



Bega Valley Business Forum
Strategic Planning Report
August 2023



Facilitated and produced by Nicole Weber
Quality Matters Consulting

Executive Summary

Nicole Weber from Quality Matters Consulting was engaged in August 2023 to facilitate the production of a two-year Strategic Plan for Bega Valley Business Forum for the period October 2023 – September 2025. Six representatives from the BVBF contributed to the co-design of the plan. A draft plan is provided based on the strategic planning session held in Merimbula on 28 August 2023.

Five key themes were explored from the planning process and specific goals and action items are outlined against these in the draft plan (Appendix 1). These themes and associated goals are summarised in the Planning Outcomes section of this report.



Background

In September 2022 a consultant was engaged to conduct a Governance Planning workshop. This resulted in an agreed Vision, Purpose, Objectives, and Recommendations. This report is provided in full separately. Key elements of the report were referred to at the planning session and are included below.

Figure 1: BVBF agreed Vision, Purpose, Values, Strategic Pillars

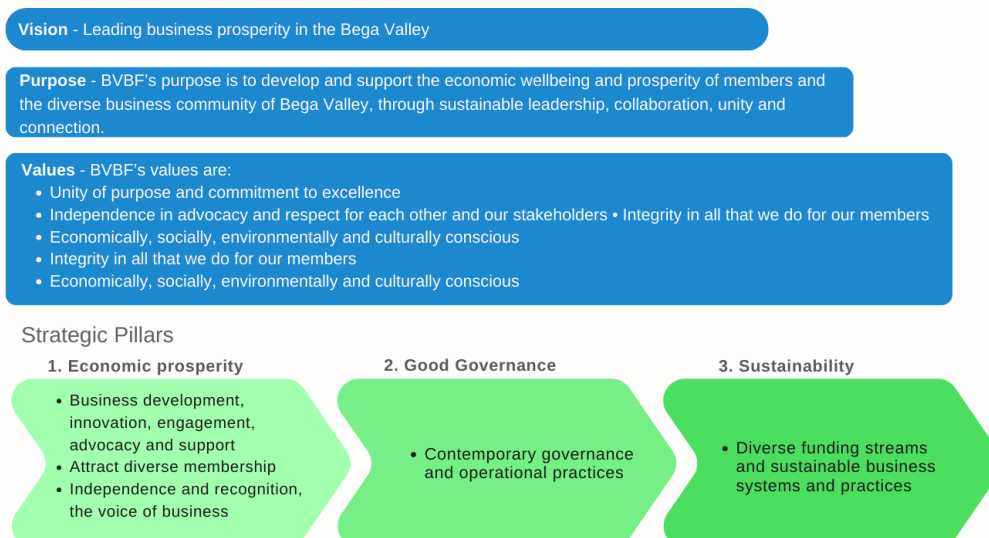
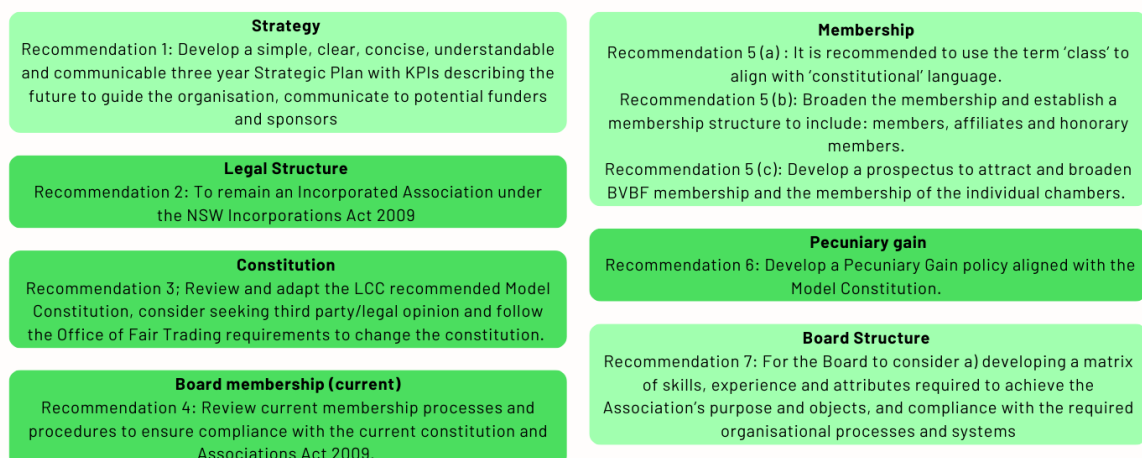


