

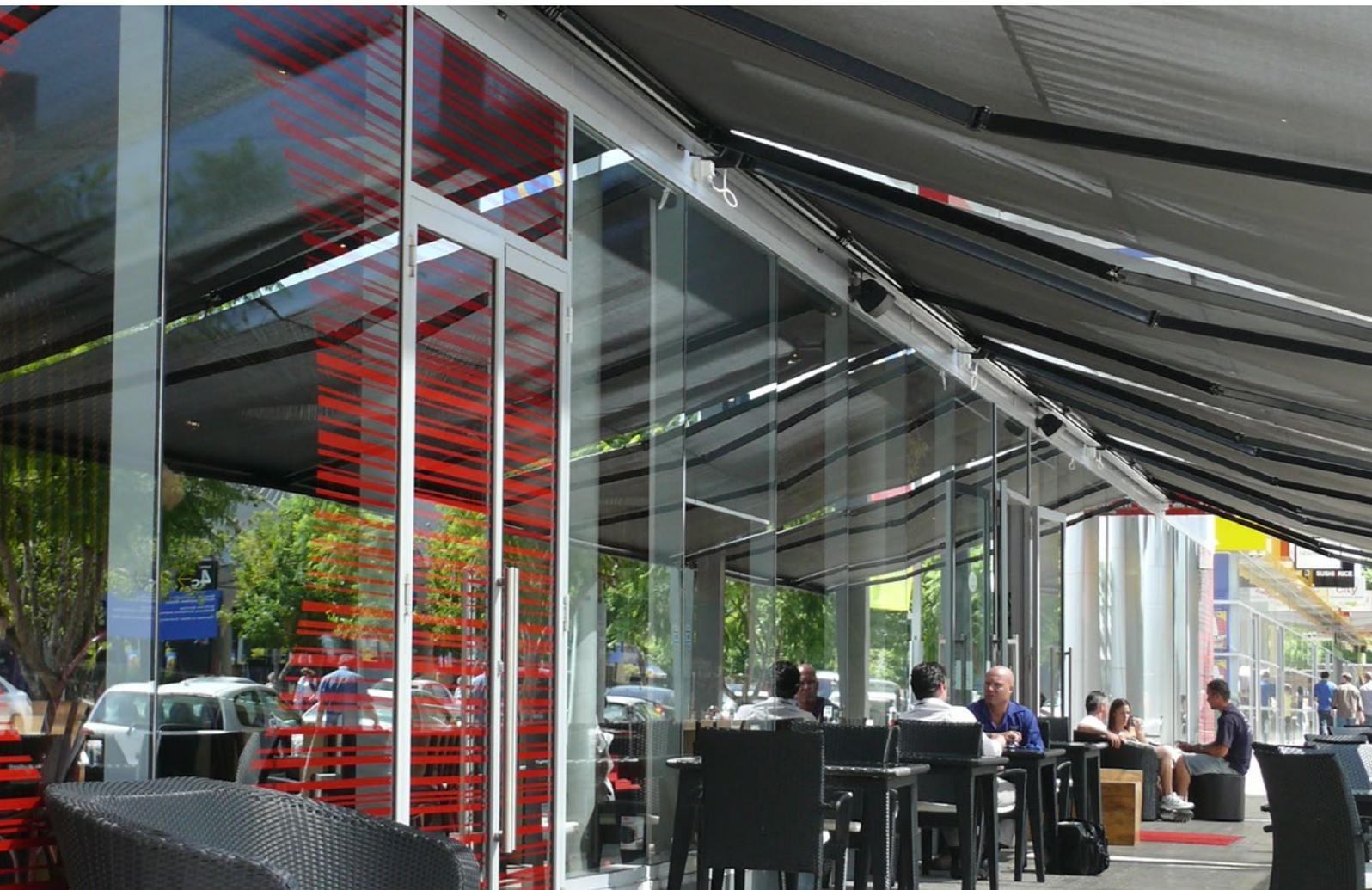


**Alfresco Shade**®

Intelligent Shade Solutions

# What you need to know about Awnings

A FREE Consumer Awareness Guide to help you make a better-informed decision when choosing the right awning for your property.



