

## **2022/23 COORDINATOR ANNUAL REPORT**

The 2022/23 Financial Year was another turbulent one for businesses within Richmond. With COVID-19 becoming widespread in the community there was still hesitancy amongst some to return to every-day situations. Alongside this there was increasing staffing pressures, continued stock issues and uncertainty with the wider economy. However, with borders reopening the Nelson Tasman Region started to welcome international visitors back and the domestic travel market remained strong. Large scale events returned to the region and especially over the summer period there was a noticeable increase of people around town.

We were able to run the full suite of events again in 2022. Starting with Ghosts and Goblins which ran on October 31. Harcourts Richmond took on the naming rights for the event which worked particularly well as they were able to leverage their wide marketing channels to help promote it. The event was well supported with approximately 1200 children attending and whilst there were learnings to take away from the afternoon it was a successful event that is now becoming synonymous with Richmond town centre.

The committee decided to outsource the overall event planning of the Santa Parade to Pop Up Events, a local event planning company. This meant that several of the Nelson Santa Parade Trust floats which had been professionally built could be used in the Richmond Parade, giving us the opportunity to gain sponsorship for the floats and offer them to community groups whereby building a float was a barrier to their entry. It also meant a lot less administrative hours were spent on the parade and there were no requirements for additional labour on the day. PAK n SAVE Richmond remained the naming sponsor alongside Nelson Pine, NBS and Richmond Mall as marketing sponsors. The event was very well received with great feedback from the community and those involved in the parade. Pop Up Events will again be running the Parade in 2023 and we hope to gain more sponsorship and community involvement alongside a greater activation of Queen Street pre and post the event.

Market Day was held on December 29 and again was near full with 114 sites sold. Without the COVID-19 restrictions of 2021 we were able to have tables, chairs and children's entertainment once again which was very well received and made for a festive atmosphere in Sundial Square. It was a very hot day, and it was notably quieter in afternoon when it was particularly hot but overall feedback was mainly positive with stall holders rating the event 7.5 out of 10. Unfortunately, we were not able to secure any sponsorship for the event and again there were learnings to take away from the day but overall a great event for bringing a lot of people into Queen Street. Feedback from businesses tends to show that if they are proactive and get involved in the day then they do well so it would be beneficial prior to this years event to spend some more time talking to businesses on Queen Street about different ideas to make the most out of the event.

Richmond Unlimited also supported Tasman District Council's Matariki Event in Sundial Square in June by way of time and resources as well as utilising our channels for marketing. With various performances and food trucks and luckily a dry evening it was a well-attended event. We also put up flags and the Star Motifs in Queen Street to celebrate Matariki.

The Christmas Tree and Star Motifs were installed in Queen Street over the Christmas period and the Pohutukawa wood-cut street flags up over the summer. Due to winter weather taking its toll on the flags the decision was made not to restock the 'Q St' Flags for the winter and there was no negative feedback on this from the businesses or community.

Once again, Richmond Unlimited was the naming sponsor for the 3 Day Women's Golf Tournament at Greenacres in October. At the event all the prize money is given in Richmond CBD

vouchers, and this coupled with tournament organiser's driving their participants to shop in Richmond with extra incentives the tournament brings a good boost to the town. The committee have agreed to sponsor the event again for 2023 but has informed the Tournament that we will be reviewing this in 2024 to ensure that wider benefits are still being seen across the whole of the Richmond CBD.

Richmond Unlimited supported Waimea Weekly's "Shop n Win" promotion which ran from late October through to the end of November. The financial contribution from Richmond Unlimited and Richmond Mall meant that all businesses within Richmond CBD were included in the promotion however a number of businesses chose to 'upgrade' which gave them additional marketing opportunities and promotional material. Overall, the promotion felt a bit flat, there were a few issues in the organisation of it, and it was felt that it didn't really have the backing of businesses unless they were the ones that had brought in themselves. It is certainly a "nice to do" but it was not felt that it directly benefited retailers and it is unlikely that Richmond Unlimited would participate in the same capacity again.

In June 2022 Richmond Unlimited started a monthly column in Waimea Weekly to highlight events and businesses within Richmond. This provides a good opportunity to promote the brand of Richmond Unlimited and highlight what it is that we do.

Members were provided with up-skilling opportunities over the year. Firstly, Richmond Unlimited subsidised a first aid course held in Richmond one evening and then with funding from MBIE & NRDA a Digital Upskilling Programme was offered. Eight members from Richmond signed up to be part of the programme and seven sessions were held covering various topics, however with dwindling participation it was decided not to continue with the last two sessions as we were not able to secure the additional funding required.

On the digital front we are keeping the business database and events section up to date on the website. The website in the past year has had approximately 24,000 sessions. The bounce rate is 51.4% and session length is averaging at just 25 seconds so whilst the website is not particularly engaging, looking at the behavior of visitors to the site and content viewed it appears that it is still doing the job of highlighting businesses that may not necessarily have their businesses linked to a google listing. Working with businesses to ensure they claim or create a Google listing may be an upskilling opportunity over the next year. Facebook Followers of Love Richmond is now close to 3,700 and Instagram followers close to 700. The monthly paid promotions that we have run over the past year has helped to grow these audiences and the aim will be to continue to grow them to ensure that the residents of Nelson and Tasman are being reached to provide exposure for businesses and events and promotions that we run.

Personally, I am really looking forward to the upcoming year, our latest strategy session has provided good direction for our future activities. I would like to say thank you to the Richmond businesses that have provided input over the year and that have supported our activities and of course to the committee who continue to take time out of their very busy days to work towards the greater goal of improving business in Richmond.

**Sheena Murtagh - Events, Marketing and Administration Coordinator - Richmond Unlimited**