

## **HOMEbiz REPORT – PRESIDENT’S REPORT 2009**

2008 was what I believe to be a very successful year for our network. In a tumultuous year for businesses, our network was able to deliver more value and information to its members. One of our successful activities undertaken was the presentation of our workshop series. These workshops, made possible with thanks to the Maroondah City Council and their support through their Business Groups Grants program, delivered almost 100 hours of training and education to members and non-members of our network as part of our Engage, Enrol, Equip program. This program began with our presentation and workshops in February ran by Donna Hanson, of Prime Solutions Training & Consulting. A few months later, our brand building presentation and workshops ran by Paul Harmer of the Brand Surgeon was another success, with many attendees benefiting from the wisdom shared by these presenters. These hours were in addition to the regular monthly meetings that are held.

Once again we were also in attendance at the Maroondah Festival in February 08. Again with the support of the council, we presented our network to the community and resulted in a number of new members joining the network and hearing more about what the network can provide businesses. We have plans of attending the festival again later this year, when I believe it will be held in the month of October.

This past year also saw our network consider the possibility and validity of a combined business network for the Maroondah area. Most if not all of you here have heard discussions about the Maroondah Business Group and may have even been in attendance at our general meeting held in August last year. At this meeting, our network passed a motion to join as part of this new group and transfer our assets into the merged group’s accounts. The minutes of this general meeting are available on the website as well as all the reports from tonight’s AGM. Following on from this motion, plans were set in place for the creation of the MBG brand and subsequent launch. The Croydon Chamber of Commerce was one of the founders of this initiative and the chamber had voted in favour for the group in June of last year.

Unfortunately, for reasons of their own, the Croydon Chamber of Commerce rescinded their vote to not go ahead with a merger in a special general meeting held in December last year. As you can imagine this came as a shock to the committee of Maroondah Homebiz, as we

were moving forward with the Chamber for the formation of MBG. The committee is still waiting written confirmation of this decision by CCCI but had been informed verbally that the decision by CCCI will not change.

As you will hear from the Treasurer, this has resulted in a much greater loss for us for this year. Our Christmas function was planned to also be a soft launch for the new MBG venture with support from the CCCI. Due to low numbers of attendance, we made a substantial loss at this function with higher costs committed to with catering and entertainment. The committee is in discussion with the CCCI with respect to these losses and to follow up on the CCCI's decision to pull out of the MBG formation. I am sure the new committee will be able to inform you of any updates to these events as they take place moving forward. At this stage it is my understanding that the motion passed in August will lapse and not proceed as the MBG is no longer a valid networking group.

However, I would like to use the expression that every cloud has a silver lining. The lining of this cloud is that the concept is still alive and well. I am sure that you will agree with me that the idea of a larger business network for the Maroondah area will all involved. The current committee for Maroondah Homebiz is looking into what needs to be done to take the idea that was Maroondah Business Group and see how it can be nurtured and coaxed forward in 2009.

So, how is Maroondah HomeBiz placed for this year? I am of the firm belief that our network is stronger than ever as we move into this year of change. The new committee is energised and enthused for the network. There are some great presentations planned for this year, of which our February meeting and tonight's meeting have set the bench mark already for the calibre of presenters and topics. 2009 is shaping up to be a year that requires businesses to be decisive and positive with its actions. Businesses need to look ahead to the other side of the current climate of uncertainty and recognise that when times are tough, marketing and networking activities are even more vital and important. It is with this in mind that our network intends to deliver more value and resources to you as part of its offer and purpose.

Thank you  
Matthew Tibble – March 2009  
Creative Junction