

13<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Mr Brian Robartson

City of Greater Geraldton  
PO Box 101  
Geraldton WA 6531

Dear Brian

**Re: 2015 Temporary Variation of Trading Hours Proposal**

The Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MWCCI) received email advice from City staff on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2015 seeking feedback from the Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry on an application for 2015 Temporary Variation of Trading Hours .

The MWCCI held a meeting on Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup> of March to seek feedback from its members and the general business community to assist in forming a position on the proposed application. We had a number of City Councillors present and we thank the Council for their interest.

Due to the extensive number of extensions requested by the businesses making this request, including for the apparent purposes of supporting their own store sales, it was considered by the meeting that this request should be regarded as a move to de-regulation of trading hours.

**The following motion was put forward from business owners present at the meeting and was approved :**  
**Moved** "That the community have shown consistently in the past that they don't require nor need extended trading hours. That the CGG accept that in 2013 they made the right decision to not pursue extended trading until the population can support it. That the CGG accept that the retail economy in Geraldton has reduced substantially since 2013 and cannot finance the additional costs of opening during extended trading hours. That the CGG accept that extended trading hours does substantially increase the cost of business without a corresponding increase in revenue. That the people have been asked, consulted and decided that extended trading hours in Geraldton are not sought nor needed in the immediate future and accepted the past CGG decision to not further this aim until the population increases to the point where it can be substantiated." **Carried unanimously**

In addition to the above it is appropriate to advise that there was significant comment on the inappropriateness of the requests relating to the public holidays, most especially Anzac Day of 2015, and those requests for extended trading where completely rejected by the meeting.

The meeting considered as a separate matter the days associated with the 2015 Christams Trading period, with attendees provided with the following results from a survey conducted of members in relation to the 2014 Christmas Trading Period :

- 14 of 27 respondents opened their business on **Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2014 – 10:00AM to 4.00PM**, 4 of which indicated that trade was sufficient to warrant being open.
- 14 of 27 respondents opened their business on **Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - 8:00am to 9:00PM**, 5 of which indicated that trade was sufficient to warrant being open.
- 12 of 27 respondents opened their business on **Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - 8:00am to 9:00PM**, 4 of which indicated that trade was sufficient to warrant being open.
- 14 of 26 respondents opened their business on **Sunday, 21<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - 10:00am to 4:00PM**, 5 of which indicated that trade was sufficient to warrant being open.
- 15 of 27 respondents opened their business on **Monday, 22<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - 8:00am to 9:00PM**, 3 of which indicated that trade was sufficient to warrant being open.
- 15 of 27 respondents opened their business on **Tuesday, 23<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - 8:00am to 9:00PM**, 5 of which indicated that trade was sufficient to warrant being open.

The meeting discussed the proposed days and extended hours proposed in the request to Council and the following is the response from attendees on the proposed 2015 Christmas Trading Hours which have support from the meeting:

- Extension on Wednesday, 23 December 2015 - 6pm - 9pm.
- Trading on Sunday, 13 December 2015 and Sunday, 20 December 2015 was also supported with an amendment to the proposed hours, with the preference to be 10am -4pm .

There has not been sufficient customer patronage of previous extended trading to make wider extensions of hours sufficiently viable and as such the MWCCI cannot support the requests for the extended trading hours proposed for Sunday, 6 December 2015 - 10am-5pm, Monday, 21 December 2015 - 6pm - 9pm, Tuesday, 22 December 2015 - 6pm - 9pm nor Sunday, 3 January 2016 - 10am-5pm.

The businesses present confirmed advice that the general economic conditions faced have in fact declined and that efforts by the large national operators to carve out a larger share in a tight market continues to impact them, which together with increases in operational costs means that the retail sector of Geraldton is facing tougher conditions in fact than was the case in 2013, when the issue of de-regulation was extensively examined.

**On behalf of its members the MWCCI is requesting that the Council reject the proposal in accordance with the spirit and intent of its motion of 28<sup>th</sup> May 2013, which stated:**

*MOTION MOVED CR GABELISH, SECONDED CR HALL That Council by Simple Majority pursuant to Section 5.20 of the Local Government Act 1995 RESOLVES to:*

1. *RECEIVE the two petitions on the deregulated trading hours; and*
2. *NOT SUBMIT an application to the Minister for Commerce for the deregulation of trading hours in the City of Greater Geraldton area; a. Makes the determination for the following reasons: that deregulation of trading hours is not supported in Geraldton.*
3. *NOT consider the matter of deregulated trading hours until such time that the population of City of Greater Geraldton reaches a minimum of 50,000 people.*

Should Council wish to consider the extension of retail trading for the 2015-16 Christmas/New Year period at this time, the **MWCCI's advice is that the following extensions of retail trading are supported:**

- **Extension on Wednesday, 23 December 2015 - 6pm - 9pm.**
- **Trading on Sunday, 13 December 2015 and Sunday, 20 December 2015 - 10am to 4pm .**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,



R W Jefferies  
Chief Executive Officer