



# **Strategic Business Plan**

**2023-2028**

**Prepared by**

**Maling Road Business Association Inc.**

**October 2022**

Reviewed October 2023

## **Maling Road Business Association Strategic Business Plan**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to outline an ambitious five-year Strategic Business Plan for the Maling Road Precinct. The Plan provides a consolidated vision for the centre together with an integrated set of strategies to achieve the vision and improve the centre. The Plan, funded by the City of Boroondara, has been prepared in a very consultative process involving representatives from the Maling Road Business Association and Council, with assistance from Creative Community Enterprises

The Business Plan is based on:

- The statement of purposes of the Association
- The Maling Road Business Association Plan for 2023/2028
- Maling Road Place Making Consultation
- Business Survey (October 2022)
- Workshop discussion with representatives from the Association in October

The Maling Road Business Association is an incorporated body currently representing owners and business operators of approximately 80 rateables units consisting of approximately 80 businesses. The Statement of Purposes of the Association is as follows:

- To generate and manage the collective marketing, promotion, advertising and business development activities for the Maling Road Traders;
- To manage the affairs of the Association;
- To engage with the business owners and operators, represent their interests and work with them for the collective benefit of the Maling Road Shopping Centre;
- To develop positive relationships with our key stakeholders who impact and influence the role and function of the Maling Road Shopping Centre.
- To engage in other activities that may benefit the Maling Road/Canterbury community.

The Association operates through a Committee of Management and a centre coordinator. The Association is funded by a special rate levied by the City of Boroondara, currently raising approximately \$ 67,000 in 2022/23. In addition, Council provided \$ 15,000 in 2020/21 for the KrisKindle annual event. Details of the Committee and coordinator as well as the special rate are provided in the Appendix.

## Maling Road Business Association Strategic Business Plan

### 2. PROFILE OF THE CENTRE

Maling Road is a premier tourist attraction situated in the heart of the leafy eastern suburbs of Boroondara. Located only 12km from the Melbourne CBD, it is well-served by a local metro station on its doorstep. The compact heritage-listed precinct consists of 80 business premises. A plan of the centre is illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Extent of the Maling Road Activity Centre

## Maling Road Business Association Strategic Business Plan

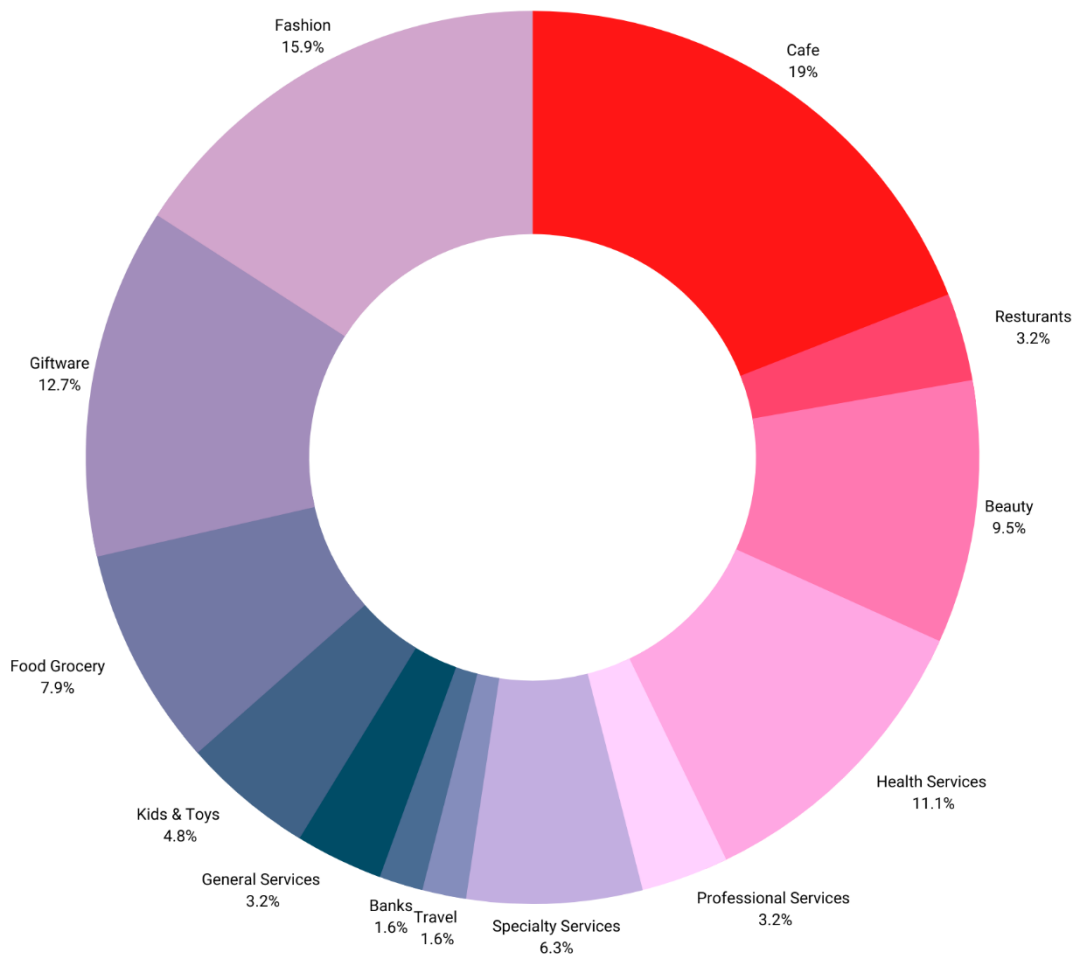
### Extent of the Maling Road Activity Centre

