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MINUTES

Local Government Economic Development Network

- Thursday 28th August 2020
- Online via Zoom
- 2pm to 4pm

Attendees

Thanks to the 28 who attended and welcome to those joined for the first time:

Adriaan Stander (Kingborough Council: Strategic Planner), **Bill Duhig** (Skills Tasmania: Project Manager), **Bruce Williams** (City of Launceston: Economic Development Officer), **Carol Bracken** (Cradle Coast Authority: Program Manager - Regional Futures Plan), **Carolyn Coates** (Hobart City Council: International Relations | Economic Development, Engagement and Strategy | Community Life), **Craig Perkins** (RDA Tasmania: Chief Executive Officer & Director Regional Development), **Erin McGoldrick** (Glenorchy City Council: Manager City Strategy and Economic Development), **Fiona Ranson** (City of Launceston: Urban Design & Heritage Planner), **Jackie Harvey** (State Growth: Project Manager), **Jaime Parsons** (City of Launceston: Team Leader Place Making, Liveable Communities), **Jane Eldershaw** (State Growth: Project Manager Antarctic Tasmania and Regional Coordination), **Jen Newman** (RDA Tasmania: Regional Development Coordinator), **Kevin Turner** (RDA Tasmania: Regional Development Coordinator), **Linda Seeborn** (Skills Tasmania: Manager, Workforce Policy and Programs), **Lucy Knot** (Hobart City Council: Economic Development Project Officer), **Luke Doyle** (Hobart City Council: Manager Economic Development, Engagement and Strategy), **Marilyn Burns** (City of Launceston: Urban Design Planner), **Marissa McCarthy** (Hobart City Council: Senior Adviser), **Meagan Bennett** (George Town Council: Manager Liveable & Connected Communities), **Melissa Findlay** (State Growth: Project Officer), **Michele Gledhill** (Huon Valley Council: Manager Economic Development), **Michelle Riley** (State Growth: Regional Coordinator), **Mike Brindley** (RDA Tasmania: Regional Development Coordinator), **Philip Holliday** (Hobart City Council: Executive Manager City Placemaking | City Planning), **Rebecca McKenna** (Devonport City Council: Project Officer), **Samantha Skillern** (Hobart City Council: Marketing and Business Engagement Officer), **Sheena Hannan** (Glenorchy City Council: Economic Development Coordinator), **Tasha Tyler-Moore** (Kingborough Council: Manager Development Services).

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The Meeting

2pm

Introduction: Kevin Turner (RDA Tasmania)

2.05pm

Welcome and reflections: Luke Doyle (City of Hobart)

2.20pm – Guest Speaker

Presentation by Sarah Bendeich, Senior Advisor City Place Making (City of Hobart) on *Adventures in Collaborative Placemaking*.

- Slides [available here](#).
- Sarah also recommended the Heart Foundation's [Good For Business – the benefits of making streets more walking and cycling friendly](#).

Thanks to Sarah for an excellent and engaging presentation, the following discussion around place making included:

- Alfresco dining policies and balancing regulations and place making, and the trend for on-street furniture becoming more permanent.
- Community engagement and how to hear from more than the usual voices.
- How to measure the impact of a place making project
 - Economic Development Australia is releasing an Evaluation and Measurement toolkit to do exactly that, it is based on one that has been tried and tested in British Columbia
 - Projects have to be justified against the long term maintenance costs
 - Getting retailers to provide their turnover as an evaluation benchmark
 - How to filter out macro-economic factors that distort evaluation of projects
 - Huon Valley Council and King Island Council are participants in a trial for Neighbourlytics' [Launch Cities](#) analysis and evaluation tool
 - Commbank is a good source of data regarding retail digital transactions
 - [Spendmapp](#) is a subscription tool that access financial transactions - both online and physical, with new data available every 6-8 weeks. It helps to identify local spend, as well as escape spend.
 - Vacant shop surveys

3.05pm - Lightning Talks

2 minutes each to share goals and activities and anything you would like to connect with network members about.

