August 31, 2012

Dear Mr Coley,

Re: Request for submission: Inquiry into local economic development initiatives in Victoria.

The City of Glen Eira is an developed Melbourne municipality covering approximately 38 square kilometres of Melbourne’s inner south-east.

The City of Glen Eira includes the suburbs of Bentleigh, Bentleigh East, Carnegie, Caulfield, Caulfield East, Caulfield North, Caulfield South, Elsternwick, Gardenvale, Glen Huntly, McKinnon, Murrumbeena, Ormond, and part of the suburb of St Kilda East.

Glen Eira has a total of 13,893 businesses, of this 8,775 are non-employing business, 3,618 employ 1 to 4 employees and 1,500 employ 5 or more. (Source ABS published 2011).

Glen Eira’s activity centres are the commercial hubs of business and Glen Eira has very limited industrial activity.

As a developed inner city municipality Glen Eira’s Business Development Strategy aims are to:

- build on existing strengths and develop the local resources of the area;
- promote self-sufficiency amongst businesses;
- enhance and promote shopping and business precincts to attract investment; and
- create effective linkages to encourage business development.

The Business Development Unit is actively assisting local business, business sectors, groups and investors with a wide range of services. It is the first point of contact for all enquiries relevant to the business community.

To meet the aims of Council’s strategy the Glen Eira Business Development Unit has developed and maintains the following practical initiatives and community building programs.
Mentor Partners Program

This program was launched in 2002 it is a Glen Eira and Kingston City Council initiative designed to facilitate a link between small business operators and experienced business mentors.

This is a community building program which facilitates the sharing of our community resources – wisdom, knowledge and experience, helping business to be self-sufficient.

This program's unique approach actively matches the business owners with a mentor based on skill, management style, and personality. The relationships are facilitated by Council's mentor Partners Program Coordinator. The Co-ordinator conducts the interviews, introduces and monitors the on-going results of the relationship.

This continues to be a valued and highly successful program.

BusEd Program — linking business and education

This program is delivering practical outcomes for small business. Developed to facilitate a link between small business operators and the education sector.

Launched in 2002, the success of the program is based on the several hundred projects which have supplied businesses with practical outcomes and valued learning experienced. It is a community building program, sharing knowledge, skills and resources experience.

BusEd promotes local business and education communities to work together on mutually beneficial projects. Valuable relationships have been fostered between Council, Monash University, Holmesglen Institute of TAFE, RMIT, William Angliss, and local schools.

Council facilitates the relationships, monitors to projects and promotes the outcomes.

Businesses have benefited from a cross section of educational disciplines including, IT, Marketing and Communication, Research, Management and Arts assisting business to be self-sufficient.

Women's Business Network

Glen Eira Women's Business Network is an informal, friendly network open to Glen Eira business women who wish to start, grow a business or develop a career in business.

The network continues to grow and currently has more than 480 registered members.

A balance of strong business related and self-development subjects are delivered to inform, build confidence, and enhance existing business skills.

These events are valuable networking opportunities linking local business and bringing isolated business in contact with their community.
Business Education Events and networking opportunities

Business training and education seminars and workshops are offered to business throughout the year, the highlight event is May Small Business Month.

May Small Business Month

May Small Business Month is designed to acknowledge the contribution business makes to our community; it provides a calendar of educational workshops and events throughout the month. This initiative has proven to be a successful community building strategy attracting from approximately 600 to 900 local businesses each year.

Improving the amenity of the City

- Urban Design and Capital works revitalisation programs Business Development oversees the budgetary, design and delivery of the capital works program within the commercial centres.

- Planning, Traffic, Sustainability and Compliance Business Development is involved in commenting on planning, traffic management and Civic Compliance and sustainability issues relating to the management of commercial centres.

Activity Centres and Special Rate programs

Business Development is actively involved in assisting traders’ associations – attending meeting and providing a key link between Council services and the commercial needs of the centres.

The role includes overseeing the management of the self-funded Special Rate Marketing Schemes, attends traders’ meetings, and acts as a sounding board for marketing and promotional activities to help guide and support their marketing endeavours.

Business Development assists in the development of new traders associations when sufficient interest arises.

We trust this information will be of benefit to your inquiry and assist you in understanding the practical community building initiatives Council has developed to assist local business.

Yours sincerely,

Lynda Bredin
MANAGER BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT