

2024-25 Presidents Report

The Myrtleford Chamber of Commerce & Industry have brought a range of business development and economic development projects and events to benefit the Myrtleford business community and town.

The year began welcoming three new faces who joined the Executive: Dan Pusvacietis, Leesa Borsi & Amy Rogers.

We reviewed the Vision Statement and Objectives of the chamber, addressed membership numbers which had declined during Covid and have failed to return, conducted a Member Survey in January and reviewed and updated website content and functionality.

Vision Statement

The Myrtleford Chamber of Commerce will be the most effective organisation in the Alpine Shire that people can approach in order to facilitate the establishment and development of any idea, events and infrastructure which assists the economic, employment and business growth in Myrtleford and the Alpine Shire community.

Our Objectives

- To proactively raise and deal with the concerns of the members.
- To encourage businesses to increase their levels of knowledge, training and performance in meeting today's challenges and those of the future.
- To promote and support the town and businesses it represents and its community.
- To develop and foster partnerships and affiliations with other Chambers of Commerce & like bodies.

Collectively we met with Bright and Mt Beauty Chambers at a joint Chambers meeting in Mt Beauty. We applied for a community grant to send a representative from Mt Beauty, Bright and Myrtleford to the World Congress of Chambers in Melbourne in September. The application was partially funded and we were able to support sending Dan as a representative from Myrtleford.

Myrtleford Community Leadership Program – March – July 2025

Executive members Dan Pusvacietis and Leesa Borsi participated and completed the Amplify Myrtleford Community Leadership Program. A transformative program designed to upskill and empower individuals from Myrtleford and surrounds. Delivered by Alpine Valleys Community Leadership, participants were able to develop essential leadership skills while building connections that strengthen their community.



The Chamber participated in a session focused on strengthening involvement and working together to support a connected and engaged community.

Led by facilitator Susan Benedyka, the discussion-based session was to bring people together, build relationships, share insights, and reflect on current opportunities and challenges for community group sustainability.



Business Events:

Alpine Shire Tourism operators networking session was held in Myrtleford during February with an outline of past and proposed promotions.

- Spring/summer campaign focused on Alpine wildflowers, with an arty spin. Working with 'Great Walks' editorial, adverts and digital exposure <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQdpzKQudR0&t=2s>
- Touring motor bikes campaign. Working with Adventure Rider magazine and website with a 12 month campaign.
- Halliday Wine Companion, advert in conjunction with article highlighting our region.
- Gravel Rides - Project 10, Tourism North East activation of gravel. Three of the ten rides are in our region.
- Hosting three competitions between November 2024-June 2025. The competitions are to boost subscribers to our newsletter. So far we have had over 2,500 additions to our database. The dates, target markets and prizes were;
 - November, families, win 5 nights in Mount Beauty at The Park with BBQ pack from Farm to Fork
 - February, couples 50+, win 4 nights in Myrtleford at Motel on Alpine with lunch at Cafe Fez
 - May/June, couples lifestyle leaders, win 3 nights in Bright, The Odd Frog.



Visitor Information Centres had over 88,300 visitors in 2024, keen to find all the things to do, see, eat and drink in our region.

Myrtleford Splash Park



Over 5 years from concept to completion, in 2019 Splash Park for Myrtleford identified in the Myrtleford Resilience Plan.

Officially opened in September 2025, the Myrtleford Splash Park has been a community driven project championed by the Myrtleford Chamber of Commerce. Concept Designs were developed and were funded through the Community Bushfire Recovery Grants Program completed and handed to the Alpine Shire in June 2021

The splash park design draws inspiration from the local landscapes of Myrtleford and offers a nature inspired water play facility which is unique to Myrtleford. The splash park also features a one-of-a-kind mosaic and will be a major landmark on Myrtleford Mosaic trail, further supporting the arts community of Myrtleford.

This is a catalyst for further development in the Happy Valley Precinct and benefits Myrtleford and Surrounds by driving economic recovery through increased tourism and geographical visitor dispersion.

Memorial Hall

The development of Memorial Hall into a functioning community space and Visitor Information Centre is another project with MCCI involvement and was completed following years of various stages and grants.

It will be opened to the public on 31st. October.

Myrtleford Summer Series December 2024 – February 2025



We have continued to support local performers with 11 weeks of live performances by local musicians. Funding was provided by Alpine Shire through their Community Grants and Events. Outdoor live performances were held in the Town Piazza Friday evenings throughout December and Saturday evenings in January and into February. An additional evening was held in March over the Labour Day long weekend (Saturday) and was well attended.

The Summer Series encourages families to buy take-out from local food vendors and picnic in the Piazza whilst being entertained by local musicians. With plenty of chairs and umbrellas available. (We have been successful in attracting funding to run again in December 2025 and January 2026). Local musician Rudi Katterl has been co-ordinating local acts on behalf of Chamber.



