

Making Space



Extending outdoor dining and
entertainment in Mount Alexander Shire



SHAPE

Mount Alexander

Making Space

Mount Alexander Shire Council has been working together with local businesses to assist with the expansion of outdoor dining and entertainment, while meeting COVID-19 restrictions.

With support from the Victorian Government's Outdoor Eating and Dining Program, we established outdoor eating and entertainment spaces in Maldon, Harcourt and Castlemaine.

We installed picnic tables and parklets, and converted disused carparks into active and vibrant public spaces.



3

pop up parks/
spaces



4

parklets



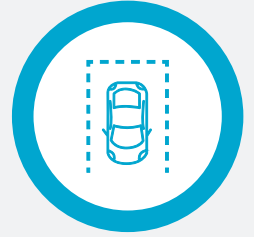
6

business with
extended outdoor
dining



171

additional
seats



8

car spaces
used

From March to June, we asked business owners/operators hosting an outdoor space and the community what you thought of the program, using a mix of posters, newspaper advertisements, our website, radio, social media and email newsletters.

Who we engaged with

During the engagement period (5 March - 14 June 2021) there were 192 contributions. The contributions were received via our online engagement platform, Shape Mount Alexander, and also by direct email.



Our new outdoor dining and entertainment spaces

Last updated: 16 Aug, 2021

The pandemic meant we needed to rethink how we use our public spaces - in 2021 we want to know how all these new spaces are working!

[Learn more](#)

Tell us what you think

Right now you're in a temporary outdoor dining and entertainment space. We'd love to know what you think of it.



Complete our two-minute online survey with the QR code or visit:
shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/making-spaces



What we heard

In considering all 192 contributions to the engagement, the majority of feedback was positive in terms of overall sentiment.



Parklets

84% of respondents strongly support the parklets

All of the businesses in the outdoor dining program felt it was overwhelmingly positive; citing the ability to hire additional staff, improved safety for patrons, and enhancement of the streetscape.

All of the businesses in the outdoor dining program said they would host a parklet again.



Old Bank Corner, Maldon

92% of respondents were strongly supportive of the installation at Bank Corner, saying it was 'positive'

More than 80% of respondents would support the hosting of more events at the site.



Village Square, Frederick Street, Castlemaine

58% of respondents were positive

33% provided mixed feedback, mainly requesting more activity and improvements to make it a successful public space.



Picnic Tables (Harcourt, Castlemaine)

85% of respondents were positive about the picnic tables in Castlemaine and Harcourt.

Three percent of survey respondents expressed concern about the impact of the program on car parking in Castlemaine, and the accessibility of the spaces and furniture. Improving accessibility will be reviewed and addressed in the future. Better activation of the pop up spaces is also a priority.

We received two responses from local retailers, who raised concerns about the hospitality and entertainment focus of the funding. The grant guidelines from the Victorian Government stipulated

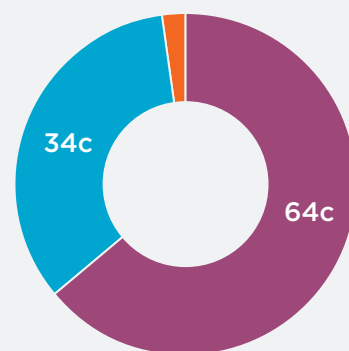
that the funding be specifically used to support hospitality and entertainment businesses. Retailers were ineligible for funding through this program.

However keeping the program funds within the community was a priority, and where possible, Council engaged local businesses, artists and community organisations to build street furniture, and provide entertainment in the activated spaces throughout the program.

For every dollar Council spent as part of the program:

64c was spent within Mount Alexander Shire on employing builders, artists, contractors, community organisations.

34c in the region (Bendigo, Kyneton) on employing builders, artists, contractors, community organisations.



What's next?

Council has determined to continue the program beyond the initial period of 30 June 2021 through to October 2022.

This will mean that businesses can continue to benefit from extending outdoor dining and entertainment areas while social distancing is still an important part of the pandemic response.

Thank you for your feedback, and we look forward to sharing more of our plans for the future of our public spaces.

“
Anna C says:
Excellent idea.
Encourages community gatherings, brings life to the outside spaces, provides central sitting areas, allows communication.
”

“
randiwagner says:
Wonderful! This is such a creative town, lets keep building & exploring this idea to create more vibrancy, community connection & patronage.
”

“
Andy J says:
Love the parklets and picnic tables - just simple ideas that create spaces for people to hang out. Love reclaiming car-parks for people too!
”

“
Claire says:
I like them.
It increases space in venues, great social spaces and activity on to the street. An improvement consider accessibility.
”

“
Chris C says:
This is a good space. As a local who likes to spend time in the Maldon main streets area, it gives me the chance to find a place to sit.
”

“
Flick says:
I love these new spaces created for many of the cafes, please make them permanent, social distancing for future is a great idea!
”