

Summertime Taskforce Project Recommendations Report

Queensland Government Response

October 2022



Photo: Tourism and Events Queensland



Queensland
Government

Introduction

The Summertime Taskforce was established by the Queensland Government as a key election commitment and action under the *Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021–2023* – to identify ways for businesses to make greater use of outdoor areas through on-street dining and other forms of outdoor trade.

The Queensland Government welcomes the *Summertime Taskforce Project Recommendations Report* (the Report), provided by Maree Adshead, Queensland Small Business Commissioner, in collaboration with the Summertime Taskforce Industry Reference Group (IRG).

The government response to the Report has been developed in consultation with the Queensland Small Business Commissioner and local

government stakeholders, to maximise our existing programs to support outdoor activation, and make it easier for business and local councils to ‘move outdoors’.

Importantly, our response recognises the diversity of businesses and business ecosystems, and the importance of supporting local decision-making to meet local needs for outdoor trade.

The government thanks the members of the IRG for their contribution and advice, and also Ms Adshead for her role as Chair of the IRG and overseeing development of the Report.



Photo: Tourism and Events Queensland

22091 10/22

Our support for small business

Small businesses form an essential part of Queensland's social and economic fabric. They operate in all industries and in every local community — making up over 97 per cent of the state's businesses and employing 979,000 people.

The last few years have been incredibly difficult for our small businesses, who have faced business disruptions from bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet Queensland's small businesses have shown amazing resilience and a great ability to adapt and innovate.

The Queensland Government has committed to \$15.2 billion of financial and economic support initiatives for Queenslanders in response to the COVID-19 health and economic crisis, which includes the \$140 million *Big Plans for Small Business Strategy*. This assistance includes:

- \$182 million in **Small Business COVID-19 Adaptation Grants** to help small businesses adapt, sustain operations and build resilience
- \$600 million support package to help Queensland businesses including **COVID-19 Business Support grants** and other hardship assistance
- \$1 billion in **interest free/low interest business loans** with 86 per cent going to small business
- More than \$1.3 billion in **payroll tax relief** and **land tax relief** measures
- \$100 million in **electricity bill rebates**
- Building stronger regional economies through **Building our Regions, Works for Queensland**, and investing in **regional tourism infrastructure**
- \$100 million **Business Investment Fund** to invest in small to medium sized businesses with significant growth potential
- 400 free online courses made available for businesses and their employees through the **Small Business Skills Hub**
- Sourcing at least 25 per cent of procurement by value from Queensland small and medium enterprises (SMEs), increasing to 30 per cent by 30 June 2022
- \$1.2 million to establish a **regional network of business support officers** in partnership with the

Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland

- Tailored support for small businesses impacted by COVID-19 through the **Mentoring for Growth program**
- \$7 million to support the **sustainability of live music venues**
- Delivering **ecoBiz** to help small businesses save money on energy, water and waste
- \$4.9 million in total for the **Tourism Business Financial Counselling Service** to provide free advice to tourism operators who need guidance on adapting their business
- \$7 million **Growing Indigenous Tourism in Queensland Fund** to support Indigenous tourism attractions, businesses and regional ecotourism experiences
- \$30 million to **increase skills and capability** through grants and other support for small business.

To ensure consistent support for small business, the Queensland Government has recently established the **Queensland Small Business Commissioner** as a permanent office, to enhance the operating environment for small businesses in Queensland and to reduce the time and costs associated with resolving disputes.

The Queensland Small Business Commissioner is also delivering the **Small Business Friendly Councils program**, which aims to improve the small business operating environment, and reduce barriers between large organisations and small businesses. Over 30 local government councils are currently signed up for the program and have pledged their support for small businesses.

Cutting red tape has been another important way the state government has assisted businesses to continue to operate, recover and rebuild. In response to COVID-19, the government waived a range of regulatory fees and charges, and regulatory requirements, to help restaurants, cafes, clubs and bars, craft brewers and artisan distillers to keep trading.

