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Oceania Edition

A Peak Inside The Best Managed Boarding Facilities For 2017

AUSTRALIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION
CREATING THE FUTURE FOR BOARDING SCHOOLS

Canberra Grammar School

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Executive Publisher
Marcus VandenBrink

Business View Magazine Oceania
http://www.businessviewoceania.com
info@businessviewoceania.com
AU: +61 2 8011 3231
NZ: +64 9 889 0039

Email for all inquiries at info@businessviewoceania.com

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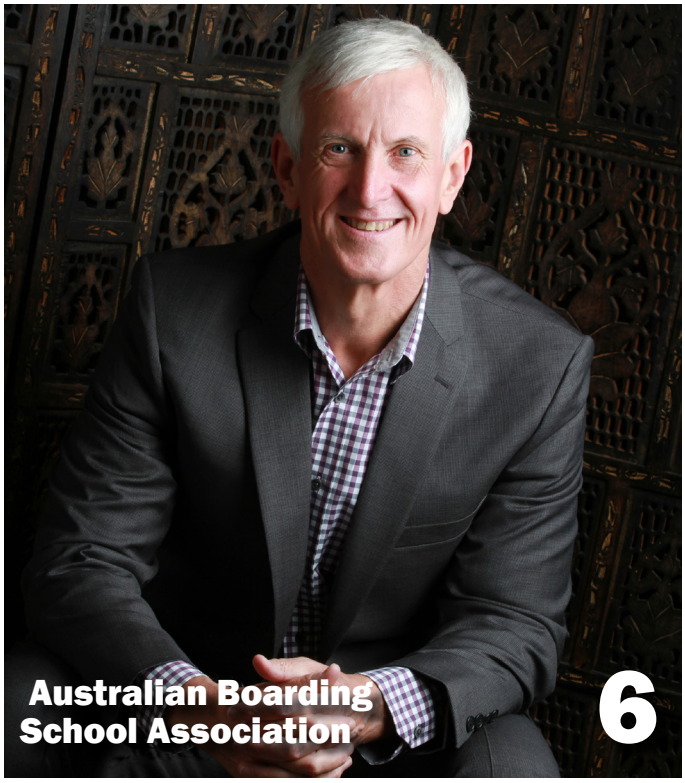

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Australian Boarding School Association

The Australian Boarding School Association (ABSA) is a beacon for boarding schools around Australia. It has grown to become a guiding light for that part of academic life that has often gone forgotten by scholastic Australia. The interest and well-being of Australian boarders and staff has never seen such resolute attention and dedication.

The story of how ABSA began and grew all starts with Executive Director Richard Stokes, who has overseen and been a part of ABSA since its inception and has been crucial in driving the increasing momentum, and in raising and maintaining boarding standards throughout the country.

Stokes started out back in 1986 when he coordinated a group of people who worked in boarding in Queensland stating:

"We used to get together once a term

to talk about what our issues were. That grew to running a national conference, which then grew to a discussion in 2007 where it was established that this route for boarding support need to be developed more officially."

This conversation happened between Stokes and Dr. Tim Hawkes, a prominent Australian educator and current headmaster of The King's School (day and boarding) in Sydney.

"We agreed that we needed to provide this service for all boarding schools. He and I formed the association, he was my founding chair, and we carried on from there."

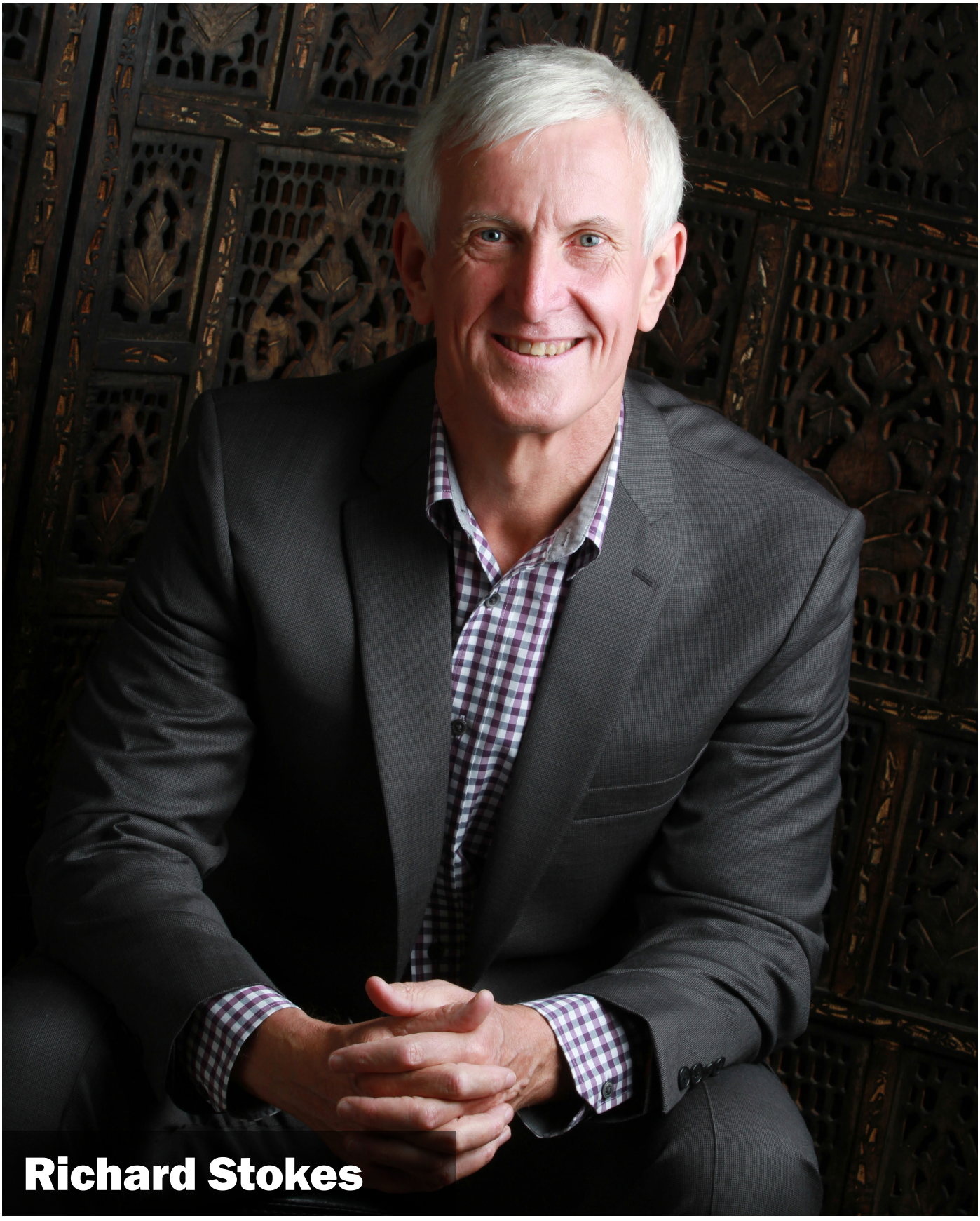
From those sparks of a voluntary group of concerned boarding staff, ABSA was formed. Every single boarding school in Australia is now a member.

"In 2008, I sold the concept of the association to Principals and Heads of Boarding through the country," Stoked explained, "I highlighted what we'd already achieved, how we'd united so many schools already, and pushed what a great service we could provide.

"We probably got about 80% of the country's boarding schools joining in ABSA's first year. Now to me, this was quite remarkable, I was as surprised as anyone."

The specifics

In terms of the day-to-day, ABSA is actually only run by two staff, Stokes himself, and his general manager Thomas Dunsmore, and the pair have an administrative trainee to aid them. The job of ABSA, is to support boarding schools in the best way that it can. Stokes' and Dunsmore's jobs involve a great deal of them training boarding schools. Stokes himself helped with the updating of ABSA's 'Duty of Care' workbooks, authored by Hawkes, books which are a part of ABSA's



Duty of Care course (alongside additional workshops). The association trains around 800-1000 people each year, with workshops being a key part of Stokes' role. Stokes goes further into the kinds of services ABSA provides relishing ABSA's 48 page journal 'Lights Out':

"It's distributed three times a year and is the best boarding school journal in in the world! We highlight the things that are going on in boarding houses, but we also give people professional development tools that can help with their job."

True to its event driven roots, ABSA holds a range of conferences for boarding focused employees throughout the year. An example is one that usually starts at the beginning of March called the 'Take the Reins' conference. The event is designed to assist people taking up boarding leadership positions. This conference covers topics that would help monumentally in the day-to-day activities of these staff covering common topic like dealing with difficult parents, steps to changing the boarding culture and how to support staff.

"All of those sorts of key things new leaders need to hear about," quips Stokes.

"What's more, we run a four day national conference on even-numbered years, for general boarding staff – the ones at the actual coalface - covering a larger variety of topics. On odd numbered years, we run a two day conference in August for boarding house leaders. People like the Heads of House, Assistant Heads of Boarding, Heads of Boarding.

"Over two days, they're engaged in a whole lot of wonderful deep learning about positive change."

ABSA developed the national boarding standard from scratch in a three year project which involved educators from around Australia. In the same vein, the association has almost completed an accreditation scheme for boarding schools so that they can actually say they are accredited against voluntary standards.

Stokes is certain that in the future, the standards will be accepted by most Australian governments, followed by them needing to mandate the standards, but at this point in time, adhering to the standards remains completely voluntary.

Connections and collaborations

The rapid 100% boarding school membership rate translates clearly into the view that ABSA can do things quickly and efficiently. Despite this, Stokes found that what members valued the most about ABSA and its services, was the personal connection.

"As I said, both our jobs include a lot of travelling to members, visiting and training them. We make sure these schools know us personally."

"That we have that personal connection with our members is a critical touchpoint for us, it's where we stand out, so we work hard at keeping them close."

ABSA keeps the communication lines

open for these members to call up, and discuss issues, and seek advice. An added benefit of ABSA is the strong networking connections it provides through its conferences, forums and networking events. The association manages a number of email groups and publishes e-newsletters crammed with news and updates.

"These kinds of interactions and exchanges of ideas and information is really very important for what can actually be quite a lonely job," opines Stokes, "And it's critical for to us continue to share industry knowledge across the nation – things like what's going on in terms of good practice and innovation."

Building boarding

ABSA continues to grow internationally too, with boarding schools in New Zealand and China enlisting the association for training and guidance. While New Zealand does have its own ABSA Kiwi counterpart, this counterpart is currently entirely voluntary, and many of its members just don't have the time. ABSA has since taken on some of the mantle and will even start its first run of training in Christchurch in July of this year. Stokes' influence has been far reaching:

"We've also got members in Singapore, and there are schools in Malaysia, Thailand and Korea that have shown some serious interest.

"In China we trained staff in a boarding school just out of Shanghai. In September, we're going to spend some time in India. There's a big group of English speaking schools there, so we'll be heading out to do some support work."

When it comes to assessing and raising standards, ABSA's next step is to create a review service. With this service, a boarding school can invite ABSA in for three to four days to review their boarding program, to talk about what they're doing well, and about what they can do better.

"We think a really tailored approach to this review process would be the best one. Some schools will want a special review," says Stokes, "For example, one school recently wanted us to take a look at its staffing structure, and how it might go about changing it."

The theme for ABSA's strategy is to create a successful future for boarding schools through developing better education for students, better professional learning for staff and through developing partnerships with a range of companies that would prove great connections for its members - mattress companies and gap year providers for example.

"I'm also working towards developing positive relationships and connections with the government and non-profit organisations. Those organisations that need to really be involved with the boarding school side of things, academic organisations whose actions may have a knock on effect to what we're trying to achieve."

Was it all worth it?

Stokes' passion for boarding standards is nothing short of a blessing to the world of Australian boarding. The concept of boarding and the support it requires has been largely forgotten by the rest of the education industry, with Stokes stating:

"They're almost an unknown quantity in Australian society; it's been revolutionary for them to have someone that actually cares for their interests.

"It is a Herculean task, but I've got a passion, I started it after all, it's my fault."

With the numerous streams of support and guidance ABSA has and will have in place, its growth is inevitable and watching it spread its wings is all the more exciting.

SENATOR THE HON SIMON BIRMINGHAM

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
SENATOR FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Op-ed / Business View Magazine

Education – key to our future successes

The workplaces of today and the world of the future obviously need people with the right mix of skills for the times, the right attitudes and the right passion for their work. My job as Minister for Education and Training is to ensure we have the right mix of policies in place to foster the sorts of conditions that build those qualities in Australians.

While there are plenty of potential potholes and pitfalls in the road ahead for our education system, they are far outweighed by the opportunities in front of us.

Estimates show around three in four of the fastest-growing occupations need STEM skills – that is, skills in science, technology, engineering or mathematics. The Turnbull Government's National Innovation and Science Agenda and our reforms to schools are directly designed to grab that opportunity.

More and more Australians want specific, hands-on skills that will give them a foothold into a new industry or a boost up in their career. Our new VET Student Loans program clears away Labor's failed and scandal-plagued VET FEE-HELP scheme and better ties taxpayer loans and support to courses that will deliver students the skills they need for new or better jobs.

As the world globalises, so too does the hunt for the best and brightest minds with international businesses, research houses and innovation incubators looking to poach Australia's talent. We're making sure our students can learn from the best in the world but that we provide the right opportunities to keep that talent in Australia and to help them feed their ambitions.

Those are just some of the looming threats and opportunities on the horizon for Australia's education system. What's clear however is that we need to ensure our education system is integrated and connected all the way from the high chair to higher education.

Australia cannot hope to train plumbers and mechanics or graduate doctors and scientists if these connected foundations are not in place.

From early learning in child care settings, through schools, vocational education and training and on to higher education and research, an individual builds on their skills and learning.

Laying strong foundations

The global education research consensus is that access to early learning opportunities is key to giving students the best start in life and that early learning has flow-on effects throughout the rest of their education. It's why our child care reforms supports working parents and early childhood education - those early years have a profound impact on the cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of children.

Our reforms address concerns that the existing early childhood education and care model is inaccessible, inflexible and unaffordable. We want to ensure taxpayer support is better targeted to those families earning the least and working the most, while guaranteeing vulnerable children are given the right level of early education opportunities.

We know that if a child starts school behind the pack without the right interventions and supports to catch them up, they fall further and further behind as they grow older. That's why we want to improve early years' education and child care for all Australian children, regardless of income or location.

Preschool helps prepare children for the challenges ahead at school so that they can get the best possible start. We want all children to benefit and have included stronger targets to help ensure that federal funding for preschool increases opportunities for Indigenous children and children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

While the Government will always have the key role to play in delivering fair and affordable early childhood education and care opportunities, many businesses have seen the benefits their involvement can have. Many business leaders I've spoken with point out that their investment in child care and early learning for their employees' children delivers significant returns in the form of a happier workforce, increased productivity and longer-term, a smarter generation of potential hires.

The idea of education for all has a long and proud history in Australia and it's why the Turnbull Government has committed a record levels of funding for schools that will only continue to grow. Unfortunately while funding has been increasing, our students' performance in several local and international tests and benchmarks that came out last year, showed there was some stagnation and even decline in results.

Australia has schools filled with incredible educators, but those results worry policymakers like me, not to mention the families and parents across the country.

So while it's clear a strong level of funding is needed for our schools, and the OECD recognises we have that in Australia, we also need to focus on how that funding is used. Funding alone doesn't guarantee great schools where students can achieve their full potential.

That means ensuring our record and growing levels of investment are properly distributed according to need, but the Turnbull Government also wants to tie that money to states and territories implementing reforms that evidence shows will boost student outcomes.

Ultimately those reforms are about creating a smarter Australia. That means students who have the skills they need to succeed, but also students who one day will be industry leaders, business moguls, world changers and thought makers.

To that end, our Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes reforms build on an extensive amount of work we've done over the last three years in improving the training of new teachers, our de-cluttering of the National Curriculum and investment in modern skills like coding through the National Innovation and Science Agenda.

We are working to implement a range of evidence-based initiatives to support students by focusing on outcomes in literacy, numeracy and STEM subjects, helping lift teacher quality and better preparing our children for life after school. You can read more about those initiatives at www.education.gov.au

Pathways to success

Our secondary students need to develop the right skills to fill the jobs of the future.

Vocational education and training (VET) is set apart from other types of education by its close links with industry and its direct employment outcomes. Indeed, students can be confident that the skills they're developing will prepare them for not only the jobs of today but also those of the future.

The work-relevance and flexibility of VET courses appeals to a broad range of Australia's population. In 2015 alone, 4.5 million, or around one in four, adults were in the training system. This included secondary students in pre-apprenticeships, young adults combining work with part-time study, and mature students seeking

skills to advance their careers or opening up a different career path.

Most Australians would unfortunately be familiar with the stories about vulnerable students being ripped off or conned into signing up for courses they would never complete after Labor changed VET FEE-HELP and opened the floodgates to shonky providers. Once data emerged highlighting the issues with VET FEE-HELP, the Coalition acted to close Labor's loopholes. While the 20 measures our government put in place over 2015 and 2016 have stemmed some of the losses in VET FEE-HELP, with total 2016 loans projected to be hundreds of millions of dollars lower than in 2015, it is also clear that a completely new program was essential to weed out the rorters and restore credibility to VET.

The new safeguards we've put in place through our VET Student Loans program mean students can have confidence that the training they are receiving is aligned to workplace needs and strong employment outcomes, and is being delivered by training providers who have met the tougher benchmarks we have set. At the same time, taxpayers can have confidence the loans the Government is providing are for genuine students, learning skills that will contribute to the economy and increasing the likelihood the loans will be repaid.

One of the key changes has been to acknowledge that while our education system should include opportunities for students to pursue particular passions, taxpayers rightly expect that their loans for VET courses should be aligned to employment opportunities which is why we've worked with states and territories to determine which courses we will subsidise per the skills they have determined are in demand.

In the broader skills space, we are committed to creating more opportunities for Australians to complete apprenticeships. We know that this model of training, combining study with real world experience, produces job-ready graduates with the skills needed in modern workplaces. We're exploring a range of reforms to support students into and through apprenticeships, and to ensure the design of the system meets the needs of both students and employers.

For students that choose higher education to start a career, the Turnbull Government will this year detail reforms to ensure the system fosters excellence, accessibility and fairness but we also want to ensure it is sustainable for future generations. The costs to taxpayers of higher education, have, over recent years, grown dramatically. Since 2009, with the demand driven system, taxpayer funding for Commonwealth supported places in higher education has increased by 67 per cent as compared to 33 per cent growth in nominal GDP over the same period of time.

An important principle however is that while the Commonwealth is the principal funder of universities, that they retain their autonomy. We need to give them the

support but also the freedom to evolve and retain their competitive edge in an era of profound economic, industrial and technological change.

At stake is the wellbeing of 1.4 million students at 41 universities and 126 non-university higher education providers.

The biggest challenge that policymakers face is to ensure universities and higher education institutions are places for students to not only develop knowledge and fulfil their dreams, but also places that provide skills that students need to be job-ready. That means universities need to support and encourage students so they aren't just another number on a seat but so they acquire worthy qualifications that advance not just their own job prospects but the potential that they will become innovators or entrepreneurs who create many more jobs in the future. On the part of students it means giving them the tools to make wise choices by entering courses they aren't just passionate about, but ones with great prospects at the end of them.

Student experiences show there's a range of factors that lead to student attrition and it is going to take concerted efforts from educators and policymakers to reduce it. Universities and higher education providers in particular must take responsibility for the students they enrol because the attrition rate has hovered around 15 per cent for the last decade.

We've heard too many stories about students who have changed courses, dropped out because they made the wrong choices about what to study, students who didn't realise there were other entry pathways or who started a course with next to no idea of what they were signing themselves up for. With around one in three students not completing their studies within six years, we've taken action to ensure they are empowered to make choices about their courses that best suit them with an additional $8.1 million investment in the popular Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching website and we're working with the higher education sector to bring more transparency to the admissions processes so students know exactly what they're signing up for.

There are also a number of other specific initiatives we've been implementing to connect students with job opportunities, such as $28.2 million for a national PhD internship program so higher degree graduates get the right skills and qualifications for the jobs of the future. There will be 1400 internships over the next four years with a focus on greater engagement of women in STEM.

Through the National Innovation and Science Agenda we've also increased incentives for universities to collaborate with businesses to tackle real-world problems and deliver solutions that help Australian industries and families. For example, our changes to the Linkage Project scheme means when researchers and businesses come to the Government

with strong proposals that will clearly deliver real benefits for industry and Australians, we can green light them quickly. We sped up the processes for approving Linkage Projects that fund collaborations between researchers and businesses and we made changes so that grants could be made year-round so worthy projects don't need to wait months and months until applications open

Going forward, we will have a National Research Infrastructure Roadmap to underpin investment decisions over the next decade about which projects align to the national interest and should getting taxpayer support.

There's also much to be said for the value of our international reputation for education. Last year more than half a million students from over 200 countries made us the third most popular education destination in the world. February 2017 ABS figures revealed education exports earned a record $21.8 billion in 2016 – up 17 per cent on 2015. It means knowledge is the nation's third biggest export sector. It's why last year we launched the National Strategy for International Education 2025 to maintain Australia's role as a global leader in education, training and research by focusing the efforts of the policymakers, businesses and education institutions with a vested interest in the sector's future.

I hope my contribution has given you plenty to mull and think about in the context of how our education system is placed for the future. There is significant change afoot and our guiding principle has always been how do we secure our strengths and advantages and exploit the opportunities we can give for this and future generations in the education system.

Our reforms across the entire education and training system—from preschool through vocational education and training and higher education and post graduate qualifications—are all geared to meet the current and future needs of both students and our nation.

Finally, I always appreciate feedback and ideas so if you'd like to get in touch or to keep across the latest news in this space, you can find me on Facebook at www.facebook.com/simonbirmingham or Twitter at @birmo, or you can email me at minister@education.gov.au

Assumption College Connection, Community, Kilmore

Assumption College's quiet warmth resonates through its values and the way its staff speak of it. A proud Catholic day and boarding school in the growing commuter town of Kilmore, it encourages its students and staff to "inspire one another to shape the future with audacity and hope". On speaking with Principal Kate Fogarty and Head of Boarding Dick Morriss, the loyalty to heritage, development and community are clear as they talk of family spirit, personalised teaching and activities galore.

But first things first, the history. Assumption College was founded by the Marist Brothers as a boys school in 1893 and enrolled its first

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Assumption College

WHAT: A Catholic, year 7 to 12 co-educational, day and boarding school in Kilmore, Victoria

WHERE: Sutherland St, (PO Box 111) Kilmore VIC 3764

WEBSITE: assumption.vic.edu.au

boarders in 1901. The first female day students arrived in 1971, and the first female boarders in 1995. As Kilmore grew, so did Assumption. In the late '70s the school was home to more than 300 boarders. In recent years, due to reduced boarding demand, the college now has 72 boarders and an overall enrolment of more than 1200 students.

"About 25 years ago, the Brothers were looking to update resources for all their schools, to really redefine what it is to be Marist," explains Miss Fogarty. "We went back to the days of the founder, St Marcellin Champagnat, and those original five characteristics [presence, love of work, simplicity, family spirit and in the way of Mary], to help us define what is distinctive about Marist education."

To this day, it combines a spiritual identity with excellence in teaching and pastoral wellbeing. But what are the specifics that make this school the thriving ground for the next generation of successful millennials?

The essence of family

Over time, it was the spirit of family that the school really focused on;

from a nurturing family dynamic within the boarding community to trying to enhance the strong ties that students have with their own families. Through efficient use of technology and the power of social media, these ties are stronger than ever. There's a dedicated boarding page alongside the school's main Facebook page, while mobile technology ensures easy communication between parents, staff and students.

"One of the cutest moments we've seen was when a boarder's mother, who was on a community marketing visit with us, got a video from her son," says Miss Fogarty. "He'd just learnt how to use the washing machine! She and the other mums were so excited to be a part of this moment, and to see how much they could still be a part of their kids' day-to-day life."

After considerable discussion and reflection a few years back, the school downsized its boarding residence. The large, historic boarding house was closed in favour of three smaller houses, two for boys and one for girls, each accommodating 24 students and offering a more boutique experience.

"This decision came after we really homed in on those five characteristics. It became clear that we wanted to do more to develop the family life we wish to live and the familial culture

we wish to embody," said Director of Boarding Dick Morriss.

"Those big old dorm-style rooms weren't conducive to building the kinds of good relationships we want in the modern day. With this new way we could replicate the family dynamic more easily. This dynamic was further enhanced with a mix of ages in residences, and students having their own rooms rather than sleeping in dorms.

"It was a brave decision to close the big boarding house; we were full and doing well," Miss Fogarty continued, "and yet, we favoured a style of boarding that sat more comfortably with our values, and aimed to produce the kind of young adults we think the world needs."

A spotlight on wellbeing

These young adults are supported not just academically but developmentally too. They take part in many community and charitable projects, and a core example of nurturing their emotional wellbeing is through the school's restorative practices: methods used to bring a pupil back into the mainstream student community, after they have, perhaps, through their behaviour lost the trust of others.

"We don't see punitive consequences as a good way of

helping young adults to grow into the best version of themselves," said Miss Fogarty.

"We involve them in conversation and reflection on how their behaviour has impacted others, and then we help them to find a way to seek a better relationship, or, in fact, gain forgiveness."

Miss Fogarty and Mr Morriss believe this approach is a great way to help students grow into better adults. Such restorative practices are used throughout the school community. With people living so closely together, especially adolescents with their quirks and challenges, knowing that the school has a safety net of discussion and calm consideration creates a more conducive environment for people to feel respected and valued.

Another thing that separates Assumption's boarding program from others is that its boarding staff live onsite. When Assumption talks of its boarding community, it talks of its student, their families and its staff. Time spent with, and dedication to, students by staff is what helps to deliver that real and rare sense of family.

"Our staff would not move their entire family onsite unless they felt living in a boarding residence would be a iovful experience," said Mr Morriss.

And Miss Fogarty added: "We offer them great support, with opportunities to lead and be part of decision making. Our boarding staff get all the professional learning that our day staff receive, alongside regular pastoral care courses to help them develop and enable them to do their jobs in the best way possible."

Staying true to its roots

In explaining how the school is staying true to its Marist and rural roots, Miss Fogarty returned to the downsizing of the boarding facilities, which was a large financial investment for the school, one which she felt was hugely courageous: "It just showed that we're not just about taking kids because we can, but because we're staying true to our values and to the rural families we have always served."

The school has even held back from going after the international market as many boarding schools have and has stayed true to the original

one size doesn't fit all

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Kathryn Fogarty - Principal

Kate Fogarty is steeped in the Marist tradition. Not only was she educated by the Marist Brothers in Sale, after her schooling she embarked on a teaching career and has taught in Marist schools across Australia.

While she still teaches, in recent years Miss Fogarty has moved into educational leadership. She is the first female principal of Assumption College, Kilmore, a Marist school, founded in 1893.

'I have been formed in the Marist tradition, having been educated in and worked in Marist schools and other ministries in Victoria and the Northern Territory. I have been very fortunate to have worked at some wonderful schools, where I was mentored by fabulous Marists, brothers and lay,' she said.

Miss Fogarty is well credentialed, having a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Melbourne, two master's degrees (Theology and Education) from the Australian Catholic University, and a third Master's in Instructional Leadership. She also has post-graduate diplomas of Religious Education and Education Law.

'Social justice is a key part of the Marist tradition, as it is in Catholic education generally,' Miss Fogarty said.

'Like many teachers in Catholic schools, I have a keen interest in educating for social justice, which for me personally includes carrying on the spirit of St Marcellin Champagnat (who founded the Marist Brothers) and his commitment to educating young people, so that they might flourish and bring their best to the world.'

boarding purpose: so that students from remote communities, ones that couldn't get a Catholic education, could. The college also welcomes students of other faiths.

"It's our raison d'être says Miss Fogarty "We're committed to doing that, and committed to doing that well. Our boarding is about the kids and for the kids. It's not about making money, or providing easy options. It's genuinely providing the best experience for these kids that have to be away from their homes."

In this same light, the school provides additional tutoring to its boarders during evening study which, although costly to the boarding program, persists because of its great results. The boarders are after all doing better academically than their day peers.

Growing through collaboration

Although the school is certain in its values, it knows that it can only grow through learning and changing. It is with this in mind that Assumption makes full use of its Marist backdrop. Through its close ties with 12 Australian Marist owned and governed secondary schools, it draws extensively on their wealth and expertise.

"They're our sworn sporting enemies, our sister schools. Actually, later in the years we're hosting a

During the ACK First XVIII vote count in 2016 (Dick Morriss is in back row far right).

Richard Joseph Morriss Director of Boarding

Dick, while a Boarder, announced that he wanted to be the Boarding Master one day. After a very successfully teaching and administration career in education spanning 15 years Dick moved permanently into Residential Care after completing a Graduate Certificate in Residential Care. His first appointment was Director of Boarding at Saint Augustine's Marist College in Cairns where in eight years the program went from 126 to 215 boarders. His next position was at Xavier College in Melbourne, his alma mater. Currently at Assumption College, Kilmore and back with the Marists and now in his 14th year in this role working in both boys and co-ed boarding programs Dick can be described as a very experienced and passionate advocate for all that is related to boarding.

conference for all Marist sporting schools through Australia," explained Mr Morriss. We also join forces with our fellow Marist schools in leadership projects.

For Assumption, being part of the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA), the biggest association of boarding schools in Australia, means they also have a great resource to draw on Through sharing in a wealth of expertise, what they're learning and best practices, they can always improve and stay current.

Looking ahead

It is perhaps unsurprising that Assumption has a significant waiting list. Indeed, growth in the northern suburbs is putting additional pressure on the school to find places for more students. It has done substantial building work in the past seven to eight years which will help to accommodate this extra influx, and Miss Fogarty says that they'll take on one more stream of students in 2020, but by 2024, the school will be at capacity at around the 1600-1700 mark.

"We're very blessed with the huge amount of space we have and we've done some great planning in anticipation of the growth that's coming," she said.

"No matter, we would never grow the school until we feel we're in the right place to do so, and we're certain that it won't affect the fabulous culture we have."

Miss Fogarty and Mr Morriss believe that the biggest challenge facing them and the school is to respond to the growing awareness that traditional schools don't always produce young adults with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in modern workplaces. They have and will continue to balance the needs of student seeking excellence in academia, with the resilience and life skills that workplaces need from young people. Miss Fogarty finds the real tension in looking at current programs, is considering what is life giving to students for their future: "We have academic rigour, but we also have a more holistic approach. It's not just about our students having good marks, but about them having purpose, resilience and love in their hearts.

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Brisbane Grammar School

Educating generations of 'grammar gentlemen'

Brisbane Grammar School is a veritable haven for high achieving young men in the state of Queensland. Founded in 1868 and opening its doors a year later, it has an almost 150-year history of housing and educating generations of Australia's future leaders and visionaries.

Underpinned by values of endeavour, learning, respect, leadership and community, the Brisbane Grammar School purpose is to educate boys by nurturing their intellectual, physical, and emotional wellbeing to become thoughtful, confident men of character who contribute to their communities. Through a

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Brisbane Grammar School

WHAT: A non-denominational boys school for boarders and day students from Years 5 to 12

WHERE: 24 Gregory Terrace, Spring Hill QLD 4000, Australia

WEBSITE: brisbanegrammar.com

longstanding commitment to providing "a broad liberal education", the school seeks to ensure students are best prepared for life beyond the school gates.

Almost from its opening, Brisbane Grammar School has offered boarding to its students. With 1700 students and 100 boarders, the school combines development and educational innovation with a palpable sense of history and traditions. Its beautiful campus is a testament to this; striking a balance of historical structures with state-of the-art educational and sporting facilities.

2018 will be a momentous year for the school – it celebrates its 150-year anniversary. As a part of our 2017 'Best Managed Schools' series, we spoke with David Carroll and Berian Williams-Jones, Deputy Headmaster Students and Director of Boarding respectively. They helped us understand a little bit about what has made this institution so resilient, and also shed some light on the school's enduring uniqueness and plans for the future.

All-round excellence

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trying to encourage our boys to become all-rounders," explains Carroll.

"What an all-rounder looks like for us is someone that works hard, but also participates in our sporting, cultural, and public purpose programs."

In the boarding house it's in the outstanding programs that the school prides itself on in terms of nurturing bright minds. Williams-Jones, in his role as Director of Boarding, focuses specifically on the school's boarders as he explains the five strands of the school's 'enrichment' programs.

Educational enrichment

Boarders are given specialist teaching over the course of the year, which in essence means that every boarder gets an extra week of teaching compared to that of their day boy cohort peer group.

"It offers further support for boarders in terms of supervision, routines, study habits and one-to-one assistance from in-house tutors," adds Williams-Jones.

Activities Enrichment

The activities enrichment program for boarders runs seven days a week. Students have quite a diverse pick of activities that go well beyond the classroom, including beach sports, bushwalking, paintballing, sporting competitions and on rare occasions, you may well see some young crooners singing their hearts out at a Sat-

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urday-night in-house X Factor competition.

The school recognises that its students' talents will be of a diverse nature and believes in the importance of providing them with a specialised and assorted activities program to draw out these varying talents.

Life skills

The life skills program gives boarders the skills they need to meet the challenges of everyday modern life. They're graced with the teachings of first aid, cookery and basic household chores, like ironing and lawn mowing.

Public Purpose

The school's Public Purpose Program provides boys with a real sense of purpose and fulfilment. Boarders and day pupils help those that are homeless or in transition. At the same time, boys understand the fortunate position they are in to be able to make that difference.

Leadership

The final strand of the school's enrichment initiative is its leadership program. Across the school, leadership is crucial, demonstrated in the prefect structure of its class seniors. While in the boarding house, there are seven

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boys with similar status to the school prefects.

"We also have leaders within each of our 10 house families, all of whom set the all-important tone for the junior boarders," Williams-Jones continues.

"We like to try to look for opportunities for each boy to be in charge. We feel it essential that each boy gains a meaningful understanding of what it is to be a leader."

Connections and progress

While certainly a leading school in Queensland and Australia, it is clear that there is little egotism in its attitude. Carroll explains to us the school's refreshing outlook, an outlook which inevitably spurs it on to continuing excellence:

"We are proud of what our students achieve at school and in their lives after graduation, but we are always working to do things better."

Carroll clarifies that the school achieves this through a persistently collaborative atmosphere. By motivating its staff through professional development, the school always sees the positive trickledown effects befall its students.

The other side to this collaborative

Anthony Micallef
Headmaster

Anthony is the 12th Headmaster of Brisbane Grammar School, commencing at the beginning of 2014. For the past 20 years he has served the School in a number of key management roles. Anthony has been instrumental in developing student-related programs, structures, and policies, most significantly in the areas of student leadership, personal development curriculum, student services, community service, boarding, and outdoor education. He combines his strong academic, pastoral, and sporting background with a collaborative style of leadership, and an ardent belief in creating an inclusive educational environment where individual strengths can be encouraged and nurtured.

David Carroll
Deputy Headmaster - Students

David joined the staff at Brisbane Grammar School at the start of 2014. He has held senior leadership positions including Acting Headmaster, Acting Deputy Headmaster, and Dean of Students, for 15 years in two GPS boys' schools and one AIC Boys school in Brisbane. David has established a reputation for facilitating relational student wellbeing programs with a focus on the individual care of students, as well as the development of a community atmosphere. As well as being an experienced teacher and a pastoral leader, he has also coached cricket, rugby, and tennis at a high level in other GPS/AIC schools.

Berian Williams-Jones
Director of Boarding

Berian was appointed Director of Boarding at Brisbane Grammar in 2016. His career spanned many senior leadership positions closer to his native Wales, including Head of Boarding at school leading a community of more than 300 students. A year spent teaching at The Southport School and a period of study, funded by a Travelling Fellowship from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, sowed the seed for migrating to Australia. In 2015 he took up the post of Head of Boarding at Gippsland Grammar School in Victoria, and served on the Victorian board of the Australian Boarding Schools Association, before moving to Queensland.

culture is that the school works closely with parents and students. Carroll is keen to emphasise that through such close relationships, the school can better itself in enriching its students' education and lives: "A tripartite relationship that has the student at its focus, is at the core of who we are as a school."

The school recognises the value people place on word of mouth, especially in boarding, with the satisfaction of its current parents playing an important role in continued growth.

Williams-Jones is quick to explain: "I believe that what sells boarding is satisfied students and parents. Putting our current parents at the heart of our development and ensuring top quality experiences, is why we continue to see families eager to join Brisbane Grammar School, and more specifically the school's boarding community."

In terms of physical developments, the constantly-evolving school is moving ahead with the exciting state-of-the-art STEAM – science, technology, engineering, art and maths – precinct. This will complement The Lilley Centre, completed in 2010, which was driven by a vision to create powerful new 21st century learning experiences for students.

The blessings of boarding

The nature of boarding has changed considerably over the past 30 years. While many boys continue to board for geographic reasons, others actually live near the school. In fact, the school's closest boarder lives 250m away.

"We're seeing the trend of students who live close by and could be day students, but instead attend the school as boarders to gain the many additional benefits. Now it's a decision and an option parents are taking because of the programs that we offer," affirmed Williams-Jones.

Certainly a significant shift in recent years has been the school's decision to open its doors to international students. There are around half a dozen international students currently boarding alongside the more traditional country students. The school also offers temporary boarding places for families who may have to travel for their work for example, and so give their sons a home through the Brisbane Grammar School boarding facilities. In all, the school has rolled with the natural progression its boarding has taken, an attitude which has given life to the varied and diversified nature of its boarding house.

In the same breath, the school has

a ‘closing-the-gap’ committee focused on enhancing reconciliation. It has three boarders who earned indigenous scholarships through the school’s Cape York Leadership Program, while another three indigenous boys are in the house through other bursary style programs.

A setting that inspires

What truly stood out when speaking to the pair, was the supportive, nurturing environment the school places around its students. The school takes its five values of learning, endeavour, respect, community and leadership, and translates them into expectations.

“House rules aren’t the way we want to run the boarding house; we think expectations bring a better result,” said Williams-Jones.

“Just this term we introduced a positive behaviour framework to the boys, and it will be a means by which we can recognise, acknowledge and reward behaviour which we think contributes positively to towards the development of the community.”

As our conversation comes to a close, it’s clear that it is in the values of the school, and passion the staff have for it that will bring out the best in its students. This is characterised beautifully in Carroll’s parting words to us:

“Student wellbeing is a key part of every Brisbane Grammar School boy’s journey. Supporting our students is really, really important here.”

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Calrossy Anglican School

Connections, Community and Individualism

Since 1919, Calrossy Anglican School has been educating young ladies of secondary school age in the warm planes of rural Australia. However, its history is not a singular one. It has strands to it and tells a tale of growth and integration. From its humble beginning as the 'Tamworth Church of England Girls' School', the institution grew strong and connected, and in 2006 amalgamated with subsequent schools that had developed within the community of Tamworth. It welcomed into its fold a primary school and a boys' secondary school, facilitating students of all genders and ages to

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Calrossy Anglican School

WHAT: Single sex day and boarding for Secondary Girls and Secondary Boys from Year 7-10, with Coeducational classes for senior students.

WHERE: 140 Brisbane St, East Tamworth NSW 2340, Australia

WEBSITE: calrossy.nsw.edu.au

prosper in education and life. Calrossy now offers a unique "diamond school" model of education, with a co-educational primary, single sex Secondary Girls and Boys in Year 7 to 10, before the students combine together in classes in Years 11 and 12. It allows Calrossy to still offer a one-stop shop for parents, that can target its teaching to best suit each gender, before they come back together as more mature students for the reality of a co-educational world beyond school. Calrossy calls it the "diamond school advantage."

It is a model that is working. The number of boarders has grown from around 40 to 50 pupils in the days Principal David Smith was a young man in Tamworth, to the present day range of 230 young girls and boys. Boarders from Year 7-12 are spread out over four campuses, and make up almost a third of the schools' secondary students. Indeed, certain years even have a waiting list for boarding, no doubt spurred by not only the school's excellent academics, but the 'unique experience' it prides itself on providing to its young scholars.

Calrossy unquestionably has a major role to play in helping to raise

Principal, Mr David Smith

David Smith is the new Principal of Calrossy, joining the school in 2017. Prior to this he had various leadership roles in Sydney boarding and day schools including Barker College, The King's School and St Andrew's Cathedral School. He has worked as a Chaplain, a Primary teacher and as a Secondary teacher of English. Married to Julie with three adult daughters, David spent his youth in Tamworth and North-West NSW and is very familiar with quality schooling in a regional setting. He is delighted to be involved in a boarding community and indicated that this was one of the attractions when applying for the Principal position. "Secondary boarding for both boys and girls is integral to the fabric of Calrossy and we are strongly committed to providing a supportive, flexible and nurturing 'home away from home' for our resident students. It is very much part of the DNA of the school. Our boarding staff go out of their way to make Calrossy 'Home' and the close connection with the rural community enriches us all".

Head of Boarding, Mrs Courtney Coe

Courtney has been with Calrossy Anglican School since 1999 and as Head of Boarding since 2006. She has had the privilege during the past 10 years of leading Boarding as we have had an amalgamation of schools, been an integral part in developing our boarding community to provide boarding opportunities for both girls and boys, acquired new facilities and been involved with planning for the future needs and requirements for boarding students. Courtney is married with 2 young children.

this cohort of rural boarders. After all, these kids grow up within its walls from Monday through to Friday, if not all seven days of the week during the most impressionable era of their lives. So then, what is this 'unique experience it provides'? And, what steps does it take to accommodate these kids the best it can? What of the culture and support it provides to help assure their future?

We spoke to Mr Smith alongside the school's Head of Boarding, Courtney Coe, to gain some understanding and insight into the operations and values of this religious regional school. We explored how the school connects its boarders with a keen sense of self, and instils in them its Christian values, so that they may flourish academically and personally to prepare for the roads ahead. The diverse perspectives of the Principal, who joined as recently as a few months ago, and Mrs Coe who has a longstanding history with the school, has paved the way for a fresh outlook as well as a learned interpretation of the aspirational institution.

Brains on sticks

"Kids are more than brains on sticks," Mr Smith exclaims. And while this statement is teeming with hints of the absurd, it also goes straight to

School partnerships of the future

Technological advancements are having a positive impact on almost every aspect of school life - from the classroom through to behind-the-scenes administration areas. Parents, guardians and students want easier and more convenient ways to interact with their school, whether to pay tuition fees, buy school uniforms or even school lunches.

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the core of what stands out the most in the assertions of Calrossy's new Principal and its Head of Boarding.

Whilst the school's academics are by far the best in its part of the state, for both boarding and day students, there is something more it implants in them.

"We want them to be citizens of the world, compassionate, caring," says Mr Smith.

Mrs Coe avows one of the school's focuses being to look at the unique need of each child:

"Be it from getting them on programs for activities they love, to understanding and accommodating their individual learning needs. We acknowledge all individuals as just that, individuals."

With performance related stress and pressures facing all students, the school is very careful of measuring a child's worth, solely by how well they do at school. Instead, as well as their raising academics, it helps its kids to define their special passions, strengthen their interpersonal connections and grow their independence.

The ties that bind

The school's approach is four fold in terms of interlocking a strong

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community culture, Christian values and an understanding environment. It strengthens the bonds with not only its students, but also with their families and the Calrossy staff appointed to watch out for them. This is in addition to strengthening its presence within the community.

Students

"One of the things I'm focusing on in my time as Principal is to listen, and hear and learn," says Mr Smith, and indeed, he asserts great importance on getting to know the students and understanding things from their perspective before making any ensuing changes. Such a remarkable and rather adaptable attitude is a stark contrast to the stereotypical rigidity that comes with the old fashioned image of boarding schools.

Furthermore, unlike many boarding schools, Calrossy maintains a system where no child stays in the same room each term. A strong move to entrench advanced social skills in students, and indeed a great way to help them to enjoy a varied social circle, much outside of the cliquey mentality – the school's value of inclusivity coming strongly into play.

Academically, and for Year 12 boarders in particular, individual rooms are provided for studying, further supporting the intellectual advancement many of them so feverishly seek.

The bonds Calrossy holds with the students, the bonds so closely linked to the success of the boarding programme, include staff whose main and sole focus is the boarders and their wellbeing. These staff nurture that crucial close and understanding relationship with boarders to ensure their welfare and that their needs are met. The essence of family is undeniably strong and the staff bask in the mealtimes that resemble a family dinnertime of sorts. This familial feeling comes to life in the light chatter of spirited children, and the moments

taken to show appreciation for all that they have. Even the rooms are less dorm-like, and are moreso spaces for the young residents to make their own.

Community

As for the community at large, the school absolutely encourages and indeed enables its kids to integrate into the surrounding town.

"We don't have a school-centric sort of view," explains Mr Smith, and as such, many kids take part in community sport. In addition, the school enables kids to indulge in their particular interests through town classes (archery anyone?) and many of the older students even have external part-time jobs. In a rural area like Tamworth, the spirit of networking and connecting with the community is already strong, which is nothing short of providence for Calrossy, a school which values inclusiveness at all costs.

The school's wellbeing program, that Mrs Coe works on with the Leader of Wellbeing for boarders, combines the child's individuality with the prospect of what the child can offer to the wider community. The program looks at the needs of each age group and gender, and provides them with a specific value for them to focus on each term. This includes values like resilience or service, and aids in bolstering the students' ethics and ideals. Some examples include kids knocking on doors for Red Cross, raising the money to sponsor children in Uganda, and more locally, being involved in fundraising for a local helicopter organisation, a service that has irrefutably been a great asset to the community in the wake of natural disasters and bushfires.

Within the smaller ecosystem of the school's community, the boarders are part of mentoring programs to younger students, they also partake in a buddy system and even give some face time through serving breakfast to the youngsters.

Being part of a rural community, the school even has its own cattle club and equestrian program involving the grooming and training of animals. Many of its students do after all have a highly rural background and potentially, a rural future. This way, the school can ensure they train them with the experience they need. "Honestly though, this is enjoyable for most of our kids. Our future lawyers and doctors

love these programs just as much, and from this they learn the art of caring and patience," says Mr Smith.

Families

Alongside the relationships with the pupils and the community, the school strives to keep families involved as much as possible. "We know there's nothing like real family and so we try to keep these links strong," Mr Smith maintains. Each term, the school has a leave weekend where the kids

can go home. Also, unusually but inspiringly, the school sometimes makes every effort to attend events in some of its students' hometown, as a lot of the time, parents cannot afford the time to attend events at the school itself.

In boarding they maintain contact with all families on a regular basis, understanding the massive commitment these families make in leaving their children in the hands of Calrossy. All boarding staff are hugely accessible, and are available to contact throughout day. This no doubt gives that essential peace of mind to concerned parents.

"That's been a nice part of the boarding situation here – the time we have for people," Mrs Coe tells us.

Staff

Calrossy employs 240 staff, where half are teachers and half are in support and operations roles. A good number of these support and operations staff are involved with boarding, while many of the teachers kindly volunteer their own time to provide afterschool tutoring to many of the students. Calrossy's staff are likewise part of the tight-knit Calrossy family, where their wellbeing is as important as the wellbeing of the students they watch over.

The school also makes sure its staff are given extensive training to broaden their personal and professional development to ensure competency and growth. One example? Calrossy is a part of the Australian Boarding Schools Association and requires its staff to complete the association's "Duty Of Care" certificate.

For what lies ahead

As a Christian school, Calrossy is keenly aware of the need to maintain its relevance in an increasingly secular western world. Technology

is one of the things at the forefront of maintaining this relevance. Calrossy students have been virtually connecting with the local Mayor and even with museums in Europe to gain an interactive and wider worldview.

"We're changing practice away from the norm of the teacher at the front sprouting information to the uninterested. We're helping children to access a whole, exiting world of information," states Mr Smith.

But there's also the challenges that come through dealing with real people and navigating real interactions. As such, the school endeavors that its boys and girls know how to interact maturely, to make levelheaded decisions, and to act with integrity and caring.

"These children need to be wise as well as smart," opines Mr Smith. "Our goal is to have happy, resilient, rounded adults at the end of it all. Thoughtful caring people, who are responsible towards the world at large, and towards each other."

Calrossy's staff realise that the world they grew up in is disappearing rapidly. Research says that the children of today are going to have three or four different careers. This is in addition to the national if not global crisis of depression amongst younger people. With these boys and girls facing the usual life challenges, as well as the challenges of an incessantly changing future, Calrossy upholds the weight of equipping pupils for the outside world, and certainly, to become active members of it.

"Together with academic excellence, the key point of difference is the school's personable and caring nature. As a Christian school, this is something we hold dear," says the Principal. "That personal care and connection is deeply important. Our affordability and the flexibility of our boarding are simple added benefits."

And as for how Mr Smith expects the school to keep growing and attracting talent, which for a rural school, it has already done remarkably well:

"We try to build awareness through regional magazines, but we're not going to splash hundreds of thousands on TV ads etc. It is satisfied parents who are our most effective marketing."

It is clear to see that Calrossy provides its students with 'roots' if you like, a framework that's incredibly supportive and uplifting. It gives its student the tools to be happy and fulfilled. Everything the school does is not for its own advantage, not for making waves on the league tables (which it does anyway), but for the advantage of the students themselves, to give them the smarts and the strength for the life that is unfolding for them.

"We're really passionate, and that's one of the reason why our students are passionate too," states Mr Smith.

And how does he feel after coming back to Tamworth following two decades spent in Sydney? He informs us hilariously:

"We had to buy a new ram recently. This is a bit out of my comfort zone, but that's a part of the fantastic uniqueness of our situation here. Working in a great school, in the country, is a huge privilege!"

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Canberra Grammar Sch
A culture of caring

History and facts about school

Rooted in Australia's capital city, Canberra Grammar School (CGS) was established in 1928 after existing as various different schools since way back in 1902. Boarding was available at the independent Anglican school since the 1930s, although while girls were accepted into the school in 1975s, boarding is currently only available for boys, but there are plans to extend this offering to girls.

CGS has always been a proud boarding school, acknowledging the responsibility and commitment it takes to nurture students who are entrusted to its care. With a vibrant community of students from Canberra, New South Wales an overseas, boarding is central

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Canberra Grammar School

WHAT: An independent, day and boarding school for boys and girls, located in Red Hill, a suburb of Canberra, the capital of Australia.

WHERE: 40 Monaro Cres, Red Hill ACT 2603, Australia

WEBSITE: cgs.act.edu.au

to the CGS community. The school currently offers boarding care to around 90 students, and we spoke with Gareth Downey, Head of Boarding, about boarding at the school, where it's heading, and his time there.

A life of variety

Even in the three years he'd been there, Downey has seen the variety of boarders change as folk from different part of the country, and indeed, different parts of the world make their way to CGS. This has contributed hugely to the diverse, nurturing environment the school has cultivated. It has boarders from Southeast Asia, the Middle East, rural and coastal Australia and many more. Some students only live within one to two hours' drive from Canberra, but are just that little bit further out to commute every day, and so take advantage of the CGS boarding facilities.

"We've also noticed a growth in the last three years of student coming in from Sydney. At the end of last year we peaked, we had 10 students from Sydney," Downey tells us. This is particularly interesting because these students are leaving a large city, with a large number of highly regarded and prestigious schools, in favour of CGS.

"I think a lot of that is about the fact that we're not in Sydney, if that makes

sense, trying to remove students from that sort of environment," he adds.

Similarly, the school's boarding has attracted students from the southern isles, students who have traditionally gone north to Sydney for school. The school is even home to military kids from within Canberra, but whose family may be posted far away.

"Many go on postings in three year cycles, and they want their children to stay in Canberra, and finish their education at a quality school."

To take that diversity a step further, Downey did confirm that the school becoming fully coeducational was a big strategic plan for the school.

"Last year, the school extended the range of year groups that girls could join in the junior school, and this year [2017] we've had girls joining us in year seven and year 11, so we've begun the transition into coeducation. We don't have the boarding facilities yet and we're still in the planning stages, but we intend to have girls boarding as well."

Going viral

Boarding is currently at its full capacity, and Downey attributes interest in the School's boarding facilities to a number of factors; "The school, a number of years ago did not have the same strength when it came to boarding numbers. In the last three to four years we've really increased that, now we have a waiting list for boarding which is a terrific position to be in."

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So where does this assortment of interest come from? The school's inroads have come from not only its strategic marketing, but also the word of mouth that happens when students and their parents who feel they've been well looked after, start to spread the word. It's word of mouth that Downey has seen to be the most powerful marketing force for Canberra Grammar School:

"When a parent is considering sending their child to boarding school, it's a pretty major decision. The school they choose and the care and attention that's given at the school. It's a big deal to send your child away like that, and often, for many, thousands of kilometres away."

For these families, to put their kids into someone else's care, and then those people to make decisions the parents usually make, Downey has found that word of mouth from trusted family/friends/acquaintances, has definitely been the strongest marketing driver.

Patterns emerge where a boarder comes from an area new to Canberra Grammar. Downey explains that the school did a little bit of analysis on where its boarders come from.

"For example, if we had never had any boarding students enrolled from a particular town in rural New South Wales, and a student from that town enrolled, we saw a sudden spike in enrolments from that same town. From there, we get one student, then all of a sudden we get three, four or five. It's all word of mouth, and parents sharing their positive stories with their friends and family." For Downey, this kind of success comes not solely from word of mouth though. It's the strategic stages it takes from converting this interest into actual pupils that want to attend. He works with marketing to produce promotions, goes through the usual meet and greets on open days, sporting expos and national and international boarding expos.

"I guess that meeting them and talking to them and showing them around is the best form of marketing," says Downey, adding "It's the highest conversion rate, whereas when you're using above the line marketing strategies, like ads, it's very difficult to know how successful it is."

The school had a few success stories from Hong Kong, then all of a sudden it had students trickling in from there.

"You get this sort of an almost viral thing happening where you can see ground zero, this middle area where we've been successful, and then it spreads from there."

Its success is in the numbers. Boarding is full, and it has waiting lists for year groups that haven't even yet started at the school. Being in this kind of strong position opens the school up to financial and academic planning.

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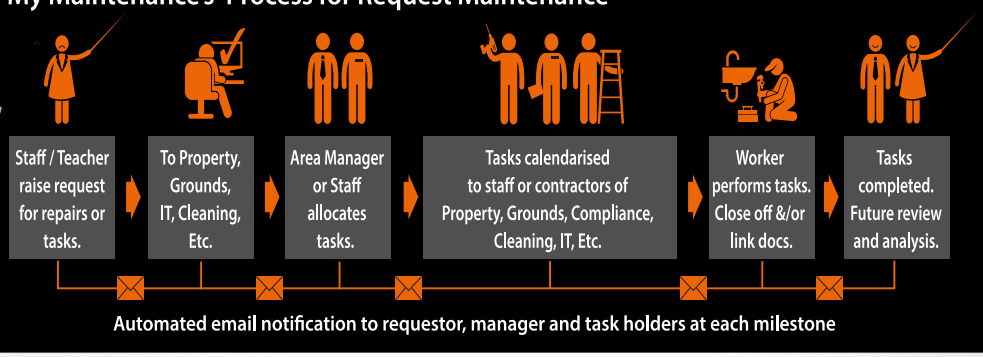

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Genuine support

Another major focus for CGS Boarding, is developing cross-generational relationships between the students. Specifically, having older students leading, mentoring and guiding the younger ones. Not just in an academic sense, but in their conduct and their behaviour, connecting them through sports training, and other similar program schemes.

Downey explained: “We’re trying to get that feeling that the older students aren’t in charge because of some ancient kind of hierarchy, but that they’re there to lead by example.”

And for the staff it’s the same. The school tries to make sure that everything they do is from that position of caring for students, and not just for the sake of keeping them in check. Trying to make the boarding environment a positive one is one of the hardest things for all boarding institutions. This is a place where students spend more time with staff than at home.

“Thirty-seven to thirty-eight weeks a year, they’re a boarder, fourteen to fifteen they’re at home,” Downey tells us.

“It’s hard work, and it’s intense, but we’re doing our best to create an atmosphere of homeliness and comfort and an environment which feels open and caring not necessarily an institution.”

The school also encourages its students to encompass this open, caring culture into their own natures and

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Our business is built on the relationships we form through service and integrity. Having established our working relationship with Canberra Grammar over 40 years ago, we know and understand the needs and requirements of the school and work closely with the fantastic facilities staff to achieve positive outcomes every time.
It has been an absolute pleasure to have dealt with Canberra Grammar over the last 40 years, we wish the school all the best in its future endeavours, and we look forward to servicing the school well in to the future.

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behaviours, and in the things they do, and CGS' variety of service programs help them achieve this. From dog walking and charity fundraising events, to community volunteering and helping the aged and those with learning support needs.

"There's a strong sense of giving something back that I really want to continue to grow. It's all about being part of a caring community, and about caring what happening around us in the local community. We're always looking for ways for our students to contribute."

Facilities and support

As a part of its caring, nurturing outlook, the school's facilities look after the students' wellbeing as much as their academia.

The school has two physical buildings that its 90 boarders live in, and all boarding staff are fully responsible for the wellbeing of these students. This encompasses all academic needs, pastoral needs, their health needs, making sure they're well and comfortable.

Downey's network of staff is tight-knit and varied. He has a team with some direct reports, some auxiliary staff, and contract staff that provide additional support. The catering arm is an external provider, the relationship for which Downey manages. There are also six resident tutors that live within the boarding community to provide

Gareth Downey, Head of Boarding

Mr Gareth Downey started at Canberra Grammar School as the Assistant Head of Boarding in 2014, and shortly after moved to the role of Head of Boarding. He was educated at the University of York where he obtained his Bachelor of Science, and then later completed his Graduate Diploma in Education at the University of Technology Sydney.

Gareth grew up in North Yorkshire and moved to Australia in 2001 and met his wife soon after. Before joining CGS, Gareth also spent time at the Cranbook School in Bellevue Hill, Sydney, as a Housemaster. He had a strong passion for cycling, but switched to rugby in his late teens, only to re-take up cycling after retiring from rugby and commuting in Sydney every day for seven years, before moving to Canberra.

Dr Justin Garrick, Head of School

Dr Justin Garrick became Head of Canberra Grammar School in 2011. He was educated at Sydney Grammar School and Sydney University, where he graduated with first class honours in English Literature. Dr Garrick also has a master's degree in Education from the University of New England.

He undertook his PhD as a Cambridge Australia Scholar at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and he has an MBA from the University of London.

He has taught at Sydney Grammar School, St Paul's School in London, Oundle School and Wellington College, UK, where he was Head of English and then Deputy (Academic) prior to joining Canberra Grammar School.

after-hours care to students, there are clinic staff and three registered nurses who provide a great deal of care to the boarders (as well as the day students.)

"We make up 10% of school population, but take up more than half the clinic time," Downey states "This is because we provide every level of care. From if they stay away from school sick, through to calling specialists for sporting injuries and things like that. So yeah, we've got quite a big team that surrounds these boys, and I manage to coordinated all of that and still manage to teach chemistry too."

One of things Canberra Grammar of-

fers that often other boarding schools don't, is that the majority of its students have single room which is actually quite uncommon. Where these schools do have single room, it's usually just for those in year 12. This does depends on the mix of year groups and the number of students, but most of Canberra Grammar's year nine and upward boarding population have their own rooms, and the few that don't, share with just one other person. Students avoid the stereotypical boarding style dormitories, and rest easy in their single or double rooms. There are separate study spaces, private areas to change, storage, Wi-Fi, common areas for group and private study, relaxation areas, three common rooms, the clinic and a traditional old dining hall with a very modern kitchen attached to it.

It's not just these areas that make up day-to-day life for the boarders. Entertainment-wise, the school lets boarders make use of school swimming pools and the gymnasium and it has provided things like table tennis table and pool table. Simple touches, but representative of the enjoyable, homely living environment, atmosphere and culture the school is trying to create through its boarding.

Don't lose it

"I strongly believe that as soon as you think you've got everything sorted, that's the time you start to lose your edge. Here, we're in a state of constantly trying to do things the best way we can for our students," admits Downey. Through regular surveys, parents committees, staff development and open channels for feedback, the school is always comfortable uncomfortable with itself, and always happy to change and adapt to continue on its steady, successful path through boarding excellence.

An inclusive culture and community that supports individual development

Canberra Grammar School is an Independent Anglican School offering outstanding academic education, co-curricular opportunities and pastoral care to day and boarding students of all backgrounds and faiths within a community guided by Christian values. The School is in the process of becoming fully co-educational. It educates boys from Pre-School to Year 12 and is currently extending its offering to girls, who have been educated in the Primary School since 1975 and who will now be represented across the range of School life by 2020.

The School respects and nurtures all students as individuals, seeking to inspire, support and celebrate the efforts of all in realising their intellectual, spiritual, cultural, social and physical aspirations. Building on the professional expertise of its staff, the commitment of its community and the resources of the nation's capital, Canberra Grammar School aims to be the most dynamic and distinctive centre of learning in Australia.

Canberra Grammar School students present themselves with an engaging mixture of openness, sincerity and passion. Be it in classrooms, in the boarding houses, in orchestras, on stage, on the sporting field or in Chapel, they are enthusiastic and determined; they care for each other and they aspire to the highest standards in education. It is the School's goal that not only each student, but each parent too, feels a sense of belonging to the School community, and that our students have the opportunity and support for personal, social, academic and spiritual growth.

Each individual student is treated with a great amount of care and consideration, and the School believes children need an environment that encourages them to seek out academics and social relationships, to find their passions and purpose in a complex world, and provide a range of curricular and co-curricular options that help prepare young people to face the challenges of a globalising world.

The education, the opportunities and the facilities that CGS provides must prepare the students to play an active role in a changing world. It must equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them to embrace the challenges of our time as opportunities to make a difference in whatever fields of endeavour they choose to enter.

CGS is a great place for all kinds of students and we realise that everyone is different, so rather than providing you a generic prospectus, we encourage you to create your own and find out how our School suits you.

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The Hon Darren Chester MP

MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT

Opinion Piece /Business View Magazine

As Minister for Infrastructure and Transport I'm determined to build the type of infrastructure our kids and grandkids will thank us for. I'm working with other levels of government and the private sector to deliver the Federal Government's $50 billion infrastructure investment programme. This is the road, rail, shipping and aviation infrastructure that will support Australian jobs, industries and quality of life for decades to come.

The Federal Government understands that world class infrastructure is essential if we want to boost Australia's productivity and improve the living standards of all Australians—in our major cities and our regions.

Investing in infrastructure now is vital if we are to keep up with increased demand - between 2010 and 2030, our domestic freight task is expected to grow by 80 per cent and air passenger movements will increase to 280 million passengers per year. By 2050, Australia's population is forecast to jump to close to 38 million and Sydney and Melbourne will both have populations of around eight million people.

These figures show that we are facing challenges on a couple of fronts – combating urban congestion while boosting our supply chain productivity.

A number of current projects will address these twin challenges, including the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail, which will play a key role in moving freight along the east coast.

It's a simple concept to grasp—a 1,700 kilometre freight rail connection between Melbourne and Brisbane that offers an alternative to the existing coastal route and bypasses the congested Sydney area.

It will connect our regions to our ports, reduce congestion in our cities and make our roads safer—and we can build it within a decade. The project is currently in the second phase of market testing, two sections are now with the Queensland Coordinator General for consideration and extensive community consultation is underway on the ground in Queensland.

The project is expected to create thousands of direct and indirect jobs during peak construction and hundreds of ongoing jobs per year once fully operational. While Inland Rail will serve this nation well for at least the next 100 years, its benefits are already being felt. I have met with local consultative panels and attended the opening of a one-stop shop in Toowoomba where local residents can meet with the team charged with delivering this major project.

The other signature project which is well advanced in terms of development and planning is the Western Sydney Airport. Western Sydney is a fast growing region which is deserving of an airport in its own right. Western Sydney also stands to be a beneficiary of additional economic activity driven by the new transport hub. By the early 2060s, the airport is forecast to generate more than 60,000 direct jobs and $1.5 billion per year in val-

ue add for the Western Sydney region.

Alongside these flagship rail and aviation projects, we are expecting to invest $9 billion on land transport infrastructure projects this financial year alone. There are more than 1,000 projects currently underway around the country – transformative projects such as WestConnex in Sydney and the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing in Queensland, as well as major upgrades to the Pacific Highway in NSW and the Bruce Highway in Queensland.

These are just a few of the big-ticket infrastructure projects we are busy delivering – but with opportunity also comes challenges, and one of the key issues in Australia's infrastructure investment landscape is to align planning and investment across three levels of government.

While each level of government has different areas of responsibility, the federal government takes the national approach and is the largest single funder, while State, territory and local governments build, own and operate the majority of road and rail assets.

We believe the Government cannot, and should not, fund all infrastructure projects – rather, we want to see the cost of transport projects shared between those who benefit most and the broader Australian community.

Right now, we are investigating a more collaborative decision-making process to ensure projects and policy settings support national and regional priorities, and deliver a more effective transport system.

This includes using the Commonwealth's balance sheet position to apply more innovative funding and financing measures rather than grant funding. One example of this innovative approach is the concessional loan provided by the Federal Government to the Sunshine Coast Council to expand the Sunshine Coast Airport. The Federal Government financial support will deliver the infrastructure needed to remove constraints to growth in passenger numbers, destination and freight capacity.

This early engagement approach will help Infrastructure Australia to maintain its project pipeline and maintain a Priority List, both of which assist industry and investor decision making.

We are also looking for greater contributions from the private sector to fund and deliver high-quality infrastructure and greater use of innovate financing.

Making our roads safer is also a particular passion of mine, with good reason. After decades of consistent reductions in road deaths, we are now seeing an increase across most jurisdictions. In 2016, road crashes killed 1,300 people, an almost 8 per cent increase compared to the previous year, while serious injuries have been increasing for several years.

While road safety is primarily a state issue I am making it a national conversa-

tion by engaging my state counterparts to develop and commit to a meaningful action plan for the National Road Safety Strategy, across three years from 2018. We have already held industry roundtables, and I have instigated the first series of Road Safety COAG meetings.

We are investing heavily in improving local roads every year, through initiatives such as our Black Spot, Roads to Recovery, Bridges Renewal, Beef Roads and Northern Australia Roads programmes. All up, these initiatives will invest almost $6 billion in roads and bridges around the nation – a huge investment in productivity and driver safety.

We are also targeting safety improvements for road transport workers, with a range of practical initiatives being undertaken by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. We are redirecting nearly $4 million a year in funding from the disbanded RSRT to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to progress a package of practical safety initiatives targeting the heavy vehicle sector, making our roads safer for all drivers.

All of these measures tie in with our plans to develop a national freight and supply chain strategy to improve our freight capacity and reduce business costs. Developing and implementing a national strategy is the next wave of reform to boost productivity and improve safety and efficiency in the vital supply chain sector and is critical to growing Australia's productivity. A national freight strategy is key to improving living standards for all Australians—now and in the future.

The inquiry will draw on data from agencies such as the ABS, the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics and the CSIRO, and our consultation with industry will look at a number of key issues including:

- *The capacity of our key national ports, airports and intermodal terminals in comparison to international markets with similar characteristics.*

- *Trends occurring in the global supply chain.*

- *The adequacy of investment planning to meet forecast growth to keep Australia's position with its trading partners.*

- *The regulatory and investment barriers to improved efficiency and access to key national terminals, including road and rail corridors.*

A draft report will be made available for industry and government for comment by December this year, and the final report should be provided to the Government by March 2018.

The Government's $50 billion infrastructure investment programme is the largest investment by any Australian Government in our history. The infrastructure investment pipeline presents both challenges and opportunities but ultimately it is an investment in our future, in the infrastructure that our kids and grandkids will thanks us for.

We all know the feat of human effort needed to move home or pack it all away for storage. With this feat come the emotions attached. There'll undoubtedly be sentimental and/or expensive belongings involved, and the worry of their safekeeping and safe arrival is profound. It's even been said that moving home is the third most traumatic thing after death and divorce. AUSPODS seeks to take a load off these tensions with the products and services that have emerged from the PODS group.

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king inside the Box

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Auspods Holding Pty Ltd

WHAT: Moving services and short- and long-term storage solutions using portable on demand storage containers

WHERE: Unit 14/63 Burnside Road, Stapylton QLD 4207 Australia

WEBSITE: auspods.com.au

AUSPODS has grown from around $4 million revenue about six years ago, to about $11 million revenue at present. Just last year, the international company's Sydney branch was recognised as being number one in the world for customer service within the PODS group, with 92.3 per cent of those surveyed giving a 100 per cent customer satisfaction rate.

We spoke to the CEO of AUSPODS Holding Pty Ltd, Aaron Coulson, about the Australian master franchise he spearheads, and what it truly is that makes it stand out.

What's the big deal?

The PODS idea (Portable On Demand Storage) was born in the US and has been up and running in Australia and the UK since 2006. Such a simple idea has since been a huge convenience for its many patrons. Packing-weary customers order a portable, ground-level storage container, which is delivered to their homes to use for however long they need to. This can then be delivered to a new home, or deposited in AUSPODS' clean, secure and pest-controlled storage facilities. A packed container can also be stored onsite at the

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Which was established to keep up with the Australian demand within the transport and logistics industry. With 36 years of experience we have become known for providing our customers with a personalised, trusting and reliable transport service. This can be proven by our loyal long term customers.

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MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Dennis's Haulage Pty Ltd main objective is building a relationship with our customers and providing them with a reliable, efficient, personalised, safe and comprehensive transport system at competitive prices.

METHODS

In order to achieve our mission and objective, Dennis's Haulage Pty Ltd always adheres to follows:

INDUSTRIES COMPLIANCE STANDARDS

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- Vehicle Maintenance Program
- Dangerous Goods Accreditation
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- And Maintenance Manual.

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No job is too big or too large. Dennis's Haulage Pty Ltd ensures to work out a personalised service in order to benefit our customers.

We are in constant liaison with our customers and help them identify their needs and wants. Dennis's Haulage Pty Ltd is quick to act upon any situation that may arise, thus making us a reliable and caring Company, leaving our customers with a peace of mind.

CODE OF PRACTICE WITH HANDLING DANGEROUS GOODS

Dennis's Haulage Pty Ltd is committed in providing a safe, secure service to our clients in transporting and handling Dangerous Goods for the safety of all employees, the community and the environment by :

- Ensuring all regulations governing dangerous goods are administered and that all licenses and permits are current.
- Supplying and servicing clients whom themselves recognise and operate to the strict guidelines of all dangerous goods regulations.

customers residence. Adding to the convenience of delivery and loading is the three different sized PODS containers available, making them suitable for just about any domestic or commercial moving or storage job.

AUSPODS in Australia runs a grand total of 13 trucks which are all capable of handling the 24 ton mark, with a few additional smaller trucks for those trickier local deliveries.

The PODS group also designed and patented the aptly titled 'Podzilla'. This is quite the unique hydraulic lift system which loads the PODS container on and off the truck, ensuring the container and its contents remain level. It is regarded amongst the entire industry as being the safest way to lift and transport a container. Its mechanisms minimise the shifting of contents and damage of packed and stored goods .

Aaron Coulson, CEO

"This is one of the biggest benefits that we offer versus some of our competitors that use methods like roll-off systems and tilt trays where damages inevitably occur," asserts Coulson.

Customer ties

There's nothing more stressful than getting to the day of a move, and finding that a van or container just cannot fit. Hence, AUSPODS works closely with customers to determine their precise needs, priding itself on the one-to-one experience that a generic large-scale call centre service just cannot provide.

"It's a very small, compact group of people that are often dealing with the same customer from start to finish. This makes servicing our customers a lot easier and more efficient as nothing is lost in translation."

The company also has the added advantage of using Nearmaps software to determine the exact logistics of the area it's delivering to, to anticipate any potential issues or dangers, and adjust its services as such.

"We do our best to eliminate any problems that might occur on the day, because in line with our company vision, we want to provide an experience that's essentially, stress free."

Up to the time of delivery, the firm has already made significant notes for its drivers, even down to which way the container door needs to face.

"We were never intending to be the cheapest product on the market. We prefer to be the business that gives the peace of mind that comes with moving."

Familial Focus

It's clear through the way it manages its staff, the people focused ethos of AUSPODS is all-encompassing, not just for show. All of its 42 staff have undergone a comprehensive training program, and the company makes

sure they're very comfortable with their role.

"We have a strong culture where everyone in the business is empowered with different responsibilities, and everyone's opinion matters," explains Coulson

This connected, familial spirit stems from how the business started - a fairly small group of investors intermingled with a lot of family relationships.

"Our aim was to operate the business with family values front of mind."

Sustainability and outreach

Being a fairly small business, AUSPODS can thankfully have a fairly significant control over its carbon footprint. It always considers energy efficiency in its vehicles purchases, whilst incentivising its drivers to cut their usage by giving them rewards for their accountability rather simply telling them what they need to do and hoping for the best. Coulson describes the company's approach:

"We've been pretty militant in keep-

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ing things efficient, and have been using new technologies to track our usage. Our drivers have meanwhile engaged very well with meeting their targets, and they treat it as a competition to see who's achieving the most efficiency."

"Because we don't keep trucks for long, we're always making sure we're up-to-date with the latest technologies as far as these efficiencies go."

You can see corporate responsibility is a passion for the firm. Alongside its environmental endeavours, it strongly believes in giving back to the community, supporting homeless organisations and many different school and local community groups. It's also been a massive help to disaster victims in Australia, providing free services to many who've been involved in bushfires and floods for example, moving their home contents with the efficiency of a paid job, and reaching out through social media for anyone else that may have needed help.

"Any organisation needs to understand that the only way to succeed in business is if you've got support of the local community. When you are a decent, ethical company then you want to give this support back wherever you can."

In this breath, the firm holds many relationships with local suppliers, asserting the importance of supporting local industries so that the industry stays healthy for the long-term rather than just the company worrying about its own short-term needs.

For the future

Coulson voices plans to consider expansion from the East coast to Perth and possibly other regional areas of the country; but more excitingly, explains a new innovation that's in the pipeline:

"We're currently working with an Adelaide based company to develop a new foldable container which can be assembled onsite within five minutes. This will mean significant improvements in efficiency, and is probably three to six months away from coming into fruition. The prototype is already developed and tested, and it's in its final approval process as we speak."

AUSPODS are here for the long-haul (pardon the pun) and the company assures us it's not resting on its 'market leader' laurels, as it strives to continuously expand and innovate.

Supporting Partner
Dennis's Haulage

Buccini Transport

Providing transport solutions since 1993

To succeed in the competitive transportation industry, companies not only need to have the latest equipment but also follow the rules and regulations of the trade to the letter. As one of the most highly regulated industries in Australia, which is also faced with an ever evolving landscape of regulatory changes requires a continuous vigilance and commitment to internal upgrades as well as a commitment to customer protection and satisfaction side of things. The family-owned business, Buccini Transport, have managed to establish a reputable business based on excellent service along with a safe and fully compliant working environment even without the resources of multinational conglomerate.

The business started almost 24 years ago with a basic courier model. Paul Buccini, the director and founder

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Buccini Transport

WHAT: A transport solutions company offering a wide variety of services including air and sea freight

WHERE: 20 Anton Road, Hemmant QLD 4174, Australia

WEBSITE: buccinitransport.com.au

of the company, continued to grow the business over the years by adding to the fleet and to the range of the provided services. Today, Buccini Transport is a full-fledged transportation, warehousing and logistic (TWL) company which performs transport and warehousing service for air, sea and road freight. Including customs, AQIS, bonded warehousing, import and export shipping containers, heavy haulage, loose general freight, direct point to point, Taxi-truck and much more. In essence, they operate within a broad spectrum of sectors with a lot of equipment on the ground which allows them to delve into various different areas of transportation, warehousing or logistics to suit client needs. Grant Kemp, the Compliance Manager at Buccini Transport, talked to us about the various operations of the company, their corporate philosophies, and their general approach to business.

Brisbane footprint

Buccini Transport mainly operates out of two facilities in Brisbane. The first is located in the port of Brisbane, is dedicated to shipping container movements. The company takes containers from a variety of different clients to/from the port (stevedore) and then stores them for delivery as required to suit client needs. More specifically, containers can be delivered to client for handling or moved into the container handling facility where the goods are unloaded and warehoused

until requested by client (for either collection or delivery).

According to Grant, clients have multiple options for delivery. Full container deliveries can be handled by: live load/unload process. Where labour or forklift operators (usually provided by receivers) on site will unseal the containers, unload the freight, and leave the container on the vehicle empty so that it can be transported elsewhere.

Sideloader/sidelifter or tilt-tray which takes the entire container off the vehicle and places it on the ground so that it can be unloaded at the client's convenience. Exported goods are handled in pretty much the same way except that the entire process happens in reverse.

Tipping – goods are unloaded literally by tipping the container up and letting gravity unload the goods from the container. This method is very common in raw material delivery like produce (grain, barley, chick pea, or mined

products like sand, cement, gravel or recycling products like plastics, glass, rubber)

Their second facility is a container handling facility with a difference. This customs-bonded facility in the southern area of Brisbane facilitates clients who import and export goods overseas. These clients often require services around AQIS, customs checking, fumigation, Bonded Storage and various other services regarding goods by air, sea or road , in accordance with regulations that are required for goods that come into Australia from outside the country and vice versa. These services include FAK (Freight All Kinds) for both import and export, this is very similar to splitting a taxi fare the company combines packages from various senders going to one location/port into a single shipping unit and then send container to receiving facilities for collection or distribution to the receivers. They deal with every manner of freight there is, within the boundaries of the law. No matter if it is sewing machine needle from Japan, a container of cotton to Canada or 500t mine site dump truck to Mount Isa this combined bonded warehouse, 3PL logistics hub, distribution center and container handling facility has the experience to make it happen.

Maintaining close relationships with each client for optimal outcomes

The company is also committed to compliance and Chain of Responsibility. Ensuring loads being transported meet and do not exceed the requirements for loading limits, load distribution, while protecting client's interest by being able to provide Verified Gross Mass Weighing, Chain of Responsibility auditable movements. Whilst ensuring that everything complies with Australian import/export regulations as they do not wish to disrupt the local flora and fauna with outside contaminators, for instance. Inspections and weighing are key elements of this system to ensure only legitimately declared goods are traveling and within legal limits. That includes both restricted items like explosives or other types of contraband as well as environmental hazards.

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Of course, Buccini Transport also works very closely with their clients to ensure they achieve the best result. First and foremost, they always assign

specific customer representatives to each client so that they can build rapport. The clients can then relay their comments and concerns without having to explain themselves to a new operator every time. The company also benefits as they can then manage the needs of each client in a more effective manner as they are already aware from other transactions the desired outcome/expectation etc, there are precise points of contact in every department (freight profile). The industry itself is highly regulated and becoming even more so. This is something that Buccini Transport actively encourages, as they are very strong on responsibility. They follow strict guidelines and wish to impart the same level of knowledge, expertise, and education across the entire industry to ensure their staff and clients are safe not only physically but also from the legal complications arising from non-compliance or Chain of Responsibility obligations.

Supporting the business through solid ideals

As mentioned before, Buccini Transport is a family-owned business that can nevertheless handle a huge amount of work across a wide range of operations. The director and owner is actively involved in the business, along with several other members of his family and approximately 100 unrelated staff . The dynamic is completely

different than most major companies as it is a more closely-knit group with more socially approachable elements. There are also multitude opportunities to progress or evolve within the business as it values it employees highly whist actively encouraging cross training and understanding of adjoining roles. Before anyone is hired at the company, they have to go through a very rigorous screening processes that ensures they are up to the task and that both parties will benefit from a working relationship.

This philosophy of maintaining optimal operations is embedded into every aspect of the company, as Grant explains: “We are a unique blend. There are very few companies out there that are privately owned like we are which have the scope and abilities that we have. We do have an extensive range of equipment and the skills behind it. If you look at management, for instance, we all have years of experience within various aspects of the TWL areas. All of that comes together to create a vast knowledge base that can be drawn on in an instant. When a question is asked, it is rare that we won’t have an answer right away. On top of that, the customer service side of things is vastly important to us”

As the industry continues to evolve and progress, Buccini Transport will continue to uphold the same ideals that have brought it this far. They will keep trying to achieve the optimal outcome for their clients while maintain the best ways to run the business in a compliant way to safe guard our clients from any Chain of Responsibility issues. “The more you help a client achieve their goals without jeopardizing safety or laws, the easier it is to get a mutually beneficial and long-lasting business like we have”, Grant says. Thankfully, this philosophy has enabled the company to grow over more than two decades and will continue to supply transport, warehousing and logistics services with a difference.

SAF-Holland

A world leader in the manufacturing of commercial transport products

More than a century ago, two people on opposite sides of the Atlantic started on a journey that would end in the creation of a huge business. In 1881, a German blacksmith from Kelilberg called Paul Zill invented a new kind of plough. Soon after realizing the business potential of his invention, he created a company called Otto Sauer Achsenfabik or SAF. As one of the pioneers in the business of manufacturing agricultural equipment, the company grew over the years and also entered the transport industry with the manufacture of axles and suspensions.

A few decades later in 1910, Gerrit Den Besten of South Dakota established the predecessor of the Holland company, the Safety Release Clevis Company. His first invention was a safety release hitch between plough and horse. The ingenious idea would eventually grow into a huge business. Like SAF, Holland was constantly at the leading edge of innovation. As new

AT A GLANCE

WHO: SAF-Holland

WHAT: A leading manufacturer in the commercial vehicle market

WHERE: 68 bd de la Pétrusse, 2320 Lëtzebuerg, Luxembourg (HQ)

WEBSITE: safholland.com

technologies became available, the transport market grew dramatically. Both companies continued to lead the way until 2006 where the SAF Group and Holland Group merged into a single company.

Warren Farrugia, the National Aftermarket Manager for SAF-Holland in Australia, gave us some insight on the company's history, its methods of operation, and the innovations that have allowed them to stay on top after all those years. According to Warren, one of the most important reasons why the two companies joined forces was so to become the one-stop providers in the transport industry, particularly in trucks and trailers. Careful acquisitions such as the Georg Fischer company and future-oriented investments have now solidified the company as the biggest global supplier of transport equipment. Though the headquarters are located in Luxembourg, the company has a global presence and caters to the markets of nearly every continent.

Delivering customer satisfaction with a vast range of products

Today, SAF-Holland has one of the biggest product ranges in the entire industry. That range includes trailer axle and suspension systems, truck and bus suspensions fifth wheels, kingpins, landing gear, and coupling prod-

ucts. The company sells its products to OEMs worldwide while they also work very closely with individual fleet operators and trucking companies. All products are made in Germany but are tested in all kinds of different conditions depending on the export market. For instance, each axle and suspension system is tested in Australian conditions and customized accordingly before coming to the market.

Meeting customer demands is a top priority for SAF-Holland. As a premium brand, their name is synonymous with flawless performance and quality products. In fact, that is one of the company's biggest assets. Even though they are not the cheapest brand in the market, customers are always certain that the products they pay for will meet high quality standards. SAF has been operating in the Australian market for over 60 years. As a result, they have one of the biggest footprints in the market largely due to their historical presence and quality control. With several distributors that sell their products nationally, SAF-Holland is well-known throughout Australia and the world for its careful and systematic approach to quality products.

Catering to several vital markets

Another aspect that makes the company unique is the fact that they have

a lot of different clients that they supply products to. As such, it is vital to gain an understanding of each client in order to ensure that their products can fit specific purposes. Their approach is simple in that regard; asking as many questions as possible yields the biggest benefit. By communicating with the clients on a personal level, they can make sure that each client can remain satisfied. After all, SAF-Holland retains a customer satisfaction level of 100 percent, precisely due to their corporate philosophy.

"You absolutely have to listen to your customers. For us, our customers and our staff are the most important. Our staff deal with thousands and thousands of customers each month across different industries and they are all working in different applications. The feedback from our customers is what drives our business", says Warren.

Retaining the leading edge through constant innovation

In order to stay ahead of the competition, the company invests both in the latest technologies, such as high precision robotics equipment, and in its employees. Internal and external staff training is one of the company's key strengths, according to Warren. As a community-first company, every

SAF

Holland

department shares the same visions, sets of goals, and standards. SAF-Holland's employees are some of the best that the industry has to offer. As a result, the company always meets customers' expectations and works more efficiently by meeting deadlines in a consistent manner.

"If you want to have a product of choice, you really need to work closely with your customers and to understand how the different markets operate", says Warren. Like any other industry, transportation is a market where trends often guide product change and development. Staying on top of these shifts requires vigilance in many departments. Constant research is an essential part of understanding the worldwide and national markets. What is equally important, however, is networking and working closely with customers to better understand exactly what they are looking for in a product.

Warren says that one of the SAF-Holland's key goals on a national level is to become the number one premium transport supplier in Australia across all of the company's key supply channels. Doing that will require promote their brand and the breadth of choice that they offer to clients. Furthermore, they will continue to focus on innovation and design to make sure that they always have the edge over competitors. And most important of all, they will strive to manufacture products which are based on the needs of their customers through close interactions and networking.

SAF-HOLLAND Group

City of Burnside

A strong focus on community services

As one of the highest ranked local government areas of South Australia, the City of Burnside has traditionally enjoyed a wealth of Council-related activities. Louise Miller-Frost, General Manager of Community and Development Services, and Barry Cant, General Manager of Urban Services, spoke with us about various projects undertaken by the Council, their commitment to the community, and the development of a range of strategies.

The City of Burnside is primarily a residential council with some light commercial activity. The affluent area has minimal industrial activity. Because of

AT A GLANCE

WHO: City of Burnside

WHAT: Local government area of more than 44,000 residents bordering Adelaide

WHERE: Civic Centre, 401 Greenhill Road, Tusmore SA 5065

WEBSITE: burnside.sa.gov.au

all that, the Council is heavily invested in providing services for their community. One of the ways to prioritise the projects was actually established after a major natural disaster. Back then, the Council realised the need to track everything, including damages, potential fixes, safe spots, and hazards. Now, they have established an internal way of keeping detailed records and a very pragmatic assessment process.

"We try to have a very planned approach to the work that we do so that we can target those areas which are in most need of refresh, renewal, or maintenance", says Louise. "We have detailed plans and commissioned assessments and can actually work through, stage by stage, what needs to be done in the right order".

Louise is responsible for the customer-facing side of operations, covering community services including the community centre, library, swimming pool, planning and development, policy planning, and a range of other endeavours such as animal control and customer service. Being responsible for public health and economic development, she also manages several important facilities for the Council including the Glenunga Community Hub and the George Bolton Swimming Centre Burnside.

Barry's range of responsibilities is more hands-on. He is responsible for two portfolios which essentially encompass every urban project in the City of Burnside. These include engineering services, operation services, property, open space and recreation. Anything from the delivery of waste management services to capital projects goes through his team. Furthermore, he is also responsible for engineering and infrastructure upgrades as well as maintenance and renewal of Council assets.

The Glenunga Hub – A centre of community activity

"Glenunga Hub is a landmark project for the City of Burnside, having been in the making for many years prior to its actual completion," says Barry. "A lot of the initial planning with such projects is concerned with community interactions which involves consultations from the area's residents. The Hub underwent a rigorous planning phase with several designs before they finally landed on the current one."

The process of finding the right location was similarly rigorous. Barry and his team had identified a selection of buildings which had reached the end of their useful life. They understood that the ageing infrastructure meant that they had to come up with a new way of making use of those assets. There, they saw an opportunity to rebuild them into something new, and better. "At the time, there were a few sporting clubs, a toy library, and other small services scattered into several locations. As such, it was decided that the project would follow a multi-purpose, multi-use approach which would result in better facilities for more of

the community," says Barry.

In this particular example, the facilities were mostly used in the evenings and weekends and were most commonly employed for sport training purposes. "The wider community did not have any real further use of the assets, and the buildings were very rarely occupied during the daytime," says Barry. "Through a considerable investment by the Council, Glenunga Hub is now widely used both by the sports clubs and the wider community." The Council, which gained shared management of the facilities by contributing fully to the cost of the project, focused on upgrading both the buildings as well as the open space, resulting in maximum efficiency.

Today, the Glenunga Hub is used for a variety of community events, including children's birthday celebrations, community programs, and other similar functions. It provides an outreach venue in the west of the council area for educational and language courses, health and fitness classes, special interest clubs, and other programs coordinated by the Council. A number of successful local sports clubs continue to call Glenunga Hub their home.

Upgrading a beloved swimming centre

The George Bolton Swimming Centre Burnside and its refurbishment has also represented a significant undertaking for the Council. "The project commenced roughly the same time as the Glenunga Hub project," says Barry. "In the initial stages, a detailed condition assessment was carried out. That way, the team had a complete understanding of the condition of all the assets within the facility." Some of those were approaching 45 years of use and various systems were too old to be useful any longer.

After presenting the Council with several options, it was decided that the aspects of the facility which were most loved and used would be maintained and further enhanced. The outdoor, park setting was one of the Centre's strongest points, and the City of Burnside wanted to ensure that through the project, the Centre lost none if its charm. "As the facility has traditionally provided a good mix between recreation and lap swimming, the Council did not want to ruin its character,"

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says Barry. “Turning it into a wave pool to attract only casual attendees, for instance, was out of the question. Instead, it had to be viable for swimming teams too.”

The Centre underwent a major refurbishment, with all new plant and pool infrastructure installed and the main pool remodelled to incorporate a wet deck edge. An extra lane was added to the configuration to allow for competition swimming (taking it to 8 lanes), and an access ramp was built to allow for equitable entry for those with a disability or with poor mobility. .A new playground with new equipment was also added. All three pools were retiled, and there were significant upgrades to the main buildings, kiosk, café, and other areas. Overall, the project cost approximately $5 million. “Even though the pool is usually open for 6-7 months, the team decided to close it early and open it late so that they would have time to work on the upgrade during a period of 9 months,” says Barry.

Improving sports facilities throughout Burnside

Sports are vital to the community of the City of Burnside and the Council is

committed to maintaining and upgrading the facilities whenever possible.

The Council recently developed and adopted the Sport and Recreation Strategy to provide long term planning for Council's contribution to the community's future active and passive recreational pursuits. "It is also to ensure that the City of Burnside is able to meet the minimum needs of our community in a socially, environmentally and financially sustainable and responsible manner," says Barry.

"The Strategy allows Council to plan for future service provision, as well as be able to consider opportunities as they arise in a strategic, regional and holistic manner."

The City of Burnside Strategic Community Plan 'Be the Future of Burnside 2012-2025' sets out a desired outcome for sport and recreation services in the City. This desired outcome is to deliver a range of fit for purpose sport and recreational opportunities and facilities that foster healthy lifestyle pursuits.

Council's approach to deliver this desired outcome is to:

Mayor David Parkin

CEO Paul Deb

Louise Miller-Frost

- Ensure public spaces meet the future needs of our community and provide for a variety of vibrant and inspirational opportunities, encouraging participation by the community; and

- Create and facilitate access to diverse sustainable leisure, recreation and sporting facilities and programs that are safe for people of all ages and abilities.

The City of Burnside is committed to providing fit-for-purpose sport and recreation facilities to deliver its strategic community plan desired outcomes. Council acknowledges that participation in community sport and recreation activities is fundamental to our residents' social well-being and not only provides enjoyment but produces health, physical, mental, social and economic benefits for our community.

The Strategy allows Council to plan for future service provision, as well as be able to consider opportunities as

they arise in a strategic, regional and holistic manner.

Council audits all if its main sporting and recreational infrastructure including sports fields lighting, playing surfaces and recreational playgrounds facilities in order to check which of them were not up to code or not adequate for their purposes. Long term improvement and upgrade plans have been developed to accommodate the future management and provision of Council's recreational assets.

Ensuring a solid future for infrastructure and growth

The urban planning team has a long and successful history of construction and engineering in the City of Burnside, owing to strong strategic plans.

"The next step in infrastructure and growth is really very important," says Barry. "Especially with our build properties, much like other Councils, we have a number of properties which are significantly ageing. We are getting to the point in time where those buildings will have to either be replaced or significantly enhanced to ensure that they are safe and suitable for their purpose", says Barry.

The purpose of an asset management plan is to help an organisation manage their infrastructure and other assets to an agreed standard of service. The City of Burnside currently has four Asset Management Plans covering the following categories: Transport assets, Stormwater assets, Open Space assets, and Building assets.

The objective of infrastructure asset management is to ensure that assets provide their required levels of services in the most cost-effective manner to cater for both present and future customers.

The building Asset Management plans focus on the management of the City of Burnside's building assets, which includes community, utility, amenity, sport, heritage, special and business buildings. This plan specifies the requirements for effective management of this asset group and the corresponding financial implications.

This plan is reviewed annually, with a formal update completed every 4 years. Effective asset management of the City of Burnside's building assets will contribute towards achievement of the following strategic objectives:

- Fit for purpose and cost-effective infrastructure that meets community needs.
- A financially sound Council that is accountable, responsible and sustainable.
- Conservation and enhancement of the historic character of the City.

The contribution towards achievement of theses strategic goals and

GLENUNGA
HUB
City of
Burnside

asset management objectives will be achieved by:

- Stakeholder consultation to establish and confirm service standards.

- A regular program of inspections and monitoring activities to assess asset condition and performance.

- Application of a systematic analysis to prioritise renewals and establish the most cost effective works programs.

- Continuously reviewing and improving the quality of Asset Management practices.

Talking about the specific enhancements that will be made to those facilities, Barry explained the idea of having a single facility for various different uses as a more financially responsible approach which is also easier to maintain.

"We have to strategically assess and manage how and where we invest those funds to ensure that the services and the facilities that are provided are appropriate for what the community needs now and looking forward. That's when we can look at those multi-purpose/multi-use types of facilities instead of single-purpose/single-use to ensure that more people and more groups of services are provided from fewer facilities. It maximizes Council's investments as it is easier to manage and provide one facility instead of five," Barry explains.

Aside from all that, the Council will also continue to work closely on its assets and ascertain what needs to be upgraded and when. The storm water infrastructure capabilities, for instance, will have to be upgraded in the next couple of years. Being able to undertake all those projects and keep costs for repairs at a minimum is particularly important for the Council. With their combined expertise, however, the various teams will continue to improve the lives of the community both in the forefront and the background.

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Livingstone Shire Council

The fruits of infrastructure

The story of Livingston Shire spans nearly 140 years having been established in 1879 with a population of 5023. Now, this population has grown to 37,000 and continues to attract more and more residents and visitors with its combination of a solid economic growth, a laid back lifestyle and endless natural surroundings. The solid economy we speak of is driven by agriculture, mining, retail and governance. This economy is particularly propelled tourism – no doubt a result of the natural, cultural and entertainment attractions it boasts. Spanning over 11,776km2, the scenic district

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Livingstone Shire Council

WHAT: The Livingstone Shire Council was established after de-amalgamation on 1 January 2014 and looks after approximately 11,776 square kilometres and has a population of more than 37,000 residents.

WHERE: Yeppoon QLD, 4703

WEBSITE: livingstone.qld.gov.au

sits comfortably along the subtropical Capricorn coast.

As with everything in life, if there is to be prosperity, it needs to be worked for. Accordingly so, we spoke to the Mayor of Livingstone Shire himself, Bill Ludwig, about the projects and plans that have, and will, help the town to continue to flourish. But, before we go into all of that, it's important to put some context around the development work. In 2008, the Shire of Livingstone merged with three of its neighbours from within the Capricorna region of Queensland to form the Rockhampton Region. Namely, the City of Rockhampton, the Shire of Mount Morgan and the Shire of Fitzroy. In 2014, the Shire of Livingstone was de-amalgamated, a result of a proposal to do so in 2012, and a subsequent vote by the area's citizens in the following year.

"We'd lost six years through the amalgamation process," says Ludwig "When we de-amalgated in 2014 we were very much playing catch up on all our projects." Despite all the starting and stopping, Ludwig persisted, along with the council, to create and rehabilitate within the Shire:

"We were hugely impacted by Cyclone

Marcia as well as going through long periods of recovering from mining and tourism downturns," Ludwig laments.

Projects

Ludwig was first Mayor of Livingstone from 2000 to 2008, and was voted in again in 2013 – in time for the de-amalgamation – and has remained the governing elected leader since. Fittingly, his perspective and insight on the district and its many projects are thorough to say the least, and his approach to servicing the wants and needs of his electors is inspiringly open and forthcoming. Recalling his time on trying to get the foreshore project off the ground, Ludwig tell us:

"I told people to dream what they want here, and what they want from the project, and then my job would be to go and find the money.

"It's a great philosophy to have I think, to not limit people. There are things you can achieve even without a lot of money. You just need thoughtful design and to get the synergy right. I'm encouraging people to strive for excellence."

Ludwig is a firm believer that with well thought out infrastructure, not only is his council creating social amenities, but they are making the town more and more attractive for people to come and live there. He states "This is the key to private sector investment, if you get your transport corridors right, and get things like water, sewage and other key infrastructure in place, what naturally follows is that private sector investment. It comes where we create opportunities." So what exactly is some of the infrastructure development going on at the moment?

Panorama Drive

Once the Shire had de-amalgamated, and started to get the ground running on its infrastructure projects, Panorama Drive was the first major project the Council went for funding for. It's an entirely new road link to cost an estimated $31.5 million, and will connect the Shire's northern suburbs of Yeppoon with access to nearby resources, while also relieving traffic congestion. The drive also provides an alternative emergency access route in times of major disaster, which following the trail of destruction left by cyclone Marcia, would be hugely beneficial should disaster strike again.

"In politics, people really focus on the first 100 days that someone is in power. Day 99 is when we got the grant we applied for. It was a great coup for us to get a grant that size, that early in new council," Ludwig extols. Indeed in April 2014 the state government committed to contributing to 50% of the projected project costs, up to $15 million, through its Royalty for Regions Funding – an initiative committed to developing Western Australia's regional areas.

Developing The Future

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Panorama Drive is a strategic road link forming a key transport corridor to directly connect the northern suburbs of Yeppoon with resource nodes, airports and current and future industrial parks. The project enables Livingstone to meet the current and critical future access needs to accommodate the growth, in the northern areas of Yeppoon.

JRT was awarded the construction contract. The contract works were separated into two stages - Stage 2A and 2B. Preliminary documentation, quality control and planning were undertaken prior to construction. JRT commenced construction in July 2016.

Preliminary challenges of the contract were to find appropriate onsite material for road embankment construction and fill material for behind structures; and the logistical movement of excess material through the site without disrupting construction of various road elements. As a result, prior to excavating we undertook thorough site testing to isolate areas of material that would be suitable for building elements and road construction in accordance with specifications.

Effective programming was also required for the timing of commencement of a number of sub-tasks consisting of retaining structures, drainage structures and electrical works to be staggered to suit availability of materials and JRT resources to allow continuous flow of work with differing construction timeframes.

"We're very focused on getting our strategic transport corridors up and running," says Ludwig, also adding "Another upshot of this project has been that not only are we getting infrastructure in place, but at any one time we've had up to 100 jobs going while still in the construction phase.

Yeppoon Foreshore and Town Centre Revitalisation

The planning for the Yeppoon foreshore and town centre revitalisation started way back in 2001. The plan was (and still is) to revitalise existing public spaces and create tourism, recreational and commercial land uses. The first two stages were completed in 2003 and 2006 respectively, but once again it was the amalgamation and the cyclone that unfortunately delayed matters.

Nonetheless, once matters were more timely and back in the council's scope, much activity followed. The multi-award winning 'Keppel Kraken' water play area has been up and running since December 2015 when Stage 3 was completed, and construction on stage 4 was completed soon after the council built the Yeppoon Town Centre Carpark as well as a signalised intersection at Queen and Barry Streets.

The council is now at stage 5 of the plan, a stage which includes the construction of a beach amphitheatre stage roof, a new fourway roundabout and a new access road to the Anzac

Parade (Yeppoon's main beach). Ludwig explains:

"The first Christmas immediately after Cyclone Marcia, we were able to open the Kraken, which has been great for tourism and the community. Especially since it was only 10 months after the cyclone hit.

"To have that, and to have won two major awards for landscaping excellence, to be able to then complete construction of the car park, and on track to be hopefully completing stage 5 soon, is a real economic uplift with all the jobs we're creating, and a huge confidence booster for the tourism industry."

The project has cost a whopping $53 million but is already proving prosperous with things like a 20% increase in overnight tourism and $75 million in private sector investment attesting to his.

Other projects

In line with Ludwig's passionate involvement with district growth, there are a number of other projects happening throughout the Shire:

Emu Park Foreshore and Town Centre Revitalisation

This project is something of national significance and includes a reflective memorial boardwalk, a gateway and orientation gallery. It recounts, preserve and honours the history of Australia's war heritage, and those who created it through service and sacrifice, providing a lasting legacy.

Ludwig explains that the project actually started out without any budget. It began with a concept plan, and the council got a design team to work with the community and local artists to help in the design. Funding was successfully secured afterward:

"We opened this one week in advance of Anzac Day. It was ready and operational for the community for these significant 100 year celebrations,"

The Gateway

The Gateway is a property development initiative – and specifically a business park - to support industry and encourage economic development. It is is a 56 hectares, and located conveniently (and strategically) on the main corridor between the Capricorn Coast and Rockhampton, giving business and industry investors access to reliable trunk infrastructure.

Statue Bay

A part of the 'Capricorn Coast unique Tourist drive', Statue Bay connects Yeppoon to Emu Park via the Scenic Highway. With the effects of Cyclone Marcia alongside the significant landslides and rock falls the area faces, reconstruction and slope stabilisation are being carried out. There will also be extensive

civil and geotechnical engineering design work to construct an all-important ocean protection revetment wall.

LDCC and Community Education Resilience Hub

Due for completion in November 2017, construction for the hub is already underway, and will provide a community resource for advice, guidance, engagement and education. The hub will in particular, play a crucial part in disaster support. The structure is designed to be able to withstand natural disasters, and will be a part of ensuring a structured and coordinated response to help the community before, during and after any such event.

Wreck Point Lookout

With the Yeppoon Lions Club continuously increasing in popularity, it successfully secured $190,000 in funding from the Queensland Government, with an added $100,000 from Livingstone Shire Council, to construct a new lookout shelter. Works continue after having begun in February 2017.

Capricorn Coast Flood Mitigation Strategy

In March 2014, following the impact of a short sharp rainfall event which inopportunely coincided with a Spring high tide, the council sought to take action. This strategy is a collection of six pro-

jects proposed for the Yeppoon central business district, to direct stormwater flow and reduce/remove physical barriers to help the district's road networks cope with further such watery affairs.

Sarah's Garden - Olive Estate

Sarah's Garden provides an open recreation area for the community. To make it even more welcoming and accessible, the council is developing the area to include shaded barbeque facilities and shaded playground equipment.

Hartley Street Recreation Reserve

The council looks to create a strong sporting culture throughout the area, and is creating a sport infrastructure which will include creating more facilities at the reserve which is located in the heart of Emu Park.

A backbone for growth

"It is worth talking about that you can't be a one trick pony when you're in local government. If you're going be sustainable, and withstand the shocks of economic downturns, you have to make sure you have well a diversified economy for local community.

"That's been at the heart of every strategy we put in place."

Ludwig is clearly well attuned to cultivating infrastructure for the benefit of the many, and it is truly exciting to see the forest of growth that is happening from the many seeds that the council continues to plant.

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Pyrenees Shire Council

Driving infrastructure renewal

The Shire of Pyrenees, a local government area in Victoria, hosts a population of approximately 7,000. The rural municipality has an annual budget of about $20 million, including $7 million in capital. With an infrastructure renewal gap of about $2 million per year, the Council is heavily invested in retaining its assets as they face the challenge of managing infrastructure projects and capital works within an environment of financial restrictions.

Jim Nolan, the CEO of the Pyrenees Shire Council, plays a key role in the

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Shire of Pyrenees

WHAT: A local government area in western Victoria with a population of 7,000

WHERE: 5 Lawrence St, Beaufort VIC 3373, Australia

WEBSITE: pyrenees.vic.gov.au/Home

economic activities of the Council. Jim has 26 years of experience in local government across four different municipalities, namely Glenelg, Southern Grampians, Northern Grampians, and Pyrenees since 2014. Over the years, he has been closely involved in a variety of infrastructure projects though his current role as CEO has him in the management seat more often than not. He is also constantly looking for ways to increase the Council's economic base and control its budget more appropriately and efficiently.

Allocating resources for the road network

For the Pyrenees Shire Council, primary emphasis is usually placed on asset renewal. As an example, the Raglan-Elmhurst road has been an ongoing project for almost a decade. The road stands at the top of the local hierarchy as an important strategic link road servicing the agriculture and viticulture sectors. The original construction was a narrow sealed road which failed to serve the growth of the area. Over the last 10 years, the Council has been steadily upgrading and widening the road with substantial financial investments. In the last two financial years, the Council committed just under $1 million for vari-

ous improvements, part renewal and part upgrade.

According to Jim, Council's rate of expenditure for their road network reflects the fact that the majority of the network was constructed several decades ago, and there is a constant need for maintenance. The capital program's budget stands at about $7 million, a significant portion of which goes to various renewal programs. For instance, the renewal budget for the road resealing program runs at almost $700,000. Budgeting to make sure that every part of their road infrastructure is preserved and properly maintained is vital for the Council.

Establishing a hub for community activity

From a community perspective, revitalizing the Amphitheatre Community Centre was a substantial undertaking for the Council. The level of community engagement was unprecedented right from the beginning.

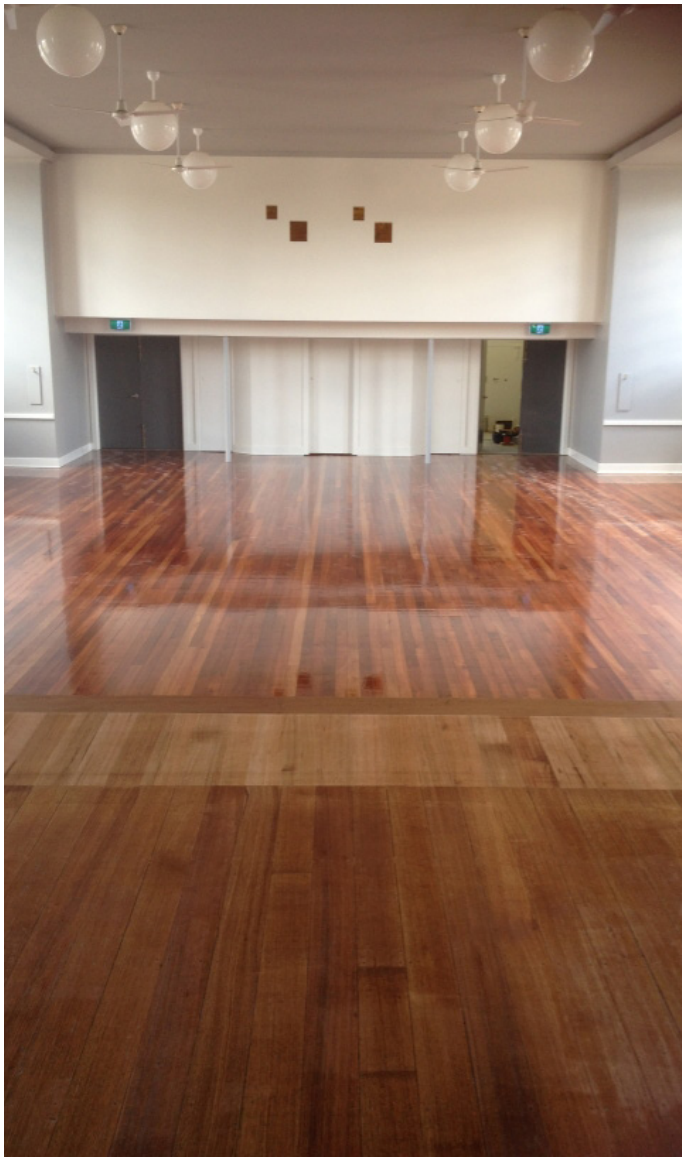
"It's been quite a success since opening in 2016", says Jim about the Centre. "It's reflective of the type of facility that Pyrenees has established in a number of small towns, with populations of less than 1,000 generally and often of 300. Having a quality community facility has been very important in those communities to maintain some community pride and provide an opportunity for community activities to occur. In this case, it also enabled an aged facility to be demolished. It was really important that instead of adding to our infrastructure, we replaced the old for the new."

The $631,000 project was completed with financial assistance from the state and federal governments as well as Council and the Avoca Community Bank. In fact, $10,000 was contributed by the Community Bank for the community of 240 individuals, a significant undertaking which showcases the level of interest in the new centre. The centre is a multi-use facility that provides a hub for a range of activities, including sports and community events. Moreover, it provides a space for use by the adjoining local primary school. Since opening in 2016, the centre has been well-utilized and the response has been extremely positive.

Engaging with local businesses

Of course, this was not the only time the Council engaged the community in an infrastructure project. The Moonambel Water Supply Project has seen a similar level of engagement, for instance. There, the Council partnered with Central Highlands Water to undertake a feasibility study to ascertain which option would be ideal to ensure a stable supply of water to the region. Prior to that, they conducted a survey of businesses and residents to see if there was significant interest in proceeding with such a project or not.

The feasibility study suggested that a pipeline would be the most suita-



ble path to take, and the community was consulted at that stage too. As wine production is a very important part of the economy in the Pyrenees Shire and the township of Moonambel effectively services that, the Council wanted to ensure that everything would go smoothly. Enterprises in and around the area are significant. The wineries are a significant contributor to the local economy with grape growing and the production of some high quality wine. This enables growth in tourism and compliments other business activity in food and accommodation services.

Sustainability investments

On top of all that, the Council is also heavily invested into sustainability. Their regional bioenergy project recently won a sustainability award after being implemented in a local hospital. The pilot project uses timber biproducts from nearby timber mills which would have otherwise been considered as waste. By utilising such resources, the project was able to reduce power costs for the hospital while providing an efficient operation. The Council, on behalf of the region, facilitated and delivered a government grant. Interest-

ingly, the project has already been duplicated in a small business while Jim ensured us that it could be used in any other suitable enterprise too.

The primary future issue in infrastructure and construction for the Council will be maintaining and renewing their assets. Another fundamental issue will be providing opportunities for population growth through some residential developments. Though this is not necessarily a task for local government, the Council has been very proactive in that area to encourage population and economic growth. After all, they have been a developer for a residential subdivision in Beaufort just outside of Ballarat, a project that will assist in the sustainability of the region and add to the towns housing stock Council's assets. Overall, the Council will continue to be heavily invested in promoting a clear future for the region and servicing both its current and future residents.

Shire of Quairading

About Quairading

Settled comfortably in the central Wheatbelt of Western Australia, the Shire of Quairading boasts spans of farming land, and a history steeped in stories of aboriginals and settlers alike. The continued dedication of its council and of the active farming community inhabiting it, means that that the Shire continues to be a pleasurable place to call home. Perhaps that's why, more and more, retirees in particular have been flocking to Quairading for a little piece of the wholesome life.

Nestled just 167km east of Perth on the York-Quairading Road, Quai-

rading not just provides all the benefits of a prolifically rural existence, but the delights of a warm community feel through sporting, culture and social vibes. The maintenance, and more so, continued improvements are so designed, to uphold and stimulate the small economy that runs through its population of around 1200.

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Shire of Quairading

WHAT: A local government area in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia, about 170 kilometres (106 mi) east of the state capital, Perth.

WHERE: 10 Jennaberring Rd, Quairading WA 6383

WEBSITE: quairading.wa.gov.au

We spoke in length to Graeme Fardon, CEO at the Shire about the town's projects and growth plans. And indeed, there was nobody more appropriate to talk to than the man who'd been leading the charge on the town's success for an incredible 23 years.

Fardon and the Shire

"We've reached just little over 100 year age bracket," Fardon confirms, referring to when it was officially gazetted on 7 August 1907. Since then, the town has continued in a fashion of growth and settlement. A railway was followed by the appearance of retailers and incoming farming hopefuls, and by 1950, the settlers had cleared the vast majority of farming land, bringing it all into production. More flocked from the nearby 'dry' area of Dangin, attracted by lands and of course the local alcohol licensed hotel.

And now? Fardon tell us: "We have

full suite of assets, healthcare control and maintenance, and responsibility for our 1200 population." A population Fardon explains, is fairly steady, and certainly not diminishing; the incoming retirees seeking haven from the bustle of their larger towns have seen to that, as has as the increase in the Noongar population via Australian's "Return to Country" program.

