



## Members Annual Renewal Report 2014 - 2015

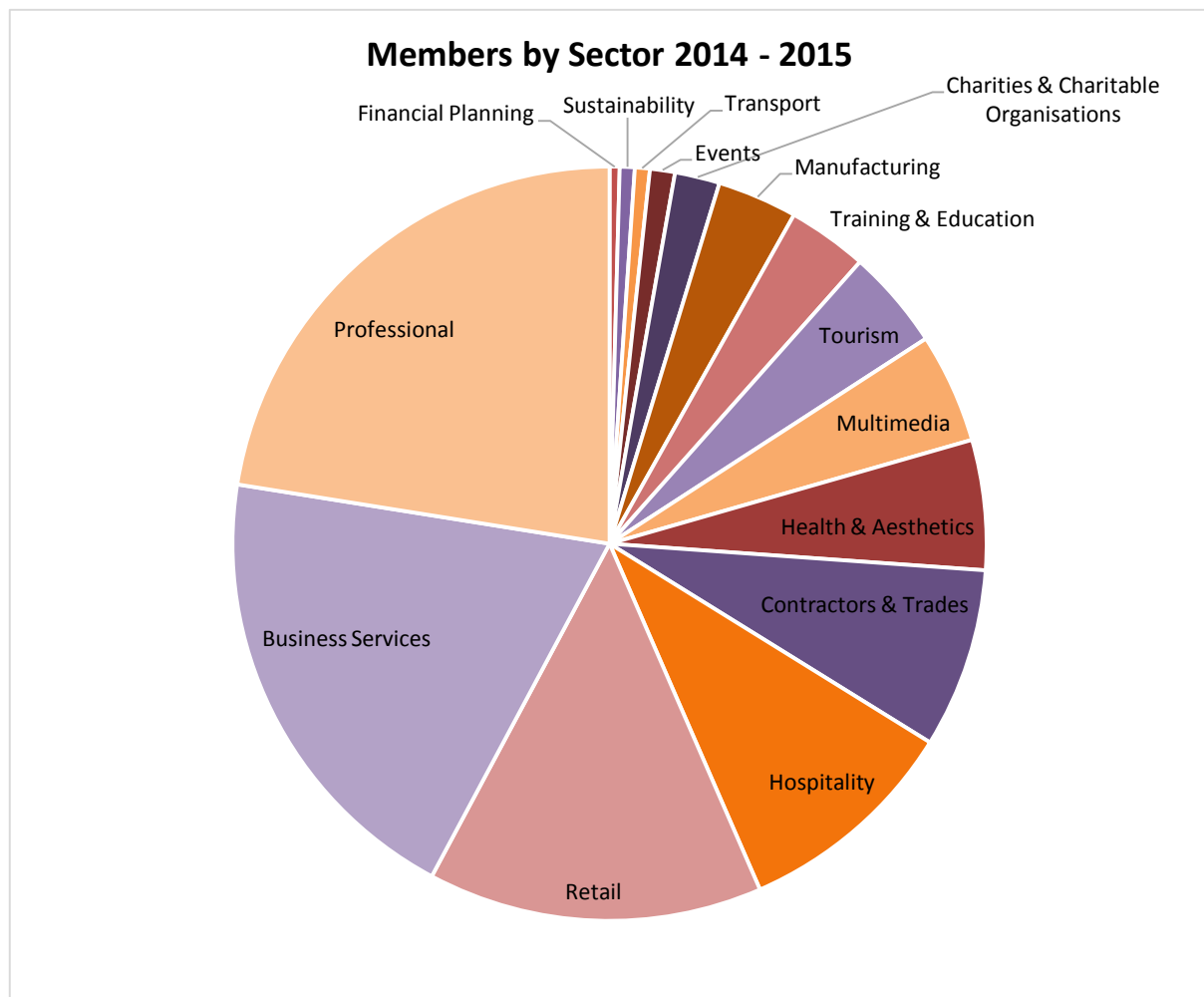
**History:** Commerce Ballarat is a result of a merger that occurred in 2004 between the Ballarat Chamber of Commerce and the Ballarat Retail Board. Commerce Ballarat operates as an independent body with a broad membership base, working collectively for the advancement of Ballarat businesses.

