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18th June 2009

To the Mayor of Manly Jean Hay,

Re: Manly Food and Wine Festival

Numerous Chamber Executives attended the recent Food and Wine Festival, myself included, as I am sure you did, and the Manly Chamber of Commerce would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Manly Council and the events department on what we thought was a very successful event, possibly the most successful yet!

The word on the street has been that the weekend attracted record attendance numbers, was patroned by a wide variety of groups from young families through to older couples and enjoyed what can be described as a friendly, warm ambiance.

When the Chamber has been out speaking to businesses it seems that the changes made to this years festival resulted in a greater circulation right throughout the Manly business district and retailers have reported a positive increase in sales for the weekend which is unusual when Manly holds events such as these.

I refer to my letter to dated 11th February where the Chamber suggested a number of initiatives to add to the festival. A number of these were implemented.

- The celebrity chefs/demonstration and cook off concept was adopted and held in the Grand Marquee to great success. This also included a book signing element which was also another suggestion.
- A total of 12 local retailers were excited to participate in the suggested Designers Market opportunity and reported good trade. We hope this will be continued, but managed to ensure Manly retailers trade is not cannibalised.
- The Mainstreet office approached all stall holders with the idea to hand out business cards to encourage return visitation. This will of course be hard to measure but hopefully results in some return trade.
- It was also suggested that local catering companies should be given the opportunity to participate. One local caterer did participate which is a good start however this should be offered and communicated to all next year for a wider and better result.
- The Chamber feels that the coffee and chocolate corner which was not considered could be considered again next year.
- All food stall operators seemed to be doing a strong trade, with lines at 30+ in peak periods, which then encouraged some festival goers into permanent Manly food outlets, creating positive turnover for all.

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- We would like to suggest next year, that all Manly cafes, restaurants and bars be given the opportunity to participate, with Council vetting the applicants based on previous participation, variety of food and compliance with the Manly Councils terms and conditions. The Mainstreet office is willing to help with distribution, as it seems to have the most current database of operators.

The added elements, blessed by the perfect weather, created a second dimension to the entire festival, which successfully offered attendees entertainment beyond just drinking and eating.

I have been able to discuss the event with Bob Smith our President who is currently away, and we at the Chamber appreciate the willingness of Council to work with us. We look forward to next year's event and working with you to make it an even greater event for not only those patrons who enjoy it, but for the businesses of Manly who participate in making the weekend the success that it is.

Yours truly,

Margot Stolle

Executive Officer