

BORONIA & THE BASIN COMMUNITY NEWS

2024/2025 ANNUAL REPORT

(Reporting period: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Stepping into the shoes of a leader of the calibre of John Pernu was always going to be a big task – and it would be remiss if I didn't begin my report by paying my sincere respects to his memory and provide our thoughts to his family, especially his wife, Katrina High-Pernu, and his extended network of friends.

I was honoured to have been chosen to continue his strong legacy and was endorsed by the Committee to take the role of President at the April Committee Meeting.

The strong foundations and processes that John honed is his lasting legacy at the Boronia and The Basin Community News, and it's this strong foundation that sees the BBCN in a unique position as 'legacy' media – both to continue to deliver hard copy to over 13,000 residences and collection points each and every month, but to continue to expand our reach into the digital realm.

1. Committee Changes

In the short months I've been President, there has been further changes in the Committee membership. Former Treasurer Doan Vo has passed the baton onto Ella Szlegier, and longstanding Distribution Coordinator, Irene Smith, has handed duties onto Leigh Halse. Association Secretary, Roger Thompson, has also indicated it's time for him to step away from this role, with Joy Shelley indicating she would take on duties here.

I want to thank Doan, Irene and Roger for their contribution to the BBCN across the course of the journey, and I congratulate Ella, Leigh and Joy for putting their hands up to fill this void. I have worked alongside all three and am proud to report that their roles are being completed thoroughly, diligently and very capably.

2. Regular Contributors

Our thanks go to our regular contributors who continue to be a mainstay of the paper each edition – Page 3 Bird (and sometimes non-birds!), Des Palmer, Committee Member, Danny Nolan for his local history insights, Rob Fairbairn's continued Strummer Stories, the much loved Pet's Piece, contributor Dr. Gianne Ficatas from the Boronia Veterinary and Animal Hospital, as well as regular cartoonists Paul Woods and Toby and the Magic Pencil (artwork by Ben Sullivan and contributed free of charge by creator, Gary Dellar). We also welcome new regular contributor, local physiotherapist Meg Doyle.

Our thanks to our local representatives at all levels of government for both their continued regular contributions and financial support: Local Ward Councillors Peter Lockwood and Paige Kennett, the Mayor of Knox (2024 Mayor, former Councillor Jude Dwight and 2025 Mayor, Councillor Lisa Cooper), State Member for Bayswater, Jackson Taylor MP and Federal Member for Aston, Mary Doyle MP.

A special mention to Joy and Cath Shelley who led the Kids Zone feature spreads. Alongside this, the Young Writers Initiative (YWI), spearheaded by Arthur Shelley, has continued to see steady growth by contributions from local schools – with regular certificates and \$50 gift vouchers provided to young writers. Our grateful thanks go to local Bendigo Bank branches for financial contribution to see this occur, to the tune of \$2,000.

These regular features in Kids Zone and the YWI are instrumental in ensuring that the next generation of writers, contributors and, indeed, leadership at the BBCN are being actively fostered. Arthur's extensive foresight and futureproofing has been a critical part of the BBCN's journey.

3. Association Membership and Volunteers

The BBCN has over 50 members, approximately 100 regular drivers and 'walkers', as well as 8 committee members. Becoming a Member remains no-cost – please request a form, at any time, to join: contact@bbcn.org.au.

Members have a vote at any AGM or special meeting which may be called. Their main duty is to approve the annual reports, in particular our Financial Statement, and approve the appointment of office holders and committee members each year. Members receive a written notice of AGMs and special meetings.

Our strength – as it has been for over 30 years – is always our members and volunteers. These range from the Committee Members and the Editorial Committee, which meet monthly, through to the dedicated drivers who deliver bundles of papers to each and every volunteer 'walker' that delivers the paper. This happens every single month – and our three-decade legacy of reliably delivering the news, locally, is down to these volunteers.

4. Editing and Graphic Design

As flagged, each month the Editorial Committee gathers to put the paper together – I'd like to thank Kim Hanson, in particular, for her careful and diligent work, and John Edgley for his guidance and invaluable institutional knowledge each month.

