

# 2020/2021 HIGHLIGHTS



*Matt Lowe - Director, Corporate Membership  
The Chamber - Majestic Roofgarden - April 2021*

## FROM THE BUSINESS SA CHAIR

Business SA was founded in 1839 as the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce and is purported to be the first Chamber of Commerce in Australia. Now in its 182nd year of continuously supporting trade and commerce across South Australia, it continues to be the peak body for the business community.

We advocate for both members and the broader South Australian business community. It remains our primary reason for being and distinguishes us from any company providing commercial services to businesses.

As defined in our Constitution, Business SA stands for the economic growth and prosperity of South Australia. This position involves advocating for and on behalf of South Australia's business and employer communities to enable a more productive and competitive environment to engage in trade, commerce, export, and innovation. It also involves providing advice, products, and services relevant to the needs of members and the business community.

The 2020/2021 financial year was one of continued uncertainty for many of Business SA's members. We worked ferociously to support our members and clients with effective advocacy and timely professional services. I cannot express my thanks enough to my fellow Board members, Chief Executive Martin Haese, Executive Directors Jenny Briggs, David Slama and Sean Pearce, and all of the team at Business SA. The commitment and dedication from this group is a credit to every one of you.

**The year also saw the first full year of implementation of Business SA's three-year 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, including:**

- implementation of a new membership model
- creating new and exciting event offerings
- digitisation of many services
- partnerships with the local government sector
- continuous improvement in Business SA's products and services and continuous improvement in Business SA's delivery model

We implemented each initiative to ensure that Business SA is the long-term partner of choice for members and clients.

Across 2020/2021, we saw initial success in the implementation of our strategic plan and the first financial surplus for Business SA in seven years. Underpinning this improved result has been stringent cost control and overhead management. Long-term organisational sustainability will ensure Business SA's confidence and ability to reinvest into products, services and technologies that better support members and clients today and in the future.

The Board recognises that the 2020/2021 financial year result includes government stimulus receipts of \$1.2m, in addition to \$0.5m in the prior fiscal year. Business SA's eligibility for those payments arose predominantly through Jobkeeper 1.0 and 2.0 and declines in turnover occurred over the eligibility period due to:

- operating outcomes associated with COVID-19
- the Apprenticeship Support Australia (ASA) contract expiration on 1 February 2020
- the timing of significant contract payments.



*Nikki Govan - Chair - Business SA Board of Directors*

Business SA has worked tirelessly on behalf of its members to advocate across federal, state and local government jurisdictions in what has been some of the most challenging trading conditions since the Great Depression. We recognise that if Business SA did not do this work, it would be unlikely that anyone else would.

**Significant Business SA advocacy efforts included:**

- multiple and critical COVID-19 support measures
- development of our 9-point plan for economic recovery
- continuing advocacy at the federal and state level for workplace relations reform, sectoral support measures, and critical infrastructure initiatives.

In each instance, we designed our advocacy efforts to keep the best interests of our members, clients, and stakeholders top of mind with all levels of government.

Business SA notes that its charitable status was revoked on 18 May 2021 by the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission. This decision was disappointing as our COVID-19 advocacy delivered benefits for and on behalf of the entire state. The Commission advised us that the primary reason for this decision was a reinterpretation of their eligibility criteria, instead of changes or non-compliance with any associated rules by Business SA.

Nonetheless, Business SA's operations remain unchanged as a result of the loss of charitable status. Business SA does plenty of work without profit in mind and will continue to do this and deliver positive outcomes for the entire business community.

The Business SA Board recognises that implementing a vaccine program and ending the sustained lockdowns and restrictions is only the beginning of South Australia's economic journey out of COVID-19. It has been critical to build a financially sustainable Business SA and ensure a sustainable economic platform for SA businesses to thrive on. We will continue our significant work in both areas to innovate and evolve. We will ensure that we remain the trusted partner who stands alongside its members and clients for another 182 years and more.

Yours sincerely

A white handwritten signature on a dark blue background, appearing to read 'Nikki Govan'.

Nikki Govan  
 Chair of the Board  
 Business SA | Chamber of Commerce and Industry South Australia

# HIGHLIGHTS IN 2020/21



## Support for employee wages subsidies for COVID-19 affected businesses

Business SA worked with ACCI to push the federal government for an employee wages subsidy from early in the pandemic, and this work resulted in JobKeeper. We also actively argued for the continuation of JobKeeper in a stepped down form, rather than the government's original intention to abolish it from October 2020.

With ACCI's support, we also secured additional support for businesses with apprentices and trainees through the Supporting Apprentices and Trainees (SAT) subsidy and the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencement (BAC) subsidy. We successfully argued for this to be extended until March 2022.



## Pushing for government support of commercial tenants and landlords through COVID-19

Business SA was the first organisation nationally to advocate for SMEs needing commercial rental support. We also recognised the role landlords had to play and argued for tax and rate relief for them too. Business SA lobbied the state government to ensure full implementation of the national leasing code, and we secured an extension to leasing protections for small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The government agreed to do this until the end of 2020.

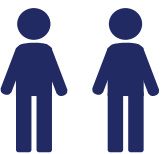
We also successfully argued that businesses that own their property should get a land tax break, and they did in the form of 25% relief on 2019/2020 charges.



## General payroll tax waivers for businesses and exemptions for apprentice and trainee hires in response to COVID-19 impacts

Business SA has actively lobbied for payroll tax relief since COVID-19 began. The government first introduced a waiver for businesses with sub \$4m payrolls until September 2020, with a deferral option for businesses with plus \$4m payrolls. Our continued lobbying led to the initial waiver's extension to June 2021. A new waiver was introduced for businesses with over \$4m payrolls remaining on JobKeeper.

At Business SA's request, the 2020/2021 South Australian State Budget exempted new apprentice and trainee hires from payroll tax for 12 months.



