

**Minutes of Economic Development Strategic Reference Group**  
**Level 2 meeting rooms Leichhardt Service centre**  
**1<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

The meeting commenced at 4.10pm.

**Members Attending:**

Adrian Abrook, Angelo Angelopoulos, James Bradey, Monica Brewer, Kerrie Bush, Carolyn Croker, Aaron Edwards, Andrew Fineran, Lyndal Gowland, Richie Hrovat, Sarah Mandelson, Stephen Meates

**Other Attendees:**

**Council Staff** – Roger Rankin, Bernadette Selfe, John Whelan (minutes recorder)

**LRAC Members** - Jeanette Wang

**Apologies:**

**Members:** Jennifer Aaron, John-Gang Cheng, Chris Fitcher-Coles, Howard Spreadbury

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**Items 1 - 8**

Bernadette Selfe welcomed the attendees, undertook the Acknowledgement of Country and noted the apologies.

Attendees were then requested to reintroduce themselves to the meeting

Bernadette Selfe provided a background briefing which included the definitions of **Economic Development** and how the **Employment and Economic Development Plan** fitted into the **Community Strategic Plan** that was being developed for the Inner West Council.

Bernadette Selfe described the aim of today's session being to provide input to assist in the development of the **Employment and Economic Development Plan**.

This would be achieved by the attendees breaking into smaller groups to consider specific questions and then summarising their thoughts for the meeting.

The meeting then split into four groups to undertake the group sessions

**Item 9 Group Session One – What Has Worked Well?**

The groups were asked to identify the projects, initiatives and business services that the former Councils did well which made a difference to the local economy and local business

The following table is a summary of the outcomes of the group work. A number of topics were mentioned by multiple groups

Topic	Additional Comments
Fairs - various	Events to support business – local business participation – not just a day out Precinct Cultural Identity promotion
Active Business Development Officer	Out there / present among the businesses Westpac Wednesday monthly education Marrickville Business Panel Quarterly Forum – Business Proprietor knowledge sharing and collaboration – Chatham House Rules Other business education events Help navigate through Council
Laneway festival	Mini festival facilitation
Creative Precinct	New SMEs Helping the evolution
Facilitate BEC delivered services	Links on web sites
Local Business Awards	Not finalist and winner based – recognition based e.g. original Ashfield awards and recent Marrickville Awards
30 mins free on the parking meters	
Burwood has a lunchtime business seminar/networking	Many businesses cannot make during the day nor after hours
ED team greets new businesses and welcomes them to the area	
Ashfield offered free OHS advice	Non-council Inspector came to site and showed items requiring attention – did NOT enforce
ASHBiz meetings	Provided a conduit from business to Council
Community events to bring new customers to the area	
Local promotion	e.g. Made in Marrickville

Topic	Additional Comments
Parking	Where available good
Revitalisation programs	
Grants to support activity	
Live Music program	
Free WiFi	
Industry Recognition	
Open Door Policy	Strategy Business Community
Green Space	
Green Power	
Marketing	

**Item 10 Group Session Two – Issues & Challenges**

The groups were asked to identify the economic issues and challenges facing business in the Inner West Local Government area. The following table is a summary of the outcomes of the group work. A number of topics were mentioned by multiple groups.

Topic	Additional Comments
Expansion of programs	Revitalisation Music
Efficiency	Council is (very) slow Red Tape Burden
How to achieve balanced development	Commercial vs Residential
Infrastructure	Civil Parramatta Road Transport Suburb linking

Topic	Additional Comments
Parking	15 mins 30 mins Need for loading zones
Promoting the High Street	limit competition in business zones mix the zonings more
DA package & landlords	Provide a flexible business tenancy DA package Work with landlords
Paths	Cycleways Bicycle storage
Relevant Funding Allocation	Spend money where it makes a difference
Better engagement with marketing	
Database of local businesses	Assist new businesses to identify opportunity and competition (data for SWOT analysis)
New Business opening	Advise existing business about new businesses coming into the area
Lower local rates on business	Business is paying more than its share
Enforcement of street scape standards	Increase visual appeal
Waste Management service for local business	
Assistance to Start Up businesses	
Parking	Some areas very under resourced for parking and so cannot meet demand
Councillor engagement	There is a perception that Councillors come for the speech and the photo opportunity and then do not engage with local business especially at festivals
Complaints and Compliance	More sympathetic treatment
Industrial Zoning uncertainty	Business abhors uncertainty – zone are needed for employment
Commercial space in mixed use zonings	The new commercial units of developments are significantly smaller than the previous stock (e.g. new = 60m <sup>2</sup> vs old = 120m <sup>2</sup> and greater) This size deters some businesses and reduces the potential for a diverse commercial precinct
Insufficient play centres in parks	The lack of facilities in the parks does not encourage the users to linger and patronise the nearby businesses