# What you need to know about Awnings

A FREE Consumer Awareness Guide to help you make a better-informed decision when choosing the right awning for your property.

## Read This Free Report to Discover...

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Dear Business Owner,

Choosing an awning provider isn't easy. Why?

Because you're bombarded with confusing jargon, inconsistent design information, inexperienced operators and misleading pricing methods. How do you ever find a competent reliable provider to help with your property?

You start by reading this consumer guide. You'll discover 7 surprising ways permanent awnings can help your business, Unique benefits of folding arm awnings, and Exciting benefits of a retractable roof system.

We wrote this guide to help you better understand how to choose an Awning provider. Now with this information, you can make an informed and intelligent decision. If you have any questions about awnings you're invited to call us on 1300 789 700. We've dedicated our business to educating consumers and raising standards in the industry. We'll be happy to help in any way.

Thanks!

Tom Westcott, Alfresco Shade.

**Ok, let's get started...**



# Permanent Awnings



## 7 Surprising ways Permanent (Fixed) Awnings can help your business.

1. Block the sun and rain – not the view. No supporting posts to interfere with your view or the table layouts.
2. Reduce cooling costs and protect furniture from sun damage. Keep the sun off your windows and reduce the heat loading in your property
3. Extend your useable outdoor space. Keep your customers comfortable even in hot or wet weather.
4. Boost your street appeal and make a great first impression on passersby. Awnings can be personalised with your branding to match the look and feel of your company.
5. Reduce annoying sunstrike and glare on product display windows. Very helpful for retailers and jewellers presenting window displays on retail frontage.
6. Keep your doorway entrances and footpaths dry and free from rain. Don't let prospective customers get scared away by bad weather! Make it easy and safe to access your property in any weather.
7. Add value to your commercial property and keep your tenants happy. A quality awning is a great tool for helping to hold onto great tenants. What's good for them is good for you.

## Ideal applications

- Store frontages
- Walkways and pedestrian access areas
- Heritage buildings
- High street stores
- Hotels and building entrances

## 9 hidden advantages of Fixed Awnings

1. Waterproof PVC fabric is unique because it's both waterproof and translucent. So the fabric canopy cover will provide waterproof cover and still let natural daylight through. You won't see a shadow effect underneath the canopy. Great for keeping walkways dry and safe. Providing a light and airy space (not a gloomy dark area that requires lighting).
2. So versatile. Fabric structures can be manipulated in beautiful 3D curves and shapes. You can get creative and build something really unique and eye catching. Upward curves, downward curves, flat, or customised to suit your offering. Lots of options available.
3. Easy to fit with guttering systems to manage water flow off the roof. You can also add a huge range of accessories to get more use from your outdoor space. Blinds, heaters, speakers, and lighting are available to help improve the customer experience.
4. Can be branded with your company logo or custom imagery. You can even create a special look with customised digital printed patterns and in a range of fabric styles.
5. Very lightweight. Fabric is super light compared solid building materials like glass and solid roofing panels. This means you can span a long way with less structural steel work, and place less stress loading on your building.
6. Elegant and timeless design. Fixed awnings can be designed to suit all types of property from heritage through to contemporary buildings. A well considered and tastefully designed awning can totally transform the look of an otherwise bland property.
7. Easy to clean. High-quality waterproof PVC fabrics are coated with PVDF nanotechnology surface. This gives the fabric a self-cleaning finish that will wash clean in heavy rain. Saving you lots of hard work! We recommend cleaning your awning every 12 months to keep it looking smart...compared to every month for a glass awning.
8. Terrific durability and return on your investment. A well designed and carefully built fabric awning can work for 20+ years with reasonable care and maintenance.
9. Fabric is a great building material as it doesn't rust or corrode, like many other roofing materials. Which makes it great for seaside applications and high corrosion environments.

