**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for Financial Year 2022**

Held on Monday 21 August at the River of Gold Motel, Cnr Hope & Walker Streets, Cooktown

**Present**: Mick Davies, President – River of Gold Motel; Russell Bowman, Treasurer – The Lure Shop; Will Peck, Secretary – Cooktown Orchid Travellers Park; Nellie Harvey – Cooktown Wholesalers; Melinda Parker – Astute Law; Jason Ritchie – The Seaview

**Apology**: Julie Hillhouse – Cooktown Platinum Realty

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| **No** | **Agenda Item** | **Summary and Resolutions** |
| 1 | President’s overview of the Chamber’s activities for the last year. | Mick Davies ran through a summary of the Chamber’s activities over the last year – see below.  |
| 2 | Presentation, review and adoption by **Ordinary Resolution** of the Chamber’s Financial Statements for Year Ending 31 December 2021 | The Chamber’s financial statements are overseen by Jan Howard who is an accountant/approved person within the meaning of or governing legislation.Russell Bowman tabled the 2022 Financial Year Statements verified independently by Jan Howard (see attached). He noted that there had been significant expenditure this year in relation to the Directory, Visitors Guide and new brochures that had reduced the current balance to about $60k. He tabled a draft budget for the next 2 years (see attached) showing annual expenses running at about $35k leaving a balance at end 2024 estimated at $38k. The meeting resolved to adopt the Financial Statements for 2022 and to retain Jan Howard to check and report on the 2023 Financial Statements. |
| 3 | Retirement and appointment of the management committee. | Under the Chamber Rules the current management committee automatically retires with effect from the end of the meeting.Nominations for the next Committee were received from Russell Bowman, Julie Hillhouse; Will Peck; Nellie Harvey; Mick Davies; Melinda Parker; Jason Ritchie. The meeting resolved to appoint all nominating to the new Committee and approve a committee of seven members.The new Committee agreed that Russell Bowman will take over as President and Julie Hillhouse will take over as Treasurer. Will Peck continues as Secretary. |
| 4 | Update on new brochures. | Will Peck updated the meeting on the new brochures promoting Cooktown’s Top Attractions and Day Trips from Cooktown and that these had been distributed to many tourist outlets and received good feedback. |
| 5 | Planned activities for 2023Discussion on potential activities for 2024. | The session on Artificial Intelligence had been locked in the James Cook University experts for 13 September.A end of season BBQ was planned for the Tourist Sector at the end of SeptemberA session on insurance was being organised for December.We were looking at doing a session on digital marketing using Kate Fraser’s (the Seaview) expertise next year. |
| 6 | Any other business and meeting close. | Discussion took place on promoting Cooktown as a tourist destination more in Cairns and FNQNoted that the next edition of the Visitors Guide would need to be thought through carefully particularly online v print. The total cost of production, storage and distribution for 2 years is approximately $50kRussell Bowman as the new President spoke briefly at the AGM emphasising the Chamber’s mission to support sustainable business growth for the Cooktown Region and increase valuable tourism - particularly by extending the season and having the right infrastructure. He took the opportunity of having representatives of the Council present to encourage them to plan ahead to develop the infrastructure needed to support businesses and tourism. |

**Summary of last year’s activities**

While our activities have not been ‘high-viz’ we have been very busy these past 12 months.

**Business & Community Services Directory**

* As the next planned step in the ‘Go Local First’ campaign to encourage local support for our businesses and services we have produced Cooktown’s new Business & Community Services Guide - both a printed booklet and online via the Chamber’s website.
* The booklet is a great little publication and has received good feedback.
* The Post Office kindly distributed it via PO Boxes and we still have plenty left for any new residents or any who have not received one.
* This was funded by a mixture of advertising and premium listings and the Chamber’s reserves. Many thanks to all of those who supported the Directory.
* We have some credit with Blackstar and will be promoting the Go Local First Campaign and the Director shortly
* We maintain the online Directory, posting new listings as new businesses start up. It is interesting and encouraging to note the number of new businesses starting up. We will need to consider a further edition of the printed booklet next year and will engage businesses for their views.

**2023-24 Visitors Guide for Cooktown & Cape York**

* We have produced a new 2023-24 Visitors Guide for Cooktown & Cape York with the great support of the businesses that advertised – This involved engaging potential advertisers to raise sufficient revenue to underwrite its production. While advertising was down on the previous 2020 guide produced for the Expo year it still enable us with support from the Chamber’s reserves to produce the Guide.
* We focused on restricting the Guide’s content to make it easier to find and read. We also introduced a new formatted advert that proved popular. As a result the Guide is well structured with a better quality look and feel. It should also be easily updateable for future years. The new Guide has also been well received.
* We have printed 60,000 (compared to 120,000 of the 2020 guide) and it’s important to preserve copies. Its purpose is to get visitors to Cooktown and the Cape – it’s not designed for visitors who have made it to Cooktown.
* The Guide is distributed by Link Logic throughout Visitor Centres in Queensland and at relevant shows and by iTourism who distribute it through the various promotional boards in the FNQ region. This costs approximately $14,000 per year for 2 years which is a large part of the cost of the total cost of the Guide.
* This year we have also produced and are promoting an online Guide via the Cooktown & Cape York Website ([Cooktown and Cape York Peninsula — Explore Cooktown and Cape York](https://cooktownandcapeyork.com/)) maintained by Sally Eales at the Council. The Chamber has produced a DL card flyer with a QR code linked to the online Guide.
* We are keen to promote the online guide and this new Flyer is being distributed in the same places as the Guide. We are also encouraging Cooktown tourist businesses to promote the online version and not hand out the printed Guide

**New Cooktown Brochures**

* We have produced 2 new Cooktown Brochures – Cooktown’s Top attractions and Day Trips from Cooktown.
* We have kept the cost of the brochures down by designing them ourselves and getting them sponsored (with an advert) by Nick Davidson Sunset Cruise and Lachy Spicer’s Cooktown Car Hire – Thankyou to Nick and Lachy for their support.
* These provide visitors with the opportunity to enjoy all that Cooktown has to offer both as a town and as a base to explore the Southern Cape.
* They have received great feedback from tourism operators and visitors and are undoubtedly contributing to Cooktown becoming a major tourist destination rather than just a stop on the way to or from the Tip – and staying longer.
* We plan to distribute these via iTourism next year as well as in Cooktown to encourage tourists to add Cooktown to their trip.

We believe that our visitors might benefit from other simple trifold brochures and encourage any suggestions.

**Other Activities**

* We have made submissions on behalf of the caravan and camping parks to close the ‘free’ RV camping ground which is subsidised by ratepayers money on the grounds that:
	+ It does not comply with Council’s own local laws and conditions imposed by Council on commercial parks – which involve is a significant fixed cost to commercial operators.
	+ Council does not have the resources to manage it to ensure compliance. There are often a large number of campers that are not self-contained which leads to environmental pollution.
	+ It unfairly competes with caravan parks and takes significant income from this important tourist sector reducing their ability to invest in improving and expanding accommodation.
* There is a Council meeting tomorrow considering the future of the RV camping ground.
* We have represented the town’s businesses in various forums where politicians and public servants have visited looking for local insight.