

# BUSINESS CONTINUITY



A guide to doing business  
during construction and  
road upgrades

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Working together with our business community to help minimise disruption during construction periods.



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Business Continuity Guide



## A message from the Mayor

As Victor Harbor grows, so does the need to upgrade local infrastructure to support the needs of our community.

Our Council is committed to investing in road, streetscape and other infrastructure upgrades to assist in creating a bright future for Victor Harbor, at the same time as ensuring our residents, businesses and visitors have access to the facilities and services they need.

We understand that it can be challenging for businesses during these upgrades, and we want to

work together with our business community to help minimise disruption as much as possible during construction periods. This has been the motivation for preparing this guide, which we hope will help prepare our business community for these important upgrades in our city's infrastructure.

I do encourage you to take the opportunity to talk with Council in our consultation processes, and contribute to the planning and development of future upgrades. We are all working towards the same goal – to ensure Victor

Harbor continues to be a great place to live, work and visit. Improved facilities, services and infrastructure is key to achieving this, and while there may be some challenges in the short term the long term benefits will be the reward.

I look forward to working together with you to make Victor Harbor even better. Please contact me if you have any concerns.

**Dr Moira Jenkins**  
City of Victor Harbor Mayor

## A message from Business Victor Harbor

Infrastructure upgrades provide long-term positive benefits for our growing community and, more broadly, our region.

However, we appreciate and are sensitive to the fact that some businesses may experience some short-term impacts during the 'works period'.

Business Victor Harbor supports this guide, which will provide key information and strategies for local businesses to use to best deal with some of the impacts and challenges experienced during upgrade projects.

With a growing population base, the Victor Harbor and South Coast region is home to a diverse range of businesses and it's vital we share information and

resources in order to achieve a successful local business community.

We hope you find this guide useful and encourage you, through membership with Business Victor Harbor to support future growth of our economy.

**Business Victor Harbor**

## Take action to assist your business

The town of Victor Harbor is growing.

Upgrades to infrastructure, improvements to existing community facilities and

streetscape are some of the positive initiatives that the City of Victor Harbor are delivering to help create a place of opportunity and lifestyle.

We understand construction projects may impact local business and residents, so we have prepared this guide as one of the tools to help you plan and prepare in advance of

construction beginning in your area. While construction projects can be frustrating, it's important to remember the positive impact these projects will have in your area in the years to come. Some examples of completed streetscape projects include the Railway Turntable project (Eyre Tce), and the Mainstreet Upgrade Stage 1 (Ocean St & Coral St intersection).



Upgrades to infrastructure, improvements to existing community facilities and streetscape are positive initiatives.



Council looks at how proposed projects are going to assist with building a better community and creating a better place to live.



Council's project teams and contractors make every effort to reduce the impact of major construction projects to nearby businesses.

For more information about projects and planned works contact council on 08 8551 0500 or visit

[www.victor.sa.gov.au](http://www.victor.sa.gov.au)



## How council plans for projects

Well before construction starts on a streetscape or other major construction project, council undertakes consultation to work with the community to ensure a town's identity and community values are retained.

On many major projects, council looks at how proposed projects are going to assist with building a better community and creating a better place to live by focusing on long term commitments to people, places and partnerships.

After community feedback is received, council starts planning and designing. Then, once budget is allocated, construction is scheduled. Consultation takes place throughout this process.

## How council helps support a community during construction

Council's project teams and contractors make every effort to reduce the impact of major construction projects to nearby businesses including:

- wherever possible, avoiding planned work during peak holiday periods (such as Christmas and Easter)
- liaising with local organisations such as Business Victor Harbor and trader groups or community groups prior to construction to identify ways to help mitigate project impacts
- informing businesses of timeframes of upcoming work so they can plan ahead

- providing regular, detailed construction updates to local businesses and community members through project newsletters, emails and face-to-face liaison
- once work is underway, retaining access for customers and vehicles during standard trading hours (wherever practicable and safe to do so)
- providing advice and guidance from council's Economic Development team to assist businesses to help mitigate construction impacts, and
- providing project information on council's website and social media platforms including the project benefits for residents, visitors and local businesses through to specific construction details such as changed traffic conditions.



# BEFORE CONSTRUCTION

What actions will you undertake?

To assist in this process, we've started with a few actions.



Talk to your staff and make them aware of the construction period and potential impacts on your business.



