

Presidents Report August 2022

Thursday 25 August 2022

Southern Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce. Inc. AGM

Currumbin RSL

Hilary Jacobs – President

Southern Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce

Good morning ladies and gentlemen

It seems like only a few months ago that we were all here for our last AGM. Here we are again today!

****This time** last year the chamber had 108 members and had around \$64,000 in funds. This year our membership base is now 117 including 5 life members reflecting an 8% growth. Our asset base is now sitting at around \$79,000. Our Treasurer John Forrester will have more details on our financial status in his report.

During the last 12 months we have increased the number of Gold Members to a total of 22, we have 10 Silver members, and 16 bronze members. This is where most of our increased asset base is derived from. We now have 64 general members and five lifetime members. Without the support of all our members and the volunteering of our committee and executive the SGC Chamber wouldn't exist. So thank you to everyone here for your ongoing and continuing support.

****At our last** AGM the executive was confirmed as our two Vice Presidents being Daragh Murphy & Michael Kelly, Secretary Mike Remmer, John Forrester was appointed as Treasurer and I was returned as President. The Executive has been ably supported for the last twelve months by our management board members; Josh Martin, Zav Revere, Sarah Galvin, John Mitchell, Steve Edgar, Josh Yates and Anne Stovin. During the year Anne Stovin resigned and Kristy Oswald took over as a nominee from the RSL. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the executive and management board for their support and efforts during the past 12 months.

**** Since** the AGM last year we have held eleven events.

Our first post AGM breakfast was at Coolangatta Surf club and featured the CEO of the Gold Coast Titans talking about business resilience, they have certainly needed that this season!

Early in November we were pleased to have the Small Business Minister, Di Farmer, as our guest speaker for breakfast at the Rydges Airport hotel. The Minister spoke about some of the support in place to help small businesses recover from the impacts of covid.

Later in November we had an End of Year Drinks at the popular Salty Fox Bar located on the roof of the Rydges Gold Coast Airport Hotel. We enjoyed great food and drinks and as usual our raffle.

****Our First event** for 2022 was again the Rydges Airport Hotel and this time featured a panel of guest speakers from Southern Cross Uni, Study Gold Coast and Laura Gerber, member for Currumbin, who all spoke about and discussed the rebirth of the higher education sector following the ravages of Covid. We also launched our new look name and logo at this event, and eventually became the Southern Gold Coast Chamber.

Our March event was at the RSL and Marion Charlton COO from Gold Coast Airport talked about the almost completed works at the airport. Chris Marsh and Tim Walmsley also spoke to us about the gold Coast Business Portal and Bench On.

In April we had three events.

Firstly we held a twilight networking session at Burleigh Brewing, with drinks and great food.

The next event was our first ever Social by the Sea. This is a new early morning event aimed at being a quick coffee and networking opportunity for those thinking of joining or recently joined the chamber. These events feature a great venue with a view and a free cup of good coffee. Bring your business cards is the order of the day.

Lastly as we rolled towards the federal election in May, we co-hosted a Meet the Gold Coast candidates event with the Central Chamber held at The Star Casino. The event was well attended and saw a roll up of an impressive line up of candidates.

We didn't have a May event, the election was more than enough for everyone!

**** In June we** invited the newly appointed CEO of CCIQ, Heidi Cooper, to meet our Chamber and speak to us. Heidi spoke about Business sustainability and growth. The event was well attended at Coolangatta Surf Club. We also heard from Rod Mould Planet Arc about how they can help businesses of all sizes move into sustainable electricity production with solar installations, from inception to installation and ongoing measurement, Planet Arc provides all the necessary support and project management.

In July we again welcomed The Mayor, Tom Tate the new CEO of Gold Coast City Council to speak to our breakfast meeting held at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. A sell out event with 120 guests heard the new CEO talk about his vision for the city and how he sees the Gold Coast growing in the next 10 to 20 years.

Finally earlier this month, we had a strong turnout to attend our Business After Dark at Tallebudgera Surf Club. The food was fantastic and the weather was reasonably kind to us!

