COVID Safe Summer Guide

The guide for NSW’s public space managers this summer

As the weather warms up, we’re helping councils, public space managers, small business owners and local communities with our COVID Safe Summer Guide. We can all help keep public spaces stay open and accessible by working together to reduce COVID-19 spreading. Please stay safe and visit the NSW Government website for the latest information on COVID-19.

In addition to the Government website, we’ve collected case studies demonstrating different ways council and state government public space managers are working to support the community to keep safe during the pandemic.

What’s in the case studies

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

Case Studies

Our Parklands and Open Spaces

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, 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 1.5m distance stickers on the ground at regular intervals, arranged for two patrolling Rangers to provide education on COVID Safe practices and barricaded park benches, tables and water bubblers as a preventative measure. Council took regular census counts to help direct resources to when they were most needed. We 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.
**Street Play – North Sydney Council**

North Sydney Council’s Street Play pilot, which received Streets as Shared Spaces grant funding, temporarily closes roads to create more public space. From September, the community will be able to nominate streets via a public map. The agile program will move with community demands to accommodate where people want to see ‘play’ days. The sites will be accessible and promote connectivity to schools, services and open space. The Council has also commissioned a mobile parklet that will include interactive games for kids of different age groups.

**Supporting community – Parramatta City Council**

Parramatta’s abundance of existing public spaces and facilities offer welcoming and safe destinations for our residents, workers and visitors. Council workers 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 live-streamed theatre and music performances, Parramatta Artists’ Studios’ Studio Conversations podcast series, City of Parramatta Libraries’ online story time, and the Parramatta Heritage and Visitor Information Centre’s Victory in the Pacific Day Online Experience. 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 our 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.

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

NPWS introduced a booking system (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 June 1 this year, only 65 campgrounds used an online booking system. In just 8 days, NPWS included the remaining 200+ campgrounds on the system, so now 370 campgrounds are available across 80 national parks. 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.

**Parklets, Hurstville – Georges River Council**

Over the next 12 months, Council will deliver exciting public domain improvements focusing on places for people through a Streets as Shared Spaces grant. The offerings to the community will include increased public art, parklets, traffic calming measures, opportunities for increased outdoor dining and new activation spaces.
Case Studies

Our Beaches and Foreshores

COVID communications – Northern Beaches Council

Council employed a highly effective communications campaign, including an online COVID information hub, weekly electronic newsletter distribution to residents and businesses and responded to community concerns on social media 24/7. Council deployed over 35 Variable Messaging Signs across the region, lifeguards issued regular broadcasts across the patrolled beaches and Council installed over 9,000 signs throughout our parks, town centres and beaches promoting health and safety messages.

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

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

Our Local Streets, Plazas and High Street Businesses

Supporting local businesses – Blue Mountains City Council

Blue Mountains City Council registered as a COVID Safe business, so the community could feel comfortable about continuing to visit our facilities throughout the pandemic. It installed branded sanitiser stands at the entry of all Council facilities, so the community could continue safe hygiene practices. It provided floor indicators, to assist with social distancing, installed screens at all customer service desks and recommended the community make contactless payments. Council installed social distancing signage at Council facilities and also made social distancing signage available to businesses throughout the City. Katoomba’s Customer Service Centre introduced a concierge, who helped usher visitors into the centre safely. Council also closed some public facilities for a period. Echo Point at Katoomba, which is one of Australia’s most visited tourism destinations, was closed between March and May 2020 to ensure the safety of visitors and the local community.
Supporting local businesses – Georges River Council and Woollahra Council

Georges River Council and Woollahra Council have introduced a range of measures to support local business.

The Georges River Council Economic and Social Recovery provides 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 big win from the Plan was increased outdoor dining facilitated by fee waivers. The $47 million plan includes approximately 40 initiatives across three key phases: Immediate Support; Revival (initiatives to revitalise, support relaxing restrictions and prepare for a post COVID-19 environment) and Discover Georges River (focusing on celebrating and relaunching the city to community and visitors).

