Business view magazine

Jan-Feb 2017
Oceania Edition

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MASTER BUILDERS
AUSTRALIA

www.masterbuilders.com.au

MASTER BUILDERS

Master Builders is the major Australian building and construction industry association. Its primary role is to promote the viewpoints and interests of the building and construction industry and to provide services to members in a broad range of areas including training, legal services, industrial relations, building codes and standards, industry economics and international relations.

Master Builders Associations

Master Builders Australia is the national body of the Master Builders group. Its members include all nine State and Territory Master Builders Associations.

Each Association provides an extensive range of services to assist its members which will ensure the building and construction industry operates in a profitable, efficient and ethical manner.

Membership of the Master Builders demonstrates that these companies value high standards of integrity, skill and responsibility to their clients.

Editor's *Note*

Dear Readers,

The year 2017 is also promising to be an interesting one, regardless of where one might stand. On the other side of the pond, a new president was recently sworn in. On our own side, development continues across all fronts. Here at Business View Magazine, we will continue to highlight the region's commercial and local government sectors and ensure that the work of the people involved does not go unnoticed.

Our main feature for this issue will be Fennel Forestry, who are heavily invested in Australia's largest commercial plantation forests in the Green Triangle. The importance of forestry will be detailed, along with the business and environmental practices that make Fennel Forestry stand out.

In addition to that, we are featuring the best managed conference centres and venues in Australia for 2016. To complement that, we have a profile and interview with the Accommodation Association of Australia in an effort to present their guidelines and the fantastic work they have been doing since the organisation's inception.

As part of our commitment to showcasing the business world of the region, we will be highlighting the achievements of various small businesses, along with their struggles. This issue will focus on immigrants to Australia who, through hard work and dedication, have managed to create a wide range of businesses.

Finally, we have a range of local government Councils and a selection of companies featured throughout Australia and New Zealand. We hope that you will enjoy reading more about the regions' growing sectors!

Best Wishes from

James Schafer & the team

10 Business Trends That Will Grow in 2017

Because so many Millennials are in charge of buying decisions, business trends for the upcoming years will change. If you haven't noticed, Millennials have been on the rise. They are now the largest living group according to the Census Bureau. Because so many Millennials are in charge of buying decisions, the world is changing and business trends for the upcoming years will have to cater more to this generation. For an audience that craves success and technology, here are 10 strategies you may want to consider revamping for 2017.

By Leonard Kim @ Inc.com

1. Tools for non-technical entrepreneurs to build tech products

There are so many people online who are not technically savvy, myself included. But the need to use technology is more than it has ever been before. Because of that, technicality in your business is more imperative than ever before. In 2017, technology will be a necessary staple for every business if it expects to compete in today's market. CMS platforms like WordPress allow easy management of a website with minimal technical know-how for people like me to build their businesses online.

2. Tools to help with personal brand

Personal branding has helped people like Anthony Robbins and Oprah Winfrey create world-renowned brands. The internet opened up the playing field to make it much more even, so people who may have never succeeded at anything in life, such as myself, have a shot at making it big. So many people are releasing similar products, that the competition in the market continues to grow. Personal branding tools will start trending even more, helping businesses gain individuality and reduce the number of direct competitors. Look into personal branding tools to increase business in 2017.

3. Focus on training remote employees

10 years ago, you may have never even heard of a remote employee. Nowadays, tech companies and start-ups are doing most of their hires remotely. IBM led this trend and many other companies have followed suit. Since meetings can be done over Skype or other video conference platforms and customer service, social media and programming positions only require access to the computer and Internet, talented Millennials can be hired for positions no matter where they live.

4. Businesses embrace the Millennials, instead of rejecting them

You may think Millennials are materialistic, narrow-minded and selfish. But that isn't the case. They just don't work in the same way that baby boomers do. They look for creative ways to do their job better and are constantly looking for ways to improve the processes in the workforce. This leads to innovation and helps jump-start change within large organizations. Ian Altman sees a trend where businesses are starting to embrace Millennials and cater to their needs. This will be seen even more as the generation takes over more of the job force in 2017."

5. More businesses for sale

Baby Boomers started most of the brick and mortar businesses that we see. But there are a few components that are shifting the business landscape. Technology is becoming easier to use, items you once could only find at specialty shops are now easily accessible online and Baby Boomers are entering retirement. These shifts, along with the economic recovery in recent years has made business sales more prominent. As Baby Boomers seek to retire in the next few years, you will see many businesses being sold, taken apart and reinvented by the Millennials. In addition, many of these Baby Boomers will try to get ahead of their competitors by selling their businesses next year, before the market becomes too competitive and business buyouts decrease.

6. Products that track nutrition

I work at an academic medical center and get access to a lot of data in the world of health and nutrition. I also attended CES earlier this year and saw an entire portion of the conference dedicated to health and fitness wearables. From the data I have access to and through observation, Millennials, especially women, are concerned with their health and nutrition more than any other past generation. With the addition of technology like integrated health systems, Fitbits and virtual reality, tracking nutrition and fitness levels is becoming even easier as people expand the market. In 2017, this trend will continue and tfitness apps and software will grow the health and fitness market.

7. E-commerce will continue to rise

I started working with an entrepreneur who spent the last 10 years selling shears for hairstylists at conferences. He recently had a graphic designer put together a website and started to run social media ads. Within one month of running Facebook ads, he generated $140,000 in revenue, sold out nearly his entire inventory and had to hire four more staff members due to the unexpected volume that his Facebook campaign generated. Due to how much easier it is for businesses to target and access their core audiences, there is now an increased demand for online e-commerce tools. Recent studies have shown that 58 percent of shoppers are willing to add additional items to their virtual shopping carts to meet free-shipping quotas. As technology continues to expand in 2017, we should see an increase in e-commerce trends.

8. Businesses will focus on connecting customers rather than on selling to them

People are tired of being sold, and Millennials can tell they are being sold from a mile away. This is an instant

turn-off for these buyers and once they sense any type of selling, they move on to the next company. What is working though are apps and services that connect people to what they want. Companies like Postmates don't sell any products, but they allow you to get whatever you want delivered to wherever you are. According to Ian Altman, "We are in the connection economy. Uber is the largest taxi company, yet it has no physical assets and can still deliver rides easily to its customers. We should see more businesses like Uber on the rise."

9. Strength-based training versus remedial leadership

You have probably heard the old adage, "do what you are good at, not what you love." The same goes for the workplace. Up until recently, people hired for the same position were all taught the same skill. Now, companies are hiring specialists to come in and focus on doing one particular task, until they perfect it. At my position at Keck Medicine of USC, I am not required to learn the in depth details of all our marketing strategies. I just have to focus on what we are doing at a digital level, honed specifically in on social media. According to Ian Altman, Gallup Research shows that productivity increases 21% when employees are doing something they love. In 2017, businesses will invest more in training that focuses on a leader's natural talent than on remedial leadership training.

10. Products becoming green

Millennials are quite conscious of what types of products they buy. They turn off the sink when they brush their teeth. They shut off the water in the shower when they are shampooing their hair. They even go out there and actively look for socially conscious companies to purchase from, because they care about the earth and want to make sure it's still here for when they are old, and when their children grow old. "Going green" is a term that's been around for a while. However, it has only recently been taken more seriously as companies have developed more products to help push this mission forward. Already, over $500 million has been saved in energy efficiency and we should expect to see this grow in 2017 as these green products increase.

Look out for these trends in 2017

These changes are going to happen. And because of that, you need to be ready for the drastical changes in the next few years as Millennials make up more of the work force and become target customers. If you expect to survive as a business, you will want to modify your business in 2017 to follow these popular trends.

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Changing a Business Means Realigning Everything. Are you Ready?

Your innovative changes brought you success in the market today. Now all you have to worry about is the next set of changes pushing you out tomorrow.

By Martin Zwilling, Founder and CEO, Startup Professionals

New business owners are rightfully proud of the changes they bring to the market, so they readily admit that change is good.

Yet these same entrepreneurs often quickly get set in their ways, and find themselves resisting changes to their own business, and begin to fear further customer change in their domain. Change is no longer seen as an opportunity, but as a big risk and cost.

I know we all hate risk, but I'm a big believer in the old adage - "No risk, no reward!" The challenge in business is manage risk, or take calculated risks, rather than blindly step into every risky unknown.

One of the key ways I have found to calculate the business risk of a change, is to look for an alignment of interests across the range of constituents required for success.

The constituents of every business

success go far beyond customers - they include employees, partners, investors, vendors, and may even include competitors. Every change requires an alignment check, and probable realignment, of some of these forces.

For you as a business person leading the charge, I recommend the following principles for managing alignment:

1. Proactively make change happen, rather than react

You can't win by always being in recovery mode. With the speed of change today, you need to develop a culture that loves change, build the ability to quickly realign into your organization, and reward members of the team who come up with ideas, and are instrumental in making them happen.

2. Regularly update and re-publish your vision and direction

On a quarterly basis, you need to re-assess your original vision, to make sure it is consistent with new realities. If the world is changing direction, you need to realign your thinking.

Just as importantly, you have to bring all constituents along, or the business will be fragmented and left behind.

3. Review all business components for every re-alignment

Too many businesses handle change on a piecemeal basis - maybe they update the product, but don't look at the revenue model, or the selling process.

Nearly half of small businesses today still don't have a website, despite a majority of people looking there for search, sale, and support.

4. Every change requires extra communication to constituents

It's twice as hard to change an image in someone's mind than it was to get the image there is the first place. That means all realignments require

over-communication, in multiple medias - video, voice, documents, and actions.

Don't assume a simple press release will be enough.

5. The fastest way to change a business is to bring in new blood

Most successful business owners have learned that you usually need to seed change and realignment with new people. Even with good people, there is an existing team member confirmation bias that works against change.

You always need to look for new skills and experience.

6. Plan to replace some tools and processes

It's a bad strategy to assume that all existing processes and systems must be updated, rather than replaced to accommodate a market change.

In reality, the costs in maintenance and usability are very high to do things the old way as well as the new. Always evaluate new tools and new systems.

7. Pick metrics to measure change implementation and results

Plan ahead to measure the results you expect from the realignment, as well as the extent of the change process.

You will always hear the negatives and problems during a change, which can easily hide any positive results, or how near you are to success in the process.

Even with all the right planning and flexible systems, it takes the right people to make change happen - starting at the top.

Consider what Steve Jobs had to do to change Apple from a computer company to consumer electronics, or how Howard Schultz changed all the rules of selling coffee with Starbucks. Every aspect of these business had to be realigned.

As much as change is good for new businesses, it is absolutely required for the long-term survival of existing businesses.

Witness what resistance to change did for Blockbuster Video and Kodak. Also, real change takes more than the one person at the top - it takes the engagement of all team members internally, as well as external constituents.

Are all your stars aligned for change?

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Accommodation Association of Australia

Providing the best outcomes for the tourism accommodation sector

Tourism, both domestic and international, is a continuously growing industry all over the world. In Australia, Deloitte has called it as one of the "super sectors" of the next decade. It is no wonder then that organisations like the Accommodation Association of Australia (AAoA) are extremely important in the industry. Evolving out of the former Hotel Motel & Accommodation Association, the organisation was originally established in Queensland in the 1960s by a group of moteliers. According to Richard Munro, the CEO of AAoA, the group simply wanted better outcomes for their industry.

AT A GLANCE

WHO: The Accommodation Association of Australia

WHAT: A national, peak governing body that provides a unified voice for the tourism accommodation industry

WHERE: Suite 1, Level 2, 189 Kent St, Sydney NSW 2000, Australia

WEBSITE: aaoa.com.au

Today, the AAoA plays a vital role in the tourism accommodation sector of Australia and has been servicing the industry for more than 40 years. It has continuously grown since its inception and has followed the trends of the accommodation industry very closely. What was once a small body governing motels and small hotels has now morphed into a national organisation that covers thousands of members from famous hotels to regional boutique motels.

Providing a wide range of support

As a governing body, the AAoA prosecute a very clear agenda on behalf of the industry though they do not play a regulatory role in it. Unlike similar organisations, the AAoA does not rate or regulate their members and instead trusts them to conduct in a professional manner, particularly in the business-to-consumer side of things. Instead, the AAoA is interested in four main areas: demand drivers, employment, regulation, and taxation. These areas are broadly defined but encompass much of the work undertaken by the association.

Richard Munro, CEO

For instance, supporting good infrastructure that w ill hopefully attract more visitors is part of their focus on demand drivers. Securing better outcomes for the industry around penalty rates, public holidays, and part-time provisions is vital for the employment sector. Lobbying for better payroll tax and standing off against companies and services like Airbnb and online travel agencies is also an important part of their work. While the government has the last word in regulation, the accommodation industry largely operates within itself and the AAoA tries to protects their interests at all times so they in a constant communication with federal bodies.

Making the effort to address national issues

To that end, the AAoA has to stay up to speed with the latest developments in the accommodation industry as well as any changes in legislation that may affect them. For instance, the AAoA has been lobbying the government to provide clearer definitions of the Building Code of Australia. Right now, different types of accommodation fall into varying categories. While residential homes fall under a different class than hotels and motels, for instance, services like Airbnb are blurring the lines as people are renting their homes for short-term stays. As one might expect, this has a direct impact on the accom-

modation industry and the AAoA wants the government to address that.

Still, the AAoA has to remain impartial on the political side of things. According to Richard, the association is "definitely agnostic" in this department as their only goal is "to get the best outcomes for the members". Even if it takes a bit of extra effort, they take into account both sides of the government by consulting with the appropriate bodies. Thankfully, the AAoA has had a lot of success in working with the government to help shape legislation that makes the accommodation industry more viable for their members. The association is mostly involved with the federal government as it would be nearly impossible to work with every local government.

Responding to the industry's needs

Becoming a member of the AAoA comes with pronounced benefits which are hard to resist.

"We have a lot of benefits that we negotiate on behalf of our members. First and foremost, we are doing advocacy. Not any one individual business could go out and do what we do. Combining all the members together and pursuing the agenda as a peak body makes a big difference. Secondly, we offer an industrial relationships hotline

and once you become a member, it's a free service. Basically, members can get as much industrial relationships advice as they want, about things like wage rates, management contracts, or even things like an unfair dismissal. Other benefits are around negotiations such as the case with banks. We have negotiated the best merchant rate for our members so when they transact with a credit card, the fees are the lowest. We also have cashback benefits through a loyalty program which we offer for purchases through our buying platform", explains Richard.

As the peak representative body of the accommodation industry, the AAoA is deeply involved in everything that can result in better outcomes for their members. Skilled workers, for example, is a key topic that is directly addressed by the association in the form of specialized academies. In order to make sure that enough skilled people are available to work in the industry, the association has developed the AAoA Academy to train prospective employees so that they can cover the necessities of the industry in serving all of the incoming customers.

According to Richard, there is an exciting future in terms of growth for the industry, both due to the increasing number of domestic visitors but also due to a large influx of interest from Asian countries. At the moment, the organisation is also conducting a lot of work in pre-employments programs as part of the jobactive initiative of the Australian government. That involves training people for two weeks before they join the industry and simultaneously offering qualifications, certifications, and diplomas to people who are already working in the accommodation sector. After all, one of the best ways to reward those employees is to ensure their long-term qualifications in the industry.

Overall, the AAoA has a crucial role in the accommodation industry that continuously benefits its members. From lobbying better regulations in the government to ensuring that the industry can retain its viability in the long term, the association ensures that its members will continue to profit. As the tourism and accommodation industry continues to grow, the AAoA will surely follow alongside it.

CountryPlace

Conferencing in Paradise

When it comes to running a conference or business event, it would be hard to find a more appealing location than the wonderful Dandenong Ranges just outside of Melbourne. High in the mountains, surrounded by forest, overlooking Silvan Dam and right down the Yarra Valley, the CountryPlace location is truly idyllic.

Choosing the right venue, in the right location, can sometimes be a daunting task. The right conference facilities, services, accommodation, and

AT A GLANCE

WHO: CountryPlace

WHAT: An award-winning conference, event, and accommodation venue

WHERE: 180 Olinda Creek Road, Kalorama, Victoria 3766

WEBSITE: countryplace.com.au

food and drink offerings, have to be carefully considered in order to make the meeting or retreat a success.

In Victoria, there are few places that can fit all of the above requirements better than CountryPlace. The award-winning conference, event, and accommodation venue offers a premier service in one of the most beautiful locations in the Dandenong Ranges. The centre has been operating for almost 25 years in its current location, just 40 minutes from Melbourne.

Jeffry and Carol Farman, the co-founders and a directors of the company, talked to us about managing the venue, their values, and the guidelines that direct CountryPlace. With a strong background in advertising and marketing, Jeffry handles the promotion, branding, and marketing of CountryPlace. He is also actively involved in developing and maintaining the magnificent CountryPlace gardens.

Very special gardens

The venue's gardens are a huge attraction with both the people who book the events and the guests themselves. These gardens are situated in the Olinda State Forest, one of the ven-

ue's main features. Anyone who visits the location can attest to its beauty.

The gardens, which spread across eight acres, feature both native flowering trees and exotic specimens. Because guests frequently enquire about them, the organisation recently completed a project to identify and label all of the important species. The pristine gardens offer a sense of tranquility that makes CountryPlace ideal for both business and leisure.

Special events, popular with guests

One example of a popular event is the Faulty Towers Dining Experience.

"We have been running the Faulty Towers Dinner Show for the past three years and it's now enormously popular. We sell out well ahead of time for each of the events and we will be running six of them this year. Faulty Towers tends to attract people who are familiar with the show. Often corporate groups will include a show to provide a highlight for their event," says Jeffry Farman.

Moving Australia's venues forward

When the Farmans acquired the venue in 1992, they quickly focused on turning it into a prestigious yet approachable organisation that could accommodate a range of different clients. Soon after the purchase, they

Jeffry Farman

went on a tour of venues in the United States. Here they became familiar with the International Association of Conference Centers (IACC). Membership of the association required strict standards with regard to meeting facilities and conference rooms. For example, meeting rooms must have very good natural light with lots of windows. Fully adjustable ergonomic chairs were required to provide all-day comfort for conference delegates.

With all that in mind, the company developed a purpose-built conference facility, connected to the main complex, that met all of these standards. Having met the criteria, CountryPlace became the first Australian conference centre

to be accepted for membership of the international association.

After gaining membership, in 1993, Jeffry worked hard to establish a local chapter of the association in Australia. He became the first chairman of the Australian Chapter. He also served for two years as president of the global board, based in St Louis.

Domestically, CountryPlace has won the National Tourism Award twice and the Victorian Award for Tourism five times. It is also the only conference centre to be inducted into the Tourism Hall of Fame in Victoria, a fact that showcases the exemplary services of the venue.

Establishing the Quality Management System

Offering a reliable, customer focused service is important for CountryPlace to achieve strong repeat business levels. The organization is committed to an ongoing Quality Management System for their operations. “Quality management is based on establishing clear standards, training and staff communication. You firstly have to know what the customer wants you to achieve,” says Jeffry. Everything from making beds, pouring beers, cleaning the venue is documented. The system that CountryPlace has in place defines absolutely everything. Nothing is left to chance.

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Specialising in Limited Release, Boutique Wines of Distinction.
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Yering Farm is steeped in history, for its location and for the vines this site was originally known for. It is located on the original site of the Yeringa Vineyard once owned by the Deschamps family back in the 1800's.

As fifth generation Orchardists, the Johns family resurrected the property in 1980. The old hay shed was transformed into the charming rustic Cellar Door that you can visit today, complete with the original "Yeringa Vineyard" sign adorning the entrance.

The whole property exudes charm, with commanding views of the Yarra Valley: perfect to linger with a bottle of wine and the Yering Farm "Pruner's Platter" by the fire or out on the large verandah.

The replanting of grapevines began in 1989 and to this day, all Yering Farm wines are still produced on site from estate grown fruit with the sole focus being to produce high quality, low yielding, hand picked grapes.

Like Alan and Vicki Johns, the wines have passion and personality, as do the fabulous wine labels, especially in the Farmyard series, which includes Run Rabbit Run Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, Duck Down Under Pinot Noir and The Foxtrot Cabernet and Shiraz.

As an Orchardist, a tasting experience would not be the same without trying Alan's Pink Lady apple cider. It's delicious!

YERING FARM WINES

The most recent addition to Yering Farm is the luxurious self-contained heritage farmhouse. Known as *The George at Yering*, it is set idyllically amongst the 70 acre orchard and the 30 acre vineyard, all within a short walk to the Cellar Door.

The George at Yering exudes luxury from the moment you enter the front door: a double story home awaits beyond the vaulted ceiling foyer. In the main lounge area with its open fire place, you get to enjoy a complimentary glass of Yering Farm Cabernet Sauvignon aptly named "The George".

Over the two floors are six large bedrooms, three bathrooms, central dining, library room and a gorgeous timber country kitchen looking out on to the in-ground solar heated saltwater pool and spa with beautifully manicured gardens.

Contact Yering Farm

Yering Farm Wines,19-21 St Huberts RdYering, Victoria 3770 Australia

www.yeringfarmwines.com

info@yeringfarmwines.com

This method, it seems, has been working well for the company. Their level of repeat business stands at around 65 percent. They are clearly doing what their clients want. Regular clients have particular requirements, right down to the way they need the conference tables placed.

The quality management system is imbedded across every aspect of the business, including the supply chain. Anything that goes into the kitchen is carefully inspected too. If a chicken arrives at the wrong temperature, for instance, the kitchen staff will send it right back because it does not meet the standards set by the management system.

Being the largest residential property on the mountain has made CountryPlace very important for local suppliers so there is a symbiotic relationship that works very well. Keeping the supply chain moving and simultaneously investing back into the facilities can be a challenge but it is certainly something that Jeffry and his team have consistently handled well. After all, a venue such as CountryPlace needs to be at the forefront at all times. There are continuous investments in computer software and hardware, screens, data

projectors, electronic whiteboards, and everything else that might be useful to meetings and conferences.

Running at the top of the market

According to Jeffry, CountryPlace's most successful marketing tool is keeping direct contact with their customers. The venue has a database of about 5,000 people to whom they regularly email marketing campaigns and associated promotions. Some of their clients only have a conference once each year but the company still keeps in touch with them and maintains continuous contact. Web-based marketing is also a vital and the company is continually improving its website strategy.

Jeffry also talked to us about staying ahead of the competition: "The market is quite competitive. First of all, 90 percent of our business comes from Victoria. Corporate, government, universities, and leisure groups." What they tend to do first is choose a location. An area or region that has a particular appeal. The Dandenong Ranges is a tourist destination because of its natural beauty with the forests, gardens, hills, and lakes, all of which make it very

attractive. It also means we are well-known for our location to most clients"

CountryPlace maintains a team of about 35. Jeffry and his wife regard CountryPlace as a family business with staff who have been with them for a considerable number of years. The managing director John and his wife Janine, an award-winning chef, have been with CountryPlace for more than 25 years. Their sons have also worked in the business. Generally, Jeffry wants to offer his employees a chance to balance work and family life even though the work is challenging. CountryPlace operates 7 days a week with very busy weekends so a lot of employees are needed to cover the various bases.

Continuous growth via ongoing investment

To date, the venue has provided meeting and hospitality facilities for over 10,200 residential meetings covering learning and professional development as well as programs related to culture change, leadership, and team-building. It has hosted a range of clients including universities, schools, corporations, churches, government, and special interest groups such as health and fitness clubs as well as hobby and sports groups. Over the past 12 months alone, the venue has grown revenue by over 22 percent. According to Jeffry, their 25 years of experience and their absolute dedication to meeting their clients' specific needs are the two main things that have established CountryPlace's leadership in the market.

Jeffry hopes to continue building upon the stellar track record of CountryPlace. He wants to retain positive customer feedback to raise the level of repeat business. Whatever area Jeffry will focus on in the future, it is certain that CountryPlace will benefit.

Supporting Partner

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Acqua Viva on the Swan

A fine establishment for corporate and special events

The Swan River, arguably one of Perth's most beautiful locations, attracts thousands of visitors every year. Its natural beauty combined with the intensely active lifestyle of the nearby residents provides the perfect recipe for success, particularly for business that operate on the waterfront. Acqua Viva on the Swan, one of Perth's finest establishments for corporate functions and special events alike, is one of those businesses that has developed a strong clientele and a solid reputation along the shoreline.

