



## Braidwood & Villages Business Chamber

“Alone we can do so  
little, together we can do  
so much ...”

--Helen Keller

There is no arguing that Braidwood businesses have experienced one of the worst years ever. It started with the Telstra outage at the beginning of our peak trading period, and was quickly followed by drought, fires, high winds, flood, and now COVID-19.

In difficult times it is vital that people pull together and present a united front. As your business chamber, we will be doing everything within our power to support you, so please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have an idea that you think we could help with.

### FREE MEMBERSHIP

We understand that now, more than ever, times are tough. We believe being united in these difficult times is more important than collecting membership fees, so for all current members, we are offering the next 12 months membership free, and until June 30<sup>th</sup> we are offering non-members 12 months free membership. The form is on our website [www.bavbc.com.au](http://www.bavbc.com.au)

### WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

Even though we are a relatively new organisation, with an executive of just five people, this executive team have been working hard behind the scene looking for ways to help local businesses. Our activities since Christmas include:

- Along with the Chamber Chairs/Presidents of other fire affected regions, our Chair attended a meeting with the Prime Minister, other Federal Ministers and relevant organisations to ensure the plight of our local businesses was recognised.

- We invited Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister for Employment, Skills and Family Business, and the Hon Karen Andrews, Minister for the Department of Industry, Science and Technology to come to Braidwood and see the region first hand. We took the opportunity to highlight the inadequacy and red tape issues of the funding that was ignoring the plight businesses who were fire affected rather than impacted.
- We sought a donation to assist with businesses who were struggling, and, with thanks to the Anglican Church, we were able to donate, in total, \$2000 worth of vouchers, able to be spent in any Braidwood Business. This was promoted to all members by email, and to all Braidwood businesses regardless of membership via Facebook and word of mouth. Registration was simply by emailing your name and contact details to our secretary, and, other than for auditing purposes, they have been sealed to ensure privacy.
- We invited leaders from Regional Development Australia Southern Inland, Small Business Ombudsman's Office and Dept of Industry Science and Technology to lead a panel discussion for businesses to understand some of the assistance available. Businesses who have followed up on those opportunities are experiencing positive benefits.
- By invitation, our Chair represented Braidwood at a Tourism Stakeholder gathering in Braidwood and at the Australian Chamber of Commerce Tourism Recovery Summit in Batemans Bay.

PO Box 337 Braidwood NSW 2622 e: [secretary@bavbc.com.au](mailto:secretary@bavbc.com.au)  
[www.bavbc.com.au](http://www.bavbc.com.au)

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- We gained significant media coverage in Canberra and attracted a significant number of visitors to Braidwood over the January long weekend with the “More than a cul-de-sac” event.
- We met with Council to discuss opportunities to drive business to the region.
- We arranged representation of our food producers with a stall (at no charge to the producers), at the Food in the Capital event in Canberra (postponed to November 2020)
- We worked with Bragging Rights Events to hold a workshop for regional women in business, supporting them in the growth of their marketing and social media strategies.
- Looking at options for a future strategy that ensures resilience for the region in times of emergency, with a focus on protecting incomes, food security, and ensuring availability of essential supplies.
- Developing our website so that it offers businesses links to relevant COVID-19 information.
- Keeping abreast of initiatives and maintaining strong engagement with key government leaders so that we can ensure the needs of Braidwood businesses are understood and taken into account in any actions taken.
- Creating useful business tools (which will be available on our website as they are developed) including social media scheduling tools, business strategies and links to important webinars.

## WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW

We recognise the next 12 months are going to have challenges no business has faced before, so we are working towards helping businesses as much as we possibly can. We are:

- Working on promotion of our local businesses, online through our social media channels and via the local paper.
- Revisiting our tourism strategy, keeping in mind the lessons learned from the recent past.
- Looking for opportunities to bring income to the region as soon as the pandemic restrictions are lifted.
- Working with the Life Centre, Community Association, Wagging Tails, Anglican Church, Post Office and other community leaders to develop and implement a plan to care for all of the vulnerable in our community, business owners or otherwise, during this crisis.

## YOUR VOICE

- If you aren't already a member, please join the Chamber! Alone we are one voice, together we can make a real and tangible difference for everyone. There will be benefits specific to businesses that warrant membership.
- Follow our Facebook page for updates; and our Instagram page to support local businesses: <https://www.facebook.com/bwoodbusiness/> <https://www.instagram.com/braidwoodnsw.bavbc> Send your photos so we can promote you!
- Tell us what you want! The strategies for resilience, food security, events, tourism and business survival need to be what YOU want and need. There are links on the website to register your interest.
- Don't think that your voice is too small, too big, or not relevant to be a part of this. We welcome everyone from the artisans with hand-made goodies and the micro farmers to the tradespeople, real estate agents, farmers and large businesses, as well as organisations that support the region in tourism, events and community activities. You are all relevant and valued.