

Fitzroy Street Taskforce

***Newsletter #1
October, 2007***



***Junction of Fitzroy Street and Upper Esplanade
1930
Port Phillip City Collection***

Welcome to the first issue of the Fitzroy Street Taskforce Newsletter

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Taskforce Coordinator

My name is Katrina Gorjanicyn and I am the newly appointed Fitzroy Street Taskforce Coordinator. Since I have been in my position at the CoPP I have worked with Mike McIntosh (Manager Economic Development) to produce an Action Plan (circulated 1 October 2007), based on previous Taskforce meetings.

My role involves liaising with you as well as guiding and tracking the development and delivery of the actions initiated by the Taskforce. I will work with you to build the capacity of the Taskforce to advance Fitzroy Street. I am looking forward to meeting you and working collaboratively to enhance Fitzroy Street. My contact details are:

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Update on Action Plan

The most recent Taskforce meeting was held on 31 July 2007. Taskforce members have worked collaboratively and given of their time generously to identify ways to improve Fitzroy Street. Additionally, Council consulted the local community by setting up an information tent where people had opportunities to relay their experiences of Fitzroy Street to Council staff.

Three key themes emerged from Taskforce meetings: streetscape and aesthetics; safety; and community identity. These themes underpin our Action Plan and will be the basis of our Taskforce subgroups. The Action Plan is the central planning and reporting tool for projects. The document is also the link between residents, traders, community, police and government groups. Taskforce members will be responsible for driving the outcomes of the Action Plan.

STREETSCAPE

Lighting audit

Council has appointed Webb Consulting Engineers, to undertake a lighting audit of Fitzroy Street and problem areas identified by the Taskforce. The audit, which will cost approximately \$5000, will identify what lighting assets exist within the local area, and their effectiveness in the street.

The study is currently mid-way through and is likely to be completed by the end of October 2007. The findings will assist in the development of a Masterplan and directions for improving public lighting within Fitzroy Street

Footpath maintenance

During September, I joined Council staff on a walk along Fitzroy Street to inspect the footpaths and laneways. We noted that there were problems with weeds, litter, cigarette butts and uneven pavement in laneways that run between Fitzroy Street and Jackson Street.

Since this inspection the bluestone laneways have been weed-sprayed and cleaned. Loose litter will be picked up daily and the laneways are cleaned thoroughly four times a year with additional cleaning as required. One laneway has been completely re-sheeted with asphalt. Council notified residents and traders of this in advance via a letter drop. Footpath works on the north side of Fitzroy Street, between Park St and Loch St, were recently completed.

Maintenance staff are keen to work closely with the Taskforce to implement further actions as they arise.

Rubbish collection

The Taskforce has reported rubbish bins overflowing on weekends. Council staff have informed me that the frequency of collecting rubbish in accordance with the

current contract is adequate. There is, however, a recurring problem of pizza boxes blocking the bins and significantly reducing their capacity. This may be a matter on which Taskforce members could provide me with further feedback, particularly with the busy summer season commencing.

Council staff are keen to meet with the streetscape subgroup to address specific concerns raised by the Taskforce.

Street landscaping

On my walk along Fitzroy Street with various staff from Council, we considered the Taskforce's proposals to improve street planting. There is a possibility of introducing planter boxes and/or hanging baskets to Fitzroy Street.

Some of you may be familiar with the planter boxes in the Bourke Street Mall, where plants are rotated seasonally. A similar arrangement could be suitable for Fitzroy Street. Another option is to install hanging pot plants, which are less likely to be vandalised or stolen. The City of Sydney recently introduced hanging pot plants to the city streets.

Council could assist in the design of a planting scheme; however, responsibility for the cost of establishing and maintaining planters and hanging pot plants would require further consideration.

Footpath trading

A trial to relocate footpath trading furniture against the building line for the summer season has commenced. This action was initiated by the Fitzroy Street Taskforce and supported by a group of traders – Fondi, Bar Santo, Sapore and No.1 Fitzroy Street, located at the southern end of Fitzroy Street.

The trial conditions include: a time frame of 5 October 2007 to 31 March 2008; a mandatory 3.0m wide *Pedestrian Zone*

width; and positioning of all outdoor furniture against the building line in accordance with the *New Trading Zone*. So far, feedback from customers, businesses and residents on the initiative has been positive. Council will further evaluate the trial by seeking feedback from residents, visitors, community groups, disability groups, Fitzroy Street Traders Association, Councillors, and participating traders.

