

TRMSBA Records for the Meeting between PMNSW and The Rocks Markets Small Business Association

10am, 24th August 2018, level 4, 66 Harrington Street Sydney

Meeting Attendees

Susan Lee
Sam Romaniuk
Sarah Cleggett
Kylie Doulman
Carolyn Mercer
Pam Cann
Isaac Savariego
Alex Noble
Peter Wing

The Meeting

Susan Lee

Welcome, Introductions and respectful rules for the meeting

Sam Romaniuk

- outlined that the Rocks Markets (RM) is distinctive and well known to Sydney visitors having a strong brand image.
- the RM provides customers with a unique experience as the RM provides a presentation that is valuable.
- expressed that there are things that he would like to see addressed with the RM, the canopy design, colour and location are to be considered in the future.

The Rockets Markets Small Business Association (TRMSBA) expressed that

- the canopy was designed and built to represent the tents erected on the site by the First Fleet settlers in 1788.
- the canopy was initially constructed using much better quality fabric in a lighter colour (tent canvas colour) than the present iteration of the canopy. The current canopy suffered from the poor decisions of colour and quality made during the last replacement.
- the canopy has been erected every weekend (weather permitting) for the last 27 years to facilitate the RM and is a cultural icon.
- it was expressed that the RM is an exceptional street market in comparison with any other market in the world with its selection of stalls that provide Australian made, made by the stallholder, unique, individual etc. These stallholders have to be valued and considered by management in the decisions that they make. If these valued stallholders leave, it will be difficult to get them to return.
- It was expressed that it is easy for management to acquire generic wholesale/retail stallholders but there are not many creative exceptional stallholders available and management need to hold on to these stallholders
- a lot of the RM stallholders have seen successive management regimes come and go. Experience has shown that the rhetoric that is levied by management is rarely the same as the actual outcome. Stallholders have given advice to Management in the past which has been ignored and

the actions taken by Management have resulted in the negative effects predicted by Stallholders. It has then taken years to rebuild and recover from the damage caused.

Management use terms and vision statements such as valued, unique, visitor experience, cultural ribbon, made by many hands, "to make the Rocks one of the most envied heritage destinations in the world and a leader in retail experience internationally" etc.

PMNSW need to do as they say and actually start to support the RM with decisions that enhance the RM (and the Rocks Precinct).

-It was expressed that seemingly small changes that are made by management have large effects on the functioning of the Markets. The loss of unique stalls will lead to a loss of reputation, credibility and the ability for stallholders to make a living at that market. Stallholders will move to find other markets to support their requirements as the positive image and tradition of being a makers market diminishes.

Toilets

PMNSW intend to increase the cleaning roster of the City of Sydney owned toilets under the Harbour Bridge. PMNSW expressed that they want to be informed if there is a problem with the City of Sydney toilets under the Harbour Bridge (closed, as they have been for long periods of time, dirty, etc).

PMNSW described the plan to refurbish the toilets at the Hickson Road level of the Metcalfe building. Plans will be made available if TRMSBA would like to see them.

TRMSBA stated that they wished to view the plans when they are available from PMNSW.

The new toilet facilities will be refurbished on the lower ground floor, entrance via Hickson Road. They will comprise 4 female and 4 male plus one disabled toilet, down from the current 5 female (3 on the Ground Floor plus 2 lower ground) and 4 male (2 Ground floor plus two Lower Ground). TRMSBA expressed concern that there is usually a queue at the ground floor Metcalfe Arcade Women's toilets especially on busy days and the lower ground toilets will be inadequate, toilet facilities need to be enhanced, not just maintained in number, need to be convenient and need to be easy to find. TRMSBA voiced concerns over the safety and security of persons using the lower ground floor toilets especially children as this area of the Metcalfe has been described by visitors as "creepy" due to its secluded and dark location.

The refurbishment of the Hickson road, lower ground floor toilets are not seen by TRMSBA as a management decision that will enhance a visitor experience of the Rocks.

The Statement of Environmental Effects

TRMSBA expressed their concerns with the Statement of Environmental Effects (SEE) that was issued with the Development Application D/20108/713 (the DA) concerning the rezoning and redevelopment of the Metcalfe Arcade.

TRMSBA expressed that the SEE was either designed to be deceptive or was the result of incompetence.

