

# Meeting Minutes

## Northern Business Liaison Group

Date	8/09/2022	Time	5.30 PM to 7.30 PM
Chair	Jeni Coutts	Meeting no.	5 of 2022
Location	Zoom	Minute taker	Jacqueline Weedon

## Attendees

Attendees			
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Jeni Coutts(JC)	Independent Chair	Jeremy Richards (JR)	Watsonia Optical
Sarah Maguire (SM)	Watsonia Traders Association	Hesham Mobarek (HM)	Watsonia Pharmacy/Watsonia Traders Association
Renato Marnich (RM)	NELP	Yvette Stanfield (YS)	Macleod Traders Association
Daniela Parisella (DP)	Banyule City Council	Ivan Zarezkij (IZ)	NELP
Dani Ahimastos (DA)	Banyule City Council	Jim Needham (JN)	NELP
Luke Minton (LM)	SPARK	Jack Boronovskis (JB)	LXRP
Scott Lambert (SL)	NELP		

  

Apologies			
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Noella Jacobs	Greensborough Chamber of Commerce	Matt Guest	Watsonia RSL

## Actions – previous

No.	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Update
4.1	Renewal of NBLG membership drive	Renato Marnich (RM)	ONGOING	OPEN	ONGOING RM continues to approach local businesses

No.	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Update
8.3	Presentations of other MTIA projects as case studies of successful approaches to supporting business during construction.	Renato Marnich (RM)	9/06/2022	OPEN	ONGOING. Clyde Rd LXP presented 08.09.22
9.2	DA to present at an upcoming NBLG about Banyule's trader activities.	Renato Marnich (RM) and Dani Ahimastos (DA)	4/08/22	OPEN	ONGOING. Carried over to meeting on 30/09/22.
10.1	LM and RM to provide update about promotional hoarding.	Renato Marnich (RM) and Luke Minton (LM)	Next NBLG	OPEN	CLOSED Hoarding cannot be used for promotions but other opportunities are being explored
10.2	LM to follow up with DA about Spark using a training space in Banyule Council's area.	Luke Minton (LM) and Dani Ahimastos (DA)	Next NBLG	OPEN	CLOSED Initial discussion held. Facility in another area has been booked

## Key discussion points/decisions

Owner	Action
Jeni Coutts (JC)	<p><b>Welcome and outstanding business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JC: Welcomed the Northern Business Liaison Group attendees and introduced agenda items.</li> <li>Apologies noted</li> <li>Introduced guest presenter Jack Boronovskis - LXP</li> <li>JC: Addressed previous meeting's actions as above.</li> </ul>
Jack Boronovskis (JB)	<p><b>Trader Engagement Case Study</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JB Presented trader engagement case study on the Clyde Road Level Crossing Removal.</li> <li>Approximately 22,000 vehicles travelled on Clyde Road daily prior to the six-week shutdown, buses also replaced trains for four weeks during this time.</li> <li>Area has a diverse mix of retailers/businesses and these were categorised into high, medium and low impact. Business owners were invited to book a briefing with the Community Relations team commencing with high impact traders followed by medium and low impact.</li> <li>'Shop Local' competitions were run for the public encouraging them to shop at participating retailers and a separate one for the workforce with a monthly prize draw with workers winning prizes purchased from local traders.</li> <li>Signage was installed in a high traffic area to promote local traders which was rotated regularly increasing awareness. Local traders were used wherever possible for printing etc.</li> </ul>