Earlier this year, our proofreader Ros Atkinson stepped back from her role in this space – her dedication in ensuring all articles and contributions were up to the standard that our readers rightly expect was fantastic, and we thank her for her time with the paper.

I'd also like to acknowledge Nicole Z for her incredible graphic design on many of our front pages – including the May edition reporting on the fire in Montrose, which was well received by all.

The BBCN continues to use the Scribus desktop publishing (DTP) program.

5. Digital Realm

Alongside the continued good work by Danny Nolan managing the BBCN's Facebook and website presence, the BBCN has expanded its online footprint and now proudly sees an Instagram page, which continues to grow (@boroniabasincommunitynews).

While work is underway in expanding this presence with regular posts, our thanks go to Akshara, Daniel, Manasvi and Victoria for beginning this important journey in April.

6. Funding Submissions

Alongside the YWI contribution flagged earlier, the BBCN has received \$2,000 from the local Bendigo Bank branches in order to allow us to provide space each month for local community organisations and clubs, free of charge, to advertise their programs.

Our thanks to Arthur Shelley for his oversight in this space and his diligence in acquittal.

Where possible, the BBCN will continue to actively seek financial contributions via appropriate and relevant grant rounds, variously made available by government, philanthropic and industry sources.

7. Printing

Newsprinters Wodonga have continued in providing the BBCN an exceptional standard of service, as they have for many local newspapers both locally and around the state.

Our paper has only ever used Newsprinters Wodonga, due to not just the price they provide us, but, importantly, their experience in the industry and reliability each month, and my thanks goes to them, too.

There has never been a more exciting time for the BBCN – and that's down to the volunteers that work every month, local businesses that provide financial support, and various community groups' continual backing, such as The Basin Community House that host our meetings (including the AGM) and Miller's Homestead via Your Library that host our Christmas Party.

We not only continue to regularly provide hard-copy news and information in the public interest to Boronia and The Basin, but the further expansion into the digital realm has seen exciting developments.

And, as always, our grateful thanks go to the readers of the Boronia and The Basin Community News – our community. Ultimately, it's this over three-decade, sustained support that means the year ahead of us will be even stronger than the last.

Patrick Kelly – BBCN President

ADVERTISING REPORT

Advertising revenue for the 2024/25 financial year was steady and overall BBCN just covered costs. This is a slight improvement compared to the 23/24 deficit of \$424.84.

We would not be able to exist in our current printed format without the advertisements of local businesses and organisations. We appreciate the very regular full page advertisements from Knox City Council, and the banners from local politicians. Weisz Family Optical, The Internet Laundrette and Boronia Veterinary & Animal Hospital have supported our paper in every issue for years. Boronia Bowls Club is another regular advertiser in about half the editions. We were fortunate to pick up some additional advertising as a result of the State elections in November 2024 and some additional revenue from casual ads, including two new day care centres.

The Local Service Directory advertisers contribute about one third of our advertising revenue and these have moved across at about the same as last year, with three advertisers leaving and another three new ones to replace them.

We have kept our advertising costs as the same for the past 2 years and this may need to be reviewed if printing costs go up in 2026.

Please shop local and support our advertisers, and we look forward to a better year.

Arthur Shelley, Advertising Coordinator.

DISTRIBUTION REPORT

During the last 12 months we successfully delivered a total of 13,100 copies of our publication each month to homes, shops and other businesses in Boronia, The Basin, Ferntree Gully, and Kilsyth. Our strong presence in the local Community is often acknowledged and genuinely appreciated.

Our heartfelt appreciation is extended to our dedicated '**drivers**' who faithfully collect the papers on the final Thursday of each month from The Basin Community Hall, and

deliver them to our '**walkers**' ready for distribution into mailboxes. These committed individuals contribute significantly to the smooth operation of our distribution process.

Equally deserving of our gratitude are our '**walkers**' who tirelessly pound the pavements, delivering our publication to individual homes, businesses, and designated drop-off points. Their consistent efforts are the backbone of our distribution network, ensuring that our community remains well-informed.

