



Fruit & Vegetable Growers Advisory Committee
MMA Boardroom, Epping
11 September 2019
8:30am – 9:30am

In Attendance: Mark Maskiell (Acting Chair), Anthony Pignataro, Ricky Mazaris, Vince Doria, Nick Patsuris, David Whitchelo, Malcolm Lum, Lauren Kitchener, Bryan Coyne & Georgie Christerson (Minute Taker).

Apologies: Harry Huyskens (Chair) & David Power.

Confirmation of Minutes from Previous Meeting: MMA CEO welcomed all committee members to the third Growers Advisory Committee Meeting for 2019. Minutes from the previous meeting on 4 June 2019 were confirmed as true and correct.

OPERATIONS

- **Line Marking:** Line marking works have commenced in the market, with the re-painting of the white lines to a more visible yellow paint. This will be beneficial for visibility purposes. All zebra walkway crossings have been re-painted also.
- **Breezeway – Railing, Pedestrian Access & Forklift Highway:** A new hand rail has been installed adjacent to gate one entry / exit gate to prevent pedestrians taking short cuts and potentially colliding with vehicles and boom gates. Installation of hand rail, pedestrian pathways, crossings and rapid roller doors to create a safer market environment for tenants. Handrails have been extended, concrete footings with more structure which will provide more protection for market users. The MMA will create a safety video on this topic & present in TWITM.
- **Shot blasting Floor works:** Shot blasting of the trading floor has been completed, to enhance grip at certain high forklift traffic areas.
- **Update on Solar Canopies & Roofing:** MMA explained to the Committee of the location for the new roofing canopies in the market. The MMA continues to experience resistance from SP Ausnet, who are the Northern Region energy grid and infrastructure owner, who still have not approved the MMA's proposed grid protection and export solutions. The majority of carparking bays will be operational whilst the canopy works commence, which will occur during the day, to avoid market trade.
- **Carparking:** MMA are continuing to experience issues in the misuse of parking bays, however it was noted that this doesn't affect the T1, 2 & 3 areas. The MMA advised they are continuing to monitor and enforce the operating rules. The storing of pallets, stock and forklifts are becoming an issue outside store holders also. The Committee suggested communication to be sent by the MMA to all market tenants, as a friendly reminder to pack items away correctly after trade.

MARKETING & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- **A Better Choice - Green Grocer National Brand Program:** The Victorian 'A Better Choice' program currently has 176 members, being the highest of all States nationally. Fresh State and the MMA are fully committed to working together on the program and have a combined base budget of \$170,000 per year. However, it was noted that additional funding is required to maximise the outcome of the program.

The MMA will be introducing a contribution fee of \$30+GST (per access card) for an initial 6-month period (Nov-Apr). In 2020, to coincide with access card renewals, all access card holders will be invoiced the standard access card fee of \$40+GST. The MMA are continuing to market this campaign (i.e, global billboards, Facebook, Instagram, social media etc) to increase social media followers through the A Better Choice branding & further marketing campaigns. This will be aimed at assisting independent greengrocers to further increase their businesses, and the flower industry are now involved as the majority of greengrocers are now selling flowers also.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- **Warehouse 7:** Construction works have commenced on Warehouse 7, for a completion date of March 2020. There is small format warehousing space still available for any interested parties and the MMA will provide further information upon request.
- **Early Buyer Access permit/ application and cost:** MMA advised that the early buyer permit is due for renewal, however the MMA confirmed they will cease and will not be continuing. The MMA are aware of people obtaining access having not paid for the early buyer access card. The Committee & MMA agreed that there should be a blanket rule for everyone, and the Committee discussed the main issues. Market hours were again discussed, and each Committee member discussed the issues from their own personal perspective. MMA confirmed that market hours are continuously being reviewed.
- **CCTV:** The policy was discussed which includes “common sense” information. MMA confirmed they have installed several new CCTV cameras throughout the market.
- **Digital Transformation:** The implementation of the new CRM system, Salesforce into market operations is on track, with the release of the Alpha phase by 30 September, followed by the Beta phase later in the year. The MRO’s will now carry I-pads for operational purposes. The new system will overhaul the current financial system, and ease interaction between the MMA and tenants, particularly in terms of transactions, paying invoices and viewing accounts online via the portal.
- **Drug & Alcohol Policy:** MMA distributed a FAQ document to the Committee prior to the advisory meeting for review. The MMA have engaged an external independent expert drug and alcohol tester, Fit4Duty to conduct the random testing. The testing involves 2 types of tests - a non-invasive mandatory swab test and a breathalyser test for drugs and alcohol respectively. The testing will occur in a clearly marked ‘testing’ van, and an fit4duty staff will be randomly selecting market users for testing. Initially there will be a focus on high risk areas including but not limited to forklift and buggies. There will be several forms to be completed by each person undergoing a test including; consent forms and a medical declaration. The medical declaration is a statutory declaration which the person declares that they have been taking prescription medication in accordance with prescribed instructions / doctor’s orders and they declare themselves fit to remain onsite.

The alcohol test is very similar to the breathalyser police use. If a non negative reading is returned, the swab will be sent to a laboratory for confirmatory testing, typically taking up to 3 days. As a separate but related initiative, the MMA is installing breath testing stations across the market for Market users to test their BAC to ensure adherence to the Market Operating Rules.

Formal education & FAQ’s will be provided to Business Principals prior to the testing commencing. The reason for the testing is to keep the market a safe workplace and to ensure our market users return home safely each day. All employers owe their employees a duty of care, and the feedback in the market community has been positive for this initiative.

The MMA also informed the Committee that a breath testing machine will be located at Gate 1, used predominantly for transport companies requiring access to the market. If a drug or alcohol test has a non negative or positive reading respectively, the MMA will require a negative reading for each before the offender is permitted to return to the market to ensure they no longer pose a risk to the market community. The MMA recommends employers to send any drug or alcohol affected employer to an EAP (Employee Assistance Program) to ensure the person(s) will be fit to return to work. Committee were positive about introducing the testing, and the MMA are hoping for a smooth transition. MMA will circulate the Drug & Alcohol policy after today’s meeting to all committee members.

- **40 Year Market Service Award:** MMA advised of an influx of market community members recently receiving their 40 Year Market Service Awards. Several nominations have been received by the MMA and are encouraging more market tenants to apply. Once approved, the MMA will present the nominee with a Gold Access card (free market access), and complimentary parking each day after 7am, together with receiving their award.

MATTERS ARISING

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