

MEDIA RELEASE

14th July, 2014



Chamber seeks 'Peoples Panel'

Camden Chamber of Commerce and Industry President, Miriam Roberts has called for a 'Peoples Panel' to be formed to help guide Camden Council as to how it should spend ratepayer's funds. The suggestion has been put in light of a recently released council endorsed report recommending significant changes to the Camden Town.

In responding to various media inquiries the chamber has released the following statement.

1. What is the Chamber's opinion on the overall plans of the town centre strategy?

Camden Chamber of Commerce & Industry does not agree or disagree with the Town Centre Strategy report that the council endorsed at its meeting on 8th July. The chamber only received a copy of the report late on the 7th July, so it is too early to commit on the specific individual items within the report.

Our concern, in the first instance, is a lack of inclusiveness by council on such matters.

We heard at the 8th July council meeting that council have workshopped this project over many meetings during the past 12 months.

We believe that organisations, such as the chamber, should have had a seat at those meetings to be part of the development of the Camden Town Strategy. We have repeatedly asked council to involve chamber in their planning for the Camden Town.

2. What does the Chamber think about the proposed decked car park and widening of the footpath on Argyle St and what will this do for business?

It is too soon for chamber to form a view of specific matters within the report as we have only recently been provided a copy of the report.

3. Will the Chamber be making a submission?

Chamber will be responding to council's invitation for community feedback because we believe that for Camden Town to thrive and survive our community needs to become involved, informed and engaged in robust, respectful discussion about the future our town.

4. What changes would the Chamber like to see to the Town Centre to make it a vibrant business area?

We hold concerns there is no overarching strategy for Camden but rather we get fed bits and pieces – this approach has gone on for years. We would like to see Camden Council adopt a similar approach that

Melbourne City Council adopted whereby a robust process was adopted to identify 'everyday' Melbournians who formed a "Peoples Panel" that advised council on how to spend its money.

5. Is there anything else you'd like to say?

We hold concerns that we are being ask to make decisions on major infrastructure projects, before the Camden Town Retail & Commercial Study has been completed and before we have been advised on what will replace council when they vacate their John St premises in 2016.

We have repeatedly invited council to include chamber in their deliberations as to what will replace council when they vacate their John St premises. Our requests have not been successful.

We welcome any feedback from our local business and our local community about what their vision is for Camden Town.

For more information, contact:

President Miriam Roberts

Phone 02 4655-2111

Mobile 0412 303 807

Email president@camdenchamber.com.au

Immediate Past President David Cadden

02 4640-9922

0407 872 590

pastpresident@camdenchamber.com.au