance as there may be a range of restrictions in place
- 7 Increase cleaning of key touch points and utilities, including outdoor showers and public toilets
- 8 Ensure volunteer facilities for lifeguards and other staff support physical distancing
- 9 Consider smart solutions like sensors, cameras (fixed or drone) or data from mobile network operators to count the number of people using public spaces, spot large gatherings and breaches of COVID Safe rules and predict peak times. These tools can provide visitors and compliance officers (and beach ambassadors) with real-time information
- 10 Encourage people to walk and cycle to their local places through community campaigns and signage, and visit alternative local destinations

What we're doing

- 1 Working with councils to establish a 'Keep a towel length between you' campaign to encourage 1.5m minimum physical distancing
- 2 Sharing of COVID Safe Summer guidance for public spaces, highlighting best practice and useful resources, including ready-reckoners to share with the local community on using beaches safely
- 3 Transport for NSW creating 20 kilometres of pop-up cycleways across Sydney to give people more travel options and announced plans for a pop-up cycleway connecting Rose Bay to Bondi Beach



*La Grande Motte, southern France
(Photo by Clement Mahoudeau/AFP via Getty Images)*



Valencia, Spain
Image: Shutterstock

An idea from the Northern Hemisphere summer

Beach Grids, Galicia and Valencia, Spain

Roped grids helped physical distance sunbathers at Galicia's Silgar. The pilot scheme divided the beach into five cordoned sections, each containing 780 cuadrículas (grids) measuring nine square metres. Wooden posts and colour-coded roping marked spaces for two adults and up to two children to enjoy. It also allowed larger parties to merge their areas together while a longer section next to the sea enabled exercise and children's play. In Canet d'en Berenguer, Valencia, a digital solution allows locals to book their time at the beach via an App.

Ideas from our own backyard

Pop-up cycleways, Wollongong City Council

Wollongong City Council will trial pilot pop-up cycleways along the coast during their Streets as Shared Spaces pilot project. Road space will be reallocated to cyclists in the Wollongong CBD, Port Kembla, Towradgi and Thirroul and link key locations, including train stations and highly popular beaches. Council plans fun, colourful and comfortable routes that incorporate greening and art initiatives while also slowing vehicles and encouraging safe cycling trips to school, work and for leisure.



Wollongong City Centre map,
Image: Wollongong City Council



Charing Cross, Waverley
Image: Waverley Council



Beach Ambassador, Bondi Beach
Image: Waverley Council

Beach ambassadors and more, Waverley Council

Waverley Council has trialled a range of measures including:

- Information signage at parks, beaches and coastal walks about how to help stop the spread of COVID-19
- Beach Ambassadors monitor visitor numbers at beaches and beachside parks and provide friendly advice about physical distancing and other safety measures
- More Ranger patrols at beachside parks and beaches including Bondi, Bronte and Tamarama Beaches and the Bondi to Bronte Coastal Walk
- Variable messaging signs (VMS) at major attractor sites as well as along Bondi Road and Campbell Parade provide COVID Safe advice
- Increased safety messaging and visitor number information across social media channels, regular news updates on Council's website and media interviews
- A \$1 million per month package launched in March to support local businesses. Relief measures include fee waivers for footpath seating, community markets, outdoor fitness permits, mobile vendors and relaxed conditions of consent for restaurants to enable trade as takeaway-only services
- A partnership with the Bondi Chamber of Commerce on the *Keep It Local* campaign, a dedicated online directory for Waverley businesses to list information about services they're offering and how the community can support them. Directory is free for businesses to register their information and update
- Parking meters switched off during height of restrictions to support local economy

Our Local Streets, Plazas and High Street Businesses



Our local high streets contain the restaurants, bars, specialty shops, hardware stores, and other local shops that create jobs and bring unique character to our cities and towns. When our high streets, plazas and precincts are thriving, they connect people and services and reflect community character.

As a first step, encourage all businesses to register as COVID Safe through www.nsw.gov.au, and make use of resources available such as a COVID Safe check in via a QR code.

