

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

This financial year has turned out to be a year that I am sure many of us did not expect, with changes, challenges, lengthy lockdowns, and level changes that are extremely tough on most businesses. Our focus needs to be on retaining staff and keeping family safe and well. Health and safety will also be of utmost importance going forward. This coming year will have to be carefully managed, and the Business Association will prioritise giving support to its Members.

Over the past few months the boardwalk has been replaced with a beautiful Tonka decking that not only looks fantastic, but it is much safer for all who use it. I can see from my vantage point at Penguino's in Phoenix Plaza that the improved boardwalk is encouraging the public back on to it to take their walks, and make their way through the town centre. The final stage of the project is due for completion prior to Christmas.

The Business Association will continue to monitor vacancies in all sectors and work on directing those in retail or hospitality in the direction they require. This will continue to evolve as alert levels change.

Looking back over the past year, the patrols that our security company, Vanguard Security, have been doing around the BID area appear to have significantly reduced nuisance behaviour on the streets. Rob Henry and his crew have been very visible around the community and have gone above and beyond to engage with, and steer groups of youngsters in the right direction. We also believe that increased police visibility has helped. We will continue to monitor the situation closely as Browns Bay needs to be seen to be a safe destination for our community and visitors.

My thanks to our Town Manager, Kim Murdoch, for her efforts this past year. Kim has been extremely active keeping us informed at all times. Her social media posts have engaged people in the community, and informed them in real time about what's happening around town. We plan to keep building on the momentum. Kim initiated a networking meeting for Chinese business owners and landlords, with the use of an interpreter. This was a positive step in closing communication gaps and making the Asian business community feel more included. Communications are now ongoing via WeChat. Unfortunately, most of these businesses are in the retail and hospitality sectors, and will be needing a major push with our Shop Local campaigns.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of our Local Board representative, Alexis Poppelbaum, who attended the monthly Executive Committee meetings and kept us up-to-date with new developments in and around Browns Bay. Our relationship and interactions with Hibiscus and Bays Local Board are extremely important to the Business Association.

I would also like to thank the Executive Committee for their commitment to improving Browns Bay for all to enjoy. This year has been challenging and the postponements, cancellations and re-arranging of our annual schedule have been difficult. It's a first to have to cancel the Browns Bay Christmas Parade for any reason other than extremely bad weather! This also affects Sally Cargill from Heart of the Bays community group, who kindly delivers this event for the Business Association. I assure you that Kim, Sally and the Committee will be pushing forward with a number of safe event options in the coming year. Hopefully increased vaccinations will allow the country to open up and facilitate crowd gathering events in the not too distant future.

This is the second year that we have utilised the services of Browns Bay chartered accountants, Robinson & Running as Treasurer. I thank them for providing an outstanding quality of monthly and end of year reporting with complete transparency and always in a timely fashion.

Last of all, my thanks to all the Members, especially those who have taken the time out of their busy days to be online with us this evening. Your support is absolutely necessary for us to succeed in many of our initiatives. We wished we could have talked to you face-to-face, but it wasn't to be. We hope to see you all at our next networking evening.

MALCOLM McDONALD