

# 2023 Annual Report



*Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce 2023 Board of Directors*

Tri-Cities  Chamber of Commerce

COQUITLAM | PORT COQUITLAM | PORT MOODY | ANMORE | BELCARRA

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We acknowledge that the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce operates on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the k<sup>w</sup>ik<sup>w</sup>ə<sup>l</sup>əm (Kwkwetlem First Nation). We thank the k<sup>w</sup>ik<sup>w</sup>ə<sup>l</sup>əm who continue to live on these lands and care for them, along with the waters and all that is above and below.

# Joint Message from the Chair and CEO



**Jenifer Wright**  
Board Chair, 2023

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it has been an honour for us to serve our members in 2023. For more than 50 years, the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce has been championing the local business community, fostering economic growth, delivering value to its members, and acting as a hub for connection in Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, and the villages of Anmore and Belcarra. We are also very proud of our growing relationship with the kʷikʷəλəm Kwikwetlem First Nation, whose traditional, ancestral and unceded territory the Chamber is grateful to work within.

The Tri-Cities Chamber is a convener of business, government, and community to foster dialogue focused on solutions to the complex economic, social, and environmental challenges we face. Now more than ever, as businesses cope with increasingly complex challenges, our Chamber has worked to help our member organizations be resilient and thrive.

We listen to you, work with you, and speak to all levels of government on what businesses need, or need changed. Being an active member in the BC and Canadian Chambers of

Commerce is also critical to our success in advocacy and policy development at the provincial and national levels, and we were pleased our representatives attended both organizations' AGM and Conventions this year to connect, advocate, share, learn, and vote on vital public policy recommendations.

While 2023 has not been without its challenges for the business community, our Chamber membership continues to grow. With nearly 1,100 member organizations, we are now one of the top five largest Chambers and Boards of Trade in British Columbia. The larger our collective voice and network, the stronger we are together. Strong businesses are the backbone of a thriving community.

The reason our Chamber is so strong and growing is because of the people behind it. Our members are driven, passionate, and dedicated relationship builders. Our Chamber ambassadors and other volunteers, our staff team, partners, and sponsors are exceptional. Our Board sincerely thanks you for your support.

We are pleased to share more about our Chamber and our efforts throughout 2023 in this Annual Report.



**Leslie Courchesne**  
Chief Executive Officer

# 2023 Board of Directors



**Jenifer Wright**  
*Chair*  
General Manager  
Westwood Plateau  
Golf & Country Club



**Daniel Richardson**  
*Vice Chair*  
Managing Partner  
BTM Lawyers LLP



**Ryan Whittle, CPA, CA**  
*Past Chair*  
Partner  
Areti LLP



**Ryan Gorder, CPA, CA**  
*Treasurer*  
Partner & Business Advisor  
MNP



**Leslie Courchesne**  
*Ex-officio*  
**Non-voting**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Tri-Cities Chamber



**Chris Chong**  
*Director*  
Owner  
Butter Studios



**Mike Forrest**  
*Director*  
Vice President  
Forrest Marine Ltd.



**Adel Gamar**  
*Director*  
CEO & Founder  
GLG Ltd.



**Ryan Jamieson**  
*Director*  
Deputy Executive Director  
Coquitlam Public Library



**Jennifer McKinnon**  
*Director*  
Director of HR  
Manhas Health Co. &  
Executive Director,  
Downtown PoCo BIA



**Kathryn Millar**  
*Director*  
Partner  
Indigenous Worx



**Reihaneh Mirjani**  
*Director*  
Vice President / CEO  
Immigrant Link Centre  
Society / Soul Bite Food



**Pulkit Sharma**  
*Director*  
Project Manager  
Peter Kiewit Sons ULC



**Vivien Symington**  
*Director*  
Owner  
Club Aviva



**Vineet Verghese**  
*Director*  
Vice President  
Commercial Financial  
Services, RBC

# 2023 Committees and Panels

## **Executive**

*Chair – Jenifer Wright*

## **Board Nominations**

*Chair – Ryan Whittle*

## **Business Excellence Awards Judging**

*Non-voting Chair – Leslie Courchesne*

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

*Chair – Ryan Jamieson*

## **Women in Business**

*Chair – Vivien Symington*

## **Government Relations and Economic Development**

*Chair – Adel Gamar*

## **Membership Experience and Ambassadors**

*Chair – Jennifer McKinnon*

## **Tri-Cities Young Professionals**

*Chair – Jenifer Wright*

*Thank you to the 50+ members who served on Chamber committees, panels, and as Ambassadors this year, giving their time, expertise, and skills to guide our strategies, policies, programs, and member engagement. We also thank our members who participated on behalf of the Chamber for external committees, roundtables, and consultations, to ensure the Tri-Cities Chamber voice is heard.*



# About the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce

*Shaping business and our community through genuine connections, active education, and effective government advocacy for our members.*

## Our Vision

To be the voice and essential resource of a thriving business community.

