



BUSINESS LIAISON ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT 2020

For the year ended 31 December 2020

Business Liaison Association

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PARTNERS 2020



ELITE SPONSORS 2020



PLATINUM SPONSORS 2020



GOLD SPONSORS 2020



Michael Healy MP
Member for Cairns



INTRODUCTION

In presenting the 24th Annual Report of the Business Liaison Association, I would like to thank the Executive Committee for its efforts in the management of the Association and Working Groups for the management of the Association throughout the COVID pandemic.

The annual budget of the Association balanced out \$343,766 and this was made possible by continuing sponsorship and donations from the Cairns business community, government grants, secondary school donations, both public and private and through fundraising.

Funding was allocated to the following activities organised by the Association:

- Careers programs including the Cairns Youth and Careers Expo
- Business industry seminars, breakfasts and workshops
- Awards and competitions
- Visiting Experts and Industry Site Visits
- Executive Officer and part-time Administration Officer wages

The Business Liaison Association's footprint spans 33 schools within the region from Tully to the Cape. Over 11,000 students and actively engages 35 local businesses and educators.

OUR MISSION

To encourage and provide secondary students with relevant up to date knowledge, skills and resources to meet the current and future challenges of the business community.



SPONSORSHIP

The Annual Networking Cocktails function for 2020 was held for sponsors past and present, and members. It was well attended by corporate sponsors. The Association presented gifts to the following 35 corporate sponsors in recognition of their commitment and contribution. We also recognised our long-term milestone corporate sponsors for their loyalty – Mindwire (15 years), James Cook University (15 Years), Grant Thornton (15 Years) and Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns (15 Years).

2020 PARTNERS	2020 GOLD SPONSORS
James Cook University	Alive Discount Pharmacy
Department of Education, Far North Queensland	Big Cat Green Island Cruises
	Brien Leibinger Lawyers
	BDO
2020 ELITE SPONSORS	
Catholic Education, Diocese of Cairns	Cairns Mate IT
Danae Jones Marketing	Cairns Hardware
Efex	Hutchinson Builders
Oasis Magazine	HEH Civil
Star 102.7	Michael Healy MP, Member for Cairns
	MiHaven Training
2020 PLATINUM SPONSORS	Ports North
Cairns Show Association	Progig
Careful Books	Rotary International
Ergon Energy	Sandran Property Group
FGF	SMSF Strategic Advisors
Grant Thornton	TAFE Queensland
Mindwire	Total Exhibition Services
Skill360 Australia	Tong Sing Pty Ltd
Status Signs	
Vocational Partnerships Group	
WIN Network	

STRATEGIC PLAN AND STRATEGIC REVIEW

Following a review of the activities and structures of the Association in 2019, a new Strategic Plan (2020 – 2023) was developed to progress the findings and outcomes. The Association continues to source new initiatives to maximise opportunities for all stakeholders. This plan focuses on the following key success areas and is reviewed annually. Regular progress to date reports were tabled at the Executive Meetings. Adjustments to timelines were necessary due to COVID shutdown.

KEY OBJECTIVES FOR 2020 – 2023

1. Succession and Planning
2. Technology and Change
3. Awareness
4. Corporate and Finance
5. Value Adding

An action plan was developed to progress these areas over three years.

The following activities were carried out in 2020:

- A Youth and Careers Expo with a COVID Safe Plan;
- The Association continued to offer the Visiting Experts Program although delegates were limited due to COVID shutdown
 - Young Entrepreneur – Mr Scott Millar;
 - Young Science Ambassador – Ms Bronwyn Smithies; and
 - Legal Studies Workshops - Professor Anthony Gray.
- During 2020, several rural and remote schools accessed our Visiting Experts Program including Atherton State High School, Kuranda State College, Babinda P-12 School, Tully State High School, Mossman State High School, Cairns School of Distance Education and Dimbulah P-10 School;
- The Annual Aspire Awards Presentation night to recognise student achievement was held despite difficulties in complying with the COVID restrictions;
- Additional networking functions for corporate sponsors and supporters including a Sunset Cruise and Christmas Race Day at the Cairns Jockey Club;
- Expansion of sponsorship opportunities for corporate sponsors to include event sponsors, lunch sponsors, industry visit sponsors and raffle sponsors;
- Recruitment opportunities for award recipients;
- Regular meetings were held by the Finance Working Group;
- The expansion of student Industry Site Visits to include Norweld Australia;
- Partnering with TAFE Queensland to offer "Try a Trade Program" for students.



SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Association is very proud of its achievements and successes. These include:

- Our annual budget balanced out to \$343,766;
- A highly successful one day Cairns Youth and Careers Expo with 62 exhibitors and the event attracted over 3,000 secondary school students, plus parents, career changers and job seekers;
- A new Junior Literary Competition was introduced in 2020;
- Approximately 3,000 students participated in 2020 Business Liaison Association awards and competitions with \$40,000 (in value) being awarded to students for further studies. These were generously sponsored by:





FINDEX



Jacobs



SIDCOR



- Unfortunately, due to the impact that the COVID shutdown had on student class time in schools, the DATA Awards could not be offered in 2020.
- The Association was able to attract and finance high profile motivational speakers for our breakfast seminars;

- The Business Liaison Association fundraised for Headspace (youth mental health) and donated \$1,500;
- The Association continued to offer three-day visits by high profile speakers to cover Cassowary Coast, Cairns and Tableland schools. In some cases, with funding assistance Visiting Experts are able to visit schools for five days eg. Wonder of Science assisted with funding for Young Science Ambassador;
- Over 5,000 students accessed our programs through 2020 – these are allocated below:

SCHOOLS	TOTAL STUDENT ATTENDANCE 2020
Atherton State High School	105
Babinda State School	122
Bentley Park College	369
Cairns School of Distance Education	46
Cairns State High School	557
Cape York Girls School	6
Dimbulah State School	63
Djarragun College	110
Freshwater Christian College	137
Good Counsel College	10
Gordonvale State High School	51
Herberton State School	0
Holy Spirit College	0
Innisfail State College	10
Kuranda District College	59
Malanda State High School	156
Mareeba State High School	171
Mossman State High School	64
Mount St Bernard Catholic College	79
Northern Peninsula Area State College	0
Peace Lutheran College	161
Ravenshoe State School	59
Redlynch State College	285
St Andrew's Catholic College	217
St Augustine's Catholic College	244
St Mary's Catholic College	297

St Monica's Catholic College	220
St Stephen's Catholic College	182
Smithfield State High School	392
Tagai College	0
Trinity Anglican School	254
Trinity Bay State High School	172
Tully State High School	119
Woree State High School	307
Western Cape College	50
Yarrabah State School	0
Other	664
TOTAL ATTENDEES	5,698



Set out below is a snapshot of activities for the 2020 year and attendances.

EVENT	TOTAL
JCU Careers in Health Breakfast 6 th March 2020	229
Young Entrepreneurs Breakfast with Scott Millar 27 th February 2020	163
Enterprise Workshops 28 th February 2020	207
Try a Trade – Hair and Beauty 10 th March 2020	26
Prof Anthony Gray Legal Studies Workshops 12 – 16 th May 2020	462
Young Science Ambassador Visit 16 – 19 th May 2020	752
Mock Court Competition 28 th May 2020	30
Youth and Careers Expo 2020 27 th August 2020	3005
Sunset Cruise 17 th September	60
Ergon Energy Site Visit October 2020	80
Norweld Site Visits November 2020	136
Christmas Networking Cocktails 5 th November 2020	100
Christmas Race Day 15 th November 2020	60
Annual Awards Presentation 2020 3 rd December 2020	384
TOTAL 2020	5,698

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Our Executive Officer, Kerrie Stanley has introduced several new initiatives to increase networking events for corporate sponsors 2020.

The main focus for 2020 was to provide as many events and opportunities for the students in our region to participate in our programs during COVID shutdown. And, then as schools reopened to sustain the programs in a constantly evolving period of restrictions. We also had to 'pivot' and rethink strategies for:

- Increasing corporate sponsorship opportunities
- Increasing exhibitors for Cairns Youth and Careers Expo
- Raising awareness of the Business Liaison Association within the community
- Improving marketing collateral by creating a consistent corporate image for the Association
- Profiling the Association through a selection of Social Media platforms, and
- Successfully managing all events within prescribed COVID regulations.

INDUSTRY SITE VISITS

The Business Liaison Association is expanding this program as both students and teachers are able to view firsthand practices and innovations in the workplace, and then implement the knowledge gained into classroom learnings.



CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

The following sponsorship information includes cash and in-kind sponsorship.

	2020	2019
Sponsorship In-Kind	84,000	\$ 97,760
Awards Sponsorship	44,241	\$ 63,530
Rotary and School Donations	29,500	\$ 36,295
Cash Sponsorship	67,389	\$ 60,098
TOTAL	\$225,130	\$257,683

These figures are extracted from Grant Thornton Financial Statements, Quick Books software.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Jessica Bugno – Treasurer has meticulously monitored financial records throughout the year, she has also presented very comprehensive Financial Reports and streamlined processes at the Executive Committee Meetings. Judith Searle from Careful Books has generously contributed a Platinum in-kind sponsorship for the Associations bookkeeping. Judith carries out checks on finances and supervises accounts. There have been regular meetings of the Finance Working Group, chaired by Jessica Bugno to monitor the Financial Reports. It is pleasing to report that the Association has traded a surplus for 2020.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Association has completed/reviewed policy and procedures documents to enhance corporate governance. All members of the Executive undergo training in this area. Policies and procedures have been reviewed at Executive Meetings throughout the year. The Governance Working Group Meetings chaired by Sandy Whyte (Committee Member) have met to:

1. consider the corporate governance requirements for the Association;
2. complete the Governance Checklist; and
3. along with the Terms of Reference for the Governance Working Group.

