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## 2021/2022 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 is continuing to thrive after a full transformation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

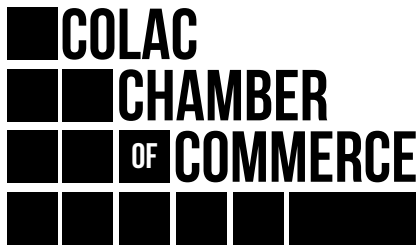
After such difficult times, and the ongoing challenges of operating and trading in a COVID-19 environment, we as a community have so much to be proud of, the resilience, agility, innovation and strength of our business community, small and large, has supported our local economy to continue to thrive despite circumstance.

The Chamber's 2020-2023 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 tangible value for our members and played a part in supporting our local businesses in numerous ways throughout the toughest trading conditions in decades.

Our Key Deliverable Scorecard details the Colac Chamber's performance and progress across our four pillars of success, through the execution of our key success indicators as defined in the our strategic plan. Our progress against each key deliverable is detailed in the accompanying scorecard, with performance highlights including;

### Membership Success and Growth

- 777 Initiative focusing on COVID 19 communications 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. This initiative ceased as of April 2022 as the demand decreased and the focus of the Chamber moved from 7 day focus on resilience, to a focus on rejuvenation.
- Membership Growth and Satisfaction. There has been an increase in Membership subscriptions across all categories. Starting the new financial year with 134 members, we have now grown to 176 Chamber members resulting in a 33% increase in 12 months.
- SME Business Excellence & Development Series design and launched which included events such as; Starting Strong 2022 Colac with industry experts, Catherine Birch – ANZ Senior Economist & Mark Whelan - Findex Partner to provide insights, thoughts and general advice on how small businesses can start the new year strong. Greenlight 'Energy Saving for your business' learn how to upgrade your appliances and save money with enviro friendly practices. Managing Mental Health for Small Business, Dealing with difficult customers, Psychological First Aid & Self Care. Back to Business for an evening of networking & key business insights from VCCI Chief Executive Paul Guerra & event partners ANZ. We kicked off the New 22/23 Financial Year with our Well-being Series Launch and Networking. Canva workshops for marketing tips and strategies for businesses and we initiated a Colac Mums in Business Network which is a friendly, supportive and inclusive networking community of mums with businesses.
- Member satisfaction has soared with Chamber Members Satisfaction Survey results recording >85%. The feedback included "Informative, well ran and valuable".



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### Advocacy and Leadership

- 82 written advocacy representations, 12 in person meetings and 77 informal, 87 radio interviews and 62 features to highlight local issues.
- Strategic and focused advocacy for change across government and the sector with face to face meetings with State Government Agencies, Federal Ministers, Local Members and local government representatives.
- Consistent and timely information regarding Government support and restrictions as well as highlight local businesses and events.

### Collaboration and Relationships

- Love Local Buy Colac – our Colac Chamber initiative delivering to date \$91,440 in gift cards to be spent at targeted locally owned businesses in and around Colac. Businesses and employers including Bulla, ALC, CMTP, SLM Law, Greg Allan Farm Machinery to name just a few have contributed to over \$90K in gift cards which can be spent in Colac at over 70 locally owned small businesses. The aim of this project is to meet \$100K in Love Local Buy Colac gift cards by December 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 built over the past 12 months in the community. Special thanks again there to Bulla & CMTP who led the initial charge and continue to support the initiative.

### Governance and Sustainability

The principle is to ensure the organisation has the right governance structure and processes 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 Chamber is about to add two Youth Members onto the Chamber board to voice their generations beliefs and social trends to assist in guiding the Colac Chamber to stay inclusive and connected to our vision, values, and mission in the current day and nurture and support our new generation of business leaders.
- The focus on developing stakeholder relationships, leveraging grant funding opportunities and having shovel ready projects including our Business Excellence and Development series as well as execution of our partnership strategy has seen for the Chamber to finish off the financial year in a very close to break even result.

The past year has been fast paced and dynamic, and I want to acknowledge the determination, resilience and investment of time that the board members have put into our local Chamber. As volunteers, the Board members have maintained a focus on good governance and tangible outcomes for its members whilst delivering a strong and strategic voice for our business community and I thank them for their contribution.

The Colac Chamber is well placed to continue to deliver for our members and the Colac and regional business community.

Ingrid Bishop  
President  
Colac Chamber of Commerce  
September 2022

