

16 December 2021

## **LOCALS URGED TO “SHOP THE GONG”**

The region’s peak business organisation, Business Illawarra, has welcomed Wollongong City Council’s buy local campaign **We Shop the Gong!** to help local businesses recover from a reported 30 per cent drop in spending in the Local Government Area during July to December this year compared to same period last year.

According to data from Council, over the last 12 months residents spent \$2.5 billion outside of the region and online. If just ten percent of this spending was diverted to local business an extra \$250 million would enter our economy and in turn support up to 3,200 jobs.

“We know that the pandemic has had a significant impact on business, especially small businesses in our retail and hospitality strips and we have been advocating for all levels of government to provide support and undertake campaigns like the one Council has launched at this opportune time,” said Business Illawarra Executive Director, Adam Zarth.

“Now that the reopening plan is in its final stages with restrictions almost completely removed, local businesses appreciate this additional marketing and promotional support Council is providing to get locals back into our stores and outlets and using local service providers”.

“Business Illawarra now calls on residents to **‘Buy Local’** in this busy shopping period leading up to Christmas and throughout the summer holiday months going into 2022”.

“We also encourage businesses themselves getting involved in the campaign and believe they will be well served by doing so,” Mr Zarth said.

Residents are encouraged to adopt the Council suggestions to:

- add **‘Near Me’** to your internet searches
- head to your **‘High Street’** before heading out of the area to shop
- **‘Ask a Friend’** about where they found a specific good or service locally, and
- **‘Share the Love’** about their own local purchases.

Local businesses are urged to get involved by:

- using the **We Shop the Gong** graphics
- tagging the **We Shop the Gong** social channels and using **#weshopthegong**
- submitting a story to Council, and
- ordering window decals and carry bags when they become available.

Information and campaign tools for businesses are available at:

<https://wollongong.nsw.gov.au/business-in-wollongong/we-shop-the-gong/for-business>

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### **About Business Illawarra**

Formerly the Illawarra Business Chamber, *Business Illawarra* is the region’s peak business organisation; a not-for-profit advocacy group dedicated to the economic development of the Illawarra.