Christian Tinelli, the venue's manager, talked to us about what makes Acqua Viva unique and how it has devel-

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Acqua Viva on the Swan

WHAT: One of Perth's finest establishments for a variety of functions and events

WHERE: Nedlands, Broadway, Perth WA 6009, Australia

WEBSITE: acquaviva.com.au

oped over the years. In the 1920s, the venue's current location was used as a facility for swimming lessons. A few decades later, a major redevelopment turned it into a restaurant. And 12 years ago, Christian and his father Umberto decided to take over and turn it into the conference and events centre of choice for a considerable percentage of Perth's corporate and private sectors. Though it took them a couple of years to establish a foundation and attract people to the previously shuttered location, the Tinelli touch won their visitors over in the end.

A long history in hospitality

Growing up, Christian was always on the inside of the hospitality industry. After all, his father has been involved in the industry for more than 30 years, establishing several different venues throughout his career. And though Christian initially wanted to focus on studying dentistry, he decided to focus on Acqua Viva instead. Christian, his father, and his sister are now all involved in the family business and their work has attracted rave feedback from every guest that has walked through their venue's doors.

Acqua Viva is conveniently located on top of the river and is only accessible via a jetty. The function centre

Christian Tinelli

Rebecca Tinelli

is split up into three different areas; a bar, a private dining room, and the main dining room. The layout of the venue has been purposefully designed such as that all the rooms are close together in order to accommodate larger functions. However, each room is suited to different events. The bar lounge area, for instance, is a fantastic choice for cockstail-style functions as it can host up to 90 guests. The private dining is the best choice for more intimate events such as small weddings, private parties, birthdays, christenings, and more. The entire room is surrounded by floor to ceiling glass windows and it can seat up to 35 guests at a time.

Finally, the main dining room can accommodate either up to 150 guests with a dance floor or 180 guests without. The rooms are all fully equipped with furniture of the highest quality, including white leather chairs, lounges, silver and white ottomans, and coffee tables. The décor is neutral with hints of elegance throughout. The atmosphere is friendly, warm, yet also highly professional. As such, it serves for a wide range of events from the most professional to the most private. Furthermore, the style allows for extremely flexibility in personal theming and colour preference, allowing guests to make the function centre as personalized as they possibly can.

Umberto Tinelli

Delivering outstanding customer service with a personal touch

Acqua Viva also hosts a number of different events to demonstrate the facilities:

"In August, we are doing a wedding day launch which happens once per year. It showcases the venue to potential couples who are looking to book a venue. There are wine tastings and a selection of canapes. We also set up the rooms to show them the different ways in which the venue can be utilized. We also do a similar event for the corporate sector", says Christian.

Delivering outstanding customer service and satisfaction is a multifaceted affair that has to be carefully managed and maintained. At Acqua Viva, guests can expect a personalized approach from the moment they make their initial query. The venue has three dedicated employees who work at the office and who maintain close contact with the clients from the first phone call to the actual night of the function and beyond. According to Christian, their service is very prompt and professional which provides a good point of difference.

Aside from those factors, the other main things that set Acqua Viva apart

from the competition are its position on the Swan River and the personal touch that Christian and his father provide for their guests. First of all, the location offers stunning views of nature and the city of Perth, something that a very limited number of venues can offer. Furthermore, the owner-operators are actively involved in the venue. They meet and greet guests on their arrival, chat with them during their events to make sure that everything is up to par, and greet them off once their event has come to an end. Their active involvement is a rare sight for a fine dining establishment yet feedback from their guests is strongly positive in this regard.

A great reputation inside and outside of the organisation

As a family business, Acqua Viva is not tied up to any huge organisations or companies. They maintain their own high quality standards and set out the example for their employees as well. According to Christian, the staff at Acqua Viva are treated like part of the family. On their part, the staff are eager to learn from Christian and his father as their experience provides plenty of learning opportunities across many areas of hospitality, from service to the finest Italian food and more. A testament to this working relationship

is the fact that many of the employees have stayed with the Tinellis over the years. In fact, one of them (feel free to insert name and role here) has been working with Christian's father for 28 years.

Maintaining a great reputation is vital for Acqua Viva as the organisation rarely relies on traditional advertising methods as part of their marketing strategy. Instead, they prefer to market themselves on word of mouth. Clients who choose Acqua Viva as their venue of choice for private and professional events overwhelmingly give positive feedback which in turns feeds new clients back into the business. Of course, in this day and age, social media and the company's own website are also important. For example, the venue's Instagram page is constantly updated to ensure that potential guests can be provided with an intimate insight on what's happening with the venue and how things look from the inside.

Going strong in a competitive industry

The hospitality industry in Perth is, after all, a very competitive market.

"The last couple of years have been tough on hospitality overall. In Perth, there's been a boom of new ventures

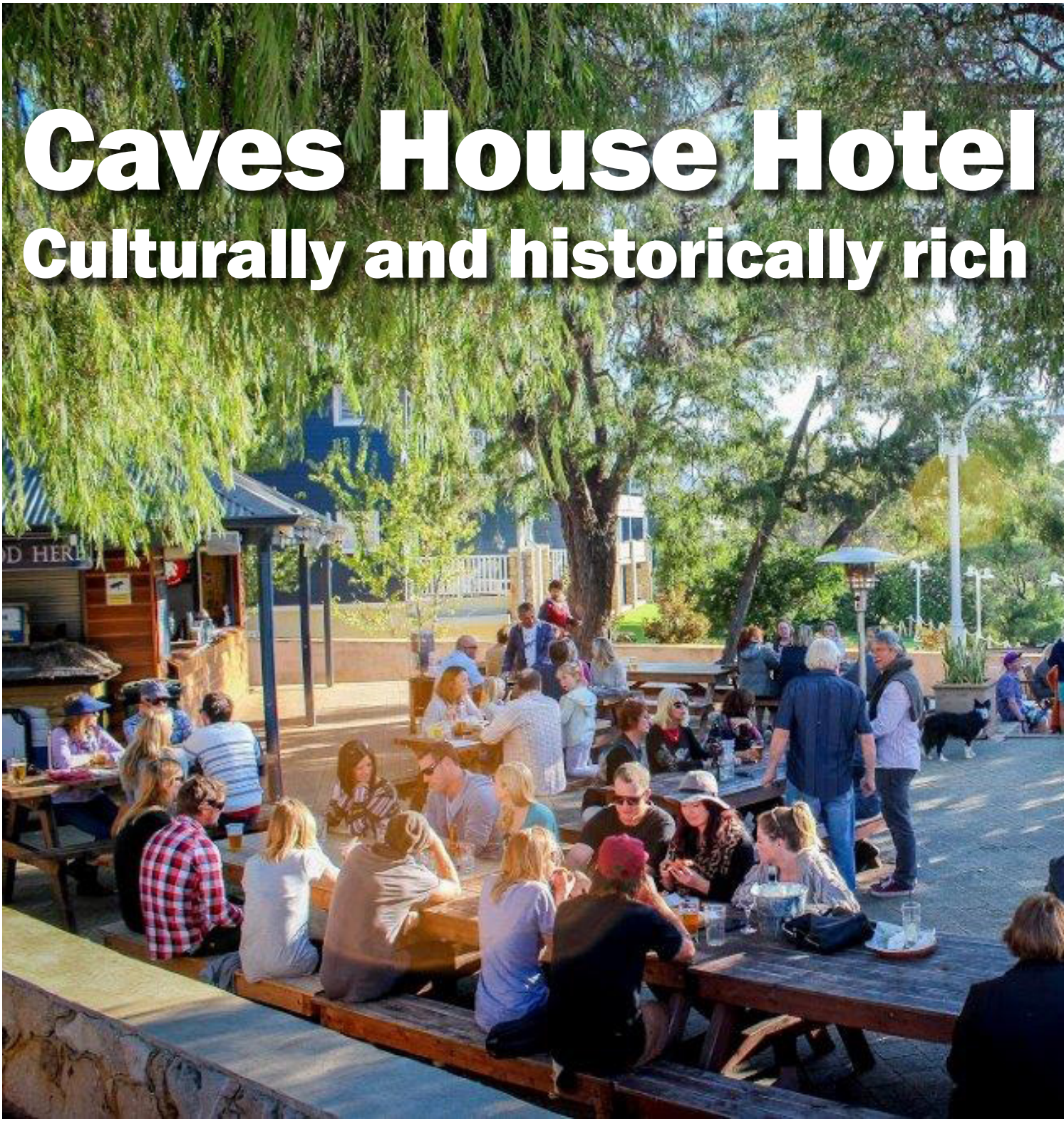
and venues opening up. Pop up venues, in particular, have been very popular. But we've also seen a lot of them shutting down because it's a very tough market out there. In the corporate sector, there are fewer people as many of them have been let go. So while we do retain those functions, the amount of staff has decreased so in functions that might have been 150 people, we now have 120 or 100. We still get a number of functions through our door but it's the number of people who attend them that is much smaller. That's one of the problems that our industry is facing. We are lucky that we have been around for 12 years and have a lovely clientele that like to give us repeat business", suggests Christian.

One of the elements which has helped Acqua Viva in this regard is the symbiotic relationship they have developed with their suppliers. By being loyal to their operators and keeping the same suppliers over the years, they have established a strong trust. In addition to that, they have a strong relationship with external services like decorators and DJs. All of them work together to ensure that clients will keep coming back so both sides have a stake in the game.

Over the next few years, Christian hopes to make a bigger push in the corporate sector, not necessarily on big events but more so on smaller ones like one-day conferences and professional breakfasts. Furthermore, Acqua Viva will be launching an external catering service for a variety of events. As Christian explains it, many clients wish to have an event on the foreshore so Acqua Viva will be able to provide them with their own excellent food service. The family's experience in the hospitality industry will certainly be a strong aspect for years to come.

Caves House Hotel

Culturally and historically rich



Australia is a place favoured with stunning locations, breathtaking views, and heritage sites that are a testament to its rich and varied culture. In Western Australia, visitors and locals who like to appreciate locales of historical and cultural value should pay close attention to the Caves House Hotel. The heritage-listed hotel and event centre is located a short walk away from Yallingup Beach which was a mecca for surfers during its height in the 1950s.

Originally built by the government of Australia in 1901 to accommodate

visitors of the nearby caves, Caves House Hotel has always maintained its distinct style. Soon after rebuilding it in 1938 as the original was destroyed in a fire, the government sold the property which has since changed hands a number of times. Thankfully, all of the owners were respectful of the building's significance and have managed to maintain the vibrant atmosphere and Art Deco style that makes it so unique. Today, Caves House Hotel is owned by partners Libby Shepard and Neil Jilley. Libby spoke with us about managing a cultural place with a strong heritage, maintaining its artistic integrity, and developing new services for the modern era without impacting on the hotel's character.

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Caves House Hotel

WHAT: An iconic hotel with an Art Deco style with live entertainment and many opportunities for events

WHERE: 18 Yallingup Beach Rd, Yallingup WA 6282, Australia

WEBSITE:

caveshousehotelyallingup.com.au

Providing full entertainment in every season

Libby and Neil are the first owners who have been born and bred in the local area and as such they have a profound love for the building, both for its architectural value and the culture that surrounds it. The two of them have cultivated a friendly yet professional working atmosphere as they see the staff as an extension of their own family.

As a hotel in the South West of Australia, Caves House Hotel experiences considerable fluctuations in visitor numbers. Even so, their iconic live entertainment events happen all year round. After all, the hotel is famous for its entertainment, as well as the various drinks and food on offer. During the summer season, more than 70 staff are employed in the organisation though the number is reduced to about 30 in the winter. Different seasons provide different avenues for entertainment, however, and both Neil and Libby always has a full program for the guests.

To that end, Caves House Hotel supports local artists as much as possible so the two partners employ people from the community as often as they can. Aside from music, the hotel also offers a wide range of other activities such as Murder Mysteries and Comedy Nights. Furthermore, there are several huge events that attract a considerable number of visitors such as Octoberfest and the renowned New Year's party show.

Keeping the staff and customers happy

Because the Caves House Hotel caters to a wide clientele, customer service and satisfaction is of the utmost importance. First of all, there is bistro-style food and alcohol on offer at

all times. The partners believe that an extremely quick customer service turnaround on the delivery of food and drinks is vital so they have made sure to keep all bases covered at all times. The staff themselves take pride in their work, particularly because the hotel is an iconic and fun place to work at. The staff take care of every customer with a smile on their faces while also ensuring that everything is always clean and tidy.

Importantly, the staff at the Caves House Hotel are considered an integral part of the experience. As such, everyone is rewarded when they work hard and opportunities are presented equally to everyone. Libby and Neil personally congratulate and applaud those who excel, particularly during the monthly staff meetings. Furthermore, they have started an annual draw that will allow their staff to earn a paid holiday worth $2,000 as recognition of their hard work.

Managing an iconic hotel

As for the hotel itself, managing it is an absolutely pleasure for both partners. Libby not only grew up inside of hotels due to her father's business but she and Neil also have a strong love for the arts. Those two elements are strongly combined in the Caves House Hotel. Of course, it is still a business so the economic side of things has also got to be considered. To achieve prosperity, Libby and Neil have a five-year plan in place which

will enforce a lot of changes in the hotel.

First of all, a new renovation will see a particular room turned into an evening cocktail bar with more elaborate drinks. Moreover, an additional bar will be opened at the other end of the hotel to cater to another clientele. Furthermore, there are several developments in place to increase the accommodation services and serve an even larger audience. In addition to all that, there is a lot of décor work underway which will keep the same Art Deco style while making the building seem warmer and cozier.

"We aim to retain the culture of the hotel itself. We have no intention of modernizing its structure and architecture. We will be retaining and building on it, constantly improving it", says Libby.

The unique Caves House Hotel continues to attract visitors due to its history, its status as an iconic building, the beautiful heritage gardens, and its unique features that people seem to

vastly enjoy, not to mention the great entertainment and food constantly on offer. Moreover, the hotel is a lively place that continues to breathe off a vibrant aura with live music and a host of other events. By continuing on the same path, Libby and Neil will certainly keep on the great tradition of the Caves House Hotel while making everything more enjoyable for their visitors.

Hobart Function and Conference Center

A pristine location for premium events

Visitors to the Elizabeth Street Pier, one of Hobart's most beautiful waterfront locations, will find a thriving business community where they can enjoy food and drink at a unique location. There, one will also find one of the region's most popular venues, the Hobart Function and Conference Center (HFCC) which has been hosting weddings, gala dinners, conferences, product launches, meeting sessions, and thousands of other events since its inception in 1999.

Redeveloped from a warehouse in 1999, the HFCC has grown considerably over the years along with the rest of the waterfront. After its industrial op-

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Hobart Function and Conference Center

WHAT: A premium events and conference venue hosting a variety of social and business events

WHERE: 1 Elizabeth St, Hobart TAS 7000, Australia

WEBSITE: hfcc.com.au

erations ceased, a private developer decided to invest in redeveloping the entire pier. Though the developer experienced some financial difficulties, the pier was ultimately divided into five different tendencies including a hotel accommodation right above the HFCC, a couple of restaurants, and a bar. After the previous owners put the HFCC on the market in 2011, Niall Mitchell and Ginny Webb decided to purchase the venue and put their experience in the industry to the ultimate test.

From weddings to full-blown conferences

Thankfully, the business partners succeeded in every regard. Niall talked to us about the venue's history, their experience in hosting a huge variety of events, and their plans for the future. The HFCC has six different spaces which range from very small rooms suitable for board meetings to larger rooms with removable walls which can be adjusted according to their clients' needs. The smallest room, called the Norfolk, can host up to 15 people in a cocktail-style adjustment. The Grand Ballroom, the venue's largest room, can accommodate up to 600 people in the same adjustment.

Niall, Ginny, and the rest of HFCC's

staff has many years of experience in industries of hospitality, catering, and more. As a result, they can and have hosted numerous events for thousands of people with particularly positive feedback. The waterfront location lends itself to fantastic wedding receptions while business meetings also benefit from large rooms with plenty of natural light coming in from the floor-to-ceiling glass doors.

Fantastic food with excellent service

In addition to providing eloquent spaces for events and conferences, the HFCC also has a very large, fully equipped kitchen with its own team of chefs. The venue caters to social events with three course dinners, canape receptions, and whatever else that a client might request. Moreover, the centre hosts its very own events which have proven to be extremely popular. The New Year's event, for instance, is sold out of its 300 spaces earlier and earlier each year. The venue provides live entertainment with a popular local band, a seven-course dinner, and a variety of drinks.

Servicing excellent food is of the utmost importance to the FCC which is why Niall and Ginny have also launched a dedicated catering company called PRISTINE Catering and Events which they employ primarily for off-site events. Through that company they have catered to thousands of people at once. A prime example of that is the venue at Princes Wharf No

ELIZABETH ST PIER

1. The Tasmanian State Government, which manages the venue, has chosen the HFCC and PRISTINE Catering as the preferred supplier of PW1 for dinners which can host up to 1500 guests. Finally, the business partners also opened a restaurant in the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens by the name of Succulent.

Competing in two distinct markets

The competitiveness of the local market also keeps the HFCC on their toes. However, even though there are more than 100 venues in Hobart which can accommodate small meetings, there are only a handful in the local vicinity that can host large dinners like the HFCC can.

Niall also explained to us the intricate details of the industry in the area:

"We have two large and distinct markets. One is the interstate market with large conferences coming from all over Australia into Tasmania. It's always difficult because people will come to Tasmania one year and then go somewhere else, like Melbourne, for the year after. You cannot count on return trade because it could be five or six years before they host another event in Tasmania. We work closely with Business

Events Tasmania, which is a local government organisation that markets the state as a whole. They find out which associations and companies are planning national conferences and they go and target them. When they do invite the decision makers to Tasmania, they arrange a visit so that we can show clients our venue. The local market for smaller meetings is something that we want to grow"

An important distinction that separates the HFCC from the rest of the market is that they are a family business. Niall's wife Fiona is in accounting, Ginny's husband Johann is the main Executive Chef at Succulent, and both Niall and Ginny are actively involved in the day-to-day running of the centre. What that means in business terms is that they can freely operate without the strict restrictions and policies set out

by larger organisations which in turn means that they can instantly respond to any needs and wants that a client might have. Thus, their point of difference is in their flexibility.

Over the course of the next few years, Niall wants to maintain and grow their off-site operations by building the reputation of PRISTINE Catering. Furthermore, he wishes to continue the success of Succulent which was launched to rave reviews. And as for the HFCC, he wants to build upon their current success and grow further along the small meetings market in the local area. Despite the challenges that they might face in the future, the team at HFCC has certainly shown that they can be successful.

Northside Conference Centre

Born out of visionary leadership

Back in 2005, the Northside Community Church had an opportunity to redevelop its site located at Crow's Nest. Instead of building a facility just for the Church, the visionary leadership team decided to develop a day meeting facility which could be used for the local community as well as the business sector in conjunction with the Church. The result of that project was the Northside Conference Centre facility, a 3-level venue with 8 rooms including a modern Auditorium which can accommodate up to 400 people.

Patricia Chan, Northside Conference

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Northside Conference Centre

WHAT: A not-for-profit conference centre which supports the local community and charitable organisations

WHERE: Oxley St, New South Wales 2065, Australia

WEBSITE: northsideconference.com.au

Centre's General Manager, talked to us about the services offered by the venue as well as the points that differentiate them from the competition. Patricia manages the facility seven days a week and is proud to preserve the original vision which led to the development of the centre. The venue is a not-for-profit organisation which redirects the vast majority of its profits back into the community, supporting numerous charities and local groups in the process. Some examples including support for a mission in Madagascar that aims to put more kids to school, regional youth Aboriginal group, Women's Refuge, as well as charities for the marginalized and homeless people of Sydney.

Hosting professional and community events

Today, the centre is operated by several paid employees as well as a huge team of volunteers pooled from the local community. According to Patricia, what makes the centre truly unique is that it is a "modern venue suitable for the high end corporate sector yet at the same time it is able to accommodate smaller groups at different levels in order to benefit a variety of community use". Large corporations around

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the Lower North Shore frequently hold strategic planning days, workshops, AGMs, conferences, and end-of-year cocktails at the Northside Conference Centre.

On the community side of things, the venue hosts groups like AA, Legacy, Meditation, Mothers & Seniors meetings, and more. Patricia and her team do everything they can to accommodate the budget of such organisations so that no one is left out. Furthermore, they recognize a number of charities each year and offer huge discounts. Organisations like AA and the Leukaemia Foundation who truly do great work for the community have a professional and approachable venue to conduct meetings and conferences without spending exorbitant amounts of money.

"It's a five-star venue. To be able to offer that to a very worth community not-for-profit organisation is one of the best things about what we do here. We can bless them with a venue that they would otherwise not have been able to afford. We are trying to work with their budget and make recommendations, whether they are corporate or non-profit. The core of what we do is to build the community, to help the great-

er community", explains Patricia.

A wide selection of meeting spaces

The auditorium offers a premium space with plug-and-play, state-of-the-art audio and visual equipment, full lighting and draping, two large 12x9 fold back screens, options for web casting, audio visual recording, and more. On the Upper Level, there are four configurable breakout rooms which can be combined for extra space. In addition to that, the Urban Garden is an open room with natural light that can host up to 90 people.

Moving further, the Lower Level provides another configurable space which is described as a 'blank canvas'. It can be used for workshops, community events, classes, training, and more. The Boardroom is another ideal location for meetings of up to 35 people. Finally, the Foyer is ideal for cocktail and exhibition events so it is perfect for more intimate settings.

Delivering a caring, personal touch

The personal touches are what truly sets Northside Conference Centre apart and what makes it a great place to work. Like Patricia says, the staff understand the vision of what the organisation is trying to achieve and they are more than happy to work hard for it. The venue stands for charity but it is also a professional organisation which

6

goes above and beyond. The feedback from clients also reflects that. Thankfully, the centre has been operating smoothly since its inception and the wider community has benefited directly from this.

By continuously updating and upgrading their equipment, the centre has also managed to remain competitive in the challenging industry of hospitality. Their catering services offer all-day delegate packages, from breakfast to full-day catering to cocktail parties. Their menu also changes seasonally, particularly for the high-end cocktails. Outsourcing also means that they have no overhead and can keep prices very low. The all-day delegate packages start from $29 per person upwards to $45 for full catering which includes high-end drinks and food.

Constantly looking towards the future, Patricia hopes to see more and more people using the centre's facilities. As they do not have a big advertising budget, they mostly rely on word of mouth as well as the Internet. Those methods have worked great for the organisation but getting higher attendance into the auditorium is a priority for Patricia. As long as the Northside Conference Centre continues to profit, the community will also benefit.

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Seville Mercy Conference Centre

Upholding the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy

More than two decades ago in the Cairns region, the Sisters of Mercy decided to turn a piece of land into a serviceable conference centre for the community. At the time, the educational community around the area was in need of a specialized venue. More specifically, the catholic schools of the area needed a place where they could conduct staff training and other similar initiatives. After some planning and preparation, the Seville Mercy Conference Centre was finally built.

Today, the centre is still part of the Sisters of Mercy and it operates within similar ideals. The management maintains in regular contact with the Sis-

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Seville Mercy Conference Centre

WHAT: A conference centre owned by Sisters of Mercy

WHERE: 35 Bauhinia Ave, Earlville QLD 4870, Australia

WEBSITE: somcairns.com.au

ters and the location also hosts a separate building which houses two of the Sisters. Overall, the conference centre functions a self-sustaining business that operates under the philosophy of the Ministry, in service to the wider community. After all, the Sisters of Mercy have been contributing in the educational services of the community of Far North Queensland for 120 years.

A personal touch for a wide range of professionals

The Seville Mercy Conference Centre is set in a serene location and is surrounded by well-kept gardens which are part of the natural bushland. It is less than 15 minutes away from the airport and 10 minutes from the CBD. According to Rod Cole-Clarke, the centre's manager, Seville Mercy maintains a family atmosphere with a team-focused approach to their staff. There are seven staff members in total which has allowed the centre to establish a personalized approach to business. Rod was adamant in the fact that every member of the staff has a great skillset and that they all complement each other. Being diversified also means that everyone can fulfill a multitude of different roles.

