

1.8 ENHANCED OUTDOOR DINING UPDATE

(Author: FH)

Responsible Director: Peter Panagakos

RECOMMENDATION*That Council:*

- 1) *Notes that the Getting Ready for Enhanced Outdoor Dining project have been engaging with the traders and identifying opportunities where outdoor dining can be expanded in a range of settings across a number of Activity Centres.*
- 2) *Notes that delineators are in place and visual enhancement is being completed including the use of vinyl banners, painting and artwork by community artists utilising the \$500,000 funding provided by the State Government for expanded outdoor dining.*
- 3) *Notes that there is a remaining balance of \$140,000 that is not required for the additional trading areas (delineators) and visual enhancements identified in point 2 above.*
- 4) *Notes that the provision of direct grant funding is not permitted within the State Funding Guidelines, but that the \$140,000 balance amount identified in point 3 should be directed equitably across Activity Centres for further visual enhancement as was intended by the funding provided by the Government.*
- 5) *Allocates \$25,000 of the remaining funds (identified in point 4) to each of the activity centres where there has been significant interventions by Council for enhanced outdoor dining including Pinewood, Oakleigh, Glen Waverley, Clayton and Mt Waverley (\$125,000 total). Officers will work with the traders/associations in those areas on further dining improvements/enhancement in line with the State Government funding agreement.*
- 6) *Allocate \$5,000 being the balance of the remaining funding to each activity centre where there has been less intervention being Hughesdale, Huntingdale and Syndal.*
- 7) *Direct officers to work with the traders and trader associations to ensure that funding expenditure is consistent with the State Grant Guidelines.*

- 8) *Notes that the Oakleigh Village Traders Association (OVTA) recently received tentative approval for a \$20,000 grant for an Artistic Suspended Lighting Installation under the Andrews Government's Grants for Business Chamber and Traders Groups program and have via Steve Dimopoulos MP approached Council seeking \$10,000 to support and make up for a shortfall in funding (in addition to a \$8,000 by OTVA) contribution for their Eaton Mall lighting project.*
- 9) *Notes that officers will work with the OTVA so that part of the \$25,000 allocation is used to make up the shortfall identified in point 8 above, subject to compliance with the State Government funding agreement and Council's procurement requirements.*
- 10) *Notes that there has been no further announcements from the State Government regarding any extension of the program. The current funding agreement (\$500,000) for the enhanced outdoor trading areas requires that the money be spent by June 30 2021. If there was to be any extension Council would expect additional financial support to that already given.*

INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Government's Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Package provided \$87.5 million to Councils and businesses outside of Melbourne's CBD to support outdoor dining this summer.

As part of the package, Monash Council received \$500,000 in funding to develop and deliver an enhanced outdoor program in the municipality.

DISCUSSION

Council developed the Get Ready for Outdoor Dining Working Group to implement Monash's outdoor dining program. This is a cross organisational working group with representatives from all divisions ensuring a coordinated approach given the many stakeholders involved and the roles undertaken. The timelines to deliver this opportunity were very tight with the expectation that additional spaces would be available by 26 October 2020.

There were many urban design considerations to ensure the optimising of streetscapes and outdoor dining spaces, as a result a number of the outdoor dining areas have been improved beyond the basic form in which they were initially rolled out. There has been significant and ongoing consultation with

the individual traders to achieve the enhanced outdoor dining areas that we now see in place.

In this period, aided by the \$500,000 State Government funding we have seen our Activity centres transform with trading occurring in additional footpath areas and on car parking spaces. Water filled and concrete delineators have been installed and painting or wrapping of these has occurred to improve their appearance.

Council is now at a point in the program where there are monies that have not been spent to facilitate enhanced outdoor trading and there is the opportunity to work with traders and traders associations to provide some further enhancement and attract more people to these areas.

There is a current remaining balance of \$140,000 from the State Government funding. In Activity Centres where there has been significant intervention made by Council which includes Pinewood, Oakleigh, Clayton, Mt Waverley and Glen Waverley It is recommend that \$25,000 per Activity Centre be allocated for further enhancements.

The remaining \$15,000 is proposed to be allocated to the small neighbourhood areas or where there has been less interventions by Council, where \$5,000 would be spent at Hughesdale, Huntingdale and Syndal.

The OTVA recently received tentative approval for a \$20,000 grant for an Artistic Suspended Lighting Installation under the Andrews Government's Grants for Business Chamber and Traders Groups program. OTVA are contributing an additional \$8,000 of their funds toward this project.

OTVA via Steve Dimopoulos MP have approached Council seeking \$10,000 to support and make up for a shortfall in for their Eaton Mall lighting project. Whilst Council is unable, under the terms of the State funding agreement to provide this as a grant, officers will work with OTVA so that part of the \$25,000 allocation is used to make up the shortfall identified.

Should this report and recommendations be adopted by Council, Officers will work with the traders associations and traders to ensure this funding is spend on items consistent with the State Guidelines and Council's procurement requirements.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

At present the Footpath Trading and Access policy provides the framework on how footpath trading should be managed in normal times. The use of roadways, parking bays and other spaces is not anticipated in the policy but it will provide some guidance on a range of matters associated with safety and amenity.

CONSULTATION

Officers wrote to all relevant hospitality businesses, including those who currently trade on footpaths, alerting them to the State assistance package and inviting them to contact Council to express their interest about how outdoor dining might be enhanced for them. Members of the Project Team visited and consulted with over 200 hospitality traders about their options. We received over 140 applications from hospitality traders for permits to utilise additional footpath and roadside space. Following the roll out of the enhanced outdoor dining interventions, the team have continued to visit and support the traders to ensure they are able to maximise use of the new spaces.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council received a grant of \$500,000 which has funded the associated infrastructure costs to facilitate trading. The majority of the budget costs have been associated with the instillation of the delineators, ramps and visual enhancements. There remains \$140,000 of uncommitted funding from this grant money that should be allocated for its intended purpose.

Council has previously resolved to not charge any footpath trading permit fees during the lockdown period, and more recently resolved to not charge any footpath trading fees for the remainder of the 2020/21 financial year amounting to waiving of a further \$210,000 in income.

In addition there is a further \$109,000 of officer in kind support that has been provided to support traders and the enhanced dining opportunities.

Council has absorbed the waiving of the footpath trading fees and the officer in kind support and not sought to claim any of this shortfall from the State Government funding provided, so that the full benefit of this can be realised by our traders.

CONCLUSION

The Enhanced Outdoor Dining Project has been a complex project with tight deadlines and unique concepts however Council in partnership with the traders have managed to ensure that our hospitality traders have had the opportunity to go some way in recovering from the impacts of the pandemic.

This allocation of funding will assist in continuation of Council's support.