Brainstorm ideas with your staff about how they can give even better customer service to your wonderful customers and ask them to keep supporting during the construction period. Get their emails and other details to alert them to specials/promotions and/or events (conducting marketing efforts during the period).



Talk to your neighbouring businesses and see what plans they have to promote their business/products/services and identify if you can collaborate on any initiatives or share costs on initiatives?



Can you take your products and services offsite to new locations/businesses to expand business? Market stalls, or a mobile operation during construction.



Ensure your signage and wayfinding to your store (area) is easy to understand and clearly communicates that you are open and your hours of trade.



Do you have your database up to date so you can communicate with your customers?



Ensure all staff know where customers park when visiting your business (consider printing some maps)?

**As a business owner, you're always planning and improving your business. When you're informed ahead of time, project construction is something you can prepare for. Here are best practice suggestions to help you manage during the construction process.**

## Partner with other local businesses

- You're not alone. Collaborate and work together with other businesses and community leaders in your area so you can communicate effectively and make any concerns heard.
- Develop a group plan to stay in contact and share information with council, the construction project team and most importantly, clients and customers.
- Consider appointing an organisation representative as a liaison to council and the project team. That person can attend planning meetings and then share the information with the rest of the group (you can take this in turn to lessen the burden on one business or individual).
- Connect with community groups and neighbourhood associations to widen your communication audience. These organisations could potentially assist you to coordinate periodic communications to the community, updating them about promotional activities, road closures and any other relevant information.
- Alert key stakeholders and influencers (the local Police Station, the local School and other professional offices) with a fact sheet explaining that shops are still trading and providing key information and seeking their ongoing patronage and support. Make it personal. Tell a story.
- Working together has benefits in understanding considerations and developing ideas to deal with future issues.



## Communication

- Construction timelines can be impacted by many factors including weather, funding, utility providers (such as phone, water, power) and underground services, so staying informed will allow you to plan your business operations more efficiently – whether construction is occurring directly in front of your business or in the nearby vicinity:
- Ensure you have the most current project information so that you can plan for your business accordingly.
- Ensure you stay aware of the various construction phases and what this will mean for your business, for example will customer access be affected? Will there be changes to parking or deliveries? Do you need to advise any suppliers of these changes?
- When a project starts in your area you'll be supplied with contact details of the project team, including email address. This will be your point of contact during the project.

- Communication is critical during the entire construction project. As a business owner, you must communicate with the construction project team, your employees, other businesses, and most importantly, your customers.
- It's important to discuss the projects with your staff as they may be impacted by changed hours, traffic changes or changes to parking.
- Having an open discussion provides staff with information and sets their expectations.

## Resources planning

- It's an unfortunate reality, but you may need to consider changes to trading hours and staff rosters to adjust to changes in customer numbers/visitation patterns once construction begins. Plan ahead for this important step and engage your staff early.
- Allow employees to share any concerns they may have with you. Your staff will appreciate the opportunity, and the discussion may spark new ideas that will benefit your business.

## Stock

- Consider how you will manage your stock levels or orders prior to/during construction. How will you handle deliveries? Do you need to plan for changes in visitation patterns and deliveries?

**General project information can also be found at**  
**[www.victor.sa.gov.au](http://www.victor.sa.gov.au)**



## Suppliers and lines of credit

- Inform current suppliers of the upcoming construction project and see if there are opportunities to involve them in the construction activity. Do they want to be part of a special product promotion? Can they assist in providing deliveries when it suits you? Do you need to ask them to review your line of credit and payment schedule aligned to new customer visitation patterns?
- Communicate with your suppliers any changes to access and modify delivery days and schedules to suit.
- Speak with the project team to ensure deliveries can be made to your business during construction.
- Use a database and email management tool to build your customer database. You can use this to track who is opening your communications and see what promotions or information they are clicking on and reading.

## Landlord

- Advise your landlord of the upcoming construction project and be sure to keep them informed of all construction information.
- Think about how the landlord could be part of your planning? Can they provide assistance/

support to businesses as they are likely to see an upside in assets and rents in the medium and longer term when the project has finished?

## Budget review

- Budgeting and understanding your cash flow situation is one of the most important areas of your business. You may need to investigate managing your cash flow tighter than normal and think about new budget line items, for example increased cleaning of signage, windows or general cleaning and upkeep to keep dust to a minimum.

