

Flower Industry Advisory Committee

MMA Boardroom, Epping

13th September 2016

In attendance: Greg Duffy (Chair), Fidrim Halit, Cheryl Roehrich, Jashar Rustemi, Mark Maskiell, Matt Elliott, Kirsty Harvison (Minute Taker)

Apologies: Danny Malikovski, Sue Friend, Theresa Hunt, David Whitchelo,

Item 1: Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes are confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting

Item 2: Actions Arising from Previous Meeting

- **Casual stand fees:** MMA have reviewed the current stand licence fees and confirmed that currently there are minimal requests for licences of stands on a casual basis from parties that are not current licence holders. For ease of administration, the MMA has decided to keep one rate for casual stands, with a higher rate during high periods such as lead up to Mothers' Day. MMA will review the fees if the demand for casual stands substantially increases.
- **Stand licences:** MMA investigated history of 3 day licences. There were a limited number of 3 day licences at West Melbourne, which was a carryover from historical point when flower market was within F & V area. When moved to the new site, it was on the basis that all stand licences were 6 days per week. MMA confirmed that there is no plan to change to 3 day licences.
- **Children in the market:** Age that children are allowed to enter the market is now 15 years old, based on the Child Employment Act. MMA considering proposals for children in the flower market on Saturdays. Risks associated with being an industrial site to be taken into account. MMA advised that they are currently investigating options for a proposed dedicated day in school holidays for market users to bring their children to the Market.
- **MROs & Customer Service:** Advisory confirmed that current Flower Market MRO, Angelo, is generally working well. Issues were raised with the approach of the Customer Service Centre. MMA will provide feedback to the Customer Service Centre to work towards improving customer service.
- **Warehouse 5 & 6 Vacant space:** MMA reported that warehouse 5 & 6 is fully let. Four 95m² tenancies that were available following the end of initial lease term have each been let to new tenants.
- **Warehouse 7 update:** MMA has circulated an EOI to ascertain demand. Providores and green grocers have expressed interest in a solution where they can more easily drive vehicles inside their warehouse. Currently not sufficient demand to justify construction expenditure. Advisory **REQUESTED** that details of Warehouse 7 be provided on the notice board in the Flower Market.

Item 3: Marketing Activities

- **Florist satisfaction survey:** Survey will be distributed later this week to review how Epping is going 12 months after opening. The survey also aims to target buyers who haven't been to Epping and why that may be.
- **Parking for florists:** MMA will undertake 3 months' trial commencing 1 October for free Saturday parking for unreserved and casual parking, with the aim of getting infrequent visitors to visit more often. No change for reserved parking.
- **Social media:** Flower buyers considering coming to Epping – how to get them excited? Florists are time poor therefore social media is key. Genevieve is no longer with Flowers Vic and have not yet filled her role. MMA asked for suggestions for people who may be interested in undertaking social media activities to publicise what is new in the market etc. The person would need to have good product knowledge and be in at 3am so can take pictures and provide social media content.
- **Attracting diversity of product offering at the Market:** MMA trying to target other sellers such as potted plants, succulents, terrariums etc so that the Market has diversity of product for

florists to stock. Current full page advertisement in Green Wedge magazine. Contact details of potential supplier of a large range of succulents and indoor plants was provided to MMA.

- **Melbourne Polytechnic:** Melbourne Polytechnic have advised the MMA that the floraculture course (geared towards growers) won't be eligible for government funding in 2017. MMA advised that if this is an issue for industry, need to lobby government to try and get it back on the list.
- **Interflora:** MMA advised that it has met with Interflora, who are willing to collaborate on initiatives to get newer participants attracted to the industry.
- **Night Market Trial**
MMA reported that 36 stand holders responded to the survey regarding the night market trial, with 50% stating that they would not trade at a night market trial and a further 8% listed as unsure. Reasons cited for not participating in the trial include inconvenience as well as difficulty or lack of resources in managing the farm during the day and selling in the evening.

47 flower buyers also responded to the survey with similar results. 49% of flower buyers stated that they would not attend the night market trial with a further 8% unsure. The flower buyers cited several reasons for not wanting to attend the night market, however the overwhelming response was returning to their shops close to midnight posed a safety risk or those based within shopping centres would not be able to access their stores at all.

Item 4: Market Operations

- **Dust Testing:** MMA continues to work with City of Whittlesea re enforcement of dust controls on the Alex Fraser recycling facility.
- **Truck curfew:** The trial period has finished. Curfew currently remains but the MMA has not yet received confirmation from Vicroads re future plans.

Item 5: General Business

- **40 years of service programme:** 40 year service entitles to free access card. Process will be that the Advisory signs off the application in collaboration with the MMA to confirm period of service.
- **Bird droppings:** Advisory **REQUESTED** MMA review cleaning of bird droppings at the far end of the flower market.
- **Trading from rear of stands adjacent to undercover parking:** **REQUESTED** that MMA review operations in the parking areas adjacent to the flower market and that these areas are not permitted to be used for trading as this creates an unfair playing field.
- **Market Hours:** MMA reported that approximately 25 – 30 people across the Market have contacted McKinna re operating hours. McKinna has also contacted a number of flower buyers. Some of the larger buyer concerns include a perception that high volume of pre-trade sales between wholesalers means best stock has been cherry picked before the buyers access the Market. As a result, some larger buyers are going farm direct to source produce. MMA will undertake a short survey in the next few weeks to gauge hours opinion across the market.

MMA also asked the Advisory whether, as part of the market hours review, there was interest from the Flower Market community for a change in key trading day to be Monday/Wednesday/Friday. The Advisory reported that the current key trading days links in with loading and sale at Sydney market on Monday/Wednesday/Friday. Also issues associated with working Sunday nights if change to Monday trading. **AGREED** that preference is to keep key trading days as current.

Advisory raised that still getting buyers in at 3.15am and **REQUESTED** that this be reviewed and addressed.