

# Hastings Special Charge Scheme

## Review of Support for Reintroduction

## Hastings Special Charge Scheme Review of Support for Reintroduction

This report details the level of support within the Hastings Retail Precinct for the renewal of the Special Charge Scheme. It also details the process and feedback received.

### Introduction

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The Hastings Special Charge Scheme has been running for 5 years and will cease on 30 June 2013. The Special Charge Scheme began at \$300 per property, with a 5% increase each year. The scheme raised a total of \$58,860 in 2013. The Western Port Chamber of Commerce is in charge of the expenditure of these funds towards the promotion of Hastings.

Prior to the declaration of a new scheme, the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council is seeking that the Western Port Chamber of Commerce demonstrate that the special charge still has sufficient support among the Hastings business community.

A survey was conducted by the Western Port Chamber of Commerce to gather feedback for the renewal of the Special Charge Scheme. This report details the findings of the survey.

### Process

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Prior to surveying the businesses, a 4-page document was compiled to explain the Hastings Special Charge Scheme, which included financial details of the scheme, a map of the boundary, past achievements and future plans. A statement of support for the reintroduction of the charge was also attached to the document, for the business owner or landlord to complete.

The document and support form was delivered to all businesses in person within the current Special Charge Scheme boundary on Tuesday 22 January. This gave the business owners an opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on the scheme, as well as raise any queries they had.

While some forms were signed on the spot, the majority were returned via fax or email over the proceeding weeks. Follow-up phone calls and visits were made throughout March to resupply misplaced paperwork and collect completed support forms.

By Thursday 28 March 2013, a total of 63 letters of support had been received.

### Responses Received

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Of the premises within the Special Charges Scheme defined area, the following is a breakdown of the responses:

<b>In support</b>	63	54%
<b>Opposed</b>	19	16%
<b>Non-responses</b>	35	30%

There are 117 active premises which are included in the above responses. The 35 vacant (inactive) premises are not included as there was no person available to complete a support form.

A list of the businesses that are in support of the reintroduction of the Hastings Special Charge Scheme is on pages 3-5 of this report.

## Analysis of Responses

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### In Support

54% is considered a good level of support for the reintroduction of the Scheme. The businesses who are in support of the reintroduction of the Special Charge Scheme see value in taking a united approach for promoting the town, and want the current support and promotions to continue and evolve. The businesses in support constantly provide suggestions and feedback for the chamber, which is effective in building and improving the goals that the committee set out to achieve.

The review of the fee structure was also well-received, with the Scheme rates being lowered from \$365 to \$330 for High St businesses, and dropping to \$200 for side-street businesses.

### Opposed

Of those opposed to the reintroduction of the Scheme, the following comments were noted:

- Businesses in side streets saw less value from promotional events, eg. Christmas decorations are placed on High St
- Business is tough so they can't justify any additional costs
- They feel that the Scheme should be spent on promoting each individual business, not Hastings as a whole
- They don't have time to get involved in attending meetings or reading material sent from the chamber

It is worth noting that the majority of the businesses who are opposed to the Scheme rarely, if ever, get involved in the chamber's activities or promotions. When they are invited to share their feedback to the committee so improvements can be made to make participation easier, they cite that they don't have time or aren't interested.

### Vacant (inactive) Premises

Vacancies are at a relatively high rate of 23% – the current national shop vacancy rate is 14.31%<sup>1</sup>. The current economic climate, along with a shift in consumers spending online instead of in retail premises, are causes of the high rate of vacancies. Obviously no business owner comment was possible from these premises.

### Non-responses

There are several reasons for the low response rate; some of these are listed below:

- Some premises have limited opening hours, so the paperwork was delivered but not discussed – eg. restaurants that only open at night
- Some businesses have absentee owners – the staff on duty do not feel that they have the authority to make a decision without consulting the owner
- The managers within the national brand or chain stores do not feel they have the authority to endorse these Schemes without consulting head office
- Many potential respondents feel they need to "think about it some more"

In all these instances the businesses had the option of returning the survey by fax, email or post, but had not responded in the provided time.

In the case of larger stores (eg. Kmart, Coles, Safeway, etc) and franchises, it is reasonable to presume they do not oppose these Schemes. They are subject to these Schemes in other centres and familiar with the operation. From a public relations viewpoint, they understand it is necessary to be seen as a good corporate citizen at the local level.

## Conclusion

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There is a fair level of support for the declaration of a new Special Charge Scheme for Hastings. While there is some opposition, the amount of opposed businesses has not changed from the 2007 review when the Scheme was declared for 2008-2013, while the amount of businesses who support the scheme has risen. The opposition is at a relatively low level and is unlikely to become a significant political issue for Council.