I pay tribute to Mr Sandy Whyte for the tremendous work done in the area of governance and compliance. Sadly, Sandy passed away in November 2020.

MARKETING

The goal for 2020 was to continue to raise the awareness of the Business Liaison Association and the services that we provide to the students in the region. The Executive Officer maintained the current networking opportunities offered by the Cairns Business Women's Club, the Cairns Chamber of Commerce, and attended ad hoc networking events like BNI and Trading Mates.

The Website is consistently being updated with events and current information.

The Executive Officer and Administration Officer have continued to post valuable content/updates across all social media platforms. This has increased the Business Liaison Association's interaction on their FaceBook page. Resulting in an increase in the likes to 1,716 and the followers to 1,871. This year the staff have been working hard to increase their student Instagram following. They are currently in the early stages of this with 373 followers at present.

BUSINESS NETWORKING

The Executive Officer attended a limited number of business networking events during 2020 as a result of COVID and the number of BLA hosted events that needed coordinating.

NEWSLETTER

Four newsletters were produced in 2020 and distributed electronically to around 750 sponsors and supporters. The newsletters keep readers updated on what the Business Liaison Association is doing, what events have been held and what events are coming up. We will continue to publish frequent newsletters in 2021 and increase distribution wherever possible. Within the constraints of the newsletter, we were also able to promote events that corporate sponsors held.

WEBSITE

The Business Liaison Association is grateful for the ongoing in-kind platinum sponsorship of Mindwire web designers who assist in the design and hosting of our website.

The Executive Officer and the Administration Officer maintained the website during 2020.



We connect students & industries

The Website now has a

Main Menu Options

- **Home Page that includes**
- **Awards and Competitions Page**
- **Youth and Careers Expo**
- **Events**
- **News**
- **Frequently Asked Questions**

Second Menu

- **About us** – History on the BLA
- **Board** – Meet our team including past committee members
- **Sponsors** – Meet our Family
- **Contact us Page** including a map of our location

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Business Liaison Association's FaceBook page also received a lot of work in 2020. The FaceBook page was redesigned to mirror the website in terms of consistency of the Business Liaison Association's corporate image and keeping the community up to date with our events.

FaceBook Page Year	Likes	% Increase
FaceBook page 2015- 2016	529 likes	
FaceBook page 2016 -2017	680 likes	151 +29%
FaceBook page 2017 -2018	793 likes	113 +16%
FaceBook page 2018 -2019	962 likes	169 +21%
FaceBook page 2019 -2020	1,298 likes	336 +35%
FaceBook page 2020-2021	1,716 likes	418 +32%

MEETINGS

Meetings of the Executive Committee were held every six weeks during 2020. The focus of these was:

- Refining accounting systems and procedures – regular monitoring of accounts receivables;
- Implementation of new initiatives;
- Ensuring accountability and responsiveness to stakeholders' needs;
- Progressing the strategic plan and reviewing the action items arising from it;
- Corporate governance and Finance;
- Technology and change; and
- Reviewing Marketing collateral.

All Executive Committee Meetings during 2020 were held at the Business Liaison Association office, JCU Building meeting rooms, 1st floor, 36 Shields Street, Cairns. However, during the COVID shutdown, several meetings were held via zoom.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Business Liaison Association sincerely thanks the sponsors from industry and community who support this Association. Without their generous sponsorship, we would not be able to do what we do for the young people of Far North Queensland.

Sincere thanks must also go to the Principals, Teachers, Co-ordinators and Volunteers.

Sincere thanks also to the members of the Executive Committee who are not seeking re-election. Your professional contribution will be sadly missed.

Gifts were presented to

1. **Jacinta Perry** –5 years – General Committee
2. **Hugh O'Brien** – 9 years – General Committee
3. **Virginia Cullen** – 2 years – General Committee
4. **Brett Moller** – 6 years - General Committee

OFFICE BEARERS

Chairperson:	Angela Toppin
Deputy Chairperson:	Shannean Moncrieff
Treasurer:	Jessica Bugno
Executive Officer:	Kerrie Stanley

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Brett Moller	Solicitor
David Craig	James Cook University
David Kirchner	Rotary International
Edna Galvin	St Monica's College
Hugh O'Brien	Education Consultant
Jacinta Perry	Vocational Partnerships Group
Lesa Pershouse	Mareeba State High School
Maurice Andrejic	Redlynch State College
Rita Zappulla	SMSF Strategic Advisors
Ryan Arthurson	TAFE Queensland
Tyson Franklin	Podiatrist
Virginia Cullen	Community Consultant



Angela Toppin
Chairperson
31 December 2020