## Consistent, well-timed arguments for the removal of the 1 per 4 square metre (sqm) rule and the 1 per 2 sqm rule

From early June 2020, Business SA began campaigning to remove the 1 per 4 sqm rule. After the November 2020 lockdown, we lobbied to return to 50% density as quickly as possible, prompting a decision to fast-track the original pathway by 11 days. Again in March 2021, we campaigned for restrictions to go to 3 per 4 sqm, particularly given JobKeeper was soon to end. The government responded positively to our efforts by lifting capacity to 75% from 31 March 2021.



## Release of Business SA nine-point plan to position South Australia for economic recovery

In September 2020, Business SA released a nine-point plan to set South Australia up for economic recovery beyond the impacts of COVID-19. This plan recognised that simply getting through COVID-19 and lifting all restrictions was no panacea to the economic challenges faced by the state. The nine-point plan provided business opportunities and created a more simple and lower-cost business environment.

Opportunities identified were through:

- new industries such as hydrogen
- increased university/business collaboration
- bringing major events like Formula E to Adelaide
- wholesale tax reform to reduce the impact of inefficient taxes including payroll tax.



## A range of cash grants for those businesses continuing to be heavily impacted by COVID-19

Business SA has made several representations to the government to provide cash flow support to businesses impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. Last November, the 2020/2021 Budget included an extra \$10,000 emergency cash grant, including \$3,000 for sole traders. This was the direct result of Business SA's advocacy after sole traders had missed out on the first cash grant program.



### **Advocacy for businesses in sectors most impacted by COVID-19 restrictions**

While Business SA is a chamber of commerce for all 17 industry sectors here in South Australia, we are conscious of the uneven impact of COVID-19. This is particularly true for hospitality, tourism, and events businesses (including live performance).

We have made various representations throughout COVID-19 for increased support to heavily hit sectors including a COVID-19 events and live performance de-risk fund. This fund is based on similar models in Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and the United Kingdom.

Bringing businesses in the events sector to the table with SA Health officials has helped to work through how to maximise their activity through periods of tight restrictions.



### **Arguing for a swifter vaccine rollout and the implementation of workplace vaccinations**

Since the COVID-19 vaccine rollout started in earnest in February 2021, Business SA has been publicly and privately advocating at a state and federal level. We want to ensure every possible optimisation of the public policy settings and logistics of this critical program to get Australia out of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, including lockdowns. This has included:

- working proactively with SA Health to position local businesses to fast-track workplace vaccination
- supporting ACCI in a push to consolidate Australia's plan out of COVID-19 restrictions (including international travel) once sufficient population levels are vaccinated.



### **Business SA's role alongside ACCI supporting South Australian businesses in workplace relations reforms**

Together we secured South Australian businesses much-needed workplace relations flexibility and reform throughout COVID-19. This advocacy was to local Senator Stirling Griff (assisted by our members) to have Parliament pass the *WR Omnibus Bill*.

This act clarified long-established issues around the definition of casual workers. It avoided a potential multi-billion liability on South Australian employers from double-dipping claims by preventing casual employees from claiming full-time benefits while keeping casual loading pay.



### **Infrastructure outcomes from the 2021/2022 state and federal budgets**

Our pre-2021/2022 state budget submission recommended a long-term plan to duplicate the Augusta and Dukes Highways to improve freight logistics and shift the dial on regional population growth. In the 2021/2022 state and federal budgets, governments committed funding to commence the first 30km of the Augusta Highway duplication project from Pt Wakefield to Lochiel.

Business SA continues to push for a total commitment to completing both key regional growth projects.



### **Heading off proposed changes to workers compensation premiums related to COVID-19**

In response to a 2020 Bill proposed by the state opposition, Business SA argued that employers should not face a reverse onus of proof if employees contracted COVID-19. We did not wish to see all employers having to prove that their employees did not contract COVID-19 in the workplace. This Bill has not progressed, and Business SA maintains a watching brief.

Further, with the state government recently proposing changes to how ReturntoWorkSA guidelines impact injury assessments to contain cost increases, Business SA has been advocating to ensure that employers are only accountable for injuries incurred at their workplace. This would otherwise compromise the significant ground gained in recent years to reduce average premiums from nearly 3% to 1.65%.

# POLICY AND ADVOCACY



**Advocacy based on sound policy on behalf of South Australian businesses is central to our existence.**

*Martin Haese - Chief Executive Officer  
Andrew McKenna - Director, Policy & Advocacy*

## Key Policy Submissions

The early days of COVID-19 were equally about helping businesses understand government policy and lobbying for sufficient business support. 2020/2021 became increasingly about the long-term economic needs of business beyond COVID-19 and responding to events including:

- the November 2020 shutdown
- fluctuating restrictions, including border closures

Business SA worked closely with its peak body, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) to ensure discussions on the many national COVID-19 matters included the voice of South Australian business. These matters ranged from:

- the vaccine rollout
- international border restrictions
- wage subsidies
- industrial relations policy

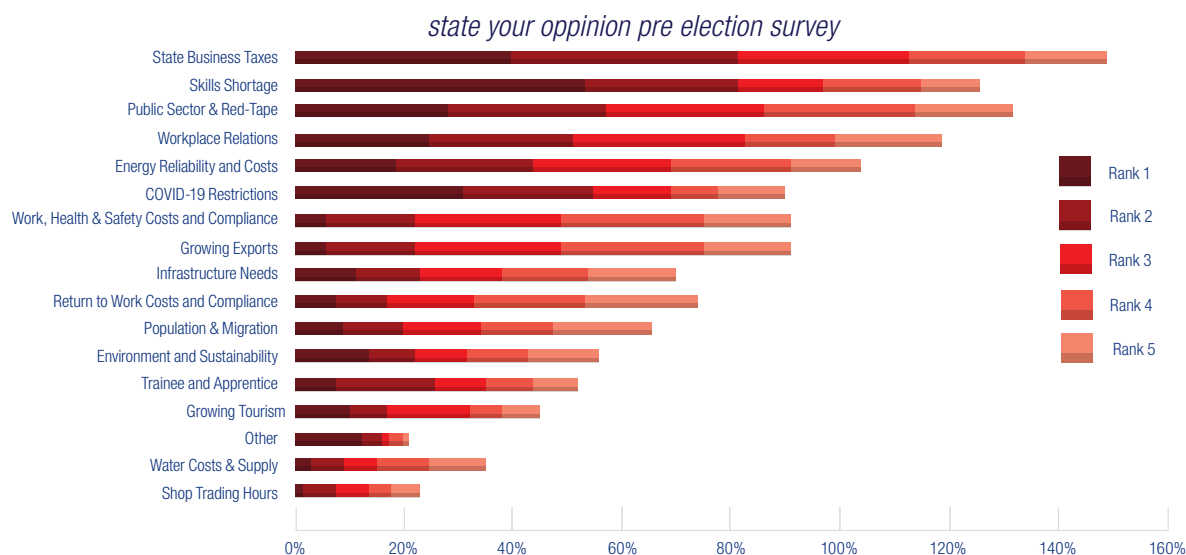
During 2020/2021, we held quarterly summits with South Australia's Regional Chambers of Commerce to keep abreast of regional business issues and to keep regional members informed of key COVID-19 related policy developments.

In November 2020, following a survey of over 400 regional businesses, Business SA released its third biennial *Regional Voice* report. This pre-eminent survey of South Australian businesses found the skills shortages to be the top issue facing business owners in 2020. This issue has gained increasing prominence since our first survey in 2016. An overwhelming majority of respondents said they struggled to attract skilled staff to regional areas in 2020, even when offering competitive pay rates. Critical barriers to finding people willing to move to the regions included a lack of access to:

- community infrastructure
- necessary services.

The Business SA William Buck Survey of Business Expectations (SOBE) continued as the state's flagship business survey throughout 2020/2021, with some quarters attracting over 400 respondents. The 2020/2021 year ended on somewhat of a dampener, with the SOBE business confidence index experiencing its first dip since the beginning of COVID-19, down 9.5 points but remaining in positive territory at 104.5. Similarly, business conditions also fell, down 11.5 points, while remaining positive at 105.3. The end of JobKeeper and increased interstate border closures due to worsening interstate COVID-19 outbreaks predicated these results in the June 2021 quarter.

In preparation for the 2022 election, Business SA ran its four-yearly pre-election survey. We use this to adequately gauge the significance of issues facing members and test potential policy responses to address these issues. The following graph outlines the various issues impacting the South Australian business community in 2021.



The Policy and Advocacy team represents members on the following committees relevant to the cost and ease of doing business in South Australia:

- Customer Panels for Australian Gas Infrastructure Group, SA Power Networks, ElectraNet, SA Water and the Essential Services Commission of South Australia
- ACCI committees for Economics and Industry Policy, Industrial Relations, Employment and Skills, and WHS
- Tourism Industry Council of South Australia
- Visitor Economy Coalition
- South Australian Volunteering Strategy Board
- South Australian Industry Skills Council
- Ministerial Advisory Committee for Industrial Relations
- Ministerial Advisory Committee for Workers Compensation
- Various State Parliamentary Committees.

The Chief Executive Officer represents Business SA's members on the Premier's Industry Response and Recovery Council.

Business SA members are representatives on the State Taxes Liaison Committee (Cowell Clarke) and the Port Adelaide Container Terminal Monitoring Panel (TRG Transport).

# MEMBERSHIP

Across 2020/2021, the economic impacts of COVID-19 continued to impact the business sector and had a resulting impact on Business SA's membership offering. Agility was the order of the day. After almost two decades of an essentially unchanged membership model in place, Business SA launched and implemented a new model of greater relevance and better value to business owners. Whether a business is a start-up, on a growth trajectory or contemplating succession options, the model launched in September 2020 caters for precisely that.

Early indicators of success showed a 22% growth in membership numbers, with 892 new members joining Business SA over the financial year, ending in almost 3600 fully paid members by the end of 2020/2021.

To further support organic membership growth, Business SA embarked on building partnerships with local governments. By offering our business support tools and services to businesses struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw 362 businesses join through the local council partnerships with the:

- City of Adelaide
- City of Playford
- City of Unley
- City of Victor Harbor



**REDEFINING BUSINESS SA'S MEMBER EXPERIENCE AND VALUE PROPOSITION WAS CRITICAL TO ENSURE MEMBERS RECEIVE VALUE AND BENEFITS RELEVANT TO THEIR NEEDS.**



Regional business support was essential to Business SA's growth agenda across 2020/2021 through our new *Regional Chamber Partnership Strategy*. Business Victor Harbor and the Renmark Paringa Network were the first to sign up from the 12 South Australian regional chambers.

In what is traditionally a quiet period for membership in the lead up to Christmas, we trialled an offer of one complimentary month membership. The positive feedback told us that members welcomed this offer and our new financial hardship measures designed to support members challenged by COVID-19.

## Buy Local to Save Your Local Campaign

During the pandemic, Business SA continued to drive the *Buy Local to Save Your Local* public campaign to inspire South Australians to purchase local products and services upon the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

The campaign was a significant highlight of Business SA's advocacy efforts through the media to support businesses during the crisis. This was not a throwaway line but rather a lifeline to support South Australia's economy across a year where borders were closed, and restrictions were in place. We knew that many small businesses were suffering during this time so South Australians were encouraged to think about their local florist, the family-owned grocer, favourite restaurant, local pub, physiotherapist or hardware store.

#BuyLocaltoSaveYourLocal



City Trader - Campaign Participants





**clean LIFE**  
Live a Clean Life

**KILLS 99.9% OF GERMS**

**ISOPROPYL ALCOHOL WIPES**  
MEDICAL GRADE  
Isopropyl Alcohol 70%  
Disinfects hand and general surfaces

MDX300mm | **75** wipes

**Dispensing Order:**  
1. Remove lid  
2. Locate the wiper  
3. Insert the wiper  
4. Remove the wiper  
5. Clean the wiper

**clean LIFE**

**AUSTRALIAN MADE AND OWNED**

Phil Scardigno - AXIS Manufacture

# MEMBER #3,500



Business SA welcomed its 3500th member, iconic Adelaide Hills business, Prancing Pony Brewery. Owner Corinna Steeb said her business lost income directly from the lockdown and turned to Business SA for representation in ongoing COVID-19 discussions. "We believe there is strength in numbers," said Ms Steeb.