Through its broader **small business regulatory reform agenda**, the government is continuing to

implement reforms to make it easier for small business to do business. This includes improving regulator engagement, streamlining processes and compliance requirements, and reducing processing times.

Underpinning this reform agenda is the **Regulator Performance Framework**, which is improving the way regulators operate, focusing on better engagement, reduced regulatory burden and

improved transparency and accountability.

With Queensland's economy growing and the **Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games** projected to generate increased international tourism and trade, the time is right to improve business and local government capability to trade outdoors to help make the most of our amazing climate and the bright future ahead.

Rockhampton Regional Council



In a region that enjoys 300 days of sunshine a year, Rockhampton Regional Council is committed to helping its community take advantage of outdoor dining to create vibrant and active street frontages while providing business operators the opportunity to expand floor space at a minimal cost, potentially improving the commercial capacity of their business.

In 2017 Rockhampton Regional Council identified the opportunity to extend the use of the footpath and road reserve to create new places for outdoor dining by installing platforms on existing parking spaces in six CBD heart locations. The Council's Dining Platform Program (the program) aimed to give food and beverage businesses a safe outdoor dining footprint and a better dining out experience for customers.

Benefits of the program include promoting the viability of food and beverage businesses and encouraging activation of the streetscape with more people on foot. Under the program, six parklets have been locally manufactured and established on existing parking spaces and are still popular with customers and local businesses to this day.

Rockhampton Regional Council has now joined the Small Business Friendly Councils (SBF) program, which provides the opportunity for them to share learnings from the Dining Platform Program with other councils.

The SBF program, led by the Queensland Small Business Commissioner, provides the framework, support and tools to help local governments, Queensland Government agencies and large enterprise to realise their goal in supporting small business. By bringing together people around a common goal, the SBF program aims to enhance the operating environment for small businesses and provide the opportunities they need to thrive. A growing list of city and regional councils have signed on to the SBF program.

The SBF program is driven by a series of simple, yet powerful, commitments by SBF members to improve the way they transact, interact, and support small businesses across Queensland. It is designed to create tangible and practical improvements and outcomes that help SBF members deliver on their commitments and become more efficient and effective.

Outdoor trade in Queensland today

Outdoor trade is not new to Queensland. We have an enviable worldwide reputation for being the Sunshine State—where being outdoors is part of the social fabric in all our cities, towns and regions, and is a key attraction that drives our tourism industry.

Contributing to this competitive advantage, outdoor trade brings life to our streets and public spaces, attracting locals and visitors alike. This includes through outdoor dining and hospitality, retail, markets, live music and other entertainment activities. Queensland small businesses are well positioned to maximise the opportunities that outdoor trade can bring to our local economies and communities provided it is done in a safe, accessible and inclusive way.

In Queensland today, local councils have the power to regulate outdoor trading activities such as footpath dining, street markets and commercial activities in parks and other areas.

Under the *Local Government Act 2009* and the *City of Brisbane Act 2010*, local councils have the power to control local roads in their area, to close a road to traffic either permanently or temporarily, and to establish a special entertainment precinct for the purpose of regulating noise from music being played at licensed premises.

In addition, local councils can get approval from the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) to regulate, through local laws, **footpath dining and roadside vending on state-controlled roads**.

This gives local councils the ability to apply consistent rules to businesses in their area, whether they are on state or local roads. It also means applicants only have to contact their local government when seeking approvals in their local area. Costs may be applied for local government assessment and approval of footpath dining or roadside vending, but there is no charge for application to, and assessment and approval by, the Queensland Government.

Recognising the benefits that outdoor trade can bring to our Queensland economy—including a revenue boost for business and revitalised streets—many local governments have taken an active role in facilitating outdoor trade, with great results. For example, **Ipswich City Council** has revitalised local precincts and reduced application times for food truck site licences.

