

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Sunday, 7 November 2021

DINING, DANCING & DELIGHT – MAJOR BOOST FOR CBD RECOVERY

A boost for cafes and restaurants, bigger Christmas events, pop-up attractions and new business support will turbo-charge the CBD's recovery as workers and visitors return to Melbourne's heart.

A \$44 million package unveiled by the Andrews Labor Government and the City of Melbourne today will inject renewed life into the city as Victorians enjoy hard-won freedoms and look to celebrate in the city over summer.

The first initiatives from the \$200 million jointly-funded *Melbourne City Revitalisation Fund* include a new Midweek Melbourne Money scheme, which follows the successful Melbourne Money program that generated \$40 million in revenue for city cafes and restaurants in June and July.

From Monday, 15 November, diners will be enticed into the CBD with significant savings when they visit destinations like Flinders Lane between Monday and Thursday. This program aims to boost foot traffic on weekdays.

This \$5 million round of rebates will allow diners to claim up to \$150 off their bill, with the 30 per cent saving up from the 20 per cent offered mid-year.

More than 200,000 rebates will be up for grabs at restaurants, cafes and bars where meals are served across the City of Melbourne – including the CBD, Lygon Street, North Melbourne, Southbank, South Wharf and Docklands.

A total of \$10.4 million will go towards bolstering businesses, also including support for outdoor trading and dining through permit fee waivers and new infrastructure, and initiatives to boost the night-time economy.

An allocation of \$15.7 million will bolster the city's events calendar, with an expanded Christmas Festival starting two weeks earlier than usual – next Friday, 12 November.

New attractions include a Christmas Carnival at Birrarung Marr, floating art installations on the Yarra, a Christmas maze at Docklands, a Christmas night market at the Queen Victoria Market and augmented reality "Elfie Selfie" stations across the city.

The Christmas Festival will also see the return of family favourites including Santa's Workshop at Federation Square and lighting projections on the Melbourne Town Hall, Hamer Hall and Chapter House Lane – plus thousands of street decorations and a 16-metre-tall Christmas tree at Fed Square.

Events businesses will be supported through grants, waivers of permit fees and charges, and sponsorships. On top of that, more than \$14 million will be invested to enhance public areas, refreshing familiar places with pop-up libraries and creative spaces.

A further \$3.6 million will provide city businesses with an enhanced Business Concierge service to provide greater support for new businesses and help existing city traders adapt to the post-COVID economy.

For more information on Midweek Melbourne Money, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"The CBD is the heart of our great city and a magnet for all Victorians – and we're making sure it can bounce back quickly and strongly."

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“We want kids to enjoy the magic of Christmas in the city and businesses to get the benefit of an amazing vaccination effort that is delivering rewards for Victorians every day.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Industry Support and Recovery Martin Pakula

“The CBD’s recovery is gathering pace with activity coming back and our theatres re-opening. The Midweek Melbourne Money vouchers will provide a real boost for many hospitality businesses.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane

“This partnership with the City of Melbourne is delivering for city businesses, the residents who call the CBD home and the visitors who love its great restaurants, cafes, parks and culture.”

Quote attributable to Melbourne Lord Mayor Sally Capp

“This summer is going to be a celebration like no other, as we roll out a program of spectacular events, exciting initiatives and critical infrastructure to entice people to enjoy the city’s hospitality, shopping and entertainment.”