

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business

Minister for Resources



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OUTDOOR ECONOMY CASH VOUCHERS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Victorian businesses from 11am today can apply for vouchers to help them take advantage of open-air trading opportunities as the state prepares for the next major stage of reopening on Friday.

More than 7,000 vouchers valued at \$2,000 are available to help pay for the hire and purchase of furniture and equipment and other costs as part of the Victorian Government's new \$54.5 million *Outdoor Economy Package*.

Public health settings for regional and metropolitan Victoria come together at 6pm on Friday as we enter Phase C of the Roadmap to Deliver the National Plan and significant new freedoms are shared across the state – some 20 per cent of the vouchers will be reserved for regional businesses.

The *COVIDSafe Outdoor Activation Voucher Program* is open to businesses, community organisations, not-for-profits, charities and trader associations to set up street trading and invigorate local areas.

Successful businesses will be able to use their voucher for expenses including purchasing and hiring marquees, screens and umbrellas, obtaining insurance and promoting outdoor operations, to a limit of \$2,000.

Restaurants, cafes, hotels and bars are eligible to apply for vouchers, as are hairdressers, beauty services, dance studios, gyms and retail shops – including Brunswick fashion label Kindling which has created a welcoming space for customers to browse and try on clothes in its courtyard. The courtyard had previously been used for staff breaks.

Applicants to the program must provide a plan detailing how they will move their business activities outdoors, and provide proof that the voucher payment has been spent on eligible items within three months.

The *Outdoor Economy Package* also includes the \$40 million *COVIDSafe Outdoor Activation Fund* which is helping councils transform outdoor areas with new street furniture, landscaping and public art as well as entertainment.

For more information on the *COVIDSafe Outdoor Activation Voucher Program* – and to apply – go to vic.gov.au/covidsafe-outdoor-activation-voucher-program.

The City of Melbourne will continue to be supported separately through the \$200 million *Melbourne City Revitalisation Fund* – the Government is working with the City of Melbourne to bring visitors back to the city and provide support for businesses, including to establish and enhance outdoor operations.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford

"Our reopening is gathering pace and it's fantastic to see businesses across the state moving from survival footing into relaunch mode."

"Businesses thoroughly deserve this moment and those that can see a benefit in taking their operations outside deserve our support to make a real go of it."

Quotes attributable to Kindling owner Nina O'Brien

"Our click and collect customers told us they were keen to go shopping in person again and offering a space in the backyard where our customers could safely shop and try-on our new collection made sense."

"It was so nice to have people through and to receive such positive feedback about the new work we have been creating behind the scenes during lockdown."

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