

2021 AGM PRESIDENTS REPORT

Membership

Membership numbers have slowly grown over the past year. The Challenge that businesses face is keeping doors open for business with the impacts of Covid-19 not going unnoticed, We have lost some members but we have also gained lots of new member over the past 12 months with many new businesses starting up. New members were welcomed at most meetings and membership going in to the future will undoubtedly continue to grow. The Chamber has relied on attracting members through word of mouth and utilising resources for members that show value.

Visit Batemans Bay

This campaign has had to shift its focus over the last 6 months due to travel restrictions. It's purpose of promoting small business and telling stories to our audience, focused mainly in Sydney and Canberra, has continued but we have had to pivot the page to also support local businesses and promote them locally. It has attracted lots of attention to those businesses that participate and we have had members join due to that page alone.

To date since April we have had over a 2 million reach. There is huge potential for growth this in this space and we have seen all the other towns in the region follow suite with @VisitMogo, @VisitNarooma, @VisitMoruya and @VisitBodalla pages all starting and becoming active.

Cross Chamber Communication

That leads into our work with other Chambers. We have a great relationship with the other Chambers in the region and have met multiple times to both collaborate and be cohesive in our needs and wants when approaching council. We have started the process of creating a Eurobodalla Chamber to be a voice for the region. We believe having a stronger region benefits us all and having a voice that can speak to local, state and federal governments would be a huge benefit to us all.

Business in CBD

The last 12 months have been especially trying for Batemans Bay coming off the back of the previous year with Bushfires. We have seen far less foot traffic and tourist to the region due to lockdowns from Covid-19. At the same time, we have seen lots of new small businesses coming to the region and the future has never been brighter we believe.

Advocacy

We have had lots of projects happening in our region recently including the new bridge completion, Bay Pavilions and foreshore completion. While some of these projects have been slowed down due again to covid the money coming into the region for infrastructure is great. We know there has been various issues regarding the new Bay Pavilion we will continue to work with council and our member businesses concerned about the way it will impact their business.

We have worked with Transport NSW and RMS on the closing of the Clyde Mountain which saw concessions made in favour of business. We have participated in many reviews for bushfire preparedness and hope that council continue to work towards being on the front foot if this was to ever happen again.

We have met with Michael Holland and the other members of the ONE Eurobodalla Hospital on the need for Level 4 facilities. We will continue to support and advocate for these services for the region.

Challenges

The obvious challenge over the past year has been navigating through the pandemic. We held the New Year's Eve commemorative event last year only to see the borders closed the following morning. We also had a community and emergency services day planned in July which has been postponed 3 times due to lockdowns. While we are not out of the woods with just yet, it appears as if we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. I have no doubt the region will bounce back and see business owners come together alongside the community in supporting small business

Events

While many events have stopped over the past year, we look forward to them all being successful in 2022 and council proactively supporting them to bring vibrancy back to the region. We would also like to congratulate the Sculpture for Clyde Committee on its successes as it now is a stand-alone event not under the Chamber. It has had huge success over the years and brought an enormous amount of public art in the shire.

Conclusion

It has been an extremely tough year for the country and in particular for this region based so much around tourism. With travel bans lifting I believe we have set ourselves up for one of the biggest summers ever. It is also great to see how we have pivoted to be more sustainable year-round. I want to say a massive thanks to the committee around me because without everyone lifting each other's spirits and pulling extra weight at times lots of what we accomplished would not have happened. The Chamber is in a great position going forward and we look to the new incoming council as hope that we will have a great relationship with them and continue the advocacy at higher levels of government to continue growing this region. It has been my pleasure to work alongside the executive.

Mathew Hatcher
President
6 October 2021