**For more information about budgeting visit the Australian Government business website [www.business.gov.au](http://www.business.gov.au) or the South Australian Government business website [www.business.sa.gov.au](http://www.business.sa.gov.au)**

## Gather customer contact information before construction begins

- Keeping your customers updated with information is vital.
- Providing customers with information about the project, what to expect, where to park and how to reach you will benefit you and customers. You may also like to communicate any specials, sales or activities that you are planning.

- Consider offering promotional specials during the construction period.
- Send weekly emails to customers to encourage ongoing patronage and support. Keep them informed and involved.

## Inform customers before, during and after construction

- Keep your customers informed so they can navigate construction and access your business.
- Keep them focused on the end product and the benefits for them as a loyal customer to your business (for instance, improved infrastructure, increased seating spaces, improvements to parking or public art).
- Consider posters or handing out copies of alternative routes to your business before and during construction, show them pictures of the 'finished product' to help demonstrate the small inconvenience will be worth the gain (for them and for you).

## Marketing

- Talk to staff about the project and strategies put in place during construction.
- Share project information and positive business messages with customers by collecting a database of customer contact details whenever possible.
- Approach businesses or consultants in your area who might be able to provide free assistance. This can be a great opportunity to pool resources together for some collaborative marketing initiatives with other businesses.
- Contact schools, TAFE and universities to identify if there are any opportunities for the students to use the construction as a marketing project to support your business and the community.

### Examples of collaborative marketing initiatives

- Emails and Facebook notices to potential customers with daily or weekly specials.
- Feature a business and restaurant of the week.
- Reach out to a local radio station and ask if they would like to do a live broadcast from a business or interview a local business owner with an interesting story.
- Use prize draws to attract customers. Do something above and beyond what you would usually do in your business to attract and retain customers.
- Collaborate with other surrounding business owners to create special offers or experiences.

## Social media

- Well-structured social media advertising campaigns with high quality visual components can help you grow your following, better reach your existing followers and reach people within a geographic area who don't follow your pages.
- Facebook ads in particular can reach a much larger audience than traditional advertising for small businesses with a small advertising budget. Remember, great photos and short videos are key for this but you can capture great content on your smartphone and use photo editing apps to enhance them.
- Consider having a private Facebook group for you to share ideas, tips and concerns with other businesses in the area impacted by construction.
- Only communicate positive opportunities externally.
- Facebook provides some great free online training resources for those who don't know where to start at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

### Driving customers to your business

- Historically, many businesses reduce advertising and promotional expenditure rather than slash fixed costs during construction periods.
- However, studies have shown that those maintaining or increasing advertising outlays during slowdowns wind up outselling rivals who cut back. Here are some tips for driving customers to your business:
- You could consider a customer loyalty rewards program, website or text marketing program.
- Provide kerb service or other convenience-oriented services.

- Work with your business neighbours to run special promotions such as BBQs, pop-up markets, or prize draws.



### Extend business hours

- Consider staying open later in the evening after construction crews have finished for the day or opening a little earlier to take advantage of construction teams in the area (particularly if you are a food related business).
- Be flexible to accommodate customer demands and other perceived needs where possible.

### Make the construction work for you

- If you've been considering a business remodel/refurbish, why not do it during the construction period? Use this period to get things done that you haven't had time to address.

**Now is the time to brainstorm ideas with other businesses in your area to identify possible activities and events which could help drive business and attract customers before, during and after the construction period.**

# DURING CONSTRUCTION



Handy tips once construction begins.

Here's some ideas during construction:



## Stay informed

- Attend meetings held by council, business associations or others relating to the project.



## Create a friendly rapport with construction workers

- Consider offering 'construction specials' for coffee, breakfast or lunch if you are a food related business.



## Be positive

- Encourage and generate a positive, healthy working environment with staff and customers to ensure retention of valued employees and customers.
- Have a positive attitude, especially when dealing with the public and customers. People want to have a pleasant experience in your community and business district.
- Tell the truth about the construction situation in an upbeat way. Don't apologise for the construction situation, unless you really need to. Everyone knows construction can be an inconvenience, you don't need to remind them. Negativity and complaining will drive people away. A positive, fun atmosphere will bring them back.



**Here are some examples of what other communities have done to encourage people to continue to visit the area.**

- Temporary markets.
- Information booth explaining the construction work, parking options, changed retail hours, etc.
- Murals or artwork display
- Construction specials for construction workers and customers.
- Kids activities – face painting, mini golf, art and craft, etc.