When it comes to **liquor licensing**, Queensland licensees can either permanently or temporarily license outdoor areas for the purposes of facilitating outdoor trade.

The Queensland Government supports businesses that may trade outdoors in many ways. **Small business grants, mentoring and assistance programs** are available to help business owners and operators establish and grow their businesses, and become more productive.

A wide range of business information is available on the **Business Queensland** website – **business.qld.gov.au**. DTMR and the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) also provide information relevant to outdoor dining licensing requirements online, with officers available to provide more **detailed assistance**.

To support businesses during the peak of Queensland's venue restrictions, application fees associated with changes to **trading hours and changes in licensed areas** were waived until 30 June 2022. Liquor license application fees were also waived for two years to support businesses during COVID-19.

The government continues to support **independent craft brewers and artisan distillers** across the state to grow their business and create more jobs for Queenslanders by providing the **artisan liquor licence**. The artisan licence provides a cost-effective permit for our craft brewers and distillers to sell their own products as takeaway and online, as well as showcase and sell samples at events such as festivals and local farmers' markets.

To cut **red tape for food and beverage businesses**, the government has also established one stop shops for regulatory information, including the **Food Pantry** and **Queensland Business Launchpad**.

The **Queensland Business Launchpad** takes the guesswork out of setting up and running a business by consolidating the licences, permits and other important regulatory information from all levels of government. Since April 2021, the Business Launchpad has assisted more than 18,000 users in understanding and applying for the licences and permits they need to start, run and grow their food and beverage or residential construction business.

The Business Launchpad is expanding to more industries and more functionality will be added to

make the customer journey even better. Businesses can submit their liquor licensing forms directly from the Business Launchpad. For more information visit launchpad.business.qld.gov.au.

Revitalising our streetscapes can also enable and encourage businesses that want to trade outdoors. The government will continue to deliver the **Works for Queensland** program to support regional councils to undertake job-creating maintenance and minor infrastructure projects. Each council receives a funding allocation, which can be used to fund a range of projects that improve the local area—such as beautification of streetscapes and outdoor areas, enhanced public safety and security (such as lighting) and increased connectiveness that would support outdoor trade activation.

For example, **the Carpentaria Shire Council** is using funding under the program to beautify outdoor areas, which can lead to more opportunities for local businesses.

The Queensland Government is also continuing to work with businesses and community groups,

in consultation with **TAFE Queensland**, to activate and maximise use of outdoor spaces at **TAFE campuses**. Many of our TAFE campuses support great outdoor spaces that present opportunities for small businesses and sole traders to utilise. For example, **Toowoomba Farmers Market** has been a tenant at Toowoomba TAFE since 2017, hosting farmers from around the region to sell their fresh food and produce. Toowoomba TAFE also hosts night markets including **Christmas and twilight markets**, and several participants in the iconic annual **Toowoomba Flower Show**.

Our Queensland Government Response to the Summertime Taskforce Report builds on this strong foundation. Together with local councils, we will support businesses in finding creative ways to sustainably increase trade and revenue while adding vibrancy to their local area through safe, inclusive and accessible outdoor trade, while also creating opportunities for small business and local communities to grow arts and cultural small scale outdoor events.



Response to the Recommendations

Following detailed consideration of the Report by all relevant state government departments, the Queensland Government will support or support in principle all three Report recommendations.

Recommendation 1

The Queensland Government should appoint a lead agency to evaluate the implementation options proposed in this report and design an outdoor trade activation program for Queensland to boost business productivity and revitalise local economies.

Government Response

Supported

The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) was appointed as the lead agency. DESBT has worked with other relevant Queensland Government agencies and key stakeholders, including local government representatives, to evaluate the implementation options proposed in the Report and identify where support is needed to drive outdoor trade activation in Queensland.