## Our Core Values

Leadership, service excellence, integrity, and innovation.

Established in 1971 by combining three separate Chambers in our area, the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce is a not-for-profit organization incorporated under Canada's *Boards of Trade Act*.

As the voice of business in the Tri-Cities, we represent organizations in the cities of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, and the villages of Anmore and Belcarra, spanning a variety of industries, specialties, and interests.

Our membership includes the community's biggest employers, small and medium-sized businesses, as well as home-based entrepreneurs, non-profits, and more.

The Chamber strives to have a focus on strong policy that supports local businesses, being a visible and approachable presence in the community, and ensuring that the value of membership is the best investment businesses can make.

## A Community of Belonging

The Chamber is committed to fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion where members can thrive. To this end, the Chamber has created a Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The mission of the Committee is to inform Chamber membership about the benefits of diversity and inclusion, and

offer resources to Chamber members that can help them to cultivate more diverse and inclusive workplaces. The Committee will also help ensure that diversity and inclusion are prioritized in all of the Chamber's services and public events.

2023  
Chamber by  
the Numbers

1,000+  
Member  
Organizations

60  
Chamber Events

50+  
Board, Committee,  
Panel, and  
Ambassador  
Volunteers

50+  
Sponsors and  
In-Kind

### CHAMBER STAFF TEAM

**Leslie Courchesne**, CEO  
**Chloe Wan**, Director, Strategy  
**Nicole Lauzon**, Manager, Membership  
**Sandra Jette**, Manager, Marketing and Member Experience  
**Camelia Maxim**, Office Manager

# 2023 Chamber Select News Headlines

## JANUARY

Chamber members meet with MP Ron McKinnon for 2023 pre-budget consultation

Anmore and Belcarra included in Chamber newly revised logos

## FEBRUARY

Chamber applauds BC Budget 2023 focus on housing, homelessness, but it misses the mark for business

Launch party kicks off Taste of the Tri-Cities festival, February 17 to March 12

Chamber advocates for key changes to help local business in 2023 Federal Budget

Chamber signs joint letter urging for protection of supply chains and transportation

Chamber urges support for Austin Heights BIA renewal

## MARCH

Chamber signs joint letter to support Cascadia ultra-high speed passenger rail project

Inspiring speakers take stage at Chamber International Women's Day event

## APRIL

Chamber issues Letter of Support for Cannabis Consumption Spaces

Chamber hosts BC's Official Opposition Leader for Lunch With Leaders event

Chamber statement on BC minimum wage increase

## MAY

Chamber Economic Summit informs and inspires members how to navigate uncertain times

Chamber CEO speaks on behalf of business community at Coquitlam Town Hall

Chamber statement on BC's Future Ready Action Plan

BC and Canadian Chamber heads meet PM at Western Executive Council, Hill Day

Navid Morawej named 2023 Chamber Member of the Year

Chamber celebrates Business Excellence Awards with glamorous gala

## JUNE

Show Chamber member businesses some love this summer for your chance to win

Chamber supports strong policy resolutions to help business: BC Chamber Conference, Whistler

## JULY

Chamber CEO calls for enhanced collaboration with City of Port Coquitlam to support local business community

Small businesses to get help with vandalism costs

Call to extend CEBA loan repayment deadline by two years: Chamber signs joint letter to Deputy Prime Minister

Chamber meets BC Minister of Children and Family Development to advocate for strong policy and programs

Chamber signs joint letter to Prime Minister urging immediate action to end labour disruption at BC ports

## AUGUST

Chamber Town Hall focuses on future of Coquitlam's transportation network

Chamber endorses BC Chamber's newly released public policy playbook

## SEPTEMBER

How to compete for lucrative federal contracts: watch the Chamber Talks video

Chamber CEO urges Port Moody and Coquitlam councils to enhance collaboration with Chamber to support local business