## Design recommendations for best results

1. Think long-term and invest in quality materials and workmanship. It can be tempting to opt for cheap fabric and to try to save money upfront. But anything you do save initially will be wiped out over the long-term when a shorter working life and ugly results are factored in.
2. Use fabric and materials proven to work for over 10 years in Australian conditions. Not all fabrics can handle our extreme weather. For best results use top quality European PVC fabrics.
3. Make sure the steel frame is fabricated and welded carefully and signed off by a structural engineer. For best results use a galvanised steel frame with a heavy duty powder coated finish in a colour you like (loads of options available). It also pays to use heavy duty galvanised steel fittings to match with the galvanised steel frame. Be careful using stainless steel fittings on a steel frame. Over time the stainless steel can start to cut into the galvanised steel.
4. Keep in mind that your awning will get direct attention from the roadside. Everything will be easy to see from ground level, so make sure it's up to the standards you want. The finishing and detailing will form a big part of the customer's first impression of your company.

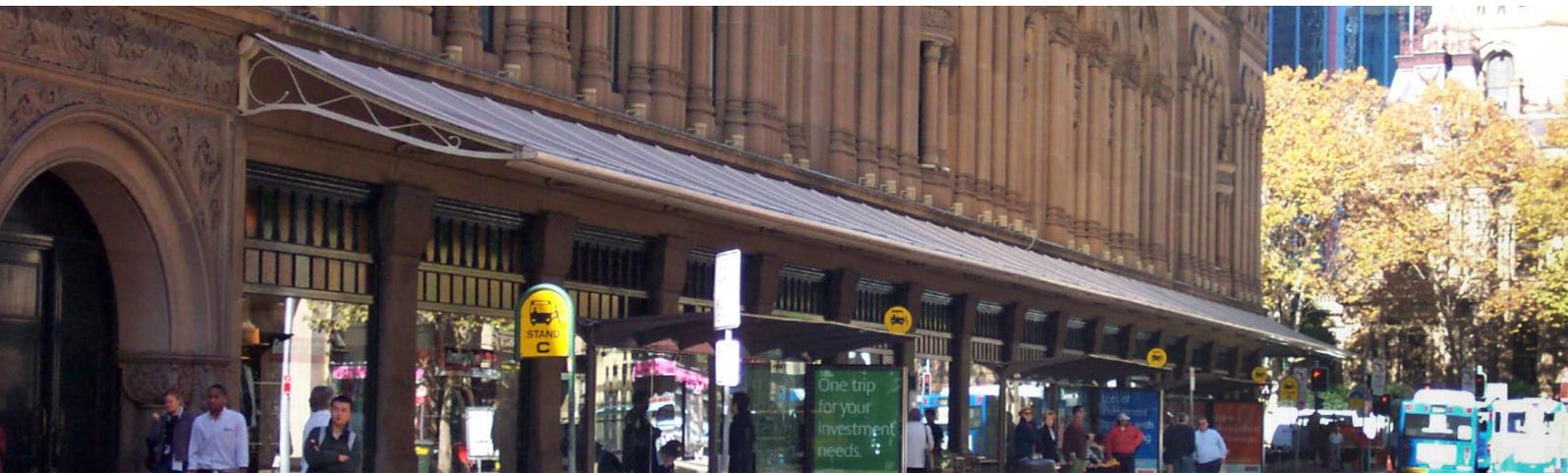
### Don't forget to clean the underside of your awning!

Commercial awnings can have a hard life with constant exposure to traffic, crowds, road dust and pollution. We recommend cleaning your awning every 12 months, or every 6 months if you are in a coastal location. A quick wash on the top and the underside will keep it sparkling clean and help extend its working life.

5. Don't forget about guttering systems. Nothing gets on your customer's nerves more than being splashed with water from overhead. Try to incorporate guttering into the design from the start. You should be able to hide your drainage channels and create more of a clean and refined look. If possible, avoid going for retrofitted guttering that looks like it was bolted on as an afterthought.
6. Fabric structures must have at least a 5 to 15-degree slope for water to fall off the canopy, depending on the fabric used. Make sure this is designed in from the start. Don't get caught out with water pooling on your awning!
7. Think about cleaning and ongoing maintenance. Over time your structure will need to be cleaned both on top of the cover and underneath. A few things to consider. How will workers get access to the top of the awning? Where will they stand when cleaning the top of the structure? Will they need a walking channel near the gutter? For larger awnings, local councils require steel framing to be designed to support the weight of workers doing maintenance work.
8. Build the awning to meet the wind rating standards set out in AS 4410. Awnings can be subjected to significant wind loading, including the down forces created by wind coming off large buildings. This needs to be factored into the design to get design approval from local council.

