



Dear Community Members,

Without a doubt, 2020 has been one of the most challenging years for the global business community, and AustCham has been no exception. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted every aspect of our lives, from the way we work, to how we live our daily lives.

However, with the support and understanding of our Sponsors and Members, the Chamber has successfully pivoted its operations to a hybrid format, hosting over 35 events and initiatives this year – many of which we hosted virtually.

AustCham started 2020 strongly by hosting the [Australia-Korea Business Awards](#) and [Australia Day celebrations](#) on January 31st. Both events collectively attracted over 500 guests and afforded us the opportunity to recognise and celebrate the achievements of the Australia-Korea business community.

As the year progressed and the pandemic worsened, the Chamber placed a greater emphasis on member advocacy. We established a Small Business Support Program, the Stand Together Campaign, and actively advocated for changes to capital gains tax and for [an Australia-Korea travel bubble](#). I would like to personally thank the Foreign Affairs Minister, the Hon Marise Payne; Trade, Tourism and Investment Minister, the [Hon Simon Birmingham](#); and the Health Minister, the Hon Greg Hunt, for their contributions towards to our 'travel bubble' recommendation letter. While we are yet to see the finalisation of such a plan, the Chamber will continue to actively advocate on this issue to ensure the Australia-Korea travel corridor remains at the forefront of any future agreement.

AustCham's industry-specific sub-committees have achieved great success this year through multiple high-level engagements organised between government ministers, senior business leaders and Chamber members.

The Financial Services Sub-Committee hosted three [global and regional economic webinars](#): providing Members with insights into how COVID-19 has affected respective markets and hosting a ministerial update from the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, the Hon Simon Birmingham.

With critical minerals and hydrogen dominating much of the Australia-Korea industry news this year, the Chamber's Energy, Resources and Sustainability Sub-Committee hosted a '[Critical Minerals Roundtable](#)' with Hon Keith Pitt MP, Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia. In addition, the Chamber also hosted the '[Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Roundtable](#)' with the Hon



Angus Taylor MP, Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction and Darren Miller, CEO of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).

Despite the challenges of on-going COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, AustCham's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Sub-Committee continued to play an important role as a conduit of financial and practical support between our members and the local community in our host country. This year, the Chamber has raised over 25 million won for charity. We have donated to the Australian Bushfire relief appeal; funded seven educational scholarships to [Gapyeong students](#); renovated the home of an elderly gentleman through the [Yeongdeungpo Housing Project](#); and more recently, painted and upgraded a local alley as part of the [Yongsan Beautification Project](#).

While 2020 has presented its difficulties, there have been many silver linings and the Chamber has much to be thankful for. As a non-profit organisation, our members are our lifeblood, and we are extremely grateful for your support. This year, our membership base has grown substantially through the addition of 20 new members. In addition, we are delighted to welcome the NSW Government as our newest Gold Sponsor, and Australian Made Campaign Limited (AMCL), Australian Strategic Materials and McDonald's as Silver Sponsors.

The support from our Sponsors and Members has not only afforded AustCham the ability to continue its mission of fostering a stronger Australia-Korea relationship but provided the secretariat with more human resources. I am personally delighted we have been able to employ [Kate Kalinova](#) in a full-time capacity as the Chamber's Project Manager.

With 2021 just around the corner, I would like to wholeheartedly thank our Sponsors, Members, Directors, Sub-Committee Members, the Australian Embassy, Austrade, community representatives, and of course, our hard-working and passionate team at the secretariat.

Have a safe and wonderful Christmas, and I look forward to seeing you all in 2021.

**Rowan Petz**

Executive Director  
Australian Chamber of Commerce in Korea