We also want to extend our thanks to the '**emergency walkers**', who generously step in during times of need. Their willingness to fill gaps in the distribution chain, particularly when some of our regular volunteers are on holiday or unwell, exemplifies the community spirit in our area.

Occasionally during this last year our team have been challenged by the lack of drivers and / or walkers due to illness or holidays – it would be very helpful if we had more volunteers to call on in times like this.

I wrote in my report at this time last year that we were looking for a distribution coordinator to 'share the load' – I am pleased to announce that Leigh Halse has risen to the challenge and joined our team of volunteers both as a driver and as the Distribution Coordinator. We are always looking for 'emergency' walkers and drivers – if you would like to join our team, please send an email to contact@bbcn.org.au

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the vital role that our whole distribution team plays in enriching our community through the distribution of our publication – around 100 volunteers. Your dedication is greatly appreciated and contributes significantly to our collective goal of fostering a well-informed and connected community.

Irene Smith Distribution Coordinator

DIGITAL MEDIA REPORT FACEBOOK & WEBSITE REPORT

Facebook has again proven to be a useful extension of the paper in informing our readers. Facebook is not the domain of the young, and we accept that our audience is made up of Gen X and Boomers. We amassed over 330 new followers, which is still averaging just below 30 new followers per month, in line with the last two years. The page also manages a consistent 3000 views a week. The most consistent posts viewed were those announcing non-paper local events such as school or church fetes, events at the mall, and festivals such as the *Chariot Festival* and *The Basin Music Festival*. The three most viewed posts were *the Kilsyth Fires*, *the Boronia K12 Fete*, and *the Victoria Day Awards*. Articles that are reposted from the paper, which are repeatedly popular, are the Young Writer Initiative, the Vet's pet piece, and the occasional history articles. Ideally, the Facebook page is achieving what we intended it to be. A conduit for items unable to appear in the paper and to push local community stories and events.

Website.

The website has been primarily a source for out-of-area readers and those who wish to read the paper as soon as it is available. This is indicated by the constant spike in views on the day the paper is released. Toby & the YWI are still popular downloads due to their monthly updates. The site is also popular for easily sourcing older editions. It is no secret that static websites are becoming less popular, but they remain a vital part of the paper for contact and archiving information.

This is also very important as the website is the only conduit for electronic correspondence, such as reader's letters, article contributions, and of course new advertisers.

As for other digital media, for the last two months, a nine-minute sideshow has been showing on loop in the Boronia Mall, showcasing *Now & Again* photos of the centre, and has been labelled as created and sponsored by the BBCN. This presentation has proven to be popular according to the centre and has been linked to on both the Facebook page & the website.

Danny Nolan, Digital Media Moderator.

KIDS ZONE REPORT

We continued with the format of one article for mums, babies and toddlers as well as a monthly themed activity or article for kids. Five articles were written by Joy Shelley, six by Cath Shelley (mother of a toddler and baby) and one by Kim Hansen (mother of a toddler). The articles were generally about helpful ideas on how parents and grandparents can cope with raising toddlers in today's world. There was also a reflective article comparing three generations of fathers. Themes included World animal days, forests and space, as well as activities and healthy treats for Easter, Christmas, Mothers' and Fathers' days.

Joy Shelley

YOUNG WRITERS INITIATIVE REPORT

The BBCN committee, as well as our readers and contributors, have been pleased with the impact of the BBCN Young Writers Initiative (YWI). It was again proudly supported by a grant from the Bendigo Bank (who have agreed to continue the sponsorship across the end of 2026 calendar year).

Community interest in the articles written from all levels of school has been high, and positive feedback from the public has been generated. Two of the award winners have gone on to be involved in other publishing initiatives, and one other winner has published her first book.

After receiving the individual annual award, one winner has contributed several research articles to our BBCN paper and other articles to another local paper. He has since been instrumental in setting up a Knox Community Youth Writers group and a school newsletter. He acknowledges his commitment to do this was from his confidence through being published in BBCN and because of his positive support in interactions with the Young Writers Initiative.

