

## Club Cowra President's Report 2025

If I were to select a word which represented Club Cowra for 2025, I would select the word '*change*'.

2025 was a year of upheaval -in the best sense of the word- and was certainly an interesting one to spend in my inaugural year as Chairwoman of the Board.

I am incredibly proud of the staff this year, who have stepped up, adapted to a change in Management and shown what can be achieved by our team. The quality, consistency and output of the bistro has been vastly improved by our Head Chef, Bobby Ellis, and our hardworking kitchen staff. Harley Torok and Julie McMahon are longstanding Club employees, who have adapted well to the changes of the last year and continue to demonstrate a willingness to improve. We are also grateful to have such energetic and impassioned junior staff in the kitchen in John Van Rhee and Ethan Austin. Beck Lazarou has handled a significant increase in interest for functions over the last year with grace, with her excellent customer service skills regularly trickling back to the Board through customer feedback. Jordan Hayes, Kyesha Ingram and Will Neal have demonstrated a willingness to learn, improve and excel which is valued enormously by The Board of Directors and undoubtedly, our patrons. The enthusiasm and commitment of our Operations Manager, Marc McLeish, has manifested in improvements in foot traffic and entertainment for patrons which has not been managed in the Club's recent history. His fostering of relationships between The Club and other community groups is unrivalled and The Board appreciates his efforts enormously. I could easily give a special mention to each staff member individually, which demonstrates the improvements made by the entire team at Club Cowra in 2025. While Gaming is an undoubtedly integral part of our Club, it's been inspiring to watch our reliance on gaming income drop from 43% of our total income in February 2024 to 32% in November 2025, even considering our significantly increased overall turnover.

Our new CEO, Sharlene McLeish, has stepped into what I imagine was one of the more turbulent years of her life in 2025. It gives me great pleasure to watch her grow into her position increasingly with every challenge presented to her. As she did before she took on the CEO role, Sharlene is consistently bringing new ideas, ways to streamline processes and improve profit margins to the Board. Her commitment to the Club and long held respect for our business, having been first employed at the age of 18, is what has made her an excellent leader in a tough year. The Board would like to formally congratulate and give thanks to Sharlene, as well as her office support team, for their Herculean effort this year, and we look forward to seeing what they can do in 2026.

Lastly, I would like to give thanks to the Board of Directors at Club Cowra. Our Executive council, in particular, have been an invaluable support to me in my first year as Chairwoman. Both Shane Egan (Vice Chair) and Claudette Harrison (Treasurer) have taken it upon themselves to improve their knowledge of Board Governance to greatly benefit the Club in 2025, and their dual energy and calm demeanours mean that inconsistencies are noticed and change is swift.

With an astute and energetic Board, dedicated staff and the invigorated interest of the community, 2026 is looking like being Club Cowra's best year yet.