Figure 2: Governance Workshop Recommendations



In Figure 2 the recommendations shaded dark green have been actioned and largely resolved. Those shaded lighter green require further action.

The purpose of the Strategic Planning event was to create an action plan to progress the outstanding recommendations from this report. The results of that event are provided below.

Key considerations

The following questions were considered by the group in the planning session.

- What structure should BVBF take?
- How can BVBF operate more efficiently and sustainably, whilst still representing stakeholder communities?
- What is the scope of our work (what is in, what is out)?
- Who are the key partners/collaborators BVBF could work with to achieve its objectives.
- What next key steps need to be taken to create/strengthen these links?

Next steps

The draft plan will be presented for consideration to the BVBF and member Chambers of Commerce. The BVBF will take responsibility for implementing the action plan set out in **Appendix 1**.



Planning outcomes

Strategic Goals

After considering the vision, purpose

- **Governance:** Ensure a membership and legal structure is in place to support ongoing sustainability and growth
- **Services/operations:** Add paid services that deliver on our purpose and increase revenue streams
- **People:** Engage paid staff to deliver on our purpose
- **Finances:** Expand membership revenue through affiliate program. The goal is to bring in \$200k annually to fund paid roles
- **Events and Activities:** Implement a program of events and activities to deliver on our purpose

Proposed organisational structure

In the 2022 Governance Planning Report, Recommendation 5 deals with Membership. The following three recommendations were made:

Recommendation 5 (a): It is recommended to use the term 'class' to align with 'constitutional' language.

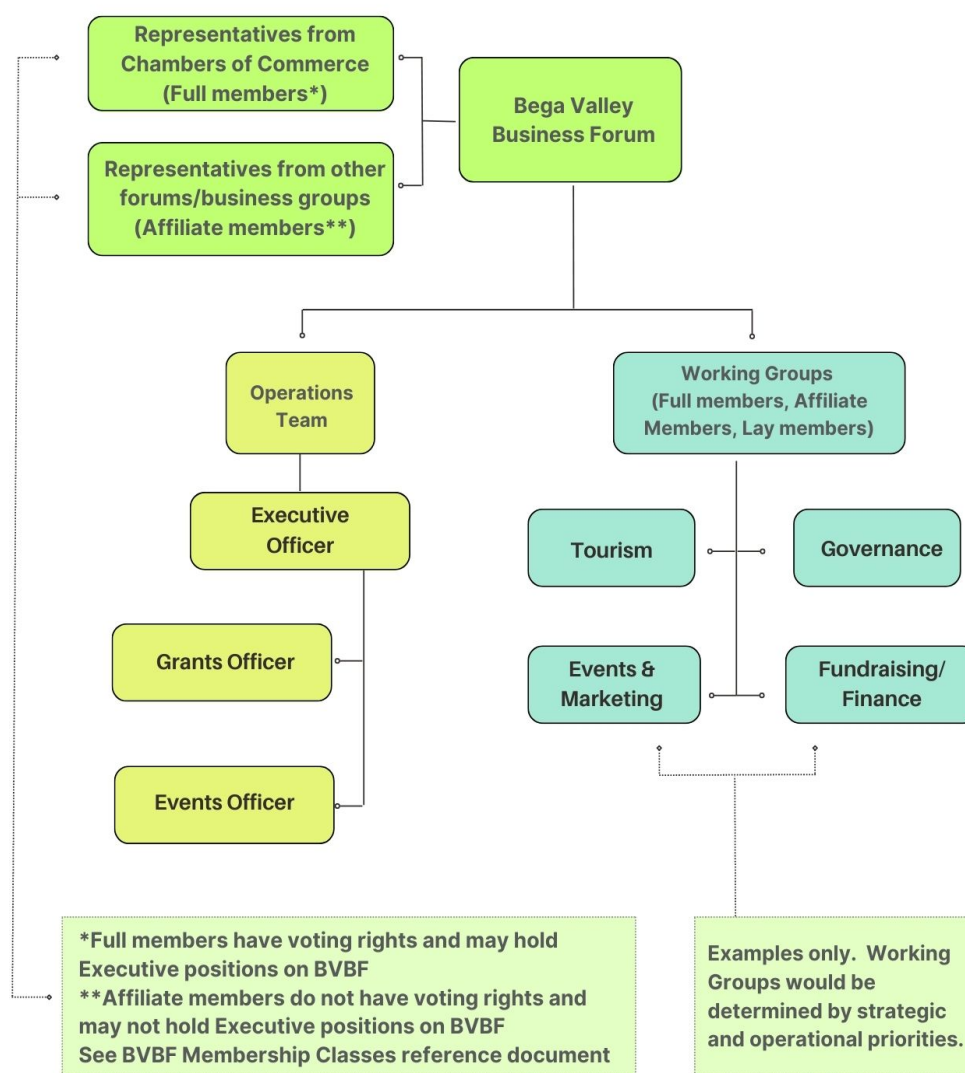
Recommendation 5 (b): Broaden the membership and establish a membership structure to include: members, affiliates, and honorary members.

Recommendation 5 (c): Develop a prospectus to attract and broaden BVBF membership and the membership of the individual chambers.

Bega Valley Business Forum updated its Constitution in 2023 which resolves Recommendation 5 (a). A draft membership structure has been created and is provided as Appendix 2. This document outlines the purpose, roles, and standing (i.e., voting rights) of each membership class.

The proposed membership structure is intended to provide a representative and sustainable forum group into the future. Another priority identified at the Strategic Planning workshop was to increase the capacity of the organisation to deliver on its purpose through working groups and paid operational roles. The following draft organisational chart was created with this in mind. As noted in the diagram, the Working Group titles are examples only.

Draft BVBF Structure



Ideas captured

Since 2020, two Chamber members have left the BVBF. Bermagui Chamber of Commerce left in 2021 and Bega Chamber of Commerce left the BVBF in 2023. Under the current membership structure, only representatives from Chambers of Commerce in the Bega Valley are eligible to be members.

In real terms this means that there are currently only 5 members of the BVBF. These members also have other work and committee commitments. The group discussed the implications for the sustainability of BVBF under these arrangements. It was agreed that serious consideration needs to be given to the future of the organisation as these limited number of members (all volunteers) cannot reasonably be expected to deliver on the purpose of the BVBF.

As such, it was agreed that there needs to be an exploration of the membership arrangements, organisational structure, and the activities of the BVBF. This includes seeking funding for paid roles and fee for service activities for businesses such as business mentoring. Discussion also included exploring revenue streams beyond grants.

The following ideas were captured as important for future consideration and inclusion in actions:

- Make activities fun, informal, social
- Forum activities contribute to building relationships
- Increased communication with Councils
- Values-led work
- Project-based work
- Create a business mentoring program
- Major growth in size and scope of activities while staying true to our purpose
- Arranging Guest speakers and events to add value for businesses across the region
- Unite communities through our work
- Seek out more funding and diverse funding/revenue streams
- Paid roles (Executive Officer and others) to progress operational work
- The goal to represent all 7 Chambers of Commerce through reengaging with members that have left BVBF
- Expand membership base to enable delegation of work (not the same small group doing everything)