Chamber says CEBA loan extension doesn't go far enough

## OCTOBER

Chamber votes for strong policies to support business prosperity: Canadian Chamber Conference and AGM

Commerce and community connect at Chamber 2023 Business Showcase

Chamber applauds Premier Eby's demand for small business CEBA loan extension

## NOVEMBER

Chamber commends BC Government's progress toward removing barriers for internationally trained professionals



*Tri-Cities Chamber CEO Leslie Courchesne and Scotiabank Chief Economist Jean-François Perrault at Economic Summit, May 2023*

## Chamber in the Community

The Chamber was pleased to participate in community events, including Kwikwetlem Day and Walk for Reconciliation, Soroptimist of the Tri-Cities Give Her Wings Gala, Austin Heights HollyDaze, Port Coquitlam May Days, Tri-Cities Remembrance Day Ceremonies, Port Moody Art Shuffle, SHARE Gala, Rotary Rib Fest, Noruz Fire Festival, Port Coquitlam Christmas Tree Festival, Port Moody Spike Awards, Port Coquitlam Best Biz Awards, Coquitlam Express Golf Tourney and Awards, Terry Fox Hometown Run, Port Coquitlam Foundation Croquet Tournament, and more.

# Advocacy and Program Highlights

## *Economic Development and Advocacy*

We consult with and advocate for our members on issues affecting their business, and for economic development at the municipal, regional, provincial, and federal levels. We are an active member of the BC Chamber of Commerce, which represents the interests and concerns of Chambers and businesses across the province, as well as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, which speaks for more than 175,000 businesses on national and international issues.

Topics for government relations and advocacy in 2023 included extending the deadline for CEBA (Canadian Emergency Business Account) loans, ending labour disruptions at West Coast Ports, supply chain challenges, local development proposals, and more.

## *Education*

A key pillar of the Chamber's strategic plan is providing educational content and training in response to the needs of our membership. In 2023, we continued to update our online resource library to assist businesses in all areas of their operations, and curated educational opportunities and resources for members in our Chamber Chat weekly e-news.

The Chamber offered educational events, such as our International

We hosted our Annual Economic Summit in May, featuring keynote speakers BC Premier David Eby, and Scotiabank Chief Economist Jean-François Perrault. We also ensured access for our members to speak directly to political leaders through events and roundtables with MP Ron McKinnon, MP Bonita Zarrillo, BC Minister of Children and Families Mitzi Dean, BC Official Opposition Leader Kevin Falcon, monthly Mayor's Coffee Talks, and the annual Mayors BBQ.

The Tri-Cities Chamber participated in the BC Chamber of Commerce and Canadian Chamber of Commerce Conventions and policy debates, resulting in the annual policy manual that sets out advocacy efforts for the year (in addition to emerging issues), available on our website.

Women's Day Brunch, and Chamber Talks, and online partner events for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and National Small Business Week.

On October 5, we were the local partner Chamber for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Inclusive Growth Dialogue series. This event focused on building employer confidence in hiring neurodiverse people and persons with disabilities.



*L to R: Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce Board Director Jennifer McKinnon and CEO Leslie Courchesne at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Convention and AGM, Calgary, October 2023.*



*Canada's Chief Accessibility Officer Stephanie Cadieux speaks at the Chamber's Inclusive Growth Dialogue event, Coquitlam, October 2023.*



# Program Highlights

## *Shop Chamber, Tri-Local and Taste of the Tri-Cities*

In 2023, the Chamber championed supporting local businesses through a number of programs. Our #ShopChamber member-to-member discount program continued to help members grow their network and referrals.

We were proud to be a lead member of the Tri-Local Collective, supporting local businesses in the Tri-Cities, in conjunction with the three cities, Austin Heights Business Improvement Association, Downtown Port

Coquitlam Business Improvement Association, Port Moody & Co., Tri-City News, and Shop Local Port Moody. The initiative is geared to educate and motivate our community to support Tri-Cities businesses. As well, the Taste of the Tri-Cities festival held February 17 to March 12 featured nearly 60 restaurants, cafes, breweries and other establishments. The Summer Lovin' campaign in July and August featured a chance to win prizes each week for visits to Chamber member businesses.