"We try to make everybody's stay

SEVILLE
MERCY CONFERENCE CENTRE

here as good as we can make it. If we make a mistake, we just apologize and try to fix it immediately and that generally defuses people as we take ownership. We have regular meetings with the staff to inform them of any changes. For instance, everyone knows that we have ultra-high speed internet coming or that a new coffee machine is here. We keep them informed both in what they need to know on a daily basis and also in the bigger picture of where the centre is going so that they can come along with us. I believe in the staff working with me", says Rod.

A modern centre for any event

The centre itself is fully equipped to handle all kinds of different events though its initial focus on education has preserved throughout the years. Seville Mercy receives guests that host staff training events from many different sectors including education, disability services, and mental health services. They also receive a broad range of professionals who take advantage of the centre's facilities such as psychologists and psychiatrists, environmental groups, and school teachers. Business and personal training sessions are also quite common such as corporate retreats and meditation classes. Finally, the centre also holds various corporate events which are usually presented as exhibitions of extended durations.

There are two large conference rooms, each of which can seat up to

Courage to Care Cairns - Week 1 -16th to 21st Aug, 2015

120 delegates. Furthermore, there is a smaller meeting room which can accommodate up to 30 guests. A recently renovated executive boardroom with several seating options is also available. The only difference in the equipment is that the executive boardroom has a 60-inch flat screen TV instead of a projector due to its relatively small size. Other than that, all rooms are fully equipped with sound systems, whiteboards, amplifiers, and every other piece of equipment required for a successful presentation.

According to Rod, technology plays a pivotal role in the organisation and he is always on the lookout for the latest updates. Right now, the centre is in the process of installing a high speed internet connection and additional tech equipment. All these small but important touches are part of the wider model adopted by the centre which Rod calls ‘extravagant hospitality’. Each client is treated like a guest in a family house, something that also shows through the team’s interactions with them. No concern or query is unimportant and every staff member does their best to accommodate the needs of each guest and make their stay as good as possible.

Delivering excellent customer care

To offer outstanding customer satisfaction, offering a personalized service is crucial. The guests are consistently impressed by this systemically

friendly approach adopted by the centre and they show it with their repeat business. Word of mouth is extremely important for Seville Mercy and they have received a lot of clients that way throughout the years. It is important to not only maintain a great appearance but also to offer a consistently reliable service that the guests can in turn appreciate.

Though the centre also offers 26 rooms for accommodation, their main income is derived from conferences. As such, they have to play up to their strengths; a family-like atmosphere, a certain degree of intimacy, and the small business connection which comes from their local spirit. It is a decisively different service than the one offered by the big centres downtown and the guests who choose Seville Mercy appreciate that. This philosophy goes all the way through the sup-

ply chain down to the strong network of contractors which the centre has established in order to fit all of their needs.

Like Rod says, the centre has grown tremendously over the years and there is no indication of it slowing down any time soon. Occupancy rates have steadily increased ever since Rod came on board and he wants to see that trend continue in the future. “When we are busy, it means that we are serving the community”, says Rod, while they are also fulfilling their role as set out by the Sisters of Mercy. And as for expanding in the future, the 8 acres that the centre is sitting on will offer plenty of opportunities. The growing clientele may one day require them to add more space but Rod and his team are unfazed by such challenges.

Sydney Conference & Training Centre

Hosting quality events in a beautiful locale

Even though they have existed for a very long time, conference and training centres are now more popular than ever. Today, clients can choose from a huge variety of venues which fit their specific purposes. Near Sydney's Northern Beaches in the suburb of Ingleside, the Sydney Conference & Training Centre offers a dedicated residential venue located on 9 acres of secluded gardens which overlook the nearby ocean. Purpose-built to host all kinds of different events, the centre has been servicing various industries for decades.

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Sydney Conference & Training Centre

WHAT: A purpose-built venue catering to businesses and organisations in Sydney and across the region

WHERE: 30 Ingleside Rd, Ingleside NSW 2101, Australia

WEBSITE: sydneyconference.com.au

In fact, the venue has been trading as an exclusive conference, event, and training centre for 20 years though the owner had changed several years ago. Even before that, the facility was owned by a banking corporation which also conducted training for their staff on the same premise. And while the facility has gone through two different owners in the last several years, some of the employees have been working there for almost 20 years. Scott Spear, the Facility Manager at the Centre, explained to us that the varying levels of staff experience ensure that shared knowledge is engrained into the employees, which means that everyone knows how to treat existing and new clients alike.

Scott has been with the Sydney Conference & Training Centre for a year. He makes sure that everything is properly set up and that any services or facilities that the guests may want to use are primed and clean on time. Furthermore, he facilitates any request made by the clients before and after their arrival so that their meeting or event can go smoothly. His background in sales means that he actively listens to customers' needs, actively suggests

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things that they might have missed, along with his co-worker Tammy they ensure that all client needs and requirements are met in a timely manner.

Providing personalised care for all clients

The Centre takes on many different types of clients though they mainly focus on corporate and government contractors. There are six fully equipped conference and training rooms along with nine break-out rooms, each offering a view of the landscaped gardens with an abundance of natural light. The conference and training rooms are all equipped with ergonomic furniture which can be swapped at the clients' request. Moreover, they come in many different sizes and arrangement styles which aim to accommodate each client's needs.

The team ensure that every client receives a personalised service, from the moment that they first enquire about the venue until after they have left the facilities. When the Centre sends out the inquiry form, they try to ask as many questions as possible so that they can provide a high quality personalised standard of care and give the clients a tailored quote. As such, each room and every item inside of it are fully customizable while also offering a lot of privacy.

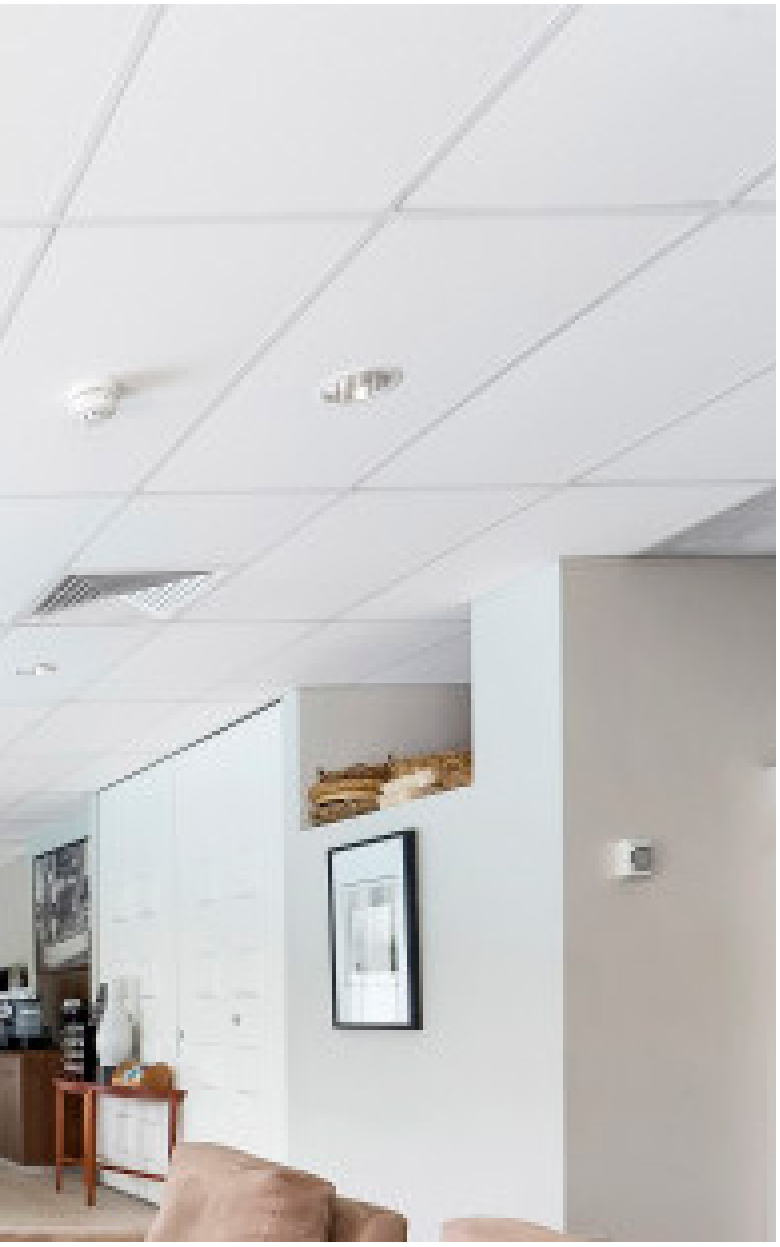
EXIT

Team building exercises and other activities

Aside from providing the necessary rooms for training and conferences, the Sydney Conference & Training Centre also provides several other amenities such as sports facilities and a gym. Catering can also be provided at the client's request through a third-party supplier.

"Catering is not compulsory; the clients take that up, though we do encourage it. Our food is a cut above the average conference centre, in my opinion, and clients constantly give us feedback to that effect. We have everything from three course meals down to snacks. People can choose from a variety of breakfasts, for instance, so we do cater to different budgets as well. When we quote a price we are always happy to negotiate, of course, according to the client's needs", explains Scott.

Aside from food, clients may also choose to participate in external events and activities. The centre has a big activities and events book which the clients are free to peruse at their own leisure. Many of them choose to go through planned entertainment events such as obstacle courses or even bubble soccer as part of team building exercises, for instance. To make sure that everything goes smoothly, the Centre remains in constant communication with the clients and the feedback has certainly been positive.



Serious investments in a competitive market

The Northern Beaches area has quite a few conference centres which means that the market is quite competitive, particularly in pricing. Even so, most centres cater to a specific type of client. Whereas the Sydney Conference & Training Centre may focus on corporations and government, for instance, others might focus on birthdays, weddings, and similar events. Even so, Scott assured us that the centres maintain friendly relationships even though they are in constant competition.

To keep up with the competitors, there is also a need to continuously reinvest into the Centre in more ways than one. Technology, for instance, is a major focus for them. Infrastructure that clients may now take for granted, such as complimentary wireless Internet throughout the facilities.

Though they recently had some light refurbishment work done in the venue, additional work will be undertaken in the coming months. During that refurbishment, they will also look into upgrading other areas such as audio and visual equipment as well as digital marking screens and other areas of technology.

Fennell Forestry

Harvesting Australia's Green Triangle with care

The Green Triangle is home to one of Australia's largest commercial plantation forests, providing ample opportunities for local businesses in the forestry sector. Fennell Forestry, a family-owned business, has been in the game since 1991. Though it started small, it has since grown into a major plantation hardwood and softwood harvester and transporter. The company, which employs about 70 staff, is still largely managed by members of the Fennell family. Wendy Fennell, Managing Director at Fennell Forestry, has been a part of the business almost since its inception.

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Fennell Forestry

WHAT: A major plantation timber harvest and transport company with a history of 25 years

WHERE: South Australia's Green Triangle

WEBSITE: fennellforestry.com.au

"Fennell Forestry has been operating for 25 years since 1991 and I've been involved with the business for 23 of those years. I was studying at University and working part-time in the business and then I moved back to working full time. I became Director in '97 and managed the business alongside my parents and my brother. Afterwards, we went through a succession plan with our parents and so Barry and I have now jointly managed the business for 5 years now."

Innovating through constant change

During her years in Fennell Forestry, Wendy has seen quite a lot of changes in the industry. Technological advancements and changes in rules and regulations have all contributed to the transformation of the industry though the company's philosophy and ethics have largely remained the same. In fact, the brand recently went through some major changes after expanding its business into the woodchip industry.

"We've just been through quite a big growth stage. We went from harvesting and transporting hardwood log into

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40 Years ago on July 1, 1976 Barry and Shirley Maney took over the Mount Gambier Ford Dealership that had been operating with a team of only 20 staff and over the next 40 years transformed into a company dedicated to customer service excellence. Through our partnership with Kenworth Australia and our focus on building strong customer relationships we have grown to a team of 100. Each day we strive, and are committed to continuing Barry Maney's legacy and customer service ethos.

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harvesting and transporting chip which required an overhaul of operation and introduction of new equipment to suit. That's happened recently, in the last couple of years, so we've expanded quite a bit on this thus far. Barry's working on innovations that complement the service we provide, the harvest of the timber on the site and how we can help the customer extract the most value out of their assets", says Wendy.

Barry's innovative work was also complemented, in turn, by major advanced in technology. As one might expect, forestry is an industry that's almost unrecognizable from its early years. Almost every single piece of equipment that is involved in forestry has evolved in one way or another.

"We originally commenced our business with manual blunt force. So they just used chainsaws and cut the trees down, sawed all the large trees. Then we moved to mechanical harvesting with the implementation of harvesters. Other technologies have been heavily involved, from the harvesters that cut the logs to the kind of trucks we use. For example, on-board elec-

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tronic scales which allow you to weigh the product while it's on the vehicle. There're have also been advancements in the forestry equipment itself, like the computers that are running the harvesting heads", comments Wendy.

Fennell Forestry has taken advantage of these developments while also keeping in line with the regulations of the field. Logistics, for example, are "more heavily compliance based", according to Wendy. Everything needs to be documented and auditable so that it meets the legislative requirements. Wendy calls this a part of the "logistics puzzle" which is ensuring that the requirements of both the customers and the legislative authorities are fully met.

The supply chain, another important part of the business, has also gotten bigger over the years. The company's mission statement of providing "consistent quality service to customers" involves a lot of hard work. Finding the right equipment requires a lot of research and smart purchase decisions. Afterwards, the company also has to train the right people for the right job so that the equipment is properly used and maintained. Preventative maintenance also plays an important role in the consistency of the service as it ensures that the company can always deliver its services when needed.

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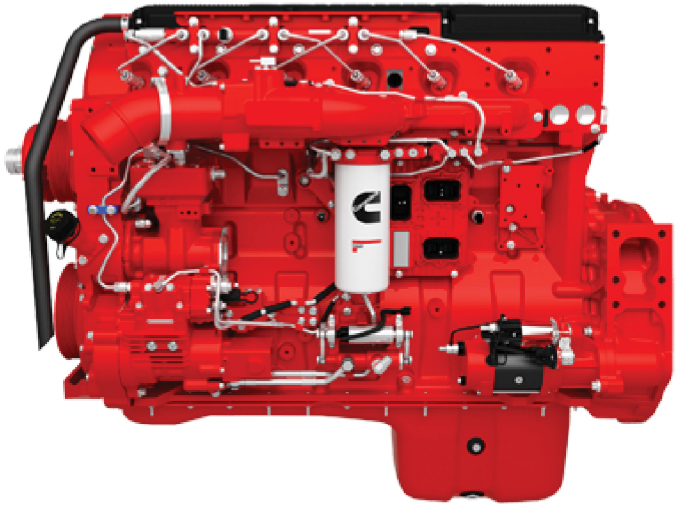

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Fennell Forestry managing director Wendy Fennell says local support from its suppliers is "very important" and that the company wants no unscheduled downtime with its fleet of late model logging trucks and harvesting machinery.

Cummins is well represented in the Fennell fleet with 15 engines powering logging trucks and 15 installed in harvesting machines which operate 20 to 22 hours a day, five days a week.

One of Cummins' great strengths is that it owns its branch network and its Mt Gambier branch plays a critical role in supporting the Fennell engines from one of the most modern Cummins service and support facilities in the South Pacific.

Wendy Fennell rates Cummins' support as "very good" in terms of customer engagement, parts support and the provision of technical support when needed.

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An employer of choice

As far as the work environment goes, Wendy is an adamant believer in being an "employer of choice".

"We like to try and accommodate that work-life balance for our employees. We try to give them structured work times so they are home every night, especially the transport side of it with the trucks. We double-shift most of our operations so there's no pressure on them to work long hours"

The company's involvement in the community means, in part, that it's always ensuring a stress-free environment for the employees. Aside from the fact that Fennell Forestry supports and sponsors a number of local sports clubs and events, it also ensures that each of its employees feel comfortable in their work and that they can maintain a balance between their professional and personal lives.

"We are heavily involved in the community. We support sporting clubs and events that our employees are involved in. We also run an annual truck pull where we raise money for Variety. We've raised about $36,500 for charities including Variety and the Make-A-Wish foundation. What we try and do is operate a workplace where safety, efficiency, and productivity are top priorities", says Wendy.

Proud Supplier to Fennell Forestry

Parts Stop, originally part of the Scott Group of Companies was purchased by the current Managing Director in 1994.

We have expanded, becoming an independent supplier of transport related equipment and spare parts for the industry around Australia, providing warehousing distribution and sales support for manufacturers.

We have direct dealings and relationships with major fleets, owner operators, trailer builders/repairers, resellers and end users.

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PS
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The operations of Parts Stop are based in Mount Gambier, South Australia and have been successfully trading since 1984, starting from dismantling and selling second hand parts. It has grown into an operation specialising in the wholesale, distribution, and retailing of new parts and equipment focused on market segments of heavy transport (specialising in the trailer market) spare parts and equipment for the forestry, automotive and agricultural sector. Supporting the industry with products diverse as Exide batteries, Valvoline Oil, Hella lighting, Koala Kare cleaning products, SAF Holland, BPW Transpec, and trailer componentry from 6x4 to a roadtrain. Parts Stop truly is your one stop for parts in the trailer market. After recently relocating to larger premises, also now offer service repair and fitment of trailer components.

The company was originally a part of the Scott Group of Companies, initially established to provide purchasing for the companies within the group Australia wide. Since purchasing the company in 1994, we are now a family owned and operated independent supplier of transport related equipment and spare parts for the industry in this area with clients throughout the region and interstate. The Company currently has a staff of 7.

We are in partnership with our suppliers, clients and staff to achieve mutual benefits by working together building long term mutually beneficial relationships for all parties.

To explore ways we can help your business, contact John Laube, Managing Director on 0418 811 643. We value direct relationships with our clients.

FENNELL
FORESTRY

OUR MISSION

Fennell Forestry provides forest harvest and haulage services to multinational forest growers operating within the Green Triangle region of South Australia.

We generate value through consistent, quality service and safe forest operations, for the benefit of our staff, customers and contractors alike.

Our commitment to the implementation of new technology allows us to value-add to our own business, while providing the best result for our customers.

OUR VISION

To create a sustainable business that provides a balance between professional fulfil

OUR VALUES

Safety, Respect, Flexibility, Leading Edge

The annual truck pull is actually one of the most exciting events for the company. A number of local businesses and teams have shown an interest ever since the first truck pull organized by the company in 2013. The event is bigger and bigger every year and videos of the competition are readily posted in the company's website for everyone to enjoy. And as the team at Fennell Forestry puts it, the real winners are the charities like Variety who receive considerable sums from the event.

Modernizing the forestry industry

Despite any traditional roots, Fennell Forestry is a modern company that not only adheres to new standards but also attempts to revitalize and reshape the field whenever possible. For instance, communication with clients in the forest industry was traditionally limited. Once a company was awarded a contract, most of the work was done during that period. However, Fennell Forestry wanted to change that by interacting frequently and directly with customers to come up with new solutions and improvements.

"We made a conscious decision to engage with our customers throughout the term of the contract, to work on continuous improvement and innovation and try to understand their business and how we could come up with gains that would benefit both ourselves and the customer. For us to

innovate better we need to fully understand what's driving the customer. Initiating meetings with them and continuously asking questions that we want to know the answers to has enabled us to come up with solutions for them that they weren't even necessarily looking for at the time. That's worked really well and the companies that we contract to have been very open to this kind of engagement and they have really worked well with us, they've been very approachable", recounts Wendy.

Looking to the future by celebrating the past

Thankfully, the company's work has not gone unnoticed. Aside from the

fact that it has grown substantially as a company, a variety of its members have received awards and recognition for their work in the industry. Graham Fennell, Wendy's father and founder of the company, was inducted into the National Road Transport Hall of Fame in 2015 alongside John Bignell, another company employee. Wendy herself was named the Women and Business and Regional Development's Business Woman of the Year in August of the same year. The company itself was also a finalist in the large business Brand SA award held in October 2015.

As for future aspirations, Fennell Forestry is not about to rest in its laurels. Success is a continuous road, full of bumps, troubles and, of course, rewards. The goal is simple: "To grow a sustainable, quality business that continues to provide career options for the people of the region as well as providing innovative solutions to our customers to improve the supply chain as a whole". If the company's path so far is any indication, its future certainly looks bright as well.

Supporting Partners

Barry Maney Group
barrymaney.com.au
Autopro Mount Gambier
mountgambier.com.au
Cummins
cummins.com.au
Parts Stop
partsstop.com.au
Warrin Mining
warrinmining.com.au
South Central Trucks
southcentraltrucks.com.au

Speedy Wheels Australia

Servicing the tyre and wheel industry since 1957

Originally established in 1957, Speedy Wheels has been serving the tyre and wheel industry of Australia in various capacities for a very long time. At the very beginning, the company was a one-man operation, founded and run by Mr. Keith Tonkin. The company, which was known as Speedy Wheel Repairs at the time, got its name from the 24-hour turnaround, steel wheel repair service it provided. Mr. Tonkin operated out of an old disused dairy shed in the Sydney suburb of Brighton and he con-

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Speedy Wheels

WHAT: One of Australia's most popular importers and distributors of steel and alloy wheels and accessories

WHERE: 5-9 Anne Street, St Marys NSW, 2760 Australia

WEBSITE: speedywheels.com.au

tinued to provide his repair services locally on his own for several years. Then, in 1964, the business started to grow and a second employee joined the work roster and in 1965, a third employee – Mr. Geoff Medbury, joined the company and would go on to be the Company's longest serving employee.

By 1968, the business had morphed into a wheel widening service and moved away from repairs. Business was growing rapidly, which necessitated a move into larger premises in Rockdale, but sadly, Mr. Tonkin died unexpectedly at work from heart failure, without seeing the move in early 1969.

His wife with the assistance of their two sons, took on the running of the business. Importing of wheel accessories and steel wheels commenced and sales began to grow rapidly and by 1985 two further relocations to ever larger premises occurred. Annual sales reached $5 million dollars by 1985.

In 1986, Speedy Wheels Limited was incorporated, after becoming a public company listed on the Syd-

Ian Stewart (National Sales Manager), Steve Morling (National Operations Manager), Luke Tonkin (Product Manager), Michael Holovinsky (Business Developement Manager)

ney Stock Exchange. At that time, all of its manufacturing capabilities had already ceased and the company focused entirely on the import and distribution of steel wheels from Taiwan and alloy wheels from 15 other countries. Finally, in 1999, Gregory Russell and two other Company Directors from the publicly listed company, undertook a successful management buyout of the Company's share register and took it back to private ownership status. Gregory, who talked to us about the company, has been a part of the Speedy Wheels management team since June 1993 while his experience in the industry begins as early as 1973.

Maintaining a great reputation throughout Australia

Today, Speedy Wheels is one of the most renowned importers and distributors of aftermarket wheels and wheel accessories in Australia. Instead of dealing directly with consum-

International Cargo Solutions (ICS) is a 100% Australian owned Customs Brokerage and International Freight Forwarder providing specialised global logistics services. For the past 20+ years ICS has successfully managed the import activities of Speedy Corporation and take the opportunity to congratulate Greg, his management team and staff on their success in receiving this prestigious award.

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ers, they sell their products through registered tyre and wheel retailers. The company deals with both passenger and 4WD wheels and a vast range of accessories. They have over 2700 retail business accounts nationally, about 1200 of which are core accounts who deal with the company on a regular basis. Their reputation also makes them a preferred supplier to all the key retail chains within Australia.

In fact, retailers prefer Speedy Wheels for very specific reasons: “We’ve got a very solid reputation and we’ve obviously been around for a long time. People come to us for our level of service which is second to none, but also for our technical capability. The foundation of the business is our loyal and longstanding staff, a group who share many years of experience within the industry. With the backing of people like Geoff Medbury, with his 51 years in the trade, it’s a very solid base to work from. These days, the complexity of the vehicle market in Australia is just phenomenal. Australia has got more vehicle brands and models than any other automotive market in the world! In terms of population we’ve got no scale, but in terms of vehicle makes out there, Australia has massive scale. It’s a very competitive environment and a very technical business”

SPEEDY
SPEEDY CORPORATION PTY LIMITED

Actively adapting to the market

The competitiveness of the market has also pushed Speedy Wheels to adopt a very active stance in regards to their business. For example, the company has developed its very own software called Wheel Magician which is essentially a searchable, interactive database of wheels. The web-based program is primarily used by the company's call centre where operators can instantly search the database and answer any queries from customers and dealers while also being able to check things like stock levels. Furthermore, every visitor on the company's website can use the program for free.

