

# Hamilton Central Business Association (HCBA) AGM Report year ending 30 June 2020



**OUR VISION - To be New Zealand's premier CBD business destination.**  
**OUR MISSION - Creating a dynamic CBD environment for business to thrive.**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Hamilton Central Business Association continues to represent the businesses based in the central city; to be their voice on issues of strategic importance to the CBD, to promote their offerings to the public, and to contribute and collaborate on projects that support the CBD business economy.

While we are all navigating the new and unfamiliar territory of life post lockdown and the impacts of COVID-19, there will almost certainly be more pain to come, with businesses and employees still facing a period of uncertainty. This is particularly relevant for sectors and businesses that were facing challenges prior to lockdown, most notably the retail and hospitality sectors. However, there has also been some positives take-outs from the enforced lockdown period. We have seen businesses rise to challenges that have been placed on them, who have been able to 'pivot' their offering during lockdown and who have capitalised on the emotion and genuine desire of the public to support local businesses.

Cities nationally and internationally are continuing to reinvent themselves to capitalise on the new consumer trends and consumption demand. Main Streets are no longer places filled with traditional retail shops, with a documented shift to reconfiguring high streets to a mixed offering including retail, hospitality, services, experiences and specialist amenities all being located in close proximity.

HCBA will continue to endorse the growth and progression of the central city, to support economic growth through business development and to advocate for the improvement of CBD amenities. Cities are vibrant places where people go to spend time and money, creating strong economies.

## **2.0 COVID-19 UPDATES AND IMPACTS**

In the lead up to, during and post lockdown, HCBA worked alongside other organisations, to provide communication, assistance, support, and promotional opportunities to its members.

### **CBD Business Advocacy**

- HCBA held a series of discussions with businesses around safety in the CBD pre and post lockdown. HCBA implemented:
  - Public sanitizer stations - HCBA placed one in Riverbank Lane and one in Casabella Lane and purchased two additional stations for use in the CBD when public events are able to be held again.
  - Social distancing indicators - HCBA had yellow stickers reaffirming the 2 metre safety message in spaces throughout the CBD.
- HCBA was a communication point for COVID-19 information relating to businesses from:
  - [www.covid19.govt.nz](http://www.covid19.govt.nz)
  - [www.business.govt.nz](http://www.business.govt.nz)
  - Te Waka, Business Support Centre, webinars
  - Economic Development information and webinars
  - EMA information
- HCBA attended a weekly zoom meeting with Te Waka and a community of business leaders, where happenings across the Waikato were discussed and information shared around business sectors.

### **CBD Sector Support**

- HCBA created a Covid-19 section on the [hamiltoncentral.co.nz](http://hamiltoncentral.co.nz) website for the business community, as a reference point for up-to-date information, including updates from Government, Te Waka and Hamilton City Council pre, during and post lockdown.

- HCBA supported the hospitality and retail sectors with ongoing sector specific promotional opportunities, including:
  - Mighty Local campaign
  - Mighty Waikato e-Cookbook
  - Dish Magazine
  - Surprise Dining
  - Eat Local
  - Our Local
  - New Zealand Made
  - Waikato Food Inc
- During lockdown HCBA ensured promotion of all CBD businesses who continued to market themselves to their customers. There were some fantastic marketing initiatives implemented during the lockdown period, as businesses continued to promote themselves to their customer base, even when there was no transaction occurring.

### **CBD Business Promotion**

- HCBA created a virtual CBD on the [hamiltoncentral.co.nz](http://hamiltoncentral.co.nz) website to highlight businesses operating at each alert level. It is anticipated that this site will form the basis for creating a digital CBD as a promotional tool.
- HCBA ran a Facebook weekly promotion for four weeks, offering our 37,000 followers the opportunity to tell us a business they would like to win a \$50 voucher for in the CBD. This had an extensive public reach and ensured our local businesses continued to be front of mind in an essentially non-trading economy. Two winners were selected each week with the vouchers to be redeemed post lockdown.
- The same local voucher competition was also provided to our CBD Advantage Club members, ensuring CBD workers also had a chance to be rewarded for supporting local businesses.
- HCBA was a key spokesperson to the media during lockdown, speaking on behalf of the CBD businesses and reiterating the message for the public to think local and act local for shopping, eating and entertainment.
- HCBA wrote several 'Shop Local' articles for the media, including the Waikato Times, Waikato News and Hamilton News on the importance of supporting local businesses.
- HCBA worked in partnership with Hamilton Waikato Tourism's Shop Local campaign, utilising Phantom Billboards, Waikato News, The Breeze and Nourish Magazine for advertising.
- HCBA ensured constant communication to the membership over the lockdown period, including newsletter updates, contact calls, webinar attendance and collaboration with other support organisations.