At this point I'd like to thank Annie Noon of Fotoforce Photography for capturing our events as our official photographer. Annie has managed to get to almost every event and the photos we're showing today and that feature on our website and Facebook page are provided by Annie.

The Chamber is recognised as the voice of business for our area from the Tallebudgera Creek to the NSW Border. As President I attend many meetings with a number of groups, organisations and panels. The way we meet may have changed and we're all much better at Zooming, Teams and all manner of other technology based meetings than we were 3 years ago.

The Chamber has been included in the Light Rail Business Advisory Group since Stage 2 was announced and delivered in time for the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Its good news for the city that Stage 3 from Broadbeach to Burleigh has commenced early works and the consultations and planning for Stage 4 which will see light rail delivered to Coolangatta is well under way.

The Chamber is also represented on the quarterly World Surfing Reserve Local Stewardship committee.

During the last 12 months the Chamber has taken part in a number of other committees, projects and workshops. Usually I attend these as President of the Chamber. This year has seen more in person events in this space, although Zoom and teams still form a large part of these activities. Some of these meetings have included Transport 2041 consultation with the City Council, the Gold Coast Australian of the Year selection panel, and Investment Strategy meetings for Coolangatta and Kirra with the City Council.

We can't pass today without mentioning the impact COVID 19 has had on the Chamber movement and more importantly, you the businesses that we represent.

This time last year Queensland and more specifically the Gold Coast border region was coping with what became the toughest border restrictions imaginable. During August the requirement to be vaccinated and be an essential worker was introduced. As reported at our last AGM we were successful in getting some grant support for the businesses closest to the border. In October we engaged further with Destination Gold Coast to help develop an area specific Play Money campaign part funded by the State following our extensive campaigns about the damage being done specifically in Coolangatta and Kirra etc. That campaign was another direct result of our lobbying the State Government to address the border issues and the perception that the border zone was 'dangerous' not open or difficult to access due to traffic arrangements in place. !

The tough border restrictions remained in place until Christmas, with QLD being one of the last states to issue a road map to border openings and slower on vaccine roll out. The involvement of our Chamber and CCIQ directed the way that QR codes were used in QLD for checking vaccinations status and our efforts ensured that QLD was less restrictive about who could visit premises etc.

We've continued to use the relationships we built then to bring the needs of small business to the attention of the State Government. Only yesterday I attended an online meeting with the Employment & Small Business Ministry to discuss the current jobs and workforce situation. As it was online it meant that chambers from as far north as Cairns and out west could all attend. Attracting and retaining the workforce was the key agenda item.

During the last 12 months and following the growth of the engagement between the Chamber Presidents and CCIQ as a result of the Covid 19 situation there are now a number of Regional Policy Advisory Boards in place of which I am the regional Chair for the Gold Coast and Scenic Rim area. The Policy Advisory Boards discuss and agree issues which impact our region and these are then fed into the CCIQ state policy. The downstream affects of this has been better support for localised issues. Having said that right now the biggest problems all seem to be the same across the state, being skills and people shortages, Electricity costs, housing affordability and the knock on effects this has on worker flexibility, the lack of a back packer workforce and the low unemployment rate making it difficult to recruit in almost every field of work.

** During the past 12 months our Facebook page has seen reach increase by 166% and our likes increase by 136 or 6% compared to the previous 12 months. The page is used to promote the Chamber, our activities and to keep the local businesses informed of events and activities in the area. We've recently relaunched our LinkedIn page and are already seeing more activity across the platform. We now have 250 followers.

Looking forward the Chamber is going to play a part in the consultation process for the newly created QLD State Eco Parkland in Currumbin Valley and next week will be involved in disaster management planning with the City Council.

In summary we have continued to grow and build our relevance to you, our business community.

Our membership, and financial security continues to improve. We can now do more for our members and our dedicated management board are planning to take us even further in the coming year.

In closing I'd like to thank our past and future board members for their continuing endeavours and their commitment to what is a very voluntary role.

** I'll now pass you to our current treasurer, John Forrester – John