

# Lismore Business Panel Minutes

## 24 February 2017

**MINUTES OF THE LISMORE BUSINESS PANEL HELD AT LA VIDA RESTAURANT, KEEN STREET, LISMORE ON FRIDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2017 AT 12 NOON**

*Please note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next LBP meeting.*

### Present

Michael Haddin (Chairperson), Brent McAlister (Executive Director-Sustainable Development), Cr Isaac Smith, Cr Gianpiero Battista, Jason Mumford (City Centre Manager), Barry Robinson, Kaylene Hopf, Sharon Dowling, Rob Walker, Chris Knight and Melinda Kent (Corporate Support).

### In Attendance

Gary Murphy, Council's Executive Director Infrastructure Services and Martin Soutar, Council's Open Space Assets Co-ordinator.  
Big Rob.

### 1. Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome

The deputy Chairperson thanked Isaac for his service on the Panel and welcomed Gianpiero to the Panel.

### 2. Apologies

Paul Deegan and Rob Walker.

### 3. Public Access

Big Rob spoke for five minutes regarding agenda items. Issues raised were as follows:

- The minutes from the 9 December 2016 meeting were inaccurate with regard to the Thursday Market information.
- Why is the LBP paying for the Compliance signage which is not in its Charter, Council should be paying for them and why are they not corflute signs that would be cheaper.
- Nothing is being done to help late night business in the CBD, which is not going well with only one nightclub in town now.
- How did Council not know about the Telstra costs regarding the CBD upgrade and the impact that these decisions are having on shops.
- Why is the CCM trying to push through a rate rise to the outgoing Business Panel – business people cannot afford further rates rises with the upcoming proposed rate rise. CCM gets the biggest benefit to his salary. The new Business Panel should vote on this, not the outgoing one.
- The Business Paper was put out very late this week not giving time for consultation, technology cannot be blamed.

### 4. Disclosure of Interest

Nil

### Lateness of LBP Agenda

The Senior Support Officer advised that unfortunately the Agenda was not able to be provided a week prior to the meeting due to an upgrade of Council's Records Management System. Unfortunately integration with other programs were impacted including the Business Paper program and the ability to publish it on Council's website.

## 5. Confirmation of Minutes

That the minutes of the Lismore Business Panel held on 9 December 2016 were not confirmed as accurate. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry representative felt that the presentation notes were a scripted response which were erroneous and misleading. The following comment is to be inserted in Section 6.2: "The Lismore Chamber of Commerce and Industry had concerns that the update presented contains inaccuracies which are misleading and the 2480 content not being adhered to."

## 6. Presentation

### 6.1 Gary Murphy, Council's Executive Director Infrastructure Services and Martin Soutar, Council's Open Space Assets Co-ordinator gave an overview of the Inner Footpath Upgrade Project.

It was advised that Council made the decision to postpone the upgrade when final costings revealed that Telstra works would cost in excess of \$220,000 extra per street. Unfortunately staff could have done better with regard to Telstra consultation, however had based costs on previous works (allowing for a 100% increase) and too many assumptions were made. Telstra lines are under and within concrete slabs and the costs involve Telstra providing every connection with a temporary line along the roofline, to maintain service to each shop.

In the long term this may result in a better outcome with the NBN coming to Lismore by the end of the year, with current infrastructure potentially needing to be replaced. One option is that Council may replace it and rent it back to the NBN. Council is currently seeking advice from other Councils. The timeline may be 12 months to progress answers.

Currently cost scoping is being done to do repairs (ie settlement of pavers etc) in Magellan Street, with a full costing available in the next few weeks. Consultation with Magellan Street businesses will start when a full scope and costing is made.

Businesses are encouraged to report any issues to Telstra, which may influence upgrades when the NBN progresses.

Staff asked if communication to businesses had been adequate. It was advised that business owners had received communications, however building owners had not received correspondence. It was also suggested that due to the previous publicity regarding the upgrades, that the rest of the CBD should be advised of the latest.

Barry Robinson bought up the issue of stormwater backing up in Keen Street and was advised that several shops experienced the same issues. An application can be submitted to Council for works to rectifying the issue, using an approved contractor.

## 7. Reports/Recommendations

### 7.1 Advance Notice: Intention to seek Council and Lismore Business Community support for an application to IPART, to make the existing additional SBRVL Permanent

Jason explained that Council must start the process for applying for IPART SBRVL early next year. This report is a courtesy to let the outgoing Panel know what will be proposed and gauge opinion. The recommendation from the outgoing Panel will be reported in a Council Report proposed to be submitted to the Council meeting in May 2017, as will the recommendation from the new Panel to be appointed in March.

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Once the Council has made a recommendation, full public consultation will be held. OPTION #1 is no extra SBRVL at all.

The Lismore Chamber of Commerce and Industry representative advised that the Executive Board was generally against any increase. There is a Special Rate variation for infrastructure that will impact rates shortly. Because of costing measures and other rate increases businesses cannot afford more costs. The Chamber would like the time to consult their members. Events could be run by other groups, such as Norpa.

Other feedback suggested that we need to invest and promote to bring money into town, with a centralised Panel to vote on strategies. Also we would lose much of the work, momentum and continuity if the amount was reduced, which would be detrimental. Prior to a CCM being employed the money was seen as a "lolly scramble" and did not provide value for money. Employment of a CCM does have a cost, however the CBD has benefited and our promotions have attracted people to town.

The Councillors advised that they are looking at a proposal to Council regarding the business rate. That the Economic Development Unit needs beefing up and more needs to be done on economic development in conjunction working with the CCM and Tourism Manager.

### RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the current (outgoing) Lismore Business Panel supports the idea of a permanent Additional Special Business Rate Variation Levy to fund the Lismore Business Promotion Program and recommends that an application to IPART be made to place such funding on a secure footing, subject to Council's approval and the results of intensive consultation with the Lismore Business Community.
2. That in respect of the above, the current (outgoing) Lismore Business Panel further recommend that one of the options proposed and shown below be supported:
  - OPTION #1: No additional SBRVL.
  - OPTION #2: A new permanent A-SBRVL commencing at \$120,000 p.a. in the 2018/19 year (Business as usual).
  - OPTION #3: A new permanent A-SBRVL commencing at \$220,000 p.a. in the 2018/19 year (Significant increase).

**Voting:** OPTION #1: Chris Knight; OPTION #2: Barry Robinson; OPTION #3: Gianpiero Battista, Sharon Dowling, Michael Haddin and Kaylene Hopf. Rob Walker and Paul Deegan absent.

**Moved:** Kaylene Hopf **Seconded:** Gianpiero Battista

## 8. Items for Discussion

### 8.1 City Centre Manager Update

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#### 1. CBD WiFi Project

Vertel are coming to Lismore at their own cost to conduct a site survey. Third party marketing group oOh Media have indicated as part of any agreement to fulfil the marketing aspects of having public WiFi would include a proposal to have an electronic billboard (the nominated site being the City Hall) which could reduce the cost of funding public Wi-Fi. The CCM advised there is further investigation required and appropriate reports and consultation will be forthcoming and presented to a future LBP meeting and Ex-com. LCC will make the decision ultimately, with Council to resolve which option. Any proposed signage at the City Hall has to take into account Norpa and the Lions Club.

### 2. Eat the Street

Major Event Grant (MEG) has been approved for \$10,000. 8 confirmed chefs providing demonstrations from 12:30-6:30pm, approx. 75 stalls which is capacity, 4 bands and a number of local entertainment. Approx \$18,000 in sponsorship and in kind support.

Panel questions Jason on sponsorship and why food companies such as Bidvest, Norco and PFD were not sponsors. Jason advised that they had been approached.

**ACTION:** On survey to stall holders, could a question be put on asking food vendors if they use Bidvest or PFD as food suppliers.

### 3. CBD Placemaking & Retail Strategy

The final draft will be ready to be presented to the next LBP meeting. The document identifies a range of best practice placemaking activities to beautify the CBD and stimulate the economic impact. It also identifies gap in potential retail businesses that could be attracted to the central business district.

### 4. South Lismore

CCM advised that he and Deputy Mayor Cr Gianpiero Batista had conducted a walk-around visiting businesses, including South Lismore, who were pleased to see them. Screen planting is going to be put in at the pump site in Union Street. He will be doing fortnightly walk arounds including CBD, South, North Lismore and Goonellabah.

### 5. New Events

CCM is working with Council's Media Officer to source a quote from an architectural lighting company for lighting up town and laneways. It is proposed that they will be installed by July within an event for the whole month with a working title of "Winter Nights, City Lights" which will flow on from the Lantern Parade.

It was suggested that due to power not being available in Keen Street that lights could be projected from the awnings onto trees.

**ACTION:** CCM to investigate the potential of having lights from awnings.

## 9. Other Business

### 9.1 Chamber of Commerce Update

The following events dates are coming up:

- Business Connect Breakfast at Workers Club - 28 February 2017 with Liz Ellis presenting;
- Regional High Tea which kickstarts Women's Festival – 5 March 2017;
- Business Awards – Saturday 22 July 2017.

### Next Meeting

The next meeting of the new Business Panel will be held on 24 March 2017.

### Closure

This concluded the business and the meeting terminated at 2.00 pm.

## **CBD INNER FOOTPATH UPGRADE**

### **Project postponed**

Council has made the difficult decision to postpone the upgrade of the inner Keen Street footpath. We will however begin a tidy of Magellan Street pavers as some have fallen into disrepair.

The cost to upgrade the inner footpaths of Keen, Woodlark and Molesworth Streets has far exceeded what we planned for. In recent weeks we discovered that the cost of relocating and replacing telecommunications services is beyond what was originally expected.

The cost is in excess of \$220,000 extra per footpath. Over three footpaths around the CBD block this would increase the project budget to \$2.3 million across all four streets. The budget for all four streets at present is \$1.5 million. This is not a cost increase that Council can bear.

Despite lengthy negotiations over the last few weeks we have been unable to reduce these costs. However, we should have discovered this earlier in the project and we apologise to businesses for the disruption our lack of planning in this area has caused.

There is also uncertainty about the roll-out of the NBN and how this would affect the footpath. A delay now may actually lead to a better outcome when the NBN arrives in Lismore. We are currently working with NBN to explore options and maximise the benefits of the NBN roll-out to businesses by providing the best NBN connectedness possible.

Businesses can assist us in working with NBN to deliver a high quality service by contacting Telstra with any service issues to log the fault.

We will continue discussions with Telstra and NBN Co. in an endeavour to seek a good outcome for all parties with a view to postponing works until January 2018.

If we cannot resolve the challenges with the costs of Telstra infrastructure, we will assess options for a footpath finish that does not involve pulling out the existing pavement and impacting on telecommunications services.

It is always our goal to deliver on our promises and to make sure we start and finish projects on time and on budget. In this case it was not possible to be certain of that and we are genuinely sorry for the inconvenience we have caused.

We have learnt lessons from this experience and next time we will investigate these matters much earlier in the process to ensure a repeat of this situation does not occur in future.

We thank you for your time, effort and cooperation during the project – the input and support from our CBD businesses has been fantastic.

We will complete pavement repair works in Magellan Street this financial year.

If you have further questions, please contact Project Manager, Martin Soutar on 0427 299 058.

Yours sincerely

Gary J Murphy  
**Executive Director Infrastructure Services**

14 February 2017