

Hot tip for Sunbury shoppers

By Matt Crossman

Shoppers are being encouraged to get out of their cars and take a good look around Sunbury's laneway arcades as traders deal with sluggish business conditions.

Sunbury Business Association (SBA) president Michael Osborne said that while service industries, including real estate and lending, were doing well thanks to low interest rates, retail in the town was "a massive struggle".

He said many business owners hoped the opening of major developments such as Bunnings on Vineyard Road would encourage more people to shop locally.

"The real problem is getting a consistent cash flow," Mr Osborne said. "If the cash flow is inconsistent, as it often is with retail, it can make it really hard to plan."

Mr Osborne said Sunbury's laneway arcades were one of the town's best-kept secrets.

"We would encourage people to treat shopping as an experience," he said.

"People often go to the major shopping centres because there's parking and it's convenient, but there's some great little shops down those laneways."

Hume city sustainability director Kelvin Walsh said there had been significant investment in Sunbury in the past 12 to 18 months.

“ There's some great little shops down those laneways ” - Michael Osborne

"This has been most evident along O'Shannassy Street, which has continued its transformation into a premier dining district," Mr Walsh said.

"Overall commercial vacancy rates are low, which is a good indicator that high-quality, long-term businesses are being established."

Mr Walsh said streetscape improvements, including a \$2 million upgrade of O'Shannassy Street and improvements to the Village Green,

would further encourage people to shop in Sunbury.

"Community events including Sunbury StreetLife, Market on the Green and SunFest had also been instrumental in creating vibrancy and driving increased activity," he said.

Mr Osborne encouraged business owners to take part in a series of business networking breakfasts run by SBA in partnership with Sunbury Community Health.

The next breakfast will be held at Crossfit Kenko Gym, McDougall Road, on April 16.

Mr Osborne said traders should always seek to treat business as part of an ongoing relationship. "Good business is never just a transaction."