

## **Notes from Small Business Friendly Council Conference**

### **Day 1 Thursday 16 May**

#### **1. Conference Opening - The Hon. Damien Tudehope MLC, Minister for Finance and Small Business.**

Purpose of conference to look at the relationship between Small Business and Local Government.

Over 760,000 small business in NSW. Employ 1.5 million people or 40% of the workforce.

NSW Government is to concentrate on: "culture of how it does business with people." Wants to put customer first and to achieve a cultural change in the public service & government to put service first.

NSW now has a policy to pay small business within 5 days.

Wants to engage policies that encourage people to operate small businesses.

#### **2. Address from Small Business Commissioner – Robyn Hobbs OAM**

For those attending to be inspired and to walk away with at least one idea on what you can do in your community to support Small Businesses.

Small Business Commission happy to work with local councils to support SB.

Local council is the bedrock of what happens to SB.

69 Councils in attendance with over 201 participants.

108 out of 128 NSW Councils are members of the SB Friendly Council Programme.

Do you have an idea for your area that we can partner with you?

Five councils from WA present – funded by WA Government to attend.

SB Commissioners from Federal Government; Queensland; SA; WA and NSW present.

#### **3. How to Plan for the Future – Mark McCrindle**

Have to understand the trends to plan for the future.

What will the next ten years bring?

What happened 10 years ago: no Wi-Fi; tablets; smart phones but did have simple mobile phones.

Observe trends not just linear but can scale

Look at where at with sequential plans

The future is rushing us: robotics: AI; quantum computing.

The Metro – driverless trains – start in a few weeks; drones being tested by Amazon for parcel delivery.

Where are we heading?

Each person is connected digitally to at least 10 platforms.

Digital disruption – need to keep up to date.eg Netflix 10 years ago started mailing DVD's to people then in to digital delivery.

Emerging generation – always connected.

Gen Z – ushered in new language, new way of work and how to work.

65% of primary school children will enter job types that don't exist today.

Already happening e.g. social media marketing manager.

New jobs emerging old jobs under threat of automation

1970's largest occupation types: typist and telephonist.

Jobs transforming because of: globalisation, automation, changing demographics.

Demographics: Australia fast growing. Added 4 million people since beginning of decade.

Based current growth by 2051 around 42million.

**The future cannot be predicted on the past.**

Population growth 1.6% a year; capital cities growing faster Sydney 1.6%, Melbourne 2.5%.

Key factor to growth – culturally diversity.

Australia most diverse in the developed world.

Australia 29% born overseas; USA – 14%; UK 14%

1 in 5 Australians speak a language other than English at home. In NSW 1 in 4 or 27% of the population.

Emerging generations are connected digitally and globally. Stress is from lack of Wi-Fi or dead batteries.

Generational change – see card (scanned)

Focus on younger generation but older generations are growing - ageing population.

Average national tenure in a job is three years.

Gen Z (10 to 24 year old's) - 17 jobs or five careers in a lifetime

Gen Y more inclined to start their own business

Australia has 22 million trading business. That is 1 business for 11 people.

Sole operator 61%

39% employ people of which 69% are Micro Business 1 – 4 staff; 24.3% Small – 4 – 19; 6.2% Medium 20 – 199; 0.5% Large 200 plus.

**Survival Rates** - 1 in 10 fail annually; half do not get past four years.

Regulations and operators not responding to them are the main reasons.

McCrinkle worked with Hill Shire Council on Hills Business Performance Sentiment Index (PSI)

<https://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/Business/Grow-your-Business-in-The-Sydney-Hills/Hills-Business-Performance-Sentiment-Index-PSI>

Need to reduce red tape and help SB manage change fatigue.

Everything is changing fast – can get fatigued. Need a one stop shop to make working with Councils easier.

We now live in the mobile era communication on the go. Emerging generation search you tube- need to watch to make it straight forward.

Our approach needs changing – we need to innovate.

More data generated last two years that in the entire history of man.

TL:DR – short hand for too long didn't read

Find ways to cut through to bring people on boards.

Can't change a trend – need to get on board. We need to do less speaking and more listening.

“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” – Steven Covey.

Be responsive and be collaborative.

Answers are not found with one expert but the whole room.

Need collaboration and authenticity - leading by authenticity.

Need to create a Collaborative Culture.

#### **4. Panel Discussion by SB Commissioners**

General discussion of their roles and how they work together.

SB Commissioners meet bi – monthly.

Necessary skills - listening, responsiveness, collaboration.