"The retirees are coming in from metropolitan areas, looking for affordable housing, safe community, as well as an actual sense of community." Indeed this demographic is where growth has stemmed in last decade of the Shire's existence.

Looking more microscopically, the council itself operates the Shire's administration, its medical practice, a childcare centre and a youth centre. This is all while striving to maintain the park and the area's amenities (such as the waste transfer facility), and helping landowners comply to land-related state legislation.

The time he's spent on the council has meant Fardon has seen the entrance and exits of many an elected member, and as it stands today, the Council operates a collective team of around 40 staff, which in itself set the council as an important employer within a small community.

Of the economy at large, Fardon iterates the town's predominantly agricultural drive and in particular "cereal canola and legume crops, a few sheep and cattle and an emerging small sandalwood industry."

Upkeep and Development

Sustainable practises

The council does employ an environmental officer who works with likeminded shires on sustainable practises including offset planting, re-vegetation projects and nature reserve projects. The natural essence of what makes this shire what it is, most certainly does not linger on the side of being taken for granted.

Caravan park

The refurbishment of the caravan park has been a recent and positive contributor to the community's economy. The park's total rebuild had been in the planning for five to six years.

"The car park was in particularly poor condition, and the general facilities did not comply with current legislation for caravan and camping areas," says Fardon

$900,000 was streamed into this project, with a further $300,000 earmarked for three new self-contained cottages (subject to external funding). But that was not all. The caravan park refurbishment connected to a wider web of infrastructure improvement, allowing the council the chance to overhaul the town sewerage scheme and

upgrade the power in the area; Fardon described it as “more an entire infrastructure project rather than a simple caravan park rebuild.”

These wider projects included:

- Sewage, fire management and water supply upgrades – hydraulic consultants assisted with the design and approval process to aid the pool and benefit the rest of the town

- Electricity – the town engaged with Western Power to partner up on increasing the area’s electric domain. A large transformer was installed, and cost-sharing was embedded in the partnership, with the result of it helping not just caravan park and the pool, but equally if not even more importantly, the local hospital which was deemed to be short on power. Quite rightly also, the added electricity improved not only these facilities but the power in the locality at large.

“The caravan park, was a total rebuild from the ground up, beginning with a ground up demolition process,” adds Fardon. Further new facilities at the caravan park included a brand new campers’ kitchen and even an outdoor entertainment and fire pit area.

Following a relaunching campaign for the park last April, the impact on tourism has been palpable, with Fardon confirming a noticeable increase in caravanning and camping traffic. Car-

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avanning clubs particular have been paying a marked interesting in spending time here.

"We've actually been targeting caravan clubs through caravanning associations. We've even been to caravan and camping trade shows in Perth where we advertise the park, as well as being promoted by the Caravanning Industry Association of WA in the Eastern States. We're on a recognised tourist route "Wave Rock Pathway" which also helps a lot," he adds.

This has been Quairading's tourism strategic communications plan thus far, with increased events in the pipeline to further attract visitors.

Positively, the chamber of commerce and traders have reported on more and more visitors to their businesses, while tenancy and occupancy rates have increased as a direct spin-off.

Swimming Pool

The swimming pool was a whopping $3 million project which was completed late last year. The council met the six-month, off-season construction timeframe which followed 10 years of saving, five to seven years of planning, and a four year design phase. The council was not messing around with this.

"We dove into the full public con-

sultation process in terms of the design side of things," said Fardon, adding "This is a once in 50 year project, and we wanted to do it thoroughly. The opportunity to do major works like these comes by rarely." Having opened as far back as 1959, the pool definitely needed the kick-start. The council set aside $2.2 million towards the project, and managed to attract a further $800,000, culminating in vibrant new main pool, with a fun, beach-entry for toddlers and kids, and an aged friendly learn-to-swim pool. Aqua-aerobics groups are already scheduled to make regular use of the facilities, with likely many more visitors to follow.

"This will have a big positive impact, and we have actually provided facilities that are much more user-friendly and in greater demand," Fardon states.

Even more

There are further major and minor projects in play to further the Shire's economic agenda such as:

- Roadworks – the $4 million projects are in the final stages of their upgrade works. Roads are being strengthened and revitalised to support the rough and tumble of passing and even visiting grain freight trucks. Earthworks are underway after extensive consulta-

tions yet again, and the council has been working with many partners also tasked with the roads projects to ensure suitable delivery.

- Street scape – road draining has improved where previously there were not a lot of storm drains, whilst water is being captured and recycled much more resourcefully. Wonderfully, there are also rose gardens dotted in previously barren land.

- Solar panelling – the Council is very much green driven and so went full steam ahead in applying solar panels to the community centre, and around 40% of the energy gathered actually goes back into the mains grid. “We want to install something similar onto the council’s administration centre, and hopefully start to see some of the cost savings the community centre is seeing,” affirms Fardon

- Community gym - the town has a very strong and active community gym committee who approached the council after researching similar sized town, and presenting evidence for the needs of such

facilities. Fardon explains: "We accepted the submission and got with the concept. We were able to receive funding from LotteryWest, and buy tens of thousands worth of gym and security equipment."

For the Shire's tomorrow

As Fardon and his colleagues continue in steering the Shire towards continued prosperity, he talks to us about some of the needs and plans standing at the helm of the Shire's future:

"We would love better communications and many residents and external businesses remain frustrated with the number of telephone blackspots they encounter, and the slow internet speeds. We're looking for grants to strengthen this, but I know there's a bit of competition."

Deviating from this, Fardon sensibly explains the council's strong, robust strategic planning process which recognises both the local and regional interests and promotes the sustainable growth of the community and the region. Amidst meeting the community's expectations and making the most of its own current assets, Quairading's council seems to be able to walk successfully, the fine line of infrastructure investment. ject, and managed to attract a further $800,000, culminating in vibrant new main pool, with a fun, beach-entry for toddlers and kids, and an aged friendly learn-to-swim pool. Aqua-aerobics groups are already scheduled to make regular use of the facilities, with likely many more visitors to follow.

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Custom Chemicals International

Sometimes, You've Just Got Natural Chemistry

Custom Chemicals International (CCI) is revered by Bob Soden, its Sales Director, as a family-oriented environment that's at the forefront of new ideas and innovation. And rightly so, as since Soden himself was a founder of the company in 1985, it's had satisfied staff on board for decades, and has consistently offered something to the market that many were not; always keeping its products a step ahead of the game.

From its origins of a little warehouse down in Albion, Queensland, it grew and grew and moved location a few times to its current home of Narangba, also in Queensland. It built a fac-

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Custom Chemicals International

WHAT: Australian owned and operated chemical manufacturer

WHERE: Narangba, QLD. 4504

WEBSITE: customchem.com.au

tory there and has grown roots there ever since.

So how does it do its business? "When we started, we looked at the market and saw that there were actually quite a few people in the industrial cleaning product domain. This is when we decided to come up with something a bit novel for its time."

CCI embarked on the process of offering other companies the chance to put their own labels on its products. "This novel idea definitely worked, of course it worked, otherwise we wouldn't be here today. To this day we still do customer labelling." As a supplier to the wholesale distribution market, it has no direct dealings with the public, and with a business model that has worked for all these years, it doesn't plan on ever doing so.

It mostly contracts 'one man band' representatives throughout the country, or the 'little fellas' as Soden affectionately refers to them, to distribute its products. With a huge network of these distributors, business continues to thrive.

Nature lovers

For a company so invested in the dealings of chemicals, CCI has an unusually close relationship with nature and is unashamedly forward about its

love for the environment. Soden exudes passion as he talks of CCI's development of environmentally friendly products.

"We've come up with quite a few innovations in the market in terms of environmentally friendly products. Once cleaning product for example, uses a mixture of lemongrass oil and thyme oil, which might be dearer in cost, but so much better for the environment and for the people using it."

Another such product example is some of their products which use oil derived from coconuts instead of petroleum.

"The environment is big thing for a lot of businesses, so they're happy when they find these kinds of products with us."

A global eye on innovation

The company is constantly looking to the rest of the world to make sure it stays on top of the innovation game. Soden confirms that it is in Germany where CCI gets a lot of its standout innovation, such as a window cleaner

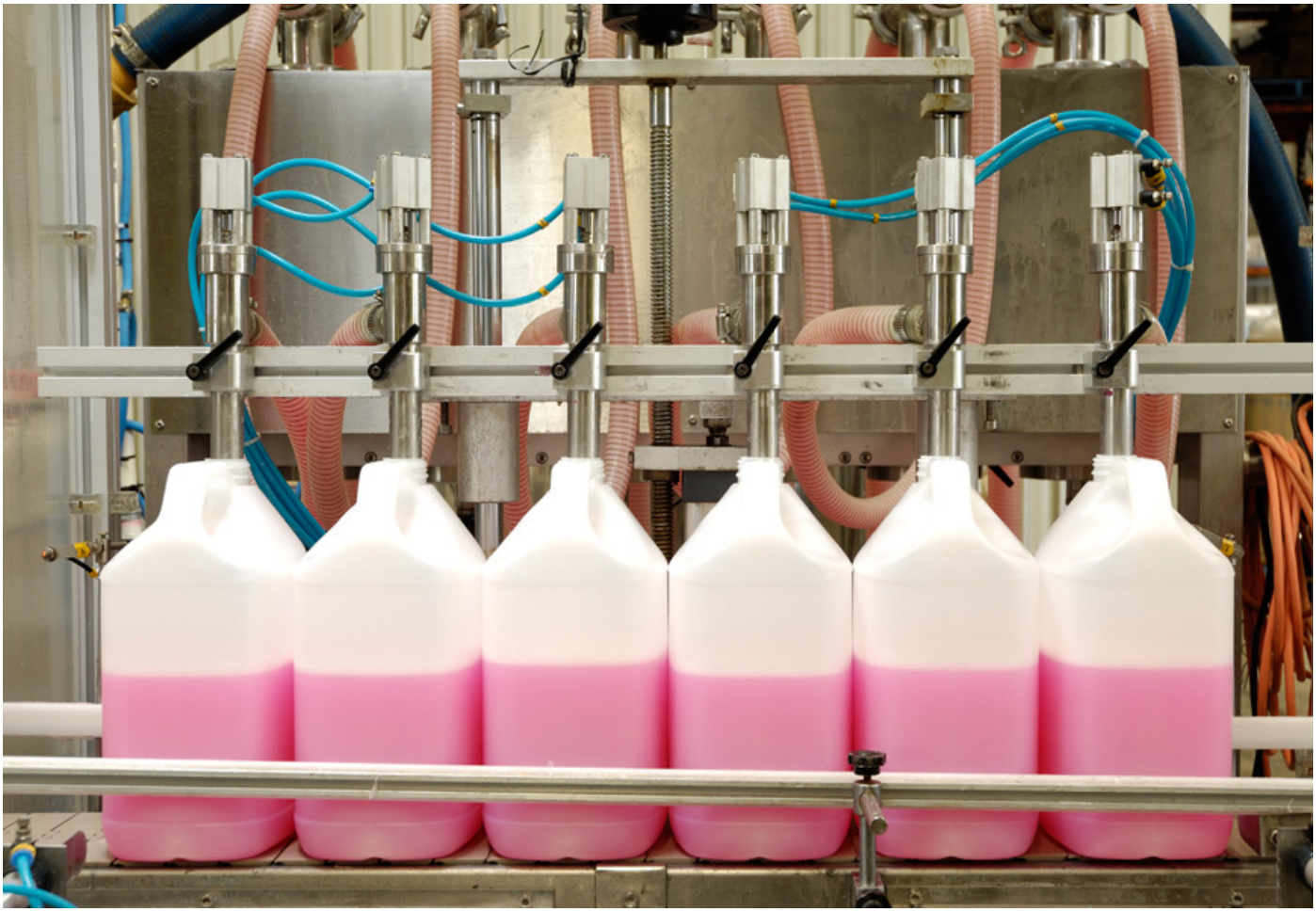
that fascinatingly uses nanotechnology.

"A lot of chemical tech is coming out of Europe. We've got some here, and by adding a few bits and pieces, we've adapted them into some really great products."

Another way of making sure it keeps up with the latest findings, need and initiatives, is through the close network the firm keeps with its representatives. They are always reporting back on what's new, what the market is looking for and what they've seen being pioneered. Then, through a thoroughly careful process of amending and testing, CCI brings to life something unique and really special.

Something in particular that Soden tells us CCI are working on is a range of products focusing on probiotics, an field it very much believes is the future of retail chemical based products. He's talking about all sorts of distinctive products like leave-on mopping solutions and disinfectants that are entirely green-friendly.

"Only another couple of countries in



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the world are doing it," he exclaims about probiotics.

A world of change

Soden talks of years of having to ride the waves of governmental change and regulation with the most recent being activated on 1 January of this year. To be specific, there was a big, worldwide change requiring the harmonising of global labelling. Namely, the UN Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of classification and labelling of chemicals, which has had a profound effect on safety and compliance initiatives around the globe, including those of CCI. The costs have been vast, but it's not something CCI can't handle.

"We started preparing for this in 2015, because we knew it was coming and we knew we had to be ready for it. We've been having to deal with these kinds of things for years. We have costly waste water licenses with councils and we deal with the requirement of the environmental protection agency. When we started out, the EPA didn't exist at all."

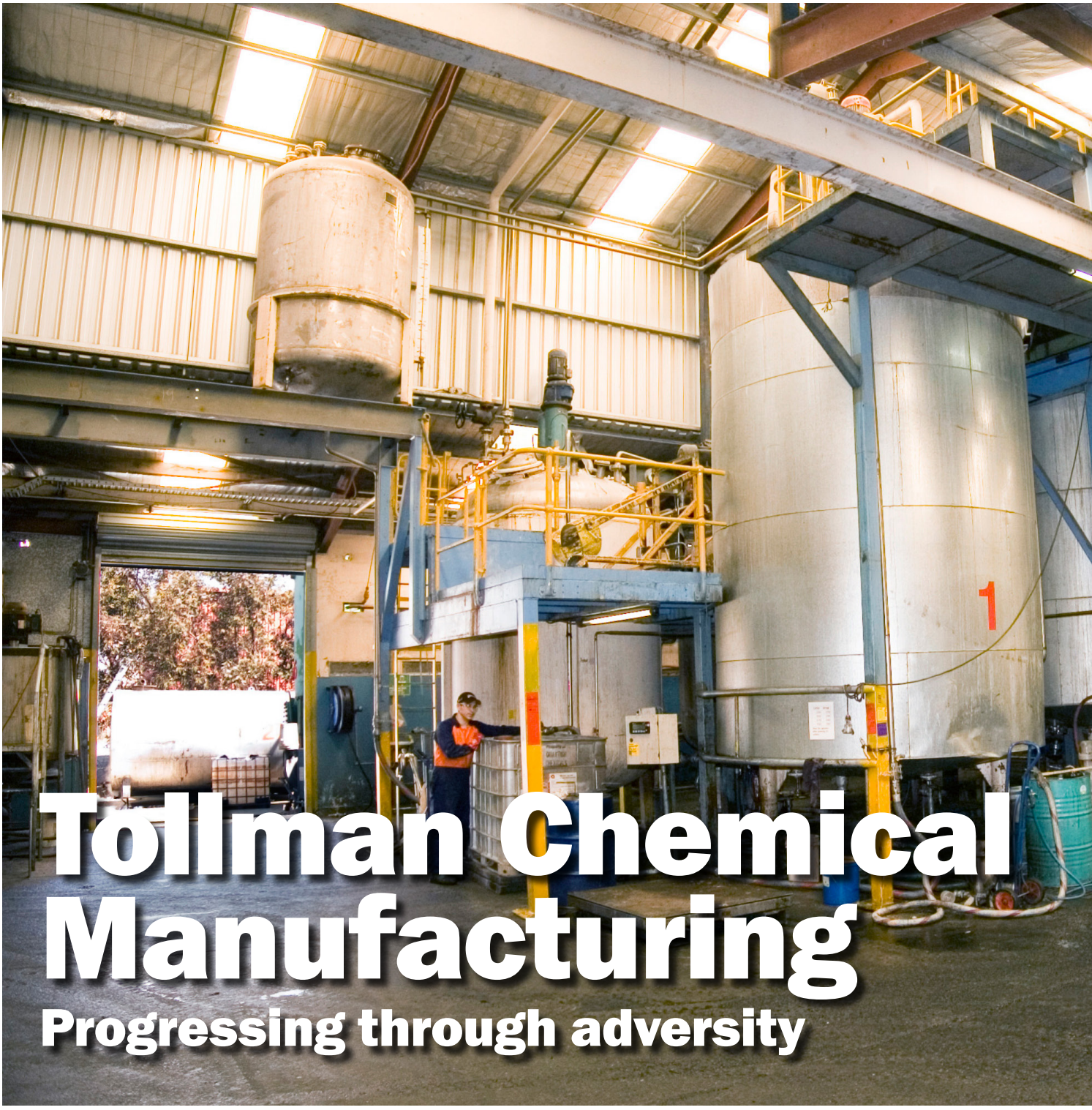
The CCI is firm in its compliance and safety measures, and know that the way forward means abiding by these measures and keeping their clients in the know as to what is going on and what needs to be worked on.

The future is probiotic

As our interview draws to a close, Soden is keen to once again highlight how much he believes in probiotics for not only his business, but for the future of chemical innovation at large. Much of the firm's capital investment has gone into the creation of these probiotic products, and they've been using and creating many environmentally friendly including soluble plastics and soluble toiletries for the portable toilet market. These may seem like small things but could change the whole reality of how things are done.

"You've got to add something different in order to make some money out of it," Soden exclaims. "That's the name of the game."

The main direction of business for CCI at the moment is clearly innovation. Soden wants innovation in probiotic products to eventually kill bugs in hospitals that antibiotics cannot, and for it to be used even in the place of disinfectants and chlorines – and alas, all this from something commonly drunk to improve stomach digestion. With the firm's distributors looking more and more to snap these products up, CCI's direction is certainly looking to be the future of chemical advance.



Tollman Chemical Manufacturing

Progressing through adversity

Tollman takes up the task of manufacturing, in an Australia where the promise of the Australian manufacturing industry is diminishing. Alas, you'll know of recent news citing Holden and Toyota's manufacturing plants are due to close imminently. Nevertheless, even with the commercial challenges and bureaucracy manufacturing faces, Tollman stands strong as a successful customised chemical manufacturer in the Victoria region.

Wholly independent and 100% privately owned, Tollman has been manufacturing, formulating, packaging and distributing chemicals for 15 years. The company's website does state to

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Tollman Pty Ltd

WHAT: A customized chemical manufacturer

WHERE: 5-7 Maria St, Laverton North VIC 3026, Australia

WEBSITE: tollman.net.au

provide services to a wide range of industries, but Managing Director Malcolm Dodson affirms that the majority of its business is done in agriculture, a mainstay of the economy of the land Down Under.