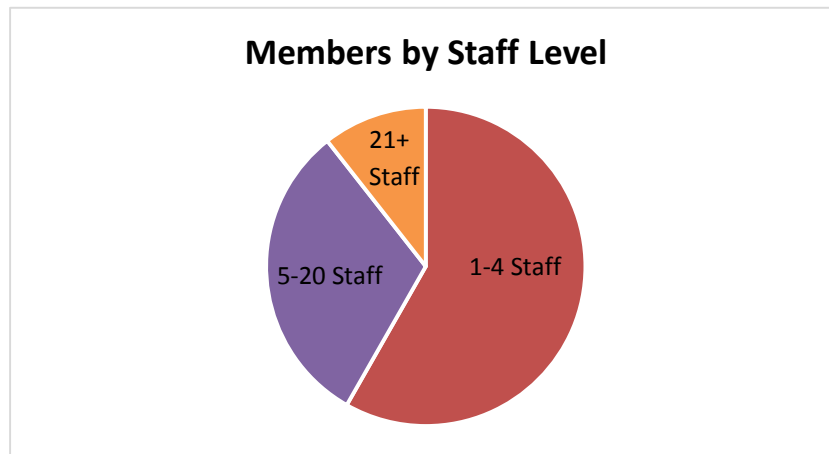
**Today:** Commerce Ballarat has grown from 120 members in 2008 to 468 members in 2015 and employs an Executive Officer part time, a full time Events & Executive Assistant, a full time Events & Administration Assistant and part time Accounts Administrator.

**Our Mission:** To provide strong, reliable leadership and advocacy on all matters relevant to commerce in the greater Ballarat region.

**Our Vision:** To represent the industry sectors within the local Ballarat community by providing:

- Advocacy and support
- Networking opportunities
- A platform for members to build partnerships to enable them to grow their business
- An arena to address local issues at a local level.





## 2014 – 2015 Members Satisfaction Survey



## Benefits of Membership

**Business Weekly** - Weekly newsletter distributed to over 1500 Ballarat business people.

**Member News** - An important part of our Business Weekly is our member’s news section; all members have the opportunity to promote their news and events to over 1500 local business people.

**Ballarat Business Directory** - A comprehensive directory of our members, members have the ability to upload their corporate logo and details of their goods and services. This directory is the only comprehensive business directory in Ballarat and as such is used extensively.

**Member of the Week** - Every Commerce Ballarat member has the opportunity to have their logo and business description placed on our home page for 1 week.

**Business Event Calendar** - Members can both publicise and source upcoming business events and development programs.

**505 Club – bi-monthly - Free** evenings of networking and fostering relationships to grow your business, hosted by members within their business.

**Young Professionals Network – Free** coffee networking mornings for professionals in their 20’s & 30’s opportunities to network and build mutually beneficial relationships.

**Mentoring Program – Free** program for members offering one on one mentoring and group workshops, program is suitable for new businesses or those that are looking for growth or change. Applications open November 2015, places are limited.

**Business Development** - We contribute financially to the running of our programs and also source external funding to allow us to offer these events either free for members or at a nominal charge.

**In the past year Commerce Ballarat offered development opportunities, including;**

- Business Day Out
- Commerce Ballarat Mentoring Program
- Business Awards Application Writing Workshops
- BisNet Breakfasts
- Melbourne Food & Wine Festival CEO
- Business Basics Panel
- Dealing with the Media
- Marketing for Biz Panel
- Government Lobbying and Community Engagement

## **New and Exciting Events/Opportunities Established in 2014/2015**

**BisNet Breakfasts** – In 2015 Commerce Ballarat took the reins of Ballarat’s oldest business breakfast. The first Tuesday of each month provides great speakers and networking opportunities.

**B31 Ballarat Business Month** – In 2015 CB have inherited the hosting and organisation of B31, a festival of development and networking for SME’s held in August.

The **b2b Bunyip Christmas Competition**, was refreshed in 2014 with the use of Social Media. It was a fun way to interact with the general public whilst highlighting our fabulous hospitality venues, ten b2b Xmas Bunyips were hidden around the city with verbal and picture clues given out daily on PowerFM, 3BA and social media.