Victoria – doing work with mental health. SB owners with depression have to keep working and deal with depression

<https://www.vsbv.vic.gov.au/news-publication/helping-small-business-owners-protect-mental-health/>

NSW SM Commission is pushing for Councils to pay SB in twenty days until December and then to make payments within five days.

SA SB Commission – working through Retail Acts to help start-ups get shorter leases than 5 years. Working to get SB online and digitally enabled.

Need to rethink High Street concept not working anywhere.

Infrastructure works impact on business. Need to communicate

Talk to landlords to reduce rents and to get councils to reduce rates to get vacant shops filled.

Aus. Fed. Commissioner – financial benefits to shop owners keeping premises vacant for periods of time. Banks place greater value on the rent level rather than actual received rent.

NSW SB Commissioner would like to see legislation that an owner cannot keep premises vacant for x amount of time.

Hard for sole traders/SB to keep up with technology in a rapidly changing environment.

If collecting data Councils should make available for Business to use.

“Easy to do Business Program’ by Service NSW unique in Australia. No cost to Council

[https://www.smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/158110/Easy-to-do-Business-fact-sheet.pdf](https://www.smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/158110/Easy-to-do-Business-fact-sheet.pdf)

Real Estate agents may not know how the NSW SB Commission can assist SB mediate with issue.

## 5. Targeted Sessions

**Target Session 1 Regional Economies Dr Kim Houghton - Regional Australia Institute**

<http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/home/>

Jobs big focus of research this year. Other issues mid-size towns 5,000 to 50,000 people.

Regional not necessarily rural. 30 Regional cities.

**Myth.** Populations declining in Regional areas. Overall growing at min. 1.63% in heartland. Regional Cities 7.8%.

Growth constant in Regions.

Need to look at stats who was here five years ago who is here now.

Look at ABS data for shift in Industries.

Agriculture not the employer it once was. See Productivity Commission on Agriculture

<https://www.pc.gov.au/research/completed/agriculture>

Jobs trend moving away from labourers to skill/professional base.

Need to change narrative that there are no jobs in Regional Areas.

Social and cultural perspective impact on economic growth. Wages are not the drivers – but what is it like to live in the place.

Look at job growth in skilled occupations.

Entry level jobs could be at risk in the future.

Councils should be able to access NSW Regional Development Framework funding. Need to look at Social & Cultural Infrastructure.

**Target Session 2 Life in our Cities Barrie Barton – Right Angle Studio**

<https://www.rightanglestudio.com.au/>

Don't invest in cities they decay.

What are longer term changes in cities – what will they look like in 30 years.

Need to try and imagine what city will look like and try and work back.

With respect to start ups – need to ensure people understand risk and how busy it is. Particularly if public funding is injected.

Growth does not need to be open ended. Happy to stay small and profitable.

Social networks important.

Small business – highly emotional.

Urban renewal – use small business to build social cohesion. Social inequality is disruptive.

Elephant and Castle in London – Lead Lease agreed to forego rent for an incubator program. 17% rental space for chain stores. Rental abatement, fit out assistance for start-ups.

Sometimes take economic hit for short term to get long term good residents.

Small business is the inside made into the outside.

Can't make a joke of failure in SB.

Councils need to build empathy – chasm between decision maker and the people at the end.

Truth – need to be voice of reason and tell the truth.

Reciprocity - neither generosity or charity.

Focus – need to ensure small business focus on what is important. Make it simple and interesting.

Ecology – city is habitat we need to strive and service. More like a gardener than an architect.

Council – community – chamber working together.

Vacant High Streets happening all over the world.

## **6. Working with Small Business Luke Aitken - NSW Business Chamber**

NSW Business Chambers represent 20,000 businesses across all industries.

220 local chambers in NSW

783,000 SB in NSW, 7 million employees. 58% Gross domestic product.

NSW 10.6 billion dollars in compliance costs annually to small business.

Red tape has a major impact.

**One of the most complex regulators to deal with is local government. Councils lots of regulatory responsibilities but poorly resourced.**

Problems – excessive s94 car parking restrictions. Low level of cooperation between state and local government.

Small Business Friendly Council Program \$95 million from the Federal Government.

Outdoor dining getting single regulatory framework

Need to look at what techniques can get effective feedback for SB to local councils. So that Councils can improve.

#### **7. Communicating with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities.**

**Peter Zographakis** – Settlement Services International; **Elfa Moraitakis** – Sydwest Multicultural Services; and **Rima Elhage** – NSW Police

1/3 SB born overseas. Support groups assist refugees and migrants who establish SB.

