Office of Local Government

COVID-19 COUNCIL UPDATE

5 November 2020

NSW to reopen Victorian border

The NSW Government will reopen the border to Victoria at 12.01am on November 23.

The reopening will be a welcome relief to residents and businesses in border towns impacted by the border closure.

It will also provide people with the confidence to make plans, book holidays and reunite with family members in the lead up to Christmas.

The NSW Government will continue to work with its Victorian counterparts to protect the health and safety of the community and has strengthened processes to support contact tracing across the two states.

The current restrictions on movement across the NSW-Victoria border will stay in place until the reopening on November 23.

Under the Public Health (COVID-19 Border Control) Order (No 2) 2020, anyone who has been in Victoria in the past 14 days must not enter NSW unless:

- They hold a current entry permit
- They are authorised to enter under the order.

Only border region residents can travel within the NSW/Victoria border region. All other NSW residents that travel to Victoria including within the border region will be unable to return to NSW without a current entry permit or authorisation to enter under the Order.

For more information on the current restrictions still in place please click here.

COVID-19 recovery projects unlocked through $850 million investment

The NSW Government has worked with councils to unlock $850 million worth of investment in local projects following changes to infrastructure contributions policy.

So far 488 community projects had been identified by 15 councils with significant funds across Sydney, the Central Coast and the Hunter.

Projects on the list identified by the 15 councils include:

- Bayside Council: $7.3 million for improvements to Arncliffe Town Centre
- Fairfield Council: $3 million for the Fairfield showground redevelopment
- Ku-ring-gai Council: $1.6 million for Stanley Street park in St Ives
- Lake Macquarie City Council: $4.4 million for the Gymea Avenue and Myall Road intersection upgrade at Garden Suburb, and
- City of Parramatta: $4.8 million for Hill Road and Bennelong Road upgrades, bus shelters and upgrade to Haslams Creek Bridge.

For more information and a list of participating councils click here.

Grants to revitalise Sydney CBD

More alfresco dining, roving performances, chairs in squares and people meeting with friends and family at cafes and restaurants are all part of the vision of the NSW Government and City of Sydney partnership to revitalise the Sydney CBD this summer.

The NSW Government will provide $1.5 million to fund a CBD activation grant program as part of its $20 million partnership with the City of Sydney, which has now been signed.

The jointly-funded $3 million program will support delivery of CBD activation grants of between $5,000 and $50,000 to businesses, creatives and community groups to encourage people back into the city centre.

The new grants follow the $72.5 million support package released by the City in March for small businesses, artists and the creative and community sectors impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City has also expanded to Surry Hills the popular Chairs in Squares program, waived fees for footway dining and health and building inspections, provided rental support for tenants and childcare services and brought forward $23 million of capital works to support construction in the city.

The grants, which opened to businesses on October 29 and will close on December 7, form part of the NSW Government's $15 million contribution to the $20 million partnership with the City of Sydney.

To find out more about the NSW Government's $16 billion health and economic stimulus measures, please visit nsw.gov.au.

Skilling for recovery fee-free training

Councils are encouraged to spread the word that hundreds of fee-free training courses are now available for school leavers, young people and job seekers as part of the NSW Government's Skilling for Recovery initiative.

Enrolments are now open for in-demand skills leading to career pathways in areas such as aged care, nursing, trades, IT, community services, logistics and accounting.

As part of the initiative, school leavers have the unique opportunity to experience a range of skills to find out what suits their passions using the Summer Skills program.

The Summer Skills offered will cover a range of industries including agriculture, construction, conservation, fitness, engineering, coding, communication and digital literacy.

Full details are available for the Skilling for Recovery initiative here and the Summer Skills program here.

NSW country shows to resume early 2021

Regional communities and show committees can start planning events scheduled for early 2021 with the NSW Government today giving the green light for country shows to resume in NSW.

COVID Safe measures are being put in place to allow up to 5,000 people at any given time to attend shows in the new calendar year, starting with Bowral, which is scheduled to be held on January 9.

Safety measures will include social distancing at venues, controlled access at entry points throughout the show to minimise crowding, a limit to the number of attendees depending on venue size and the one person per 4 square metre rule.

Organisers are encouraged to use the Service NSW COVID Safe QR codes to enable safe management of crowd numbers and enable contact tracing.

The NSW Government is working with the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW to explore options for the 2021 Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Guidelines and checklists for country shows will be available here.

COVID-19 and the way we work

Time and cost savings, greater productivity and increased flexibility are some of the benefits which could be realised by workers and businesses across the State after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NSW Innovation and Productivity Council has released its *NSW Remote Working Insights* report which outlines lessons learnt from widespread remote working.

The report surveyed 1,500 remote workers to find out about their experience of remote work during COVID-19, and what they want to do in the future.

The IPC also harnessed technology from Sydney-based artificial intelligence company Faethm to analyse the 'remoteability' of the NSW workforce, revealing what types of workers can work remotely, and to what extent.

Findings include:

- Half of the workforce can work remotely for at least two days a week, where only a small fraction did so previously.
- By working remotely, NSW workers save an average of 1 hour and 17 minutes per day from not commuting. Two days per week of remote work equates to over three extra weeks of annual leave, and about $860 in saved travel costs per year.
- Most who could work remotely reported higher productivity, but much work is not 'remoteable' (56 per cent), and collaboration and social isolation are key challenges for remote workers.
- NSW remote workers want a balance with two to three days of remote work per week.

- A 'hybrid model' could combine the best aspects of remote work with the benefits of offices for collaboration, team-building, and non-remoteable tasks.

For the full report, please click here.

Information and resources

Guidelines for COVID Safe workplaces
Safety plans for a range of businesses and organisations can be found here, and those in the sport and recreation sector here.

Keep Our Mob Safe campaign
NSW Health in partnership with the Department of Customer Service has developed the Keep Our Mob Safe campaign to prepare and empower Aboriginal people to keep themselves and their communities safe and healthy amid COVID-19. The resources include flyers, posters, and social media tiles and are available for download here.

Together against COVID-19
A pack outlining strategy, plans, and controls for communication to build social cohesion as the COVID-19 crisis evolves can be found here.

Stakeholder toolkit in community languages
Downloadable translated resources and direct links to information on how to stay COVID Safe in the community and specific resources for businesses can be found here and here.

Quicklinks
Councils can access the latest information and resources about COVID-19 on the NSW Government, NSW Health, Commonwealth Government, Commonwealth Department of Health, and NSW Office of Local Government websites.