The Maling Road Precinct has a total retail and commercial area of approximately 8,000 square metres in 2022 is a focal point for a wide range of economic and social activities, including retail facilities, commercial offices, higher educational, community and civic facilities, as well as leisure and entertainment uses.

Maling Road serves as both a convenience centre for residents (with basic items provided by the mall supermarket, fresh food outlets, the news agency/post office, chemist, bank, and hairdressers) as well as a specialist destination centre in areas such as fashion and home wares.

Maling Road is a highly successful and vibrant shopping & community precinct that serves the needs of residents, as well as tourists and visitors from all over Melbourne The primary retail catchment area is within a 3-kilometre radius of the centre.

### Maling Road Business Mix October 2022



## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

### **3. MARKETING OVERVIEW**

Over the last 5 years, the marketing program undertaken by the Maling Road Business Association has focused on delivering events and in centre promotions to best provide a vehicle for our traders to capitalize on residents and encourage them to re-engage with the local businesses. Some of the below activities were postponed due to the COVID 19 restrictions in 2020/2021

**Auto Clasico** is Maling Roads Largest event, attracting locals and visitors from all over Melbourne's East, consists of over 200 classic cars entertainment and traders extending trade to the outdoors. Auto Clasico is very well received by all traders and is one of the biggest trading days in the year for Maling Road Businesses. This event will be continued over the next special rate period.

**Christmas Kriskindl** is Maling Roads annual Christmas event, which is extremely popular with local families and traders alike. Consists of closing Maling Road to traffic, music, rides, visit from Santa free family activities and a beer garden for the adults. The event was canceled in 2019 due to weather conditions and again in 2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions – Theatre Place movie night replaced the 2020 event. – KrisKindle will continue into the new rate period with modifications.

**Theatre Place Movie Night** a one-off free community event, provided locals with a safe way to gather outside during Melbourne's restrictions.

**Scratch & Win Campaign**, outside of the Auto Classico event this promotion was by far the most successful run. Promotion made possible by VIC state government traders grants round 1. Spend and receive scratchy cards quantity dependent on \$ spend offering cash and product prizes. This was well received by local shoppers and traders. Over 90% of traders participated in this promotion.