Samantha Skillern (City of Hobart)

- New business grant in response to COVID called the Business Adaptation and Assistance Grant, biggest grant yet, it will piggy back on State Growth's business continuity grants for professional assistance but focus more on marketing and IT. Also it will help with changes to

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operational models (e.g. switching to takeaway or floor signage for social distancing). Grants will be from \$500 to \$2,000 per business. Two rounds, first to open in next few weeks, 2nd round come Feb 2021. Hoping to service up to 200 businesses.

- Earlier COVID grants split into two streams: an e-commerce program to get online and or improve their e-commerce. The other stream was for professional assistance for up to \$750.

Marissa McCarthy (City of Hobart)

- Preparing Council's COVID Economic Recovery Framework and Action Plan. This is with an agile approach; first step is an interim plan and road map looking at issues and options with business stakeholders, second step will be the Framework and Action Plan later in the year.
- The key for Hobart is an action plan that works with and leverages other support measures and expertise to make things more efficient. One option is a business concierge program and another is in-kind support using Council's facilities.
- They already have a lot of information from interviews and surveys with the business community which they have analysed and over the next months are looking to go wider to get a better understanding of different areas of Hobart.
- **Would like to connect with anyone else working on economic recovery planning for their area. Really interested to hear how different people and places are approaching it.**

Lucy Knott (City of Hobart)

- Catching up on pre-COVID commitments, this includes activities for Hobart's international relationships for example marking the anniversary of Hiroshima.
- Going on maternity leave from October so the economic development contacts will be Luke, Samantha, Carolyn and Marissa.

Erin McGoldrick (Glenorchy City Council)

- Economic Recovery Plan; a program focussing on short term goals and long term projects.
- Immediately called up businesses and found other data sources to understand the impact of COVID.
- Glenorchy has a high location quotient of people employed in arts and recreation. *Showcase* is their arts and cultural strategy and includes a project with Team Towns which will be grass roots place-based opportunities for arts and recreation businesses. *COMA* is a public art tourism infrastructure asset between MONA and Moonah. Also working with MONA on the caravan site on the Berridale peninsula.
- The construction sector is being supported through a capital works program upgrading community facilities, park and cycle assets.
- The retail trade sector supported by the [Activity City](#) business-to-business and buy local portal and campaign.
- Jobs Hub being established in Glenorchy. This is linked to large investment pipeline (e.g. Derwent Entertainment Centre, Bridgewater Bridge) and getting job pledges from these projects for locals.
- Long term projects include master planning for the marine and defence innovation precinct at Prince of Wales Bay, and a Greater Glenorchy Plan.

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- Establishing a concept for a business incubator space.
- Exploring a sport and recreation hub on the back of the proposal for the Derwent Entertainment Centre and other sport and recreation infrastructure projects.

Sheena Hannan (Glenorchy City Council)

- [Beyond the Curtain](#) Campaign has been promoted in the media to encourage greater awareness of the three main hubs in the Glenorchy municipality

Michelle Gledhill (Huon Valley Council)

- Feasibility study has been completed for a Huon River Foreshore Shared Pathway connecting Huonville and Franklin along the river edge. Included a cost benefit analysis and extensive community engagement, now ready to access funding.
- Beginning the Jefferys Track feasibility study to link Huon Valley to Derwent Valley. Similar to the Plenty Link Road study. Going through the community engagement process but anticipating some opposing voices from local communities so need to unpack the community sentiment to understand issues. Options could be a freight route or a local road or just upgrades to improve emergency management.
- Economic Recovery Working Group to have first meeting in direct response to Covid. HVC also have a Social Recovery Working Group. Will look at issues and opportunities to work together a community.
- Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study: looking at skills capacity and employment opportunities with major employers. The recommendations are leading to better partnership between labour intermediaries, employers, training providers and HVC.

Rebecca McKenna (Devonport City Council)

- Bringing forward projects from 5 year capital works plans, there are a number of smaller parts that they are being prepared to be shovel ready as funding including grants becomes available.

Meagan Bennett (George Town Council)

- Great result with TEMCO being sold to GFG Alliance.
- Business grants program in partnership with Bell Bay Aluminium, \$100,000 was available, closed 11th August. Three categories: 1) Business recovery; IT support like systems upgrades and e-commerce up to \$4,000. 2) Business Resilience; professional advice and services like financial planning, human resources, WHS and training. 3) Business Stimulus; new business opportunities, assets upgrades, upskilling and training up to \$7,500.
- Infrastructure projects and capital works; Regents Square tenders closed, Mountain Bike project underway with World Trails, East Beach picnic area at Low Head approved, Macquarie Street new design concept. Getting these all shovel ready for infrastructure funding.
- Rolling out Blackspot funding road projects.
- Bell Bay Advanced Manufacturing Zone – working with interested investors to develop at Bell Bay.