Owner	Action
	<p><b>JR: How was the impact to businesses categorised as high, medium or low? Geographically by how close to the closure they were located.</b></p> <p><b>HM: Were all of the high impact businesses open throughout the closure? Not all, some were closed because of school holidays</b></p> <p><b>HM: Were they closed by choice? – And post Christmas? Most were closed due to post Christmas School Holidays and some opened back up at the halfway point during the road closure.</b></p> <p><b>JR: Is there a Clyde Rd Traders Association similar to what Watsonia has? It would be great to get feedback from a Traders Association representative to hear their point of view on how the program went. I believe they have a Chamber of Commerce.</b></p> <p><b>JR: Does LXP have a formal process to submit lessons learned at the end of each project? There is not a formal process. As we work with a number of different Alliances they all have slightly different processes but we are working towards homogenising this. MRPA does present back to the Alliances.</b></p> <p><b>JR: Is it worth making this a formal process to help lessen the impacts on traders going forward? HM: Lessons learned from the past projects would be valuable going forward. We have learned from our experience with CPB/NELP and are getting better at communication with Spark/NELP. There are gaps as we have an alliance model but we are working toward bringing these together.</b></p> <p><b>JC: Other projects would benefit from LXRP's learnings as the project has been going for a number of years.</b></p>
Renato Marnich (RM)	<p><b>Trader Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bookings have started for photography sessions</li> <li>• Business mentoring sessions are available and more information will be emailed</li> <li>• A male clothes drive has been run at NELP offices to donate to Watsonia charity shops</li> <li>• The Skills and Jobs centre has had a lot of enquiries from local people looking for local work with Spark when opportunities become available. Are any of you finding recruiting challenging?</li> </ul> <p><b>HM: When will email go out? The email will be sent to SM, HB and JR to circulate by COB tomorrow.</b></p> <p>HM: Yes, recruiting is a huge challenge at the moment.</p> <p><b>RM: Where does the challenge lie? HM: Many people don't take the time to read and understand the position that is advertised. JR: We spent months looking for the right person.</b></p> <p><b>RM: Are Macleod traders experiencing the same challenges? YS: Currently staff retention is high with only one business currently looking for staff.</b></p>
Luke Minton (LM)	<p><b>Tunnel Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nearing end of stage 2 of Greensborough Rd realignment, stage 3 to begin 12<sup>th</sup> September.</li> <li>• LM has met with HM and JR to discuss how communications can continue to improve between Spark and Traders.</li> <li>• Watsonia site compound works are continuing.</li> <li>• Yallambie site works are continuing</li> <li>• Spark has an internal business directory to help support local traders in the project areas</li> </ul> <p><b>DA: How can road closures etc be communicated to people living outside the works area who travel through for work? We can share the information with a contact who can then forward onto the relative people.</b></p> <p><b>DA: Centre Managers details will be provided.</b></p> <p><b>DA: Can you provide an update on soil testing? This site was a former landfill and some potential contaminants were found which are being removed in line with regulations.</b></p> <p><b>HM: Noted that a trader has reported that her business has started to be affected. RM: Yes, they feel that the barriers block sightlines from Greensborough Rd.</b></p> <p><b>HM: Different traders are having different experiences. It's important that we make it clear to the community that we are open for business.</b></p> <p><b>HM: We need clarification from Spark/NELP on what the Watsonia Traders Association can do and what is expected of them regarding promotional activity. Roadblocks need to be removed to ensure promotional activity can go ahead.</b></p>

Owner	Action
	<p><b>JR: Can the banners on the concrete barriers be used to promote businesses?</b> <i>The Department of Transport limits wording on barriers to six words to help prevent drivers being distracted. We will work with traders and DoT on the look of banners for the more permanent hoarding.</i></p> <p><b>JR Asked: Can we minimise wording to business logos or lists even if it's limited to the currently highly impacted businesses?</b> <i>Potentially lead times will prevent the use of these barriers but we can look at this for future opportunities once the barriers have been realigned and hoarding installed.</i></p> <p><b>Post meeting note:</b> <i>Project hoarding can be used to promote shopping precincts with MTIA Shop Local artwork, for example Watsonia Open for Business but not used to promote individual businesses.</i></p>
Dani Ahimastos (DA)	Presentation on Supporting Businesses in Banyule carried over to next meeting.
Jeni Coutts (JC)	<p><b>Open forum</b></p> <p><b>DA:</b> Is surprised by the level of support being offered as she had a business in a project area sometime ago and received no support.</p> <p><b>SM:</b> Positive feedback received on a recent weekend promotion. Need to move past the perception that the shops are closed and ensure that customers remain loyal to Watsonia shopping centre.</p> <p><b>YS:</b> Can local traders display marketing for the workforce? <i>Yes, there will be an internal trader directory. LM: A directory can be developed for Macleod.</i></p> <p><b>YS:</b> Can local traders have a special menu or catered service for the workforce for lunch and dinner when things ramp up? Can a trader take a food van to work sites? <i>It would be difficult to for a van to go onsite due to restricted access. With council approval they could park nearby.</i></p> <p><b>SM:</b> It is preferred food trucks are not near the Watsonia shops if they are in competition with traders.</p> <p><b>YS:</b> Macleod traders would also prefer food trucks are not in the area if they are in competition with traders.</p> <p><b>DA:</b> All Banyule traders associations agree food trucks are not to be placed near shopping strips. Council is here to help, let them know if they can assist with the promotion approval process etc.</p> <p><b>JR:</b> Has stepped down as president of the Traders Association and Hesham has taken over. A reminder that the Traders Association members are volunteers who want the promotions to work, can we make the process easier?</p> <p><b>JC:</b> Next NBLG meeting set for 13 October 2022 at 5.30pm, location TBC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JC Closed the meeting at 7:02pm</li> </ul>

## Actions - new

No.	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Update
9.2	DA to present at an upcoming NBLG about Banyule's trader activities.	Renato Marnich (RM) and Dani Ahimastos (DA)	4/08/22	OPEN	To be presented at the next meeting on 30/0922
10.3	JB to provide information re: Traders Association (or similar) to RM to pass onto JR	Jack Boronovskis (JB) and Renato Marnich (RM)	13/10/22	OPEN	

No.	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Update
10.5	RM to speak to Jobs and Skills Centre re: potential job candidates for traders	Renato Marnich (RM)	13/10/22	OPEN	
10.6	LM to work with NELP/DoT on development of promotional/branded artwork for hoarding	Luke Minton (LM)	13/10/22	OPEN	