

Report by Cathy Jones, Policy & Projects Officer and Brooke Martin, A/Manager Civicspace

RECOMMENDATION

That the policy for Controls and Guidelines for Outdoor Dining Areas within Strathfield Municipal Council be placed on public exhibition for 28 days to seek public comment.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

Council, at its meeting on 5 October 2010, resolved (Minute No. 256/10):

“That the policy for Controls and Guidelines for Outdoor Dining Areas within Strathfield Municipal Council be deferred for consultation with business owners.”

This report has been prepared in response to the resolution.

REPORT

Further to the Council resolution, Council contacted all affected businesses by letter requesting feedback on the draft policy.

One submission from the Strathfield Chamber of Commerce was received. No submissions were received from businesses in the other town centre precincts such as Homebush and Homebush West. The Strathfield Chamber of Commerce submission concerned the proposal to prohibit smoking in or adjacent to outdoor dining areas and stated that:

“Several restaurant and café owners have informed the Chamber that trade is still very slow and they are concerned, at this point in time, if any regulation was introduced that could prevent customers coming to Strathfield to dine in their restaurants and cafes that it could be detrimental to the viability of businesses in Strathfield’.

It appears that the objection to prohibiting smoking is based on assumptions about customer behaviour. According to the Cancer Council of NSW, less than 20% of Australians smoke. The daily smoking rate in NSW, recorded in 2007, was men 18.3% and women 14.5%. As over 80% of the population are non-smokers, it could be argued that continuing to allow smoking in places where food and drink is served may also be a detriment to the majority of the community who are not smokers.

As this issue affects the wider community, it is recommended that the draft policy be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days and comments are invited from the community. A further report will be presented to Council following the public exhibition process.

REFERRAL FROM OTHER DEPARTMENT

Council’s Technical Services Department was consulted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Letter from Strathfield Chamber of Commerce
2. Recirculated report: Outdoor Dining Policy Report 5 October 2010
3. Draft Controls and Guidelines for Outdoor Eating Areas within Strathfield Municipal Council
4. *“Application for Outdoor Dining Permit”* Form

Report approved by:

Patrick Wong
Director Technical Services