**VIP Shopping Events** run in November outside of Covid 19. The event had limited success and will not be repeated.

**Maling Road Gift Card** was launched in 2018 has been very well received.

**Easter Egg Hunt** annual easter egg hunt, big favorite of local families, bringing many new visitors into the precinct.

**Halloween is**, an annual event involving give aways and entertainment

**Shop & Win Mother's Day & Father's Day** purchase in a business and go into the draw to win a hamper made up of local businesses products

**www.mailingroad.com.au** went from a landing page to a business directory with an average of 1000 views per month

**Social Media** the MRBA is active on 2 social media platforms, Facebook has 3682 followers with an average year on year growth of 10% and Instagram has 1633 followers with an average growth of 7% year on year.

**Communication.** The MRBA regularly communicates to its membership with regular emails and face to face discussions

**Community Partnering & Engagement.** The MRBA are truly part of the community, with strong mutually beneficial partnerships with Canterbury Community Action Group, Canterbury Friends, Canterbury Community House, Canterbury Football Club as well as local schools both senior and junior

## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

### **4. CONSULTATION & FEEDBACK**

#### **Community Consultation External.**

The people that make up the Maling Road Canterbury Community have been consulted in several different ways over the last five years about what they want from their precinct, previously those consultations have been narrowly skewed towards the desired outcomes of the MRMB membership. In 2019 the City of Boroondara initiated the Maling Road Placemaking Project, where more than 1700 people were consulted and shared their ideas and thoughts about Maling Road, this included 45 business owners MRBA members which equates to over 50% of the MRBA members. The MRBA have used the results of this consultation in its development of the 5-year strategic plan.

The Draft Place Plan for revitalizing Maling Road is included in the Appendix

#### **Community Consultation Key Findings.**

1. Enhance and maintain the heritage character to reinforce the existing sense of place, history and community.
2. Foster business diversity and extend trading hours catering to a wider range of visitors at different times.
3. Revitalise Theatre Place and underutilised laneways as playful and vibrant public spaces that will attract visitors and host community events.
4. Improve the walkability and amenity of the street with generous footpaths and public spaces, safe crossings, places to sit and greenery that shades the street.
5. Optimise the precincts accessibility to visitors of all ages and modes of travel including, walking, cycling, car and public transport.

#### **What our customers like about us:**

- The personalised service
- The friendliness of the shop owners and staff
- The village/community feel
- The attractive heritage/aesthetic charm
- Quality stores
- Small retailers who try harder

#### **Business Sentiment & Understanding of the MRBA and the Special Rate & Charge**

A survey of all businesses was conducted independently by Creative Community Enterprises on being engaged in October 2022

All businesses who were asked about their awareness of the MRBA, their events, website, and social channels (Sample Size 68 businesses owners/principals)

- 100% of businesses were aware of the MRBA
- 100% were aware of the Special Rate
- 100% were aware of some previous some activities along with the website and Social Channels.

***When asked if they would like to see the Special Rate for marketing continue and be renewed for period of 2023 -2028, 100% of those asked said YES.***

## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

### **5. KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

These key issues and opportunities are taken from research, feedback from the traders and from the centre coordinators. Not all will be actioned, but they provide an insight into the passion that many have for Maling Road. The biggest inhibitor for Maling Road is the lack of funds to be able to promote the centre to its maximum value.

#### **Strengths**

- Compact nature with a village atmosphere
- Great range of both food product shops, food services, and professional services
- Specialist niche in fashion and home wares
- Long established quality businesses
- Professional presentation in some shops
- Friendly traders providing exceptional customer service
- Leisurely pace and tranquil
- Strong local community support with a strong sense of belonging
- Charming Heritage infrastructure but dynamic
- An 'experience' destination. Unique and go to destination.
- Unique stores
- Loyal customers
- Well known throughout the community
- Tourist destination
- Low vacancy rate

