

WCC plans to hit market traders with \$600 fee



Carol Altmann – The Terrier

Nuts: the W'bool City Council has sparked a near riot with its crazy plan to hit market stall holders with a new \$600 a year fee.

The fee is part of a new 'itinerant traders' policy that hits the soy candle sellers, fresh bread makers, vegie growers, jam makers, sock knitters and everybody else who makes Warrnambool come alive through the market scene.

Anyone who has ever done a market stall knows it is incredibly

hard yakka with an uncertain return, depending on the day. These hard working, early rising, earthy, organic, wonderful folks are not a threat to Warrnambool's retail scene for god's sake – they add to it!

They now face paying \$600 a year, \$350 for six months or a hefty \$125 for just 48 hours.

Not only will the new policy, as it stands, hit individual stall holders, the person running the market must pay a \$1500 fee.

The council says it is trying to create a level playing field for permanent traders. What a load of cods. These traders aren't worried about the rhubarb chutney sellers, they want timed free parking in parts of the CBD. If the WCC wants to help permanent traders, it should act immediately on the trader petition signed by almost 3000 people, asking for this very thing.

Honestly, who comes up with these ideas? We could, of course, just wave all visitors straight through to Port Fairy, where the market culture is huge.

WCC also says it is bringing W'bool in line with other councils, but this is not correct. Other councils, like Glenelg and Moyne, have itinerant trader fees, but they don't apply to market stall holders who are part of a single event on council land, ie. the equivalent of our Lake Pertobe, or the Civic Green.

I have been inundated by market stall holders absolutely stunned by this attempt to whack them on the head.

All of them helped to bring our foreshore alive over the summer and hopefully made a few dollars in the process – good on them – and this is the charming thankyou note from our council.

If you would like to support our market folk, drop Mayor Tony Herbert a line at therbert@warrnambool.vic.gov.au and tell him what you think of this idea, or you can respond to the council survey [on its website: http://www.yoursaywarrnambool.com.au/draft-itinerant-tradin...](http://www.yoursaywarrnambool.com.au/draft-itinerant-tradin...)

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