

Fight to revive CBD

Barry Kennedy

SUNBURY retailers have called on the expertise of business rejuvenation expert Peter Kenyon to revive the local economy.

Several businesses have closed their doors in the past 18 months, with at least 10 shops up for lease in Evans St.

Sunbury's CBD is beset with problems including limited parking and regular congestion, while Watergardens Shopping Centre

and internet retail are seen as genuine threats to businesses.

Worried business owners teamed with the Sunbury Community Health Centre in May where the expertise of Mr Kenyon, the Western Australia-based founder of the Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) Program, was sought.

A committee taskforce is hoping to replicate the BEAR program in

Sunbury, and a workshop for the broader business community will be held from 5.30pm on August 28 at the Sunbury Youth Centre.

Proprietor of Evans St business Elusive Style, Sylvia Unferdorben, said while Sunbury was unique in the loyalty shoppers had with local businesses, "the big bad world" was closing in.

"The train station and train parking is a big problem and we see

shoppers with one-hour parking spots put off by first having to find a spot and then get everything done in a narrow window," she said.

"There is also the need to make our streets lively and attractive and at the centre of the community again."

Fellow taskforce member Heather McGrath, who closed her shop of 28 years in March, said more work had to be done now.

"We need to get different shops –

it can't all be nail shops, chicken shops and \$2 shops," she said.

Sunbury Business Association president Michael Osborne said the time had come for the CBD to reassert itself and the BEAR program seemed the ideal vehicle.

For more information on the BEAR program and the taskforce, contact Bernadette Hetherington on bernieh@sunburychc.org.au or 9744 9554.

Former Sunbury business owner speaks out: PAGE 5