We encourage councils and local businesses to take advantage of outdoor dining. In most cases, outdoor and footpath dining for cafes and restaurants doesn't require any planning approvals if they meet the relevant standards. Also, in response to COVID-19, the NSW Government has enabled mobile food trucks to operate on any land at any time, with landholder's permission. We are also investigating how to make it easier to run outdoor markets.

We are committed to working with councils and local businesses in their areas to offer outdoor dining to patrons. The NSW Government will work with stakeholders to simplify and streamline this process.

Street initiatives across NSW will allow restaurants, bars, cafes and other retailers to have customers to spread out into the street, through the NSW Government's Streets As Shared Spaces program.

Barangaroo South, Barangaroo
Image: Destination NSW

NSW Small Business Commission

Small businesses are essential to our economy and local communities, comprising almost 98% of all NSW businesses and employing around 41% of the State's private sector workforce. They've faced many challenges during the last 12 months and all of us can help these businesses recover.

"While most of us appreciate the importance of small business to sustaining employment and supporting the prosperity of NSW, it is up to all of us to do everything we can to support them. We will continue to advocate on behalf of small businesses to ensure their voices are heard and I encourage you to reach out to us if you have any questions about how we can support small business."

*Chris Lamont,
NSW Small Business
Commissioner*

As we continue to look for ways to support small business, we're implementing practical measures supporting small businesses in your community such as COVID Safe Business registration.



Pop-up cycleways, Transport for NSW

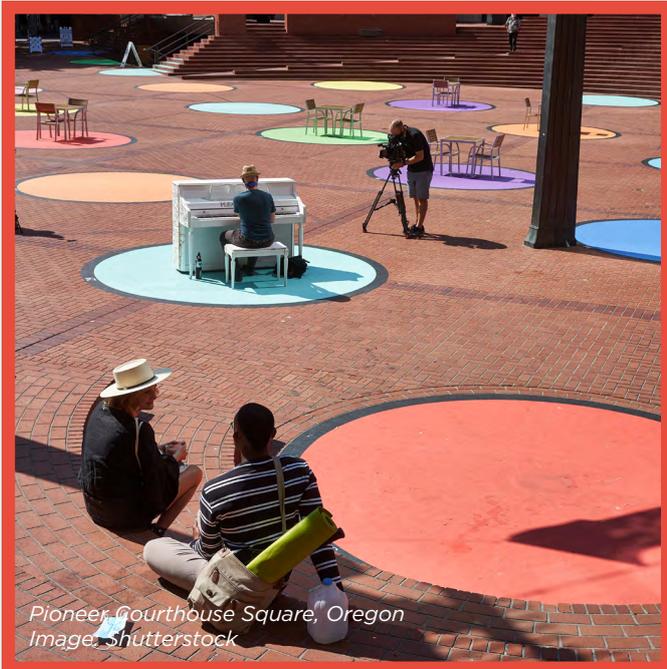
Transport for NSW, in partnership with councils, is rolling out more than 35km of pop-up cycleways across NSW - including Greater Sydney and regional centres such as Newcastle, Wollongong, Goulburn, Nowra, and Batemans Bay. Pop-up cycleways allow people to access streets as public space and link popular public spaces. TfNSW plans a 2km pop-up cycleway connecting Rose Bay to Bondi Beach via O'Sullivan Road and Curlew Street Bondi. Other places around Sydney will benefit from better bike access via pop-up cycleways, while communities enjoy a great COVID Safe way to travel.

