

Sunbury backs outdoor smoke ban

By Matt Crossman

A push for a trial smoking ban in a popular Sunbury dining precinct is gaining momentum, with a formal submission being made to Hume council.

The Sunbury Business Association and Sunbury Community Health have supported a proposal to stop people lighting up outside shops and restaurants in O'Shanassy Street, initially for six months.

The campaign, led by traders including Vic

and Carmel Scerri, of Vic's Food and Wine, had the approval of an overwhelming majority of residents surveyed late last year.

As reported by *Star Weekly*, Mr Scerri said a ban would have significant benefits for people working, shopping and eating in the street's shops and cafes.

"Nobody wants to have someone blowing smoke at them," Mr Scerri said.

A detailed submission presented to the council revealed that 82 per cent of respondents agreed that designating a smoke-free outdoor

dining area in central Sunbury was a great idea. A total of 72 per cent said a ban in O'Shanassy Street would make them more likely to choose a restaurant or cafe there.

Ms Scerri said the family business was "very happy with the idea".

"People say, 'Aren't you worried about losing business?', but I think we'd actually get more because of it," she said. "This could greatly enhance the area."

Council's city communities director, Margarita Caddick, said the submission

included significant research in support of a smoking ban.

"One option submitted was to ban smoking in the street, while the other option related to council helping businesses to make their premises smoke-free," she said.

"We will explore both options as we prepare a report for council to consider in October."

Quit Victoria policy manager Kylie Lindorff said the organisation supported the creation of smoke-free outdoor dining and drinking areas across the state.