#### **8. The Australian Financial Complaints Authority David Locke** - Australian Financial Complaints Authority (ACFA)

[www.afca.org.au](http://www.afca.org.au)

Established middle of last year brings 3 fed. Agencies together.

Provide free ombudsman services.

Deals with: Issues with banks, credit; Insurance – general, business, travel; Superannuation matters.

Does not deal with workers compensation or medical insurance.

Need to first raise concern with Bank or insurance company then if not satisfied take to ACFA.

ACFA will work through issues with both parties. While with ACFA the matter can't be taken to court. ACFA gets first dib to resolve.

If individual accepts decision then the decision is legally binding on the bank/insurer. If individual not happy with decision it is not binding then they can proceed to court.

#### **9. Making it easier to do business. Carmel Meznaric** – Service NSW

“Easy to do Business Program” aims to make NSW the easiest State in Australia. 108 Councils signed up.

Programs about reducing red tape and sharing information to reduce waiting times

Look at cost of living program

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/cost-living>

#### **10. Local Government NSW – How Councils Support Small Business in NSW Linda Scott** -President Local Government NSW

Economic development at core of what Councils do.

LG NSW prepare Inclusive Tourism Training package.

#### **11. Damon Rees CEO** Service NSW

Easy to Do Business Program. Council Digital Dashboard (once signed up) will give councils real time information on what businesses in the community are doing. Prototype will be run in August.

## **12 The Hon. Victor Dominello MP , Minister for Customer Service**

Easy to Do Business Program is about sharing information between local and state governments.

Program to get rid of and reduce paperwork.

Problem – all levels of government are afraid of asking people what they think. Even bad feedback is good to set benchmark

### **Day 2 Friday 17 May**

#### **1. Putting Your Council Area on the Map.**

##### **Case Study 1 Parkes Elvis Presley Festival Cathy Treasure Parkes Council**

Started 1986 by community. Going for 27 years. Council took control 10 years ago due to enormous success too much for volunteers.

Only Elvis festival in the Southern hemisphere approved by Elvis Foundation.

2019 26,000 visitors with \$13 million injected into local economy.

Significantly changed Parkes: socially; tourism; economic; environment; local fashions.

Overtaken the dish as the most important tourism attraction.

Benefits – all year. Lots of tourism awards.

Strategy is partnership [.

2019 – 1900 media articles; 409 traditional media.

Connection between Elvis and Parkes -none.

Trying to make it self-funding. S355 Committee of Council

Don't rest with success; reinvent; innovate; widen target market; communicate.

What can you do in your own LGA? -

- Keep it simple
- What are the results you are looking for eg growing nationally – need to plan ahead.
- Work with community
- Wont please everyone
- Need strong business partnerships.
- Prioritise marketing and communications
- Give local stakeholders love
- Involve whole community
- Blanket approval for outdoor trading
- Use your strengths
- Temp. caravan parks
- Home hosting programs
- Relationships with outlying areas.

- Invest in infrastructure – do higher quality for free entertainment.
- Look at programming what you can do
- Diversify funding – sponsorship; merchandise; ticket sales; commissions.

Success has challenges. Cost of goods and resourcing can significantly increase.

### **Case Study 2 Bring flavour to Bland Ray Smith CEO Bland Shire Council Parkes Council**

Not a tourist destination. Half way between Melbourne and Sydney. 2 million traffic movements of which 30% travelling community.

Challenge to get them to stop for a night.

1<sup>st</sup> council to embark on painting silos.

Can boast largest football in the world at Ungarie.

Projects have increased visitation.

Bring Flavour to Bland Campaign see following links

[www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/national/bland-councils-plea-to-australians-to-add-some-flavour-for-its-residents/video/9c2bdac5398228093ec43b2da5b22829](http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/national/bland-councils-plea-to-australians-to-add-some-flavour-for-its-residents/video/9c2bdac5398228093ec43b2da5b22829)

<https://travel.nine.com.au/latest/prime-minister-responds-to-call-to-spice-up-bland/0059ac90-087f-4f86-b43e-33c487732c7f>

<https://karryon.com.au/industry-news/destination/the-legit-shire-of-bland-is-setting-the-internet-on-fire-with-its-epic-youtube-campaign/>

Bland Flavour Festival started with 300 people. Now Council commits \$50,000, Grants \$55,000 and significant support from the Wyalong Gold Mine.

Advertising did not cost council a cent. Getting 12 months free promotion on Singapore Airlines.