What we're doing

- 1 Encouraging local businesses to take advantage of outdoor dining, which in most cases does not require any planning approvals if they meet the relevant standards
- 2 Encouraging local businesses to complete a COVID Safety Plan and register as a COVID Safe business
- 3 Transport for NSW is rolling out pop-up cycleways in Sydney, Wollongong, Newcastle and Goulburn and has lowered speed limits at 12 busy locations in Sydney
- 4 Convening a NSW Summer Summit to work with industry to bring people and life back to the CBD (led by the NSW Treasury)
- 5 Funding councils to make temporary changes to their streets to enable physical distancing, through the Streets as Shared Spaces program
- 6 In regions during the summer school holidays, Transport for NSW will deploy about 40 portable electronic message signs (VMS) to key locations to inform customers of incidents and delays around pinch points

Recommended actions for public space managers

- 1 Work closely with your Surf Lifesaving clubs to come up with ideas and options, for example including designated activity zones or staggering the start time of activities
- 2 Prior to warmer weather, inform local police area command of crowd management plan, including erecting of fences and staggered entry into public spaces. Local police will communicate plan of action as required
- 3 Consider beach ambassadors to monitor visitor numbers at beaches and beachside parks and provide friendly advice about physical distancing and other safety measures
- 4 Consider restricting beach or foreshore parking to encourage turnover and minimise crowding and create additional public space in adjacent areas with street closures or parklets to support physical distancing and movement to and from the area
- 5 Use PA systems and variable messaging signs (VMS) at key attractor sites to provide COVID Safe advice. Where possible, these can be linked to smart solutions to provide real time information on crowding
- 6 Actively use social media and websites to keep community informed of local conditions, closures and crowd redirection, and to encourage the community to check your website to plan their trip in advance as there may be a range of restrictions in place
- 7 Increase cleaning of key touch points and utilities, including outdoor showers and public toilets
- 8 Ensure volunteer facilities for lifeguards and other staff support physical distancing
- 9 Consider smart solutions like sensors, cameras (fixed or drone) or data from mobile network operators to count the number of people using public spaces, spot large gatherings and breaches of COVID Safe rules and predict peak times. These tools can provide visitors and compliance officers (and beach ambassadors) with real-time information
- 10 Encourage people to walk and cycle to their local places through community campaigns and signage, and visit alternative local destinations



Pioneer Courthouse Square, Oregon
Image: Shutterstock

An idea from the Northern Hemisphere summer

Painted Plazas, Oregon, USA

Oregon's Pioneer Courthouse Square uses art to encourage physical distancing for its 11 million annual visitors. The Square's managers invited artists to address the issue; Bill Will's Polka Dot Courthouse Square, an array of colourful vinyl dots, roughly 3.5 metres across and spaced 3 metres apart across a grid, were installed in July. As well as guiding how to distance safely, the dots also encourage public space use by providing a stage for Portland's musicians, dancers, writers and market vendors with safe distance markers for the audience and shoppers.

Ideas from our own backyard



The Rocks, Sydney
Image: Damien Carroll

Increased public space areas, The Rocks and George Street, Sydney

All outdoor dining areas in The Rocks have been extended, allowing customers to physically distance. The extension of outdoor dining areas enables retailers more space to host customers in line with COVID restrictions, while also increasing ambience and activation across the precinct, including live music and cultural performances. Additionally, the City of Sydney will encourage people to feel confident returning to public spaces in the CBD by expanding sections of George Street into a pedestrian-only boulevard. This temporary trial will support CBD businesses experiencing lower pedestrian traffic during the pandemic and will be proposed for permanent transformation after exhibition and community feedback in coming months.



Artist impression of Phillip Lane Activation
Image: Parramatta City Council

Phillip Lane Activation, Parramatta City Council

The Phillip Lane Activation will repurpose an under-utilised place in the Streets as Shared Spaces program. The City of Parramatta Council will clean, paint and consolidate waste to allow new street furniture, plants, art and lighting to fill the space. The Lane will allow events and outdoor dining to support local business during the dual impacts of COVID-19 and major construction in the area. Council will use the project to incentivise cooperation amongst local business to create a public space people cherish while also informing future permanent public space activations.

Our Events and Programs

NSW is an incredible destination and major events play an important role showcasing an area, supporting local economies and engaging the community. Events such as concerts or outdoor screenings animate city spaces, creating opportunities for people to mix and engage in public spaces.

The Public Health Orders specify limits on the number of people allowed on certain premises and for certain activities.