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Additional Comments</b>
Business Association / Chamber for each commercial precinct	To increase involvement and buy in of businesses in the area
Upgrading of commercial centres	A number of the existing commercial centres are in need of beautification to make them pleasant places for consumers to visit
Business Visibility	Define and market the precincts in a more inclusive way so that business on the fringe of a centre is encouraged to become involved
How to connect with home based business	
How to obtain better cut through of support local business message	
Insufficient marketing	Local population knowledge generally poor with respect to local business offerings Challenge population to keep it local
How to measure the effectiveness of local campaigns	
Changing the perspective	Understanding the reality of an area
Empty shopfronts	Encourage pop-ups Support the secondary strips Engage 'old money' – encourage landlords not to engage in land banking
Parking Flexibility	Focus on customer accessibility Provide a bus service to move consumers around the centres

**Item 11 Group Session Three – Initiatives that could enhance the local economy**

The groups were asked to identify the initiatives that they as business operators think would work well and enhance the local economy  
The following table is a summary of the outcomes of the group work. A number of topics were mentioned by multiple groups

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Additional Comments</b>
Branding and Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core identity = Inner West</li> <li>• Commercial centre branding e.g Annandale = 'The Dale'</li> </ul>	
Provide information packs for startup business	How to submit DAs What Permits and licences etc will be required for different types of business
Keep the fairs	Maintain their independence and identity

Topic	Additional Comments
<p><i>Strengthening the local economy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spot zoning exemptions</li> <li>• Control commercial property sizes</li> <li>• More Pop-ups</li> <li>• Zoning consolidation (no gaps – assist the fringes)</li> <li>• Tonnage limits on the roads of commercial centres</li> <li>• Pre-DA proposals process</li> </ul>	<p>Spot Zoning = Flexibility to permit otherwise not permitted activity</p> <p>Zoning Consolidation = two points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• different local business zones that make up the “town centre” resulting in a “town centre” in planning terms that is too large and would it be better to reduce the size of the “town centre” by rezoning some of the fringe small business zones around the core business zone</li> <li>• The fringes can be perceived as outside the central zone – what can be done to make the appearance more contiguous so that become part of the central zone</li> </ul>
<p><i>Branding &amp; Communication</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festivals should represent the nature of the community in which they are held</li> <li>• Promote the diversity of the Inner West</li> <li>• Council communication directly to new business and linking them to local resources</li> <li>• Online local business hub</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Strengthening the local economy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minibuses to shuttle customers around the area</li> <li>• Festivals</li> <li>• Improve parking</li> <li>• Use empty space for pop-ups</li> <li>• Business diversity</li> </ul>	<p>Business diversity –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage different types of businesses to come</li> <li>• limit the number of operators in a single industry sector</li> <li>• encourage diversity of spaces and sizes being developed</li> <li>• create a DA overview process</li> </ul>
<p>Connect with larger successful businesses e.g. Cinema and encourage them to undertake attractions such as festivals</p>	
<p>Pre-DA process</p>	<p>to help potential new business to understand the local area better</p>
<p>Branding each centre</p>	<p>Unique attractive identity for each centre</p>
<p>Improve search methods on existing information held by Council</p>	<p>Assist existing and would be business operators to more readily obtain relevant competitive information</p>
<p>Undertake questionnaires &amp; surveys</p>	<p>Determine such things as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what to do people want</li> <li>• habits of the locals</li> </ul>

Topic	Additional Comments
Improved parking accessibility	
Focussed activation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attract new businesses</li> <li>• grow economy with more people</li> </ul>	Economy segmentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning</li> <li>• Daytime</li> <li>• Night-time</li> </ul>
DA Package <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landlord Investment</li> <li>• Tenant attraction</li> <li>• Property facilitation</li> <li>• Allowable space</li> <li>• Diverse options</li> </ul>	

**Items 12-13 Summary and Next Steps**

Bernadette Selfe advised that the outcomes would be collated and submitted to the Strategic Planning Group Manager for approval following which they would be disseminated to the Committee.

A number of the ideas raised during the group sessions are part of existing activity. Accordingly, at the next meeting, the Economic Development Team will provide updated information about those items.

During final remarks, it was suggested by attendees that a law/policy to force landlords to spend money to maintain and upgrade shop fronts would be useful

**Item 14 Meeting Dates**

Bernadette Selfe advised that owing to resourcing issues it would not be possible for Council to support a monthly meeting. The frequency henceforward will be 6-weekly using the following dates

- April 12
- May 24
- July 5
- August 2
- September 13
- October 18
- November 29

**The meeting concluded at 6:15pm.**