On an interesting side note, the most significant contributor to Wheel Magician is Geoff, the third employee to join the company way back in 1965. Originally brought on as a wheelwright, Geoff progressed through the company's ranks to the position of Technical Manager. Today, 51 years later, he works on the data program five days per week. Keith Tonkin's grandson is also employed within the company as the Product Manager, so the general atmosphere of a strong family unit has certainly been preserved.

In general, the aftermarket wheel industry in Australia has changed dramatically over the years. Gregory theorises that, because of the technical complexities of the modern mo-

Les Rapolti (Finance Director) and Gregory Russel (Managing Director)

tor car, the diversity of vehicle models imported into Australia which are mostly fitted with attractive OE alloy wheels and the fact that people regularly change their cars to new models more regularly these days, then the want or need to change from OE wheels has decreased considerably. However, there is an upsurge in SUV and commercial utility vehicles as people want to use them not only for work but also for recreation. There are a lot of people looking for specific tyres which they may use on sandy or muddy terrain and for a multitude of off road purposes, thus creating tremendous wheel sales growth potential in this area. In addition to that, supplying specialist products directly to OEMs is another major opportunity in the market.

Coming out on top of the industry's challenges

Of course, the market is not without its challenges. While receding demand has certainly been one of the biggest challenges of the industry in recent times, another major issue since 2012 has been the introduction of anti-dumping penalties on Chinese manufactured alloy wheels. In the lead-up to that time, the majority of Chinese manufacturers were deemed to be dumping products in Australia and thus affecting the local manufacturers, even though there were only three local manufacturers left at the time. Virtually overnight, import duties went from 5 percent to 84.3 percent. Obviously, this resulted in companies like Speedy Wheels breaking their ties with existing suppliers and having to look elsewhere for their products.

Despite those challenges, Gregory will be focusing on growing the business about 10 percent over the next couple of years. While that may seem like a high number, Speedy Wheels will be poised for growth due to a number of significant changes. In essence, they will ramp up growth over the next couple of years by transitioning to the commercial, utility, and SUV market and away from large sedan vehicle wheels as that is where the industry's biggest opportunities lie in the future. Whatever that may hold, Speedy Wheels certainly has the history, experience and expertise to come out on top yet again.

Supporting Partners

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Bulk Group

Innovative logistics solutions for domestic and international markets

Handling the supply chain of any company, big or small, is a very challenging task. Most companies rely on others for all of their transport, supply chain, and logistics needs; although finding a reliable partner is not always easy. The Bulk Group, a privately owned family business, have been making a name for themselves over the past five years as one of the only supply chain solutions that can deal with consignments of any size or difficulty. Slowly but surely, the brand has become a trusted name in the business world of Australia in both domestic transports, 3PL warehousing and international imports and exports.

In August 2016, Bulk Transport Australia was rebranded into the Bulk

AT A GLANCE

WHO: The Bulk Group

WHAT: A trio of companies incorporating domestic and national transport and logistics solutions

WHERE: 47 Industrial Park Drive, Lilydale, VIC 3140, Australia

WEBSITE: bulkgroup.com.au

Group, a one-stop supply chain solution. The new name and brand incorporates three distinct companies: Bulk Transport Australia, Bulk Global Forwarding, and The Procurement Firm. Bulk Transport Australia is the same branch as before, handling the domestic supply chain in warehousing, line-haul, and route deliveries. The second company, Bulk Global Forwarding, is managing customers' international freight requirements across every area as well as customs clearance responsibilities. Finally, The Procurement Firm is a growing branch which aims to deliver on the logistics consumable requirements of the Group's clients such as pallets, export pallets, skids, shrinkwrap, and cartons.

Managing any kind of project

Lachlan Tindal, Bulk Group's Director of Sales, spoke with us about the company's operations, their corporate ideals, and their aims for future growth. The most important point of difference, according to Lachlan, is that the Bulk Group can make anything happen, no matter the size of the project or the destination of the consignments. And as far as projects go, they have done quite a lot of them as they frequently do overflow work for large companies. For instance, they ran night shift

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The security systems in place at Bulk Transport assist them in a number of ways not just the traditional perimeter or security deterrent. It provides the client with a system that monitors who has accessed their site 24/ 7 either through the alarm or CCTV system. These are also backed up with the physical presence of the mobile patrol service who physically check to ensure the premise external doors and gates are locked and secured correctly

Cctv records what has been delivered to the site and what has been despatched from the site, it has an OH and S component as it is always watching and on bigger sites can assist in traffic flow for our customers. Another feature is its sales capabilities as you can show your clients how their goods are stored or how they are protected whilst in Bulk's care.

It has assisted the client when a delivery has been queried by reviewing footage and checking to see how many pallets were on a vehicle and boxes or what was stored on the pallet. When the alarm system is armed after hours it assists monitoring and the client with false alarms as we can view the site live and see if patrols are required to attend or not.

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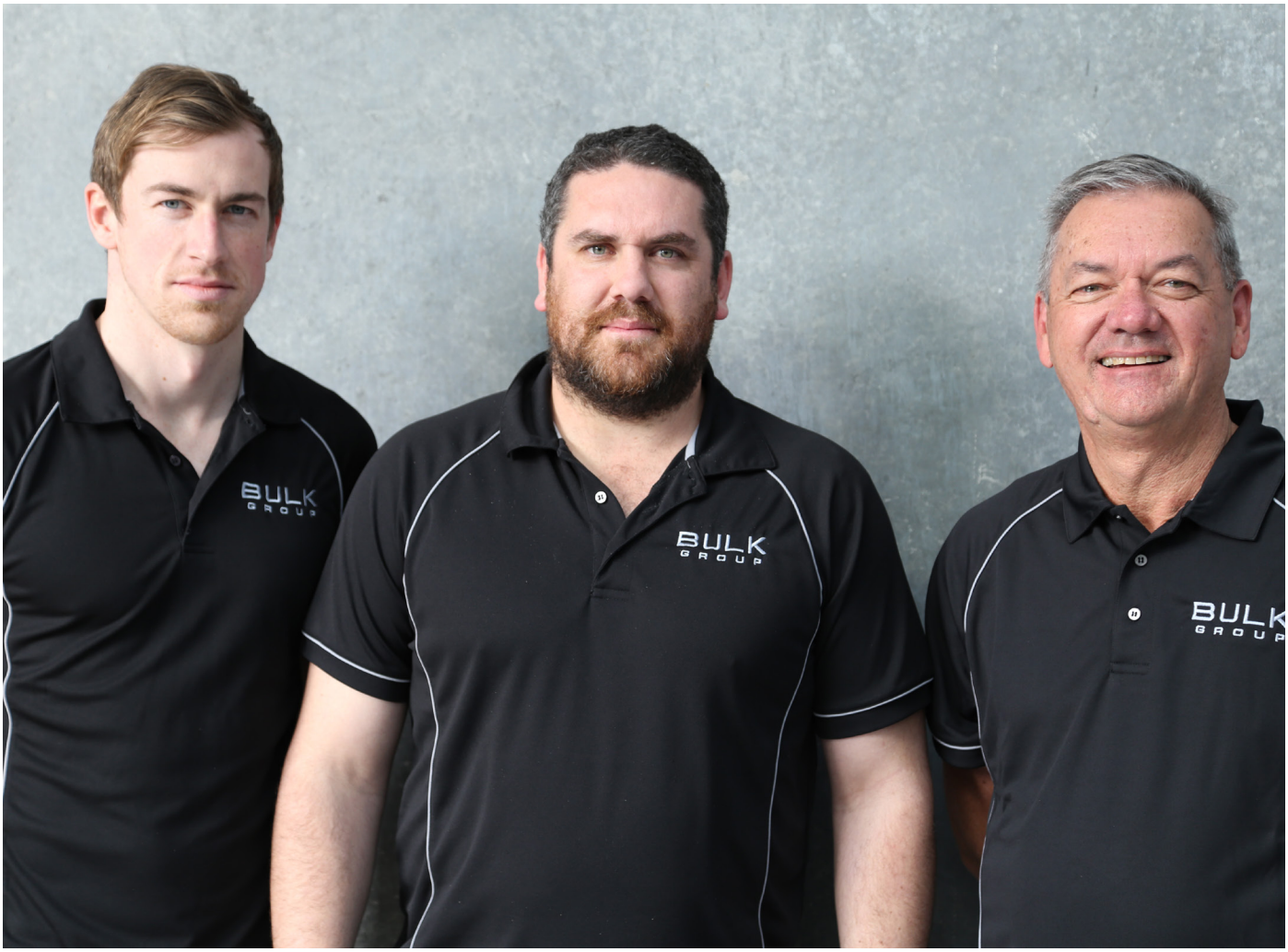
contracts for Coca Cola products, entire fleet moves for mining companies and have been focusing heavily into the commercial solar project industry as well.

Commercial solar projects are an incredibly strong point of the transport and logistics market right now, Governments and companies are investing in environmentally friendly and cost effective infrastructure. The Buk Group organizes on-site storage for the panels, transport, logistics and manages the crane operations. By providing the most efficient solutions for their clients, they are also helping them reduce their overall costs. In turn, when large firms receive proposals by the solar panel companies, they are much more likely to install a solution that is better for the environment.

In their main centre of operations, the Bulk Group has 4,000 sq. m. of storage where they are constantly packing and unpacking containers for export and transportation. Their pallet operations also take place in the same facility. Trucks are coming in and out all the time to pick up and deliver consignments to customers too. By using a couple of different software partners such as Compdata Technology Services and WiseTech's CargoWise, they can effectively manage everything that goes on within the company with ease. Though such investments are costly,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they are necessary to ensure that they can stay up-to-speed.

Building a strong foundation

The Bulk Group has a very large network of carriers that they have partnered up with both in Australia and worldwide. Furthermore, they have agents around the world that act on their behalf. This is a part of the reason why they can move anything anywhere in the world at any given point in time. In addition to that, they have access to a full fleet which includes couriers, semis, B-doubles, drop deck trailers, floats to move machinery, container forks, and more. Moreover, they have access to a full fleet of crane trucks across Australia as they often organize lifting facilities for their clients.

The combination of the three companies has allowed the Bulk Group to integrate a huge number of solutions and service under one umbrella. They are now dealing with interstate and local transport, international consignments, import and export operations, air and sea freight, heavy haulage, warehousing and storage, logistics consumables, and a range of other projects. In addition to all that, they employ 3PL warehouses in every state and large cities throughout Australia to meet the needs of their clients.

BULK GROUP
BULK Transport Australia
BULK Global Forwarding
THE PROCUREMENT FIRM

TOYOTA
8FGCU25

Excellent customer service through constant communication

Delivering outstanding customer satisfaction is especially important to the Bulk Group. One of their core philosophies is that communication with the clients is crucial for a successful business. Because of that, they provide 24/7 of customer service as the phones are diverted to an after-hours number though clients can also choose to communicate via email instead. When a client puts their trust in the company, Bulk Group wish to honor that agreement by going above and beyond. Even when an incident occurs, the team at Bulk will immediately come up with a solution and remain in constant communication with their clients.

On the question of how the company is planning to expand, Lachlan was quite enthusiastic: “One of the ways is with the technology that we are investing in at the moment. With the opening of Bulk Global Forwarding, our international market is definitely going to expand. A lot of our clients that we are currently doing domestic transports for, we are in talks to take all of their import and export operations as well. We are also looking to expand into the logistics consumables market and supply all of our customers with pallets, packing, and other consumables, to become our clients one-stop shop solution”

Over the next few years, the Bulk Group will be focusing on consolidating the business that they have built over the past five years. The facilities and equipment that they have already acquired will go towards building an even stronger company. This will also allow them to diversify in order to make sure that they can become involved in as many markets possible. As a direct result, they will be able to focus on the strongest market at any one point while providing the customers with the best possible service. After all, treating clients right is the only way to ensure that they will stay with the Bulk Group for life.

Supporting Partner
Advance Security
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Silver Fern Shipping

Headlining New Zealand's oil and fuel

When it comes to the supply chain and logistics of oil products, very few companies have the knowledge, infrastructure, and experience necessary to operate within the very strict guidelines of the industry. In New Zealand, the most trusted and popular name in the business is Silver Fern Shipping. The company, which has been a part of the ASP Ship Management Group since 2007, currently carries and distributes approximately 65 percent of the country's oil products. That includes petroleum, diesel, bunker fuel, and more.

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Silver Fern Shipping

WHAT: The main distributors of bulk oil and fuel products around New Zealand

WHERE: Level 8, Resimac House, 45 Johnston Street, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

WEBSITE: sfsl.co.nz

The origins of the company date back to the 1970s. During that time, it was set up as a distribution center by the oil companies so that they could jointly distribute their products from the refinery. The Marsden Point Refinery imports crude oil from all around the world and Silver Fern Shipping is in turn responsible for the distribution of the refined petroleum products.

In 2007, the company was purchased by the ASP Ship Management group and was placed in the market under its current guise of Silver Fern Shipping. The company has had a long history in the oil shipping industry; crucially its effectiveness has remained steady throughout the years.

Petroleum product is sourced directly from the Marsden Point Refinery up in the north. From there, Silver Fern Shipping carries the product to 10 distribution ports around the country. Two vessels, an oil/chemical tanker and an oil products tanker are the backbones of the operation. Their segregated design means the company can transport multiple types of products at the same time. Today, the company is the predominant Tanker vessel operator within New Zealand. Its local connections and experience combined with

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the global resources of ASP Ship Management make it a formidable force in the market.

Warren Nelson, Silver Fern Shipping's General Manager, talked to us about the various processes within the company, the way in which they deliver consistent customer satisfaction, and his own responsibilities inside the company. Warren is responsible for the day-to-day management of the business including the overall management of the vessels operations and the Health, Safety, Security, and Environmental (HSEE) side of the business. He also maintains a strong customer focus which is absolutely necessary in the industry.

Staying ahead of a changing landscape

After all, the oil shipping market has changed considerably over the years. Like many other similar endeavors on land and water, technology and globalization continuously shift the landscape and only those who are prepared can survive and actually thrive. For instance, Silver Fern Shipping has to compete on a global level despite the fact their operations service a local market. Their performance is measured against tanker operators from all around the world.

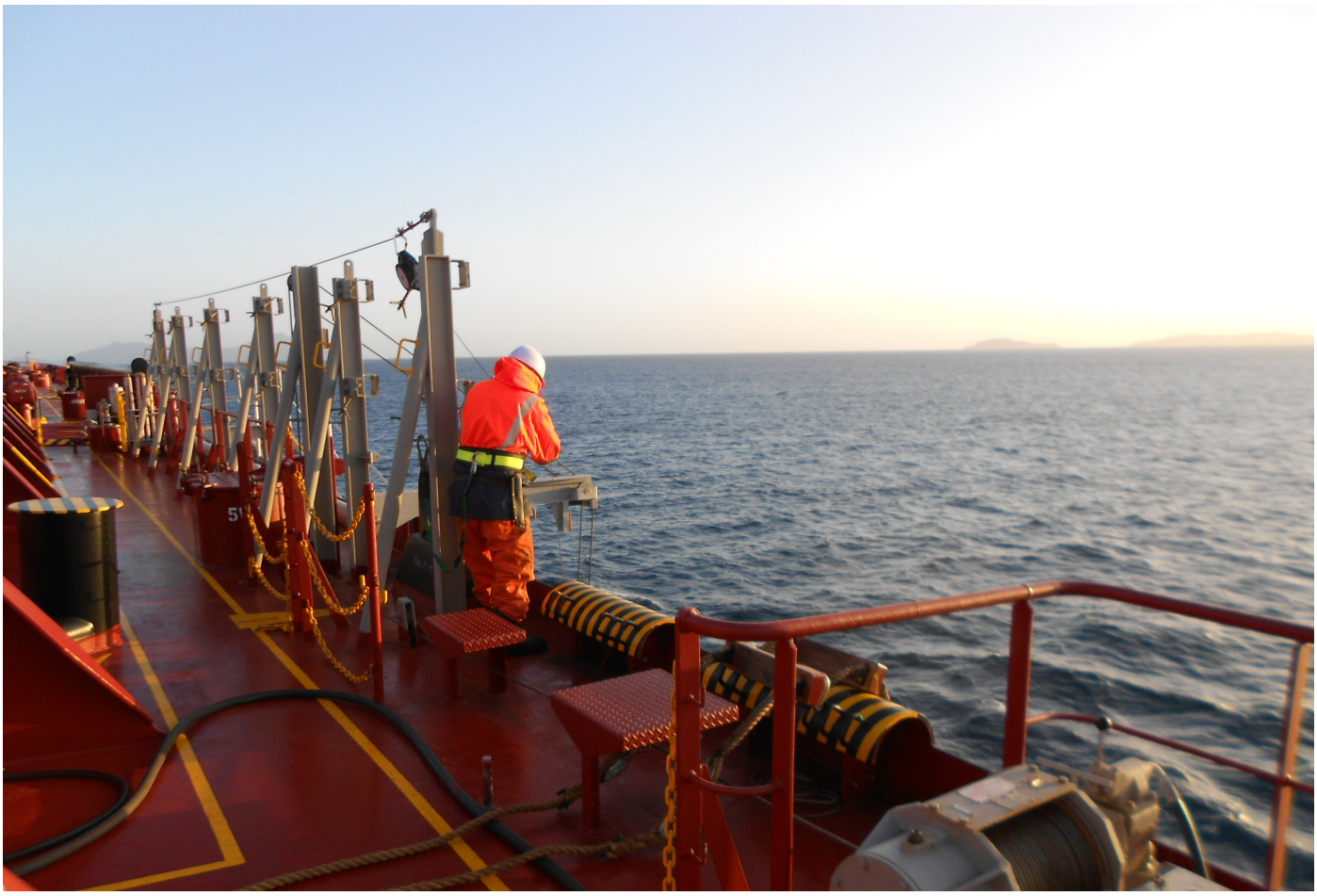
According to Warren, companies like Silver Fern Shipping have to be proac-

tive in order to stay ahead of the game and the competition. Instead of focusing merely at a local level, they have to broaden their research and focus on an international scale. There are numerous things that can influence the market at any given point which means that there is a constant drive for improvement.

"In terms of performance, we compete with international ships and operators so we have to be up for that. There are also product changes and distribution changes around the coast. Things have become a lot more automated. In terms of our industry, the regulatory framework continues to grow. For instance, we will have to meet emission standards on an international scale. We have to be proactive. The introduction of new vessels has been designed to meet those pending international requirements and get us at the right level for them", says Warren.

Working within international frameworks is a very challenging aspect of adhering to the policies and regulations of the business. First and foremost, the company works with Maritime New Zealand, the "national regulatory, compliance, and response agency for the safety, security, and environmental protection of coastal and inland waterways". This ensures that they can look ahead on what is pending on the legislative slate. Moreover, they look out-

KAKARIKI



wards to international regulations governed by international laws. One of the biggest problems is that governments often ratify International agreements at different times so Silver Fern Shipping has to regularly monitor what is happening across the rest of the world too.

Working closely with the oil industry

On a local level, the company's client is Coastal Oil Logistics Limited. The company specializes in petroleum product tanker scheduling on behalf of the three major oil companies of New Zealand. As such, they schedule both of Silver Fern Shipping's modern tankers. Coastal Oil Logistics directs the vessels to pick up the products from the refinery and then transport them to various chosen locations.

Silver Fern Shipping maintains contact with Coastal Oil Logistics on a daily basis to make sure that everything is coordinated perfectly. The schedule is based on supply and demand which means that it has to be very flexible. Warren and his team in Wellington are tasked with handling the everyday business as well as planning ahead for the future. Thankfully, the two companies have a synergetic relationship. Both parties reap the benefits of a smooth operation allowing everyone to succeed in the market.

Health and safety during transportation

Warren says that there are a couple of key indicators against which Silver Fern Shipping's performance is measured. First of all, the industry at large is very much focused on health, safety and Environmental responsibility. As such, it is key that the company performs to a high standard. Importantly, Silver Fern Shipping has an enviable record with zero loss of product to the environment. In addition to that, the availability of the vessels is incredibly important. For the last two years, the company has had a 100 percent uptime, an impressive feat for the shipping industry.

SILVER FERN SHIPPING
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Technological influences also have a large part to play here: "There's certainly a lot more automation on board vessels now. Things that used to be controlled by manual valves are now automated and managed from a control room. The engines

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on the new vessels are electronically controlled as opposed to mechanical systems. There's a lot more computerization based on those design features instead of being all manual. The result is a reduction in manpower with increased efficiency and turnaround. So there's better utilization of your assets"

Contrary to popular belief, oil tankers are some of the safest vessels afloat, primarily due to their design. Although an incident is unlikely, there are safety measures in place to prevent leakage. Silver Fern Shipping's tankers, for example, are designed to safely contain oil by use of a double hull construction. The double hulled construction means that even if an accident were to happen, it is highly unlikely that oil would be spilled. By the end of 2017, the company will replace the oldest vessel currently in service. On top of all the other improvements, the new vessel will have an eco-efficient hull and engine which burns about a third less fuel. Of course, this also translates to reduced emissions.

A strong culture that looks at the future

The two vessels are operated by about 70-75 crew and office staff members of various professions. Silver Fern Shipping offers a lot of opportunities for growth and personal development inside the company which means that someone could progress from the lowest to the highest ranks, provided that they are capable and hardworking. The company has a strong training program designed precisely to encourage such activity. Furthermore, they provide training places for New Zealand's maritime schools. At any given time, there are four to five training on board the two vessels. Such programs are focused on providing training and sea time to young cadets so that they can hopefully progress further. In the future, they might even return and work for Silver Fern Shipping as full-time employees.

As for the future, the company is expected to continue to operate at the same high standard. Warren looks forward to introducing a second new vessel in 2017. Silver Fern Shipping continues to look into expanding the company into new areas and opportunities within New Zealand. Although they are a local company, with the global resources of ASP Ship Management behind them they can market and expand their reach much further than before.

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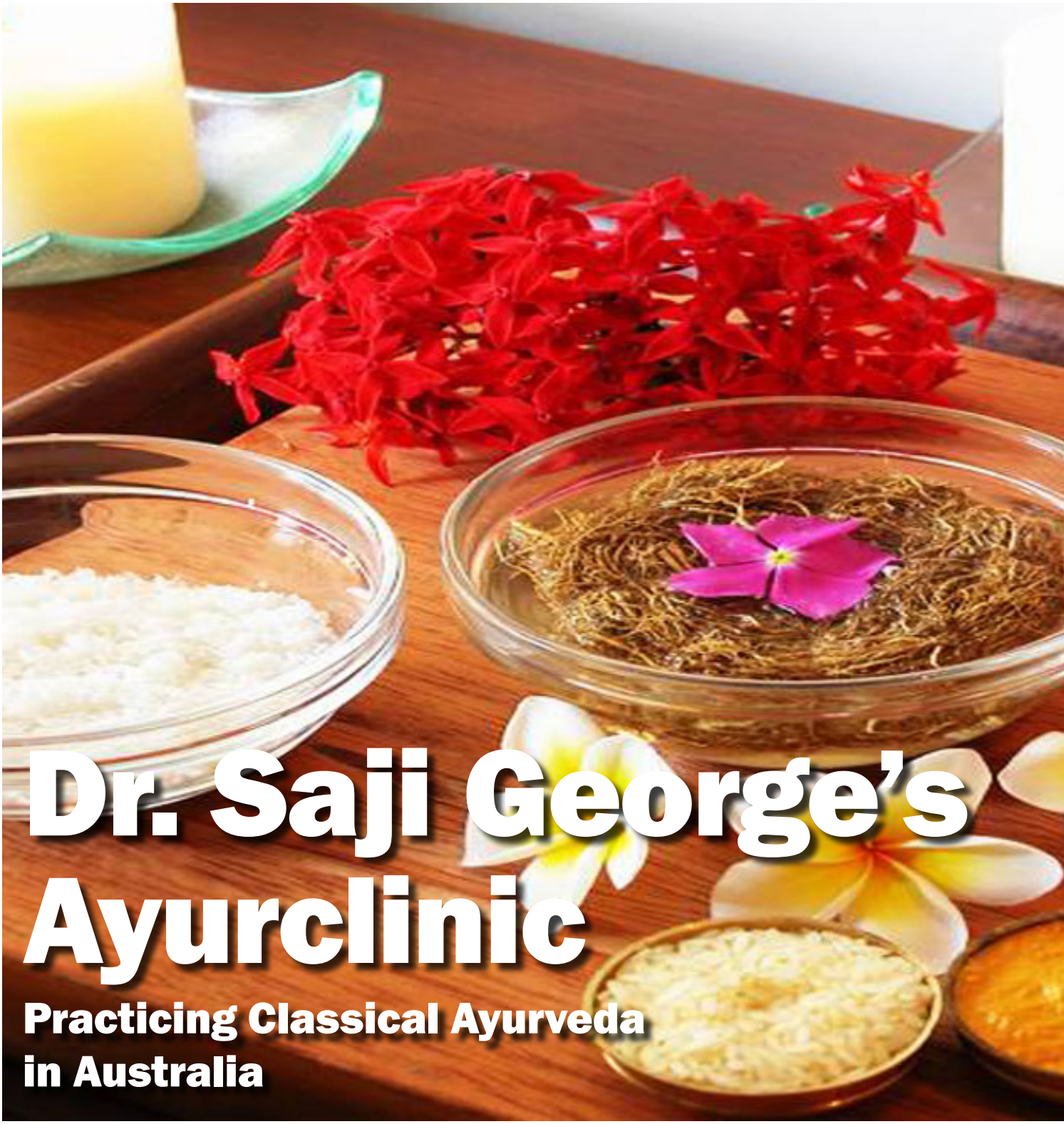

Dr. Saji George's Ayurclinic

Practicing Classical Ayurveda in Australia

Alternatives to Western medicinal practices have become increasingly popular in countries like Australia in the past couple of decades. Like every association reports, clinics and practitioners of alternative medicine are overwhelmingly positive in their growth and the general public is now far more accepting of such courses of treatment. A testament to this example is Dr. Saji George, an Ayurvedic Practitioner who has developed one of the most reputable alternative health clinics in Melbourne.

Dr. George initially came to Australia

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Ayurclinic

WHAT: A series of clinics focusing on traditional Kerala Ayurveda and Classical Homeopathy as well as other practices such as yoga

WHERE: Melbourne CBD Clinic: Exchange Tower, Suite 807 (Level 8), 530 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3000

Braybrook Clinic: Level 1, 6 South Road, Braybrook, Victoria 3019

Taylors Lakes Clinic: 1 Fastnet Drive, Taylors Lakes, Victoria 3038

WEBSITE: ayurclinic.com.au

about 11 years ago. Some of his family members had already moved here from India while his wife and daughter also wanted to migrate. After practicing in India for 14 years and building a substantial career there, the decision to leave it all behind was not an easy one. Even so, he decided to start from scratch and move over to a new country with a new future. In the beginning, things were much harder than Dr. George or his family had anticipated. Ayurveda was basically unknown in Australia up until that point and finding a job in that field was a seemingly impossible task.

After searching for a job practicing Ayurveda for seven months to no avail, Dr. George decided to support his family through a processing factory job. Even then, he never gave up his ambitions and kept searching for clinics that would allow him to practice at least some aspects of Ayurveda as a physiotherapist or a massage therapist, for example. After finally landing a part-time job, he continued to work on his language skills and build a reputa-

tion. Anyone who actually went through the initial consultation and booked an appointment with him was very likely to come back as his experience made him incredibly confident in his craft.

Building a business and reputation through sheer force of will

By continuously improving his English skills and building a reputation, Dr. George was building towards his ultimate goal of managing his own clinic once more. Through word of mouth and hard work, he established a client base that allowed him to open a clinic with a homeopathy therapist in Melbourne CBD. That 30 Sq. m clinic was all he needed to establish a base of operations that would gradually develop into more. Today, Dr. George owns three different clinics which house ten different practitioners of Ayurveda, homeopathy, and yoga. Building everything from nothing was an incredibly challenging task but his success story is rooted in hard work and determination.

The trick that got Dr. George through was quite simple, as is his advice to anyone who aspires to do the same. Never giving up is key because anyone can achieve what they want as long as they are determined to do so. Initially, Dr. George had to educate people on Ayurveda before he could even begin to think about offering them his skills. During that time, he did not have enough money to invest back into his

dream clinic as everything he was earning was going into supporting his family. Despite these and other challenges in setting up, his confidence in his practice allowed him to persevere and come out on top in the end.

All in all, Dr. George has been in the field for more than 24 years. As mentioned above, there were no Ayurveda clinics when he first arrived in Australia. The only mention of the practice was a couple of practitioners here and there who were mostly concerned with providing courses rather than actually practicing. Now, there are 22 clinics in Melbourne alone. “Things have changed and now there’s healthy competition”, says Dr. George. In addition to that, there are at least eight suppliers of Ayurvedic medicine whereas he originally had to import everything he needed by himself.

The benefits of connecting with clients

Another element that Dr. Saji George believes has contributed to his success as a clinical practitioner in Australia is being responsive to clients. Each of his clinics are great at responding to enquiries quickly and efficiently while he also makes himself available to questions even outside of business hours. Responding to his clients’ needs and always being available are two factors that are hugely important to Dr. George as it shows that he cares about his patients. On top of that, his clinics try to provide the most

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authentic services available across all disciplines including Ayurveda, homeopathy, and yoga.

The same principles can also be applied to a general business philosophy: “I’ve always said that if you are committed and focused, you can succeed very well. If you are committed and focused, then you can sell your services to people. It will just take time. You may need to be patient, but that has been my experience, even back in India. If we do our job sincerely, people will receive that well and understand our sincerity and authenticity”

Expanding Ayurclinic even further

Ayurclinic now serves an average of 500-600 clients per month but Dr. George does not want to stop there. The fact that he has built everything by himself has given him an unparalleled drive to move forward and not stagnate. His plan right now is to search for committed people who share his values in order to fulfil his wishes of starting a clinic in each state of Australia and expand his services to a much wider audience.

Adding to that, his other main goal is to create an overnight facility where people will be able to receive even more dedicated treatments. According to Dr. Saji, there are some intensive treatments that require at least two weeks in a hospital setting. His current facilities do not allow for that as patients have to come and go every time. If he moves at the same rate, however, Dr. George will accomplish most if not all of his goals in the next five years.

Ratcliff Mathews Real Estate

A successful move to business ownership

Going into business for yourself is a bold move for most people. Those who have no previous experience in business ownership often find it hard to make the transition from being employees to running their very own company, enterprise, or service. For Sandra Toia-Wilson and her husband Paul Wilson, the transition almost fell into their laps. Today, they maintain a successful company called Ratclifff Mathews Real Estate but that was not always part of the couple's plans.

A few years ago, both Paul and Sandra were completely oblivious to their

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Ratcliff Mathews Real Estate

WHAT: A family-owned real estate agency

WHERE: 673-675 Pittwater Rd, Dee Why NSW 2099, Australia

WEBSITE: rmre.com.au

future career path. Sandra, who had a background in civil engineering, had decided to stay at home and take care of the children while Paul was working in IT, an area he has been involved in for more than 20 years. Because Sandra was always urged by her family to get into real estate, she started a course through correspondence. The couple then decided to switch roles which meant that Sandra soon found herself working at Ratcliff Mathews. After a couple of years, her boss offered to sell the business to her as he wanted to retire and the rest, as they say, is history.

Though Ratcliff Mathews was already an established business, Sandra and Paul were faced with a host of challenges in the beginning. Soon after they decided on acquiring the business, they learnt that the existing facilities were set to be leased to a competitor agency. The couple, however, managed to find a new place in a mere two weeks even though they had never done anything similar before. Despite the difficulties they encountered, they managed the situation very well. This also allowed them to establish themselves and to let their clients know that the only change would be in the base of operations.

According to Paul, going from being employees to owning a business was a big transition. It came with a whole

new set of rules that they had to learn quickly if they wanted to operate in an efficient manner. Learning how to operate at that level meant understanding how to manage expenses, handle legislation, and manage virtually every part of the business by themselves. Thankfully, the couple's skills complement each other which meant they shared the workload and fully trusted each other with their own duties.

Trust and integrity in real estate

Trust plays a big role for Paul and Sandra across every level of the company. Their philosophy is that everyone

should pitch in because everyone has each other's back. The employees that they take in are treated like part of the family as Sandra and Paul maintain the traditional values of a family business. They help their team members achieve goals and then reward them for doing their work well. "While elsewhere you might be considered as an individual seller, here you are part of a team that works together", they say.

Another thing that differentiates Ratcliff Mathews from other agencies is their belief in home ownership. Sandra believes that to work in real estate, you should own real estate. That way, you will know what you are talking about

when you are interacting with clients because you will have already walked in their shoes. An example of this is Robert Ljubic, the company's Property Manager. The 24-year-old employee is a trusted member of the company, a home owner and investor who treats Ratcliff Mathews like his own business and is highly respected by Paul and Sandra.

Respect and integrity is also a major part of the couple's corporate philosophy. They are always truthful with their clients and they help them understand the entire process, step-by-step when necessary. They can and do provide their clients with numbers, statistics, and facts so that they can build their confidence through honesty. Paul and Sandra have learnt a lot about interacting with both their clients and their staff since they took over the business and they apply those lessons every day in their work.

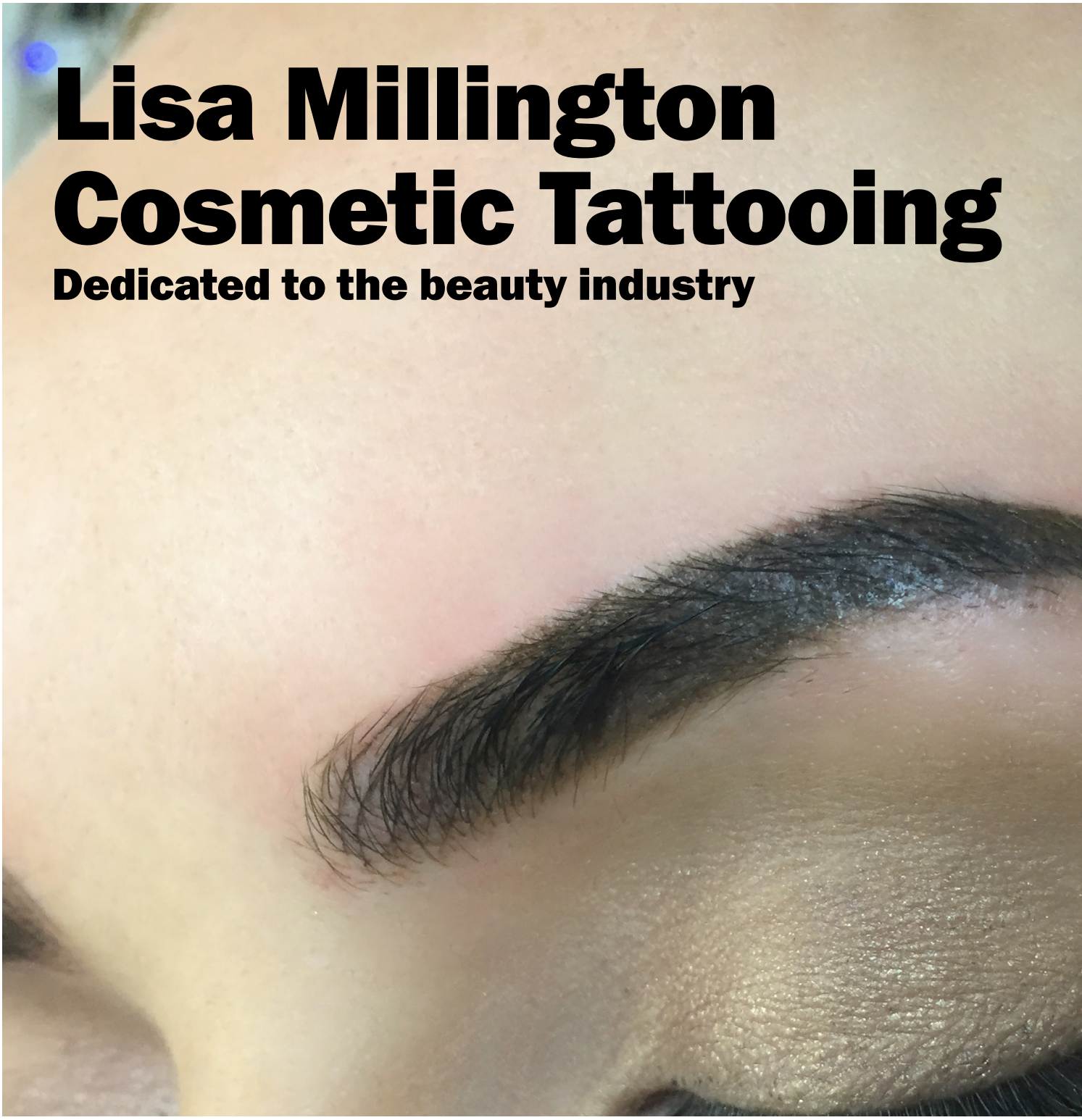
Learning more through past experiences

They also offer some of these as advice to aspiring entrepreneurs: "Do your research. Be prepared and have a little money behind you to get started. You will need to invest money first. The first three to six months will be a rollercoaster; money will have to go out before it comes in. If you have a good business plan, it will give you the chance to succeed so stick to it. As long as the service is good and you do right by people, people will support you"

Though the business is doing very well already, Sandra and Paul would like to expand their reach a bit further in the future. For instance, they will be looking into hiring more people with the right attitude and focus that fits their model. This will also allow them to expand the rental side of the business with another dedicated Property Manager. These objectives are part of a five-year goal but Sandra is adamant in the fact that such plans will only move forward as long as everyone within the company is doing well. Until then, they will strive for continuous improvements both internally and externally.

Lisa Millington Cosmetic Tattooing

Dedicated to the beauty industry



The beauty industry in Australia continues to grow over the years as both beauticians and their clients readily adopt the latest methods and techniques of the trade. Such trends are supported and influenced by a number of lifestyle changes, either directly or indirectly. For instance, social media is extremely influential in the industry as people wish to look better than ever. One of the more advanced beautification techniques that has grown over the last couple of decades is cosmetic tattooing. Lisa Millington has been involved in the industry for more than 13 years and has witnessed all the chang-

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Lisa Millington Cosmetic Tattooing

WHAT: A beauty studio offering services and training for cosmetic tattooing, also known as permanent makeup

WHERE: 165 Derby St, Pascoe Vale VIC 3044

WEBSITE: lisamillington.com.au

es and evolutions of cosmetic tattooing firsthand.

Before she entered the beauty industry, Lisa was a secretary. However, she came to understand that she wanted to change her career and focus on working for herself instead. After doing a beauty course and opening up a small studio at the back of a hairdressing salon, Lisa decided to come up with a business plan by attending a small business course. Once she learnt more about cosmetic tattooing, she knew that she wanted to concentrate in that particular area. Even though it was not nearly as popular as it is today, Lisa realized the potential of cosmetic tattooing. She slowly but steadily accumulated experience both by working for herself and by working part-time in a prestigious institution.

Building a business through passion and hard work

Though Lisa started with nothing, she had a very clear business plan and a strong passion for cosmetic tattooing as well as the beauty industry overall. Originally, her plan was to do five tattoos per week in order to cover her expenses and start building her business. As things progressed, how-

ever, she ended up doing five tattoos per day and evolving her studio much further than expected. Today, she focuses on providing training for anyone who wishes to enter the trade but lack the necessary skills or confidence to take on the world on their own. In addition to that, she does a lot of voluntary work around breast cancer patients as a way to give back to the community.

Four years ago, Lisa started training people for another individual in the same trade. Soon, however, she figured out that she enjoyed the process and was willing to open up her own training school. About a year ago, her efforts culminated into her very own training school which is operated in conjunction with the Lisa Millington Cosmetic Tattooing services. Lisa has travelled all over the world to meet up with trainers and cosmetic tattooists. This has allowed her to accumulate a breadth of knowledge which she shares with her students. Like she says, those who come to her for training spend a considerable sum so she has to make sure that they are receiving the best training possible. Lisa herself has invested almost $20,000 in her own training, after all.

This ideal of providing the best possible service is key to Lisa's work. One of the key challenges she has faced over the years is making people's interpretations of what they want to achieve and what Lisa can provide them align. Providing a service which is as close as to what a person might expect is a

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daunting task but it is a certain way to ensure that the client can walk out the doors feeling happy with the results. On the student side of things, it is often hard to impart the necessary knowledge upon the students within the relatively short training timeframe but Lisa is there to support them both during and after their training has been completed.

The growing industry of cosmetic tattooing

Growing her own business was originally very difficult but she never gave up. Even when she worked 13 or more hours every day, her passion for the industry and her strong feelings about cosmetic tattooing helped her go on. Lisa is a true believer of this thriving industry, particularly because she has seen how it has evolved during her time. When she first started out, about 10 percent of the population even knew what cosmetic tattooing was. Now, that figure is probably closer to 80 percent and she frequently encounters people who are enthusiastic about her work. Today, both men and women do cosmetic tattooing and reap its benefits.

"Cosmetic tattooing is a thriving business. It took over America 10 years ago and is actually taking over Australia now. It's one of the highest paying jobs you will get in the beauty industry. It does take a lot of artistic work and even though you don't need to be a beauty therapist, it's advantageous. There are a lot of new techniques that have come out in the last few years too. The results are much better too which is why a lot more people are interested in it", Lisa advises to people who wish to enter the industry.

Lisa has evolved her business quite a lot in recent years. Moving into training has been a very rewarding experience and she wants to concentrate on being a mentor to the many individuals who seek out her expertise. Helping them go out into the market and feel more confident in their work is one of the main reasons why she loves training and any expansion plans in the future will certainly focus on that.

Connections UnitingCare

Supporting disadvantaged individuals throughout history

Providing support for those in need is an increasingly essential need. As is the case with many other countries throughout the world, disadvantage in Australia continues to rise. Each year, for instance, 20 percent of Australians will experience some sort of mental illness. In 2010, it was estimated that 12.5 percent of Australians lived below the poverty line. Though solving those issues at their core should be a priority, supporting people in their time

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Connections UnitingCare

WHAT: A non-profit organisation providing support to vulnerable families, children, and young people

WHERE: 51 Princes Highway, Dandenong, Victoria, Australia

WEBSITE: connections.org.au

of need is also vital. Thankfully, organisations like Connections UnitingCare are there to support their respective communities.

We talked with Angela Forbes, the CEO of Connections, about the organisation's work, their core values, and what drives them, starting from their deep historical roots. The organisation's lifeline can be traced back to the 1920s when a group of people who recognised an increasing need for support in the community established the Presbyterian and Methodist Babies' Homes. During that post WWI period, poverty in Australia was high so the two groups focused particularly on the inner parts of Melbourne were people were in desperate need of help.

Over time, they realised they could provide even better support for their communities by establishing new methods. As such, they started creating group homes and caring for even more individuals while keeping the focus on vulnerable children and their families. This continued in various iterations until 1998 when Copeland Child and Family Services, who had grown out of the Methodists Babies' Home, joined with Grassmere Youth Services just like the original groups had. Then, in 2000, they all joined with Canter-

bury Family Services and Wheelers Hill Family Centre so that they could make more of a difference by coming together and gathering support. Thus, Connections was born.

Growing with strong core values

Since Angela became CEO of Connections in 2006, the organisation has grown tremendously. Their funding, for instance, has grown from $10 million to over $30 million. This, of course, reflects a growing need in the community to help vulnerable families. Angela attributes much of that growth to the core values set out by the organisation since its early days; to be grounded in their purpose and innovative in their work. Connections has an approach of continuous improvement, along with a real commitment to providing quality services to people who need their support.

“We have grown because we have always strived to be the best we could”,

CRO
SCHOO

explains Angela. The organisation takes a holistic approach to continuous improvement and innovative processes. The organisation's philosophy is applied across the board, from the staff who are involved in client facing roles to their systems and back offices. One of Angela's core beliefs is that if an organisation can measure their effectiveness, they can provide a much better service. Connections does this in two ways: they receive feedback directly from their clients through various systems they have developed and they use a sophisticated framework called the 'Connections Outcomes Framework' which they use to measure the effectiveness of their work right down to the worker level.

The admirable work of Connections' staff

The staff are, after all, the most effective tool that Connections has. Angela has huge admiration for everyone who goes out there every day and works with families who are struggling. Though they always affect change, the results are not always visible quickly. Whenever change is happening slowly, it can be a real struggle for both staff and the families. However, Connections supports their staff to make them see even the tiniest things that make a difference so that they can appreciate the work they are doing. Their work is grounded in evidence-based theory, of course, to ensure they are having an actual impact. Breaking the cycle of poverty and aiding people with a variety of complex issues can be difficult but they are an essential part of what the organisation does.

"Our staff may visit a family once per week or once a fortnight, for example, and they do a very thorough assessment. In almost all the families that we work with, there's some sort of trauma or life circumstance that has got them to where they are. As such, our staff are all trauma-informed in their approaches and they work with families in whatever they need, in a planned way, to help them achieve their goals. They are not our goals; they are primarily the family's but they are also joint ones.

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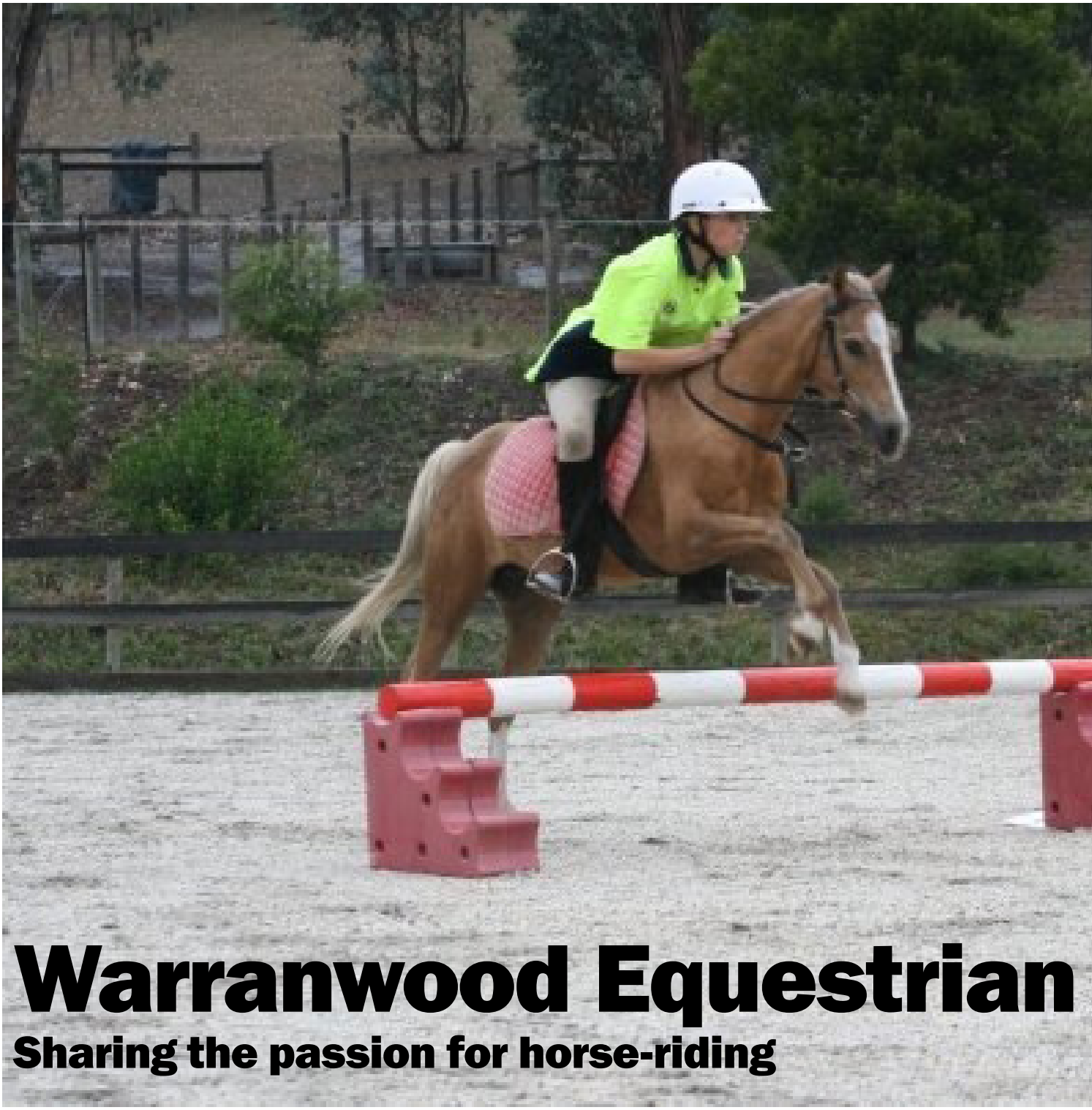
We receive referrals from places like Child Protection, the police, schools, and from families themselves. Often families are aware of what isn't working but don't have the capabilities or resources to work around that", comments Angela.