Fitzroy Street Foreshore Connections

Information on the Foreshore Connections project was circulated in Council's *Business Newsletter* – Issue 13, September 2007 and the *Fitzroy Street Business Association* – Newsletter #1, August 2007. Further information is available on Council's website: www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/stkildas_edge

Proposed projects to revitalise the St Kilda foreshore that are relevant to the Taskforce's concerns about safety, aesthetics and community identity include:

- Linking the existing footpaths on Upper Esplanade and Fitzroy Street
- Creating a new public space around Cleve Gardens
- Improving safety and access for pedestrians between Fitzroy Street and the foreshore, as well as within Fitzroy Street – Fitzroy-Jacka Pedestrian Crossing
- Creating safe and accessible cycling routes – Fitzroy Street Greenway Bike Path; Jacka Boulevard On-road Bicycle Lanes
- Improving public transport and integrating this into the streetscape – a new Park-Fitzroy Street tram stop and Cleve Gardens tram stop
- Improving access to Fitzroy Street shops, which will bring economic benefits to traders
- Re-routing the Fitzroy Street-Jacka Boulevard connection and changing traffic flow in Fitzroy Street so that

there is one lane of traffic in each direction.

A total of \$4.5m is proposed to be invested in the street to deliver these and other projects. Response to the draft design of the Foreshore Connections project will take place November 2007 – February 2008.

Masterplan Fitzroy Street

The Masterplan is progressing. A brief has been prepared and Council is likely to appoint a landscape / urban design consultancy in early November 2007. It is intended that the Masterplan will complement the existing design work being undertaken as part of the Fitzroy Street Foreshore Connections project.

The Masterplan will establish a vision for the future of Fitzroy Street, and provide a guide for future works and improvements within the public realm. The plan will provide a focus on lighting (building on the audit) to address safety concerns, and highlight positive aspects in the street, including the trees, public art and memorials.

Council will consult the public about the Masterplan. Additionally, there will be opportunities at subgroup meetings for Taskforce members to discuss issues relating to the Masterplan.

SAFETY

Street drinking

The issue of street drinking and anti-social behaviour in Fitzroy Street has been a primary concern of the Taskforce. The local law banning open containers and consumption of alcohol will be implemented by the 2007/08 summer period. This Local Law will apply between 11pm–7am across the whole municipality. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Victoria Police and the Council has been signed.

In coming weeks Council will install street signage outlining the restrictions on street drinking. Changes to procedures manuals have been advertised in *Port Phillip Leader* and the *Emerald Hill Times* in the public notices section. There will be opportunities for Taskforce members to review street alcohol bans in early 2008.

Some relevant websites relating to alcohol consumption and local government policy:

- CoPP Drugs & Alcohol:
http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/drugs_alcohol.html
- CoPP Licensees Accord:
http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/licensees_accord.html
- Alcohol after dark forum:
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/aadinvoke.pdf>
- Paper on local government reducing harm of alcohol consumption:
http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au/downloads/Prevention_Research_Quarterly/PRQ_Sept07_Local_gov.pdf

Safe City Taxi Rank (SCTR)

Council is pleased to announce that it has secured \$50,000 for the first ever SCTR to improve Fitzroy Street. The SCTR, which will be located next the Prince of Wales Hotel (where the taxi rank is currently located), will operate on Friday and Saturday nights (11.00pm – 5.00am), on public holidays, and during the Grand Prix when other transport has ceased.

Two security personnel will maintain order, organise passengers into taxis and assist drivers with collection of upfront fares. This will ensure safety of both passengers and taxi drivers.

The immediate area surrounding the SCTR will be upgraded to include pedestrian barriers, lighting, signage and sightlines. The SCTR will be operational from December 2008.

CCTV

I have received some email messages from Taskforce members about the possibility of installing CCTV in Fitzroy Street to monitor crime and anti-social behaviour.

Council's position is that it will be guided by the advice of police and the recommendations of the State Government Inner City Entertainment Precincts Taskforce on the matter of CCTV. In addition, Council supports the initiative of all new licensees being required to install CCTV as a condition of their operation.

The Taskforce may want to explore options for private funding of CCTV. As a consequence, a number of licensees in Fitzroy Street have installed CCTV outside their premises to provide better security and to monitor social behaviour. This initiative is anticipated to continue. John Enticott, General Manager St Kilda Rooming House Issues Group and a member of the Taskforce, has advised me that CCTV cameras are going in 56 Jackson Street the week of 22 October 2007.

Website relating to CCTV:

- National Community Crime Prevention Programme, *CCTV as a crime prevention measure: What is CCTV?*
[http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au/agd/WW/rwpattach.nsf/VAP/\(93C446DBC14FB8146219B06F1D49FA6B\)~Tip+Sheet+5.pdf/\\$file/Tip+Sheet+5.pdf](http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au/agd/WW/rwpattach.nsf/VAP/(93C446DBC14FB8146219B06F1D49FA6B)~Tip+Sheet+5.pdf/$file/Tip+Sheet+5.pdf)

Rooming house issues

I have received phone calls and email messages from Taskforce members regarding rooming houses and safety in and around Fitzroy Street. Some of you have requested action in regard to investigating the laws and conditions relating to rooming houses. This is a complex issue involving different levels of government and a range of social challenges.

