

2020/21 President's Report

Our purpose is to contribute to the prosperity, success and economic sustainability of our region through the success of our local businesses.

The Chamber, like many businesses has undergone a full transformation during the COVID-19 pandemic, to deliver the support that our business community needed and to ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of the Colac Chamber. It is, for all intents and purposes, a new organisation. After such difficult times, and the ongoing challenges of operating and trading in a COVID-19 environment, we as a community have so much to be proud of, the resilience, agility, innovation and strength of our business community, small and large, has supported our local economy to continue to thrive despite circumstance.

The Chamber's 2021-23 Strategic Plan, Forging Ahead - was the guiding force behind our performance over the past year, and will continue to lead us through the next. With a disciplined approach to the execution of our key deliverables and a focus on efficiency, process improvement and technology as well as one on one support for our members, we have delivered value for our members and played a part in supporting our local businesses in throughout the toughest trading conditions in decades.

Our [Key Deliverable Scorecard](#) details the Colac Chamber's performance and progress of deliverables across our four pillars of success, through the execution of our key success indicators as defined in our strategic plan. Our progress against each key deliverable is detailed in the accompanying scorecard, however some highlights include;

Membership Success and Growth

- [777 Initiative](#) which has provided accurate, timely information and explanation of government COVID-19 restrictions and grants in particular on Sundays when a number of major announcements were made.
- [Business Excellence Awards](#) delivered via Live Stream, 29 Sponsors inc. Major Sponsor Bulla, Fully customized online application & judging process, 3500+ views of live stream via the Mixx FM platform and positive feedback from participants, judges and businesses on the process through to the delivery on the night. The Finalist gift boxes were a big hit, full of local products.
- [Grants](#) Achieved a 10 fold increase in Business grants 10 written by Chamber (all successful) 60+ grant phone support enquiries & 6 written Community Grants (all successful)

Advocacy & Leadership

- [82 written advocacy](#) representations, 12 in person meetings & 77 informal representations (i.e. via phone)
- 87 radio interviews & 56 print features to highlight local issues, to advocate for change or inform on Government support and restrictions as well as highlight local businesses and events.

Collaboration & Relationships

- **Love Local Buy Colac Colac** Chamber initiative delivering to date \$53,250 in gift cards to be spent at targeted locally owned businesses in and around Colac CBD. Businesses and employers including Bulla, ALC, CMTP, SLM Law, Greg Allan Farm Machinery to name just a few have contributed to over \$50K in gift cards which can be spent in Colac at almost 60 locally owned small businesses. The aim of this project is to meet \$100K in Love Local Buy Colac gift cards by June 2022.

It is important to note we received no external funding or support for this project, it was delivered through innovative thinking and through the solid relationships we have build over this past 12 months in the community. Special thanks again to **Bulla** & **CMTP** who led the initial charge.

Governance & Sustainability

Our principle here is to ensure the organisation has the right governance structure in place, operates efficiently and effectively and maintains strong financial performance. With a continued focus on our financial sustainability we can ensure that we can and will continue to execute on our deliverables to our members, and retain top talent to do it with.

- **The focus** on developing stakeholder relationships, understanding grant funding opportunities and having shovel ready projects including our Excellence and Development series as well as execution of our partnership strategy has seen for 2020/21 a Net profit of \$59,403, a stark and positive turnaround from 2019/20 where the Chamber had a Net Loss of \$4,255.35.

As President I would like to acknowledge the significant strategic and operational input and support that our new CEO Georgia Theodoris has demonstrated throughout 2021. Her resilience, tenacity and above all passion for both the Colac region and local businesses is second to none. Her contribution has been remarkable.

Colac Chamber is well placed to continue to deliver for our members and the Colac business community. The Board and I look forward to the results we will deliver in supporting our members as we now focus on recovery in our region with a stable and prosperous 2022 for our business community.



Ingrid Bishop
President
Colac Chamber of Commerce