La Fiera

Myrtleford's Italian Festival continued its popularity with increased visitors to our region in 2025. Magnificent weather saw visitors and locals flocking to our annual Italian Festival in Myrtleford.

La Fiera's Wine & Food Festa again presold 2,000 tickets with all premium seating sold out prior to the festival. An estimated additional 1,200 people came on the day. Of the tickets presold, 10% were from Myrtleford postcode and 90% all other areas reinforcing that the festival is a definite Tourism event.

James Liotta's "Mama's not Happy" comedy show was staged for the first time in regional Victoria and was a sell out.

An art Exhibition by Billy Doolan, interactive street entertainment including Stilt Police and Bubble Tonic show at La Festa and former MasterChef semi finalist Elise Pulbrook joined with James Mele (The Meat Room) for a cooking demonstration highlighting traditional Italian cuisine from local farmer market ingredients, were just some of 2025's program.

Statistics gathered, showed a combined direct economic impact (sales) of events within the program. CommBank data supplied by the Alpine Shire shows an increase in visitation and spend from the previous year.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the small steering group who work 12 months of the year for La Fiera from fundraising, planning, marketing, ticketing and more; Louise Benini, John Reynolds-Smith, John Costenaro and Kerry Murphy.

The Festival would not be possible without the support of many volunteers and community groups and financial sponsors. Visit Victoria, Alpine Shire, Bendigo Bank, Michelini Wines and McPhersons Earthmoving combined provide around 30% of the cost of running the festival. Ticket sales, merchandise sales and stallholder fees make up the balance to conduct the festival.

Thank you to Myrtleford & District Land Care for doing a stellar job managing waste sustainability. Monitoring 4 bin stations during La Festa, assisting people to sort their waste, has reduced La Fiera's general waste by almost 90% in two years. To the Myrtleford Lions Club who assist in the set-up and pack-up also we say a big thank you to the many volunteers who give up time on the Saturday to set up, man the entrance and merchandise marquee and pack up.

2026 will provide more challenges as La Fiera continues to grow in popularity as do the increasing time and expense spent on red tape, risk management and increased expenses.



Spend Data – La Fiera 2024 & 2025



This document outlines the spend data for Myrtleford township in May 2024 and May 2025, when the La Fiera Italian Festival is held.

Month of May 2025

What are some of the key insights for the Myrtleford location for May 2025?



All insights are based on CommBank IQ's nationally representative retail customer transaction data for May 2025. Metrics are calculated based on electronic in-store card spend only. Online, cash, BNPL, direct debit and BPAY spend are not included. Customer count is the distinct number of customer who have transacted in the category within the region.

Month of May 2024

What are some of the key insights for the Myrtleford location for May 2024?



Spend 16-18th May 2025 compared to benchmark (17-19th May 2024)

What are some of the key insights for Alpine Shire Council for all categories between 16 May 2025 and 18 May 2025?



All insights are based on CommBank IQ's nationally representative retail customer transaction data between 16 May 2025 and 18 May 2025. Metrics are calculated based on electronic in-store card spend only. Online, cash, direct debit and BPAY spend is not included.

Bush Market

Around 3,000 people attended the Bush Market on Friday 3rd January 2025 held at the Myrtleford Recreation Reserve. Another Chamber initiative which has been running for over 30 years and continues to be a popular event attracting thousands to our town.

One Voice Choir members manned the carpark for us and thanks to Mel Dymond for all her contributions as Bush Market Co-ordinator and Louise Benini for social media marketing and gaining momentum for the Myrtleford Bush Market FaceBook page.



Alpine Outreach

The Chamber is represented on Alpine Outreach Inc.

Alpine Outreach is a versatile mobile van available for hire by healthcare providers, local health professionals and organisations.



During the year 150 skin cancer checks were performed by the Gardens Skin Cancer Centre and the Pinnacle Group (Medibank) from the van. 96 suspicious lesions were detected with 56 referrals.



GROW Myrtleford+



The Chamber has continued to be represented on Grow Myrtleford+ since established in 2022 – a sub-fund of Into Our Hands Community Foundation philanthropic trust dedicated to bolstering Myrtleford and it's surrounding communities.

We have supported fund raising and awareness initiatives during the year including the return of Myrtleford's Twilight Carols in the town piazza. \$25,000 was granted to 5 community organisations from 13 grant applications and one school scholarship overseen.

Finally, I thank our Executive members Louise Benini, Dan Pusvacietis, Leesa Borsi, Amy Rogers and Secretary Kerry Murphy for their commitment during the year to continuing to ensure we are an organisation that supports our community and brings value to our town and businesses. We have remained active with reduced meetings due to Secretary taking Long Service Leave during the year.

Succession planning it important to all organisations, I would like to encourage members to consider joining as an Executive member to bring fresh ideas and ensure we remain innovative and relevant to our business community.

I am very pleased to present this report to our members and wish all businesses prosperity in the year ahead.

Jim van Geet President