# GREAT MEMBER STORIES

## **Ray White Business Sales**

Corporate Member Brett Buckley of Ray White Business Sales South Australia and Northern Territory, was named 2020 SA Business Broker of the Year by the Australian Institute of Business Brokers.

## **Build Clean**

Start-Up Member Sam Ackland of Build Clean won the InDaily 40 Under 40 2020 Entrepreneur Award. He was recognised as the South Australian Young Entrepreneur after graduating from our SAYES program.

## **40 Under 40**

Corporate Members Aaron Hickmann Founder/CEO of VALO and SAYES graduate, and Anna Pak Poy Founder/Chair of Careerlink People Solutions, Rare Find Foundation and Pak Poy and Partners were nominated for 2021 InDaily 40 Under 40 Awards.

## **Roundwood Solutions**

Corporate Member Stephen Telford of Roundwood Solutions, was a finalist at 2020 the SA Premier's Climate Change Leaders Awards.

## **Country Blinds, Curtains and Shutters**

Country Blinds, Curtains and Shutters General Manager Rhett Payne says: "Business SA has given us the confidence to grow as a company by bolstering our in-house knowledge with the expertise provided by the Business Advice Hotline".

## **R.M. Williams**

Business SA congratulated long-term members R.M. Williams following its return to Australian ownership. Business SA CEO Martin Haese and Chair Nikki Govan congratulated Andrew "Twiggy" Forrest on his acquisition of the 88-year-old company, saying they are thrilled for the iconic Adelaide bootmaker, which employs 400 staff at its Salisbury workshop. "R.M. Williams roots have returned home, and the timing couldn't be better highlighting the world-class manufacturing capabilities available right here in South Australia," said Mr Haese.

# MARKETING, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION



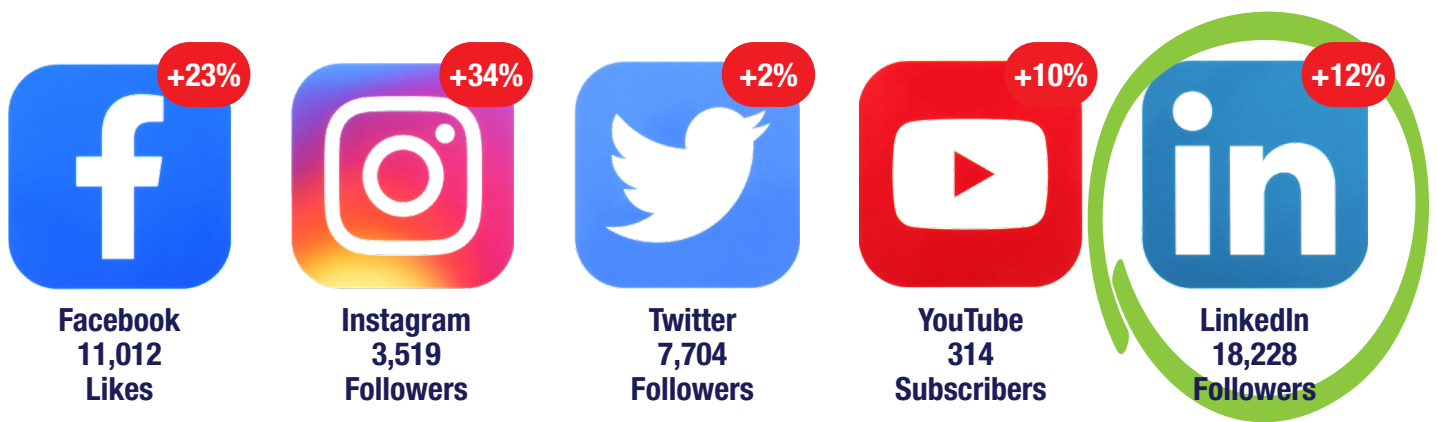
## BUSINESS SA DELIVERED THE EVENTS AND COMMUNICATION CRITICAL FOR BUSINESSES NAVIGATING COVID-19.



Social media growth remains a pivotal performance indicator for the marketing team. Growing our network, particularly with a younger demographic, is essential for increasing our membership and the broad reach of our messaging.

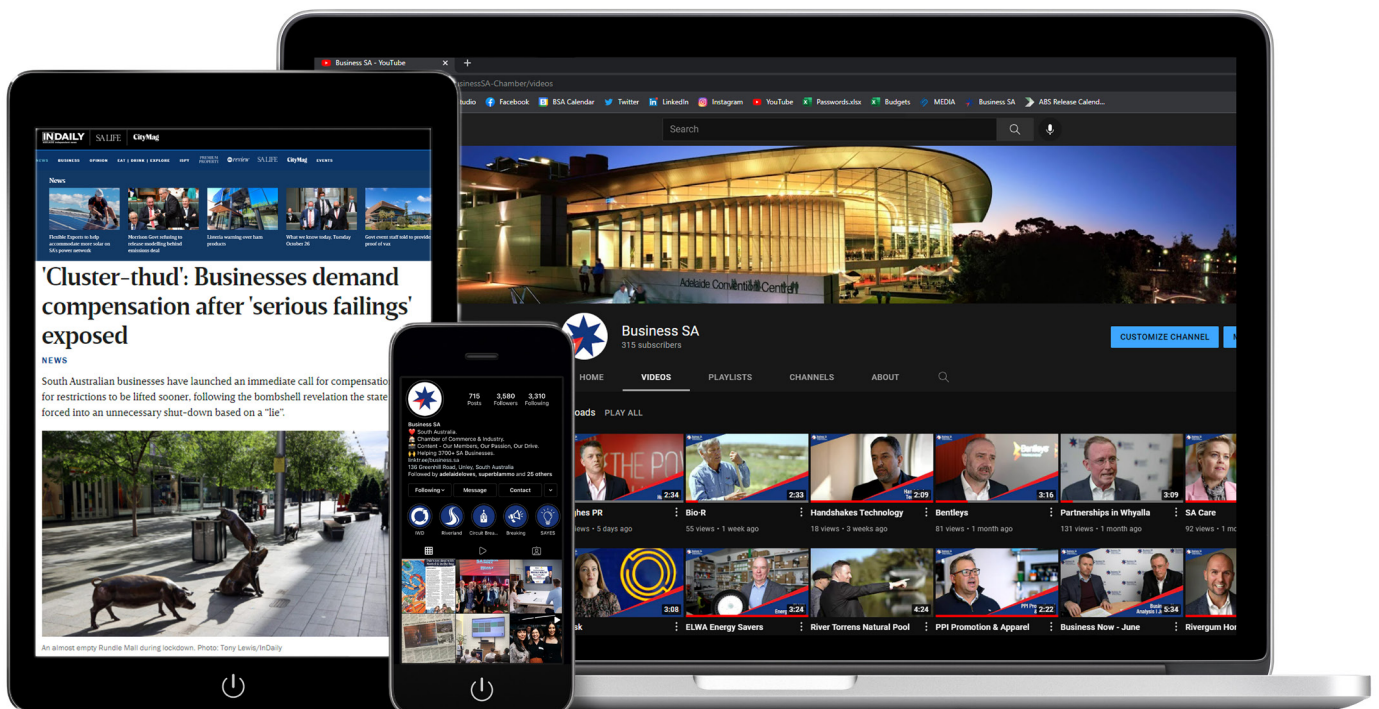
Business SA's ability to reach larger audiences through all forms of digital communication significantly increased across 2020/2021.