*The Rocks Picnic & Markets
Image: Anna Kucera*

What we're doing

- 1** Establishing a Ministerial taskforce on major events, supported by a central portal where event organisers can seek advice on how to stage COVID Safe events
- 2** Great Southern Nights will deliver 1,000 COVID Safe gigs across live music venues across Greater Sydney and Regional NSW this November, including performances by artists including Jimmy Barnes, Birds of Tokyo and Missy Higgins.
- 3** A series of activities across our state significant places, parks and gardens in our Festival of Place, a 365-day celebration and series of programs and activations encouraging people to be outdoors, active, and re-discover, explore and celebrate our diverse number of public spaces
- 4** Adapting our summer program of events in State-run parklands and open spaces to be COVID Safe

Recommended actions for public space managers

To make an event COVID safe consider the following:

- 1** Encourage timed ticketing and pre-booking
- 2** Plan how people will travel to and arrive at the event and communicate COVID Safe options to avoid congestion
- 3** Set ground rules for running events
- 4** Where possible, use digital tools and QR codes to track numbers and contact details of people in venues, such as through online event registrations
- 5** Help outdoor performances by marking private spaces for household groups
- 6** Consider hybrid events (IRL - in real life + streamed component), such as real-life fireworks with an interactive virtual audience component
- 7** Adapt carparks for evening 'drive in' events, including movies and live music
- 8** Work with your local police area command, local health district and local transport provider to ensure you're doing everything possible to keep the community safe



An idea from the Northern Hemisphere summer

Physical distanced concerts, Newcastle, United Kingdom and Cologne, Germany

In August, the UK's first large-scale physically distanced concert venue opened in Newcastle. The Virgin Money Unit Arena is an outdoor venue holding up to 2,500 spectators via 500 individual viewing platforms spaced two metres apart, each designed to seat a household. The Arena in the grounds of the Newcastle Racecourse is open until mid-September. Such innovations allow people to enjoy live music and support the live music industry. Elsewhere, concert promoter Live Nation has created drive-in concert facilities at 12 existing venues around the UK and in Cologne, a cinema drive-in has been repurposed to hold concerts.



Newcastle Upon Tyne, England
(Photo by Ian Forsyth/Getty Images)



*Parklands Food Fest Virtual Kitchen
Image: Western Sydney Parklands*

Ideas from our own backyard

Parklands Food Fest Virtual Kitchen, Western Sydney Parklands

Western Sydney’s premier food event, Parklands Food Fest 2020 went fully online, streaming two free cooking shows with celebrity chef Matt Moran from a virtual kitchen via Facebook Live. Sydney residents purchased a produce box with fresh ingredients from Western Sydney Parklands’ urban farms to cook along from their own homes. Chef Travis Harvey, from food rescue charity Oz Harvest, made a guest appearance to show how creativity with food scraps can reduce overall household waste. Viewers donated to OzHarvest’s rapid food relief program for those most in need during the pandemic.

Visit: westernsydneyparklands.com.au/foodfest

Revamp of our major events program, Georges River

Georges River Council decided to cancel its popular Magic of Christmas, Australia Day and Lunar New Year events, which attract tens of thousands of people from across Sydney. Council re-imagined its summer events and adapted them to the current environment, to give residents the opportunity to enjoy new experiences and support local business while staying safe and healthy. There will be a broad mix of scalable events in the Georges River area, which can be adapted to the changing nature of COVID-19 restrictions, including a Frightful Eighties’ Drive-in Movie Marathon for Halloween, local food markets, mobile music events, fun run and community sports fan days. Much-needed Christmas joy will be spread with a range of virtual and physical events, including digital Santa photos, an ice-skating rink and Christmas carollers. Attendee numbers for physical events will be controlled using a ticketing system.



*Georges River
Image: Georges River Council*



> HELP US STAY COVID SAFE

Visit www.nsw.gov.au and for
24-hour assistance on Public Health Orders,
you can call Service NSW on **13 77 88**.