



### **15.3 Extension of temporary closure of Cecil Street, South Melbourne**

**I, Councillor Louise Crawford, give notice that I intend to move the Motion outlined below at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 07 April 2021:**

That Council:

1. Notes the positive feedback received from South Melbourne Market traders, Market visitors and the local community regarding the current temporary closure of Cecil Street, South Melbourne between York and Coventry Streets.
2. Agrees to extend the temporary closure to Wednesday 21 April 2021 to factor in Easter and the School Holiday period.
3. Considers the data collected during the initial closure period before assessing whether a further extension is viable.

#### **Supporting Information:**

This lane closure was part of Council's Reactivation of Public Space Program with the aim to increase public space.

The one-lane closure (northbound) trial of Cecil Street commenced 4 January and was due to run until 30 March 2021. The closure had originally been planned to commence on 1 December but was postponed due to negative feedback on the impact of the closure from some Coventry Street traders on the lead up to Christmas.

#### **Background:**

A Traffic Study was completed in 2019 which looked at ways to improve access to South Melbourne Market. Options reviewed the potential to close Coventry and/or Cecil Street. Closing one or both lanes of Cecil Street from Coventry to York Streets has occurred in the past for events and had been discussed as an option. Off the back of the 2019 Traffic Study, a TAC traffic study has been funded by a grant valued at \$30K looking at Cecil Street, and will be completed in October 2020 determining priorities, costs and timing for potential permanent changes. Market management was supportive of these changes to reduce congestion on an already busy Cecil Street precinct and better connect to other local businesses towards Clarendon Street.

#### **Measures:**

IER was engaged by the City of Port Phillip to undertake research into attitudes towards a temporary new public space established in Cecil Street between Coventry and York Sts (outside South Melbourne Market) created by partial closure of Cecil St.

- Two tranches of research were conducted, firstly on site with attendees at the space, as well as a crowd count estimate, over three weekends (Saturday 30th January, Wednesday 24th February and Sunday 21st March). Secondly, with residents and businesses located within a 5km radius of the site.
- It is estimated there was attendance of 1,840 at the precinct over the three days.



- The two surveys produced differing results with attendees attitudes relatively favourable but residents & businesses with more divergent attitudes at the extremes of being either very favourable or very unfavourable.
- Two key indicators to illustrate the differing results are:
  - Expectations – 1.6% of attendees felt the space ‘Fell short of expectations’ whilst 32.1% of residents & business felt this way
  - Net Promoter Score – a net promoter score (NPS) is derived from respondent’s likelihood to recommend the new public space to others. The attendees survey produced an NPS of +49.7, an indicator of more promoters than detractors of the precinct. The business & residents survey produced an NPS of -4.5, an indicator of more detractors than promoters for the precinct.
- Attendee respondents were more likely to have a lighter touch with the space and the partial road closure with 57.8% coming from outside the City of Port Phillip. Residents and businesses would be more likely impacted due to regular contact with the site and its surrounds with many (92.4%) having visited the new space providing first hand insights.
- The new public space was a driver for attendees to the site with 49.3% stating it was solely, or partly, the reason for their visit there that day. Positive comments were the ‘great atmosphere’, that the space provided ‘somewhere to relax’ and ‘somewhere to sit and eat’.
- Whilst 51.3% of residents and businesses stated they were ‘Extremely Supportive’ of road closures for public space usage there were a solid core of those at the other extreme of being ‘Not at all Supportive’ (19.0%). This level of discontent grew as they were asked about Cecil St being partially closed (24.1%, Not at all Supportive) and Cecil St being closed beyond the end of March 2021 (31.0%, Not at all Supportive).
- Residents and businesses were also polarised in how the temporary public space affected them, with 36.2% stating ‘Very Positively’ with impacts including ‘Creating a pleasant outdoor public space’, ‘Increasing pedestrian safety’ and ‘Reducing traffic congestion’. However again, a solid core of respondents provided the opposite view, with 18.8% stating they were ‘Very Negatively’ affected with impacts predominantly ‘Increased traffic congestion’.

### **Activating the space:**

- The Market activated the space on a regular basis with live music, yoga and other small events. Anecdotal feedback from people using the space and traders was very positive.
- Restaurants located on Cecil Street applied for an extension of their outdoor eating areas into Cecil Street by about 3 metres. Decks were built and they looked fantastic. The feedback from those that took advantage of this has been extremely positive at a time when they have lost so much trade during COVID.

### **Budget Impact:**

- The budget was \$50K and that included: Traffic management, vehicle mitigation (barriers) and moving the bike lane.
- The budget to extend the road closure to the 20 April (3 weeks) will be: \$3,494+GST