## How to choose a high-quality Permanent Awning

- Use high quality translucent waterproof PVC fabric, with PVDF or Teflon coating for a self-cleaning finish. High spec European fabric proven to work for over 10 years in Australian conditions.
- Use a galvanised steel frame with a heavy-duty powder coated finish. Built by a skilled fabricator and signed off by a structural engineer. You need to be sure your structure is safe and secure with the public walking underneath it every day.
- The most successful awning projects tend to happen when the awning manufacturer and project architect collaborate to design a structure that's in harmony with the building and sympathetic to the surrounding environment. Done well, the form and function of the structure combine to create something that totally transforms the building
- Installed carefully with meticulous attention to detail. Installed by a skilled team with excellent attention to detail, and experience working on busy inner-city projects.
- Designed to allow for easy access cleaning and safe maintenance. Much easier to keep your awning looking smart and presentable if cleaning access is straightforward.
- Designed with a hidden gutter system for a clean minimalist look. Beauty lies in the details!
- Built and installed by a proven operator with over 10 years direct experience with commercial shade structures. Ability to work efficiently with architects and engineers and project managers and produce terrific results.



### Want to learn more about improving your property with a Permanent Awning?

Book your **FREE** no obligation Design Consultation and learn more about how Alfresco awning can help transform your outdoor area. You will receive a FREE no-pressure design consultation with recommendations on fabric selection, design configuration and installation details and more...

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# Folding Arm Awnings



## Unique benefits a Retractable Awning

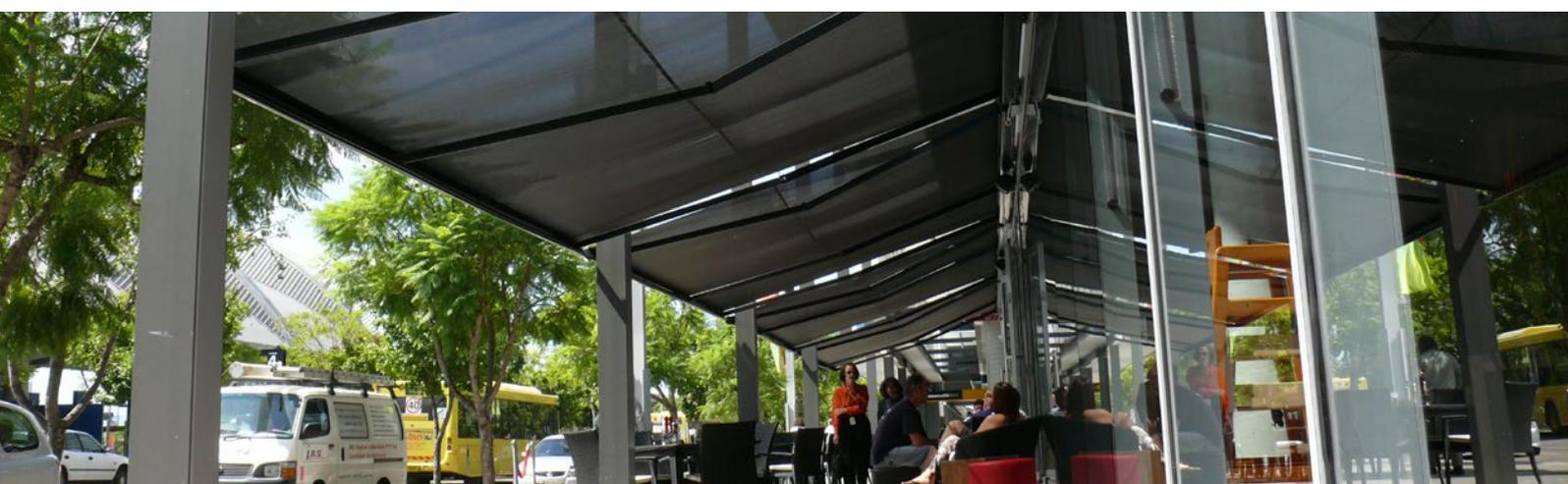
1. Shade when you need it. Sun when you want it.
2. Can be opened or closed so you can have shade or enjoy the sun. Either open manually with a crank handle or upgrade to a remote control system to open with touch of a button.
3. Stylish European design to complement your property nicely. Looks at home on a wide range of properties, from heritage to contemporary. Becoming very popular with home owners who love outdoor entertaining and café owners with small outdoor spaces.
4. Neutralise sun glare and reduce harmful UV light inside your home or business. Reduces air conditioning costs in summer and give you a cooler indoor space in summer. A welcome relief from our blazing heat.
5. Block the sun – not the view. No supporting posts or columns to interfere with the view (or your table layout).
6. Smart technology to make your life easier. Automate opening and closing with the motorised remote controlled system. Wind sensor system also available to protect the awning in high wind by automatically closing up.
7. Lightweight and easy to use. Can be fitted to most properties.
8. Extend your useable space and keep customers comfortable in your outdoor area.