A 'strong culture of support'

The organisation has a strong culture of support, supervision, and accountability. One of their core values revolves around learning and education from both sides of the coin. Internally, they invest heavily into increasing staff qualifications and skills through thorough training and development programs which are open to all staff in the organisation. Externally, they educate the community on their work and what they can do to improve their lives.

This is also applied to their work with vulnerable families: "The bulk of our work is working in what's called Integrated Family Services. We work with families wherever they are struggling. For instance, in cases where children are clearly seen to be at risk, the parents may be struggling and not meeting their needs so we go in and work with those parents, their children, and whoever else may be a part of that setting to help them start functioning in a way that is healthy for themselves and their children. Also in a way that their children's well-being in the future can be improved."

Looking ahead, Angela sees a bright future for Connections. So far, they have overachieved any growth plans and have remained a strong community organisation with a lot of expertise and influence. Now, they are in the process of a merger which will hopefully reinforce their position even further. More opportunities will be provided to support those most in need. The organisation's view of making lives better will continue to be an absolute commitment across all levels of the organisation.



Warranwood Equestrian

Sharing the passion for horse-riding

As any equestrian lover will tell you, riding horses is more than just a hobby. It is a way of life, accentuated by the strong connections that one can form with these beautiful animals. For Dannielle Appleford, owner and manager of the Warranwood Equestrian Centre, horse riding has always been a major part of life. Teaching horse riding is what she has done for most of her professional career. As such, operating her very own centre was always in the cards for Dannielle.

For a long time, Dannielle was simply working as an instructor for a variety of people who were running similar businesses. In fact, prior to focus-

Centre

ing on her own business, she worked for four different people at the same time. On one hand, this allowed her to gain a lot of knowledge, both in regards to horse riding and business management. After all, she witnessed the many challenges and difficulties faced by horse-riding centres first-hand.

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Dannielle Appleford's Warranwood Equestrian Centre

WHAT: A centre for horse-riding lessons which caters to people of all abilities, ages and backgrounds

WHERE: 72-84 Husseys Lane, Warrandyte VIC 3113, Australia

WEBSITE: warranwoodequestriancentre.com.au

Starting from scratch with a unique skillset

On the other hand, however, this approach was limiting Dannielle's abilities and her motivation. She found that she missed out on a lot of opportunities to influence things in ways she thought best. Her job was to go in and give lessons according to the philosophies and ideals of each businessman, not to apply her own. As one might expect, this soon led to a point where the interests of all the businessmen, and Dannielle's, were starting to conflict with each other. At that point, Dannielle decided to take a leap of faith and start her own business.

As if that was not challenging on its own, Dannielle also decided to start entirely from scratch. Like she informed us, it was not appropriate, not good business ethics, to carry her previous students across to her new business. Instead, she focused

on developing an entirely new business that she could proudly call her own without any help from outside. At first, she simple leased a property so that she could plan ahead for the next few years and make sure that her own equestrian centre would actually be viable. A few years down the line, however, she understood that location was an extremely important part of the business that she could not neglect. Thankfully, she did find a great location reasonably close to the Melbourne CBD as well as freely accessible to everyone in the eastern suburbs. “If you go too far out from the city, you are limiting your clientele”, says Dannielle.

Teaching horse-riding skills to people with disabilities

Aside from having years of experience as a horse-riding instructor within many different businesses, Dannielle also has an extensive skillset which has allowed her to diversify and place Warranwood Equestrian Centre apart from the competition.

“Starting any business is a challenge. It’s very different to start a business than it is to take over an existing one. Building the clientele is a challenge. I teach people with disabilities as well so I found that there’s a lot of demand for that sort of service. I found that this was one of my strengths. I was able to pick up a lot of clients from that niche market as that clientele was not available to many people who just didn’t have the skillset to do the same. So rather than walking in and taking over an existing business, it’s a lot more challenging to create your own”, says Dannielle.

Aside from working directly with people with disabilities, Dannielle is also involved with various organisations that operate on a similar basis. For instance, there are a number of adult learning centres that access programs through Warranwood Equestrian Centre as well as a school. The centre maintains a strong relationship with the RDA Warrandyte Centre, a not-for-profit organisation that allows people with a variety of disabilities and from many different backgrounds to fulfill their equestrian goals.

Facing the challenges of business ownership

Her advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is to plan everything out very carefully, particularly in regards to financing and budgeting. In addition to that, she is adamant that setting very realistic timeframes is crucial to running a successful business. This philosophy applies to both important events, like opening up the business, and lesser but continuous ones such as positioning new events and sales. The pressure created by not having a realistic timeframe and planning poorly results in a lot of unnecessary stress that can be avoided quite easily. Setting realistic targets and being organ-

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Dannielle@warranwoodequestriancentre.com.au

www.warranwoodequestriancentre.com.au

ised is important for a business too because disappointing people by not meeting their expectations has a negative effect on reputation.

One of the biggest challenges that Dannielle herself had to face was managing her time. Balancing work and life can be difficult even when you are working for someone else but the playing field is much different when you are in business for yourself. Dannielle believes that many people who aspire to own their own business tend to underestimate the time investment and commitment necessary for success. For instance, Dannielle has to work with customer enquiries which means that she must always be available by phone in case someone calls with questions or concerns. Ignoring such crucial aspects of a business is not possible so sacrifices in her personal life have to be made, to a certain degree.

Up until this point, Dannielle has been the person who has done most of the instruction and training sessions along with managing the business. In order to expand further and attract a larger number of clients, however, she needs to train a couple more people. Because of the unique services that she offers, she needs to find like-minded people who share her beliefs and are also very experienced in the field. Even though that will most likely present a considerable challenge, Warranwood Equestrian Centre will surely benefit from other people like Dannielle.

Rodney Surgical Centre

Excellent medical care for the local community

Like many other private hospitals, the Rodney Surgical Centre was originally established to serve a need within the community, a need for reliable, immediate, and easy access to surgical services. Previously, residents had to travel an hour either way to access public and private hospitals, a fact which is simply not convenient in today's busy world. Then, in October 2009, a few local businessmen opened the centre's doors and filled the void.

Today, the Rodney Surgical Centre has two state-of-the-art operating rooms, which includes an endoscopy room and a procedure room. Furthermore, there are additional specialist

consulting rooms, six post anaesthetic care beds, and a second-stage recovery area. As such, the centre offers a wide range of specialist services in many surgical services including orthopaedics, ophthalmology, general surgery, oral maxillofacial surgery skin lesion removal (including melanoma) and gastroenterology. In total,

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Rodney Surgical Centre

WHAT: A surgical centre comprised of two operating rooms, a procedure room, and an endoscopy service

WHERE: 77 Morrison Drive, Warkworth, Rodney District, NZ

WEBSITE: rodneysurgicalcentre.co.nz

the centre has the services of 20 Surgical Specialists with a lot of flexibility for part-time staff who wish to balance their work and home lives.

Innovating in medicine

Aside from traditional treatments, the centre is also highly innovative in some areas of medicine. Mr. David Crabb, for instance, one of the centre's plastic surgeons, trained under Dr. Roger K. Khouri who has developed a minimally invasive breast reconstruction procedure called Brava + Autologous Fat Transfer (AFT). The procedure involves wearing the specialized, gel-like Brava bar to expand the skin from the outside and create a so-called breast mound which includes the expansion of tissues, blood vessels, and nerves. After a few weeks, fat is transferred to the area from other parts of the body and the new breasts settle in naturally over the next three months. The breasts look and feel natural even though they only contain the transferred fat and no breast tissue. Fat grafting can be performed without the use of the Brava

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Shelley Scott, the centre's General Manager, has been working with the centre for the past three years. The small centre facilitates an intimate working environment and Shelley handles not only the day-to-day running of the Rodney Surgical Centre but is also involved in marketing, attracting new specialists, and managing the staff. Furthermore, she makes sure that patients who come into the clinic are satisfied with the care they receive.

Expanding the centre's services

Though the centre was established with day-care services in mind, Shelley assured us that the board's forward thinking allowed them to future proof the facility for overnight expansions. Over the next few years, they will work

toward transforming rooms for overnight stays and allowing the community to have even more options for their surgical treatments.

"Over the next five years, we'll certainly be looking into expanding the services that we have here for the local community. We are always on the lookout for new specialties and new specialists to work from Rodney Surgical Centre. We would hope, in the next five years, to significantly broaden the number of services available. We certainly will be looking to be a 23-hour unit, having some overnight capacity but still in the day-care standard. Beyond that point, we will look into longer stay services being made available", comments Shelley about the centre's five-year plan.

Furthermore, the centre has just started offering treatments for varicose veins in the procedure room where minor surgeries and treatments like skin lesions have already been performed.

Until recently, clinics who did not offer overnight stays were not subject to rigorous audits and regulations, according to Shelley. However, the Surgical Centre has always complied for voluntary auditing to maintain centre standards, both internally and externally. The patients also seem to think of the centre as highly competitive because their feedback is overwhelming-

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Contract management is an important aspect of the business side of a successful hospital or clinic and the tools included allow the hospitals to determine the profitability of the patient's referral at the time they are discharged. The ability to compare fixed-price with costed-up procedures makes it much easier to have suitable knowledge when negotiating future contracts.

On-site Server or remote Cloud-hosted options are available as choices and to help with the change management, they have extensive experience with the transfer of data from legacy systems.

As many operating facilities also have specialist suites to encourage the surgeons to use the theatre facilities, the suites can include the Specialist application which provides a system that is fully integrated with the hospital.

Website: www.incisive.co.nz

ly positive.

A strong emphasis on patient safety and satisfaction

Patients come to the centre through a wide variety of means. The centre receives referrals directly from patients, from GPs, and from specialists. When a specialist's service is required, such as an endoscopy procedure, they will look at a patient's specific needs, discuss the possible treatment options, and facilitate them through the procedure. A nurse is tasked with reviewing all the referrals which come to the centre, assessing the safety and needs of each patient. If they deem that the patient has needs beyond the resources of r the centre's facilities, they ensure that the patient and GP are consulted and then redirect them to a more appropriate environment instead.

Patient safety and satisfaction are very important here. Before being admitted, every patient receives a phone call and is requested to complete forms which allow them to highlight spiritual, cultural, and medical needs. The point is to provide everyone with personalized care, disregarding the feeling of "being processed" and making sure that their stay is as positive as possible. Going into a surgical centre can be a stressful or a downright frightening experience for many and

small acts of kindness do wonders to alleviate those feelings.

Of course, the centre also follows up with patients after they have left the facilities: “A follow-up phone call is made to all of our patients a day after their surgical procedure. We run through any issues that they might be having after their discharge or any comments, questions, and queries they might have. We make sure that patients have understood all of their post-op instructions. We also ensure that we give instructions in the presence of the person who’s going to care for them or be their designated driver because we find that after an anaesthetic, people might forget what they might have been told. Verbal instructions are also paired with take home written instructions”, explains Shelley.

Always on the lookout to service the community

To that same end, the Rodney Surgical Centre is also involved in charitable work as an additional means to service the local community. A local trust identifies people who need surgery but either do not qualify for the public waiting list at that point in time or do not have the funds to conduct private treatments. Once such a person has been identified, they can come into the Rodney Surgical Centre with the aid of the trust.

The Centre also contracts with the two District Health Boards it straddles to provide public services for a variety of surgical procedures.

The centre’s innovative treatments, highly trained staff, and insight into the future has allowed it to stay at the forefront of the industry. Servicing the local community is of the utmost importance to both the board and the staff members as they are able to offer medical services to people both in and outside their immediate region. Thankfully, the centre’s goals will only expand in the future.

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Grace Hospital

Surgical excellence, personalised care

Providing high standards of personalised care is something that most health care facilities aspire to but only a few truly achieve. For Grace Hospital, the commitment to surgical excellence and outstanding quality of care is second to none. The hospital was originally established in 2007 and is managed by the Norfolk Southern Cross Ltd, a unique partnership between Acurity Health Group Ltd and Southern Cross Hospitals Ltd, two major private health companies in New Zealand.

Janet Keys, Grace Hospital's General Manager, talked to us about the hos-

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Grace Hospital

WHAT: A privately-owned, specialist surgery hospital pioneering in New Zealand's hospital industry

WHERE: 281 Cheyne Rd, Tauranga 3112, New Zealand

WEBSITE: gracehospital.co.nz

pital, its core philosophies, its contributions to the local community, and its future aspirations. Janet is a hospital-trained registered nurse who has been with the organisation for more than 12 years. She was heavily involved in the planning and development of the hospital and has held various managerial roles since the facility opened in 2007. As a nurse, she has always focused on the provision of safe and professional care, something which she has applied to Grace Hospital as a whole.

Responding to the community's needs

Grace Hospital now has seven operating theatres, 48 in-patient beds, and a dedicated day stay facility. It offers a wide range of surgery treatments, particularly orthopedics, but also performing many other specialties such as urology, endoscopy, gynaecology, plastics, ear , nose and throat and general surgery, There are 190 employees who work around the clock to ensure that patients always receive the highest level of care.

One of the most important challenges for the hospital is responding to the needs of the community. For example, the growing incidence of bowel cancer in New Zealand means that the hospital is investing more into appropriate

equipment in order to meet and rise above the community's needs. Because of their unique position, they are able to invest in the latest equipment, acquire extremely talented individuals, and generally make patients feel as comfortable as they possibly can about the episode of care that requires them to visit the hospital.

Engaged, happy staff in a modern environment

The staffing levels make a huge difference in providing personalised care to the patients. A substantial number of the nurses hold post-graduate qualifications while some of them have also completed Masters Degrees. The level of experience and education of its staff is a significant point of difference for Grace Hospital, which is the only private surgical hospital in the area. One of Janet's many roles is to support consultants and ensure that the consultant's patients get the best care possible.

Patients have responded incredibly well to the level of care provided by the hospital. "The staffing level is very important. If the staff feel like they can't do their job properly because they are so busy then their satisfaction plummets. We are also a very modern, clean, nicely-appointed facility so the staff are working in departments that have the latest health and safety fea-

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tures. We have a lot engagement of staff with activities such as health and safety representatives. They always talk about the colleagues that they work with; happy teams are important for satisfaction", says Janet.

Of course, the hospital's environment plays a huge role in patient satisfaction. Patients get private rooms with en-suite bathrooms and their own TV which make for a very nice personal space during their visit. The staff understand that going to a hospital is a very stressful experience for some people and so they try their best to make things easier for everyone. One of the most important things that patients look for in hospital settings is confidence in care. Grace Hospital has been extremely competent in this regard over the years.

Staying at the forefront of the medical industry

Another aspect which is important for Grace Hospital is staying on top of medical science and the various advancements within the field of surgery. They are one of only three hospitals in New Zealand, for instance, which operate a surgical robot. In fact, they upgraded their robot two years ago for the cost of $2.7 million, a significant investment which has had tremendous results, allowing the hospital to reach high levels of innovation, surgi-

GRACE
HOSPITAL

cal excellence, and patient satisfaction. Furthermore, the hospital is currently looking to expand into additional areas such as robotic assisted gynecology.

Back in 2014, the administration also identified a need in the community for lower cost treatment options which are also more efficient. In response, they built a day surgery which allows people to come in and have surgery without the need to stay overnight. A lot of patients are pressured for time so they would not even come in if day surgery was not an option. Importantly, improvements in modern procedures have also helped in this regard as many of them have eliminated the need for overnight observations. Today, about 52 percent of the hospital's patients are treated in the day surgery wing.

As for the future, Janet is adamant that the hospital needs to maintain the loyalty of both its patients and the staff. Though they are currently the only private specialist surgical hospital in the general vicinity, their mission statement strives for them to be the first choice in the provision of surgical treatments at all times. That means staying proactive to mitigate risk, responding to emerging challenges in the industry, and maintaining the drive to constantly improve healthcare provided to patients. By contributing to the local community, providing a service that meets patients' needs and staying at the forefront of medicine, it's very likely that Grace Hospital will continue to grow at a steady pace.

Supporting Partner
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Local Government Association of Queensland

Serving the State's 77 Councils

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is the longest continuing peak body in Queensland. It is a not-for-profit association set up solely to serve the state's 77 councils and their individual needs. The fact that it has been in existence for 120 years is a testament to the value that it provides its member councils.

The LGAQ serves a critical function as the issues of local government are vital to the state and in many respects to the nation. Every public policy or economic policy matter or even any infrastructure program of the state or federal government involves the local community.

The local community can have a positive impact on these initiatives but there is also a possibility that the impact can be negative. This makes the local council integral to the success of infrastructure building and therefore, nation building.

The LGAQ advises, supports and represents local councils so that they can improve their operations and strengthen relationships with their communities. It does this by connecting them to state and federal authorities and supporting them in their drive to innovate service delivery through smart services and sustainable solutions.

Role of LGAQ

As a peak body, the LGAQ leads the local government sector in many respects. This role becomes, even more, important when the diversity of the 77 councils in Queensland is considered.

Greg Hoffman, General Manager – Advocacy, of the LGAQ explains the body's role, "We work constantly in identifying what is important to them and in taking the lead for them in our advocacy to the government on their behalf.

"We help them in so many ways in terms of services that we provide to councils, we can bulk up and provide scale on so many of the things that they need to do. We provide bulk procurement services, bulk insurance services and a whole range of initiatives to support them and that obviously is dependent on a good working relationship with them."

Membership of the LGAQ is voluntary. All Queensland councils have opted to become members of the association. The funds that the LGAQ needs to sustain itself are provided by a variety of

sources. About one-third comes from subscriptions and the remaining portion from government grants and business initiatives of the LGAQ.

The association's role as a peak body is to be the interface between government, both state and federal, and councils. While governments can deal with councils one-on-one, when it comes to the development of programs of legislation or funding schemes, then it is important that the LGAQ ensures that local government gets the best possible deal. This is one of the critical services that the association provides to its members.

Programs

The LGAQ plays an important role in a number of programs. At the state level, one of the important initiatives is the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS). It provides about $60 million a year to councils to help them do work on their local roads.

Another recently introduced program from the state government is the Building Our Regions Program. It is worth about $70 million a year and funds can be allocated to a variety of applications including water and sewerage systems, public buildings including libraries, swimming pools or similar projects.

There are also a number of federal programs in which the LGAQ helps councils coordinate with government authorities. There is one called the Financial Assistance Grants Program, which is worth about $350 million a year and it provides significant support to the operations of Queensland's councils.

In addition to these programs, there is the Roads to Recovery Program, a Bridges Renewal Program, a Black Spots Program and the Stronger Regions Program. The LGAQ plays a pivotal role in all these programs, which are funded by the state and federal governments.

The association has been instrumental in its advocacy over a long period of time. They maintain a constant dialogue with the respective governments on behalf of Queensland's councils for their continuation and additional funding.

Another important area in which the LGAQ provides help to councils is in the area of road infrastructure. Projects in this sector are especially challenging because, in addition to councils' responsibility to maintain existing roads, they need to ensure that roads are upgraded as well.

Flooding can cause rapid deteriora-

tion of roads and it is the endeavour of councils to make them more resilient so that they are less susceptible to damage and the high cost of recovery. Assisting councils in this sphere is a vital part of the work that LGAQ does.

Local government in Queensland is also responsible for the provision of water supply and sewerage systems. There are 77 councils but there are close to 300 water supply and sewerage systems in the state. There are many smaller communities within council areas who have their own systems and these facilities are an essential service to any community. Councils need to be in a position to maintain and upgrade those facilities on a continuous basis.

There are new environmental requirements being added on the discharge of effluent or the by-products of sewage treatment into the water. It is the responsibility of councils to ensure that the new environmental standards are complied with and that the increasing population's requirements are adequately provided for.

Councils need to meet these demands by investing in new and renewed water supply and sewerage systems. It is a big challenge and one of the most important areas of work that LGAQ does on behalf of councils.

Supporting and assisting councils

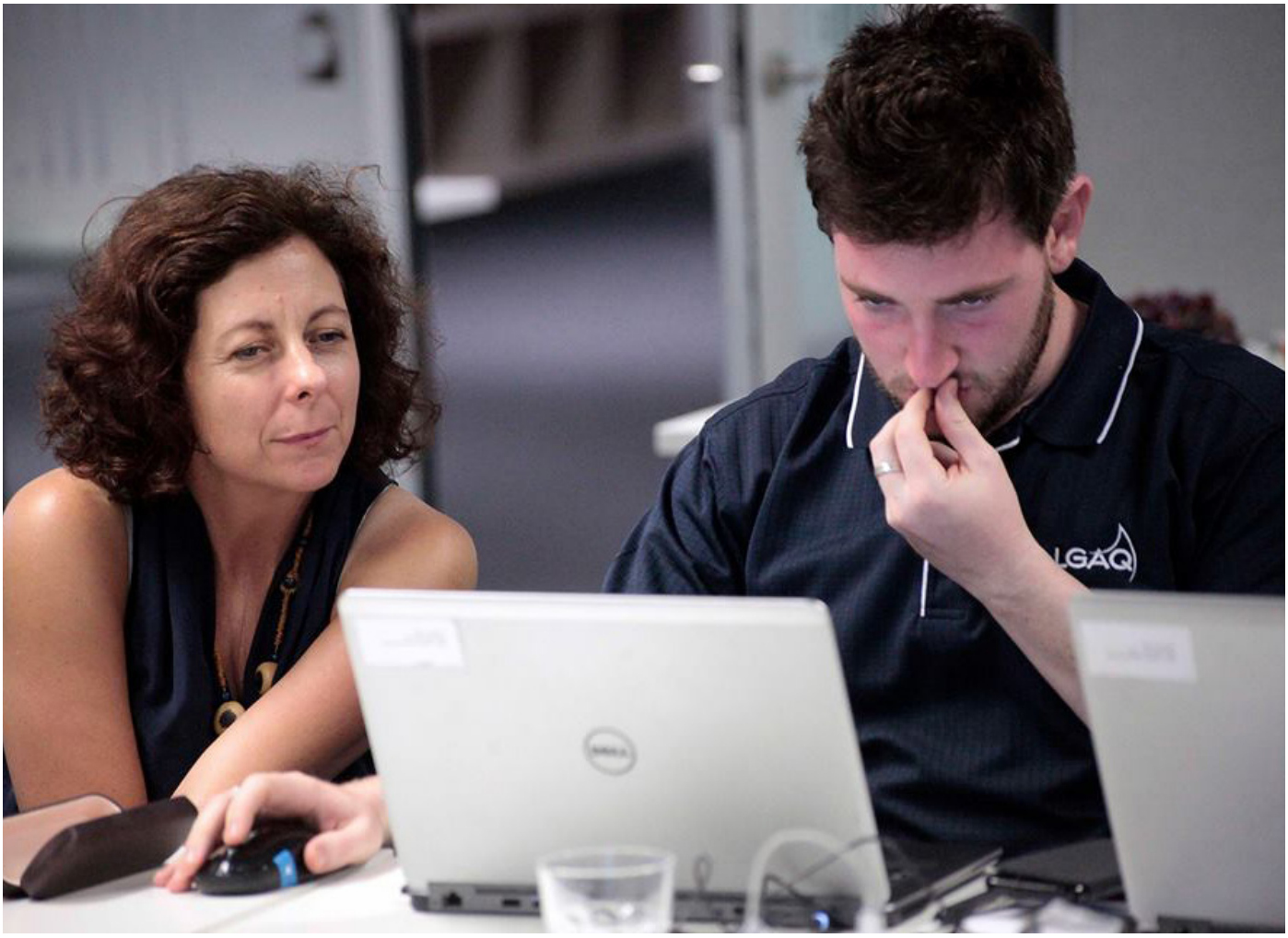
The LGAQ makes optimum use of technology in carrying out its functions and also encourages and helps councils to adopt new processes that enable them to provide a higher level of service to residents in their respective areas.

