

ERC Meeting Notes



In attendance	<p>Jacqui Weatherill Stonnington CEO (Chair)</p> <p>Stuart Draffin – Director Planning & Place</p> <p>Eddy Boscarior – Manager Economic Development & Visitor Economy</p> <p>Elles Tielen - Acting Executive Assistant to the Director</p> <p>Dan Nicholls – Regional Development Australia - Melbourne Precincts and Suburbs</p> <p>Michael Whitehead – Vicinity Centres</p> <p>Andy Simpson – Director Bounce Audio</p>	<p>Linda Mellors – Regis Aged Care</p> <p>Andy Dinan – MARS Gallery</p> <p>Nancy Collins – Swinburne University</p> <p>Rowina Thomas – Owner of Lyall Hotel & Spa</p> <p>Joey Scandizzo – Owner of Joey Scandizzo Salon.</p> <p>Tony Fialides – President Toorak Village Traders Association</p> <p>Zelman Ainsworth – CBRE Advisory & Transaction Services Investor Leasing.</p> <p>Tommy McIntosh – Creative Director of Tommy Collins by Atlantic Group</p>
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Apologies **Stef Dadon** – Cofounder and CEO, Twoobs Shoes

Date / Time 9am - 30 July 2020

Location Virtual Meeting

Item	Topic	Who
1.	Welcome and introductions from all participants Meetings to be held monthly with the next meeting scheduled for 27 August 2020	Jacqui Weatherill
2.	Draft Terms of Reference for the ERC tabled as per the attached It was noted that confidentiality be upheld and any specific examples be de-identified in any correspondence or publications resulting from ERC meetings. This will be noted at the start of each meeting.	Eddy Boscarior
3.	Eddy Boscarior presented Council's to-date initiatives in support of local businesses, which included but are not limited to: Immediate business support initiatives such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the business hotline and concierge services ○ open for business webpage 	Eddy Boscarior

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ refunding of food, health and footpath trading permits ○ rental relief for food businesses operating within Council premises ○ 7 day terms of payment for supplier invoices ○ reduced parking fees, enforcement and ticketing ○ marketing campaigns for each shopping precinct <p>Initiatives being developed for imminent release include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mentoring sessions conducted by Ion Group, which has been expanded in the second lockdown to include all local businesses (previously this was focused on licensed premises) ● Quick Grants, with a total pool of \$250,000 and up to \$5000 per grant. These grants include a free diagnostic review by Ion Group. Stonnington is the only LGA currently offering this as part of the grant offering. ● Website and Marketing – the Alpaca website tool providing an interactive platform and map for visitors to explore Stonnington based business offerings under a buy local, support local framework ● Mental Health Support – developing a partnership with Star Health to provide mental health support to affected business people and their staff. ● Supplier/landlord negotiations – Council is working with the Victorian Small Business Commission on a webinar (Residential Leasing Code of Conduct) to support negotiations and relations between landlords and tenants. ● VMS (roadside) boards will be installed throughout five key retail precincts, promoting shop local, shop safely and social distance messaging. These will be in place for 28 days. ● Signage and messaging – tram stop signs and window and footpath decals on major intersections have been installed to promote safe local shopping, with branding incorporated from each local shopping precinct. Business support and advice flyers will also be posted to local businesses. 	
4.	<p>Discussion</p> <p>Suggestions for further initiatives and improvements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support of Council mentoring programs and an individualised approach to business support ● Focus on presentation of public spaces ● The utilisation of parks and open spaces for more events, arts and music to create a drawcard for people to come to Stonnington 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of ‘life’ along major shopping strips and what can be done to revitalise these areas – whether that be through rental assistance, Council rebates or other monetary forms • The idea of commercial activities beyond retail and the diversification of shopping areas, as well as the decentralisation of the CBD (which has been expedited through COVID-19). • The idea of having an experience to draw people into the area (such as a market or gaming experience). This was reinforced by the perspective of hotels competing with the CBD and needing a unique experience to draw in guests • Focusing on the boutique, unique and smaller scale shops and the unique shopping experience that this brings. • Anchor and theme approach • The demographic of landlords has changed from a local landlord to a potentially overseas landlord or one with multiple Melbourne holdings. This demographic change may reduce the community attachment and any emotive connection a landlord may share with their tenants. • The note that landlords are also under financial risk and often do not have capacity to reduce rents as a viable option. A solution must include support for both landlords and tenants. • The idea to create precincts within precincts, or sub-communities, which aim to create a balance of different businesses and avoid over-saturation of any one type of business in a given area. Council could provide both tenants and landlords with better data to encourage balanced levels of different business types in different areas. • The idea of a ‘vacant tax’ to encourage landlords to fill vacancies and re-vitalise the area (noting that this may be something IMAP Councils could advocate to state government on). • Offering incentives to initial new tenants to create drive to repopulate key shopping precincts and having this create a flow on effect for other businesses. • The importance of creating hype and foot traffic to draw target markets and residents to local shopping areas (with the example of Shoreditch, UK) and the balance of nightlife and daytime experiences 	
5.	<p>Other initiatives Council is considering</p> <p>Eddy presented the key initiatives that Stonnington had recommended, not recommended and deferred for further evaluation, as well as the framework used to make these decisions.</p> <p>Due to the over representation of businesses in the following industries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional/scientific/technical • rental/hiring/real estate 	

- financial/insurance and
- health care and social assistance

Stonnington will have a greater reduction of Gross Regional Product (-2.5%), greater numbers of local jobs lost (-2.8% to -3.8%) and greater number of unemployed residents (-1.6% to -2.6%) more than the average for the Greater Melbourne, Victoria and Australia as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and initiatives were targeted to respond to this.

Recommended initiatives were:

- Increased advocacy with IMAP councils around renter/landlord advocacy
- Increased buy local marketing, promotion and social media
- Marketing campaign targeted at regional and domestic visitor attraction campaign
- Partnerships with Star Health to improve health and wellbeing of business owner and staff, and creation of health hubs the Alfred and Cabrini Health as well as create health hubs
- Digital mentoring and education, innovation hubs and social media focused campaigns
- Increased funding for arts, music and sporting events to be hosted in Stonnington
- Creating a Caulfield station hub together with Glen Eira Council
- Supporting local and B2B procurement.

Recommendations under further evaluation include:

- Extending reduced parking fees and/or no car parking fees
- Extending free food/health and footpath trading permit fee waivers
- Differential rates for landlords with extended vacancies (eg up to 4 times the normal cost of rates)
- Stonnington e-gift card monetary schemes
- Low and no-cost start-up and co-working area support
- Grants to enhance business support following the initial Quick Grants initiative

Initiatives not recommended include:

- Freezing of future residential rates
- Payment holidays for commercial rates

6.	<p>Follow up items</p> <p>These initiatives will be further reviewed by the ERC, Community Business Continuity Plan Team, Executive Team and Councillors (at both a Council Briefing and Meeting)</p>	
7.	<p>Next Meeting</p> <p>For the next meeting, items of note are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's further initiative amendments • Confidentiality in ERC meetings <p>The next meeting is scheduled for 27 August 2020, with meeting items to be circulated approximately one week prior to the meeting.</p>	