## Ideal applications

- Laneways and sheltered courtyards
- Low wind environments where shade is required.
- Apartment decks and balconies.
- Roadside locations where the council does not allow permanent structures.

## Useful advantages of Folding Arm Awnings

- Great if you only need shade cover. Folding arm awnings are of limited use for rain protection or waterproofing applications. More on this later.
- A smart option for street side locations where the local council won't allow permanent shade structures or support columns on footpaths or near the road. Can provide a solid return on investment for a café or restaurant.
- Folding arm awnings are a cost effective form of shade because they're built from a range of manufactured modular parts. Your awning will be made to the right size to fit your property. However, this isn't a full on custom design and build. Your awning will be built from a range of pre-set frame arm lengths and the frame width will be built to suit your requirements. This keeps costs down and makes the process simple and easy.
- You can choose from a massive range of colours and patterns (for canvas fabric) to suit your requirements perfectly.
- Uses the building as the support structure. A folding arm awning doesn't have a steel column or support legs to get in the way at ground level. It's cantilevered off the building structure. However, the building must have enough structural strength to support the awning and any wind loading. More on this later.
- Great security and storage. The closed awning is housed safe and secure in its own cassette box. This gives protection from birds and dust and keeps the awning out of harm's way.



## Limitations of Folding Arm Awnings to be aware of

Folding arm awnings were originally developed to suit the milder climates of Europe. These climates have lower wind speeds and less rainfall compared to Australia. Here are a few of the products limitations to be aware of.

- More suitable for shading, not waterproofing! Standard folding arm awnings do provide some water protection in light rain. But in heavier rain, water can eventually start dripping through the canopy. Not good if you are enjoying a coffee underneath! If you really need rain protection you can use waterproof fabric on the canopy, but this can cause problems with wind loading on the awning structure (more on this below).

If waterproofing is important, make sure the awning is installed with the cover on an angle of at least 15°C. This will give plenty of fall for the water to run off easily.

- Can't be fitted with outdoor blinds or other accessories, like lighting or speakers. If accessories are important a permanent awning or a shade structure may be more suitable for you.
- Not suitable for use in high winds. This is an important point which often catches people out. Folding arm awnings can handle a maximum wind speed of 60km per hour. Which happens at least 10 times a year in Sydney. If the awning is left open in high winds the support arms are likely to be damaged by the wind loading stress. Leaving you with an expensive repair bill.

To avoid damage, you must close the awning in heavy wind. This can be a hassle for two reasons. In windy conditions, you don't feel like going outside to sort out the awning. And things can get awkward if customers are using the awning and you need to close it to avoid damage. For this reason, we do not recommend folding arm awnings for full-time weather protection in busy restaurant dining applications.

- » For safety and convenience, we recommend using a wind sensor to automatically close the blinds in windy conditions. This will save you the inconvenience of dealing with the elements and make sure your awning is never damaged because someone forgot to close it.
- Not all buildings facades have the strength to support a folding arm awning. Glass façades and single skin brick buildings can be very challenging. A good installer can get around this by building a support system, but this may not always be practical or within your budget.
- The awnings tensioning arms can be bent if kids or vandals jump up and swing from the canopy. Believe it or not, this does happen from time to time! To help with this make sure the awning is mounted high enough to remove the temptation, and the awning is closed up when not in use.