The association also encourages councils to be more responsive to the needs and requirements of residents. It advises them to communicate regularly on matters that concern the community and to highlight their achievements so that people are aware of the work that they are doing.

At a recent conference, Margret de Wit, President LGAQ said, “Business, large and small, is reminded every day of the power of the consumer. Governments of all levels need to recognise the power of the community, and not just at election time.

“Those advances in technology have allowed communities to evaluate the performance of their elected representatives every day and in great detail. Dare I say this makes it almost impossible for councils tempted to hide their dirty linen.

“With greater power in the hands of the community comes greater expectations surrounding accountability and transparency on governments of all



levels - but especially the one recognised as being closest to be the community.

"But there is a flipside to that particular challenge. The advances that are forcing more transparency on governments also offer great opportunities for those same governments to talk about and share their successes with their peers and their communities in compelling and exciting ways."

The LGAQ maintains close contact with Queensland's councils in various ways. It engages the councils on a host of issues on a one-to-one basis. The association regularly attends meetings of the regional association of councils. There are 11 such regional groupings of councils across the state. The LGAQ talks to the councils about their problems and works out the role they can play to solve them.

Support is also provided to councils through the Policy Executive, a group of Mayors and Councillors who are elected by their peers to represent regions of Queensland. The Policy Executive has 14 members – 13 district representatives and a President – who meet quarterly to give direction to the association for taking up the common issues of councils.

Greg Hallam PSM, Chief Executive Officer of the LGAQ, explains the role of the association in its latest Annual Report, "The LGAQ has been advising, supporting and representing local councils since 1896, supporting their drive to innovate and improve delivery through smart services and sustainable solutions, delivering to them the means to achieve community, professional and political excellence and connecting councils to people and places that count.

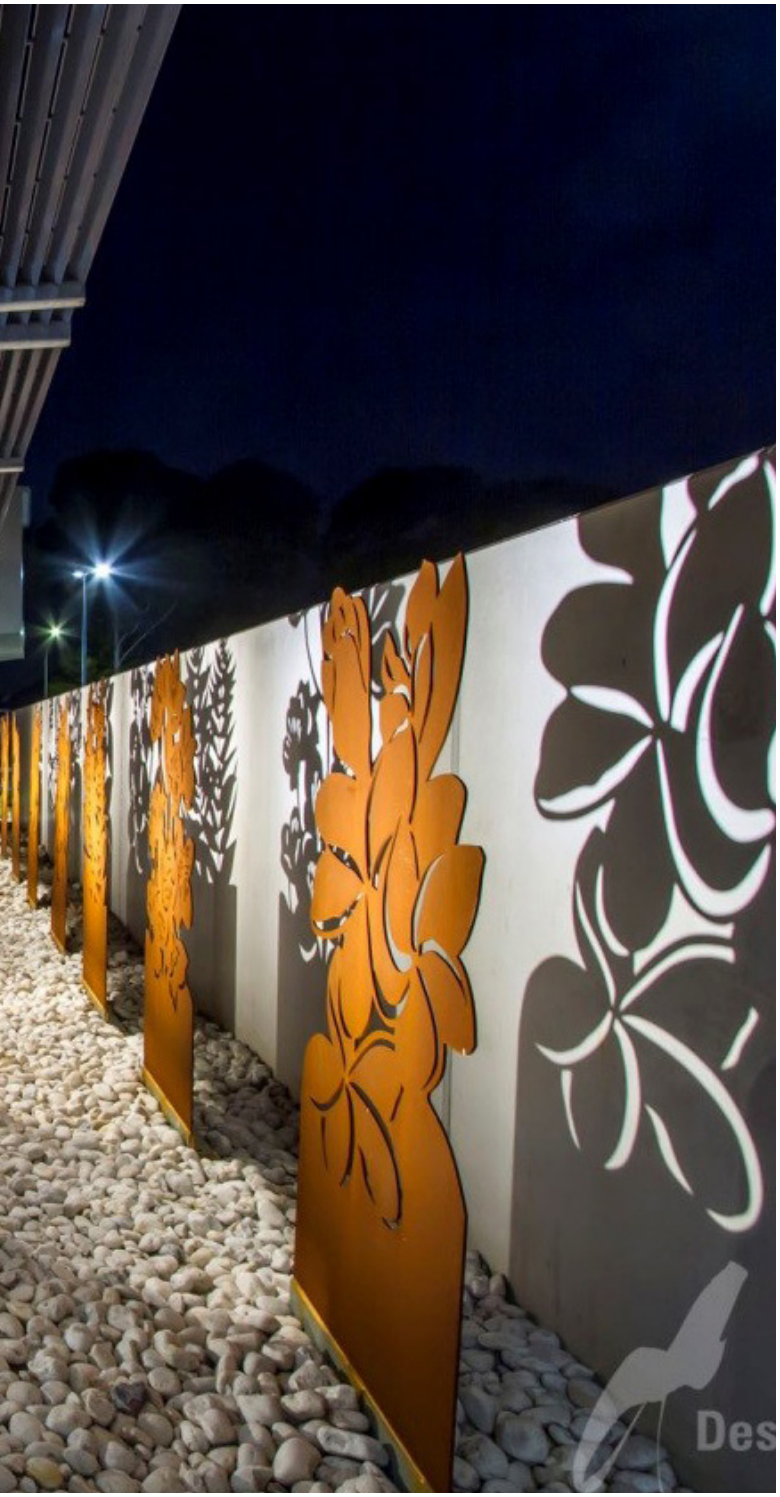
"The employees of our three streams – Assist, Advocate and Advance - have collectively received more than 4000 calls each month, travelled over 1,081,840 km and made a record number of submissions (131 in total) to the State and Federal governments."

Blacktown City Council

The fastest-growing area of New South Wales

The Blacktown City Council has consistently been one of the fastest growing areas of Australia. As one of the primary growth areas for state government in the residential and employment fields, it has also been identified as one of the major residential growth areas within the northwest growth centre. Between 2001 and 2006, the population grew by 6.47 percent. Between 2006 and 2011, population growth was measured at 10.82 percent. Both figures are significantly higher than the national average and they represent the vision of the Council for continuous growth.

To be even more precise, the cur-



AT A GLANCE

WHO: Blacktown City Council Estate Retirement Village

WHAT: A local government area in western Sydney, located approximately 35 km from Sydney's CBD

WHERE: 62 Flushcombe Road, Blacktown NSW 2148

WEBSITE: blacktown.nsw.gov.au

rent population of the local government area stands at about 348,000. According to Rudi Svarc, the Director of City Assets, the Council is projecting that the population will grow to over 500,000 over the next 20 to 25 years. 'At that number, the City of Blacktown will be basically as big as Tasmania.', Rudi rightfully remarks. Despite the incoming challenges, the Council stands ready to accommodate development, support infrastructure growth, and foster developments across every major area.

Dedicating major resources to infrastructure development

As part of the strategic plans which have been introduced to support that growth, the Council will need to deliver at least $3.3 billion dollars in the development of infrastructure in order to accommodate the development and population growth. They have always been a part of the growth objective and have consistently focused on areas which satisfy population targets for the state government. Towards that end, a major construction arm has always existed within the Council which has been used to undertake several major projects. This has resulted in a huge impact on building and managing most infrastructure constructions internally.

Rudi, who is responsible for managing and overseeing the construction and maintenance of all Council assets across every development area, suggested that the Council currently has about $3.2 billion in assets. Not only is the Blacktown City Council focused on growth that has to deal with building new infrastructure but it is also committed to managing significant existing infrastructure. Thankfully, a skilled team of engineers, architects, and other specialists have continuously supported the Council in such endeavours.

Facilitating future development through infrastructure growth

To date, the Council has undertaken several ambitious projects to the benefit of its community and Rudi talked to us about a few examples, starting with the Knox Road Bridge Duplication, a project that was constructed by external contractors but managed entirely by the Council. They also managed the construction of the bridge approaches, traffic signals at the intersection, and every other required treatment. The duplication was the last in a series of related projects which are poised to have considerable benefits to the local economies of Blacktown and Western Sydney. More specifically, it was part of a major reconstruction of almost 11 km of regional road between Sunnyholt Road and the Great Western Highway to address major traffic growth in the City. The $30 million project was a major undertaking but its impact on the local communities will also be substantial.

Under its asset management system, the Council maintains a lot of different streams within several improvement programs. As such, it's team is able to forecast projects that require asset renewal in order to ensure that the assets operate satisfactorily to the end of their useful lives. The Council provides intervention measures to infrastructure projects in the region. Rudi mentioned the fact that projects get listed and prioritized based on very specific factors. This allows the Council to better understand what needs to be accomplished within each community, particularly due to the close relationships that they maintain with local residents.

Yet another example can be seen in

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In a milestone year for a local Blacktown company, Avant Constructions celebrates their forty year anniversary in the building of residential, commercial and industrial construction. Founded in 1976 by Angelo Aloi, Antonio D'Urso, Cosmo D'Urso and David Hall; Avant Constructions completed its' first project of renovating a small Penrith laundry and from that point in time developed a company around key values of family, trust, quality and a client first mentality that has lasted over the decades and onto the future generations of staff and workers.

Basing operations from Tattersall Road Blacktown from 1980, Avant Constructions developed divisions in Joinery and Metal Fabrications to complement its residential and commercial fit-out works, Avant was awarded its first large project with a fitout for Telstra in the 1990's while at the same time completing builds such as the Aquilina Reserve Amenities Block, Plumpton Fire Station, Lisa Forest building at Blacktown Aquatic Centre and the Quakers Hill and Lalor Park Child Care Centres.

These contributions and quality builds in the local area allowed Avant Constructions entry into select tender panels for the Department of Services, Endeavour Energy and Western Sydney University who Avant still maintain strong working relationships.

After losing founding director, Cosmo D'Urso, in 2010 to a long time battle with cancer, Avant Constructions moved operations from Blacktown to Glendenning and went on to celebrate awards in 2013 for Excellence in Construction and in 2015 for Kitchen Manufacturer and Cabinetmaker of the Year from the Master Builders Association and Housing Institute of Australia respectively while obtaining accreditations in Safety, Environmental and Quality Management.

Today, Angelo Aloi and Antonio D'Urso still head the organisation with the next generation of family members managing operations of the company's construction, minor works and maintenance, joinery and cabinetmaking, in Signature Joinery and Design, and structural steel, in ABBA metal fabrication divisions.

In 2017 Avant Constructions continues its work within the community and will initiate the build of the Blacktown NRL centre, a major infrastructure project that will bring youth development to the area.

Celebrating 40 Years in Construction

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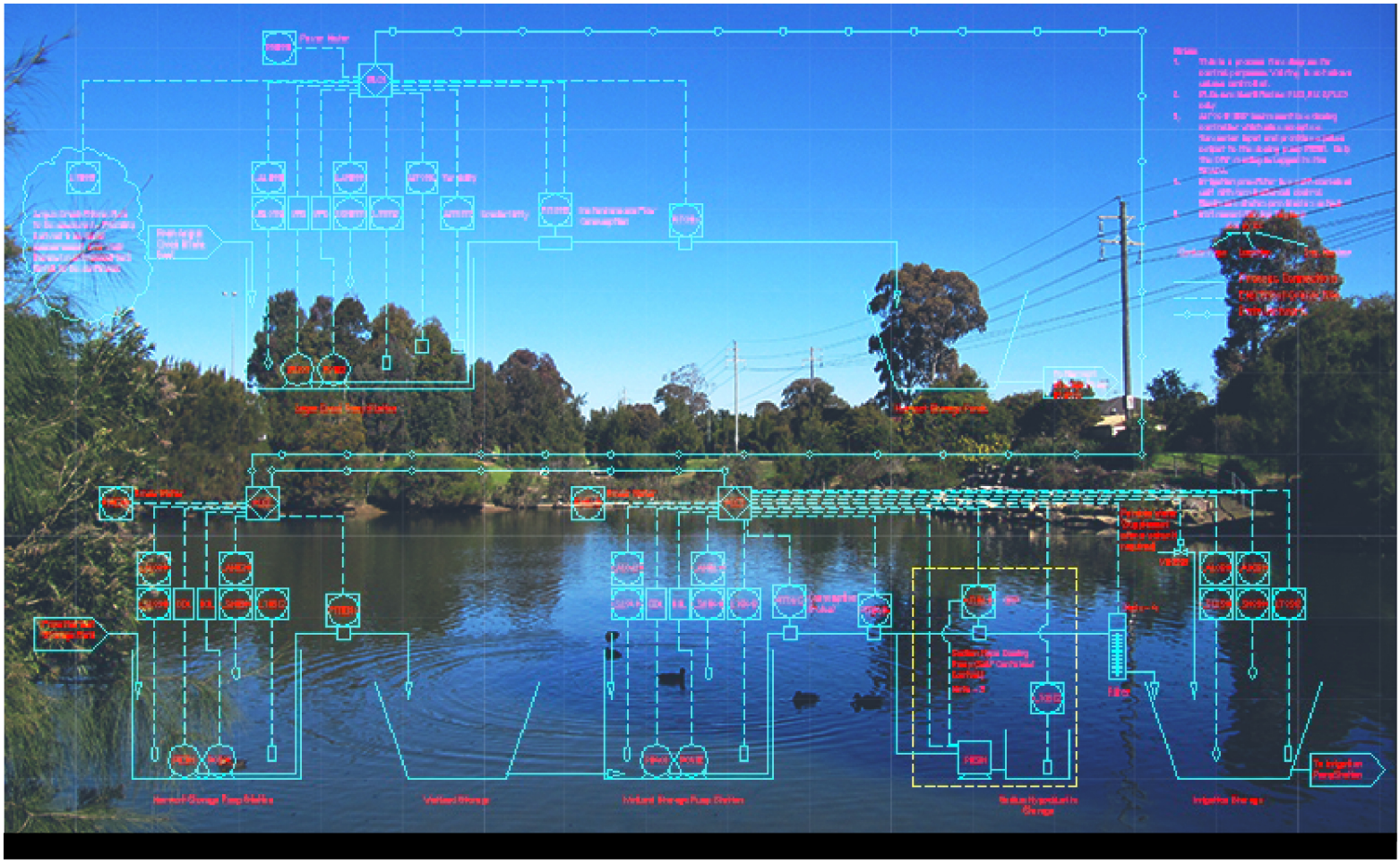
the Angus Creek Stormwater Harvesting Scheme. The Council, in partnership with the Australian Government, has completed a facility that will be able to store and clean 200 million litres of stormwater per year. Most of the water will be used for the irrigation of the Blacktown International Sportspark fields as well as the Anne Aquilina Reserve, Kareela Reserve, and Charlie Bali Reserve while some part will go towards topping up the Nurraggingy ornamental lakes. This will not only save money for the Council but it will also have major environmental impacts both due to the conservation of rain water and due to the erosion that usually occurs in Angus Creek and the subsequent disruption of the local ecosystem.

A project that will be being going to tender shortly is the Rouse Hill Bridge. This project has been given priority status to facilitate the growth in the NW Growth Area. The area that surrounds Rouse Hill Bridge was traditionally rural but it now forms part of the residential release areas. Several facilities, including a major school adjacent to Rouse Road, flooded often due to heavy rain. The Council identified a need to make the area flood-free and were successful in securing a grant to partially fund the construction of a new bridge, with Council funding the remainder through its Section 94 Plan. Council has been responsible for designing the project and will manage the construction elements such as the bridge approaches with the actual bridge structure to be supplied to external contractors.

Maintaining community facilities, grounds for sport and recreation

Such infrastructure is not the only concern of the Council, of course. Community relations are also vitally important, especially through centres of communication and interaction. In 2009, there was a general plan to consolidate and centralize a lot of the community facilities and services which were used throughout the local government area. By ensuring that the newly provided community hubs would be readily accessible to everyone, each area would benefit from a more central approach. To accomplish that, they turned several existing facil-



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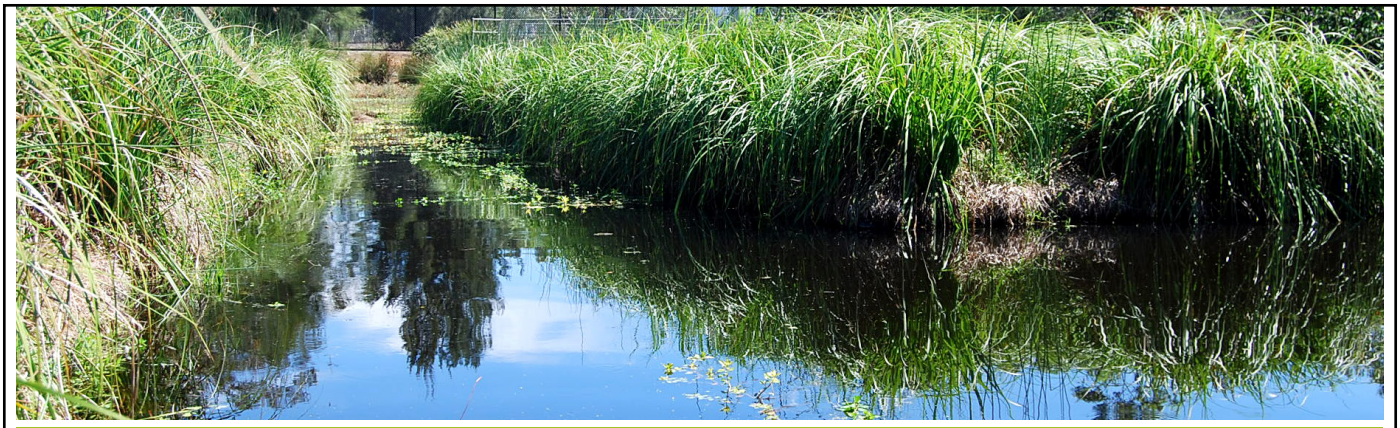
ities into community centres through some major refurbishments. For instance, Mt Druitt was a very outdated library building which was not utilized very well. The Council, however, converted it into a modern hub that is now seeing massive attendance.

A similar endeavour was also undertaken in Glenwood. The region's community centre was not adequate enough to meet the needs of the community, both based on its relatively small size and the limited functions it could provide. To amend that, the Council put forward $5.5 million for its reconstruction and equipped it with additional services and many new utilities. Overall, more than 19,000 hours have been booked across the new community facilities ever since their reconstructions. Members of the community can learn new skills through practical workshops, improve their health and well-being through support and counselling, and also express their cultural identity through the engagement of leisure and art activities of each recreational department.

In a similar vein, the Blacktown Showground Redevelopment aimed to convert old recreation facilities into a new space for the community. Now, there are turfed areas for community use, cycleways throughout the area, gym equipment, children's play areas, a major water play facility, a café, seat-



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ing areas throughout, and BBQ equipment. The showground is now utilized highly by the community as it is fully occupied every weekend and quite busy during the week. Furthermore, there is a community garden where each resident can participate and grow vegetables and herbs. Overall, the project had a very successful community outcome which also won the Parks & Leisure Australia NSW/ACT Regional Awards as a play space.

Sports are also incredibly important to the Council: “The Council sees itself as a sporting city”. We are very proud of the facilities that we provide, we are always very keen to provide good facilities for sports in the area. The Council put together a program prior to the last election for a range of upgrades in various sports fields and amenity buildings across the City. We are committed to funding these projects over the next financial year. It covers a range of different sports including rugby, cricket, soccer, netball, and baseball. The Council is supporting all those different sports by providing the best facilities we possibly can. We are very committed to sports and we have a major sports facility, the Blacktown International Sportspark where we the majority of state sports are located, including the home for Western City Wanderers”, Rudi says.

Significant plans for the future

According to Rudi, the Council will

continue to focus on providing infrastructure over the next couple of decades at a minimum. They are heavily involved in a design phase at the moment and are already looking at 20-30 projects over the next two years. Once these projects become available for construction, they will facilitate further development. Ensuring the smooth progression of drainage and the road network is the only way to ensure solid development plans. The Council has always worked closely with the development industry and even hosts two annual forums. There, the industry leaders raise their concerns and discuss any issues that the Council can potentially assist them with. If everything goes to plan, the Council's portfolio, which is already significant, will be expanded to even greater heights.

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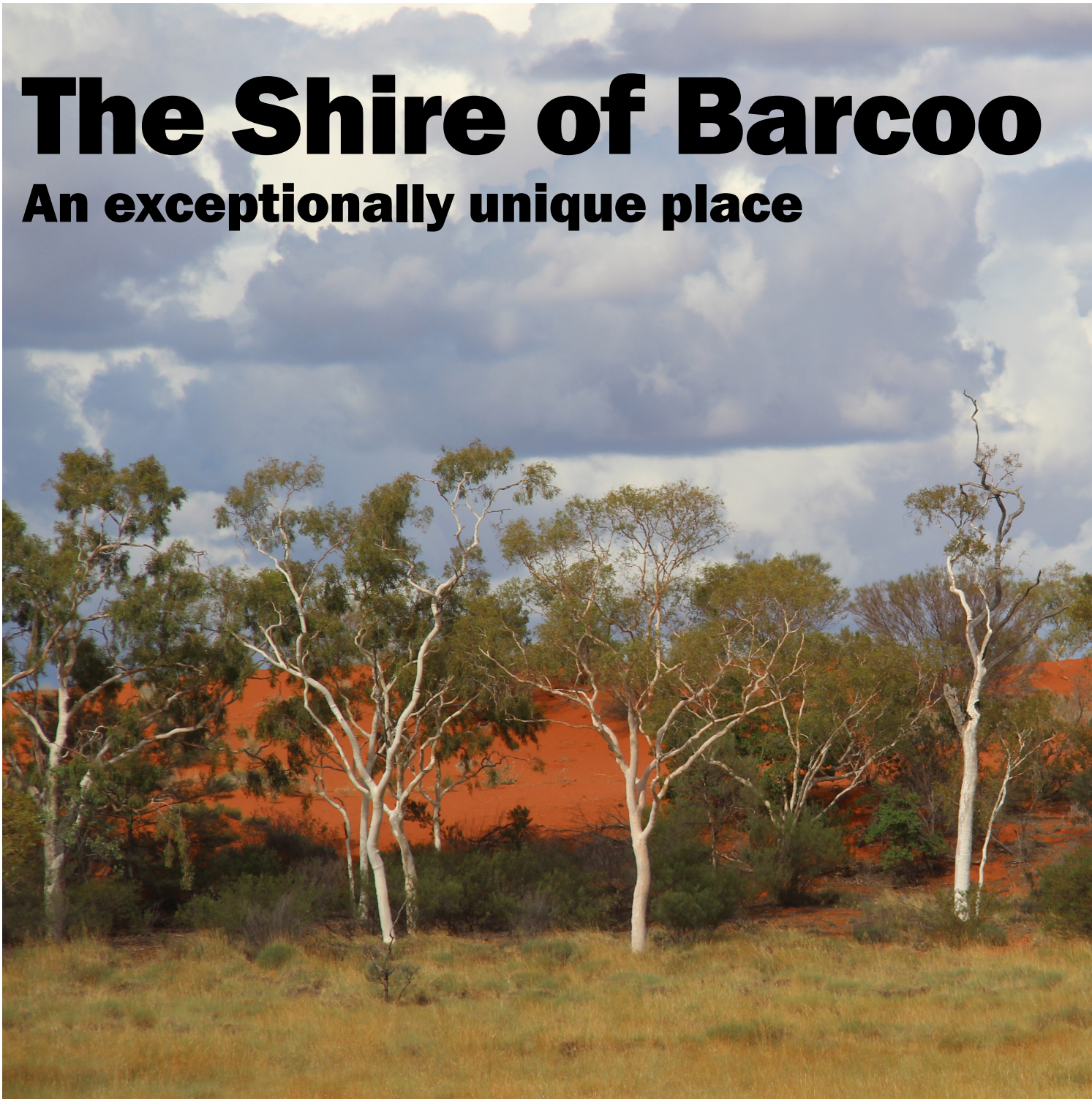

The Shire of Barcoo, one of the biggest local government areas in Western Queensland, is a place of exceptional beauty and a rich history. The shire incorporates the townships of Jundah, Windorah, and Stonehenge covering an area of almost 62,000 square km. The Thomson and Barcoo rivers reach a confluence to form Cooper Creek, an exceptional site with strong historical values. The surrounding regions offer many opportunities for outdoor recreation with fantastic wildlife and flora and numerous activities such as golf and fishing.