#### **Weaknesses**

- Limited funding sources to execute coordinated marketing programs
- Complacency among trader group
- Poor participation and response for street beautification from landlords.
- Perception of old world and out of date not progressive
- Some poor quality shops
- A gap in local community not shopping at Maling Road.
- Limited Car Parking for the centre and staff and the Railway car park
- Too many cafes
- Poor and non-atmospheric lighting
- Theatre Place needs to be used for more community events to create a destination point for people outside the local area.
- Empty shops at the bottom of Bradshaws developments/apartment have remained empty ever since the apartments were built
- High rents
- Lack of Nighttime Economy
- No Suitable high-end grocer

## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

---

### **Opportunities**

- More streamlined promotional calendar
- Strengthening relationships with community, community groups, Council, landlords and traders
- Strengthen relationship with Metro
- Continuing professional development programs and investigate one on one opportunities
- Welcome pack for new businesses
- Business profile to give to real estate agents and potential new businesses
- Maximising the use of Theatre Place, possibly to local schools and clubs
- Maximising marketing value for dollar
- New signage opportunities
- New electronic gift card
- Investigate marketing to tourism mediums
- Investigate new funding opportunities (sponsorships, grants)
- Become a more hip street and attract businesses such as Laurent
- Late night dining/trade
- More street events like Auto Classico – investigate e.g. food and wine event, musical jazz event
- More engagement with local community groups
- Investigate targeting younger market
- Investigate opportunities to tie in with school events
- Investigate opportunities to tie in with events at the gardens
- Investigate further winter events
- Tie in with food and wine festival
- Investigate on-going marketing – not just for events/promotions
- Investigate the use of a local ambassador
- Investigate Heritage week opportunities
- Leverage Bendigo Bank more
- Investigate Movies night, live entertainment
- Major promotions every 3 months
- Investigate the possibility of tourist bus visits or local retirement homes/RSL
- Music in the street
- Maintain the uniqueness of the street – let people know it will be a unique experience
- City of Boroondara's Placemaking project for Maling Road
- Increase in people with liquor license
- VIP evenings by invitation not days to make the customer feel special
- Happy hour in the morning to bring people to the street after school drop off
- Street art and handicraft shows
- More trader involvement
- A boutique deli



## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

### **Threats**

- Increasing competition from Chadstone and Camberwell, customers wanting big brands
- Deteriorating physical appearance
- Super stores and Online Shopping
- Increasingly high rents for properties in the centre
- Changing consumer shopping habits
- Economic Downturn Global
- Lack of maintenance in businesses and shop fronts
- Parking limitations

## **4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

### **Vision**

Maling Road will continue to distinguish itself as the iconic shopping village offering an extraordinary experience making all customers feel like a local. The character of the centre will be maintained and enhanced by providing development opportunities that respect the heritage value of the area. The role of the centre will not undergo significant change. The centre will continue to strengthen its metropolitan wide reputation as a village of distinction. This will be enhanced by the marketing vision.

### **Goals**

- To promote the centre as a special shopping environment with a range of interesting events and activities throughout the year
- To help maintain an attractive mix of businesses in the centre to maintain a productive partnership with Council to improve infrastructure and precinct presentation
- To work towards increasing customer traffic and retail turnover to assist improvements to business performance
- To potentially develop more interest and enthusiasm by all the businesses to promote the centre and become involved in the work of the Association
- To maintain regular two-way communication with members and with community groups
- To identify and deliver business development programs of value to the members.

### **Objectives**

- To improve awareness of range of businesses, amenities, promotions, and events
- To develop our 'brand' and 'personality' for the precinct to give it a strong image and identity for both our customers and the traders to buy into
- To encourage public transport and bike riders, [both customers and staff]
- To build on Centre's position as tourist destination in Boroondara
- To increase customer visitation
- To attract quality businesses to the area

## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

---

### **Mission Statement of the Association**

To promote and market the Maling Road precinct as a convenient essential provider of goods and services to internal and external customers

### **Principles and Values**

The values that underpin the precinct are for all our members and stakeholders to work together with integrity, consideration, respect and support toward each other, staff, customers, visitors, and the local community. The values that drive our Association are accountability, openness, cooperation, and responsiveness.

