



ANNUAL REPORT

October 2023



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OUR MISSION

Previous - To provide opportunities for businesswomen to connect and learn.

Replaced with - To provide opportunities for established and aspiring business owners and industry professionals to connect and learn.

OUR VISION

The women of Bass Coast and South Gippsland Shires feel connected and continue to gain skills and knowledge.

OUR VALUES

Welcoming. Learning. Collaboration. Fun. Sustainability.

OUR HISTORY

The Southern Business Women's Network (SBWN) is an incorporated association ¹ that supports women throughout Bass Coast and South Gippsland to grow professionally and personally.

For the past 23 years, the SBWN has been holding monthly networking events in venues across the region with guest speakers on a diverse range of topics as well as offering professional development workshops. These events and workshops are attended by members and their guests, with a volunteer committee ideally consisting of 8 - 10 members who meet monthly. The committee is responsible for the operational and financial management of the network.

The network has maintained a low annual membership fee (currently \$70.00) and provides a range of benefits to its members and allows non-members to subscribe to an email list free of charge and access to our exclusive Facebook group. Members are entitled to discounted ticket prices, the option to bring two non-members to events at a reduced fee, access to the members only door prize at events, the opportunity to MC events and donate door prizes and self-promotion on the SBWN website.

The network currently requires a minimum number of members to cover the existing fixed costs of running the network (insurance, the membership management software and website). The monthly events are generally cost-neutral and covered by ticket sales. Non-member ticket prices are approximately 20-25% higher than member prices.

¹ *Victorian incorporated associations are registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (the Act).*

I'm sure I'm not the first to say – where has the time gone! It seems like only yesterday that I took the reins (a little reluctantly) from our wonderful previous President, Christie Neilson. I personally would like to thank Christie for her support to be able to lead such a wonderful network of inspiring women.

Being President of the SBWN over the past 12 months is an honour; although I must admit a little stressful at times. I couldn't have undertaken the task without the commitment and support of the committee. I have truly admired your vibrancy, efficiency, and professionalism that you brought to the committee, which went well beyond our monthly meetings. With only Robyn and I as the two returning committee members, we very much appreciated and welcomed five new faces, with Nicole, Michelle, Cindy, Sam, and Amanda joining the team for 2023. Each one of you has provided valuable input into the network operations which we jointly had a desire to deliver more than just monthly events. I look forward to continuing this journey with Robyn, Cindy, Sam and Amanda and our newly elected committee members in 2024. I also take this opportunity to thank Nicole and Michelle for their endeavours during their tenure on the committee.

The AGM is an opportunity to reflect and celebrate the achievements over the past 12 months. There have been many highlights including the extremely successful International Women's Day event in March. This was a joint partnership with South Gippsland Shire Council, South Gippsland Water and Bass Coast Community Foundation – Women for Change to raise awareness and bring attention to issues such as gender equity.

Another highlight was the intimate Fireside Chat - Christmas in July event where we heard from 12 wonderful members to speak about themselves or what they are passionate about. This event is a format that the committee would like to continue on an annual basis, as we consider it a practical and valuable initiative in supporting our members.

Outside of the events, the committee were determined to consider how the Network could continue to be relevant in meeting our needs in an ever-changing environment. Last January, the committee came together for a workshop to review the current Strategic Plan with the main objective of how we best reflect the purpose of the Network and provide opportunities for our members. A key action was to undertake a survey to gain an understanding of the makeup of the network, their values, and expectations. A summary of the results is provided in this report, however the main finding from the 57 respondents is that 49% were self-employed suggesting that remainder 51% were either employees, retired, or not in paid employment. This led the committee to ask the question – is the Southern Business Women's Network name representative of our members? And does the Southern Business Women's Network Mission 'to provide opportunities for businesswomen to connect and learn' resonate with our membership base?

Whilst the discussion regarding the Southern Business Women's Network name requires further extensive engagement with members; the committee agreed to a new Mission - *'to provide opportunities for established and aspiring business owners and industry professionals to connect and learn'*. The new Mission has been developed to be more inclusive, without diminishing the networks values and purpose.