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1. <http://www.insidermedia.com/insider/national/82447-shop-vacancy-rate-decreases>, 3/01/13

## Hastings Special Charge Scheme Letters of Support

The following businesses support the reintroduction of the Hastings Special Charge Scheme.

Name	Address	Business
Richard Uglow	Coles Supermarket	15 Church Street
Cameron McCullough	Mornington Peninsula News Group	8 High Street
Cindy Nguyen	Super Star Cafe & Bakery	1/11 & 10/11 High Street
Steven Nguyen	TT Butchers	7/11 High Street
Jason Dowler	Harcourts Real Estate	14 High Street
John Wiseman	Lelley's Coffee House	24 High Street
Erol Nafiz	Exodus Hair Design	27 High Street
Wendy Tallon	BTRE	1/34 High Street
Ralph Kenyon	Port of Hastings Development Authority	2/34 High St
Alf Tallon	Tallon First National Real Estate	35 High Street
George Pittas	High on Fruit	35B High Street
Debra Young	Salon D'Cazbar	2/38 High Street
Sally Smith	Trotter Shoes	41 High Street
Lyle Ridout	Hastings Gold Mine	42-44 High Street
Catriona Dare	Hastings Health & Clinic	46 High Street
Mark Macdonald	Terry White Chemist	47 High Street
Ken Wildes	Wildes Fresh Meats	48 High Street
Bev Mott	Hastings Dry Cleaners	50 High Street
Sebastian Dicrazia	Best Direction	51 High Street
Petros Cozis	NAB	52 High Street
Cam Mccullough	Hastings Newsagency	56 High Street
Victoria Thorne	Stir	58 High Street
Brad Bayne	Telstra Shop	60 High Street
Bernadette	Local	62 High Street
Justin Orr	Commonwealth Bank	63 High Street

## Hastings Special Charge Scheme Letters of Support (continued)

Name	Address	Business
Jaimee Dejong	Hastings Camping & Outdoor	66 High Street
Carly Fulton	Australia Post	68 High Street
Elizabeth Wall	Ray White	69 High Street
Mark Van Staveren	Hastings Optical	71 High Street
Tim Fox	Betta Home Living	78 High Street
Michael Curry	MC Real Estate	4/82 High Street
Giles Bray	Home Loan Station	5/82 High Street
Vic Rodwell	Bendigo Bank	88 High Street
Sid Ferguson	Satchwells	1/97 High Street
Jenny Fabian	Essentials For Hair	99A High Street
Samantha Little	Enso Hair Design	1/101 High Street
Natalie Petersen	Petersen's Books/Teacher Resource Books	1-2/103 High Street
Debbie Hawkins	Contours	2/105 High Street
Stephanie Sharp	Party Supply Haven	1/106 High Street
Kerrie Toull	Western Port Office Supplies	2/106 High Street
Malcolm Hutchison	Western Port Pet Supplies	4/106 High Street
Rebecca Wood	Hair About Town	6/106 High Street
Tracy Graham	Blooms on High	7/106 High Street
Chris Hobbs	Dick Smith Electronics	1-2/108 High Street
Sue Mulcaire	The Toy Room	9/108 High Street
Phillip Treweek	Treweek & Co	125 Salmon Street
Tom Feehely	Hastings Family Dental Care	140 Salmon Street
Robyn Matthews	Amity Conveyancing	2/145 Salmon Street
Nikki Piesse-Smith	ARG Computers	6/145 Salmon Street
Lisa Ingersoll	TBA	8/145 Salmon Street
Lisa Dixon	Dominion Hill	9/145 Salmon Street

## Hastings Special Charge Scheme Letters of Support (continued)

Name	Address	Business
Judy Curr	Sarina Russo Job Access	1&6/184 Salmon Street
Suzanne Johnson	Peaches & Cream	3/184 Salmon Street
Travis Senn	EB Games	2/20 Victoria Street
Jaryn Chen	C Plus Y Homeware & Giftware	4/20 Victoria Street
Frank Gray	Kmart	20 Victoria Street
Frank Speakman	The Wicked Bean Cafe	10/20 Victoria Street
Joanne Grant	Western Port Denture Clinic	1/53 Victoria Street
Wendy Kelly	Computers.com	4/53 Victoria Street
Roland Rees	Photo Craft Studios	42 High Street
Jillian Brann	JKB Lawyers	5/37 Victoria Street
Peter Wickenden	Burke Bond Partners	147 Salmon Street
Haseena Jabeen	ANZ	36 High Street