## **3.0 ADVOCACY**

To represent the central city business voice on issues and projects of strategic importance to the CBD.

### **CBD Masterplan Development**

- HCBA are extremely supportive of Council's refresh of the Central City Transformation Plan (CCTP) and will continue to be a key advocate to the business community about this. HCBA will be hosting LandLAB at their AGM, who have been contracted by Council to complete the CCTP refresh.

### **Waikato Regional Theatre**

- HCBA continues to support the development of the Waikato Regional Theatre, however due to lockdown, the business engagement event on the project has been postponed and will now be held later in the year.
- Prior to lockdown HCBA held theatre drop-in Q & A sessions with Momentum Waikato for the South end of town businesses.

### **Access Hamilton initiatives in the CBD**

- HCBA attended the consultation for the Micro Mobility & Biking Plan in the city to provide feedback from the business community on the new bike parklets and mobility in and around the CBD.
- HCBA is continuing to work with the local business community on 'end of destination' bike facilities in the CBD.
- HCBA surveyed and advocated on behalf of the business community for the 2-hour free parking trial to continue for the 2020/2021 financial year. Representatives from retail, hospitality, tourism and commercial businesses attended Council Chambers to show their support.
- Transportation - HCBA provided support to the Waikato Regional Council on the new Rideshare CBD transportation offering.

### **Partner on Central City Improvements**

- HCBA hosted a group of elected members on a commercial tour of the CBD for up-to-date information of developments underway and future commercial considerations.
- HCBA outlined some suggested tactical urbanism ideas for consideration in the central city that may be able to be incorporated into the Innovative Street development projects.
- HCBA have branded some empty properties around the CBD with Neat Places imagery, to help keep the CBD looking vibrant. HCBA has sent proposals to property owners with key empty sites to consider this branding while encouraging potential businesses into tenancies.

## **4.0 PROMOTION**

To promote the CBD as a bustling, active, innovative, vibrant place that offers exceptional businesses and experiences.

### **Ambassador Programme**

- The first training programme was held at Jet Park Hotel, Hamilton Airport with 35 attendees. It was acknowledged how great a resource of information the programme provides to attendees and how both enjoyable and beneficial the journey is to learn about 'our own backyard'.
- The Programme continues to go from strength to strength, with attendees coming away from the training with a pride of place to share with locals and visitors.
- A bespoke Ambassador training programme was held with the Mayor and Elected members just prior to lockdown in March 2020.
- Further trainings have been scheduled from July 2020.

### **Advantage Club**

- The Advantage Club was set up for CBD workers to find out about the latest business openings, sales, promotions, events and every fortnight a free business giveaway.
- Feedback from business community has been very positive with new businesses in particular enjoying the support of CBD workers coming to visit their stores and HCBA promotion.
  - July giveaways - Sammies & Stuff, Kebabs Salateen
  - August giveaways - Coffee Studio, De Stylez
  - September giveaways - Milano's Pizza, Machina
  - October giveaways - Bearded Weasel, Sushi Ya, Snack Baby
  - November giveaways - Hungry Eyes Café, Christmas Heirloom Company
  - December giveaways - Movenpick on Victoria Street.
- HCBA have completed a reformatted Advantage Club offering, with a focus on using this forum to promote new businesses and events to CBD workers. Each month subscribers have an opportunity to win vouchers for a profiled new business.

### **Sector Specific Initiatives**

- HCBA supported the Shop Local marketing campaign, including billboards and advertising supporting retail, hospitality, tourism and wellness & beauty sectors. This has translated into some of our local businesses enjoying record trading days post lockdown.
- HCBA has a focused project on the reinvigoration of Casabella Lane. This has included establishing a pop-up shop, working with the Body Corporate on laneway improvements, developing a Lane specific marketing offering and recreating social media platforms specific to Casabella Lane tenancies.
- HCBA has worked with the creative sector to support opportunities for events and activations in the CBD, including Boon Arts Trust, Boon After Dark and Hamilton Vibrant Trust.
- HCBA is working in collaboration with Hamilton Waikato Tourism, Creative Waikato and Te Waka on the establishment of the Waikato Film Hub.
- HCBA has worked with the education sector via the University of Waikato, to help new students navigate the CBD, including international student orientation and new student induction. HCBA provides promotional material for orientation packs, including Neat Places guides and Hamilton Central social media channels.
- HCBA is working with Age Concern to promote hospitality businesses in the CBD to the aged community, including themed food days.

### **Social Media Development**

Hamilton Central Facebook page continues to grow in popularity within excess of 37,000 followers and Instagram followers also on the rise. This is a fantastic promotional tool for CBD business to promote their stories, events, profiles and competitions, with the potential to reach a huge audience. HCBA also run a closed Facebook group to ensure members are up-to-date with CBD happenings and events.

### **PR Opportunities**

HCBA has been frequently called upon by the media to provide insights and information about businesses based in the CBD and to discuss the ongoing development of the central city. HCBA has achieved good uptake from the media on business profiles and activations. Highlights include:

- HCBA wrote a series of articles for the Waikato News and Hamilton News on Shopping Local.
- Waikato Business News ran a series of development articles on the CBD.
- HCBA participated in a Kiwi Podcast profiling the CBD and the business community.
- HCBA completed a podcast on Hamilton CBD with Free FM.
- HCBA has monthly interviews with Free FM to discuss the happenings in the CBD.
- Waikato Times profiled the CBD welcoming shoppers and business post lock-down.
- HCBA has continued to provide comment to media on the CBD pre and post lockdown and pitched different businesses and initiatives to the media, with good pick up.

### **CBD Celebration Awards**

- The CBD Celebration Awards was held on 11th September and was a fantastic evening of celebration and recognition of the business community. Kelvyn Eglinton was the dynamic MC for the evening and feedback of the awards and the 'out of the box' venue has been a positive talking point for attendees.
  - HCBA enjoyed a significant amount of coverage of the CBD Celebration Awards in both the NZ Business & Management Magazine, the Waikato Business News and the Hamilton App.
  - HCBA filmed the 2019 Celebration Award winners for the Hamilton CBD Series on YouTube. The videos have also been provided to Hamilton City Council, Te Waka, Cultivate IT, Property Council and The Waikato Story, for use on their communication channels. All winners were also provided their own video to promote via their communication channels and HCBA promoted via Facebook to a wide-reaching audience.
  - HCBA are continuing the theme of celebrating the business located in the CBD, with the CBD Celebration Awards scheduled for 18 November 2020.

- The awards are being held later date this year due to the venue, which will be disclosed closer to the awards date.
- HCBA are hopeful of securing Spark Business to sponsor the awards for the second year running.

## 5.0 ORGANISATION

An effective, engaged, collaborative Business Association that represents the needs of the central city businesses, to create a dynamic business community.

### Spending and Pedestrian Counters

- CBD electronic spending continues to remain strong, with a slight decrease in spend from 2018, but still the second highest since 2009. It has been noted that there are some new patterns emerging in buyer behaviour, with Black Friday taking on a much more significant role in terms of pre-Christmas spending. This has resulted in a boost to the retail sector in November, with the follow-on result of a quieter start to December pre-Christmas sales.
- The first quarter of 2020 showed a modest decline in CBD spend, down 3%, with the full effect of COVID-19 being realised in the second quarter where spend has been significantly impacted. Since the return to level 1 and the commitment of people to spend local, there has been a good return citywide of spending levels.
- At a citywide level, statistics are showing that although there are fewer transactions in the city, the transactions that are occurring are of a higher dollar value. This has meant that when comparing to the same time last year, there has actually been a higher local spend. Although the market is naturally cautious and understandably so, for those who do have discretionary income available, they are choosing to use it and use it locally.
- Prior to lockdown CBD pedestrian counters continued to show growth most days of the week, contributing to an annual growth of 6.6% in 2019. The data continues to show the biggest pedestrian increases are on weekends, supporting the view of central cities gaining popularity as a place to go for shopping, hospitality and leisure activities outside of the traditional working week.
- Post lockdown weekends are continuing to show growth in pedestrian counts with weekday counts getting back to similar levels from last year. With a shift to more flexible work environments since alert levels were implemented weekday pedestrian levels are showing some levels of fluctuation.

### Commercial Update (pre-lockdown)

2020 started with considerable activity and momentum in the commercial sector, with a high number of lease enquiries. Large scale development activity resumed with Tristram Precinct in full swing, the Novotel Hotel extension building wrap starting to be removed, and the Days Inn Hotel hospitality development nearing completion. Waikato Tainui announced it will build a \$50m four level office complex on the corner of Tristram and Collingwood Streets. This office development at 8,500sqm will accommodate 650 ACC staff, to be configured in three pavilions. ACC have taken a 15-year initial lease with an expected completion date of October 2022.