**#BoughtinBallarat Competition** was instituted for the first time in 2015. Businesses were asked to take pictures whilst purchasing goods and services and post to social media.

## **Commerce Ballarat Advocacy**

Commerce Ballarat represented our members and the wider business community on a wide range of issues to both local and state government. Some of the issues were;

- The ‘New Public Holidays’
- Penalty Rates for Retail and Hospitality
- Commercial rate submission to City of Ballarat

## **Representation**

Commerce Ballarat represented the membership: examples

- IPPA Advisory Board
- Economic Strategy Expert Reference Group
- City of Ballarat Jobs Forum
- Community Charter for the Prevention of Violence against Women Reference Group

## **Commerce Ballarat Business Excellence Awards**

The 2014 Business Awards campaign was again a major success. The focus for Commerce Ballarat is to encourage businesses to use this as an important opportunity to review and reflect on the past 12 month’s performance.

We sincerely thank CGU for their support over the past 27 years and for the enormous contribution they’ve made to the business community. CGU stepped down as the naming rights sponsor at the completion of the 2014 campaign, but will continue their involvement as a category sponsor. The new Naming Rights Sponsor Federation Business School will form a strong partnership and offer many new opportunities into the future.

These awards would not be possible without our category sponsors: 3BA, Power FM, The Win Network, The Courier, Ballarat Technology Park – Federation University Australia, Powercor, City of Ballarat, Mercure Ballarat Hotel and Convention Centre, Central Highlands Water, Harwood Andrews, Haymes Paint, Regional Development Australia, Remington Insurance Brokers, Ballarat Regional Tourism, Nova Pharmacy.

## **Business Day Out**

Commerce Ballarat initiated Business Day Out in 2013 with the strong belief regional businesses should have easy and affordable access to the best speakers to help grow and develop their businesses. In 2015 over 200 people from across Regional Victoria attended and were inspired by Brad Smith, Morris Miselowski, Paull Jeffrey and Sharon Williams. Thank you to BDO sponsors; Viatek, Simplex Insurance Solutions, Victorian Government through Small Business Victoria, Ballarat Community Health, BGT, 3BA, Power FM, Win Network, Bezgroup, The Courier, Sovereign Press, City of Ballarat and Novotel Forest Resort.

## **B2b Business to Ballarat**

The biannual media campaign focuses on both business to business spending and encouraging awareness in the general public of the importance to our city of keeping the dollars locally. Commerce Ballarat invests heavily in these campaigns but they would not be possible without the support of our b2b Gold sponsors RU Advertising, Ballarat Mercedes-Benz, Sovereign Press, Crowe Horwath, Tanya Daniels The Good Guys and Wilson's Fruit & Vegetables. We also thank our Bronze sponsors Premier PR and Central Victorian Investments and local media The Courier, 3BA/PowerFM, WIN Network, and Prime. Supported by The City of Ballarat.



## **Business Networks Alliance Victoria – BNAV**

Commerce Ballarat was instrumental in forming this organisation, the aim of this initiative is to bring Victoria's local business representative organisations closer together, to interact and learn from each other. Over the past three years these meetings have been attended by groups from all over Victoria.

## **Coming up in 2015/2016**

- 505 Clubs hosted by; Standby Security, North Ballarat Sports Club, Ballarat Community Health
- Federation Business School Commerce Ballarat Business Excellence Awards, August 27
- Spot the B2B Bunyip Christmas Competition
- BisNet Breakfasts, first Tuesday of the month – Featuring John Kazana, Kate Torney, Peter Gordon
- Young Professionals Network Evening Event with Guest Speaker Rachael Robertson
- 2016 Commerce Ballarat Mentoring Program
- Business Day Out, May 25
- B2b Buy Local Campaigns

## **Comments from our members:**

“Keep up the good work. CB remains a great advocate for business and businesses in Ballarat.” Neil Short, Bendigo Bank

“I appreciate the work of Commerce Ballarat and the role they fulfil is an important one for Ballarat businesses.” Darren Templar, PBSA

“Commerce Ballarat is an organisation which is friendly and welcoming, informative and resourceful.” Gillian James, GMJ Compact Solutions