LinkedIn remains the highest performing social media platform for Business SA with 18,288 total LinkedIn followers (+ 12%).



Media mentions for the financial year saw a significant increase in media saturation is a result of the national media during the November 2020 lockdown. At this time, South Australia was the only state in Australia subject to lockdown conditions and therefore of particular media interest.

- 5330 mentions (+ 41%)
- audience reach of 63.02 million (+ 35%)
- resulting in an ASR of 29.15 million (+ 70%)



## Events Calendar Remained Shaken But Not Stirred

Despite lockdowns and restrictions, Business SA ran an impressive 125 physical events and 52 webinars during 2020/2021. A key highlight was South Australia's Biggest Mentally Healthy Breakfast as part of Mental Health Month in October 2020. This state-wide breakfast was held simultaneously at ten locations and encouraged business owners to support more mentally healthy workplaces.

Other notable events across 2020/2021 were:

- Business SA and ACCI hosted the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Federal Treasurer of Australia, for the 2021/2022 federal budget briefing in May at the Adelaide Town Hall
- The first event as part of our new exclusive corporate lunch series featured Stefan Ahrens, Managing Director of Ahrens Group Pty Ltd. At 26, Stefan purchased the family business, which has been listed in BRW's Top 100 Fastest-Growing Private Companies for many years and is among Australia's top 500 private companies
- Business SA was delighted to host Managing Director of the Ray White Group, Dan White, at an exclusive corporate members luncheon to celebrate our new strategic alliance to deliver confidential business appraisals and brokerage services
- Since the first gathering in 1911, International Women's Day has been an opportunity to celebrate how much women contribute to our society. In 2020, Business SA hosted Kelly Jamieson of Edible Blooms, Isobel Marshall, Co-Founder of Taboo and 2021 Young Australian of the Year and business partner Eloise Hall, Co-Founder of Taboo, Anna Pak Poy of Careerlink People Solutions and 2019 InDaily 40 under 40, Nikki Govan Chairperson Business SA, and Annie Harvey TEDx speaker.



# EMPLOYER SOLUTIONS AND PROGRAMS

## Entrepreneurs' Programme

Business SA successfully tendered to deliver business services to eligible businesses across South Australia on behalf of the Federal Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources. This new contract for the *Growth Service* is for an initial three-year term with two consecutive one-year options to extend. The *Strengthening Business* contract is a two-year contract from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2022. The focus is to assist businesses impacted by the Black Summer bushfires on Kangaroo Island and in the Adelaide Hills and Mount Barker.

Business SA now employs 11 *Growth Facilitators* and two *Strengthening Business Facilitators* and is the sole delivery partner of these two programs for South Australia.

The new contract has shifted significant responsibilities to delivery partners, requiring more intensive and concentrated management, oversight and quality assurance. The *Entrepreneurs' Programme* delivery model has therefore undergone considerable redesign introducing:

- new service standards
- service delivery timeframes
- launch of growth roadmaps
- SMART projects
- supply chain services
- the rapid launch of the new *Strengthening Business* service as well as the introduction of an improved dashboards portfolio management approach.

Despite the continued COVID-19 challenges, Business SA has successfully supported approximately 250 South Australian businesses to grow revenue, jobs and exports. Business SA's work with bushfire impacted businesses has been instrumental in ensuring the survival of many businesses through the *Strengthening Business* services.



Entrepreneurs' Programme Workshop

# Business Advisory

## Business Bookshop – Awards and Publications

2020/2021 has seen numerous significant changes to Australia's Modern Awards, including:

- updates to cover COVID-19 pandemic leave
- hours of work
- four yearly reviews
- general retail
- evening penalty rates and overtime for casuals.

The Fair Work Commission issued over 383 separate determinations, resulting in Business SA delivering 600 individual Modern Award updates.

There were 2,468 PAYpack Award Service subscribers in 2020/2021 (+ 4%), with 422 complimentary for new Business SA members.

The most frequently subscribed PAYpack Awards have remained consistent with earlier reporting years:

- Clerks - Private Sector Award 2020
- Manufacturing and Associated Industries and Occupations Award 2020
- General Retail Industry Award 2020
- Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2020
- Building and Construction General On-site Award 2020.

Business SA has 1,228 subscribers to its six subscription-based publications, with 360 complimentary for new Business SA members.

Business SA has continued its arrangement with KJK Legal and William Buck to provide legal and accounting updates for publications. As part of our commitment to ongoing improvement, the following publications were refreshed and enhanced:

- The Employer's Handbook
- Business Payroll and Salary Packaging Guide
- Business Taxation Manual
- WHS Legislative Changes Update.