The issue of links between rooming houses and street safety will require further research and discussion by the Taskforce in subgroup meetings. Meanwhile, I have consulted Council staff and conducted some research into rooming houses, which may be of interest to the Taskforce.

Council together with community organisations and State Government is currently involved in developing policies and strategies around homelessness in Port Phillip, and is responsible for regulating a number of State laws in rooming houses relating to health, building, and planning.

Residential Tenancies legislation is a State law and is administered by the Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal. The State Revenue Office is also involved if private rooming house owners claim a Land Tax exemption and the Office has guidelines setting out certain specifications for eligibility for this exemption.

Various state-funded health and housing services regularly interact with people in rooming houses, either on an individual case management basis or in group sessions.

If a rooming house is operating lawfully, and it is responding to requests from Council within Council's regulatory powers, Council is not in a position to 'shut down' the business.

Council has outlined a position in its Draft Housing Strategy 2007 – 2016, which recognises registered private and community rooming houses as part of the CoPP's diverse housing, particularly in light of other forms of affordable and accessible rental disappearing from the area.

If there are any concerns about safety or threatening or offensive behaviour, these are matters for the police. We will continue

to explore these issues in the subgroup to determine appropriate actions.

Some relevant websites:

- CoPP information regarding affordable housing

http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/affordable_housing.html

- CoPP Draft Housing Strategy 2007 – 2016

<http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/housingstrategy.html>

- Consumer Affairs Victoria Residential Accommodation Issues Paper

[http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/CA256902000FE154/Lookup/CAV_Publications_Consultations_Reviews_2/\\$file/rent_issues_paper_residential_accommodation.pdf](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/CA256902000FE154/Lookup/CAV_Publications_Consultations_Reviews_2/$file/rent_issues_paper_residential_accommodation.pdf)

- CoPP response to Consumer Affairs Victoria Residential Accommodation Issues Paper – Stakeholder consultation Aug.2007

[http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/CA256902000FE154/Lookup/CAV_Consultations_and_Reviews_Residential_Accommodation/\\$file/residential_accommodation_consultation_submission_City_of_Port_Phillip.pdf](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/CA256902000FE154/Lookup/CAV_Consultations_and_Reviews_Residential_Accommodation/$file/residential_accommodation_consultation_submission_City_of_Port_Phillip.pdf)

- Victorian protocol for people who are homeless in public places

http://www.chp.org.au/public_library/items/2006/02/00084-upload-00001.pdf

Taskforce/Police relations

During September, some of my colleagues and I joined Sergeant Fiona Bock from St Kilda Police on a Friday night walk along Fitzroy Street (as noted by revellers, we were the daggy group rugged up in scarves and mittens, sipping hot chocolate and marshmallows on Fitzroy Street at 2am).

We discussed alcohol consumption on the street and the need for greater police presence in Fitzroy Street. Through phone and email discussions with Taskforce members I am aware that many of you have a sense of urgency to build strong

relations with police and to see greater involvement of police in Taskforce strategies.

The police expressed that they were interested in doing a monthly walk along Fitzroy Street with Council as well as continuing their involvement in the Taskforce.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Community art proposal

The community identity subgroup has proposed a community arts studio at Veg Out where marginalised people produce quality products that can be sold.

Many marginalised people from Fitzroy St go to events at Veg Out Community Gardens and were a part of a previous successful community mural project that was based there in 2006-2007, which engaged homeless people and the wider community.

I evaluated the CoPP community mural project in my previous position as a researcher at Swinburne University. The findings of this evaluation are relevant to the CoPP's proposition to set up a new art project.

<http://www.sisr.net/cag/docs/portphillipmurals.pdf>

Busking

Members of the Community Identity group are discussing ways to create more vibrancy in Fitzroy St by encouraging quality buskers. The subgroup is exploring possible ways of achieving this.

GENERAL INFORMATION SHARING

Homelessness Guidelines & DVD Equal Service: Business to Business

A new DVD *Equal Service: Business to Business* and the Consumer Affairs Vic Homelessness Guidelines will be launched on 31 October 2007.

The *Business to Business* DVD contains a collection of business leaders talking about their responses to homelessness. The Homelessness Guidelines are designed to support businesses to implement equal service business models in their dealings with people experiencing homelessness.

'Diversity': Fitzroy Street profile

Fitzroy Street and the Taskforce will feature in the December issue of *Diversity*. This will be an opportunity for the collaborative actions of the Taskforce, and the challenge of combining residential amenity with entertainment areas, to be promoted to the wider community.

Diary dates

Subgroup committee meetings will be scheduled for November 2007. I will notify you by email within the next week of the exact dates, times and venues.

I welcome ideas and news items for future Fitzroy Street Taskforce Newsletters. Please send me updates by email or by calling me.

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