

Good morning members,

Trying to find a positive out of the current chaos is perhaps our biggest challenge in business right now. It is such a mixed bag for each of us, some of our members are thriving whilst others are battling to survive. The only certainty at the moment is the uncertainty. As business owners ourselves, the Executive Committee feel a deep and increasing connection with our members due to this unprecedented event, and for this we can only be grateful.

I am sure we are all on the roller coaster of these changes and the emotions that each day brings, and just like your business, our chamber needs to adapt and shift with the environment that we now find ourselves in. As a chamber of commerce, Business Horsham is required to support and guide business owners, advocate on their behalf with state and federal governments, seek out opportunities that drive positive change and business activity, and we are truly excited at what collaborations and projects we have on the horizon for the remainder of 2021 into 2022.

In October of last year, Mainstreet Australia approached Business Horsham and requested we expand our serviceable area to support the surrounding shires of Hindmarsh, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack and Northern Grampians. This was in response to a rollout of funding by the state government to business groups and chambers, identifying that Business Horsham was the only registered, active and staffed chamber in north west Victoria.

Understanding the difficulties and sheer logistics behind sustaining a chamber long term, our Executive agreed to take on the challenge and accept the request. As such, I am very excited to inform our members that we have now changed our name to West Vic Business to better reflect who and where we represent. This next phase of our journey demonstrates the inclusive and diverse nature of our chamber, representing all industry sectors, now from across the Wimmera and Northern Grampians region.

After undertaking our strategic planning process, which articulated our way forward, the first stage was to ratify the name change at an Executive level, then to commence the rebranding process, of which we are still currently undertaking and working our way through. Seeking business representation from each of the shires to be an integral part of

our Executive Committee was next. All of which will strengthen our position and ensure our future growth, and that of our business communities across the region. Keeping you informed and a part of this process is our commitment to transparency and open communication with our network.

In closing, I would like to thank each and every one of our members for their ongoing support. Your membership enables the development of programs and projects that build connections, networks, and tangible outcomes for business owners across industry sectors. Stimulating the economy at this point in time has never been more important. So once again, I sincerely thank you.

We look forward to a more positive end to 2021, and helping to drive a successful and prosperous 2022 for each of you.

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Kind Regards

Paul Atherton

**Chairman**

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