PMNSW expressed that they cannot control all the documentation that is issued by PMNSW and rely on third party "experts in the field of interest" to generate documentation that is issued by PMNSW. PMNSW expressed that they follow the defined practice of lodging development applications and rely on external authorities to ensure that a fair outcome is achieved with scrutiny being applied by an external body (The City of Sydney).

The Loss of the Storage Access Ramp

TRMSBA expressed to PMNSW that easy access to storage is essential for unique and bespoke displays to be stored and presented on the weekends. The loss of easy access to the Metcalfe building storage will cause stallholders to alter how their stalls are presented.

The loss of easy access to storage will see stallholders having to use a very small lift (shared with people accessing the lower ground toilets) or a stair inclinator to get equipment from storage. This will be slow and it is expected that there will be significant delays and frustration caused.

There will be a security risk for those stallholders who have multiple trolley loads as stock/merchandise will be unattended whilst each load is being delivered to/from storage.

It is calculated by TRMSBA that the rental income from storage is in the order of \$180,000 per year (80 storage bays, \$42per week (average), 52 weeks plus GST) . The loss of easy access to storage will devalue the storage facilities and will cause some stallholders to cease the utilisation of storage.

TRMSBA expressed that if access to storage is too difficult that stallholders will resort to driving their equipment in to the RM on a daily basis thus increasing “bump in, bump out” and parking congestion. TRMSBA expressed the view that the public face and quality of displays would suffer as stallholders utilise less complex to cope with logistical changes.

The intended new storage area in the Ajax building will see stallholders having to get the larger trolleys and bespoke displays (those that will not be able to access the existing storage area) in and out of an area that is heavily utilised by the canopy riggers on Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon. Stallholders will be manoeuvring the larger trolleys and bespoke displays on a challenging gradient and there is a real risk of stallholders losing control of trolleys and displays or unintentionally interacting with forklifts and other heavy rigger equipment.

There is a real OHS issue affecting stallholders, rigging crew and general public.

It was suggested by PMNSW that the riggers start earlier than the current 5am to ensure that the riggers are finished and out of the way prior to the stallholders starting their activities.

TRMSBA pointed out to PMNSW that the riggers cannot start before 5am due to a noise curfew enforced by local residents. The increased difficulty to access storage will see people who are less physically able, incapable of accessing storage.

It was expressed that the new intended tenant, Boston Consulting Digital Ventures (BCDV) could operate in any commercial building but the RM has to operate in this location.

It was suggested by TRMSBA that a compromise could be achieved by letting BCDV have the majority of the floor but leaving enough space for the public toilets and a ramp to allow the RM to achieve easy access to the storage facilities.

TRMSBA requested several times that all we are after is convenient practical access to storage and good public toilet facilities in a convenient location.

No concessions were given by PMNSW.

Other Issues

PMNSW presented a Rocks precinct map with all the ATM's marked on it showing their locations.

PMNSW offered to email this map to all stallholders.

It was also determined that the Metcalfe foyer that houses the present ATM is not being altered and the ATM in the Metcalfe building will stay.

Discussion was had concerning the retail experience that will be offered if PMNSW achieves their goal of converting the Metcalfe into commercial offices. Over the last two years we have seen the loss of the Swagman's cafe, the Irish shop is about to move out, all retail will vacate the Metcalfe Arcade (the four retail shops have already been cleared and "Pancakes on the Rocks" is on the move). TRMSBA again pointed out the Ministerial Media Release of August 2016 relating to the "Rocks Retail Refresh".

The top end of George street (the area associated with the RM canopy) will be a "ghost town". This area will be a dead zone for visitors directly opposing their vision for better visitor experiences. Sam Romaniuk also expressed that he was also unhappy about the empty retail spaces but didn't mention if or how this would change in the future.

Marketing plans are to be discussed in future meetings but the proposed narrative of the branding and advertising seems to be at odds with current actions. TRMSBA pointed out that digital media was largely neglected as an efficient and cost effective resource. PMNSW seemed to be unaware that there are thousands of images tagged with "The Rocks Markets" that would tell the real story and overshadow any "dated" attempt to control the public's perception. TRMSBA expressed their commitment and desire to back the original "maker" ethos of the market with actual substance instead of throwing around vague taglines.