## Workplace Consulting

The consulting team continued to provide businesses with specialist advice and guidance concerning:

- workplace relations
- WHS
- quality
- workers compensation.

Indicative of the demand for the services of the consulting team, we opened 190 new files in 2020/2021:

- 138 industrial relations
- 35 WHS and/or quality files
- 17 workers compensation files.

Business SA continued its WHS consulting work as a panel provider to the City of Tea Tree Gully and secured a contract to work with the City of Marion to undertake WHS audit services. The impact of COVID-19 was most pronounced for WHS consulting, particularly in relation to events management.

We ran topical information sessions across the year, including popular sessions:

- workplace updates:
  - annual wage review
  - COVID-19 restrictions and JobKeeper
  - fair work changes - what's on the industrial relations horizon.
- mental health of the post-COVID-19 worker
- the knack of performance management to avoid costly claims
- business essentials - Adelaide City Council Workplace Relations and WHS breakout sessions
- understanding award rates with the Small Business Commissioner
- strength-to-success regional series - industrial relations updates to regional members.

The team delivered another year of strong financial performance with above-projected revenue and net-profits. Our focus was on higher-yielding consulting services for:

- payroll audits
- enterprise agreement reviews
- legislative audits
- WHS systems development.

# Programs

## Encore

Business SA is proud of the 41 businesses enrolled in the Encore program, and this is the highest annual number since the 2017 program launch.

With a growing number of program participants, there was a strong focus on recruiting mentors for all programs this year, and Business SA now has a robust and diverse mentor cohort of over 80.



*Kate Campbell - Playpouch Australia*



*William Bartholomaeus - Cultivate KI Participant*

*Martin Haese - Business SA CEO*

## Cultivate Kangaroo Island

Business SA delivered the Cultivate KI business growth program in partnership with the Kangaroo Island Business Hub. The Department for Innovation and Skills funded the program to assist the local business community to reimagine and rebuild following the COVID-19 pandemic and the catastrophic bushfire season of 2020.

The foundation of the four-month accelerated workshop and mentoring program is our successful SAYES program, including:

- seminars on business fundamentals
- a dedicated mentor
- participants completing a business plan.

Cultivate KI commenced in June 2021 with 14 local business participants enrolled. The program delivered workshops and mentoring, with participants already identifying opportunities for commercial collaboration. Mentoring is available through a combination of Kangaroo Island and Adelaide-based mentors.

## Digital Champions Project

Business SA was one of 15 industry associations funded to provide free digital advisory services to eligible Business SA small business members (members with 19 or less FTEs). This funding from the Department for Industry, Science, Energy and Resources assisted them to improve their digital capabilities, with the most interest in:

- social media and digital marketing
- online security and data privacy.

We delivered 662 services to 499 small businesses over the two-year contract period (4 April 2019 to 3 April 2021) and met all contractual performance indicators and reporting obligations.





Sam Ackland

2020 South Australian Young Entrepreneur of the Year



### South Australian Young Entrepreneurs Scheme (SAYES)

We are thankful to the Department for Innovation and Skills for enabling the delivery of SAYES in 2020/2021, including 36 young entrepreneurs from metropolitan and regional areas.

Sam Ackland was named South Australian Young Entrepreneur of the Year. Sam founded Build Clean in 2018 where he created an internal training and leadership program and employment opportunities for the unemployed in his first year. Build Clean built a reputation for setting a high benchmark in just two years and uses an innovative app-based system to ensure clients receive the highest quality clean.

Business SA met all contractual and reporting obligations for SAYES. The newly established Mentor Advisory Panel was instrumental in reviewing and enhancing program content, business plan, and mentor guidelines. We submitted a two-year funding application for 2021-2023 in May 2021.

# BUSINESS ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

As part of the new membership structure, we launched the Business Accelerator Program (BAP) in November 2020. The BAP provides practical, actionable insights into the key growth levers for owners of SME businesses across all industry sectors. The program achieves consistently strong satisfaction levels from attendees.

Participants of BAP attend one workshop a month as part of a seven-topic series. Business SA subject matter experts and our respected referral partners deliver these sessions, and we are scoping a regional webinar series for launch in 2021/2022.

# BUSINESS GROWTH CONSULTING

Business Growth Consulting aligns with Business SA's purpose of helping local businesses to succeed. Commencing in February 2021, the service has found a large audience within our membership that are seeking assistance with developing growth strategies. Our consulting services cater to members wanting bespoke business planning services.

Business Growth Consulting primarily assists members through:

- the development of business plans
- commercialisation strategies
- business development
- systemisation
- coaching and mentoring services.

We have a project fee model that delivers highly valued outcomes for members. We measure this through revenue, productivity, and growth. Business Growth Consulting provides an ongoing engagement with members and embeds the value of their Business SA membership into the planning and growth of their business.

# TRAINING

Being extremely flexible, agile and thinking outside of the box were crucial components to the team maximising every opportunity this year. Due to the impact of COVID-19 and various restrictions, the uptake of training got off to a slower start than usual. The business community quickly reacts to any slight concern and tightens their expenditure. Therefore, we saw many organisations minimise their staff participation in external training.

In 2020/2021, Business SA delivered 131 courses to 1113 attendees, comprised of:

- onsite training (62 sessions, 552 attendees)
- public courses (69 sessions, 561 attendees).

Training feedback and customer satisfaction remained consistently high this year, with WHS the core Business SA training offering. HSR and WHS training represented 89% of total public training and 66% of onsite training.

The need to manage expenses, balance course allocation and logistics were essential to managing the impact COVID-19 had on the daily operations of the training program. We saw an increase in administration time due to transfer and rescheduling of bookings that affected revenue and margins.

The introduction of facilitated online learning created opportunities to build the regional client base more effectively. This year, we added a sales training program to the public training schedule to assist businesses with their growth strategies.

We secured funding from the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to promote subsidised training to the construction industry. While there has been limited take-up of the training, this was partly due to the sector being busier than ever. It is also because of Business SA's recent registration as an approved provider. The construction industry remains an opportunity, and Business SA continues to build upon our presence in this area as a quality training provider.