## *Tri-Cities Young Professionals*

The Tri-Cities Young Professionals Program (TCYP) is geared toward ambitious professionals under 40. The program creates a vibrant and connected business community by providing opportunities for entrepreneurs and

emerging business leaders to build, impact, and grow. In 2023, the TCYP hosted events including Trivia Nights, Wine Clubs, a Curling Tournament, and plans for a Top to Watch Awards Soirée.



## *Women in Business*

The Women in Business Program strives for the success of all women, with a focus on supporting those who continue to be underrepresented in the business community. Through educational seminars, networking events, and women-focused initiatives, the WIB

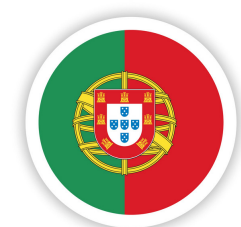
Program is committed to championing women in business. Highlights in 2023 included the March 8th International Women's Day Brunch the Swing into Spring event at the Westwood Plateau Driving Range, Harvest Moon Mixer, and Raise Your Glass Year-End Mixer.



## *Chamber Travel Program*

A yearly small-group tour abroad for Chamber members and community members is an excellent opportunity to build connections and see the

world. In November 2023, more than 20 people travelled to Portugal for a nine-day adventure through Lisbon, Porto, Coimbra and more.



# Business Excellence Awards

*Each year, members of the Tri-Cities business community gather to honour and celebrate business excellence.*

*The Tri-Cities Chambers' annual Business Excellence Awards publicly recognize outstanding businesses, organizations and individuals that demonstrate excellence in business and a passion for the community.*



## 2023 Award Recipients

### **Business of the Year (1-10 Employees) Award**

*Jamila's Kitchen & Grill*

### **Business of the Year (11-30 Employees) Award**

*Manhas Health Co.*

### **Business of the Year (30+ Employees) Award**

*Tru Earth Environmental Products*

### **Business Leader of the Year Award**

*Hema Bhatt, Natu'oil Services*

### **Community Builder Award**

*Aultrust Financial Ltd.*

### **Not-For-Profit of the Year Award**

*ACCESS Youth Outreach Services*

### **Young Professional of the Year Award**

*Paige Petriw, Spotlight Events*

### **Green Business of the Year Award**

*Ethical Waste Services*

### **Chamber Member of the Year**

*Navid Morawej*





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## 2023 Event Highlights

**1** BC Chamber Conference, Whistler: BC Chamber President & CEO Fiona Famulak, Tri-Cities Board Chair Jenifer Wright and Vice Chair Daniel Richardson **2** Economic Summit, BC Premier David Eby, Chamber CEO Leslie Courchesne **3** Round table with BC Minister of Children and Families Mitzi Dean **4** Kwikwetlem Day, Coquitlam Councillor Teri Towner, Kwikwetlem Elder Marie Hooper **5** Tri-Cities Chamber Golf Classic, DBM Law foursome **6** Lunch With Leaders, BC Official Opposition Leader Kevin Falcon **7** TCYP (Tri-Cities Young Professionals) Wine Club En Blanc



7



## 2023 Event Highlights

**8** Mayors BBQ, Port Moody Mayor Meghan Lahti, Anmore Mayor John McEwan **9** Canadian Chamber Inclusive Growth Dialogue **10** Business Showcase, Tri-Cities Chamber Board Director Chris Chong **11** BC Chamber's Premier and Cabinet Luncheon, BC Minister of Post-Secondary Education Selina Robinson, Tri-Cities Chamber CEO Leslie Courchesne, Greater Vancouver Board of Trade President and CEO Bridgitte Anderson **12** International Women's Day Brunch, authors Indira Samarasekera, Martha Piper, Port Coquitlam Councillor Paige Petriw **13** Live For Tomorrow Brands member mixer, Tri-Cities Board Director Jennifer McKinnon, LFT owners Munu and Keena Hicken-Gaberria **14** Port Coquitlam Foundation Croquet Tournament, Tri-Cities Chamber Board Director Mike Forrest

## Thank you to our Partners



## Thank you to our Leading Sponsors



As well, our sincerest appreciation to the more than 50 event sponsors and in-kind sponsors who supported Chamber programs and activities throughout the year.

# Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce

COQUITLAM | PORT COQUITLAM | PORT MOODY | ANMORE | BELCARRA



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