

COVID-19 Recovery Response Retrospective / Destination Marketing and Business Support Initiatives Undertaken Across the Pandemic (March - June 2020)

Our diverse mix of businesses has given us thorough insight into the effects of COVID-19 here in Victoria. A high percentage of our businesses report a drop in turnover of between 70% up to 100% and this has devastated our local economy. Both the Federal and State Government support packages have been integral to limiting the number of businesses that otherwise would have already been forced to close and or lay off employees. JobKeeper has been integral to many businesses in retaining their employees. This by far has been one of the most important initiatives and has saved thousands of jobs.

As Australia's leading retail, entertainment, dining and lifestyle precinct, we are proud our businesses set the benchmark on COVIDSafe precautions and lead by example. This made it easier for us to show the relevant government officials the hygiene protocols we were willing to adopt so we could reopen and finally start rebuilding our local economy.

The below outlines in stages what the CSPA did to support our members through the pandemic period.

As you would expect, the CSPA marketing calendar was revised dramatically a number of times as state of emergency information changed (almost daily).

To start with, we established CSPA's vision for the crisis (what we want to achieve and stand for). Overview below: *During the pandemic period, The Chapel Street Precinct Association (CSPA) was clear it was here to create calm instead of panic, share correct community information, find gratitude instead of anger and drive a sense of community instead of isolation.*

PHASE ONE - CSPA EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Quickly established a detailed three-stage COVID-19 Crisis Communication Management Plan.

Closely monitored the evolving pandemic and continued to work in partnership (with The City of Stonnington) and DHHS to ensure the health and safety of our Chapel Street Precinct community.

Carefully and quickly shared important community information (via our trusted digital platforms).

Important announcements (this will continue as needed) via all our Chapel Street Precinct digital channels.

Engagement with Local MPs to lobby as a united front for rent relief.

Shared a petition for UberEats to lower their commissions and media driving delivery giants to halve their fees.

Undertook a CSPA full fixed costs review and revised budgets (taking into account for new COVID campaigns).

Critical Prime Minister press conference outcomes (minutes shared with key stakeholders).

Shared guidance on non-essential closures due to COVID-19.

CSPA wrote an emotive letter to Landlords to negotiate rents. This was for members (businesses) to send on as they wished.

Promoted the Prahran Town Hall Chapel Street COVID-19 testing pop-up clinic.

Promoted a range of free COVID-19 support services and mental wellbeing support services to our members.

Changed our on-street digital billboards to reflect critical state government COVID messages.

Lobbied for softening on parking fines and tickets.

Promoted award-winning accommodation options to stay and self isolate during the COVID-19 stage 3 lockdown.

All CSPA digital platforms were revised to be reflective of the pandemic.

CSPA shared various grant information with members (plus reminders).

CSPA shared information with members pertaining to the rules governing the JobKeeper payment, explaining in detail the eligibility criteria for both employers and their employees.



COVID-19 HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE

PHASE TWO - SUPPORT RESPONSE | BUSINESS AS (UN)USUAL

Below are some of our phase two support response initiatives and marketing campaigns. The strong #supportlocal message was included and was the clear key messaging in all communication during this second phase. Our aim was to educate Melburnians on how to support local Chapel Street Precinct businesses and how easy it could be done living in a COVID-19 world.

Despite the varied approaches, one common thread was that all our members were changing as rapidly as COVID-19 spread. They were prepared to alter their practices accordingly, even if it ultimately (and legally) meant encouraging customers to make the most of their online shopping and delivery services.

To support our quickly evolving local community, we launched a daily updated blog called [Lemonade Out Of Lemons](#) promoting Chapel Street Precinct businesses who were doing takeaway, delivery, or online offerings. Members were asked to participate and send info to be included in this digital marketing.

CSPA undertook a total overhaul of our consumer [website](#) to be completely reflective of our COVID-19 marketing and initiatives.

CSPA established an on-demand PR press office and daily news alerts were sent to relevant media promoting our members and key lobby messages. These media alerts contained information on how our businesses had evolved, the human interest stories that put a face to the crisis and how CSPA was speaking out on behalf of our businesses for a better deal.

[Dolly \(Diamond\) Does Chapel from home](#) was born to demonstrate how to enjoy the best of Chapel Street Precinct from your lounge room (under stage three lockdown).

CSPA changed our on-street digital billboards to reflect the need to support local businesses at this critical time.

We created and promoted [Fitness From Your Futon](#). This was a drive for our community to stay on top of health and fitness during lockdown. CSPA made it simple with the likes of skateboard pilates, Zoom personal training and digital yoga.

CSPA got behind the Prahran Market launching its own online marketplace. The promotion of this Victorian first was driven across all our highly visited digital platforms.

CSPA shared eligibility criteria to the Victorian Government's much needed commercial tenancy to alleviate financial hardship faced by tenants and landlords during COVID-19.

We promoted free external Open For Business media listings to our members.

We gained many media stories for our businesses showing off their pivots and their new revenue streams.

We recruited AFL Legend and Brownlow Medallist Dane Swan as our official ambassador to educate Melburnians on supporting small businesses during COVID-19. [Dane Swan](#) kept us updated on local restaurants offering takeaway or delivery, retailers who had shifted to online sales and home delivery, gyms and health clubs offering online workouts and many more unique offerings.

