

Flower Industry Advisory Committee

MMA Boardroom, Epping

4 APRIL 2017

In attendance: Greg Duffy (Chair), Cheryl Roehrich, Jashar Rustemi
Mark Maskiell, David Whitchelo, Sue Friend, Matt Elliott, Jenna Patan (Minute Taker),

Apologies: Danny Malikovski, Kirsty Harvison, Theresa Hunt

Confirmation of Minutes from Previous Meeting: The Advisory **CONFIRMED** the Minutes from 13th December 2016 are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

CARRY FORWARD ITEMS

- **Early Access:** The advisory NOTED that Florists (at least 15) are entering prior to 3.30am (from 3.10am onwards). The MMA will continue spot checks and will conduct an audit on gates entries and on the trading floor for two weeks to help identify early buyers.
- **Coolroom EOI:** Currently there have been three requests for coolrooms and a request for one dry store. The MMA confirmed there will be an upfront cost to build as well as a rent adjustment so that they pay the same as the current tenants will a coolroom. The temporary facility will be removed once the permanent facility is commissioned. Mr Rustemi identified that there are areas along the perimeter of the building that could suit temporary coolroom space as options for non-perimeter stand holders. If there is interest in utilising this space stand holders are encouraged to talk to David Whitchelo.
- **40 Years of Service:** Loraine Weiland: Approved out of session
- **Smoking outside of the Designated Areas:** The advisory NOTED that there has been an improvement in the past 6 months, however people are smoking near doorways. The MMA will continue to enforce smoking in designated areas only. It is NOTED that legislation is likely to make the exclusion zones from the doorways even larger before 2018.

MARKETING

- **Valentine's Day Campaign:** Working with Flowers Victoria, a \$22,000 investment was made into a social media based campaign via Facebook and Instagram. This was also supplemented by radio. ROI exceeded industry benchmarks for both Facebook and Instagram. 75% of florists who used social media knew of the campaign. The Advisory NOTED that pre-orders were significantly higher this year.
- **Mother's Day Campaign:** Working with Flowers Victoria, the investment won't be as significant as Valentine's Day. It will include a large social media presence and point of sale items for florists. The Advisory NOTED that significant advertising isn't required as the event is flower centric anyway.
- **Product Diversification:** Stix and Flora (designers and creators of handcrafted wooden vases and planters) have commenced a six week trial and Carnival Home Wares are to commence a trail on 30 March. The key is diversified product, not duplicated products. A Flower Market tour specifically targeting potential new wholesale flower buyers ran on 20 February with approximately 30 participants. Next industry tour is scheduled to occur late May. Mr Rustemi suggested Plant & Nursery days, however Matthew Elliott met with the Nursery Growers at Caribbean Market and they had no interest in changing their current selling arrangements.
- **Student Placement Program:** Northlink are running a Student Placement for RMIT & LaTrobe where local businesses can engage students to work on a particular business need / project (ie: Introduction of a new accounting software package). Two larger Wholesalers are piloting the program next month with the intention to make the program available across the market.

OPERATIONS

- **Public Holidays:** In addition to the current notifications via email / sms / tv screens; there will be a 12 month rolling calendar available which includes all changes to trading hours.
- **Children in the Market:** The MMA will continue to run registered days during the school holidays (with the exception of Dec / Jan due to the increased movements in the market). Details regarding the upcoming school holiday dates have been released to the market and kid sized vests will be available.

- **Ring Road Speed Limit:** The MMA are undertaking a body of work to ensure traffic management concerns with the forklift crossovers to the south of the site are appropriately managed. This will involve new lighting for crossovers and a single lane, reduced limited past the warehousing.
- **Access Card Renewal:** The common expiry date is 30th April 2017. The MMA conducted a validation process in March 2017, prior to sending invoices to the market. The MMA does not require a new card to be issued and are anticipating approx. 9000 access cards will be renewed.
- **Site Cleaning:** A new scope has been prepared which includes a weekly scrub of all stands. The scope also includes an initial deep clean without compromising the slip rating of the floor. The Advisory NOTED that the recycling works well, however they REQUESTED that the cubic bins are moved inside towards the end of trade and a notice circulated that General Waste bins should not be used for cut flower waste.

OTHER OPERATIONS

- **LED Lighting Upgrade:** The EOI published on 22 Dec 2016 received 24 submissions. 5 were shortlisted and invited to participate in a closed RFP. All accepted the invitation and prepared submissions before it closed on 21 March 2017. The project has a payback period of approx. 2 years and will deliver annual energy savings of approximately 40%. It will require MMA Board approval this month, followed by Ministerial sanctioning.
- **CCTV Upgrade:** The scope was formulated to best utilise current coverage/infrastructure whilst adding surveillance to identified blind spots. Installation is now complete and testing is to be conducted this week. There are now approximately 40% more cameras on the site, including new sites within and around the Flower Market.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- **Advisory Vacancy:** Fidrim Halit resigned from his position on 17 March 2017. Prior to the MMA sending out a formal vacancy notice and conducting a formal Nomination process the advisory group are asked to seek expression of interest from any Stand Holders, Florists or Industry Representatives that would be suitable to fill the vacancy.
- **Truck Curfew:** The initial weight restriction of 4.5 tonnes was lifted as it limited the ability of many small, local businesses to access the shortest and safest routes. The truck curfew trial has now ended and the curfew will remain from 10pm to 6am daily for trucks weighing more than 16.5 tonnes.
- **Dandenong Market:** The MMA confirmed that no Planning Permits have been issued and no formal approval given to proceed. Council have advised they are awaiting on additional information from referral authorities.
- **Steritech:** On 16 March 2017 the Minister of Agriculture announced the Victorian Government would provide funding to Steritech to construct a fresh produce x-ray treatment facility at the Market. Whilst Steritech only use the treatment on selected product lines in their Queensland facility they are keen to investigate the process for export flowers as well.
- **Trading from the back of the stands:** The MMA confirmed that MRO's are continuing to enforce the operating rules and those that misuse bays (as increased trading space) will risk losing their parking bay. Stand holders with perimeter parking bays can park vehicles towards the road and only utilise the space behind for packing and distributing orders.
- **Produce Delivery:** The MMA will investigate claims that some Interstate operators are entering under Produce Delivery, dropping produce off on stands for florists to pick up and utilising parking pre-trade at no cost.
- **Causal Stands:** Mr Rustemi discussed an increased rate for Causal Stand holders on peak trading days. The MMA noted that this was actioned from a previous advisory meeting (*10 March 2016 - all agreed that current tenants overflowing onto additional vacant stands at a rate of \$66 inc GST and the rate should be increased to those that are not current / permanent stand holders*)