*Cindy Jackway - Training Manager Business SA*

# MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Despite the year of lockdowns and restrictions, the Business SA International Trade team continued to provide its full suite of services to South Australian exporters. There was a 40% decrease in trade and export documentation volume through various parts of 2020/2021 primarily due to the China trade tensions and the limitation on the number of shipments and containers. In total, 24,397 documents received approval (- 6%).

Business SA's trade team assisted wine exporters to redirect shipments from tax-free zones in China to other countries by re-issuing the Certificate of Origins.



**CRITICAL SERVICES THAT KEEP OUR FINGER ON  
THE PULSE OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.**

# PEOPLE OF BUSINESS SA



**OUR PEOPLE ARE OUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET FOR DELIVERING INNOVATION AND EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE**



## Great Outcomes in Times of Change

Our staff have demonstrated incredible passion, drive, innovation and resilience through a time of significant change. Business SA has asked a lot of its people to respond to constant change driven by COVID and continue to drive the outcomes of the 12-point strategic plan. The collective efforts of all our people have seen an enormous amount of work undertaken to support members and the broader business community.

The Board and Executive acknowledge our people as the driving force behind creating a sustainable and vibrant Business SA for the future.

## New Starters

At Business SA, we have had 26 new starters in 12 months. This is a remarkable number and represents the responsiveness, growth and recovery of Business SA. A key driver was the growth in the *Entrepreneurs' Programme*, accounting for ten new starters. Across the rest of the organisation, every new appointment has been about adding skill, depth, digital competency and aligning staff to members and clients needs.

## Milestone

We had an impressive milestone set by one of our long-term team members Rob Pearce in 2020/2021, who reached 25 years of service. For many years Rob has been the foundation of the Business Advice Hotline, with thousands of members receiving sage advice from Rob in a time of need. Congratulations Rob!



## Staff Initiatives

As a people-first organisation, 2020/2021 has been the year of recognition. We want to demonstrate this to our staff through a range of new and existing initiatives:

- launch of our *Orientation Program* in August 2020
- reinstatement of birthday leave for all staff
- flu vaccinations using our member Spartan
- Gallup profile assessments supported by Star Consulting
- Performance Development Review (PDR) process launched
- employee engagement survey – 73% engaged with the organisation (86% participation rate)
- flexibility policy launched
- salary increases – first time across all staff in several years
- harassment, bullying and discrimination training for all staff
- updates on services and benefits from Bank SA, Statewide Super and Maxxia
- Business SA participates in the Corporate Cup Challenge
- successful Christmas party to celebrate after a challenging year.



*Matt Lowe - Director, Corporate Membership*  
*David Slama - Executive Director, Enterprise Development*  
*Debbie Shearer - Manager, Events*  
*Helena Senesi - Events Coordinator*  
*Anthony Caldwell - Digital Marketing Specialist*  
*Andrew McKenna - Director, Policy & Advocacy*

# TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION

At Business SA, we are abundantly aware that the business world continues to evolve at a pace never seen before. Businesses are increasingly needing to operate 24/7 with a variety of demands on business owners and operators. That is why Business SA has set itself the strategy of continuous improvement in technology to provide members and clients with the services they need when they need them.

Business SA last undertook a significant transformation of technology six years ago. While the fundamental elements of this transformation remain valid, we are now behind best practices. Therefore, during 2020/2021, the Board and Executive agreed to the next evolution of technology at Business SA.

Our ethos is that all changes in technology should be customer-centric, and our process commenced with discussions around who our customers are and what they need. Establishing an innovation team has kept our organisation focused on those changes that will deliver the most benefit to members and clients. It is these foundations of change that we believe will ensure future success in innovation.

A focus for the Executive has been to identify the platforms that require an update to meet the expectations of our members and clients. We agreed to update or replace the following platforms in 2021/2022:



