

Taking Care of Business

Economic Development Unit Newsletter — March, 2016

Manager's Update

Hello and welcome

The end of a busy 2015 ushers in an even busier 2016 which will also have to contend with the uncertainty around council amalgamations.

The underlying ethos of Marrickville Council's Economic Development Unit, which is to facilitate NOT initiate or motivate, sometimes sounds strange to other practitioners. However, it is a formula for success when dealing with small business. By empowering businesses to run their own agenda and control the destiny of their support organisations means that independent entities such as the Marrickville Manufacturers Association and Marrickville Business Association will continue to grow and thrive regardless of what happens to Council and the support it currently provides. Marrickville's business brand, spearheaded by "Made in Marrickville", will continue to flourish and deliver the message that Marrickville is a great place to do business and is a producer of quality products and services.

Seed Cuisine in Petersham hosted this year's annual general meeting of the Economic Development Network with patron Professor Ed Blakeley attending and providing some inspirational ideas for the economic development practitioners in attendance.

Further good news was delivered for the profession with the announcement that SS ROC will form an Economic Development Group.

2016 should provide excellent opportunities for any new council that is formed as the larger entities lay claim to being more regional than before. This may open doors under the Small Business Connect and Business Friendly Councils programs run by the state government.

Marrickville Chamber of Commerce has been a revelation this year with the new coordinator, Natisse Ward, ensuring that events are fresher and more exciting for shoppers and their families. The Marrickville CBD is undergoing significant change with a rapidly expanding night economy. Good promotions and an improved shopping experience will ensure that Marrickville does not go the same way as Newtown where the night economy dominates. For instance, maintaining the variety of excellent butcher shops in the Marrickville CBD is a high priority of the Chamber and local residents.

Finally I would like to congratulate the great work by Simon Shaw and the NPBA for being able to raise their WestConnex issues directly with the Minister, Duncan Gay MP.

Regards

Duncan Gilchrist

Economic Development Manager

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Marrickville Chamber, Marrickville Council and the Sydney Business Enterprise Centre are partnering to deliver business skills training on a number of current topics which have the potential to drastically raise the bottom line in small businesses. The series of workshops will be run from 6 to 8 pm in the evenings at various locations within the LGA. Due to the quality of the presenters some require a small attendance fee but mostly they are free of charge. The workshops complement the very popular networking events such as Westpac Wednesdays and She Business.

The Chamber will again be sponsoring the SmallBiz Bus later in the year. Located in Marrickville Road near Alex Trevallion Plaza the bus will have small business advisors on hand to answer questions and provide information free of charge. Due to high demand this is not expected to take place until late in May or early June. In the meantime information can be obtained at the workshops and various networking events.

Businesses are encouraged to monitor the MBA website for details of upcoming events and workshops. This month's Westpac Wednesday Lisa Gissing will present of the 7 Steps for Business Success.



Business owners wrestle with the distinction between a strategy for a digital presence and a digital strategy?

(Times & dates available at www.marrickvillebusiness.com.au)

Around The Networks



Through sheer determination matched to strategic lobbying the NPBA managed to secure an audience with Minister Duncan Gay MP to discuss the impact of WestConnex on the Newtown CBD. As a result they gained assurances that the gateway to Newtown would not be destroyed by the proposed new roadways.

Planning is already underway to deliver a larger Food Festival in October by inclosing Eliza Street to increase the festival's footprint. Road closures remain one of the few options available for creating additional public space for events not just in Newtown but also throughout the Inner West.



The new coordinator is making a huge difference to the capacity of the Chamber to manage its day to day business and assist local business operators in the Marrickville/Illawarra Roads CBD. The Christmas events went well despite losing one day through bad weather. Easter preparations are complete and this year the Easter Bunny will visit the CBD.

The Chamber will be having its first members networking night for the year on Wednesday 16 March at Gasoline Pony.

The Chamber has partnered with Council and the Sydney BEC to present two business skills development workshops with another planned for Thursday 24 March. Membership remains at \$50 per annum and now the Chamber is able to take payment by credit card. Membership of the Marrickville Chamber carries with it the benefit of the services provided by the NSW Chamber as well including advice on awards and free legal advice on matters such as unfair dismissal.

The MBA continues to attract business registration to its website with the number of active members soon to reach 1,000. The MBA is a registered not for profit association that will not be impacted by council amalgamations. At the AGM held in the eclectic atmosphere of Gasoline Pony, Philippe Flatt handed over the leadership reins to Monica Brewer who runs the very successful Women's Business Network in Marrickville.



The strong support for the MBA will see Westpac Wednesday continue to attract good numbers and ensure the Business Awards will be held again this year in some form or another. Don't forget to keep your listing up to date on the website.



The long awaited Made in Marrickville T Shirt will finally be available in the next couple of weeks. Let us know if you have a child born in Marrickville recently and a free T Shirt will be yours. The coat for pooches will also be available soon after — promote local businesses while walking the dog. Confirming again that Made in Marrickville and the MMA will not be lost in any amalgamation as it is a stand alone association.



