

BPA Chair Person Report 2022

2022 has certainly been a better year than the previous 2 years with the impact of restrictions causing many events to be postponed or cancelled. The covid-19 pandemic accelerated and magnified shifts in the business world, creating a radically different setting for businesses to operate in. While these challenges have proved to be too great for many businesses, the pandemic related constraints have also spurred a great deal of innovation, with many local businesses using these constraints to pivot their business model remarkably well.

The BPA board is made up of local business people who volunteer their valuable time to represent and give a voice to small and local businesses in Port Augusta. We are a group of passionate people who are engaged in our community and promote economic growth in the region to benefit all local businesses and small business owners. These representatives attend board meetings, arrange networking events, represent and provide feedback to other groups including local government, state government, other chambers and the media.

The main aims of Business Port Augusta are:

- **Recognise** excellence in business through implementing and hosting the annual Outstanding Business Awards
- **Support** the development of local business networks through regular hosting of functions including informal 'get-togethers' and business showcasing events
- **Encourage** fraternity within the Port Augusta business sector to share knowledge and encourage new business growth
- **Foster** positive partnerships with Port Augusta City Council, Business SA, Regional Development Far North and other industry groups to act as the representative voice of business in Port Augusta
- **Advocate** to support improvement in designated areas of need within the Port Augusta business community
- **Provide** support and mentoring to emerging and young entrepreneurs
- **Market** Port Augusta's virtues to attract business to the town
- **Promote** economic growth and prosperity in the business community and its region
- **Facilitate** training opportunities to support local people in building or improving their businesses

During 2022 BPA have been actively sharing information from other stakeholders with updated information as it came to hand. We have increased our social media presence and are currently keeping the information bays up to a good standard and giving local business an opportunity to promote themselves to visitors at a fair price.

BPA conducted a survey within the business community early 2022 and the feedback indicated that members wanted more networking events and opportunities to learn from other business owners. We are currently working on partnering with other organisations to bring these events to business and we look forward to business participation.

We have continued to form conducive relationships with the Port Augusta Council, RDA, GMUSG, Business SA and others. We have presented to the council this year and we hope to work closely with the

new incoming Councillors and Mayor. We have met with a number of government representatives from both the Labor and Liberal parties to bring to their attention some of the business issues in the region and areas of focus for the government. BPA were represented during the consultation process of the new outreach service in Port Augusta and we continue to be involved with the strategic direction of Port Augusta.

We hope to strengthen our relationships further in 2023 and work together to deliver networking, training and improve the way we share information. We continue to provide support for funding applications to various businesses across the region and the Chairperson and other board members have regularly communicated with members and the press during the year and BPA were instrumental in delivering a “live, work, play” promotional video to encourage people to move to Port Augusta to live and work.

Our administrative support role, Cathy George, was appointed in 2022 and has taken a lot of pressure off of the Board roles and is assisting us to deliver on our strategic objective and other marketing and management functions of BPA including driving more involvement from local business via memberships, attendance at events and representation on our board.

The Rowe Partners Port Augusta Business Awards was launched with a networking event on the 22nd June and was held on the 14th October. The last time we held the business awards was in 2019 due to COVID and it was great being able to celebrate with business. This year saw 344 nominations for 149 different businesses and employees. There were 63 qualifying submissions which presented a difficult task for the 5 independent judges this year with some categories having up to 15 submissions. The board is currently reviewing the award process to deliver best practice for these awards and we thank Kelly Versteeg for her assistance with the planning and delivery of the awards this year. We sincerely thank all of our sponsors for their ongoing support of the awards.

An outcome of the awards has been the ability to run the Business Port Augusta Advancement Scholarship which provides financial assistance to applicants who are looking to upskill to assist with improving their own business or a local business they work for and we are pleased to have our first 4 recipients with us at our AGM tonight.

This year BPA is running the Augusta Markets and are working with PA Council to attract major events to the city to foster more economic activity. We will work hard to deliver more networking and training opportunities for our members and work in conjunction with the RDA to develop programs focussed on business improvement, compliance and innovation.

The future looks extremely bright for Port Augusta businesses and community with a large number of infrastructure, big industry and new businesses commencing in the near future. The regional business confidence indicator released in November is evidence of this with the Upper Spencer Gulf remaining the most confident overall with a 5.4% increase.

Disappointingly, our membership is in decline and we are working hard to show the business community that we are an important representative and voice of business for Port Augusta. The ongoing success of BPA is dependent on it having active memberships and an active board which includes representation from a wide range of business.

Whilst we are a not-for-profit organisation, BPA still has financial obligations to meet and those obligations are funded through active memberships as we do not receive any other funding. A lack of active memberships may mean that BPA does not continue into the future. This is a call out to the local business community to continue to have a membership with BPA, join BPA or volunteer as a board member or contributor. If you are a current member, we hope you continue to support us and we thank you for your ongoing membership.



Virginia Lloyd, Chairperson, Business Port Augusta Inc