Finally, the biggest thank you goes out to the network members and followers for your ongoing support and dedication in recognising the contribution that we all play in making sure the SBWN is an important role for the women of South Gippsland and Bass Coast.

Thank you!

Penni 😊

THE 2023 SBWN COMMITTEE

President	Penni Ellicott
Vice President/ Digital	Robyn Eva
Secretary	Michelle Denman
Treasurer	Nicole May
Publicity	Cindy Nicholas
Events	Vacant
General Member	Amanda Riley, Sam Morris

The SBWN Committee is a group of volunteers who put their hands up to make a difference. They bring a range of skills and experience to the group, with the common goal of creating an environment where women can come together and share ideas, learn, and grow.

The committee meet monthly at various locations across the region, to plan and work together in delivering events and networking opportunities to the SBWN membership and guests. This year saw a very new committee come together, with Penni and Robyn the only remaining members from the previous year.

A huge congratulations to the new committee members (with Amanda and Sam attending their first SBWN at last year's AGM!) for their fresh input and enthusiasm. I also thank the committee for their skills and time committed in meeting the objectives of the network.

Due to personal commitments, this year will see Nicole and Michelle step down from their positions, with Penni, Robyn, Cindy, Amanda, and Sam nominating to stay on the committee. I am excited that we have received nominations from members to join the 2024 committee which will ensure that the network continues flourish.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The last financial year was filled with events that were well-supported by members. Unfortunately, some events ran at a loss which was supported by the committee to deliver quality events, acknowledging the strong financial position of the network. Whilst future events and operating costs will be closely scrutinised in 2024 to ensure that the network remains financially sustainable, I am very pleased to report that there was only a net operating loss \$159 between the period of 01 August 2022 to 31 July 2023. A breakdown summary is as follows:

Events

Total Income	\$29,375
Total expenditure	\$30,521
Difference	(\$1,146)

Operating Costs

Total income	\$7,330
Total expenditure	\$6,344
Difference	\$986

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Balance sheet report

Cash mode
31 Jul 2023

	Actual	Total Last Year	Variance %
Asset			
Banking			
Bendigo SBWN a/c xx0419	15,632	17,265	-9
Bendigo Statement a/c xx7703	1,085	312	248
PayPal Account	982	281	249
Total Banking	17,699	17,858	-0.89%
Total Asset	17,699	17,858	-0.89%
Liability			
Current Liabilities			
Accrued Expenses	180	180	0
Total Current Liabilities	180	180	0.00%
Total Liability	180	180	0.00%
Net Assets	17,519	17,678	-1
Equity			
SBWN Capital	10,429	10,429	0
Current Year Earnings	(159)	(4,486)	-96
Retained Earnings	9,706	11,735	-17
Total Equity	19,976	17,678	13.00%

Profit and loss report

Cash mode

01 Aug 2022 - 31 Jul 2023

	Actual	Total Last Year	Variance %
Income			
Event Income			
AGM Event	2,610	2,075	26
Dinner Events	21,697	16,200	34
Workshops	3,728	20	18540
Sundry Events	1,340	0	-
Total Event Income	29,375	18,295	60.60%
Interest Income	0	0	233
Grants & Sponsorships	1,000	1,696	-41
Memberships	6,330	5,060	25
Total Income	36,705	25,051	46.50%
Gross Profit	36,705	25,051	46
Expense			
Accounting & Bookkeeping	348	346	1
Advertising & Promotion	2,614	2,175	20
Badges	0	478	-100
Bank & Merchant Fees			
Bank Charges	67	0	-
PayPal Fees	1,027	702	46
Total Bank & Merchant Fees	1,094	702	55.80%
Donations	0	500	-100
Event Expenses			
AGM Expenses	1,971	2,271	-13
Dinner Event Expenses	27,751	18,512	50
Workshop Expenses	0	300	-100
Sundry Event	800	0	-
Total Event Expenses	30,521	21,083	44.80%
Filing Fees	0	60	-100
Insurance	0	1,702	-100
Meeting Expenses - Inc. Strategic Plan	264	327	-19
Postage	0	139	-100
Printing & Stationery	39	135	-71
Subscriptions	1,851	0	-
Website & Software	133	1,889	-93
Total Expense	36,865	29,537	24.80%
Operating Profit	(159)	(4,486)	96
Net Profit	(159)	(4,486)	96

Profit and loss report

Cash mode
 01 Aug 2022 - 31 Jul 2023

	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Total
Income													
Event Income													
ASH Event	1,395	1,215	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,610
Dinner Events	0	0	1,515	3,090	1,155	2,735	2,715	1,610	3,057	3,922	1,898	0	21,697
Workshops	0	3,215	220	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	293	3,728
Sundry Events	0	0	940	400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,340
Total Event Income	1,395	4,430	2,675	3,490	1,155	2,735	2,715	1,610	3,057	3,922	1,898	293	29,375
Interest Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grants & Sponsorships	0	0	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,000
Memberships	275	945	490	210	0	700	1,120	620	280	770	560	350	6,330
Total Income	1,670	5,375	4,165	3,700	1,155	3,435	3,835	2,240	3,337	4,692	2,458	643	36,705
Gross Profit	1,670	5,375	4,165	3,700	1,155	3,435	3,835	2,240	3,337	4,692	2,458	643	36,705
Expense													
Accounting & Bookkeeping	29	29	29	29	28	28	28	28	30	30	30	30	348
Advertising & Promotion	175	0	599	0	575	0	0	0	400	41	14	900	2,614
Bank & Merchant Fees													
Bank Charges	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	55	0	1	0	0	67
Paypal Fees	52	281	70	98	34	104	0	58	93	137	73	27	1,027
Total Bank & Merchant Fees	52	281	80	98	34	104	0	113	93	138	74	27	1,094
Event Expenses													
AGM Expenses	0	271	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,700	0	0	0	1,971
Dinner Event Expenses	1,144	38	3,275	0	7,554	500	3,186	5,765	2,155	2,580	105	1,449	27,751
Sundry Event	0	0	800	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	800
Total Event Expenses	1,144	309	4,075	0	7,554	500	3,186	5,765	3,855	2,580	105	1,449	30,521
Meeting Expenses - Inc. Strategic Plan	148	23	23	0	0	70	0	0	0	0	0	0	264
Printing & Stationery	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	19	0	0	0	0	39
Subscriptions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,846	0	6	0	0	1,851
Website & Software	0	0	0	23	110	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	133
Total Expense	1,548	642	4,716	150	8,321	702	3,214	7,771	4,378	2,795	223	2,406	36,865
Operating Profit	122	4,733	(551)	3,550	(7,166)	2,733	621	(5,531)	(1,040)	1,897	2,235	(1,763)	(199)

MEMBERSHIP

As of 01 October 2023, the network has 96 financial members, one life member, 188 email subscribers, and 2.4K Facebook followers. This year we introduced an Instagram page which currently has 104 followers. Our members are professionals working across a range of sectors including agriculture, finance, retail, health, tourism, and government as well as small and large business owners and retirees.

SBWN- MOVING FORWARD

THE STRATEGIC PLAN- 2020-2023

The SBWN Strategic Plan 2020-2023 builds upon the work of previous committees and has been informed by several member surveys previously undertaken as well as an environmental scan of national, regional, large, and small business women's networks to gauge ideas and best practice. Reflecting on the plan's SWOT analysis, the network has continued to improve on and add to a lot of its' strengths but there's great potential for the next committee to consider revision of this plan, should they choose to, and contemplate what the network may look like moving forward into the future. Potential weaknesses may be explored further, as well further opportunities and any issues to be resolved.

There is a role for the 2024 SBWN committee to undertake a review of the 2020 – 2023 Strategic Plan and consider the development of a new plan that is realistic and reflects the objectives of the network into the future.

SURVEY FINDINGS

In early 2023, the current committee developed a survey to better understand the network members and if the network was meeting their needs. The surveys summary is as follows.

- 57 respondents
- 78% current members
- 75% would recommend the network/events
- 70% would recommend membership to others
- 49% identify as self-employed.
- 80% above the age of 45
- Largest number of respondents from Leongatha and Inverloch (8each)

We also asked if the networks current Mission being 'to provide opportunities for businesswomen to connect and learn', is reflective of the organisation with the following results from the respondents.

- 53% - Very reflective
- 40% - Somewhat reflective
- 3% - Not at all reflective
- 1% - never seen this before

Based on the feedback of the survey and commentary in the Strategic Plan, the committee commenced the discussion regarding the Mission and appropriate name for the network. This was primarily based on the membership base.

Feedback regarding the naming of the network was initiated throughout 2023 with the intention for members to consider a change at the AGM. Unfortunately, responses from the members have been limited and therefore the committee has determined that a more extensive consultation process needs to be undertaken to ensure confidence that the network has been appropriately engaged.

SBWN NEW MISSION

Based on the feedback from the survey, the current committee have approved that the network Mission change from;

Previous *To provide opportunities for businesswomen to connect and learn.*

New *To provide opportunities for established and aspiring business owners and industry professionals to connect and learn.*

The SBWN website and documentation will be updated to reflect the new Mission which is considered to be more inclusive of our members.

EVENTS CALENDAR

We are so pleased to have been able to provide a calendar of consistent events this year with a huge variety of speakers and a range of venues.

The committee’s aim was to engage as many members as possible by providing a range of topics and networking opportunities including panel sessions, fireside chats, interactive workshops, and raising social awareness. We introduce post event surveys to seek feedback regarding the speakers, content, and venue which is important for future programming.

SBWN partnered with South Gippsland Shire Council, South Gippsland Water and Bass Coast Community Foundation – Women for Change to deliver an extremely successful International Women’s Day (IWD) event at Trulli Square, Meeniyah. The event featured a panel of inspiring local women with the topic – Embrace Equity. It is hoped that this type of partnership will continue to grow in celebrating IWD in 2024.

The majority of speakers at SBWN events generously give their time for free which greatly appreciate and value. We encourage everyone to offer suggestions to committee of topics or speakers that they would benefit from at any time.

Below is a review of the events that were held in this current term of the committee and scheduled upcoming events.

EVENTS Calendar

Month	Title	Speaker/ Venue	Attendance / Capacity
October 2022	Farmer’s Market to Functional Fashion	Danielle Holloway. Space 47, Leongatha	61/61
November 2022	Ex-designer turned wild floral forager	Shelley Banders Old Dalyston Church	59/60

December 2022	End of Year Social	No speaker Bluette on Bear, Inverloch	41/57
February 2023	'How good can it get?	Jamin Heppell Inlet Hotel, Inverloch	70/70
March 2023	IWD – Embrace Equity	Panel (Patrice Mahoney, Chelsea Caple, and Louise Sparkes) Trulli, Meeniyana	78/78
April 2023	Celebrate Her! Stories of South Gippsland Women	Panel (Karli Duckett, Sarah Westwood, and Karin Ruff) Fish Creek Hotel	44/60
May 2023	From Fishy to National Flagship	Dr. Sarah White Top Pub, Korumburra	46/60
June 2023	Fighting Poverty through Education	Gemma Sisia Leongatha RSL	35/80
July 2023	Christmas In July	Fireside Chat Loch & Key, Loch	34/34
August 2023	Money Mastery & Canva Workshop	Nicole May, Sam Morris Leongatha Council Chambers	23/50
September 2023	AGM (postponed)		
October 2023	AGM – Unlash the power of courageous decision-making with two fundamental steps	Stacie Currie Inlet Hotel, Inverloch	44/70
November 2023	Social enterprise (cocktail event)	Kim, Founder and Distiller Mates Gin, Wonthaggi	
December 2023	End of Year Social	Gurneys Cidery, Foster	
February 2024	Specialist, Aboriginal Tourism	Ash Bartly, Venue TBC	

