

Flower Industry Advisory Committee

MMA Conference Room, Epping

2nd June 2020

8:00am – 9:30am

In attendance: Greg Duffy (Chair), Cheryl Roehrich, Lesley Imbesi, Vince Cidoni, Kathleen Farrell, Di Templeton, David Power, David Whitchelo, Bryan Coyne, Malcolm Lum & Georgie Christerson (Minute Taker).

Apologies: Mark Maskiell, Lauren Kitchener & Sue Friend

Confirmation of Minutes from Previous Meeting: MMA COO welcomed all committee members to the second Flower Advisory Committee Meeting for 2020. Minutes were not taken from the All Advisory Committee Meeting/ Dinner event in March 2020. with restrictions

MATTERS ARISING

- **Mothers' Day:** The Committee reviewed and discussed the results of the lead up to and Mothers' Day sales, the majority of flower Growers and wholesalers selling out of all stock. The imported product was almost impossible to obtain and local grower volumes were not sufficient to meet demand. The Chairman commented on the advertising campaign noting that it needed to start earlier to have maximum impact. Committee member Vince Cidoni mentioned the recent visit from the Today Show to his store, Grown Florist on Mothers' Day, with five live crosses to his store.
- **COVID-19 – Market updates and communications:** MMA Chief Operating Officer discussed the current restrictions and regulations provided by the MMA, including increased cleaning schedules, additional hand sanitiser stations etc. This has been implemented throughout the market, both the flower and fruit & vegetable market area. Temperature screening will run until 30 June and be reassessed accordingly. With the restrictions being slowly lifted, the all Market buggies are now allowing 2 people to travel per vehicle and market cafés are now available to dine in with restrictions.
- **Early Buyers:** This item is a current topic and will therefore remain on the agenda. At present, it has been noticed of several market tenants and buyers entering the market earlier than operating hours, given only 2 lanes are open for entry at Gate 1. this is a consequence of the minimal lanes open during Temperature screening. However, this is still a high priority and will again be focussed on once the COVID-19 crisis passes. MMA suggested to discuss the early buyers' issue further in July, once temperature screening has been reviewed.
- **Breezeway – Railing and Pedestrian Access:** The installation of new railing throughout the breezeway has made it more accessible and proven to be a beneficial safety hazard for market tenants and visitors.
- **Bird Control:** The MMA are aware of the ongoing bird situation predominantly in the flower market. Management confirmed Statewide (Pest contractor) have installed bird spikes on the fire pipes and will continue to investigate further reduction initiatives in the market.
- **Access to on-line platform:** The MMA have been in discussions with a company who have created an online Trading platform for market products & produce. users to access. Committee members acknowledged the merit in the system and the benefits it would provide. Noting: Complimentary training will be available for all tenants.
- **Florist Operating area:** MMA discussed allocating an area in the Flower market specifically dedicated to florists that do not operate a shop front, predominately on-line traders. The committee advised that a number of Florists are on the brink of closing, this could provide an opportunity for these florists to purchase product in the market and have an area with facilities to make up orders, form bouquets, and deliver from the Market. The area will be in the flower trading floor, close to amenities (power, external door etc) and will operate 5 days per week, utilising the space after market trade.
- **Hand trolleys:** Market tenant Green Machine are finishing their lease at the market. MMA will take over their hand trolleys and will provide them free of charge to all market users. The new signage will be displayed on them once handover has occurred.

- **Rent Relief:** By now, all market tenants should have received their market rent relief letter. The MMA have confirmed waiving a 3-month rent period on stands, cool rooms and parking to all Flower Market tenants including free carparking for Florists and buyers. April- June 2020 The MMA has received direction from the Small Business Commission of Victoria who have created a guideline document for businesses seeking additional financial assistance. If you believe additional assistance is required, please contact the MMA. These businesses will be addressed on a case by case basis.
Noted that some tenants did not receive the rental rate relief letter, please contact the MMA directly

MARKETING

- **Flower Market Campaign:** At the May Board meeting, the MMA received five times the normal amount of budget spend for approval to run future promotions/ campaigns for the Flower market. The following campaigns will be implemented;
 - A Winter campaign will be implemented,
 - A general promotion of the Flower market, not specifically on any significant event.
 - Winter campaign,
 - Spring campaign (Spring racing carnival),
 - Followed closely by a Summer campaign.

Committee agreed the campaigns need to run specifically to promote an event and to commence advertising at least 1.5 weeks prior to an event. The MMA to organise a Committee meeting in late June to discuss dates and promotions, brainstorm ideas for future promotions. A suggestion by the Committee was to run a flower competition, invite flower schools into the market once restrictions are lifted for visibility of market operations.

- **Flower Market Murals:** The MMA mentioned that most market tenants would by now have seen the Flower Market murals in the breezeway. A new mural will be painted inside the Flower Market in July and the response from the Committee was positive towards the artwork to date.
- **Flower Industry Strategy:** On the back of COVID-19 the MMA will have further discussions with the State Government about the funding of a Flower Industry Strategy.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- **Warehouse 7:** Management confirmed that no flower tenants have taken up a lease in the under-construction Warehouse 7.
- **CCTV:** The MMA have confirmed additional cameras have been installed in the circuit within the market.
- **40 Year Market Service Award:** MMA discussed the application process for a 40 Year Market Service Award.
- **Market Communications:** The committee suggested for the MMA to provide hard copies of forms, This Week in the Market, rent rate relief letters etc in the market, to cater for those who don't have access to email. These forms could be displayed in a similar fashion to the Customer Service centre.
- **MRO:** A special mention to MRO Angelo Cafeo who continuously provides excellent customer service to market tenants, staff and buyers. Market Operations Manager, Bryan Coyne will pass on this feedback.

MATTERS ARISING

- Nil