

Minutes/ Action Items:

Public Meeting: Burnie Anti-Social Behaviour in Central Business District (CBD)

Meeting Conveners: Ian Jones, President Business Northwest, Alison Poke

Date: 12th May 2022

In attendance: Steve Sheridan, Yachties; Michelle & India, Burnie Newsagency; Carrie & Adam, Leading Edge; Luke & Emily, Thomas Paul Security; Themis Katsikas, Foreshore; Ant Dry, EVRG; David Pease, AH Pease, Councillor-Burnie City Council (BCC); Teeny Brumby, Coastal Caravans/ Councillor-Burnie City Council (BCC); Bel Lynch, Director Corporate & Commercial Services, (BCC); Trent Aitken, Concerned citizen; Karen Duff, Maggie's Cards & Gifts; Dave Russell, Burnie RSL; Tania O'Rourke, Burnie RSL; Alison Poke, Indigo House; Ken Dorsey, Councillor-Burnie City Council (BCC), Giovanna Simpson-Burnie City Councillor(BCC), Cyndia Hilliger, Business Northwest, Senior Sergeant Stuart Williams from Burnie Police.

General Discussion:

The primary issue is the perception by CBD business owners that there are increasing incidents of anti-social behaviour in the CBD area, particularly by a group of younger teens on scooters and skateboards. This group of young people are often unruly, disruptive, and abusive in their behaviour around town, causing concern for safety and wellbeing by shop keepers of their patrons, public and for themselves.

- Concerns were also raised by several people about the public brawling, screaming, and fighting in the CBD. Additionally, several people spoke with reference to the increasing number of people engaged in drinking in public places, the beach areas, south Burnie beach and the CBD particularly in the early morning.
- Concerns were raised about graffiti tagging around town.
- Concerns were raised about shoplifting, abusive behaviours by these groups when entering stores.
- Several concerns were raised specifically by female workers of feeling unsafe in their workplace.

- Concerns were raised about potential impact, on tourists and visitors to Burnie, as a lot of anti-social behaviour is happening in key tourist locations, such as near the Surf Lifesaving club.
- Some conjecture and discussion about where these people were coming from, as not just kids, but older men and women. It was suggested that Burnie Safe Space may have a role in increase of numbers in CBD area of people drinking, however this is not an established fact, but may need to be explored as part of a wider exploration of the precursors and potential solutions for the issues raised. It was also suggested that being able to purchase alcohol in the morning may be a factor.

Overwhelming the group made it clear, frustration is not being directed to Tas police (Taspol) as we are all acutely aware of the limitations of staffing at times and understand the need for prioritisation of job at times and we all commend the 'fantastic job' they do.

It was raised that historically, these kinds of antisocial behaviours come in cycles, and a good solution in the past has been to simply increase foot patrols and police visibility around the city.

Senior Sergeant Stuart Williams from Burnie Police addressed the group. He indicated that statistically crime in terms of offences against the person, public place assaults, shoplifting, and public order incidents was on a par with previous years, if not a little increased in some areas and decreased in others. However, this was not to suggest that the behaviours discussed were not creating an issue for workers and people in the CBD and would still benefit from some increased attention. He explained a little about the backgrounds many of these young people come from, to provide context about their conduct issues. He stressed that Burnie Safe Space has evolved their processes, and in Burnie police experience, many of the early issues related to the clients housed in this space have been reduced. He also stressed the importance of reporting *anytime*, and *every time* there is an issue or potential for an issue to escalate. For example, someone drinking in the early hours of the morning may not be creating a problem *per se*, but it may well escalate as the day goes on and become harder to manage. It is far better to nip it in the bud, than for the police to deal with an escalated situation later. Further, it was stressed, if the police don't know about the incident, they can't do anything about it. If anyone is feeling unsafe, they should contact the police immediately.

Potential Solutions to explore:

In no particular order,

1. Increase visibility of police in targeted times and locations where known incidents occur frequently.
2. Opportunity to recruit council representative/service providers who are already in the CBD to have cameras, so footage can be accessed when needed, also as a deterrent if in uniform- eg: parking inspectors in uniform may create authoritative presence + body cameras may help reduce incidents; garbage trucks with cameras may record general footage of use.
3. Review hours that alcohol is sold to specific groups in the morning- is there any opportunity to do this?
4. Increase / improve cameras in CBD area to improve visibility and resources for prosecution/investigation of crimes.
5. Review opportunities to work with Burnie Safe Space as a key stakeholder in city to examine any issues that may be creating problems in CBD.
6. Report all crime/ Issues/ threats to safety to police.
7. Use and promote existing social media networks such as “retail watch” to ensure retailers are aware of any potential shoplifters of issues.
8. Create an opportunity to connect and communicate across retailers on a more regular basis to discuss CBD issues/ opportunities.
9. Opportunities for deterrence / warning signage in specific places
10. Take opportunities to recognise good behaviours, with the young people and marginalised people in the CBD, “catch them doing something good” and engage in ways that are positively reinforcing.
11. Explore ways that collectively as a community/ council/ service provider/ retailers/ business/ community we can take steps to improve social wellbeing of everyone in our community = help people tackle root cause of some of the anti-social behaviours we see in CBD.
12. Create an inclusive culture, rather than exclusive- to try to understand other’s perspectives and find commonalities that help bridge cultural divides.

Where to from here:

1. Business Northwest (BNW) to collate meeting outcomes and create a retail communication portal on the Business Northwest Website.
2. Using a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Planning (CPTED) framework, BNW will reconvene a working party to look at all the proposed solutions, to create a plan to initiate strategies for delivery of improvements to safety and wellbeing the Burnie CBD. There will be opportunities to see if there are other things that could be included in a plan that may help. This working party will be expected to contribute and deliver action plan strategies and tasks with support from BNW.
3. We would invite anyone who is interested in participating in this working party to please contact use at BNW on Social@businessnw.com
4. A mailing list will be created to keep people informed of any updates and actions; however, we would also strongly encourage you to connect with us either on our mailing list via our mailing list on the [Business Northwest Web Page](#) or via our social media channels on Facebook [Business Northwest](#), and [Burnie 2.0](#).

And finally, something to ponder;

“The children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise.....”

Attributed to Socrates of Ancient Greece fame!

(469–399 B.C.)

Thank you for your participation in this meeting. We look forward to moving these ideas forward to initiate some improvements in public conduct and safety in the Burnie CBD.

Ian Jones, President Business Northwest.

Phone: 0412 061501

president@businessnw.com.au

A division of the Burnie Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc.