

5th December, 2017

LOCAL SHOPPING IN A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT INTO OUR COMMUNITY

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, and New England North West Residents residents are encouraged to shop local this festive season, spreading the Christmas cheer to our local economy. And if you're anything like me, you probably still have all your family, relatives, friends, colleagues, and pets to shop for before December 25th!

The Chamber Movement spreads across the World, and into each community within the State through your local chambers alliance with NSW Business Chamber, the states peak business organisation who actively supports small business who are the backbone of the NSW economy employing over 60% of the workforce.

As the Regional Manager for the entire New England North West, I am encouraging everyone throughout our region to shop local this Christmas period. I often overhear people asking each other "why is it important to shop local when I can get what I need online or in Sydney at potentially a cheaper price?".

By choosing local and independent businesses for your services, shopping, dining and other needs, you not only enjoy a more distinctive and person experience, you're helping:

1. **Build community:** The casual encounters you enjoy at local businesses and public spaces build relationship and community cohesiveness. Volunteer at the charity gift wrapping table – it the ultimate social networking site!
2. **Strengthen the economy:** Each dollar you spend at a local independent business returns 3 times more money to your local economy, (almost 50 times more than buying from an online mega-retailer).
3. **Get real value:** Consumer feedback repeatedly show independent businesses are beating their chain competitors in overall customer satisfaction. You can't beat personalised service.
4. **Ensuring choice and diversity:** If we don't support our local businesses, then they will cease to exist and we will no longer have access to those products or services.

Of course we usually choose to do business where we perceive the best value for our time and money. But in an age where we are bombarded with thousands of corporate advertisements daily, perceptions may differ widely from reality.

Across the region, many local business chamber and local councils run a Shop Local program in the lead up to Christmas, including fun street fairs and markets. These local programs often offer gift cards that can be used at local participating stores. These care are perfect for family, friend or even staff Christmas gifts!

Imagine the difference it would make to our communities if we all made the conscious effort to support our local businesses, producers and suppliers

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