Business Port Augusta Inc
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CHAIRPERSON REPORT

Business Port Augusta 2026 Annual General Meeting

Welcome to the 2026 Business Port Augusta Annual General Meeting. It's great to see a number of business people present.

It has been a busy year for the Board and a challenging one for many local businesses. Our businesses provide hospitality, tourism jobs, apprenticeships and essential services across Port Augusta and the wider region. They also sponsor sporting clubs, donate to community organisations and support local events.

Our role has been to give businesses a collective voice and support them through promotion, training and events. Our volunteer Board in 2026 brought experience in small business, banking, health, digital and IT support, and higher education. Regional Development Australia Far North contributed business advice and regional knowledge.

We've collaborated with the Local Buying Foundation, RDA Far North and the City of Port Augusta, and with TACTIC on shared priorities. BPA is represented on Council's Safer Spaces Program and the Port Augusta and Davenport Community Alliance. We've met regularly with the City Manager and Mayor to share information and raise business concerns.

Achievements

We were pleased to be recognised as a Nominee in the 2026 Australia Day Community Event of the Year for the Augusta Markets. Throughout the year, our monthly newsletters have kept businesses informed about opportunities and the introductions of new members.

At our business forum early in the year at the Uni Hub Spencer Gulf, Greg Kipling from Raine & Horne spoke about Port Augusta's changing real estate market, Craig Cresp outlined the Hallett Group's Green Cement Transformation Project and Ruby Duka advised on the visitor impact to upcoming tourism events, in particular the Ghan trips to Port Augusta between March and October next year.

With RDA Far North BPA promoted to members through our newsletter and social media, invitations to several RDA business initiatives.

During Small Business Week, we used social media to recognise local businesses for their milestones and years of service. The Rowe Partners Business Awards raised the profile and recognition of service excellence in local businesses and acknowledged the achievements of employees. We welcomed Devinder Grewal and Brian and Dianne Morgan into the Hall of Fame in recognition of their years in business and their contributions to the community.

We sponsored Family Day at the Races and the Umeewarra Downtown giving local families a chance to take a break and enjoy a day together. The sponsorship was also on the basis the advertising and brand exposure it provided for BPA.

We thank the Local Buying Foundation for supporting our Business Engagement Coordinator position, wellbeing sessions and the Business Awards

Whilst the Augusta Christmas Markets were a great social event more importantly it attracted an estimated number of over 2,500 shoppers from Port Augusta and the wider region into Commercial Road to shop at our

established retail and hospitality businesses and the markets. Fifty market stallholders traded in 2025. This year, 85 stallholders have registered as well as 30 businesses.

As part of the rejuvenation of the city's three Information Bays BPA has QR code signage linking travellers to BPA members services. It is a practical way and a significant step to encourage visitors to locate our businesses and a reason to stay awhile longer.

BPA brought together the Business Chambers from Port Pirie and Whyalla with the intent in the future to build a stronger voice for businesses across the Upper Spencer Gulf. Bringing the three regional Business Chambers together is an important step that leads into our future planning.

Planning has also begun for a proposed caravan, camping, four-wheel drive and fishing expo in Port Augusta in 2028 with the City's Tourism Manager Jordan Crabtree and RDA's Tourism and Communication Manager Tara Hogg taking part in the planning process.

Is BPA Making a Difference

I believe we are making a difference. Local businesses have a business organisation to contact when there are issues or new initiatives to discuss, a collective voice when they share information and an opportunity to have a say in the city's future. With the work of our Business Engagement Coordinator, Sharon Taumaunu, membership has grown from 65 to 122 businesses. That's one measure of our progress.

I'd like to thank my fellow Board members, Deputy Chair Shane Packard who continuously advocates for tourism initiatives, Secretary Tracey Brimble, Treasurer Virginia Lloyd also on the Alliance, Ruby Duka Events Coordinator for the Augusta Christmas Markets, Tracey Miller as representative on the LBF Advisory Committee, Doris Chippendo and Craig Shirley for community involvement, Tony Robinson having served many years on the Board and RDA Far North Business Advisor Greg Wiliams for the time, experience and the driving force to implement our projects throughout the year.

A special thank you to Tracey Brimble, who joined the Board as Secretary in 2023. Over three years, Tracey served on the Events Committee, updated our constitution, policies and procedures, provided digital and IT support and identified funding opportunities for events. Her commitment has been appreciated.

Thank you also to Cathy George for several years of administrative support and for producing our monthly newsletter. Kate George has coordinated the Business Awards for the past three years, making each evening memorable for nominees and winners. Former Board member Anne Harvey continues to give her time to the Augusta Christmas Markets. Megan Collins for organising and reconnecting businesses to the Information Bays.

Looking Ahead to 2027

Our priority in 2027 is to continue our relationship with businesses we already have in Port Augusta to stay and continue to invest. Through our Business Engagement Coordinator Sharon with her regular contact with members, we can get a clearer picture of what challenges businesses are dealing with, what support they require and which issues they want us to raise on their behalf. That will help us work with RDA Far North to offer training and business support that reflects what local operators need.

We'll continue to raise issues such as CBD safety and the difficulty of employment issues such as staff retention, housing, childcare and essential services to support further growth. Where Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Pirie face the same challenges, I'd like to see our three business chambers identify common priorities and establish a regional business agenda to define where collective business contribution can add value to the work of Councils, RDA, TACTIC and governments. It's also important that we report back to members on the outcomes what progress has been made.

We can also do more to turn passing traffic into customers for local businesses. In 2027, that means building on the work done with the Information Bays. One initiative is supporting tourism and hospitality businesses to increase the number of travellers by promotion of tourism packages. We will also use the year to assess what it would take to run the proposed 2028 caravan, camping, four-wheel drive and fishing expo and how local businesses could benefit from being involved.

I believe the Upper Spencer Gulf will play a major role in South Australia's economic future. Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Pirie each bring their own strengths, and by working together we can give our region a stronger voice in the decisions that shape that future. For Business Port Augusta, that means making sure

local businesses hear about new opportunities early and have a chance to supply major projects, take on apprentices/trainees and create jobs close to home.

Finally, thank you to our members, sponsors and volunteers. Your support helps us keep local businesses connected and gives Port Augusta a stronger voice.

Sue Dalla Santa *Chairperson, Business Port Augusta 12 November 2026*