

6.2 Additional Outdoor Dining

Submitting Councillor: Stuart James

MOTION

That Council

1. *Sees the value in exploring options for additional outdoor dining areas, whether they be permanent, semi-permanent and/or seasonal.*
2. *Acknowledges that there has not yet been consultation with traders within Activity Centres to understand their views on any such initiative, including the loss of car spaces, nor has there been any opportunity for the community to share their views.*
3. *Undertakes trader and broader consultation to understand their views on additional enhanced outdoor dining/trading opportunities and reports back to Council on the outcome of the consultation at or before the September 2022 Council meeting. This will enable Council to consider whether it proceeds with developing a policy for additional enhanced outdoor dining/trading areas (where appropriate) including consideration of:*
 - *Agreement or otherwise to the loss of carparking spaces*
 - *How any additional enhanced outdoor dining/trading area could be provided.*
 - *What other businesses other than hospitality businesses could utilise enhanced outdoor areas.*
 - *The look and standard of what additional enhanced outdoor dining areas should deliver, should they be implemented, including, but not limited to, matters such as footpath expansion with realigned kerb and channels and the types of additional structures that could be considered to enhance our Activity Centres.*
4. *That Council includes an allocation of \$50,000 in its 2022/23 budget to facilitate this work.*

BACKGROUND

With the onset of the COVID19 pandemic, hospitality businesses were hit hard with restrictions that at times meant some businesses were unable to operate, or at the very least, trade was limited to those who could provide takeaway service.

As restrictions eased, the State Government actively encouraged Councils to make footpaths, car parks, roadways and other areas available to hospitality business who would be allowed to resume trade, but with limitations on the number of patrons that could be accommodated both indoors and outdoors. This came with some funding to setup and maintain these areas for a period of time. With the State Government funding no longer available, paying for these areas to continue to operate was left to Council. This funding was in addition to Council waiving its normal outdoor dining fees over the last two financial years.

For Monash, these temporary enhanced outdoor dining areas mostly resulted in traders being able to extend service on footpaths next to adjacent businesses whilst for others, parts of the road usually set aside for car parking were temporarily re-purposed to accommodate outdoor dining. Due to the urgency and speed at which these areas were

created, there were a number of unforeseen circumstances that had impacts on other traders and visitors to the areas.

DISCUSSION

The current temporary arrangements were never intended to be permanent will shortly be decommissioned.

This motion proposes that Council explore options for the development of additional outdoor dining areas (whether they be permanent, semi-permanent or seasonal) to replace some car parks in activity centres across Monash.

It is now time for Council to consider what options for additional enhanced outdoor dining areas could be, which would not only lead to better areas, but also outcomes that are fully paid by businesses (should they seek to take up any opportunity) as opposed to Council.

Importantly, the motion also proposes that Council engage with all businesses within Activity Centres, and also the broader community, to gather their views on these enhanced outdoor dining areas before making any decisions on how we may choose to proceed, if at all.

With this motion, the options that will be developed will not be in response to the pandemic and the need to urgently create these areas within our Activity Centres, but rather better account for urban design, infrastructure and safety considerations, which will lead to superior outcomes for outdoor dining opportunities.

Done right, these areas could improve the urban amenity making our activity centres more attractive to the community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To facilitate this work, including preliminary design work and trader consultation a budget allocation of \$50,000 is required.

The preliminary work would include the preparation of indicative costings associated with the conversion of on street parking to outdoor dining.

CONCLUSION

The COVID pandemic encouraged the hospitality trade to make increased use of the outdoors to maximise trading opportunities. There were significant variations between installations, with several safety issues identified, along with impacts on neighbouring traders and visitors to the centre. With these temporary installations now being removed, the time is right to look at the possibility of additional installations that meet standards across the municipality.