### Practical tip:

Don't leave your awnings open without keeping an eye on the weather conditions outside! A rainstorm or heavy wind can damage awnings in a few minutes if you don't have wind sensors installed. For best results close your awning up once you've finished for the day (don't leave it open all night)!

## Is Manual or Automatic Closing best for me?

You have two choices when it comes to opening and closing your folding arm awning. Either use the standard hand cranking system or go for a fully motorised remote controlled system.

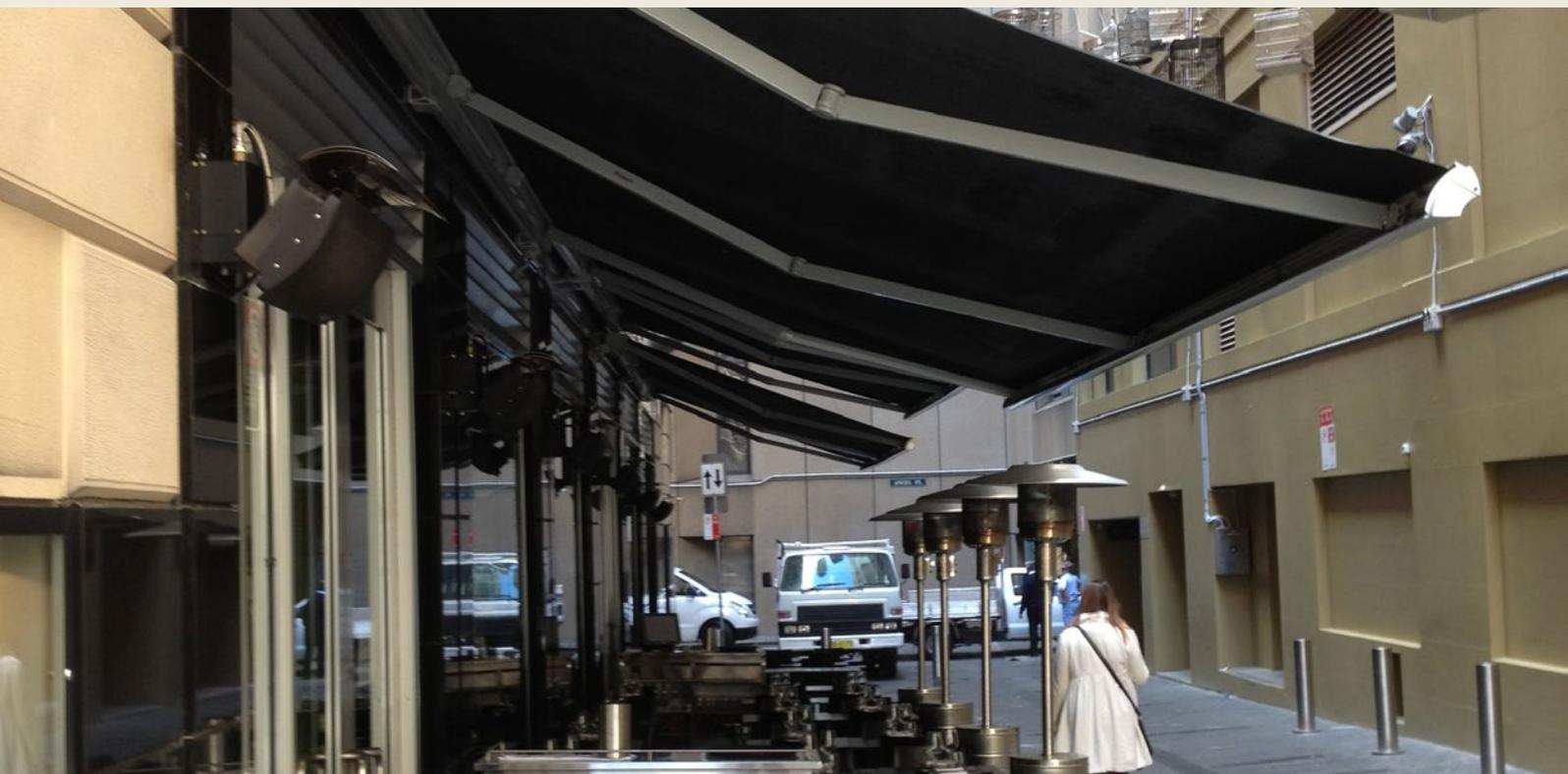
Which is best for you?