### Highlights:

- 586 Victoria Street completed and tenanted
- 391 Victoria Street (apartments/retail) completed and re-tenanted
- Residential developments at Vialou Street and London Central second stage.
- Suite 27, Level 1 in the Arcadia Building on Worley Place has been leased by a national training institution
- Accident Compensation Corporation have leased 2 floors of office space at 500 Victoria Street
- Fill a Bowl is expanding into the CBD and will occupy space in the refurbished Beggs Wiseman Building on the corner of Ward and Victoria Streets. Fit out is currently underway
- True Clothing expanded to a larger premises on Barton Street

- Part of Level 1, 83b Tristram Street has been leased to a skin specialist
- A health specialist is moving into Unit B, 313 Barton Street
- Café and coffee distributor leased space in Reid House on Alexandra Street
- Switch Group have started operating at their new refurbished space at 102 Rostrevor Street
- Le Fleur Florist has opened on the ground floor in the Monckton Trust building at 67 Rostrevor Street
- Waikato District Health Board have completed their fitout and now moved into their new office space in the former Farmers Building on Alexandra, Collingwood & Anglesea Streets
- Vetro Mediterranean Foods have leased 122 Rostrevor Street and will be commencing their fitout shortly
- Goldsmith Gallery has moved and are now operating at 427 Victoria Street
- Niche Skincare & Day Spa have leased the refurbished space at 302 Barton Street and will commence fitout shortly

### **Commercial Update (post-lockdown)**

It was expected that the commercial market post-lockdown would be naturally cautious, however there was a significant amount of tenant enquiry immediately after, with a number of leases completed and a number under various stages of negotiation. Enquiries have continued to remain high over the past few months, as businesses look to review their existing leases and changing space requirements. As the CBD workforce has made its way back in offices, it has certainly highlighted the reliance of businesses on high levels of foot traffic to support the local economy.

### **Highlights:**

- Physio RX have established themselves in 108b Rostrevor Street
- 1 London Street (ground floor) has been leased by a Government tenant
- Burger Bro has expanded their offering, having leased 237 Victoria Street
- Hamilton Central Business Association are moving into 10 Garden Place, as part of the Panama shared office stable
- Off and On, a beauty and hair treatment business have opened at 25 Ward Street
- 821 Victoria Street has been leased by national recruitment firm TradeStaff
- Haley Adele Photography has opened at 16 Casabella Lane
- Two new eateries are moving into Reid House in Alexandra Street
- Animone Graphic Design has leased 15 Casabella Lane
- Yogost has opened in their new premises at 575 Victoria Street
- Soul Images an Expressive Arts Studio in Casabella Lane
- Shallow Bakery have opened at 120 Alexandra Street
- Skin Depot have opened as a collab with Ktizo at 324 Tristram Street

Other notable developments include the turning of the sod ceremony for the new office development called Union Square, which is occupying the former Ebbett Holden site on the corner of Hood and Anglesea Streets. This large-scale transformational project consists of five inner-city buildings totalling circa 30,000sqm. Rabobank and AA Insurance will be the occupants of the first building planned for this development, with completion due in the third quarter of 2021.

### **Partnership and Networking Opportunities**

HCBA continues to provide value to their membership showcasing developments and businesses of interest within the CBD. HCBA has taken the opportunity to strengthen ties with the Property Council and Waikato Chamber of Commerce by collaborating on events that are of interest to both membership groups.

- August – HCBA, in collaboration with the Property Council, provided two exclusive events: the redevelopment of Sentinel House at 586 Victoria Street and new development of Parkhaven Apartments on Tristram Street.
- September – HCBA, in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and Hamilton City Council, co-hosted an event to outline future projects in the city with guest

- speaker Rod Oram.
- October – HCBA hosted an evening at the Escapist on Bryce Street.
  - HCBA attended a Purple Flag accreditation conference recognising places with night-time economies. In attendance was Wellington City Council, Auckland City Council, Grey Lynn BID, Karangahape Road BID, and Heart of the City Auckland. HCBA is now accredited with the Purple Flag Accreditation scheme to be an assessor. Purple Flag accreditation is an acknowledgment given to city centres who meet a specific set of criteria for a night-time economy. This includes recognition of late-night offerings including hospitality, retail, transportation and safety. There is a growing movement overseas, particularly in the UK and Sweden, for places to have a purple flag accreditation and the Governing body is looking to include NZ in this process.
  - November – HCBA hosted a Christmas evening at Craft Bar, showcasing their new restaurant offering Sage.
  - HCBA collaborated on a LinkedIn Local event at the Meteor attracting approximately 200 people on the topic of ‘art in the city’ with speakers Paula Southgate, Nancy Caiger, Ryan Hamilton and Kelvyn Eglinton.
  - HCBA contributed to a successful Safe Zone, held during the University of Waikato’s Orientation Week.
  - HCBA spoke to the Hamilton Central Rotary Group about the role HCBA plays in supporting and promoting the CBD and the business community.
  - HCBA attended an Auckland Business Improvement District (BID) Conference in Otahuhu.
  - HCBA have been working with the businesses in Casabella Lane to raise the profile on the collection of shops that now make up the Lane. HCBA have created a promotional social media campaign and working alongside the Body Corporate to offer a spending spree in the Lane for one lucky winner.
  - HCBA facilitated an anti-theft presentation by the police for a large CBD retailer and their staff.
  - HCBA are collaborating on two Social Business evenings with Waikato Chamber of Commerce at Cemac in July and Lilliputt in August.
  - HCBA are collaborating with Momentum Waikato to provide a social business evening to promote the Waikato Regional Theatre.
  - HCBA is working with RocketSpark to facilitate the Tech events in the CBD on behalf of Cultivate IT.
  - HCBA is working with iBeacon on the potential of setting up beacons in Garden Place to trial how they can benefit people who are visually impaired.

#### **International Towns and Cities Conference 2019 - Townsville**

- In October 2019 HCBA attended ICTC Conference in Townsville as both a speaker and delegate. The theme of the conference was Transformative Cities: Innovative, Connected and Resilient, getting the balance right with people, connections and communities to ensure our places are great to live, work and play and visit. There were a range of international speakers with stand out presentations about different aspects of city liveability. In particular from David Sim, Creative Director & Partner, Gehl Architects, Denmark, providing design insights beyond the buildings to truly create cities for people. Michelle Abbey, Head of Retail, Stockland, who presented on creating The Curated Retail Experience and how to look forward to answer the continuous question of ‘What next?’. Ethan Kent, Senior Fellow, Project for Public Space & Co-Director Placemaking X, USA, from Liveable to Loveable: Building People Powered Places, looking at best practice approaches to placemaking.
- The conference also included a city sustainability tour of Townsville looking at the reactivation projects underway for their city centre and their defined masterplan providing a clear vision for the city called the Townsville 2020 Masterplan. The projects focus on boosting the economy, benefiting the local community and attracting tourism to the region which include:
  - Stadium precinct
  - Central city park and carpark masterplan

- Open space masterplan
- Laneway development
- Riverway waterplay
- Townsville entrance statements

## **6.0 FUTURE FOCUS**

HCBA are continuing to provide an essential support role for the business community post lockdown. There is a real need to continue to reinforce the local buying message to the public and the role that large businesses and public sector organisations also play in ensuring that local businesses are at the top of every shopping list for goods and services.

There are still changes expected in the CBD over the coming months as the full impact of COVID-19 and lockdown are realised. HCBA will continue to work on a number of initiatives to highlight the businesses and experiences to be enjoyed in the CBD, with the hope that the early momentum of 2020 can be re-established.

One area of development that has been highlighted during lockdown and throughout the alert levels, is a new trend around the delivery of goods and services direct to the customer. This is continuing to be explored by various businesses, as they look to make their offering even more convenient to the customer.

### **Future Highlights:**

- HCBA is trialling a CBD bundle package including an overnight stay, attractions & activities and food offerings. In collaboration with iSite and a selection of local businesses to be marketed via social media.
- HCBA has confirmed the fourth Neat Places, in collaboration with Hamilton Waikato Tourism, to be completed in October 2020.
- HCBA is holding its AGM in August, showing Hamilton City Councils CCTP refresh with LandLAB presenting and Union Square with Foster Development presenting.
- HCBA have contracted a group of students via the Wintec Design Factory to complete a project of work around the attractiveness of the CBD.
- HCBA will continue to develop a digital CBD as a promotional tool for the central city.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATION**

The HCBA recommends this report be received at the AGM.

Connie Chittick

Chairperson

Hamilton Central Business Association Executive Committee

20 August 2020

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