Monica Brewer and She Business are going extremely well in their new location, The Majestic. The only small problem they have at the moment is traffic noise but the owners are working with them to remedy this. Ask Monica about her new program, The Local Board.



The first Fairtrade Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday 21 March at 6 pm at Council's Administration Building 2 - 14 Fisher Street, Petersham. Anyone interested in Fairtrade and/or being a committee member please contact the Economic Development Manager on 9335 2204 or edm@marrickville.nsw.gov.au



EDN Patron, Professor Ed Blakeley, joined the annual general meeting and provided some insightful tips for the practitioners in attendance. For a person in his 80's (not a typo) Ed's enthusiasm is just as strong as ever and his depth of knowledge is astonishing. Ed believes that economic development should be the leading strategy in all forms of government as he believes that successful businesses define a region and provides its primary attraction. While local government may not be quite ready for this paradigm shift in its strategic focus it is heartening to hear what Ed has to offer on the subject and as always most of what he has to say has practical application at all levels. EDN is working on its next mini conference and having had such a great experience with other events at Stanmore House feel that this would make a great venue for 2016.

Business Briefs - A regular feature presenting some ideas from current business thinking. This edition looks at a consumer sector upon which small business more often than not fails to capitalise. This failure also delivers for those businesses a very harmful anti-social message.

Is Your Door Truly Open for Business?

Did you know that 1 in 5 people have a disability? Every Australian (including you) now spends an average of 20 years of their life with a disabling condition. Access affects everyone...

While many people may have a lifelong impairment, even more acquire disabilities through accidents or just the process of growing older. Because of reduced mobility these shoppers are more often than not locals.

Many older buildings in the Inner West lack the basic access requirements that are now compulsory in all new construction. When you add pregnant women and women with prams to shoppers with a disability the end result is that around one third of all potential customers may be denied proper access to your business. Being mainly locals these customers also have relatives and friends who are likely to shun businesses that continue to show disregard for the rights of their friends and family who require better access.

The problem can often be fixed by widening doors and/or providing ramps but that only allows the customer to enter the premises. Inside a number of businesses only the thin and nimble can find their way around cluttered aisles, avoid stock stacked in public areas and reach shelves way above head height. **If you make it hard to shop there, people go elsewhere.**

Ask yourself a few simple questions?

Can the entry to, and aisles within, your business adequately accommodate the mobility devices [below](#) ?



Or the sight impaired and their guide dog?



Can people really move about freely on your premises?

Can all stock be reached, and if not is assistance available?

Can you afford to ignore the basic needs of people with disabilities and parents with small children?

If you would like help understanding how to make your business more people friendly contact Duncan on 9335 2204 or 0429 485 626 or email edm@marrickville.nsw.gov.au

Also visit: <http://www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au/en/community/community-services/accessibility/missed-business/>

Above many of the shops fronting main roads throughout Marrickville are professional suites and small offices more often than not accessed via long, steep and narrow staircases. So why not do more businesses the *Marrickville Way*, over a relaxing cup of coffee in one of our many cafes? Your client will appreciate the customer service and thoughtfulness and you will benefit from being out of the office and taking in some of the local atmosphere. The solutions to obtaining more customers through improved access are often simple and inexpensive and where changes to the building are required this cost can also be amortised over time and is tax deductible. Remember, one day the person in the photograph drinking coffee could be you, a relative or a friend.

Opening the mind makes it easier to truly open the door.





Alex Trevallion Plaza provided the venue for the 2016 Lunar New Year celebrations. In perfect weather conditions for an outdoor event the Mayor, Clr Sam Iskandar, commenced proceedings with the traditional 'painting the eyes of the Lions' in order to awaken them to the New Year. Since its inception in 2010, the event has been sponsored by the Marrickville Chamber of Commerce and supported by Marrickville Council as a business event under its economic development program. The Australian Federation of Chinese Organisations (AFCO) provides personnel to set up and take down the entertainment area and also provides the traditional performers, musical backing and Lion Dancers.

The Lion Dancers visit all businesses in the Marrickville CBD to wish them good fortune in the coming year. The firecrackers are meant to ward off evil spirits.

Lunar New Year is a festival celebrated by more than one fifth of the world's population. China: 1.3 billion, Indonesia: 250 million, Philippines: 100 million, Vietnam: 90 million South Korea: 50 million, Malaysia: 30 million, North Korea: 24 million people and Taiwan: 24 million. The travel industry reports that every year over 200 million people travel extensively to places where Lunar New Year is celebrated. (London's China town attracted 50,000 for one night). It is predicted that Lunar New year will soon become the biggest tourism celebration in the world, making it a very value contributor to local businesses during the festivities. Monkey years include 1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004 & 2016 with "monkey people" seen as always being smart, clever and intelligent, especially in their career and wealth. They are lively, flexible, quick-witted and versatile. Their gentleness and honesty bring them an everlasting love life. Although born with enviable skills, they have several shortcomings, such as an impetuous temper and a tendency to look down upon others.



The Mayor, Clr Sam Iskandar awakens the Lions



A petting zoo, giant Easter Bunny, face painters and scores of families crammed Alex Trevallion Plaza to enjoy some Easter fun provided by the Marrickville Chamber of Commerce. Spokesperson for the Chamber, coordinator Natisse Ward, indicated that the response to the Chamber's invitation was overwhelming with hundreds of people visiting throughout the day. In response to its members the Chamber is ramping up the number and quality of promotions in the Marrickville CBD.

The next planned event celebrates coffee with local cafes distributing special offer coupons throughout Marrickville. Following that will be a further promotion of the shopping experience in the Marrickville/Illawarra Roads shopping precinct.

The Chamber will soon commence its Visual Marketing campaign and has issued an expression of interest for local sculptors to add to the collection of above awning sculptors. Handled well, photo opportunities (especially selfies) can be customer magnets.



It's Official! Marrickville is a Small Business Friendly Council

In late 2015 Marrickville Council officially became a small business friendly council by committing to the program developed and run by the Office of the Small Business Commissioner.

The Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner (OSBC) in partnership with the NSW Business Chamber has developed the Small Business Friendly Councils (SBFC) Program to increase the number of NSW councils working proactively with small businesses, and is the first of its kind in Australia.

The role of local government is critical to ensuring a friendly and supportive environment for businesses across their local communities. More directly, councils are responsible for a range of business related activities, including development applications, licensing and inspections, all of which are essential for the daily operation of small businesses.

Since the September 2014 launch, 75 councils have committed to participate in the SBFC Program ranging from large metropolitan councils to small regional councils. These councils represent over 400,000 small businesses across NSW.

What are they asking councils to do?

Participating councils make a number of commitments in their Operational Plans, which are outlined in the SBFC Charter including:

- ♦ identifying three initiatives to support small business that council will implement, measure and report on;
- ♦ implementing an "on time payment policy" so that small businesses are paid on time;
- ♦ establishing a Business Advisory Board in conjunction with key stakeholders from the local business community to assist council in identifying issues and opportunities for local small businesses;
- ♦ providing quarterly progress updates on the implementation of councils initiatives and on time payment tracking; and
- ♦ council publically promoting the benefits of the SBFC Program.

The benefits of the Program include

- ♦ providing practical tools and resources to councils to improve their engagement with small business,
- ♦ an opportunity to embed 'small business friendly' key performance indicators into existing statutory reporting requirements;
- ♦ increasing the number of councils that are working proactively to assist small businesses,
- ♦ providing councils with an opportunity to share new initiatives and strategies to strengthen their engagement with the small business sector, and
- ♦ cutting red tape and improving council services and support for small businesses.

What Marrickville Council has done and is doing

Marrickville Council is currently implementing a number of Business Improvement processes (BIPS) and "On Time" Payment Policy. BIPs include;

- ♦ an E-Business project to develop its online services to reduce paperwork and time spent by its customers in completing applications.
- ♦ assisting retail operators to take account of accessibility issues when laying out their stores
- ♦ working with Marrickville Chamber of Commerce to increase the vibrancy of the Marrickville Road and Illawarra Road Shopping Precinct by upgrading business presentation with re-usable items sourced from local zero waste operators and demonstrating to business operators that reuse of products is a sustainable method of attracting customers.
- ♦ Council has formalised its existing procedures which already aim to pay all small business accounts within 30 days following receipt of a correctly rendered invoice except where alternative terms have been agreed. Marrickville undertakes weekly payment runs using both cheques and EFT (the preference is selected by the supplier).
- ♦ Had in existence well before this initiative a Business Panel made up of a cross section of local business operators who provide valuable input into Council's economic development and other programs by regularly completing subject specific surveys and attending Panel Forums. Over 60% of representatives on the Business Panel are females.

SMALL BUSINESS FRIENDLY COUNCILS



4 April 2016
5.30pm - 7.00pm
West's Ashfield
115 Liverpool Rd
Ashfield

Event partners



Westpac Wednesday - April

The 4 Pillars of Growth

6.15 pm Wednesday 27 April 2016
At Westpac 241 Marrickville Road Marrickville

Growing your business is an essential part of your commercial life. If you are not growing then you are going backwards.

To ensure that you can meet your business objectives, learn about the 4 Pillars of Growth which must be in place to allow your business to grow.

The talk will be presented by Abbie White of MSM Sales Specialists. MSM specialises in assisting businesses of all sizes and types to grow in a planned and sustainable way.



"Every step of the sales process went perfectly except the part where the customer buys our product."

"Closing the Sale"

Presented by Vanessa Van Wyk

By popular demand Vanessa will be presenting this highly rewarding course in Marrickville. The course is made up of six highly interactive workshops of four hours each and small business graduates universally agree that the time invested pays for itself many times over. Early bird bookings are open—contact Vanessa or Manlio on 8883 3347 or email vanessav@binarix.com



Dates for the First Four Workshops are:

Monday 8 August Monday 22 August
Monday 5 September Monday 19 September



SMALL BUSINESS FRIENDLY COUNCILS



See page 5 to find out what Marrickville Council is doing