## **2. Online Development Applications**

**Gino Cavallaro**, NSW Department of Planning and Environment

E- Planning - long gestation period.

Looking at customer centric approach

Trying to resolve all duplication.

NSW Planning Portal to relaunch in about 2 weeks in Plain English. To make it a transparent system through the process and easier for all users.

Will support application process and include concurrence with other agencies eg Sydney Water.

E- Planning reduce from five to four forms. Will reduce burden on reporting for Councils.

Designed not as a web form but as a business process.

Allied to relaunch will be relaunch spatial viewer for open data.

Intention is to make map information available and reduce burden on Councils.

Benefits to Council: Financial and live information.

12 Councils using E -m Planning already does about 80% of all their DA's.

Includes DA concurrence approvals – less duplication – payment online – approval process increased.

**Carolyn Howell** Sutherland Shire Council

Sutherland one of the 12 councils.

They have made E- Planning compulsory.

Since January 1 2019 500 applications to date. Determined 100's through the portal.

60 Assessment staff – process wide range of applications

2018 \$1.5 billion in development

Sutherland experience: -

- All information lodged in one application
- Print a field file
- Less GIPPA's
- Reduced processing at the front end
- All additional information gets loaded through portal and then tracked locally.

What changed for applicants:

- Can complete the application at their leisure
- No need to come to Council
- No need to supply hard copies
- More up to date information on DA tracking
- Still have support for mum and dad applicants

Have been teething problems but the Department has listened and making improvements.

### **3. When Tragedy Strikes**

**The Long Road to Recovery, Wendy Graham** NSW Office of Emergency Management

Discussion around recovery has evolve.

Recovery is the real story.

Talking about disaster is something that should be discussed as a normal part of business.

Question? Are we prepared for disaster? Do we have a disaster recovery plan/management plan?

Disasters affect people and community as a whole. How do we help community recover.

Examples:

Pasha Bulker Storm 2007.- big impacts on small business. Disaster however benefitted fish shop near the wreck – heaps of tourist.

Blue Mountains Bushfires 2013 – large number of houses burnt but not businesses. Perception couldn't go there because everything destroyed.

Tathra fires 2018 – recovery still ongoing. Similar to Blue Mountains had to get message out that area was still open for business.

Successful recovery predictors:

- Council leadership
- Communications and engagement
- Connected Communities
- Local Business

Need to invest in social capital not just built capital.

Are your businesses ready for disaster.

“Get Ready Business” an engagement toolkit

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/business-and-industry-in-nsw/assistance-and-support/get-ready-business>

Also see

<https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/emergency-management/funding-programs/community-resilience/Community-Resilience-Innovation-Program.aspx>

**Northern Rivers Floods Lismore – Deputy Mayor Elly Bird** Lismore City Council

Still recovering from 2017 floods. 688 CBD businesses suffered damage

Total damage just under \$40 million

Uninsured stock losses ranged from \$40,000 to \$450,000( in one instance)

Significant reduction to banking and ATMS – banks had to set up portable ATM's in car parks.

Some SB paid annual fees of \$30,000 for insurance but the companies did not pay out.

**Trauma** – traumatic experience decreases ability to undertake the paperwork to sort the claim.

Council needs to lead support for business.

Wouldn't do public appeal again – issues around who gets fund, criteria and so on. Have partnered with St Vincent's for future events

Disaster c – classification just doesn't happen it takes a lot of work.

Stress and trauma limits capacity for action. People don't plan for recovery.

Need an emergency management recovery plan. Lismore Council have nearly finished their plan – happy to share.

Recommendations:

- Plan to recover
- Mitigation s only part of the solution
- Build relationships, networks and partnerships now.

#### **Northern Rivers Floods – Murwillumbah Troy Green, Tweed Shire Council**

6 lives lost

Did swap with land to relocate Murwillumbah Industrial Land to higher ground. Gave companies additional 20% land to compensate for construction. New expenditure will increase business in town.

<https://business.thetweed.com.au/>

Outside tradies coming in can do shoddy work at premium insurance companies do not care.

#### **4. Targeted Sessions**

##### **Target Session 1 - Starting a Smart Hub Chris Celovic and Michelle Long – Jobs for NSW**

Mission of Jobs for NSW is to facilitate the jobs of the future

Sydney Start up hub 17,000m<sup>2</sup> 46,000 registered visitors this year. Over 14,000 attendees. 295 events, 480 start-ups. 980 jobs created this year.