If you intend to use the awning at home every now and then, the manual opening system should be fine (providing the awning is less than 6m in projection from the building). You should be able to open the awning in a couple of minutes. Just remember to close the awning once you're finished for the day.

For commercial users, we recommend going with the automated system with the convenience of opening or closing quickly at the touch of a button (automated closing is standard on all awnings over 6m wide). This will save you labour time and help avoid annoying your customers by opening the blinds by hand.

### Practical tip:

We recommend all commercial users fit wind sensors to automatically close your folding arm awnings in heavy wind. This will prevent damage to your awning and eliminate any chance of your staff forgetting to close the awning windy conditions.



## How to choose a quality Folding Arm Awning

- Choose a product manufactured in Europe and assembled and supported here in Australia. You will need help with parts and servicing over time. Don't be left stranded with no replacement parts or product support available.
- Select a system with high-quality components, like high tensile aluminum arms, powerful spring tensioning systems, and high strength drop forged elbow joints. The extra investment in the initial purchase price will give you a longer working life and a tighter smarter looking fabric.
- Don't get caught out purchasing an imitation product. Cheaper imitation products look great for the first couple of years, have a shorter working life compared to quality European models.
- Select a European brand with a solid warranty package that you can rely on. Most models have a minimum warranty of 5 years, and up to 10 years for higher specified options.
- Use a company with skilled and careful installers. Use proven operators with at least 10 years of commercial experience working in the Sydney shade market. You don't want people learning the hard way on your job!

### Want to learn more about improving your property with a folding arm awning?

Book your **FREE** no obligation Design Consultation and learn more about how Alfresco awning can help transform your outdoor area. You will receive a FREE no-pressure design consultation with recommendations on fabric selection, design configuration and installation details and more...

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# Retractable Roof Awnings



## Exciting benefits of a Retractable Roof system

1. Total versatility with your outdoor space. Feel like enjoying the sun in the morning? Open the roof right up. In the mood for more shade over the table at lunchtime? Close the roof to half way. See storm clouds on the horizon? Close the roof and enjoy outdoor dining despite the rain.
2. Stay connected to the feeling of being outdoors, while enjoying all the comfort of being indoors.
3. Impress your friends or customers with the sophistication and novelty of an automated motorised roof system. It's like a scene from a bond film!
4. The waterproof roof fabric provides rain and sun protection and blocks 100% of harmful UV light. You can sit outside enjoying a glass of wine without worrying about sun burn or skin melanoma risk.
5. Beautiful streamlined modern design to complement your property. Creates a stylish sophisticated atmosphere and improves the value of your property.
6. A terrific complement to swimming pools and wet areas. Helps to manage the pool temperature and give you shade on demand. Also, superb for outdoor cooking and BBQ areas. Open the roof up to release cooking smells, and then close up to enjoy dining in comfort.
7. Enjoy the magic of night dining under an open sky. The retractable roof gives you the option of dining under the stars. Nothing quite like enjoying a meal in the moonlight.

## Ideal applications

- Rooftop bars & outdoor areas.
- Fine dining restaurants with outdoor dining.
- Luxury residential homes.
- Outdoor BBQ areas.
- Poolside entertaining locations.

## Unique advantages of a Retractable Roof Awning

- Fully motorised roof movement system. Reposition at the touch of a button. Super convenient to use.
- Comes with its own aluminium support frame system and doesn't need to be cantilevered off your building. This makes Council compliance straightforward and avoids the hassle and expense of altering your property to support the structure.
- Can be fitted with outdoor blinds to create the ultimate outdoor room experience. Blinds will block wind and rain, and help create an intimate tranquil environment.
- Can be fitted with a wide range of accessories for your added comfort. Lighting, speakers, heaters, and cooling systems and more are available.
- Guttering systems are available to manage roof water flow.
- More cost effective than a blade louvre style retractable roof.



