

## **Presidents Report September 2024**

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Southern Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce. Inc. Annual General Meeting  
Currumbin RSL

### **Michael Kelly – President**

#### **Southern Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce**

It seems like only a short time ago we gathered for our last Annual General Meeting, and yet here we are once again! Since then, we've not only maintained stable membership numbers but also experienced growth in our total asset base, which our Treasurer will delve into further in the upcoming report. I'm pleased to announce that we continue to be in a strong financial position, which is a testament to our collective efforts and commitment.

#### Events:

At the start of the year, the Board committed to a strategy focused on maximising the value of our events, and I'm pleased to say that we've made significant strides in this area. Over the course of the year, we hosted a total of 12 events, with an impressive average attendance of 90 people at each.

Among these were a number of sold-out events, including the unforgettable breakfast at the new facility within Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary—The Homestead—where John Warn from Experience Gold Coast delivered a fantastic presentation. We also organised several "After Dark" events, such as the highly successful evening at Lucia Tapas Bar. Additionally, our breakfast events covered a range of interesting topics this year, with presentations from key figures such as Gold Coast Airport and presentations from the education sector.

On top of these, we hosted three mental health workshops tailored for businesses, presented by the local charity LIVIN. These sessions provided practical tools for addressing mental health challenges in the workplace, reflecting our ongoing commitment to the well-being of our business community.

#### Membership:

Over the past year, we've seen remarkable growth in our membership, with a 31% increase, surpassing our strategic goal of 20%, which is a true testament to the strength and appeal of our Chamber.

In addition to growing our numbers, we also set a strategic objective to improve member retention, and I'm pleased to say that we've achieved that goal as well. Even more businesses have come on board as Gold, Silver, and Bronze members, with a record 62 Gold members now supporting our Chamber.

In July this year, we hosted the inaugural President's Lunch at Kirra Beach House, a special event designed to recognise the support of our Gold Members. This unique gathering brought together top-tier leadership within the Southern Gold Coast business community, solidifying its place as one of the city's premier executive-level networking functions.

We've also continued to nurture our relationship with the Gold Coast Junior Chamber of Commerce, co-hosting events that engage and attract the next generation of business leaders. Looking ahead, we are eager to bring more young professionals into the Southern Gold Coast business community, helping them find opportunities to grow and thrive.

Finally, we've renewed our focus on the overall member experience by investing in people. One key example is our Chamber Administrator, Kylie, whose efforts have significantly supported the Board throughout the year. Her contributions have been invaluable, helping us deliver an even better experience for all our members.

#### Advocacy:

In the area of advocacy, we have remained steadfast in our efforts to represent the interests of our members and the wider business community. We continued to provide regular updates through various media channels, ensuring a strong voice of our business community.

This year, we held a series of events and welcomed speakers who focused on important advocacy topics. These included the changes industrial relations, migration, education, and local government matters—issues that are crucial to both our community and businesses.

We also actively participated in consultations and made a formal submission on the first tranche of changes to the IR legislation, ensuring that the voices of our members are heard and considered in these important legislative discussions.

#### Communication and Organisational Development:

In the areas of Communication and Organisational Development, we have made significant strides this year. To drive progress and ensure a collaborative approach, we established several working groups that have been instrumental in aligning our efforts with our broader organisational goals.

Additionally, we established a comprehensive marketing plan, ensuring that our messaging is consistent and that we continue to engage effectively with our members and the wider community. These efforts have laid a strong foundation with significant improvements planned in the coming months.

Board:

As we gather here today, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt thanks to our board members for their incredible support and dedication, especially given that their work is voluntary. It has truly been a team effort, and I couldn't be more grateful for the contributions you have all made to the success of this Chamber.

One board member who deserves special recognition today is Mike Remmer, who is retiring after 10 years of dedicated service. Mike, your decision to step back and prioritise family is truly admirable, and it speaks volumes about your character. Many of you may not know, but Mike is the designer of our Chamber's logo and played a significant role in shaping the early structure of this organisation. He was a key figure during the 2016 merger that created the Southern Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce as we know it today, serving as Secretary during that pivotal time. Mike, your leadership and contributions have been invaluable, and on behalf of the entire Chamber, we thank you for all you have done. As a result, the Board has voted and have decided to issue Mike with an Honorary Life Member of the Chamber. I would now like to invite Mike to the stage to receive a small token of our appreciation.

Now, it is with mixed emotions that I announce my own decision to step down as President of the Chamber and from the Board. I will, however, stay on as Immediate Past President and remain actively involved as a passionate advocate for the work this Chamber does. It has been an honour to witness the growth of this Chamber and to see our vision being realised. Over the past six years, I've had the privilege of being part of the Board during some truly remarkable times, from moments of fantastic growth to navigating the challenges brought on by COVID-19 and the subsequent border closures. But now, it's time for me to step back, focus on my day job, and spend more time with my family. Thank you for allowing me to lead this organisation and for giving me the opportunity to make so many wonderful friends along the way.

I know the Chamber is in good hands and will continue to do amazing things for our business community and region into the future.

Thank you.