Evaluation of the implementation options has shown that existing Queensland Government regulatory frameworks facilitate outdoor trade. While the outdoor activation programs implemented in other jurisdictions provided a range of learnings, further evaluation highlighted the unique needs of Queensland businesses and the evolving environment, which is now seeing Queensland transition from recovery to economic growth and expansion. In the Queensland context, rather than developing a specific ‘program’, a more sustainable approach to supporting businesses over the longer term is required.

Specifically, there is an opportunity to strengthen support for businesses to move trade outdoors through improving the regulatory environment—by simplifying compliance processes, clarifying regulatory requirements and improving guidance, and supporting a locally led approach to approvals.

Our commitment to take action

The Queensland Government will work with local governments, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner and small business stakeholders to implement a package of assistance measures and

reforms to improve the regulatory environment and build on existing assistance available to maximise opportunities for outdoor trade activation. Further information on measures and reforms is outlined in the Queensland Government *Queensland Outdoor Activation Action Plan*.

The Action Plan will be delivered in place of a specific ‘program’, but has been informed by and will draw on the Report’s implementation options, particularly in relation to: ensuring the Action Plan meets and is responsive to local needs; providing flexibility to local governments to adopt all, some or none of the actions under the Action Plan; seeking to reduce the time and cost of compliance for small business; and assisting local governments wanting to establish outdoor activation areas.

Recommendation 2

The Queensland Government lead agency should pilot an outdoor trade activation program in Queensland to test the program design and determine if supporting businesses to move trade outdoors can boost business productivity and help revitalise local economies.

Government Response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the intent of the Summertime Taskforce to assist small business and help revitalise local economies by supporting businesses to trade outdoors and councils to activate outdoor spaces for trade.

While the Queensland Government notes a targeted pilot approach is recommended to allow flexibility to test initial implementation of a ‘program’, in consultation with local government stakeholders, DESBT has identified a need for a broader state-wide approach to implementing a package of support initiatives and reforms to drive outdoor activation. This would see these initiatives and reforms rolled out to all small businesses and all local government areas—rather than limited to a specific cohort of businesses or a limited number of local councils. It is anticipated these support initiatives and reforms will particularly benefit businesses offering outdoor dining and hospitality, retail, markets, live music and other entertainment activities.

Our commitment to take action

Implementation of the *Queensland Outdoor Activation Action Plan* will be undertaken state-wide. Further, in implementing the Action Plan, DESBT will continue to work with relevant Queensland Government agencies, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner and local councils to monitor how measures are assisting outdoor activation, and their alignment with the government's broader small business regulatory reform agenda. Local government insights into what has and has not worked well will be important to help build a knowledge base that other councils can draw on.

Recommendation 3

The Queensland Government should consider the findings of the Summertime Taskforce in the context of prioritising actions to support the ongoing economic recovery of Queensland small businesses.

Government Response

Supported

The Queensland Government recognises the importance of outdoor activation in revitalising local communities and business precincts, and driving business growth.

Economic recovery remains a priority for the Queensland Government. The government is delivering ongoing support to assist small businesses to recover, ramp up and expand their operations, and employ—through the \$140 million *Big Plans for Small Business Strategy*, and as part of the government's \$15.2 billion commitment to financial and economic support initiatives for Queenslanders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis.

Queensland is in a strong economic position, with record low unemployment and strong consumer confidence. Economic recovery is well underway and consumer spending and tourism are bouncing back. Importantly, as public health restrictions have eased, we are seeing Queenslanders out and about, visiting hospitality, entertainment and retail businesses and venues—which is great for business.

The findings of the Report will assist DESBT in prioritising implementation of assistance measures and reforms (to support outdoor activation) which will further drive economic growth and prosperity.

Our commitment to take action

In delivery of the *Queensland Outdoor Activation Action Plan*, the Queensland Government will prioritise those measures that will contribute to and leverage the Queensland Government's economic strategy.



