

It's all smiles at city business grants

DINING OUT ON FUNDING



Tobias Goyder-Ewan and Edward Johnson

EXCLUSIVE VICTORIA RIFICI

Two Perth businesses are sprucing up their shopfronts with help from the City of Perth.

West Perth's Gangemi's Fine Wines & Food and the Comedy Lounge on Murray Street are two of several Perth businesses that have been awarded City of Perth business improvement grants.

Gangemi's owners Edward Johnson and Tobias Goyder-Ewan told PerthNow this week the \$20,000 grant would go towards a major redevelopment of the corner bottle shop and liquor store on Hay Street.

The duo said they believed their business was the first metropolitan standalone liquor store

to trade in Perth, having been open since 1911. The historic establishment will receive an interior facelift to turn it into an 80-person small bar with indoor dining, alfresco area and European style charcuterie food. Drinks will be served until 10pm.

The business will also build a coffee window that will be open from 7am.

"We're (still) going to be wine retail and liquor retail-focused with the addition of being able to sit down and have a glass of wine on top, and it extends that 'try before you buy' ethos," Mr Johnson said.

Mr Johnson said the grant would go towards paying for the construction of toilets, amenities

and access for people with a disability. Redevelopment is set to start as soon as next week, with the duo aiming not to close during construction and have the additions ready by October.

In the CBD, the Comedy Lounge exterior and laneway is set for a facelift.

"Overall, we expect the exterior improvements to increase Comedy Lounge's public awareness and organic traffic," business development and marketing director Jack McAllister, inset, said. "It's amazing how many people are unaware Perth has its very own purpose-built comedy club, so hopefully this will help get the word out there."

The team behind the establish-

ment are researching the possibility of installing 3D projectors that would display the venue's line-ups and a promotional

video. Mr McAllister said designs were being drafted for new laneway street art, which would include a portrait of the greatest comedians of all time.

The two establishments were part of 21 businesses to receive grants. City staff had recommended only nine out of 25 applications for grants be approved, taking the total

grants allocation to \$157,050. But councillors approved grants to all applications that scored over 60 per cent in the city's assess-

ment. This move, suggested by Cr Brent Fleeton, saw 12 of 16 businesses that had been recommended for rejection receive a grant.

The council also agreed to allocate an extra \$194,911.57 to its grant program to accommodate the move. Cr Fleeton said councillors set the \$150,000 budget before finding out the city had a \$3 million better starting position.



Jack McAllister