



THE STAR

Media Release

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THE STAR SYDNEY TO EXPAND OPERATIONS

The Star Sydney's award-winning Sokyo and BLACK Bar & Grill restaurants have expanded dine-in capacity this week in line with the latest easing of COVID-19 restrictions as bookings surge across both venues.

Prior to this week's dine-in venue capacity increase from 10 to 50 diners per sitting, both signature dining venues were effectively booked out until the end of June.

Sokyo's Executive Chef Chase Kojima said the increased dine-in capacity opens up new opportunities for Sydneysiders to enjoy lunch or dinner at the award-winning Japanese venue.

"It was only a few weeks ago that we were completely closed before we had the opportunity to open for 10 people at a time," Chase said.

"While that first easing of restrictions was fantastic, it was hard to cater for our guests at the times they wanted. I am so excited we can now reopen bookings, welcome more of our customers back and catch up with them again over lunch and dinner following a challenging few months."

Chase said the latest changes also mean he can bring back more of his team in the kitchen and serve guests menu favourites such as Tuna Crispy Rice Nigiri, Red Snapper Tempura and the Wagyu Flank Steak.

"We are a very close-knit team, so there's a lot of excitement about getting back together to do what we love and have really missed," he said.

"We have curated special menus for this reopening phase with a bento box available for lunch, and during dinner guests can enjoy a tasting menu which can be paired with wines or a la carte offering showcasing all the Sokyo favourites."

The Star's mixologist Behzad Nvaziri has also developed a series of new cocktails to enjoy at Sokyo and BLACK Bar & Grill including the Passionfruit Penicillin with Hakushu, Irish whiskey, ginger and passion fruit and a Bergamot Julep with Coconut Bourbon, coconut water, bergamot and mint.

Chase said as well as increasing dining numbers in venue, the team will also continue to offer their recently launched and popular at home dining experience, Table for 2.

"I've been overwhelmed by how popular Table for 2 has been, with the Simulation Senpai Sushi Box in particular proving a big hit," he said.



“It’s given me a chance to challenge the idea of take-away as we knew it and our guests can now relax at home and still enjoy a world-class dining experience.”

There will be additional visitation across other areas of The Star complex, including The Darling hotel, other food venues and luxury shopping outlets.

The Star will also operate selected food and beverage outlets within the casino zone but limit access to its casino to a restricted number of invited guests under a new operating model that aligns with the latest NSW Government health orders. The capacity of each outlet will be determined by social distancing requirements. Bookings for venues located within the casino will be available only to invited members, and diners will have access to gaming facilities.

The Star will ensure strict adherence to social distancing and hygiene requirements across the entire precinct.

As part of its submissions to Government, The Star also lodged a COVID Safe Operating Plan. It was prepared in consultation with, and endorsed by, two of Australia’s leading public health and infectious disease experts, Dr Paul Griffin and Dr David Heslop.

Key elements of The Star’s latest operating model include:

- No public access to the casino. Bookings within the casino zone will be by invitation only, extended to a small percentage of members from The Star’s loyalty program.
- Signature dining restaurants Sokyo and BLACK Bar & Grill will be open to the general public, but bookings are essential. The number of seated diners will increase from 10 to a maximum of 50 dependant on social distancing compliance. Sokyo has been operating under the former 10-diner limit since initially reopening on May 15. BLACK Bar & Grill reopened on May 22.
- An expansion in the number of team members returning to work in Sydney. More than 95% of The Star Entertainment Group’s total workforce of around 9000 across NSW and Queensland were temporarily stood down following property shutdowns in March.

From June 1, The Star will have had the opportunity to increase its workforce to around 1000 in Sydney. The Star Entertainment Group CEO Matt Bekier welcomed the latest easing of restrictions in NSW.

“We want to thank the NSW Government for their support,” he said.

“The business and human impact of the COVID-19 crisis has been extraordinary.

“We have attempted to ease financial stress for our people through paid pandemic leave, a targeted hardship program for the most seriously affected, early access to annual leave and long service leave, plus JobKeeper payments.

“However, having people back to work is the biggest step we can take. It will be a gradual process. From today we will have the opportunity to return more team members to their jobs.



“It will still leave us operating at significantly lower than usual levels and operations will not be materially profitable at this stage. However, the primary objective is returning our team members to work and re-engaging with guests.”

Visitation to the casino in recent years has been around 11 million per annum, an average of approximately 30,000 a day.

“The tourism, hospitality and entertainment sectors have been decimated over the past couple of months,” Mr Bekier said.

“The sooner we can all return to previous levels of operation, the better.

“However, it must also be in a responsible manner, and our plans are aligned with precautions the NSW Government wants in place as restrictions are gradually unwound.

“We will work diligently to ensure all health and social distancing regulations are promoted and enforced. That will hopefully accelerate the process to further expansion of operations for our properties in NSW and Queensland.”

Bookings for Sokyo and BLACK Bar & Grill are essential and can be made by visiting thestarsydney.com.au

Access to the Casino is only by invitation, extended at present to a limited number of Star Club members.

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