

## 2020 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

26<sup>th</sup> of October 2020

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### Welcome

Welcome to the President's Report to the Finland Australia Chamber of Commerce Inc. (FACC) 2020!

### Membership Status

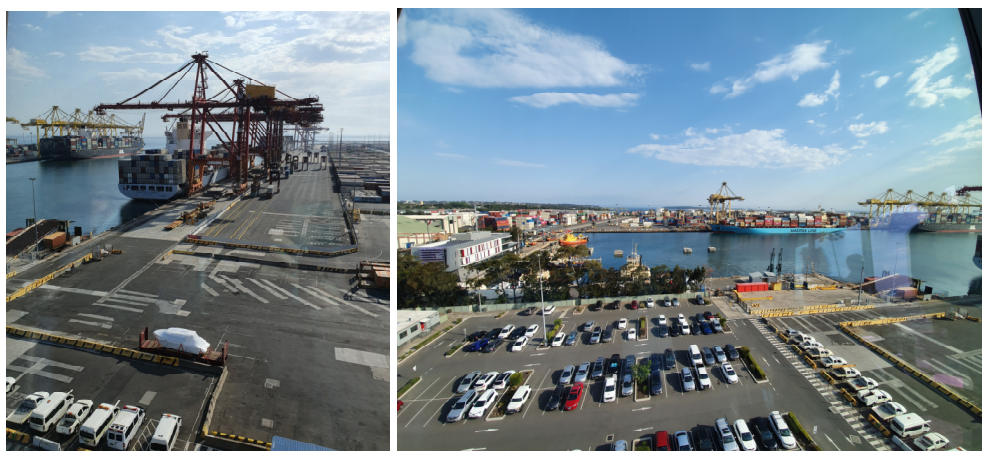
The Chamber's membership has increased since the last AGM in 2019. While we had 45 members last year, this number has now risen to 47. We welcome Glaston Finland as platinum member and Peikko Australia Pty Ltd as gold member of the Chamber.

The Chamber acknowledges that due to COVID-19 restrictions there have been less face to face member events since March 2020 than we would normally offer our members. In view of this and in order to reduce the financial burden on our members during these challenging times the board has decided to offer a one-off 50% reduction of membership fees for the calendar year 2021. You will receive a special code together with your renewal notice later this year which will allow you to take advantage of this benefit.

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### Member Activities in 2019/2020

The **Annual General Meeting** on 24 October 2019 in Sydney was hosted by Kalmar at Port Botany. The Chamber is very grateful to Kalmar for arranging an escorted private tour of the Patrick's Automated Container Terminal immediately before the AGM. Our members were able to see the Kalmar port automation in operation.

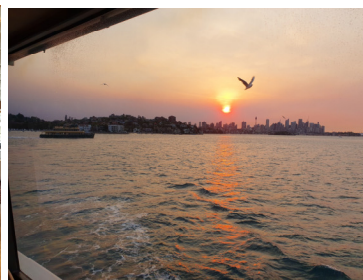




The AGM included a very interesting briefing by Tim Goulain from the FACC member European Australian Business Council (EABC) on current European trade issues and the status of the Australian Free Trade negotiations.

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By tradition the Chamber participated in the annual **Cruise with the Europeans** in Sydney on the 14 November 2019, co-organised by various European Chambers. There were 12 FACC guests present at the spectacular 2-hour cruise, among over 600 representatives from the European business community in Sydney.



On 6 December 2019 the **FACC Brisbane Chapter** put on a very successful Finnish Independence Day dinner at the Summit Restaurant at Mt Coot-tha. Our members enjoyed the magnificent views over Brisbane as well as a three course dinner. The Ambassador of Finland H.E. Lars Backström and Mrs Brigitta Backström were the special guests of the evening.

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**The FACC Melbourne Chapter** participated in the Nordic Engagement Networking lunch on 5 February 2020 at Denmark House in Melbourne. Our members were able to enjoy traditional smørrebrød lunch with fellow Nordic business people from Denmark, Norway and Sweden.



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As in previous years, FACC held **member networking drinks** for our members and friends at the Sir Stamford Hotel in Sydney. The Chamber organises this get-together on a quarterly basis and the first event for 2020 was held on 12 March 2020.



Unfortunately, the Chamber had to cancel the networking drinks for the remainder of 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

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The highlight of the past year in Sydney was the **Independence Day Dinner** at Blanca Bar & Dining at Bondi on 5 December 2019. Our members enjoyed a Finnish inspired menu which was especially created for the occasion by Tomi Björk, Finland's most cherished chef and restaurateur. Our members enjoyed a great evening of Finnish food, fun and prizes.



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The **Nordic Open Golf Day** traditionally hosted by our Chamber in conjunction with the Swedish Australian Chamber of Commerce, Estonian Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry as well as the Norwegian Australian Chamber of Commerce was this year unfortunately cancelled due to COVID-19. However, the next Nordic Open Golf Day is

scheduled for 4 March 2021 and we hope to finally be able to hold another fun day on the course for our members.

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While the 2020 **Cruise with the Europeans** due to take place in November 2020 has been cancelled due to COVID-19, we are pleased to announce that this event will return next year on 18 November 2021 and we look forward to seeing our members and friends there again!

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Due to COVID-19, we are currently restricted to offering our members **virtual events** instead of get togethers.

On 26 May 2020 our members were able to participate in a video conference about “Seizing Opportunities for Recovery & Bounceback” which was organised by the EABC and the Australian Trade and Investment Commission. There were 12 attendees from our Chamber at this event which included a keynote address by Dr Stephanie Fahey, Chief Executive Officer of Austrade.

On 21 October 2020 our members had the opportunity to join a webinar by our sister organisation in Finland, the Finland Australia Business Council, with the Ambassador to Sweden/Finland and Riku Laanti. Topics include intercultural management, Australia’s policy responses to COVID-19 and the impact on international business and Australia-Finland relations.

In order to stay in touch with our members during these unusual times, the Chamber now provides a monthly Finnish Business News newsletter by email. We are very grateful to our honorary secretary and Business Finland representative Hartti Suomela for compiling this news for the benefit of our members.

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## **Change of Board Members**

Since the last AGM in October 2019 Geoff Charnock, who has for many years been an invaluable member of our board and has contributed greatly to the success of the Chamber in his role as honorary secretary, resigned from the board. Hartti Suomela has kindly agreed to take up the role of honorary secretary.

The Chamber is pleased to acknowledge the outstanding support received from the following gold and platinum members in 2019/20, hoping we will continue our successful collaboration in coming years.

### **Platinum Members**

- Wärtsilä
- Glaston Finland

### **Gold Members**

- Peikko Australia Pty Ltd

- Australian Finnish Rest Homes Association
- Stenhoj Australia
- Finnair
- HWL Ebsworth



***Silke Koernicke***  
***President FACC***  
***Sydney, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020***