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- Positions Vacant aren't being filled – Commonwealth benefits have been a disincentive for people to apply for entry level jobs. **Would like to know if others are experiencing this and how they have managed it.**

Bruce Williams (City of Launceston)

- Working on a new Economic Development Strategy.
- Vacant CBD premises survey has been undertaken at different stages of restrictions: At height of lockdown 40% in the CBD were closed, it has got better and while some are still closed they are instead working from home. Over the last four years, out of 550 on average 70 are closed, it has gone up to 80 but some of them are being refurbished and new businesses have opened in previously vacant premises. Despite the magnitude of COVID impacts it hasn't been as bad for Launceston as feared. Overall the business community has demonstrated tremendous resilience.
- Hypothetically, private expenditure has balanced out in the local economy because the boost to Commonwealth benefits has matched the drop in wages. However, where that money is spent has changed meaning there have been winners and losers.

Jaime Parsons, Fiona Ranson, Marilyn Burnes (City of Launceston)

- The Recovery and Care Package included grants to facilitate adapting to new technologies; there's also been rate relief.
- An accelerated capital works program funded by no interest loans has brought together a suite of projects and a special team has been created to deliver these.
- The new UTAS buildings in the Inveresk Precinct continue despite the hit taken to the education sector, which is good. Another major project is the bus interchange and Creative Industries Precinct.
- Planning application fees were dropped, but they are aware that a development application doesn't necessarily mean the developments will happen, sometimes it means they are trying to sell the property with the approval.
- Exploring street changes due to Covid and the chance to facilitate increased pedestrianisation.

Michelle Riley (State Growth)

- Working to connect people to funding programs; the Tasmanian Government has delivered over \$95 million in support through grants and loans.
- Reporting information on the regions to the Tasmanian Government.
- Working on strategic industry projects like South 32's sale of Temco.

Mike Brindley (RDA Tasmania)

- Circular Head business breakfast in Smithton, in partnership with Circular Head Council, looked at the economic opportunities and discussed issues and options for achieving them.
- Release of The Renewable Energy Future which outlines some of the local economic development opportunities that communities have coming up. **Would like to hear from anyone who uses the report in their local economic development work.**

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Kevin Turner (RDA Tasmania)

- The Building Better Regions Fund, there isn't one scheduled but colleagues at the Department of Industry expect the 6th October budget to reveal new grant opportunities.
- Contributing to local projects like the George Town Mountain Bikes and the Launceston bid for UNESCO Creative Cities designation and trying to add value by connecting them to other opportunities.
- Working with Tania Hunt from the Youth Network of Tasmania to get a better understanding of the impact of Covid on young people's employment outcomes and what might be some of the systemic gaps or changes to their employment pathways. **Would like to know if anyone is working with young people to help them find employment.**

3.50pm - Economic Development Australia update: Erin McGoldrick (Glenorchy City Council)

- Erin McGoldrick is a National Board member with EDA.
- Australia wide there are over 1,000 members.
- An evaluation and measurement toolkit is due at the end of the year, for EDA members only.
- The National Economic Development Conference will now all be online, the theme is 'breaking a new ground, building a resilient future.' The conference is programmed to have lots of practical content to be shared.
- Reviewing the EDA strategic direction, priorities for economic development practitioners include; data access and analysis, legislative change to include economic development in state Local Government Acts, liveability and economic diversification as a driver for economic development, and training and development for professionals and elected members.
- Accredited economic development training for professionals and elected members and community leaders. Information on all modules is available here: <https://www.edaaustralia.com.au/training/acecd-accreditation/>. The trial in Queensland was a success; it will now be delivered remotely until a time when it can be delivered within States and Territories.

4pm - Close: Final comments

Next meeting:

- I will contact councils to see if anyone wants to host a meeting. It is an opportunity to shine a light on a council's economic development work and engage the network either at the beginning of an initiative or to showcase a completed project.