## **5. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

The following set of strategies and actions aims to realise the vision for the Maling Road Precinct

The Key priorities over the next five years are:

### **5.1 Marketing and Public Relations**

This is the major priority of the Association's work. The marketing program is to continue with the current branding statement as well as continuing the emphasis on special promotional events. More engagement with property owners about the overall marketing approach is to occur. The recommended strategies are:

#### **Strategic Marketing**

- Digital Marketing
  - Revamp [www.malingroad.com.au](http://www.malingroad.com.au) improving user interface, enabling businesses to update listing, articles and events make more interactive
  - Improve the engagement of the Association website, increase traffic via social channels
  - Improve reach and engagement of social media channels
  - Regular EDM's re events, promotions, businesses
  - Digital monthly newsletter
  - Increase digital content about businesses and Maling Road experiences (Video's, Photography, Stories)
  - Make greater use of the City of Boroondara's website and Facebook to promote images and stores about the Precinct
  - Get all businesses to have an online presence
- Destination Marketing
  - Work to establish Maling Road as a stronger tourist destination through involvement with the Destination Melbourne program and other tourism opportunities.
  - Postcards TV, Broadsheet Features
  - Trip advisor
- Greater use of Theatre Place for activations that deliver ROI for businesses and community
- Develop traditional media strategy to speak to older demographic of local area
  - Local Advertising (Canterbury Community House Collaboration)

## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

- Flyers, letterbox drops (what's on and business news)
- Promotional Activities to increase reach of social media channels and promote specific business categories

### **Special Promotional Events**

- **Kris Krindle** to become an event run over the whole of December, with specific days and events targeting young families with others targeting adults to enjoy the village and shop.
- **Auto Clasico** – May each year

## **5.2 Community Development**

Community development is an important spin-off of the current marketing and promotional strategies being undertaken by the Association. The recommended strategies for the future are:

- Continue to involve schools, kindergartens, sporting clubs, artist groups and other community organisation in the Centre's promotional activities, particularly the Kris Krindle and Auto Clasico.
- Continue to organize and provide shop and give gift cards for community groups
- Designate a particular charity such as Rotary to which the Association would develop partnership and sponsorship arrangements
- Develop links and mutual support measures with local community organisation such as the Canterbury Community House, Canterbury Friends, and the Canterbury Action Group

## **5.3 Business Development**

### **Retaining and Improving Existing Businesses**

It is important to have continuous upgrading, development, and renewal of products/services, shopfronts and service. The recommended strategies over the long term are:

- Continue to inform and encourage businesses to participate in professional development and training programs (including those seminars and workshops organised by the City of Boroondara) to build up their skills and make improvements to individual shops and offices
- Assist businesses in developing an online component of their business through developing a website
- Apply collective pressure on businesses to make improvements to shop facades, signage, and internal presentation to project a smarter more engaging image
- Create an online prospectus for Maling Road to encourage new businesses into the precinct
- Enhance website develop a trader portal:

## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

- Provide relevant information that will enable businesses to make better decisions
- Trader Offers
- Digital Welcome Pack

## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

### **Improving the Business Mix by Attracting Appropriate New Businesses**

It is recommended that the following measures be taken to strengthen the Centre's business mix:

- Monitor Maling Roads business mix to identify gaps and develop a list of desired new businesses (e.g. boutique or unique businesses)
- Develop a brief prospectus for investors outlining the case for establishing the proposed new operations in the centre, indicating its current mix, primary catchment area, sociodemographic profile, and future vision
- Approach landlords and real estate agencies and encourage them to attract the desired new businesses, suggest pop-ups for empty stores
- Directly approach the desired new types of businesses and present them with the prospectus, and encourage them to locate at Maling Road

### **5.4 Car Parking, Streetscape and Infrastructure Improvements**

This is a key priority. The recommended strategies are:

- The Below recommendations have been superseded by the adoption of the Maling Road Place Plan, which the traders association fully supports.
- Encourage landowners to make improvements to buildings in the centre, particularly facades and rear of buildings
- Lobby to improve the appearance of the railway line bridge including lighting of the bridge at night
- Encourage the organisation of transport planning research to establish the modes of transport used to access different parts of the Precinct, the period of visitation for different types of activities, perceived problems, and desired solutions
- Promote alternatives to car travel to and in the Precinct, such as walking, cycling, and public transport by encouraging improvements to infrastructure (e.g., location of and frequency of bicycle racks) supporting these alternatives

## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

### **6. MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE**

For the success of an ongoing business development and marketing program in Maling Road, it is critical to sustain a strong association with a professional part time coordinator. The recommended strategies are:

#### **6.1 Maling Road Business Association**

The recommended strategies to sustain and improve the management and communication processes are:

- Continue to elect a strong Committee each year. Work to ensure that there is an appropriate representation on the Committee from different types of businesses with different skills in different parts of the centre. Develop a succession plan for the executive members.
- Continue to organise regular meetings of the Committee to direct and monitor the agreed program of activities
- Establish Committee members as representatives/ambassadors for designated precincts in the centre. Encourage regular street walking and visits by Committee members to businesses in their respective precincts as a means to enhance the Committee's visibility
- Work to achieve more active involvement in the Association from businesses with fresh ideas
- Continue to take a very pro-active role with the City of Boroondara and other Government agencies in facilitating improvements in the centre. Encourage Council to continue to provide regular audits of public infrastructure and ongoing infrastructure maintenance
- Continue to communicate and connect effectively with businesses in the centre. Continue to prepare and distribute a monthly newsletter and to make regular visits to keep businesses up to date with proposed new events and activities in the centre
- Ensure all committee members understand their rights and responsibilities under the relevant legislation
- Conduct Governance Audit on a yearly basis
- Benchmark MRBA with other like business associations yearly

#### **6.2 Centre and Marketing Coordinator**

The Association is committed to continuing to employ a centre and marketing coordinator for 25 hours per week. The key strategies going forward for the coordinator to achieve this are:

- To generate funding/income streams other than the special rate and/or charge scheme or grants from the City of Boroondara to fund further marketing and business development opportunities
- Expand the branding, strategic marketing, and promotional initiatives, as outlined above
- Continue to communicate the marketing agenda with all businesses in the wider centre through regular electronic updates and personal visits to business premises.

## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

- Continue to encourage all businesses to develop their electronic communication and social networking capability, starting in the first instance with email
- Continue to maintain strong relationships with the local community to continue to foster ongoing connections with the centre including during centre promotions and develop stronger loyalty from these groups towards the centre
- Undertake discussions with property owners and real estate agents to encourage improvements to the appearance of buildings in the centre as well as to encourage appropriate new businesses to be interested in establishing in the centre as vacancies arise
- Continue to inform businesses about training programs to motivate and educate them to make improvements to their businesses
- Continue to lobby, with the Committee executive, Council and other Government agencies to achieve the recommended car parking and streetscape improvement priorities outlined above

### **6.3 Financial Strategy**

The proposed Maling Road program has been based on an annual special rate of \$67,000 plus income generated by events, advertising and sponsorship. The proposed scheme factor in annual CPI increases also assist in keeping pace with increase in costs, however understanding the challenging economic landscape and the increased need to keep cost to businesses at a minimum and the increased ability of the association to raise funds through other means the committee decided to request council to decrease the percentage rate and adjust the minimum and maximum charges of the proposed scheme.

