



Presidents Report 2019

The 2019/20 year is one that has positive advances in the operations of BAG as it continues to strive towards its objective of community rejuvenation. After having worked through a challenging 12 months in the 2017/18 year, it is pleasing to report that the year just ended has been far more successful in both financial and achievement terms.

Great Artesian Spa

Leading the way in this recovery has been the great performance at the Spa. After having recorded an operating loss of \$36000 in 2017/18, the dedication, vision and hard work of the staff has seen the facility post a \$47000 profit for 2018/19. This represents an \$83000 turnaround in 12 months, an impressive improvement and one which we all hope will continue into the current year as collectively we break down the poor perceptions which beset the facility at the time we took over the lease.

Some other interesting highlights for the year at the Great Artesian Spa include:

- A 30% increase in visitation numbers in the second 12 months of operation to 25000 annually
- Maintained our “**Certificate of Excellence**” for the entire year with Trip Advisor
- Awarded the “**Regional Outback Queensland Award**” for the Australian Good Food Guide 2019
- Rated as a “**Best of Queensland Experience**” by Tourism and Events Queensland.
- Nominated for a “**Customer Service Award**” at the Maranoa Business Awards
- Maintained a **4.5 Star** rating (out of 5) on Google throughout the year.

Overall Financial Performance

As a result of this commendable performance at the Spa, BAG's overall financial performance has returned to positive territory for the first time since 2015/16. As you will read in the audited statements, BAG achieved a net profit for the 18/19 year of \$4100 as opposed to a prior years loss of \$67900.

Other Highlights

- **Bottle Tree Bulletin** –BAG continues the publication of the BTB. Despite its reduction in size it continues to be the regular earner for the organization and well read by the community.
- **Digital Media** –BAG continues to maintain its portfolio of digital media with an active presence on Facebook (BAG & Spa), Instagram, Google, Trip Advisor, Austra and constantly maintained web sites for both Mitchell and The Great Artesian Spa. The reach of these sites is no doubt a significant contributor to our increase in visitation. This is typified by the following statistics (April through October 2019)
 - Spa Website 3500 Users
 - BAG Website 870 Users

- Facebook Likes >1000 likes (50% increase)
- Google Enquiries 31000 (Aug-Oct 2019 only)
- Google Photo Views 57000 (Aug-Oct 2019 only)
- **Partnerships** – Good business is built on good relationships and BAG continues to maintain good working relationships with other community groups and organisations. These relationships (like those with RESQ+, Nalingu and the Gunggari Native Title Aboriginal Corporation) are now giving our community a significant united voice which is being heard by all levels of Government. The \$37000 grant promised for stages 1 & 2 of the Booringa Community Farm is indicative of this.
- **Tourism Promotion** – Promoting our tourist potential has been high on the agenda for the past year which has seen:
 - Revamped our Spa Brochure
 - Developed A3 Spa Posters
 - Disseminated both of the above to most VIC's in southern and western Queensland
 - Became a member of **OQTA** (our regional tourism organization)
 - Regained responsibility of all of our listings on the **Australian Tourism Data Warehouse** from Maranoa Regional Council
 - Established relationships with other tourism organizations within the near and wider region
 - Direct marketed with the **Way out West Fest** and the **Queensland Ladies Sand Green Championships**
 - Became a part of the **Australian Camping and Motor Homes Association** members App
 - Continued to work closely with the regional tourism branding focus groups.

Darryl's *Community Bus* continues to be well patronized and has become a point of praise from a great many visitors (although it will need to be renamed to Darryl's and Ross's Bus)

- **Community Assistance & Functions** – BAG continues to provide support to other groups and community members. As in past years these included the Mitchell RSL & Combined Sports Club and the Major Mitchell Caravan Park as well as some administrative assistance for Rotary's drought relief operations. Other highlights include:
 - Planning, fundraising and negotiating the establishment of "Johnnys Place" in conjunction with RESQ+
 - Working through the process which has recently seen BAG "acquire" the Westlander Sleeping Car.

In closing, I would like to thank

- the Management Committee and BAG members for their support, insights and enthusiasm,
- Jeff, Bree and the staff at the Spa for their dedication and commitment and
- All of those groups, individuals and Councillors who work with us and share our vision and commitment to build a better future for our community.

Rob Cornish