Queensland Outdoor Activation Action Plan

To deliver on our commitment to take action, the Queensland Government will work with the Queensland Small Business Commissioner, local councils and the small business community to implement the *Queensland Outdoor Activation Action Plan* – a package of assistance measures and reforms to support outdoor activation. The Action Plan will be implemented over three years from 2022 to 2025.

The *Queensland Outdoor Activation Action Plan* will support improvements to the small business regulatory and operating environment, assist business owners and operators and local councils with guidance and information, help connect businesses to support and ideas, and build on existing assistance available to maximise opportunities for outdoor trade activation.

Action Area: Improve the operating environment

Action	Implementation lead
<p>1. Support local governments to apply for delegations which allow designated officers to approve a liquor licence change of boundary for outdoor trade subject to certain restrictions</p> <p>Provide councils with more control, and support local decision making in line with local economic development plans. Under this action, it is estimated approval times will be reduced by up to two weeks.</p>	DJAG
<p>2. Investigate options to provide greater flexibility for small businesses within the existing extended hours permit framework</p> <p>Review the existing framework to identify ways that small businesses can have greater flexibility when seeking extensions to trading permits within the existing regulatory framework.</p>	DJAG
<p>3. Work with local governments to explore the establishment of Outdoor Trade Activation Areas</p> <p>Assist and enable local governments to make the regulatory requirements (such as town planning and local laws) for outdoor trade simpler or more accessible for local businesses to take up such opportunities where in an identified Outdoor Trade Activation Area—making it easier for businesses to know where they can move their operations outdoors.</p>	DSDILGP
<p>4. Streamline approvals for on-street dining</p> <p>Identify opportunities to make it easier and quicker for businesses to gain approval for on-street dining where an approved Outdoor Trade Activation Area has been established.</p>	DTMR
<p>5. Improve guidance and support to businesses applying for dining and roadside vending</p> <p>Review and simplify guidance material to support small businesses to make decisions on setting up footpath dining or roadside vending.</p>	DTMR
<p>6. Continue to deliver and expand the Queensland Business Launchpad to cut red tape for business</p> <p>Through the Business Launchpad, it will be easier for businesses wanting to expand outdoors, in all local government areas, to understand their compliance requirements and other regulatory information, and submit some of their licencing paperwork.</p>	DESBT

Action area: Navigate, celebrate and raise awareness

Action	Implementation lead
<p>7. Develop a toolkit for councils to encourage and maximise outdoor trade</p> <p>The toolkit will include ideas, examples and avenues for support—highlighting opportunities for outdoor trade activation and providing guidance on how to navigate the regulatory environment and support available.</p>	<p>DESBT</p>
<p>8. Raise awareness of outdoor trading information and support for businesses</p> <p>Use government and business communication channels to raise awareness of business information and support available for businesses wanting to expand their operations outdoors.</p>	<p>DESBT</p>
<p>9. Celebrate outdoor trade</p> <p>Develop a targeted social media campaign to promote outdoor activation as a tool to expand business opportunities and profitability, and also encourage Queenslanders to support their local business community.</p>	<p>DESBT</p>



Action area: Connect and build capability

Action	Implementation lead
<p>10. Expand the Placemaking Community of Practice under the Small Business Friendly Councils program to include a focus on outdoor activation</p> <p>Through the Small Business Friendly Councils program, economic development officers from local governments around the state will have opportunities to network and discuss ways to encourage outdoor trade in their local areas, so they can minimise duplication and learn from each other's failures and successes.</p>	QSBC
<p>11. Provide access to mentoring to businesses that are getting ready to trade outdoors</p> <p>Connect businesses to experienced business mentors through the Mentoring for Growth program—to assist businesses interested in expanding to outdoor trade.</p>	DESBT

List of abbreviations

DJAG – Department of Justice and Attorney-General

DESBT – Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

DSDILGP – Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning

DTMR – Department of Transport and Main Roads

LGAQ – Local Government Association of Queensland

QSBC – Queensland Small Business Commissioner