Stop, Start, Keep, and Innovate

<p><u>Stop</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of change/procrastinating • Infighting/bickering • Relying on volunteers • Thinking in silos • Thinking small • Adhesion (stuck in a rut) • Bureaucracy • Negativity 	<p><u>Start</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing thought processes • Being progressive • Displaying Courtesy/respect • Proactive/pre-emptive approach • Open up membership/be more inclusive • Hosting Guest speakers • Paid positions with funding • Running Events • Holding more In-person meetings • Connecting with stakeholders
<p><u>Keep</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly meetings • Positive energy • Good governance • Sharing information • Advocacy work • Collaborating • Managing our own businesses and lives 	<p><u>Innovate</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging Communication • Business mentoring program • Seek corporate input • Fee for service options • Multiple revenue streams • Social enterprises • Acquire resources and assets

Appendix 1 – Draft Strategic Plan October 2023 – September 2025

	Oct – Dec 2023	Jan – Mar 2024	Apr – June 2024	July – Sep 2024	Oct – Dec 2024	Jan – Mar 2025	Apr – June 2025
Governance	Offer honorary membership to eligible persons Implement new membership classes Create new affiliate membership forms	Identify and approach potential affiliate members		Review legal structure to assess if fit for purpose		Review legal structure to assess if fit for purpose	
Services			Research and identify services we can offer	Implement service provision		Review fee for service	
People		Recruit and engage an Executive Officer (EO)	Induct and onboard EO Review EO performance		Review EO performance		Review EO performance
Finances	Identify potential funding sources Submit funding applications Set fees for membership		EO to sign up Affiliate Members Identify potential grant funding for operational roles (events, projects etc)		Identify continued funding sources for Operational roles	Develop and implement an Affiliate Membership plan (fees, numbers, target audience)	
Events/ Activities		Function to engage future members Mentoring seminar	Regional Business Awards	Open forums for Government elections	SBM event	NSW Business Chamber information session	

Appendix 2 - Bega Valley Business Forum Inc – Membership Classes (DRAFT)

Full Members

Full Members: A full member is a person who is a representative of a Chambers of Commerce with the Bega Valley LGA.

- Who is eligible – A representative of a Chamber of Commerce
- Voting rights – Full members have voting rights
- Committee – Full members are able to nominate and stand for committee (board) positions
- Full Membership Fees - \$330 per annum or as set by the Committee at the AGM
 - If a full member is not available to attend a meeting, they may appoint another person who is a representative of their Chambers of Commerce to stand in for them for a period of time, as long as that is provide in writing before any meeting.

Affiliate Member

Affiliate Member: An affiliate member is a person who represents any organisation other than a Chamber of Commerce with similar objectives to the BVBF including individuals, businesses, corporations, or incorporated associations.

- Who is eligible? Any person who represents any organisation other than a Chamber of Commerce with similar objectives to the BVBF including individuals, businesses, corporations, or incorporated associations.
- Voting rights - Affiliated members shall not be entitled to vote.
- Committee – Affiliate members are not able to nominate and stand for committee (board) positions
- Benefits to affiliate members.
 - They can be part of a regional organization that represents business
 - They can have access to make presentations to the Forum about things of regional significance
 - They can reach out to individual chambers to discuss local issues
 - They receive recognition on our website
 - They can communicate through the forum to chambers and businesses
 - They can attend meetings as observers and contribute but not vote

- **Affiliate Membership Fees**
 - Small Organisations or Businesses with less than 50 members or employees - \$250
 - Medium Organisations or Businesses with 50 -100 members or employees - \$500
 - Large Organisations or Businesses with over 100 members or employees - \$1500
 - Large Corporations – Starting from \$2500
 - Membership fees from Affiliate Members are to be shared evenly with Full Member bodies or used in such a way that they benefit all Full members evenly.

Honorary Member – Gratis.

Honorary Member: Any person may for services rendered to the association or any person whether or not otherwise eligible for membership and for special reasons considered in the absolute discretion of the committee to be sufficient to be appointed an honorary member of the Association for life or any lesser period.

- Voting rights – Honorary members shall not be entitled to vote
- Honorary members are exempt from payment of membership fees
- Honorary members are not eligible to hold positions on the committee.
- Being such persons as the Board shall admit to membership in accordance with this Constitution and shall be entered in the register of members accordingly from time to time