**website and  
associated  
web tools**



**phone  
system**

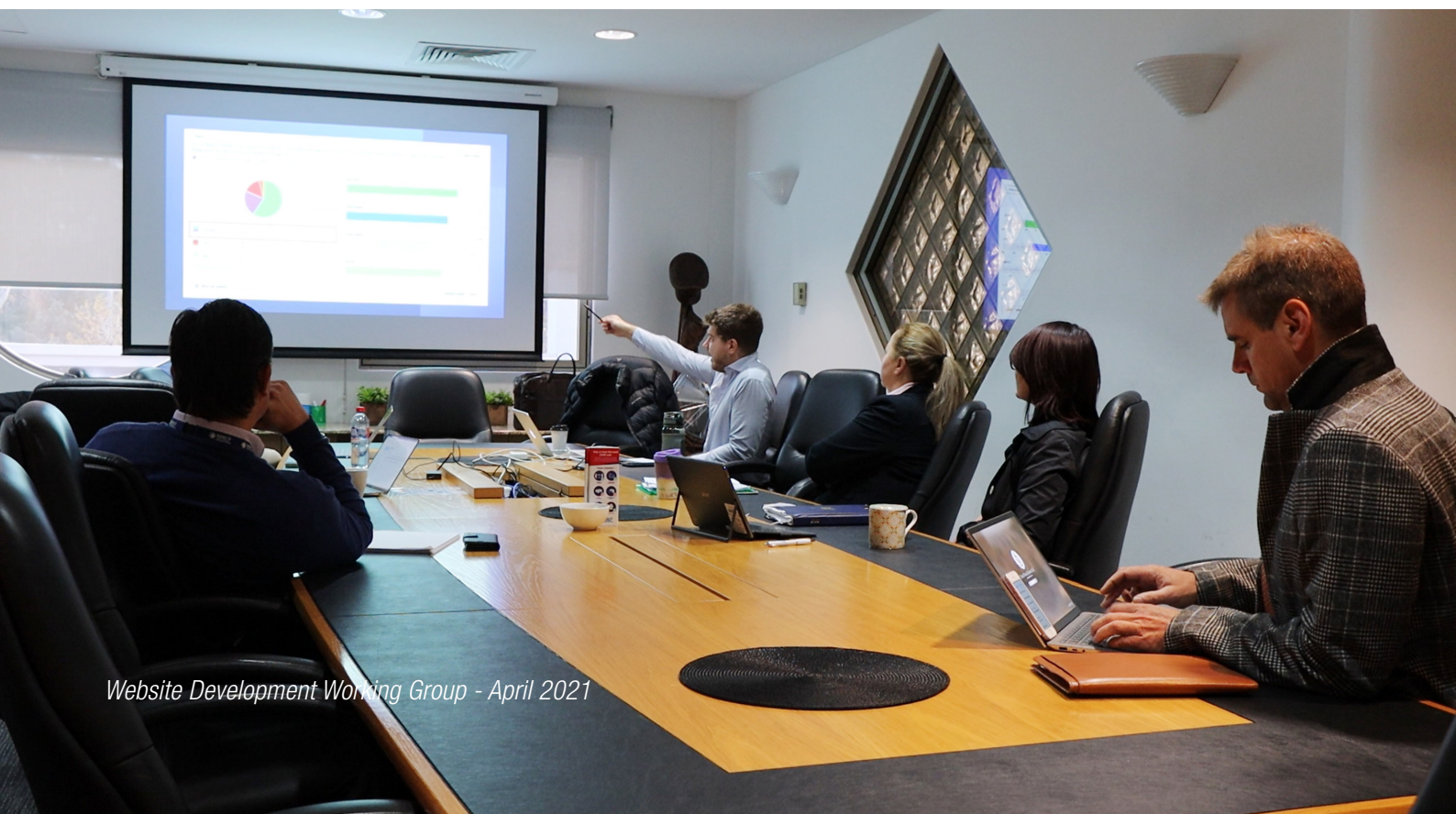


**accounting  
system**



**cloud  
infrastructure  
improvements**

We look forward to bringing the digital evolution of Business SA to our staff, members, future members, clients, and stakeholders.



# FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

For the 2020/2021 financial year, Business SA produced an operating surplus of \$1,483,126 compared to a loss of (\$527,032) in the previous year.

Before depreciation, the result for the financial year was a surplus of \$2,059,920 compared to a loss of (\$34,212) in the previous financial year.

There is clear evidence underneath these headline numbers that Business SA's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan is continuing to deliver improved financial outcomes. The delivery of the core undertakings of this 12-point strategic plan has had clear dividends.

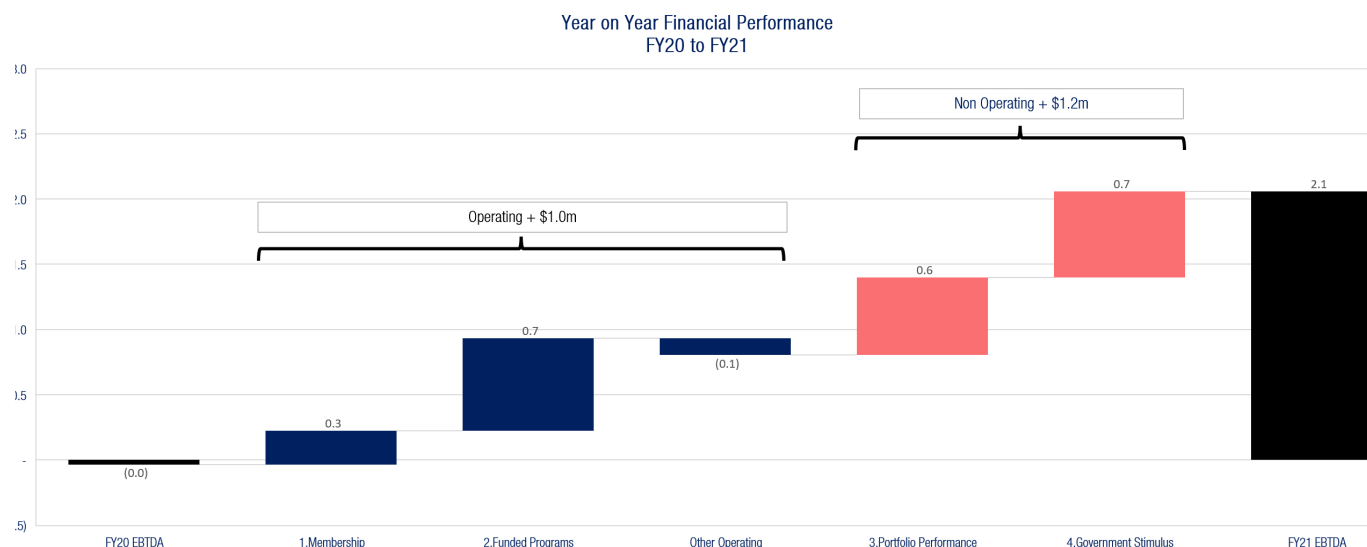
Analysis of the key drivers of the financial result is as follows:

**1/ Membership** - 22% growth in membership numbers through 892 new members joining Business SA

**2/ Funded Programs** - secured an increased scope of the *Entrepreneurs' Programme* contract

**3/ Portfolio Performance** - represents the fair value increase of Business SA's portfolio. The portfolio holds a large portion of exposure to local and international equities, which rose in 2020/2021 following COVID-19 declines in 2019/2020

**4/ JobKeeper Eligibility** - this provided confidence to maintain full employment and full-service offering.



In addition to the operating surplus, Business SA undertook a revaluation of the property in which it holds a 50% interest. This process updated the property's value (last valued in 2017/2018), and an increase in balance sheet valuation of 50% of the \$3.6m uplift has been recognised in Other Comprehensive Income. This increase results in Total Comprehensive Income for 2020/2021 of \$3,304,702.

The quality of financial results delivered positive operating cashflows for the financial year. Net cash from operating activities was \$2,011,377 in the 2020/2021 financial year, compared to an operating inflow of \$264,805 in the previous year.

The collective outcome of operating and non-operating activity is a return of balance sheet strength. The year-on-year growth in Net Assets was \$3.3m or 36% for 2020/2021. A return to a sustainable performance by Business SA sets the association of sustainable operations and growth across the 2020-2023 strategic planning cycle

