Business Port Augusta Chair Report 2025

Good evening everyone and thank you for being here. This past year has been one of steady growth, stronger relationships and a noticeable lift in confidence across our business community. It has been encouraging to see local businesses backing themselves, investing in their future and staying connected with one another. BPA has worked hard to support that momentum and to be a steady, reliable presence throughout the year.

A major part of that progress has come from the support we received through the Local Buying Foundation, which enabled us to bring in the Business Relations & Engagement Coordinator role. Sharon has taken on this position with real energy and commitment, and her work is having a genuinely positive effect across our business community. She has strengthened relationships, improved communication, increased attendance at events and brought a sense of consistency to how BPA engages with members and stakeholders. Because this role has made such a clear difference, we have applied for a further 12 months of funding to continue her position.

Our events and networking program grew significantly this year. We delivered practical and relevant workshops including AI for Business, Canva for Business, My Business Compass and the Holistic Nest wellbeing session. These sessions were well attended and provided meaningful opportunities for business owners to learn, grow and connect. Our networking events before and after these workshops also gained momentum, helping people build relationships in a relaxed and natural way.

The Rowe Partners Outstanding Business Awards was a standout moment in our calendar, with nominations doubling on the previous year. That lift came from stronger promotion and growing confidence across our business community. The Events Sub-Committee supported this work throughout the year, adding structure, ideas and shared ownership to the planning and delivery of our events.

BPA also maintained a strong presence in the wider community by supporting events that bring people into the city and encourage local spending. This year we proudly sponsored the Port Augusta Masters Games, Port Augusta Christmas Market, Umeewarra Downtown, the Port Augusta Community Christmas Carols and the Port Augusta Races Community Day. These events help build vibrancy and connection, and they highlight the important role local business plays in the life of our community.

Alongside this work, our advocacy continued. We remained actively involved in the Port Augusta Safety Survey, ensuring that business feedback was captured and that concerns around CBD safety were clearly understood. We continued lobbying Council on a number of issues raised by members — from cleanliness and maintenance to activity in Commercial Road and broader concerns about the presentation and safety of the business district.

We also participated in the Port Augusta and Davenport Community Alliance, a valuable forum where BPA has been able to make sure local business is heard when decisions are being shaped about our town, our public spaces and the wellbeing of our community. Having a seat at that table matters, and we've used it to bring a balanced, business-focused perspective to discussions that affect the whole region.

Behind the scenes, we continued strengthening our governance. Work progressed on our new constitution, and we made improvements to how BPA manages its internal responsibilities. These updates ensure the organisation is modern, transparent and aligned with best practice, helping set us up well for future growth.

Across the city we're seeing signs of renewed confidence. New businesses are opening, others are expanding and the general mood is shifting in a positive direction. As I've said before, the change isn't loud, but it is steady. More people are choosing to stay, more businesses are backing themselves and the sense of possibility is starting to return. Port Augusta is entering a new chapter, and the future looks bright.

Before I close, I want to acknowledge the BPA Board for their ongoing support throughout the year. Their time, commitment and willingness to lean in when needed keeps this organisation strong and grounded. As we look ahead, I also want to encourage more members to consider joining the board. Broader representation and fresh perspectives will help BPA continue to reflect the diversity, needs and aspirations of our business community.

We've laid a strong foundation this year. We've strengthened relationships, improved our governance, supported our businesses and helped highlight the opportunities

emerging across our city. Port Augusta is moving forward, and BPA will continue to play a central role in supporting that growth.

Virginia Lloyd, Chairperson