

Presidents Report October 2023

Thursday 12th October 2023

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

Currumbin RSL

Michael Kelly – Interim President Southern Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen,

It feels like just a few months ago that we gathered for our last Annual General Meeting, and yet here we are once again today!

Since our last AGM, our membership numbers have remained stable, and we have seen growth in our total asset base, as our Treasurer will explain further in the Treasurer's report. I'm delighted to share that we are in a strong financial position.

As of today, we have a total of 21 Gold Members, 17 Silver Members, and 16 Bronze Members. The improvement in our financial standing can be directly attributed to the generous support from our Gold, Silver, and Bronze members. The Board would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to these businesses. Furthermore, we now have 57 General Members and 5 esteemed Life Members.

Every member plays a pivotal role in shaping what the Chamber has become today, and I want to express my gratitude for your active involvement in this vibrant community organization. I also want to take this moment to extend my appreciation to the Board and Executive Team of the Southern Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce, who dedicate their time as volunteers to support this organization. Without their dedication, our organization would not thrive. So, thank you to everyone here for your enduring support.

During our previous AGM, our Executive Team was confirmed, with Hilary Jacobs serving as President, and our two Vice Presidents, Daragh Murphy and myself, along with Secretary Mike Remmer and Treasurer John Forrester. In March of this year, our President, Hilary Jacobs, informed the Board of her intention to step down from her role as President but to continue her service on the Board until this AGM. Subsequently, I was appointed as your Interim President until this AGM, and Zac Revere was appointed as the Interim Vice President. I would like to take this opportunity to once again acknowledge Hilary's exceptional contributions to the Chamber and our community over the past decade. She guided us through the merger of two Chambers, navigated the challenges posed by COVID-19 in our border community, and played a pivotal role in growing the Southern Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce to its current stature. She remains a staunch advocate for the Southern Gold Coast and continues to champion the region wherever she goes. Hilary, thank you for your remarkable service over the past 10 years.

Our Executive has also received invaluable support from our management board members over the past twelve months: Sarah Galvin, John Mitchell, Steve Edgar, Josh Yates, Kristy Oswald, and Greg Arnold. I would like to seize this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Executive and Management Board for their unwavering support and dedication during the past year. This is an entirely voluntary Board of Management, and it has been a pleasure collaborating with them over the past 12 months.

Since our last AGM, we have organized and hosted a total of 12 events. Our event journey for the year began in October when we collaborated with the Hon. Meaghan Scanlon, who was the

Environment Minister at the time, to delve into sustainability within businesses. This engaging event featured prominent panellists, including Larissa Rose from GG Enviro and Kerry Shepherd from the Currumbin RSL.

In November, we celebrated the holiday spirit with our Christmas Cheer event at the Salty Fox rooftop bar at Rydges Gold Coast Airport Hotel. At this event, we also had the pleasure of raising funds for the Gold Coast Project for Homeless Youth Inc., and it was heartwarming to see the fantastic turnout.

As we stepped into the new year in February, we commenced with one of our "Social by the Sea" events at the Palm Beach Surf Club. This event brought together over 70 of our members for a relaxed networking morning.

We also collaborated with other Chambers in the region to host a Breakfast at Southport Sharks, focusing on Supporting Business Mental Health and Wellbeing.

In March, we organized a Business After Hours event at Le Blancs Wine Bar in Tugan, which drew an impressive attendance of 60 members.

Our efforts continued with a Breakfast event at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary in which we had the Leader of the Opposition, David Crisafulli, and State Member for Currumbin, Laura Gerber, as speakers. This event was a resounding success and centred on the critical issues affecting the Southern Gold Coast.

In anticipation of ANZAC Day this year, we partnered with the Currumbin RSL to host a breakfast event that supported Veteran Welfare. The RSL team provided an informative update on their activities.

In May, in recognition of Queensland Small Business Month, we hosted a bustling breakfast event at the Coolangatta Surf Club, featuring presentations by the Queensland Small Business Commissioner, Dominique Lamb, and Dean Gould of Southern Cross University.

June brought us another "Business After Hours" event, this time at Little Cooly, with a presentation from the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation. The event was a tremendous success, although it did test the capacity of the venue.

July saw Mayor Tom Tate as a guest at our breakfast event, joined by Division 14 Councillor Gail O'Neill, who provided updates on the City budget and activities affecting the Southern Gold Coast.

In August, we continued our popular "Business After Hours" series at Burleigh Barrels, where we collaborated with the Gold Coast Junior Chamber of Commerce, offering excellent networking opportunities.

September marked a special occasion as many of our members participated in the SWELL Sculpture Festival Art Party for the first time. This unique event began our morning with a curated tour of the 75 sculptures featured in this year's festival and wasn't it a fantastic event.

Last month, we turned our focus to mental health awareness and support for businesses on R U OK day during a Breakfast event here at the Currumbin RSL. Furthermore, we initiated the delivery of three free mental health workshops for businesses and their staff. Another one of these workshops is scheduled for today after this meeting, with one more planned for November. These 45-minute sessions are open to as many staff members from your businesses as you'd like, and we encourage your active participation.

At this juncture, I would like to express our gratitude to Annie Noon of Fotoforce Photography, who has been our official photographer, capturing our events. Annie's dedication is evident in the photos that you see today and on our website and Facebook page. Thank you, Annie.

The Chamber is acknowledged as the voice of business for our region, spanning from Tallebudgera Creek to the NSW Border. Both Hilary and I have participated in numerous meetings with various groups, organizations, and panels. The Chamber has been an integral part of the Light Rail Business Advisory Group since Stage 2 was announced and delivered in time for the 2018 Commonwealth Games. We will continue to collaborate with the Advisory Group for Stage 3, which is currently under construction from Broadbeach to Burleigh, as well as engaged in consultations and planning for Stage 4 of this project. The Chamber is also actively represented on the World Surfing Reserve Local Stewardship committee.

Over the past 12 months, the Chamber has actively participated in various other committees, projects, and workshops. These have included our engagement in the Transport 2041 consultation with the City Council, involvement in the Gold Coast Australian of the Year selection panel, and our contributions to Investment Strategy meetings for Coolangatta and Kirra, in partnership with the City Council. Additionally, we are pleased to have Board Member Greg Arnold representing the entire Gold Coast region on the Business Chamber Queensland IR Reforms Working Group. These impending changes in Industrial Relations will impact all businesses in the coming months and years, and Greg's representation will be invaluable in advocating against some of the proposed changes.

Our Vice President, Zac Revere, has also been actively representing the Southern Gold Coast Chamber on the Business Chamber Queensland Regional Policy Advisory Board. These Policy Advisory Boards discuss and agree on issues that impact our region, which are then integrated into the state policy of the Business Chamber. The ripple effect of this engagement has been a higher level of support for localized issues. However, it is noteworthy that many of the challenges we currently face across the state are consistent, including skills and labor shortages, cost-of-living pressures, housing affordability, and the subsequent impact on worker flexibility.

In summary, we have continued to grow and enhance our relevance to our business community. Our membership and financial stability continue to improve, which allows us to do more for our members. Our dedicated management board is actively planning to take us even further in the coming year.

In closing, I want to extend my gratitude to both our past and future board members for their unwavering commitment and dedication to supporting our business community. Lastly, a big thank you to all of our members.

Now, I will pass the floor to our current Treasurer, John Forrester for the Treasurers report.