

MEDIA RELEASE

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Retail Therapy – Forum a Great Success!

Over 70 people from Wagga Wagga's retail sector attended the Forum on Retailing and Place Making last Wednesday evening to learn about the development of the Retail Growth Strategy for the City, and to provide their insights and vision for the City's retail precincts.

The Council's Commercial and Economic Development Directorate mounted the successful event to enable retailers and those with a stake in the development of the retail sector to consider ideas for the future of retailing and how to develop Wagga Wagga's retail places as authentic and attractive places for people to gather and recreate.

"Retailing at its best is a market theatre, a dance of the senses," said Gilbert Rochecoste, a keynote speaker from Village Well. "Each place can discover its true meaning and reflect this in the way it interacts with the people."

Scott Driscoll, Executive Director of the recently re-branded United Retail Federation, said, "Here in Wagga Wagga you have an enviable rate of population growth which feeds dollars directly into local shops and businesses. Comparing Wagga Wagga with other city's retail sectors, I believe there is a great opportunity to get the right balance between independent, locally owned retailers and the large national retailers."

The retail sector is the largest employer in Wagga Wagga accounting for 17.4% of total employment, and contributing \$205 million to the city's Gross Regional Product.

"The Wagga Wagga City Council recognises the importance of the retail sector and sees great opportunity for its development to enhance both economic activity and the quality of life in Wagga Wagga," said James Davis, Manager Economic Development Wagga Wagga City Council.

"We are thrilled that the retail sector strongly supported the Forum on Retailing and Place Making and contributed enthusiastically through the evening. The Forum has enabled us to capture an enormous amount of excellent information which the consultants, AECgroup, will now integrate with their analysis so as to develop strategies for retailing in Wagga Wagga," said James Davis.