Regional landing pad at Sydney hub can be used by Regional businesses with free access to desk. 400 regional visits to local landing pad his year.

(Need to visit Sydney Startup Hub)

Question: a library can be used as a start up hub by supplying work stations. (Talk Sydney people about setting up hubs.

<https://www.jobsforNSW.com.au/>

##### **Target Session 2 Cyber Security for Small Business -Dominic Meoli and Nicholas Cheatham – Australian Cyber Security Centre**

ACSC – federal government agency. Part of signals directorate that includes ASIO and Federal Police.

<https://www.cyber.gov.au/>

Now looking at SB. Taking whole of economy approach

Hard to reach out to SB large number of have less than 20 staff and are being targeted as back door into larger companies and government. Will attempt to gain financial advantage. Issues based attacks – deface website.

Cyber security is an important issue – need to get basic information to SB to avoid them being victims.

Discussed how spearphishing works. Not always through email, can use Facebook, twitter and other social media.

ACSC will run local courses – 30 minimum number participants.

## **5. Behavioural Insights – How Customer – Centric Thinking Can Help Your Organisation, Clare Power – NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet.**

New Department of Customer Service – need to make it easier for people to access information

New Customer Centric Service:

- Behavioural Insights - all about how to make decisions.
- Behavioural Economics – humans not optimal decision makers. More like Homer Simpson than Spock.
  1. Cognitive Limitations
  2. Difficulties with self-regulation (we procrastinate, use emotions and bias)
  3. Decisions are context dependant

What matters to policy makers – two systems of thinking:

System 1 – fast effortless eg how much food for breakfast

System 2 – slow mode of thinking eg buy house get as much information.

Underlying 1 and 2 are cognitive biases – most time great but can lead to poor decisions. Even when biases are known we default to them.

Apply Behavioural Insights:

1. Identify behaviours – decisions are context dependant.
2. Apply EAST Framework [https://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/BIT-Publication-EAST\\_FA\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/BIT-Publication-EAST_FA_WEB.pdf)

Make the desired behaviour happen:

1. Make it easy
2. Make it attractive
3. Make it social
4. Make it timely

Will come out to councils to do insights.

## **6. Helping Small Business Thrive, and Not Just Survive Linda Hailey, Hailey Enterprises**

Need to understand SB

All need to be online

Top 8 pressure points:

1. Parking charges
2. Roadwork disruption inclusive or removal of pedestrian crossing.
3. Council red tape
4. Competition from big box retailers and malls
5. Events that pull shoppers out of the town centre

6. Perceived lack of communication (need to improve it)
7. Retail not included in tourism mix (tourism initiative can be used to include all SB)

Phases of main street:

Thriving – new businesses and concepts, expansion, collaboration, embraced by power of one, active committees and groups.

In Transition – a few new businesses or concepts, interest in planning, positive vibe.

Struggling – dying from edges around gaps in the retail smile, low stock levels, panic buying.

Wodonga – Main Street three years of revitalisation works. Full time liaison person, 1 person based in CBD. Used containers in Main Street for pop up stores impacted on works.

Don't blow it and break trust.

Be careful of signage that impacts adversely on the business district.

Don't use mystery shopper programs to prove bad service.

Councils can facilitate programs and changes that work for the whole community.

Small Business Month in October.

## 7. The mother of all start ups

**Peace Mitchell** AusMumpreneur

<https://ausmumpreneur.com/>

Australian small business community for mums in business

**Hayley Markham** Code Camp

<https://www.codecamp.com.au/>

## 8. Adventurous Thinking – An Inspirational Talk about the Power and Practice of Everyday Innovation Sally Dominguez

See website link <http://www.adventurousthinking.com/>

*One of the best talks of the two days but at the end when everyone was exhausted it was waster. Best to look at the website above to understand where this remarkable woman is leading us. An Australian working on the world stage and currently working with NASA (one of her clients)*

Human development for 250,000 years was local and linear then the Industrial revolution and lots of new technology.

Can't have five-year plans based on what happened in the last five years.

Technology is a force that takes the scarce and makes it abundant.

Digital networks allow us to change behaviours.

Exponential changes start slow then increases exponentially

We need a mindset free of expertise – rather than saying it won't work

Six stages of disruption:

1. Digitization
2. Deceptive
3. Disruptive
4. Dematerialisation
5. Demonization
6. Democratization

Knowledge is no longer power - everyone has it

Business need to look at how they can:

Digitize

Embrace Failure

Bias for action.

Need to act with purpose if you want people to work with you.