

ERC Meeting Notes



In attendance

Jacqui Weatherill - Stonnington CEO (Chair)

Chris Balfour - Director Corporate Services

Eddy Boscariol - Manager Economic Development & Visitor Economy

Elles Tielen - Acting Executive Assistant to the Director

Dan Nicholls - Regional Development Australia - Melbourne Precincts and Suburbs

Michael Whitehead - Vicinity Centres

Andy Simpson - Director Bounce Audio

Andy Dinan - MARS Gallery

Nancy Collins - Swinburne University

Rowina Thomas - Owner of Lyall Hotel & Spa

Tommy McIntosh - Creative Director of Tommy Collins

Stef Dadon - Cofounder and CEO, Twoobs Shoes

Dante Peel - Consultant

Greg Houston - Economist

Kate Perlstein - GRMBA President (Acting)

Andrew Carcelli - Coordinator Economic Development & Visitor Economy

Apologies

Stuart Draffin - Director Planning & Place

Justin O'Donnell - CSPA President/Print Express

Linda Mellors – Managing Director & CEO Regis Aged Care

Joey Scandizzo – Owner of Joey Scandizzo Salon.

Zelman Ainsworth – CBRE Advisory & Transaction Services | Investor Leasing

Date / Time 9am – 27 August 2020

Location Virtual Meeting

Item	Topic	Who
1.	<p>Welcome & Introductions</p> <p>New members –</p> <p>Dante Peel (Consultant); Chris Balfour (Director Corporate Services) & Andrew Carcelli (Coordinator Economic Development & Visitor Economy); Kate Perlstein – GRMBA President (Acting) & Owner</p>	Jacqui Weatherill

	<p>Orthotics Plus; Stef Dadon – Cofounder & CEO, Twoobs Shoes and Greg Houston (Economist)</p>	
<p>2.</p>	<p>ERC Overview</p> <p>Key responsibilities of the ERC vary in relief and recovery phases respectively. In the relief phase, Council is focused on minimising downside economic outcomes for the community. In the recovery phase, it is focused on enabling community economic recovery.</p> <p>Key themes in the ERC’s response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce direct charges for residents • Reduce business charges and fees • Experience & Visit Stonnington • Start-up and work in Stonnington • Smart and customer focused Stonnington • Buy Stonnington • Enhance Stonnington Partnerships and Industry strengths <p>Discussion & feedback</p> <p>Discussion amongst participants included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveraging visitors to Stonnington/foot traffic as conduits for marketing via social media. • Utilising connections such as the Regional Development Australia Committee (Melbourne) and Metropolitan Partnerships to influence state and federal government. • Shovel-ready larger infrastructure projects to stimulate economic recovery. Council is already working with Vicinity Centres (Chadstone) on transport infrastructure projects and plays the role of enabler for job creation and economic stimulus for larger scale projects in the municipality. • Council’s role as a central connector/conduit in the recovery phase between different levels of government and businesses as well as B2B • The potential for partnerships between Council and local not-for-profit organisations and educational organisations for projects in the recovery phase – with Council as the facilitator/central conduit to bring multiple partners/stakeholders together. • The challenge of drawing visitors from other areas to Stonnington when many other hubs are also applying similar ‘shop local, stay local’ initiatives. • The importance of Stonnington to stay front of mind against other local governments’ city deals with State Government such as the North West and South East Melbourne City Deals. 	<p>Eddy Boscariol</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilising Council spaces such as Prahran Square and Prahran Market for activations and outdoor open-air markets/events as part of the economic recovery and ‘character creation’ of the area. • Supporting the existing hero businesses’ that bring people to the area and contribute to the ‘experience’ of a shopping precinct (e.g. Mars Gallery, Hawker Hall, Gelato Messina etc.) • Opportunities for Council to pair with local yoga, meditation and mindfulness businesses as part of mental health support initiatives, providing both a less intimidating approach to mental health services and engagement with local businesses. • Reducing car-parking costs (example of Prahran Square parking costs) and creating more opportunities for people to both come to and stay in Stonnington. • Fill empty shops, improve shop facades, Council open spaces and activate external walls in shopping precincts with art – these empty spaces are the blank canvases with which Stonnington’s character can be realised. • Create walking/bike tours of Stonnington focused on art, heritage, food and culture 	
3.	<p>Economic Modelling Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key drivers of Economic Activities • Levers available to Stonnington <p>Key insights from the Economic Data presented included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and household goods spending was up throughout the COVID-19 lockdown (beginning in March 2020 until current date). • Café/restaurant and clothing spending saw the biggest decrease in the same period. • Online retailing has increased across both online-only and multi-channel retailers. • In comparisons with VIC, NSW and WA, it was noted that movement and workplace attendance in WA was still not at pre-COVID-19 lockdown levels, despite minimal to no restrictions in place. • Visits to retail and recreation venues (shopping, cafes, pubs, restaurants, sports) in WA are almost back to normal levels, indicating no permanent change in behaviour. • Trends across the 3 states indicate that less people are frequenting the CBD both during and after lockdown periods, indicating a potential longer term trend towards living local. • Retail vacancies were up in almost all Stonnington shopping precincts from August 2019 to June 2020 (exclusions were Greville St Prahran and Toorak Rd South Yarra) • Vehicle and pedestrian movement is down across the COVID-19 lockdown period <p>This data provides insight into data levers such as key industry spend levels, individual street activity levels and longer term forecasting based on similar states that have moved further into recovery. This allows us to</p>	Greg Houston