Since March 2020, Woollahra Council has allocated $7 million in relief measures to help small businesses facing difficult trading conditions, including local pubs, clubs, cafes and restaurants. Support includes: rent relief for Council’s small and medium commercial and community tenants until 31 March 2021 (with a review in February); no charge for footpath dining until 30 June 2021; and an Economic Development Officer appointed to coordinate a range of local initiatives until 31 December 2021. VMS signboards and printed signage were placed in public spaces and staff followed with regular visits to these locations and to commercial centres, and greater flexibility was allowed on placement of outdoor footway dining furniture to assist local cafes, restaurants and pubs to address physical distancing requirements and support their viability.

Coogee Bay Village Shared Space – Randwick City Council

To address the impacts of COVID-19 and support the resilience of the local economy and community, Randwick Council is planning, through the Streets as Shared Spaces grant program, to temporarily close one lane along the Coogee Beach business strip. This will allow traffic to flow through at a reduced speed as a one-way street, while providing additional space for businesses to continue operations and for pedestrians to maintain social distancing. The street activation will build on the local beach and café culture through street art installations, buskers, play areas for children, and outdoor seating. This project will provide an alternative place for people to dwell near the beach and support local businesses.
Our Local Streets, Plazas and High Street Businesses

Case Studies

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

Ballina Shire Council will improve public space amenity and safety for pedestrians and cyclists in and around Park Lane, Lennox Head near the town’s shopping precinct, under the Streets as Shared Spaces grants program. Park Lane is a popular shortcut for pedestrians wanting to avoid the main street traffic; Council aims to transform the shortcut into a great public space. A program of works will test traffic calming interventions and street landscape features including reflecting desire lines in new pedestrian crossings, slowing traffic by using recycled rubber to raise thresholds and kerbs, creating a temporary roundabout, using decorative paving treatments to make pedestrian routes visually legible, and providing a new mural and decorative lighting to improve ambience. Many of these ideas emerged from community consultation.

Lennox Head. Northern Rivers
Image: Ballina Shire Council

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 for a 2km pop-up cycleway connecting Rose Bay to Bondi Beach via O’Sullivan Road and Curlewis 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.
Local support – Northern Beaches Council

Council monitored and audited the town centres, conducted health checks with local tourist operators and worked closely with the business community. A new Business Support Package provides flexible solutions, including 27 quick pick-up zones, support to enable any shift to takeaway food service, flexibility for round-the-clock supermarket deliveries, extension of outdoor dining areas and footpath merchandising. In addition, Council provided $1.5 million in fee waivers, including support for personal trainers to work in public parks and ongoing digital marketing campaigns to support shop local messages. COVID safety plans were developed for Council venues such as libraries, customer service and aquatic centres. To support the safe return to face-to-face customer servicing, an online booking system enables customers to book online 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.

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 Local 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 to help ease the financial pressure on retailers. Popular COVID Safe activations include the Lomond Crescent food trucks days and new outdoor dining venues at the renovated Carmen Drive Shops.
Our Events and Programs

**Sydney’s Olympic Games Legacy**

**self-guided experience and app – Sydney Olympic Park**

Twenty years ago, the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games were held here on the lands of the Wangal. People can now relive the many unforgettable moments during those magical few weeks by exploring Sydney Olympic Park guided by a new app, walking in the footsteps of sporting champions while visiting the significant sites and venues that made it the “the best Games ever”. The app is available from the App Store or Google Play or via the Sydney Olympic Park Live website from 15 September 2020.


**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 complete the routes at their own pace, in their own time, 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.


**Great Southern Nights – various venues across NSW**

Great Southern Nights will deliver 1000 COVID Safe gigs across live music venues in Greater Sydney and Regional NSW this November. Performances by established, emerging and local Australian artists will invigorate the re-emergence of the live music sector while supporting musicians and venues. Artists include Jimmy Barnes, Birds of Tokyo and Missy Higgins and the event will culminate in Australia’s most significant music industry event, the ARIA Awards. Destination NSW and the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) are partners delivering the event and all shows will comply with current NSW Government health advice.


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**HELP US STAY COVID SAFE**