

MINUTES
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
GUNNEDAH AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY INCORPORATED

Thursday 29th September 2022
The Civic Gunnedah

Meeting open: 5:47pm

Chair: Paul O'Donnell – Acting President

Present: Paul O'Donnell, Ben Hennessy, Keira Gifford, Tracie Finlay, Bill Ashford, Craig Neale, Darren Swain, Gemma Bunner, Initra Larsen, Jasmine Alloway, Joshua Cameron, Michael Broekman, Mikarla Commins, Virginia Blanch, Pol Montgomery, Richard Patriquin, Samantha Bath, Susan Frater, Tana Byrnes, Tay Hudson, Tracey Reid, Rebecca Ryan, Keli MacDonald, CJ Baldry

Apologies: Jamie Chaffey, Juliana McArthur, Jayne Barker, Hollie Crawford, Damien Roman, Amanda Jeffreys, Richard Gallen, Gail Paddison, Jo Kelly

1. Introduction

Welcome & meeting open from President, mention of upcoming motions

2. Present and Apologies – as per above

3. Call for Proxies – N/A

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting – AGM held on 7th September 2021

Moved Paul O'Donnell, Seconded Keira Gifford

5. Treasurers Report: Samantha Bath

- 2023 Memberships were not sent out to be paid prior to July as they should be per the constitution, so a provision for unearned income of \$23,400 has been accumulated to show this in the financials. Bring the surplus for the 30 June 2022 year to \$2,497.99 which is just covering our annual costs.
- Cash in the accounts was \$36,478.15 at 30 June 2022, but approx. \$45,000 at the time of the AGM
- Overall, there was an operating cash deficit of \$4,356.90 in the year, due to memberships not being sent out prior to July and paid after the end of the financial year.
- There have been no future budgets prepared as of yet, these are to be prepared for the future year to better determine the spending and income requirements of the Chamber.

Samantha Bath moved report, Tracie Finlay seconded

6. Presidents Report: Paul O'Donnell

The 2021 - 22 year, has been a hectic and eventful year, even though many of our best laid plans did not bear fruit. Many of the key drivers of our community (commodity prices and production) are at all time highs, the third good agricultural season, after such an extended period of drought keeps the soul of the town firmly based on agriculture. The added benefits from a productive resource sector make Gunnedah an exceptional business destination.

The year started with the departure of Susan Frater (Chamber Secretary); it only took a short while for the committee to work out just how much effort is required from the Secretary. More recently, Susan has joined the economic development team at Gunnedah Shire Council, so her involvement with the Chamber will be rekindled. We believe Susan and her team will be an important resource for the Chamber & Business Community.

In August 2021, we engaged Keira Gifford as executive assistant. Keira has been very productive in her first year, also managing to squeeze the birth of her first baby in (out). We are looking to use Keira to a larger

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extent in an expanded Secretary position for the 2022-23 year. In addition to being the driving force behind Chamber projects and promotions, we are hoping that Keira (on behalf of the Chamber) will become the first port of call and font of knowledge for government grants and the business grant application process.

The six months to 31 December was dominated by Covid 19 shutdowns and cancellations, but we managed to pull off a couple of events, including a tour of Gunnedah Leather, a couple of Beer n Bubbles social functions, then the flood that stopped the country (even more cancellations). Another of our past President(s): Julianna, took her first step in politics, by being elected as councilor with Gunnedah Shire (congratulations). We must almost have a useful lobby group within council, given the number of past Chamber Presidents sitting at the big table.....

The second six months included a few more social outings, expanding the food group to include bacon as well as beer. (cocktails were available for the adventurous, prepared by yours truly).

March was set aside as "small business month", with a full calendar of events this was a very busy month for Keira and the SMB sub-committee. The events were widely reported as a successful and enjoyable for the members who attended. This period also included time spent liaising with the flood recovery committee and looking into the feasibility of flood mitigation to protect the town.

The beautification of the riverine area was floated, but this will require a lot of effort, government approval and funding. We hope to continue to lobby and watch for activity in this regard. Improving this aspect of the town would be positive and lead to better amenity for visitors and locals.

The 2022 year had a major overhaul of committee members, with the loss of some experienced and knowledgeable committee persons. Thankfully, we still have our stalwart (Michael Broekman) - who both helps to navigate and plugs holes as required. His steady hand and solid voice have been very helpful during my period as Acting President.

We used the 2022 year to re-engineer the Chamber to create a plan to ensure we are providing useful and needed support to local business. We believe the most critical aspect of business in Gunnedah is recruiting and keeping staff, and the best way the Chamber can help in this regard is to focus on and continually reinforce the positive aspects of living, working, and thriving in our productive little community.

We decided that we should not jump on every project that floats past, but rather allocate our time and resources to activities that promote Gunnedah as a positive place live, work and thrive. In the background we will continue to lobby for improvement in key areas like health, education, and crime (prevention). However, it can be counterproductive to dwell on problem areas, so our focus will be to reinforce the positive.

Items on the agenda for the new committee include:

1. 2023 Business Awards - not held since 2018. The primary objective is to provide a large gala event, that emphasizes the benefits of Gunnedah as a destination for business and careers.
2. The inaugural business house challenge (Ambrose Golf) is booked for Thursday 20 October.
3. The (Gunnedah) coffee table book and photography competition are still on the agenda. This project could be a wonderful way to promote Gunnedah, but it needs to be at a standard that we can be proud to support. A special subcommittee will be convened to "manage" this project.
4. Developing an Event Calendar to help promote local activities and to be the first port for

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"saving the date". In addition to being on our website, we hope to have the calendar as an ongoing feature in our local paper.

5. Looking for sponsorship from members and government grants to help drive our projects and promote Gunnedah as a place to work, live and thrive, and to fund our expanded Secretary/Executive Officer position.
6. Our Chamber website is being upgraded; we hope to include a personal and business profile page for each committee member, we will be looking to have links to the website for chamber members.

In my capacity as acting President, I would like to thank the committee who supported the Chamber during a difficult couple of years and the members of the Chamber for their past and ongoing support of the Chamber and the Gunnedah community.

Thank you, and Good Luck to the incoming committee.

7. Motions

- Committee Expansion Motion

Motion to amend constitution clause 14(1)b to expand the number of committee to 4 office bearers and from 8 to 12 ordinary members so that all officially nominated persons can join the committee.

All in agreeance - moved Paul O'Donnell, Seconded Bill Ashford

- Committee Biographies

Motion to enable each committee member to have their personal/business biography and contact details included on the chamber website.

Moved Ben Hennessy, Josh Cameron Seconded

- Deferral of working group representatives and sub committees

Motion to defer appointing persons to the various working groups and sub committees, the applicants will be drawn from report to the committee and will be discussed at the first monthly meeting.

Moved Paul O'Donnell, seconded Bill Ashford

(Susan, really wants Chamber representatives, council to ratify – fast turnaround for November onwards)

8. Election of Office Bearers and Committee:

Chair for the election: Susan Frater

Declaration that all positions are now vacant.

I. Committee Nominations (13 positions)

Josh Cameron

Initra Larsen

Tracey Finlay

Darren Swain

Michael Broekman

Hollie Crawford

Bill Ashford

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Mikarla Commins
Damien Roman
Craig Neale
Amanda Jeffreys
Gemma Bunner
CJ Baldry

II. Nomination and election of Executive Committee from the committee members.

- a. President
Ben Hennessy
- b. Vice President
Paul O'Donnell
- c. Secretary/Executive Assistant
Keira Gifford
- d. Treasurer
Samantha Bath

No late nominations - confirmed

Move to elect all, Susan Frater – Paul O'Donnell seconded

Congratulations to new committee and executive

9. Motion: Bank Signatories:

Motion that all members of the Executive Committee be authorised to transact the Chamber of Commerce Greater Bank account with any one member of the executive required to authorise payments via credit card or any two via cheque or online and all transactions to be ratified in Committee meeting minutes.

Moved Darren Swain, Bill Ashford seconded

10. Incoming Presidents message

- Welcome the position of President as an important role, in the economic life of Gunnedah
- Wonderful town, climate, and with a community that rallies together
- Great things came from 2020/21 - Allawah cottage, Christmas fairs, night quip to name a few
- Wishes to focus on the excellent family opportunity in Gunnedah – sporting, schooling, job opportunities, pathways for children not to have to leave town to pursue a good career
- Props to having to expand the board – great position to be in and a positive outcome moving forward
- Looks forward to continuing initiatives put in place by previous committee
- Charter – further development of town, in all aspects – particularly economic, employment, advocate for incoming families, relocations
- Parallel paths with Council, open communications moving forward
- Importance on networking – business ownership can be a lonely journey, build strong networks to share the journey (successors, failures) powerful tool, rally behind some substantial causes in unison – drive good, solid agendas for the town and for the region
- Pleased to accept, thank you

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11. New members introduction

- Josh Cameron – returning committee member with local & expanding Rome Mortgages (Broking firm) interested to see what can come from the new committee in 2022/23
- Initra Larsen (Exercise Physiologist) – returning committee member this year representing
- Coal Services - recently opened a branch in Gunnedah
- Tracey Finlay – proudly returning member, passionate about the town and a focus on retail
- Darren Swain, community engagement (team of 5, looking to expand) for Whitehaven covering Tamworth, Quirindi, Narrabri, Boggabri, Gunnedah – acknowledges importance of Chamber's and attends all where possible
- Michael Brokeman – Happy to return to another year, very important part of community to give voice; most important is what you can put in, not what you can get out of it
- Hollie Crawford – an apology but returning member recently moved into management role with Gunnedah Times, happy to be in collaboration
- Bill Ashford – Returning member – loves to see growth, takes inspiration from elsewhere to look after each other to grow the district, wishes to bring more of that to Gunnedah
- Damien Roman – apology, but a lucky addition representing Kelahar Services
- Craig Neale – new to committee – Wholegrain milling currently shipping to approx. 245 bakeries' nationwide – looking forward to assisting in making changes and turning Gunnedah in right direction
- Amanda Jeffreys – apology, new member with recent opening of The Croft (fine dining) along with popular Bittersuite and her practice Practical Health, giving opportunity to the town
- Gemma Bunner – new to town, lived in Gunnedah for 3 months with recent expansion of Shaw and Bunner legal into the town, opened office 2 weeks ago, excited to hear about other businesses, and the enthusiasm of Chamber
- CJ Baldry – 2.5 years owning OBG Co, moving into interior, construction management expansion. Agrees that putting into the Committee is important and is why she has accepted her nomination

12. Meeting close

6:31pm