



Uralla Shire Business Chamber Inc
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President's Report

3 September 2020

It has been a quiet and a bit of a tough year for the Chamber for a number of reasons. With the drought, fires, water and now COVID issues, it has been personally challenging for all of us. I wish to apologise for not being as focussed on the Chamber due to a number of personal health and family issues that have plagued me this past nine months.

Last year we had John as Vice President, Col became our Treasurer and Bob took on the role of Secretary, Macka, Wayne, and Darren were also on the committee, and a lot of support and great input and help from Russ also.

We had the awards night in July last year, which was bigger than the year before, we held it at the Showgrounds and received lots of comments about how well it worked and went down. Lots of hard work from everybody, including Darren who MC'ed the night as well as handled all the finances, Wayne who did lots of electrical and sound work for us, and thanks to the Australia Day Committee for the loan of their brand new Sound System. We were very lucky to have fabulous guests – Damien Tudehope State Minister for Small Business, our State Minister, Adam Marshall, Russell Stewart, President of Inverell Chamber and RDANI, and our Mayor Mick Pearce. Russell had some great ideas for how to improve the awards process and pledged \$1000 towards an innovation award for our next Awards.

We had Kate Woodbridge from the NBN along to our September meeting to talk about the role of the NBN

Unfortunately the Hill Street Loos application for the My Community Project was not successful. We will give it a shot again in the future.

The Business Directory is now up and running with 110 listings so far. You can find it at uralladirectory.com

We looked at WIFI for the main street and felt that smart phones and hotspots are filling this need now.

Russell Stewart Chair of Regional Development Australia, Northern Inland joined us for our October meeting and he debriefed our Awards night with us. A lot of great ideas came out of the meeting that we can look at for the next Awards night.

We had a breakfast meeting in November, where Mark Waring from Walcha Energy came along and talked to us about the proposed wind and solar energy projects between Uralla and Walcha. They are keen to hear from local business who would like to work with them.

We had a lovely lunch for Xmas at Fung Wah Restaurant, where they looked after us very well!

We had a meeting in February but then COVID hit and we went to ground until we were allowed to meet again and had meetings in June and July.

Last meeting, in August we had a great turnout coming to hear what UPC and their contractors, Greenlight, tell us about their progress on the establishment of the New England Solar Farm and there was a good discussion and Q&A after that.

We look forward to having our new Shire Council General Manager, Kate Jessep, come to a meeting in the near future to share her thoughts on the future direction of the relationship between the Chamber and Council.

We have had several new members join us in the past month or so, welcome! We look forward to having more join us in the future. There are still plenty of projects that we would like to take on as a Chamber as resources allow, and I invite discussion on those and other new ideas that align with our strategic plan in our general meeting after the AGM.

Thank you to all our members, old and new, for your support in the past year, and I feel that this coming year will bring a lot more new ideas and enthusiasm, and am very much looking forward to working with our dynamic new Council General Manager, this can be a good year with positive relationships with council and other organisations. I believe we are becoming a stronger voice for the businesses in our Shire and this improves with every event and project we take on, in alignment with our Strategic Plan.

Again, I would like to thank our outgoing committee for their hard work this past year, in particular our secretary Bob who has had to wear many hats this year and has been flat out in a number of ways, and still manages to get things done for the Chamber.

I am looking forward to what this next year will bring, there is a lot of potential and opportunity for our Chamber to be a strong voice for our Business Community and also the public at large in our Shire. We have an outstanding group of members who are passionate about growing our Shire, and I am very proud to be a part of this group.

Cheers,

Teresa French,

President