## Limitations of a Retractable Roof Awning. Is it right for you?

In the right application, a retractable roof awning can be an amazing tool. Just keep in mind it's not for everyone. If you're a restaurant or commercial operator relying on the awning to provide cover to a critical area of your business you might be better off considering other options like a purpose built dining structure. Here are a few limitations to be aware of...

- A fabric retractable roof system can't be relied upon to be totally weather tight. In heavy rain and wind, leaks may happen where the roof fabric meets guide rails on the frame. Not a good look if you have customers dining below.

Also, a retractable fabric roof can span a maximum width of 5m per frame section. If the width of your outdoor area is 10 metres, you would need two 5m frame module sections to provide support. Waterproofing the area where the frames join with the fabric is very challenging and water can often leak through.

A great deal of smart engineering and design goes into each retractable awning. Despite this, water can still get in under the fabric in heavy wind even when the system is closed and under tension. If this is going to be a problem it may be worth considering an Alfresco Dining Structure. This has a 100% waterproof roof, even in stormy conditions.

- Retractable roof awnings have a 5-year warranty. Dining structures come with a 10-year warranty (and they are cheaper). Why the difference? A retractable awning has lots of moving parts and mechanical components. The useful life is much shorter, and this is reflected in the warranty package.



- Don't forget about ongoing maintenance costs. You'll need professional help with the following tasks on your retractable roof.
  - » Maintenance every 6 months. The motor limited settings need to be checked and calibrated to keep the fabric feeding out consistently. Bearings need to be checked and track channels need to be kept free from sand and grime. Without attention, the track system will jam up and the roof won't open or close properly.
  - » Cleaning every 6 months. Cleaning the roof fabric and track components is critical to keep the system running smoothly, and to stop excessive wear on the moving parts. Over time debris will build up on the roof cover. This needs to be cleaned off to keep the cover light and flexible. If you don't take care of cleaning, grime and build up will find its way into the tracks and motor system. This will cause the moving parts to wear out and fail.

In comparison, a dining structure only needs to be cleaned every 12 months. And with no moving parts, it requires very little maintenance.

- Think about how often will you intend to actually open the roof. Is the extra cost really worth it? The option of opening and closing the roof sounds cool but isn't always such a good thing. If you own a busy ground level business, opening your roof may expose you to road noise, dust, and exhaust fumes. Not good for your tables and furniture! We've noticed that people often initially love the novelty factor of opening and closing the roof, but then hardly ever use it! The awning spends most of its life closed, permanently covering the space. A retractable awning can be great, just make sure that opening the roof cover is actually useful for you and your property.
- Is the retractable awning going to suit your crowd? In a commercial setting like pubs and clubs, it pays to keep things simple strong and stylish. Structures need to be tough enough to handle everything the public will throw at it. Like a 21-year-old jumping up and swinging on the support frame after too many drinks. Retractable awnings are built from aluminium frames, which look great but be damaged by inappropriate use. If your crowds going to get rowdy, probably safer to go with a more heavy-duty dining structure that has a robust steel frame that can handle anything.

**“All the benefits of a true outdoor room”**

## How to choose quality Retractable Roof Awning

- Invest in quality components. With lots of moving parts in the structure, it pays to invest in quality from the start. Investment in a quality system at the beginning will help reduce future maintenance costs and give you a longer working life.
- Use a high-quality waterproof PVC fabric, with PVDF or Teflon coating for a self-cleaning finish. High spec European fabric proven to work for over 10 years in Australian conditions.
- Be aware that the quality of installation makes a big difference. For the tracks and rollers to run smoothly everything must be installed within specific tolerances. Make sure you use a skilled team with proven experience working building retractable awnings.
- Select a provider with access to parts and maintenance. Ongoing servicing and cleaning will also be required.
- Choose a provider with at least 10 years' experience working in the commercial shade industry, and direct experience building retractable roof systems. It also pays to use an operator that offers a full range of shade options, not just awnings.

**We hope this educational guide has been useful and has empowered you with the information to make a more informed decision about the right awning for your property.**

### Want to learn more about improving your property with a Retractable Roof Awning?

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