

Executive Officer Report to QBC Executive 31 October 2006

1. Staffing at VIC

Staffing at the VIC is limited to:

1 x F/T Mon to Thu at 32hrs per week

1 x Casual Fri at 8hrs per week

1 x Casual Sat/Sun at 8hrs per week

4 x Volunteers (week days): 1xday at 2hrs per week and 3x1 day each at 3 hrs per day.

Over the last 9 weeks 3 volunteers have been unavailable and limited availability. In the event that the F/T person becomes sick or when they take annual leave staffing would need to be carried out by 2 casuals (if available) and the EO. The EO has identified a traineeship opportunity which would provide for 12 month appointment from which the QBC would be paid \$1,500 at start of traineeship and \$1,500 at end of traineeship.

It is proposed that:

The executive approve the appointment of a 12 month traineeship subject to review of budget.

2. Hotel/Motel Commissions

On 14 March the previous EO held a meeting with accommodation providers to discuss membership and booking fees payable to the QBC. The meeting rejected the proposal of a flat QBC membership fee of \$750.

On 31 March the meeting discussed alternative fee structure.

On 7 April a formula was agreed that membership be based on rooms @ \$10 for each room plus a base fee of \$200.

The meeting agreed that the new formula for QBC membership fee include:

- *Representation through the Queanbeyan Business Council.*
- *A back lit colour advertisement 400mm x 200 mm, with brochure display below.*
- *One of 24 spaces with direct telephone connection on an info-board / telephone display.*
- *Promotion / bookings through the Queanbeyan Visitors Centre. A 10% booking fee will apply.*
- *Industrial Relations and Workplace Relations advice.*
- *Quarterly networking lunches.*
- *A wide range of discounts provided through fellow members of the QBC:*
 - Eg. 20% discount on plant hire – Capital Indoor Plants.*
 - 20% discount for guests on golf fees at Queanbeyan Golf Club*

Some accommodation providers have refused to pay booking fees to the QBC; recently in when the tourist officer tried to book 6 nights accommodation the response from the provider was

"I will not accept vouchers or pay commissions; he never met the previous EO and was never told about commission when he paid membership fee"

2.1 THE EO and the tourist officer discussed these issues with Lesley Norris an accommodation provider with three accommodation venues in Queanbeyan. Ms Norris advised that the proposed Bookrite system for the VIC would be the only assured way of getting a booking fee. *(An offer was received from ACT Tourism to provide Free of Charge an online booking system which will minimise phone costs and VIC staffing time and provide VIC with a 5% commission on bookings made from the centre.)* The Retail/Tourism committee supported the offer pending report from the EO/meeting with ACT Tourism. **n.b.** this meeting is scheduled for 1 November.

ATTACHMENT "B"

3. Membership

Currently we have 65 paid members and 30 members still to pay for 2006/2006 (a follow up is underway).

The membership comprises of:

- 39 members @ \$200
- 21 members @ \$500
- 8 members @ \$1000
- 2 members @ \$2500
- 10 members @ \$5000
- 5 members @ \$Contra membership
- 10 accommodation members @ \$200

Three new members have applied to join within the last 10 days; this has been due to a walk about to gather signatures for the Lowe St car park petition.

4. Membership Survey

A 6% response to the survey is disappointing been disappointing; however, I submitted the following data which was published in the Queanbeyan Age last week.

QBC membership survey; 6% of surveys have been received with some interesting results:

- Average length of business established in Queanbeyan is 8 years
- Businesses located in CBD-28%, Karabar-28%, Jerrabomberra-28% and Queanbeyan East 16%
- 57% of these businesses are home based
- Retail-28%, Service Industry-42% Tourism-14% and Wholesale-16%
- % of market received from Queanbeyan-40%, Sydney-25% Capital Region-25%, Southern NSW-10%
- Average number of employees: Full time-6, Part Time-2, Casual-16 with 1 business involved in a traineeship program.

Best features in operating a business in Queanbeyan identified as:

- Relative affordability of real estate
- Community loyalty
- Separate from competition in competition
- Friendly community
- Free parking
- Easy access to services
- Central to Canberra
- Easier networking opportunities

Worst features in operating a business in Queanbeyan identified as:

- Queanbeyan perceived as struggle town
- Confusing cross border regulations
- Main street noise and traffic
- Perception of low cost or inferior service
- Higher crime rate
- Lack of knowledge of range of businesses in Queanbeyan
- Lack of quality venues for client interface

Most assistance required with:

- Marketing
- Reliable economic and demographic data
- Profiling of Queanbeyan
- Interstate regulations
- Financial management
- Staff recruitment (skills shortage)

Improvements to make Queanbeyan a city in which to conduct business:

- Improve profile of range of skills and businesses
- Reduce main street traffic
- Promote city as part of the region

ATTACHMENT “B”

- Publicise Queanbeyan business success stories
- Develop a lifestyle zone rather than waste resources on main street diversion
- Establish formal expenditure review mechanism on council to prevent further rate rises by identifying ineffective expenditures

Businesses operated by women:

- 28% of businesses owned by women
- One business owned 50% female and 50% male

Other comments made on survey:

- Seeking more involvement with the QBC and the BEC to network within the community
- QBC doing a great job with dedicated staff and volunteers

4.1 It is planned to expand the survey to other Queanbeyan businesses through a ‘walk about’ (which will provide another opportunity to sell QBC memberships) and possible assistance from the BEC (preliminary discussions with the BEC indicate that they may adopt the questionnaire for their members).

4.2 For future reference and statistical analysis of the survey I have been able to obtain the ABN listing for Post Code 2620 (8,912 listings).

ATTACHMENT "B"