Despite covering a considerable area, the Shire is home to a small popula-

AT A GLANCE

WHO: The Barcoo Shire Council

WHAT: The council presiding over the Shire of Barcoo, incorporating the towns of Jundah, Stonehenge, and Windorah

WHERE: 6 Perkins St, Jundah QLD 4736, Australia

WEBSITE: barcoo.qld.gov.au

tion of about 350. In fact, the Barcoo Shire Council employs about 16 percent of the population while the percentage of people relying on the Council for income purposes sits at around 40 percent. Agriculture, tourism, and local government are the three major economic drives in the area though the rural community is experiencing a reinvigorating era ahead thanks to the hard work of the Council.

Intertwining the Council in the community

More than most Councils in other municipalities, the Barcoo Shire Council is deeply involved in virtually every aspect of the community. It acts as the backbone to most economic, social, and cultural activities in the region and it provides support for countless services. For instance, the council is responsible for the operation of the school bus, a service that would normally not fall under their responsibilities. Because of the unique characteristics of the shire, such as its small population, the Council had to assume a very active role to ensure the well-being of the community and the stable and continuous operation of public services.

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the region, the Council had to take a comprehensive look into the wider area and develop a strategic plan that would benefit not only the economies of its own townships but those of the surrounding areas as well. For one, the expansion of sealed roads allowed economic growth to spread out. The influx of services was a direct result of that and now the Council is concerned with building infrastructure to attract visitors and build more interest in the commercial market. According to Robert O'Brien, the Council's CEO, the hope is that by providing the initial services and necessary infrastructure, the private sector will take over and breathe new life to the region.

Heavy investments in the road network

Because of all that, it is easy to see that the Council's investments in the road network have benefitted the wider region as a whole. Of course, a big part of their workload is completing road projects for the state government.

"A big part of our work is doing work on behalf of the state government on the state road network. If we can get that average of 10 to 15 kilometers per year rolled out, we will still have at least a 10-year program ahead of us. A lot of these roads, which were originally part of the beef roads network, are just five meters wide with single lanes.

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So after we have gotten everything paved, the next step will be to widen these single-lane sections and this will take at least 10 to 15 years. And that's just on the state network. We've also got about 1200kms of our own road network which is pretty much all gravel or natural formation of sandy soil", explains Robert.

As one can plainly see, a lot of money has been utilized in improving the road network. Thankfully, government funding and federal programs have helped tremendously in this regard. Programs like Road to Recovery are vital to communities like the Shire of Barcoo. Since sealing the roads, people's destinations have also changed dramatically, both socially and business-wise. Socially, people are much more likely to visit areas with decent infrastructure. And as far as business is concerned, the beef supply network goes directly through the region so these investments are essentially value-adding to the people of Queensland.

Developing a network for telecommunications

Another major project for the Council has been the development and maintenance of a decent telecommunications network. Though this has been an ongoing concern since 2001, views on technology were much different back then than they are today. In the

PHOENIX

Strapper

last 15 years, mobile technology has exploded to unprecedented levels with the number of connected devices far exceeding the world's population. The most frequent comments in the Council's guest books have consistently been about better mobile phone coverage which is just another testament to the importance of such an endeavor.

Providing good coverage for mobile and internet networks is vital in this day and age across every aspect. On an individual level, there are loads of people who wish to work from home, access education services, and become connected for social and entertainment purposes. On a business level, modern enterprises are required to have an Internet presence vital for fast communication, administration, and finance. On the public services level, hospitals, schools, libraries, and various other utilities absolutely have a need for fast and stable Internet connections as well.

Planning ahead

As is the case with many other small councils, the Barcoo Shire Council has to establish plans decades into the future. Though the road network will take a considerable amount of its time and resources, the Council also looks in other areas for improvements too. Sustainability, for instance, is a big concern. When they first started regulating water supplies, they Council quickly looked at the cost of producing water. Once the first water treatment plants were established, they also quickly realized that the cost of treating all of the water was highly ineffective. As a result, they now only treat about 20 percent of the water which makes people use it much more efficiently while cutting down on costs.

Overall, the Barcoo Shire Council should take pride in being so actively involved in the community and responding to their needs in as quick and efficient a manner as possible. Though their work is challenging, they have risen to the occasion more than once and the community has directly benefitted as a result. The shire might seem small in comparison to others in the surrounding region but its economic and social impact is considerable indeed.

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Shire of Broome

A site of historical and cultural importance

Like the many vast regions of Australia, the Shire of Broome has an incredibly rich history directly resulting from an amalgamation of a plethora of cultures. Located in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, the Shire of Broome is home to a historically significant pearling industry, a beautiful coastline, and an ever-growing number of tourists who seek to enjoy the beach and visit the various heritage sites around Broome and other townships. With a population of more than 17,000 people, the Shire of Broome has plenty of opportunities; ranging from exciting and relaxing recreation to business development and investment opportunities. The Shire has

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Shire of Broome

WHAT: One of the four local government areas in the Kimberley region

WHERE: Shire of Broome Administration Office, Cnr Weld and Haas Street, PO Box 44, Broome 6725

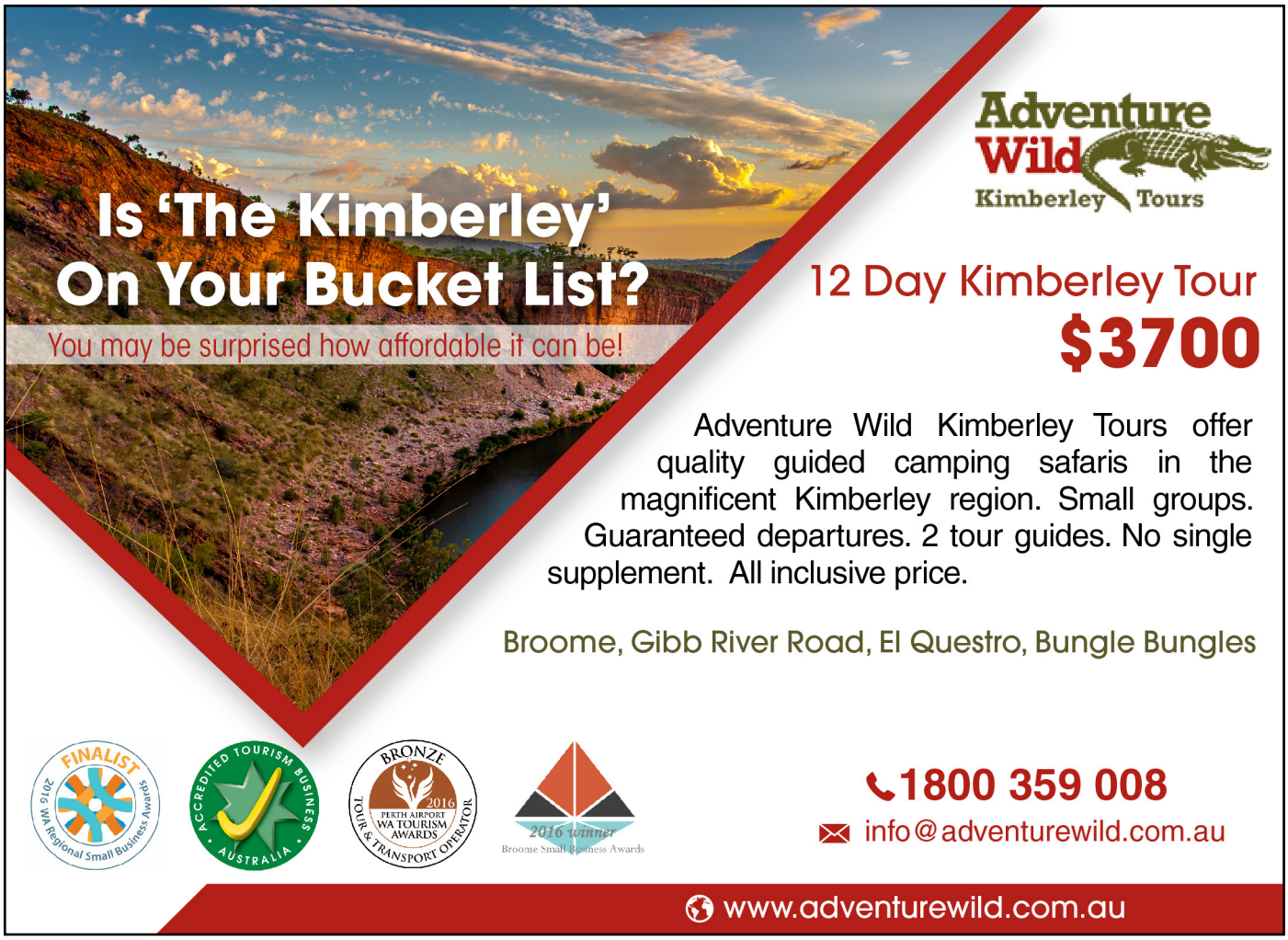
WEBSITE: broome.wa.gov.au

been rapidly growing over the last 10 years – becoming one of the fastest growing towns in the State.

Presenting opportunities for recreation

As a Shire that has 900 kilometres of coastline and is home to the world-famous Cable Beach, Broome is no stranger to recreational and community growth, as can be seen by the many projects put forth by the Shire of Broome over the last few years.

One of the biggest projects relating to sports and recreation was the upgrade to the Broome Recreation and Aquatic Centre (BRAC). The $3.3 million project was identified as part of a development in 2015. The previous facilities were 20 years old and, as one might expect, the infrastructure was becoming outdated. It may seem like an open and closed project but the facilities in need of upgrades hosted the only public swimming pool in Broome which was highly utilised by both the local population and the tourists. A conundrum was faced by the Shire of Broome in terms of how to efficiently and smoothly complete the upgrades with minimal disturbance to the local community and tourists alike.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As a result, a plan was put in place to close off certain areas of BRAC while still allowing the public to engage in a range of fitness activities while the upgrades take place. The upgrades -revolved around utilising new techniques to bring the place a facelift and bring it to modern standards of best practice. A lot of work was undertaken to improve water circulation, drainage and protect the environment. The upgrades are mostly structural however aesthetics also played a role in the development plan. Though the upgrades are still ongoing, the end result will be a facility that can easily host more people in a safe environment, one that is not only environmentally friendly but also structurally sound.

Heritage Preservation in the Shire of Broome

History, heritage and diversity are some of the core values that the Shire of Broome is built on and this is more than evident through the various initiatives they have undertaken. Historically, Chinatown was the commercial centre during the boom of the region's pearling industry. It is home to many cultures that make up the diverse region and the CBD will be on the receiving end of a $12.6 million revitalisation plan.

One of the key foundations to the project (as with any project involving heritage preservation) was protecting

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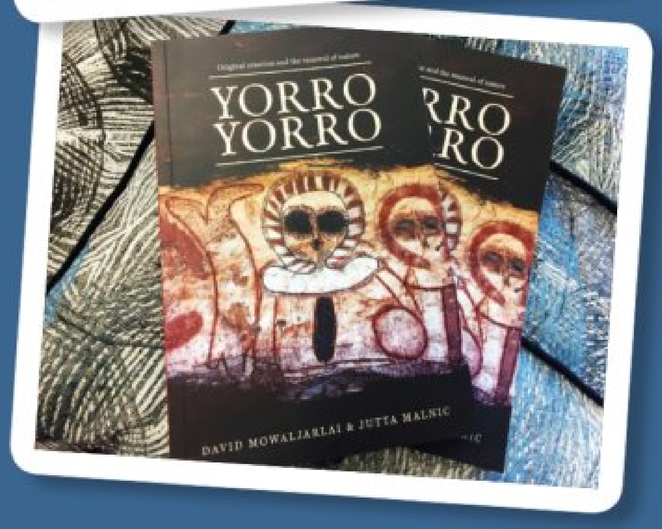

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the rich cultural history of Chinatown. The area is marked as a heritage site and is one of the many important economic drivers that move the Shire of Broome forward. With the main shopping centre and CBD with many small businesses operating out of it, it is vital to maintain and preserve the integrity of Chinatown by considering every possibility.

After careful and well thought-out planning, the Shire of Broome submitted a Business Case outlining a series of development opportunities to the State Government which resulted in them successfully receiving $10 million in funding injected into the project, with the Shire of Broome footing the remainder of the bill. The project is an immense undertaking for a Shire of this size and consists of a total of 10 sub-projects such as upgrading the two main streets in Chinatown to improve amenities by providing more shading, water and seating.

We had a chance to speak with Sam Mastrolembo, Shire of Broome Deputy CEO and Director of Community and Economic Development. Sam has 20 years of experience in related fields and has held public sector positions at several Councils. He started with Shire of Broome over 4 years ago as Director Corporate Services and in July 2015 took on the position of Deputy CEO.

“There will be physical and visual changes, and improvements in the public realm through streetscape enhancements and laneway activation that will happen; in addition to some feasibility studies that are also being undertaken on a Cultural and Interpretive Centre, a road connection, a protection wall for sea rise, and foreshore development opportunities. We also

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Rawlinsons (W.A.) has been an integral part of North Western Australias development since establishing practice and continues to be involved in projects located in the North West. They are proud of their involvement in such projects, most recently, the Kimberley Regional Offices, Acacia Prison Expansion and the Carnarvon Health Centre Redevelopment. Regional projects are complex by nature due to their often remote locations; however, Rawlinsons team of experienced professionals relish these challenges and have the depth of knowledge and experience required to successfully cost manage such projects.

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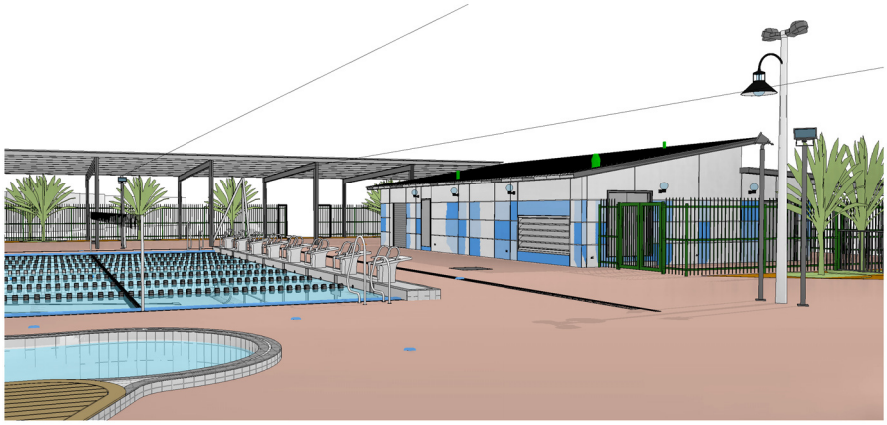

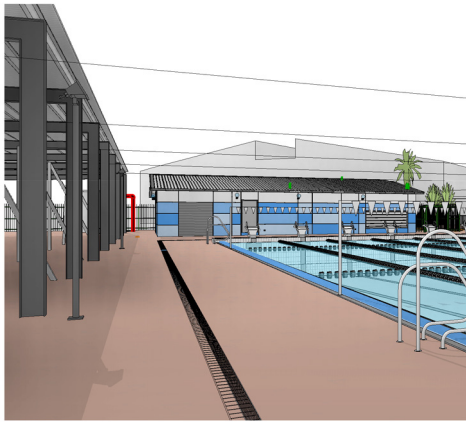

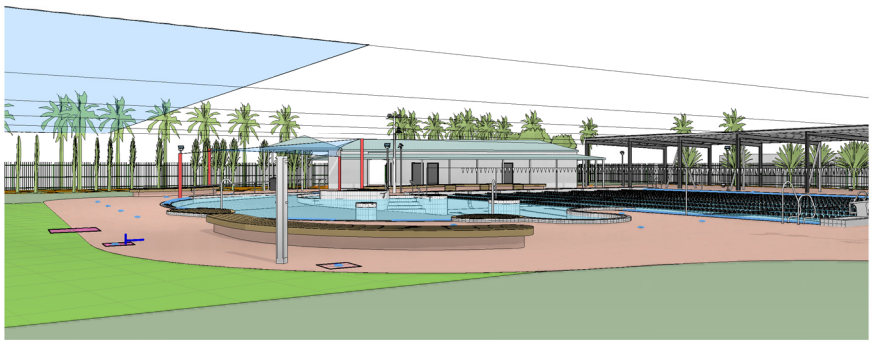

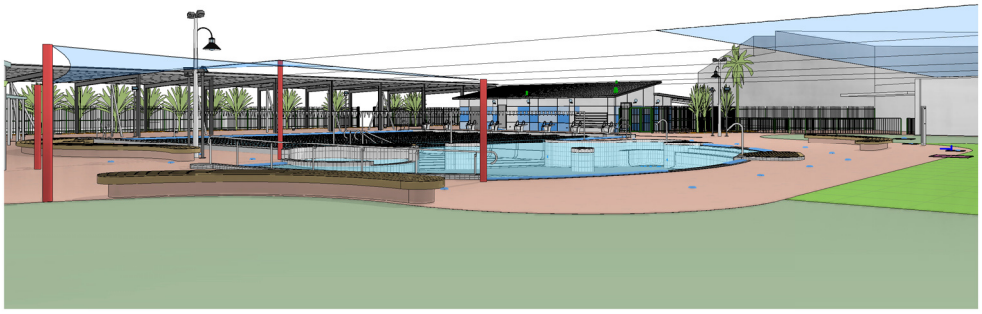

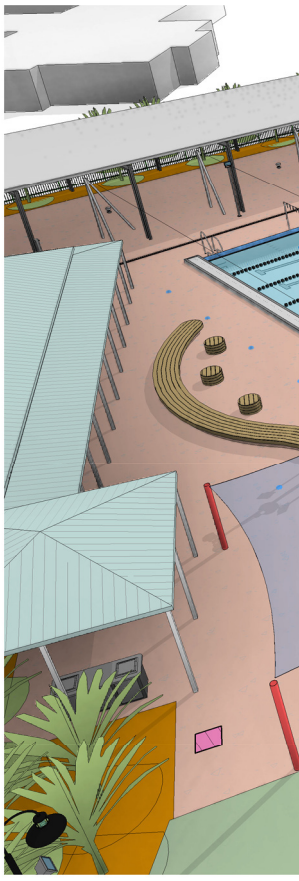

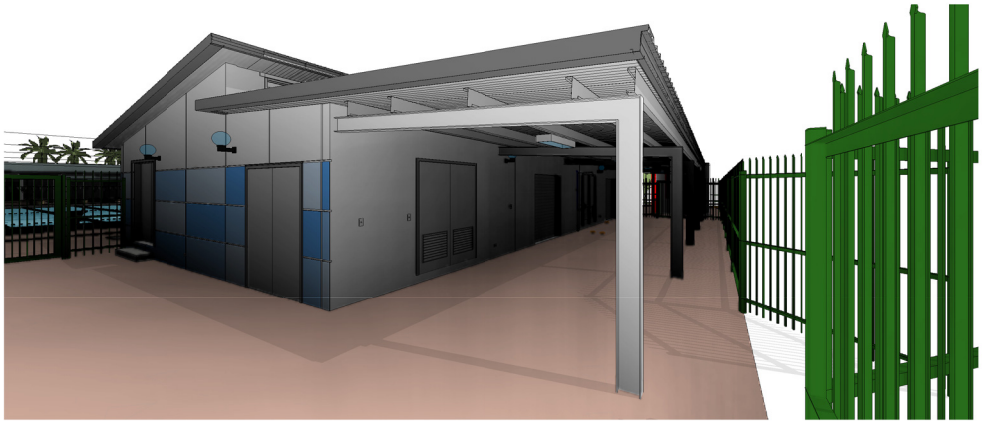

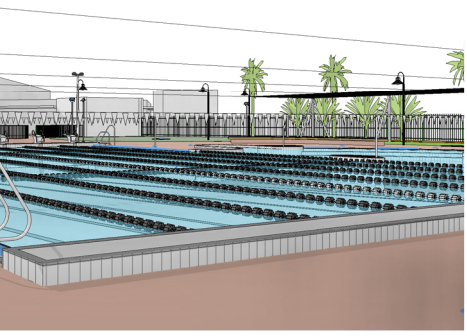

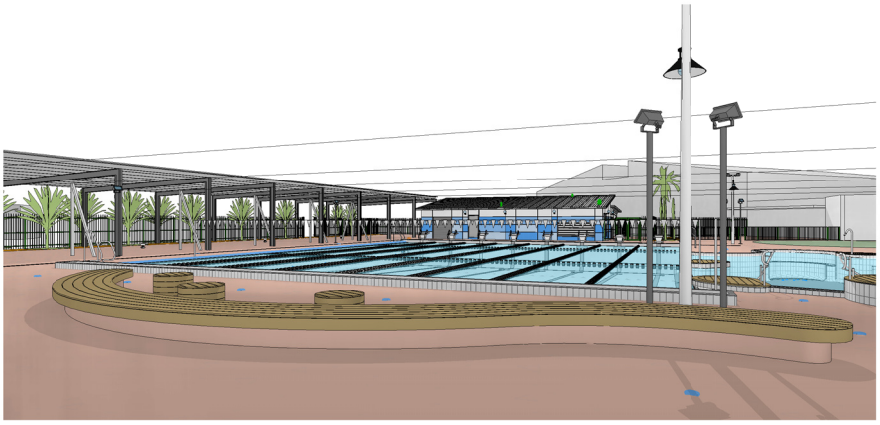

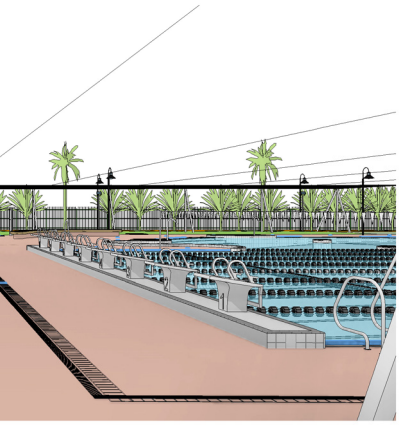

No.	DATE	AMENDMENT
b	07-06-2016	ISSUED TO QS
a	30-05-2016	UPDATED ISSUE

donovan payne

BROOME AQUATIC CENTRE

BRAC

SHIRE OF BROOME

TITLE
3D IMAGES

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have a new position that has been created for a two-year fixed term which is the 'Chinatown Investment and Development Coordinator'. This role is really to try and get activities, events, and initiatives happening in there; bring people in, and turn it into a vibrant place. Part of the funding is specific for that person to come on board and develop a two-year activity plan on some of the initiatives that they will roll out into the New Year," explained Sam.

New opportunities for growth and development

The Shire of Broome also wishes to incorporate young people as much as possible into its planning. Because of that, they have developed a Youth Framework which led to 12 young people being appointed to the Youth Advisory Committee of Council. The idea was "for them to develop an action plan of things they would like to see informing the Shire's planning around facilities and programs". And though this is still in its early stages, the Shire of Broome eventually wants them to provide input into the Shire's formal planning process.

Ensuring that every plan is future-proof

This kind of approach is vital to the Shire of Broome. The team has spent considerable time focusing on getting strong planning in place to ensure that their work actually responds to community needs and that it is in line with their resources. As such, they carefully consider their plans and future projections. They work around the strengths of the Shire such as its heritage values to promote the area in economic, cultural, and social capacities.

Of course, that does not mean that the Shire of Broome rests easy while making plans. There are several projects in infrastructure and growth for the Shire of Broome, such as the Broome North Residential Development. With a general focus on infrastructure and recreation, the Shire of Broome's next focus area will be on Town Beach and the famous Cable Beach. More specifically, tourism amenities have to be improved, safety regulations have to be updated and infrastructure work needs to be completed. By getting in touch with the local population and actively responding to their needs and concerns, it looks like the Shire of Broome's future rests in good hands.

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