CSPA fired back up our [@chapelprecinct Twitter](#) to spread COVID-19 community-specific information and to increase the penetration of our new major coronavirus #supportlocal marketing campaigns.

CSPA promoted [Isolation Comforts](#) that could be delivered right to your door from Chapel Street Precinct businesses. We encouraged our community to modify their home to feel comfortable during the COVID-19 lockdown. Chapel Street Precinct pet stores, botanical nurseries and homewares were promoted to support lockdown lifestyles. This included getting a home-delivered goldfish, creating a personalised plant oasis and more.

CSPA celebrated [Mother's Day In Iso](#) and promoted over 25 businesses in this digital marketing.

The stress of COVID-19 meant we started to celebrate the little things happening in our lives to keep sane. World Cocktail Day was a small celebration to recognise the sacrifices made and how far we had come. What better than a delicious [Chapel Cocktail](#) (Quarantini) delivered straight to your front door to celebrate!

Launched CHAP-DRIVE-THRU (to encourage order direct and collect versus delivery apps). Video views totaled 240,000+ and gained a 1.08 million audience reach from all CHAP-DRIVE-THRU free media.

CSPA wrote an emotive letter to all Stonnington Councillors to help small businesses and outlined what clear, tangible support they could give our community at this time.

The State Governments Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme was absolutely critical to most businesses surviving, a very high percentage of our businesses have stated that without this key piece of legislation they would have been forced to close their businesses permanently.

COVID-19 HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE

PHASE THREE - RECOVERY RESPONSE | "THE ROAD OUT"

AS BUSINESS STARTED TO BE ALLOWED TO OPEN (WITH RESTRICTED NUMBERS) ... *During this last phase, we knew CSPA was absolutely the key to recovery for our iconic Melbourne precinct.*

We undertook a media drive to demonstrate our CSPA members were leading the way in COVIDSafe mitigation.

Shared important community information as to when business sectors were reopening (this also included community facilities like playgrounds/pool etc).

CSPA's Executive Chairperson Mr. Justin O'Donnell made an [Official Statement](#) at the inquiry into the Victorian Government's response to COVID-19.

CSPA promoted the Australian Government's COVIDSafe App via all CSPA digital platforms.

Major digital marketing and press executed for cafes and restaurants reopening (stage one) (from June 1).

Victorian Premier press conference announcements and important information shared on all CSPA digital platforms.

We celebrated (hard) the reopening of the personal services sector with a digital beauty week takeover, using humour for cut-through.

CSPA continued our on-demand PR office (media offering) for members as businesses were beginning to re-open.

Began work on a detailed local tourism campaign to launch in the coming months.

CSPA commissioned a full street (including side streets) graffiti clean.

Dane Swan ambassador activity was extended due to community demand and also due to some Victorian restrictions still being in place. [CHAP-DRIVE-THRU](#) was also extended for both the same reasons. *Additional outdoor elements were added to both of these major marketing campaigns.*

We pushed back our Chapel Champions Awards to 2021 as to further focus on Coronavirus support measures.

We appointed an important new Forrest Hill South Yarra Precinct CSPA Director to our team.

Decision made to undertake the CSPA Annual General Meeting 2019:20 via digital video conference (Zoom).

Planned many campaigns for when the government's social limits were finally lifted and we would open (back to normal) again.

CSPA drove the push to keep Stonnington accountable for making sure Prahran Square is highly activated post COVID-19.

Launched our new Chapel Innovation brand that told the stories of many businesses that pivoted over the pandemic.

Delivered a heartfelt letter to traders to encourage them to reach an agreement with their Landlord to avoid accumulating debt.

CSPA drove the social distancing message via a creative cut-through digital marketing series called [Shopping Social Distancing Style](#) series. *This was born to drive COVIDSafe community messaging in a cut-through way as COVID government messaging was becoming increasingly fatiguing.*

We began work on an emotive documentary featuring the heroes of Chapel Street Precinct, our business owners and operators.

Overall, we used light-hearted humour in our marketing and tried to create some happiness at a fearful time for many of our members.

PRESS HEADLINES OVER COVID-19 PERIOD (MARCH TO JUNE)

Media directly generated out of the CSPA office

CSPA recorded 272 clips

5.8 million people - online coverage views

10.3 million people - print readership

13.3 million people - TV and radio audience reach

OTHER IMPORTANT PANDEMIC HISTORICAL POINTS

We feel we built even greater trust with our members, audience and major stakeholders. We also believe CSPA has demonstrated our value during this period more than ever. We were pleased to hear that Stonnington Council is considering further initiatives as part of its recovery stage of the COVID-19 Business Support Initiatives. Given the CSPA trust and reputation, we feel strongly our partnership was vital during this rebuilding period.

During this pandemic period, our digital traffic almost doubled, proving our audience trusted and turned to us during this time. We undertook a full website overhaul to be reflective of the now and provide even greater leverage for our members during this unprecedented time. **Overall we are proud to say our social media pages and our website was a place our audience and community came to for factual, timely advice.**

During all three phases of our above crisis management plan, we were clear on doing everything we could to strengthen and support our colourful community at such a challenging time.

"We know the economy goes down by elevator and up by the stairs, and we will continue to be there for our members every step of the way." Chrissie Maus (CSPA General Manager). ●