

16 April 2018

Ms Trish Stagg  
Senior Marketing and Promotions Coordinator  
City Marketing  
City of Hobart  
50 Macquarie Street  
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Trish

### **Retail Confidence and Super Sidewalk Saturday**

As you know, I am a retail academic and researcher in the Tasmanian School of Business and Economics at the University of Tasmania. I am writing regarding the City of Hobart's promotional event 'Super Sidewalk Saturday'.

In my opinion, these events (usually held annually on a single day and often in the Winter months) are losing their effectiveness as consumers and the retail industry increasingly require more sophisticated, sustainable and long-term initiatives to satisfy a variety of marketing and sales objectives. In terms of helping to achieve marketing, footfall and sales objectives for retailers, and in terms of encouraging consumer visitation to both the city centre and individual retailers, there are a number of more effective solutions including ongoing horizontal and collaborative marketing programs, brand building and place marketing strategies that I consider to be more effective than the Super Sidewalk Saturday event.

Traditionally, Super Sidewalk and similar one-off sales events have been held when retail confidence and visitation is low in a particular shopping destination (for example just after the Myer fire, and then after the subsequent flooding). These events aim to provide a sales and visitation 'boost' or 'injection'. Despite the best of intentions and a huge amount of work on the part of the specific Council or marketing body responsible for the event, these events rarely deliver the expected outcomes for key stakeholders, particularly retailers.

In my opinion, retail confidence in the Hobart CBD has markedly improved over the last couple of years; this is evident through low shopfront vacancy rates, the entrance of a number of national and international retailers (including the imminent opening of H&M) and through anecdotal evidence from retailers and customers. The visible improvement in the retail offering, shopping experience and overall confidence in the Hobart CBD can certainly be attributed, in part, to the work being undertaken through the 'Hello Hobart' initiative.

I believe that funding for the Super Sidewalk Saturday events would be better utilised in long-term, sustainable marketing initiatives that serve to build on the work the City Marketing team and the Hello Hobart program are already undertaking.

This work is focused on building the brand of the City of Hobart as a destination featuring an array of boutique, national and international retailers, as well as fine food and more casual and innovative eateries. I don't believe the Council should continue with the Super Sidewalk Saturday event and that funding for this event should be utilised to support other sustainable marketing initiatives and long-term branding programs.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can provide further information or to discuss this issue further.

Kind regards

**Dr Louise Grimmer**

Lecturer in Marketing and Retail Academic  
Tasmanian School of Business and Economics