The BBCN YWI is unique in that it is the only sustained writers' initiative through a not-for-profit newspaper in Victoria (that we know of, having consulted with CNAV-Community Newspapers Association of Victoria). Whilst several papers have attempted to engage in such an initiative, none have been able to sustain the activity for more than a short-term project.

During the 2024-25 year, the YWI received 30 entries from 4 different schools. From these, BBCN has given sixteen awards for individual monthly prizes (\$50 each), two annual "best of year" individual prizes (\$200 each) for individual students (1 primary and 1 high school) and two "Most supportive school" awards (\$400 each).

The initiative has increased the level of community interest in our publication, enhancing the sustainability of the paper. One highlight of the YWI this year was a front-page feature in the "Book Week" Edition (August 2024), featuring images of winning students.

Arthur Shelley

BORONIA/THE BASIN
COMMUNITY NEWS – BBCN INC.

Financial Report for the financial year ended
30 June 2025

Committee of Management report

The **Committee of Management** had several changes through the 2024/25 year:

President – Patrick Kelly

Vice President - John Edgley

Treasurer – Doan Vo (resigned being replaced by Ella Slzegier from July 1st, 2025)

Secretary (Public Officer) – Roger Thompson

Other Members

Kim Hanson (Editor)

Arthur Shelley (Young Writers Initiative, Grants, Advertising and Compilation)

Joy Shelley (Correspondence, KidsZone and Public Officer)

Leigh Halse (Distribution)

Danny Nolan (Electronic Media)

Irene Smith (Distribution support/handover)

Ella Slzegier

John Pernu (former president) passed away in May 2025.

Principal Activities

The compilation and distribution of a local community newspaper.

Significant Changes

Appointment of Patrick Kelly as President

Appointment of Ella Slzegier as Treasurer.

Appointment of Leigh Halse as Distribution Manager (replacing Irene Smith (from September 2025)

Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2025

Profit & Loss Statement

July 2024 To June 2025

ABN: 69 030 099 405

Income		
Advertising - Displays	\$30,578.52	
Advertising - L S D	\$7,308.05	
Interest Received	\$1,800.35	
Grants Received	\$4,000.00	
BAS Adjustment & Rounding	\$0.56	
Total Income		\$43,687.48
Gross Profit		\$43,687.48
Expenses		
Printing	\$38,381.63	
Sponsorships & Promotions	\$454.55	
Website	\$100.86	
Insurance	\$682.33	
Stamp Duty	\$50.51	
Office Purchases and Expenses	\$47.21	
Postage	\$27.28	
Committee Expenses	\$1,979.59	
Donations	\$2,136.38	
Total Expenses		\$43,860.34
Operating Profit		-\$172.86
Net Profit/(Loss)		-\$172.86

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

Balance Sheet

As of June 2025

Assets			
Current Assets			
Bank- Bendigo Bank		\$13,630.59	
Receivables			
Accounts Receivable	\$7,192.55		
Provision for Doubtful Debts	-\$500.00		
Total Receivables		\$6,692.55	
Interest Accrued		\$772.46	
Bendigo Bank-Term Deposit 2502			\$10,000.00
Bendigo Bank-Term Deposit 2504		\$10,960.89	
SANDHURST SELECT MORTGAGE FUND		\$18,668.75	
Total Current Assets		\$50,725.24	
Insurance Prepaid		\$472.73	
Total Assets			\$61,197.97
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Trade Creditors		\$3,630.00	
LSD Advertising Prepaid		\$8,367.84	
Display Advertising Prepaid		\$5,111.79	
GST Liabilities			
GST Collected	\$7,684.49		
GST Paid	-\$6,957.20		
Total GST Liabilities		\$727.29	
Total Current Liabilities		\$17,836.92	
Total Liabilities			\$17,836.92
Net Assets			\$43,361.05
Equity			
Retained Earnings		\$43,533.91	
Current Year Surplus/Deficit		-\$172.86	
Total Equity			\$43,361.05

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.