



# **ASEAN New Zealand Business Council Chair's Report for the AGM**

## **June 2022**

I am very pleased to submit my report to the ASEAN New Zealand Business Council's 23rd AGM. I would say it has been a year like no other, except it has a recent twin. Although a number of businesses have grown during Covid Year Two, many have continued to bear the brunt of affected supply and demand markets, disrupted supply chains and ongoing staffing and other operating challenges. During this ongoing period your Executive Committee has focused on providing advice and information as well as active engagement on Covid-related issues with officials and government.

The dashboard included with this report highlights the progress we have made against the key performance indicators the Executive Committee set following last year's AGM.

Covid Year Two has presented its share of challenges as events have had to be adapted and much of our in-person activity deferred or cancelled. It was a great relief to hold our kick-starter event in February this year actually in person for the first time in many months.

### **ASEAN Business Alliance**

The ASEAN Business Alliance is the network of New Zealand business chambers and representation points across the region which the Council acts as secretariat for. We have achieved all our ABA KPIs to-date and a big highlight was the long-held goal of establishing an in-market coordinator to support the development of the ABA. Based in Manila, Jen Casitas works part-time as part of Liz's team supporting our ASEAN chambers.

Another highlight has been the establishment of the Indonesia/New Zealand Steering Group based in Jakarta. Comprised of New Zealand businesses based in Indonesia and co-chaired by Tim Anderson and Matthew Faull, it will help strengthen our representation in the region working closely with Indonesian stakeholders, NZTE, MFAT and others.

A new development with the ABA has been your Executive Committee's establishment of an annual roundtable session with Hon Twyford Minister of State for Trade & Export Growth (the "Minister for ASEAN"). In September, Chairs and Presidents of the ABA chambers spent an hour virtually with the minister and officials discussing challenges and opportunities.

We greatly appreciate Minister Twyford and officials' commitment to the Council's work and it is undoubtedly helpful he holds the delegated responsibility for the ASEAN Australia New Zealand Free Trade Agreement.



## **Membership and engagement**

It has been rewarding to see the Council's stakeholder numbers exceed our target as businesses and other stakeholders have joined us to stay abreast of ASEAN developments.

The cornerstone support we receive from MFAT and SEACAPE as part of the Strategic Partnerships we have with these organisations has been key to this and to the signature events we deliver with them. We also value the partnerships we have with ANZ, Asia New Zealand, Export New Zealand and the relationships we have with many business organisations and chambers who work with and support us.

To further extend our membership engagement, we have completed a new Partnership and Membership strategy part of which you will see unrolled at the end of the AGM.

## **Events and social media**

In September last year, we held our largest ever ASEAN Forum virtually with a keynote address by Hon Phil Twyford. This year's Forum, with the theme Accelerating into 2023, will be back in person for the first time since 2019. It will be held Wednesday 27 July in central Auckland and also run virtually. For the first time, the Forum will be addressed by Prime Minister Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern as she outlines New Zealand's ASEAN trade strategy and business recovery programme. This will be well worth attending.

A broad programme of monthly virtual events was also held across the ABA extending our awareness of the Alliance and what the opportunities in ASEAN are for Kiwi businesses. The annual ABA conference, held as a 2-part series in late October and early November, also saw record attendance.

Our virtual events have continued to be a vital engagement tool for us under Covid restrictions and we now measure this engagement via our social platforms. It is pleasing to see the Council regularly exceeds benchmark engagement measures on LinkedIn, our primary platform. Our events manager Lou Hill does a great job coordinating this busy programme and assisting on other special projects.

## **Financials**

We finished the year in a strong financial position. We reported a higher surplus planned as a result of having to defer expenditure on some events and other being activities because of Covid constraints. This is now partly being used in this year's budget as part of our Covid recovery strategy. As our Treasurer reports, our Independent Review confirm our accounting practices are in order.

## **ASEAN Business Advisory Council**

Your Council is New Zealand's representative on the ASEAN Business Advisory Council, established by ASEAN Heads of State and Government in 2001 to boost efforts towards economic integration.



**ASEAN NEW ZEALAND  
BUSINESS COUNCIL INC**



This is an important way in which the Council can help identify issues to enhance the trading environment across ASEAN. It has been terrific to see representatives from our Singapore and Vietnam chambers join ABAC working groups.

David Catty used his considerable expertise to provide an updated ABAC strategy for the Executive Committee which was approved this year.

## **Thanks**

We could not do what we do without our Executive Director Liz Bell and her team. Liz uses her substantial knowledge and experience to lead our organisation very effectively. As we have dealt with the ongoing impact of Covid on our operations, she has deftly adjusted and responded. Thanks also to David, Lou, Tiare and Jen for your hard work and perseverance in what have been regularly trying times.

I would also like to offer my thanks for the other members of the Executive Committee for the input and great insight you provide.

I would particularly like to acknowledge retiring members Hayden Montgomerie, Agnes Espineda and Justin Barnett. Hayden has been an EXCO member since 2018 and has brought considerable expertise to the development of the ASEAN Business Alliance, including this year's update to the ABA MOU, which he has been involved with since it began. Agnes and Justin have contributed their expertise in a range of ways particularly in the events area. Your Executive Committee serves in a voluntary capacity and we must give thanks for those who give up their time to help us all.

As if it is not challenging enough running a business, the last two and a half years have redefined challenging. I would like to end by acknowledging the business people and all those who support them for making it through this remarkable time. May we never repeat it.

The good news if you work with ASEAN, is that growth is around the corner. The ASEAN economies are expected to average more than 5% GDP growth this year and next. In several markets this will exceed 6%. All the more reason to stay involved and to tell your new business contacts to join us.

All the best for the rest of this year of the rat!

Kind regards

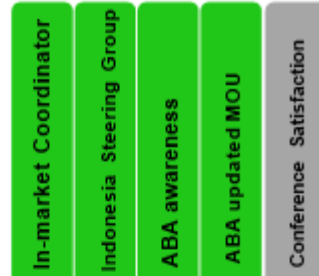
Mark Thomas  
Chair  
ASEAN NZ Business Council  
Email: [mthomas@asean.org.nz](mailto:mthomas@asean.org.nz)



### 2001 KPIs

Key:

-  - Target
-  - Achieved
-  - On track
-  - Not achieved



## ASEAN Business Alliance

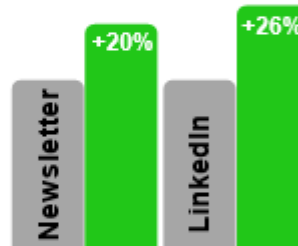
### Membership

Stakeholder numbers



### Engagement

LinkedIn & Newsletter activity

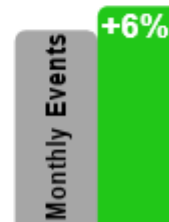


## Partnership & Membership

Confirmed membership and partnership strategy



### Event Satisfaction



## ASEAN Business Advisory Council

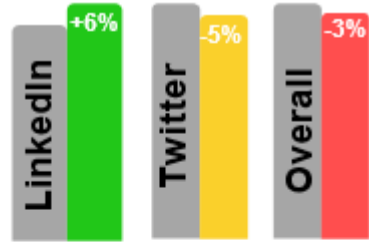
New ABAC strategy





## Social Media

Follower targets



## Financials

Meet budget: +/- 2%