	<p>both design more effective response strategies and measure the effectiveness of those strategies.</p> <p>Discussion and feedback included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opportunity to encourage emerging online boutiques to bring their brick and mortar stores to Stonnington first (e.g. Mister Zimi, Nimble, Lucy Folk already in Stonnington). • Morphing retail shopping into an experience where you do more than just shop, such as the Apple store or Mecca Cosmetics in store. • The 'experience' being a combination of different business offerings – how can we curate the experience to draw shoppers in whilst supporting landlords and working with their expectations? • Diversification and curation of offerings in retail precincts. • The difference between Chapel Street and other shopping precincts in Stonnington, and the potential need for two different models to re-engage these areas. • How we can use data from NSW (Sydney as a comparable city to Melbourne) to shape investment and economic growth in the recovery phase to strategically partner with investors and incubator hubs. • Council as a partner with pop-up shops to combat barriers such as high insurance costs • The need for a stronger PR and communications strategy to highlight the different offerings Stonnington has, such as specialised food/wine media, business media, community media. 	
4.	<p>Discussions & Feedback - draft Economic Stimulus Business Support Initiatives</p> <p>Draft initiatives that received positive feedback included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment holidays and rates freezes • Buy Stonnington and increased buy local marketing • Digital mentoring for businesses and Work Local • Discounted business permits and licences such as Footpath Trading • Differential vacancy rates for landlords • Events and activations • Business grants to enhance capability <p>Draft Initiatives that received mixed feedback included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inner Melbourne Action Plan engagement • Long term reduced or no parking fees <p>Draft initiatives and Committee ideas noted for further discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit Stonnington and enhancing local business partnerships (including arts, sports and leisure) • Stonnington gift cards to be spent at local businesses • Specialist PR for industries such as food & wine and arts & entertainment 	Eddy Boscariol

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come and SEE Chapel Street – arts walking tours and support for local galleries such as Eat & Art (certain spends at restaurants putting patrons in the draw to win a local art piece) • Activations such as laneway festivals and fashion history walks along High Street. • Open space improvements • A database of artists and manufacturers within Stonnington • Visitor ambassadors (such as those in City of Melbourne) to provide information to and engagement with visitors. <p>Feedback from retail precincts included support for reduced car parking costs, reduced rates and fee waivers, Buy Stonnington, anchor tenants such as at the Jam Factory, diversification of shopping areas and increased events/media projects</p> <p>Discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivising larger shell sites to house multiple smaller tenants to fill vacancies. • Targeting evening foot traffic and shoppers as well as daytime traffic. <p>The most supported ideas coming from discussion throughout the meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for filling vacant shops, improving shop facades and Council spaces and activating empty walls within retail precincts with art. • Curating precincts to create diversification of offerings. • Creating more opportunities for people to come to Stonnington and stay for the day. • Council as a central connector/conduit to create mutually valuable partnerships between multiple stakeholders. • Partnerships with mindfulness and yoga businesses in mental health support across the municipality. 	
5.	Next meeting: 1 October 2020 – 9am – 11am	