- Yoga or Tai Chi in the park or other open/unused space.
- Temporary pop up gardens
- Storytelling – through words, images, artwork.
- Buskers.

Some of these activities may even become regular events after the construction project has finished, creating a new tradition for your area. Ideally, best practice is to adapt events and activities prior to construction to create and build on momentum.

Make sure you check with the City of Victor Harbor's Economic Development team to identify if any of your planned events or activities require approval.

You can contact the team via telephoning 8551 0500 and ask to be directed to the Festivals & Events Officer.

# POST CONSTRUCTION



You made it!

Here's some ideas post construction:



## Consider promotions and advertising

- Let customers know that the project is finished, roads are open and it is 'business as usual'.
- Promote the new image and convenience of the completed project.



## Celebrate the project's completion and host a reopening event

- Talk to your local project staff, council or business association or join with other local businesses to hold a celebration or community event and invite the local news media, customers and the community to the event/ceremony.
- Consider an advertising or promotional campaign.
- Support other businesses that undertake promotional activities.



## Compensation

Council appreciates that there are many challenges for all types of businesses during construction activity. The law recognises that it is in the greater public interest that government be able to carry out public works. Other than under compulsory acquisition, this generally entitles federal, state and local government organisations to construct works including streetscape and place making projects without providing financial compensation. Some businesses may have clauses in their insurance policies to cover lost trade/ income or landlords may agree to provide rent abatements or reductions for a period.

# Your business continuity checklists

## Before Construction

- Stay informed about upcoming construction projects in your area.
- Attend project meetings and provide feedback, voice any concerns you may have during these meetings.
- Contact other businesses in previous project areas for their experience and tips on how to trade during construction projects.
- Develop a marketing plan, to identify how you will attract customers to your business during this time.
- Construction may take many months, what initiatives can you plan in advance to encourage customers?
- Collaborate with businesses, Business Victor Harbor and other community associations in your area on marketing initiatives like advertising, social media or events that could attract visitors to the street or precinct.
- Plan staff levels during construction. You may need to discuss this with your staff, for example changed hours might be an option or discuss with neighbouring businesses how you can manage staff impacts/levels.
- Contact lenders and landlords to inform them of the construction timeframes and potential impacts.

- Review your line of credit by discussing the situation with your suppliers. You may be able to amend the terms and conditions of your arrangements, which may allow for greater cash flow.
- Review your inventory. Do you need to stock-up or manage a just-in-time model? For example, will you still need the same amount of fresh produce or general stock levels?
- Rework your budget or look at your outgoings – can you make adjustments? How will you manage purchasing? Reviewing the budget allows you to plan, forecast and manage better cash flow where possible.
- Collect contact information for your customers and notify them of the project in advance. Having an up-to-date database has many benefits including providing accurate information to customers, project information, sales you're planning, events happening in the area and any changes to parking during the project.

## During Construction

- Pool advertising and marketing resources with other businesses in your area.
- Stay informed and attend public meetings about the project.
- Develop a friendly rapport with construction workers.

- Signage at your shop front and discuss with Project Manager about direction signage and alternative access point options.
- Provide information and access directions for staff.
- Keep a script about the construction work next to your phone.
- Use social media to keep customers informed, offer contests, vouchers, etc.
- Continue to work with local business groups through collaboration.
- Consider extending business hours.
- Deliver products to your customers or increase online business.

## After Construction

- Advise customers that roads are open and promote the new image.
- Celebrate with an event.
- Support other businesses undergoing construction work in their area.
- Acknowledge the benefits of the project and thank your staff and customers for their patience.

**For more information about projects and planned works contact council on 08 8551 0500 or visit [www.victor.sa.gov.au](http://www.victor.sa.gov.au)**

# Additional resources

## Economic Development

The City of Victor Harbor's Economic Development division deliver a range of functions including business engagement, economic development projects, co-ordination of targeted training and business advisory services.

More information on initiatives and workshops being coordinated by the Economic Development team can be found on the council website – [www.victor.sa.gov.au](http://www.victor.sa.gov.au)

## Supporting Business in SA

The South Australian government offers Information, services and resources to help you successfully start, run and grow your business.

The government website [www.business.sa.gov.au](http://www.business.sa.gov.au) has a lot of information on Starting a Business, Running a Business, Protecting your Business, Leaving your Business, Grants & Support Services & Events.



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