The MRBA proposes the next five-year plan is funded through the special rate and charge scheme on the basis of the following:

- A rate of 0.08 422 cents in the dollar of the Capital Improved Value (CIV) will be levied on each rateables property in the proposed Scheme.
- Ground level properties will be subject to a minimum charge of \$736 and maximum of \$1,021.
- All upper-level properties will be subject to a minimum charge of \$446 and maximum of \$578.
- Consumer Price Index (All Groups Melbourne) (CPI) will be applied each year to the rate in the dollar and the minimum and maximum charges

It is estimated that the cost of undertaking the proposed marketing, community, and business development initiatives as outline in the Strategic Business Plan will be approximately \$121,220 in 2023. A strategic breakdown of the overall budget in 2023, this will form the base plan for the period of 2023/2028 among key activities is estimated as follows:

## Maling Road Strategic Business Plan

Year 1 Budget 2023/24	
Income	Budget
Special Rate Marketing Levy (CofB)	\$70,000.00
Grants - Triennial Grants Auspice Auto Classico (CofB)	\$16,000.00
Grants - Community Grants (CofB)	\$3,000.00
Sponsorship - Auto Classico	\$8,700.00
Community Grant Bendigo Bank	\$7,000.00
Grants Triennial Grants Christmas Event	\$16,520.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$121,220.00</b>

Administration	Budget
Marketing Co Ordinator 16hours per week	\$49,920.00
Accountant & Auditor	\$4,240.00
Xero Subscription	\$640.00
Mainstreet membership	\$200.00
Fees & Permits	\$300.00
Insurance & Public Liability	\$1,000.00
Postage	\$200.00
Committee Meetings	\$200.00
AGM Expenses	\$1,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$57,700.00</b>

Events	Budget
Auto Classico	\$25,000.00
Christmas	\$20,000.00
Easter	\$2,000.00
Social Media - Filming / website	\$10,520.00
Mother's Day	\$3,000.00
Father's Day	\$3,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$63,520.00</b>

<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$121,220.00</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$121,220.00</b>



## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

### **Year 2**

The MRBA will expand its program while offering its members a reduction in the \$ rate, this will be achieved through generating income outside of the special rate levy:

- Sponsorship
- Grants: Local Government, VIC State Government

The Association will continue to have a financial accountability system in place to meet the reporting requirements of both Consumer Affairs Victoria and the City of Boroondara's Contract with Business Associations relating to the special rate.

#### **6.4 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The degree of achievement of the actions outlined in the Business Plan is to be evaluated at regular intervals throughout each financial year.

Key performance indicators to be included in the evaluation are:

- extent of completion of projects specified in the Business Plan
- extent of business involvement and engagement with the Association Committee
- level of business participation in activities and promotions
- business and customer perceptions about the success of individual promotions and advertising campaigns
- business perceptions about changes in the overall profile and trading performance of the centre
- financial accountability
- Business Survey conducted yearly
- Customer Survey conducted yearly
- Income v's Outgoings

An evaluation report is to be prepared for the Association at the end of each financial year of the program. The report is to address the degree of compliance with the performance indicators outlined above. It is to be submitted to Council as part of the accountability requirements for the program. It also is to be used as a basis for developing a more detailed action program and budget for the following financial year.

A simple chart is to be developed and regularly updated during each financial year of the five-year program. The chart is to indicate, for each strategy in the Business Plan, the progress in achievement and the overall outcomes after completion

## **Appendix**

## **Maling Road Strategic Business Plan**

The Appendix provides further background information on the Maling Road Business Association, its management committee, centre coordinator and special rate details.

### **Management Committee**

The Committee of the Maling Road Business Association and Centre Coordinator for 2022/2023 are:

- President – Peter Barclay
- Centre Marketing Manager – Creative Community Enterprises
  - Steve Williams
- Committee Members
  - Alan Siavoshan
  - Lisa Luke
  - Linda Vickery
  - Venisha Sinhg
  - Tiana Ding
  - Megan Schmit

### **Current Special Rate Details**

The Association is funded primarily by a special rate and charge scheme covering 65 ratable properties in the centre. In the first year Council declared a special rate and charge for the centre raised \$67,000 with a CPI increment in each of the following five years. The current special rate and charge scheme expires on 30 June 2023, thus the need to support a further renewal to continue marketing and business development activities in the centre.