

Presidents Report

2017-2018 Tomaree Business Chamber AGM

I am pleased to present this Report which is my first as President of the Tomaree Business Chamber on our activities during the 2017/2018 year.

In my view the Chamber has achieved an incredible amount during the past 12 months and as President I am very proud of all the people who have made these achievements possible. In particular we have had a very committed Board who have all been involved with our Key Activities as well as a strong Volunteer Group. **We still have no paid employees.**

Tastes at the Bay

The event was staged again under a working committee of 50 very committed volunteers led by Peter and Anita in November 2017. The event was reinstated last year after a year off and the committee took the event to another level. The introduction of the Tasters Trail was a great idea and sold out twice. The cruise sold out, along with all the souvenir wine glasses. The volunteers were amazing with over 50 putting their hand up in the on again, off again rain. Anita Hutchinson and Chontelle Grecian only last weekend conducted a highly successful 2018 Tastes festival and this will be reported next year and again all volunteers.

New Office

With the long awaited Yacaaba St Extension going ahead, our office was demolished. We are now proud to be sharing space with Destination Port Stephens and I feel this relationship now will enhance the great work both organisations do. The office move was huge, and I thank all the volunteers that did such a great job. Council has been very supportive with allowing us to use our premises rent free.

Quarterly Business Breakfast Series

This is our most popular Networking event and consistently attracts 90 to 100 guests. We endeavor to attract relevant and topical Guest Speakers.

Each Breakfast is sponsored and there continues to be a waiting list.

Other Networking Events

During the year we had a number of after-hours networking activities including a Twilight Cruise with Moonshadow – TQC. This attracted around 90 guests and we commenced the introduction of a highly successful Business Speed dating concept under the stewardship of Mel Turner who is one of our Board Members. Our networking events for the last year have seen attendance regularly around the 80 to 100

Membership

Continues to grow rapidly and in fact jumped by 85% in the financial year and is now around 195.

Nelson Bay Civic Pride Working Bee

- This was an absolute “**WOW**”. Over 70 local community members and local business people banded together with the strong support of our Council to clean up the Nelson Bay Town Centre. The Council provided most of the materials and other” in kind” support on the last weekend in May this year. The Civic Pride team and local businesses continues to maintain the gardens.

Other Key initiatives this financial year are

- Introduced the Tomaree Peninsula Tertiary Education project and we were able to successfully secure the services of a final year student in Business from the Newcastle Uni who carried out research on the need for such an educational facility. We have subsequently formed a Working Group with the local community and Council to advance this project.
- Created a **Business Connect Program** identifying 5 individual Business precincts on the Peninsula who may have individual issues and to listen to their expectations from the Chamber. through local Business precincts and the initial event was held at the Soldiers Point Bowling Club for businesses in that area.
- **Meet the Member Forums.** We conducted our first one at the NB Golf Club and because of the initial success they will be held 6 monthly. The concept is based on the Board listening to our members
- **Website upgrade** – With the support of one of our members BYBO [Claire Carlton] we were able to upgrade both the Tomaree Business Chamber and the Tastes at the Bay Festival sites.
- **Business Advocacy and Business Training.** We have supported several Business Training programs primarily initiated by Members who already play a training role in our community. Business Advocacy is ongoing, and many services are available through our Hunter Business Chamber and NSW Business Chamber memberships.
- **Other**
 - The list of the activities is too long to include in this report, but we played significant roles in various local matters and some of these were part of the role we play in Nelson Bay ‘NOW” and the Nelson Bay Civic Pride Groups. For example, the Yacaaba extension, Apex park upgrade, various traffic matters, the NB Town Centre and Foreshore Strategy and the Public Realm upgrade in Nelson Bay - there are many many more. We are working with Council and have monthly meetings with Janell from their Economic and Tourism Unit We also work very closely with DPS. There are numerous projects in the Pipeline which we are playing a key role in “driving”.

Bluewater Country Music Festival

We did not have the physical or financial resources to make this happen in the 2018 year. However, we continue to have the website hosted which has a constant “hit” rate. In fact, more than 10 local Clubs, and other venues continued to host Country Music activities on the June Long weekend and we were able to include their program on our website.

The Chamber continues to review its involvement as we would like to see this event continue but we simply do not have adequate resources to manage the event.

Volunteers

The Tomaree Business Chamber simply could not exist without our volunteers. Our Primary Volunteers are Peter Clough, our Business Development Manager and the office team that he runs, with our office predominantly being manned by these volunteers 5 days per week. We also have Anita Hutchinson and Chontelle Grecian who were our main volunteers for Tastes at the Bay this year, and the further 50 volunteers they managed to help run the very successful event. Also, we had an amazing 70 volunteers attend the NB Civic Pride working bee this year, and the results of the look and feel of the Nelson Bay Town Centre are remarkable. Some of these volunteers continue to maintain the gardens with mini working bees every month or so. Overall I am proud to say we have an amazing group of volunteers that help make our Chamber the success that it is.

Chamber Award

Finally, I would just like to mention that for the first time in our 42 years of existence we won the Prestigious Hunter Business Chamber Award for the most successful Chamber of Commerce in the Hunter and being the “Champions of Change” in our Region. We will now be taking our chances at the NSW Business Chamber Awards where we aspire to become the most successful Chamber in NSW??

Leah Anderson

President