At present, the company services three core markets: contract tolling, toll manufacturing and its own proprietary products. The company prides itself on manufacturing and formulating its customers own chemical formulations, and if not that, it works to meet particular specifications assigned to it. The business of toll manufacturing needs an extraordinary level of understanding and cooperation due to its largely collaborative nature. As such, the success of what has been at the backbone of Tollman's success, can in part be attributed to its strong partnerships, to cultivate the mutual growth of all businesses involved.

Tollman's factory stands strong in Laverton North, Victoria with substantial manufacturing technology and storage tanks, as well as the workers and chemical experts that make it all happen. But what is it specifically about the company that has really kept the clock ticking on it all these years? To unearth this, we spoke in depth with Dodson about the company, how it operates, and how his leadership has kept it going and growing.

Malcolm Dodson

Managing Director of Tollman Pty Ltd

Malcolm Dodson is a Fitter and Turner with a Graduate Diploma of Business (Monash University). Worked as a Maintenance Fitter and subsequently Personnel Office for H.J. Heinz Co. for 17 years. Moved to Dollar Sweets as Production Supervisor and then to Operations Manager for 5 years. In 2000 was appointed to Factory Manager – VSP Industries a Toll manufacturer to the Chemical Industry. After the closing of that factory Malcolm built his own manufacturing plant and commented Tollman Pty Ltd in 2002. Today is the Managing Director of Tollman Pty Ltd with 15 employees making Chemicals for Industrial, Paper, Personal Care, Mining and Agriculture.

The history of Tollman

Established in 2002, Dodson himself founded the company. The story goes that Dodson was working for an existing chemical business that decided to shut up shop. Seizing the opportunity, he decided to rent part of the facility that was being vacated, and continued on with one of the contracts that was also being vacated. He negotiated a 500 tonne chemical creation deal, rented some equipment, and off he went.

"I worked on getting some more business over the next few years, and eventually built my own facility in 2003 when I couldn't rent that one any longer," says Dodson.

Of course, at the beginning, the busi-

ness didn't have the manpower is does today:

"At the start I did everything, and I mean everything. Whether it was driving the fork, making the chemicals, getting the sales."

As time progressed though, the company grew and Dodson employed people to do jobs like engineering and building the plant. His 15 employees now include, usefully, a general manager to manage the day-to-day operations.

"My role now is to develop business relationships, look at opportunities, do product costings, see the future of the company and to drive it towards where it needs to be going," confirmed Dodson.

The Efficacy Of Efficiency

Much like many of its finely tuned machines, Tollman itself operates like a finely tuned machine. It's more than apparent that under Dodson's leadership, efficiency is King, which is likely another branch to the success story of the business. An example of this resourcefulness coming into play? The company has only one site of operations with no ambition to build anymore.

"To get the unit cost of production down, you need to really work your site hard," Dodson explains.

"It can be a difficult country, Australia, the distance and costs of transportation are vast. It's cheaper to do it here, and if we need to ship to the west, we can do so for a reasonable amount of money."

Fundamentally, Dodson clarifies that the goal at Tollman is to maximise

plant utilisation, maximise net profit ("not necessarily sales but net profit"), and the company is successfully doing that, more or less through its efficiency.

"The government doesn't seem to support manufacturing; it says the cost of wages is too high. I think this is broad and sweeping statement. Wages are high, but so is the cost of living," Dodson states.

"If you put in measures of efficiency and get you unit costs of production down, maybe use a 25 tonne reactor instead of a 5 tonne one, those kinds of labour costs can be reduced."

And as such, that's how Tollman operates. The company has a very lean overhead of staff. It streamlines as much as it can and there aren't too many bums on seats:

"Most of our people are in the factory, producing."

In fact, in the future, for some of its packaging lines, the company will be looking at using robots to reduce labour, "and that's one way of increasing your profit" Dodson rationalises.

Growth

Product Development

In terms of keeping the business going, and indeed growing, Dodson is heavily focused on not just the development of its existing workstreams, but on creating new ones. As such, the business has and does continue to see the benefits:

"Our sales increased remarkably last year, they've plateaued a little bit, but they should climb again next year," says Dodson.

Whilst Tollman has been in the field of manufacturing general chemicals for a long time, that which is its baseline, it has since become heavily involved in agricultural herbicide manufacturing (as previously mentioned). Furthermore:

"This year, we've got another business starting where all the products are made by Tollman, but marketed through this new business." These products are wetting agents used in conjunction with herbicide in an agricultural field.

Another big advancement on the Tollman agenda: a year and a half ago, Dodson hired a highly skilled technology development specialist who has been key in developing a number of products for Tollman. One of these being a product Dodson described as being as "better than anything on the market", but furtively, and understandably, he cannot say much more until the product is released.

The company also has a product development chemist onsite creating additional products in quite a variety of

industrial markets. Dodson has found that businesses that are getting their products in the US, find the costs to be substantial - mainly after seeing the US dollar going against them. In turn, these companies have asked Tollman to produce product equivalents, which it has been doing, successfully, for many a customer.

Big talk, but Dodson does proclaim Tollman to be probably most versatile chemical company in Australia in terms of the types of chemicals it can make:

"There's not a lot of small chemical companies / independently owned companies like us in Australia that can offer the services we do. There are companies that do certain things, and companies that do others, but there are none that cover the range we do. If we exited the market now, there'd be a fairly big hole on what these companies can get done in Australia."

Indeed there is a lot of local demand for things that need to be made quickly and promptly, and where only one company in the whole country makes a certain product, or if businesses have to order their products from China, there's always the potential for a six week lead time if not more. Hence, Tollman recently had a titanium reactor built in China which is on the verge of getting shipped to Australia.

"This reactor means we can cut the lead time from months, to a week. That big stretch of water from here

to the rest of the world means time, and that's where our business is at its prime, we are Johnny On the Spot," Dodson exclaims.

Marketing

So whilst there's the continual product development strategies for the business, the company's marketing strategy remains simple (yet still effective). Word of mouth and Google Adwords.

"Google Adwords has been great for our online visibility, though the word-of-mouth marketing for Tollman is especially strong. We have a good reputation so we get a lot of referrals. We work 365 days a year, we deliver satisfaction to customers, and in the 15 years we've been operation, we've never, ever missed or had a late order that was our fault," states Dodson proudly. Being a small company has helped Dodson keep it exceedingly efficient, more so than a larger company might have been able to.

With regards to the internal marketing, and by that we mean the internal culture that keeps its works happy and productive Tollman, Dodson is confident in the satisfaction level of his employees. The evidence is in the one single person that has left in the space of two to three years, and the low level of absenteeism:

"The team gets along pretty well, we all know our role and I think people can see there's a future with Tollman."

Employees see that Dodson, as Managing Director, is highly driven to keep the business going. They are confident in his ambition and his ability in continuing to make something of Tollman. This is especially since many of these workers have come from similar roles where they've seen these companies shut down, leaving them disconcertingly out of work. "It's nice for them to see prospects and possibilities."

End roads

Dodson is clear in his distaste of government bureaucracies that can hold up a lot of progress for his business and businesses like his. Nevertheless, he strives to jump these hurdles with persistence and tenacity. He hopes that the regime will change, and that the powers that be will connect with manufacturers more closely to understand them better and to help nurture this fading commerce.

Nevertheless, Tollman is recognised by the local council as a growing enterprise, and the company has won a few local business awards in years gone by. Like a plant growing through concrete, the business prospers in an otherwise challenging landscape.

Chemsol Australia

Chemsol Australia's successful combination of creative chemistry and smart business has seen it develop into one of Perth's leading chemical manufacturers. Since 1989, Chemsol has operated in Bibra Lake, developing, making and distributing products throughout Australia and internationally. Businesses can purchase these chemical products as wholesalers, large and small, or as small business operators where the products are used in the course of their business eg. industrial and mechanical workshops.

Speaking in detail with Nathan Hawkesford, Managing Director, we were able to get a nicely rounded view of the company's origins and the magic ingredients that make up its steady,

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Chemsol Australia Pty Ltd

WHAT: A developer and manufacturer of specialty chemical products for automotive, industrial, domestic and agricultural use

WHERE: 64 Cocos Dr, Bibra Lake WA 6163, Australia

WEBSITE: chemsol.com.au

lucrative endurance in the sphere of wholesale chemicals.

Histories and Families

Nathan's support at the top comes from Director (and father) John Hawkesford who oversees areas that include marketing and relations with sales reps. Nathan himself leads the chain of production, quality and delivery – and that's on top of obviously being at the helm of steering the company's strategies. Suffice it to say, he has a full and complex understanding of the company.

"Our family took over in 2005," explains Nathan "Before, the business was owned and run by an industrial chemist." The Hawkesford's spotted the distinct business potential in the chemist's existing formulations, and took over. The direction of the company, under its new owners, saw it successfully develop varying markets through newly-adapted formulations and strong customer ties.

To date, Chemsol supplies to local markets, as well as across the east coast. Meanwhile, through its wholesalers, its products reach the far corners of Asia, Africa and many other parts of the world.

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Products and propensities

Though the company has its blanket products, it can service customers more bespokely by creating special order products. There are often businesses looking for deviations from the blanket norm, chemical formulations with unique edges for those exciting USPs. In cases like these, Chemsol's consulting chemist develops a fresh formulation for that marketplace. Nathan states:

"As long as volumes are there and there is regular buying, that product will only be sold to that particular customer, though we do still retain the intellectual property."

"We also toll blend formulations for customers whereby they own the formulations and all formulations are kept confidential. This can be assured also by the signing of a Confidentiality Agreement".

Chemsol does provide quite the array of offerings and services, but the ones it particularly seeks to highlight as an emergent field, are its automotive and fuel power products. Nathan, discussing one of these products explains:

"Our fuel treatment product absorbs water out of diesel and petrol fuel. This will stabilise and revitalise stale fuel," Alas, such a product can indeed prove a boon considering some of the issues stale fuel can create - algae growth, blocked fuel filters and sulphuric acid build-up to name but a few.

"Our product emulsifies the water in the fuel and harmlessly burns it off, also eliminating the prospect of having to drain the tanks and clean them out manually."

"At the end of it all, this can save the customer from some expensive experiences."

Diversity Dreams

The company's annual revenue comes from an interestingly wide variety of products, industries and its own local business consumers. Chemsol crafts products for automotive, industrial, mining, domestic and agricultural use. While it holds ownership of the

POWER UP
AUTO & INDUSTRIAL

NATHAN HAWKESFORD
Managing Director of Chemsol Australia Pty Ltd

I grew up in rural Western Australia where I spent my formative years on my parents farming property in Dongara WA. I completed secondary school as a border at Hale School in Perth where I finished in 1989.

For my working career I started in hospitality management where I managed to travel and work all over the world.

In 2004 I came back to Australia and in 2005 purchased the Chemsol business in partnership with my father. Since taking over in 2005 we have quadrupled the turnover and developed our own brand PowerUp Auto & Industrial, which we currently supply to over 500 businesses in Western Australia plus many other businesses throughout Australia .

With the help of the Curtain Growth program I have managed to gain a solid understanding of all facets of business including staff management, marketing, logistics and business financial analysis.

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formulas, some wholesalers decant the product into their own labelled containers (or Chemsol itself does this for them). “We sell in bulk, we own the formulation, so only we can make changes,” confirms Nathan.

“Moving forward in today’s manufacturing industry, I think diversification is the key,” Nathan opines. “Because if you don’t mix it up, all industries have their ups and downs, so anything could happen. You can see that through the mining sector, many companies who were solely manufacturing for that sector, have been hit hard, if they’re still in business.”

Sustainable Solutions

Chemsol always encourages the green option when formulating products for clients, although some go the way of the cheapest option, which is often not the green one. Nevertheless, there’s always been a push towards the biodegradable products, which in itself, is a hundred more steps in the

EMSOL Australia Pty Ltd

green direction compared to companies who do not offer this option.

"It's a conscious thing for the business," explains Nathan "We're we're always trying to do the right thing."

Hence, in the same breath, the company's factory tries to recycle as much as it can. It uses recycled drums for packaging; it recycles the wash water when cleaning out tanks, and recycles any excess product back into batches to try to avoid any waste. Lots of recycling basically.

Chemsol and its future

Chemsol is currently working to 60% of its capacity so there is much room for growth and much planned for this growth. In terms of marketing, it will continue down its path of online and word of mouth, while maintaining a family-friendly work atmosphere. It is through identifying what's important and needed in the country and its industries, that Chemsol will maintain its market.

"Much of the growth we'll likely be seeing is in the agricultural market, and especially in horticulture," says Nathan.

Moving forward, the company seeks to not only maintain its existing businesses, but also looks keenly at developing sales of other products. Chemsol has just recently started marketing PowerUp batteries for the automotive industry. Moreover, it wants to take strong strides into the certified organics market where Nathan notes the growing interest.

With all the advantages that come with intensive quality control and fast turnaround times, Nathan attributes much of the business successes to of course, the continued satisfaction of customers. Its success and longevity in Australia where the manufacturing industry feels uncertain, is most noteworthy; the intelligent development of the Chemsol strategy and operations is undoubtedly at the helm of it all.

International On The Water Hotel

Peace, Work and Play

The four star International on the Water Hotel was created by established hoteliers with a boutique perspective in mind. It's only been open on the Perth riverbanks for a short time following its soft opening in late 2014. Nevertheless, those responsible for running the hotel have been working tirelessly to build a unique identity for it. Much of the managerial legwork has been completed by General Manager Helen Hong, who has worked at the hotel intermittently since 2014. She must be doing something right – the Hotel has already been nominated for awards for

AT A GLANCE

WHO: International on the Water Hotel

WHAT: A contemporary four star hotel resting on the banks of Perth's Swan River

WHERE: 1 Epsom Ave, Ascot WA 6104, Australia

WEBSITE:

internationalonthewater.com.au

its hospitality, and business is on the up and up.

"We set a goal that we wanted to be the most popular choice for people coming to Perth to have events," explains Helen. Indeed the hotel accommodates this goal with scenic views, large events areas and all the mods and cons for its guests. The hotel nestles contentedly on Perth's wonderfully winding Swan River. There are many facilities including a gym and a pool. The huge restaurant caters for around 350 people while the riverfront alfresco area can happily accommodate 250 as can, crucially, the carpark.

"Parking is actually more important than you realise," exclaims Helen, "People love it when they find out we have this much parking here, it provides them with a huge relief as it is one less problem for them to handle during their stressful event planning."

The hotel's main building comes with a long history, with elements of it dating as far back as even the 1800s, when it was known as the Belmont Hotel. The ten room variations within the Hotel brim with character and individuality. In fact, throughout the hotel guests are struck with a careful balance of modern décor on a historical

site giving visitors that crisp, stylish Ascot welcome.

Down to business

With one of the hotel's main customer bases being business customers, Helen candidly describes what they have done to attract this crowd and to keep them coming back. She explains that being a corporate style hotel in every sense, they do get a lot of corporate professionals there. Interestingly enough, Helen has found that the most important thing for visiting professionals is fast and reliable wi-fi.

"We make sure that we are always aware of guests needs and ensure that we are able to cater for them. One of these ways is free wi-fi throughout the entire establishment. They expect coverage to be perfect, that's the mind of the market.

"Guests' needs has become increasingly more modernised and demanding. Everything is becoming more and more technology based. We do not have guest forms in rooms, instead they fill them out on their mobile devices. We have movies on demand and electronic welcoming systems. It is these types of things that make the hotel more convenient and user friendly. Of course, there is a cost to the hotel, but it is these little touches that keep people coming back."

The hotel is located a touch past the main inner city and only eight minutes away from the International Airport,

yet close enough for visitors to use as a base. It is fast gaining a sort of idyllic yet convenient reputation. Close enough to the concrete jungle yet far enough removed to feel like a different world away. The views are abundant, as is the tranquillity.

Facilities and feedback

In the tight ship that Helen maintains, she mentions three values she seems to pride in above all else; cleanliness, customers, and constant development.

"We try our best to make the place spotless, that is what customer want. When they dine in the restaurant, we want that price to be reasonable for them. We want them to stay here and be able to enjoy a nice meal without feeling like they are racking up five star prices."

Every three months or so, the hotel gives out customer feedback forms and acts on the responses immediately. This is where the concept of constant development is most strong:

"For me, as a general manager, I believe that standards are never good enough and that there is always room for improvement. We always carry out staff training that is focused on customer service. These training sessions remind our staff how to interact and assist customers to make them feel comfortable," says Helen.

She invests a lot of time and training

in her staff, and says that they always do the best that they can. “Sometimes you can not avoid public comments. We address these problems as quickly and tactfully as possible,” also adding that “our staff always do all that they can to ensure that customers have a delightful experience.”

“When it comes to the team I work with, people are open, and we all drive towards to same goal and that is to give our best service. We all have the same ambition in our work, the same goals and everyone’s happy to be working in this environment.”

The riverside operations

Helen overlooks 50 staff, the facilities and the commercial end of the operations. In terms of marketing, while the hotel does follow the classic advertising campaign trail - newspapers, offers, street advertising - what Helen believes will be the real driver for growth is through return travellers and through trusted word-of-mouth. “We strongly believe that people will stay here, have a good experience and come back again, and even recommend us to others.”

Where her 50 staff are concerned, Helen maintains a training program for each new employee, and nurtures development throughout their working life at the hotel through training and vocational programmes. In terms of the wider community, because the hotel is located in Perth, getting Australian products is easy for the hotel; it continuously tries to introduce more local businesses into the Hotel.

A rounded experience

“We noticed it is not just the hotel rooms that need to meet a certain criteria, but the service and facilities too,” Helen asserts, “Overall people come here if they feel valued throughout the International on the Water experience. From the prices and the vast room space, to the food they eat. We make sure that the high quality of their stay is reverberated throughout the hotel.”

With such ambitious thinking, the revered award nominations and the stunning riverside setting, the future of the hotel looks nothing but positive. As Helen and her staff continue in their forward thinking, proactive momentum, we predict a burgeoning future for the International on the Water Hotel.

Leila Alloush

Victorian Arabic Social Services

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Victorian Arabic Social Services

WHAT: A non-profit organisation focused on providing services to both the Arabic community and those outside of it

WHERE: C1, 1-13 The Gateway, Broadmeadows, Vic. 3047

WEBSITE: vass.org.au

Establishing peace within communities

While talking about social justice and the things that make everyone equal is important, actively seeking out change and guiding the development of grass-roots individuals into leaders is even more crucial. Leila Alloush is one of the people who has dedicated her life in helping others and showing the world that positive change can only occur through cooperation and hard work.

When Leila migrated from Lebanon to Australia almost 35 years ago she encountered many difficulties, both expected and unexpected. For one, she was lacking English language skills and had to learn everything from scratch. Her migration and settlement processes was challenging. Transitioning back then was very stressful, with racism being a huge factor in the school environment and peers being unwelcoming to foreigners especially those who

weren't even able to speak English. She was fortunate enough to have a lot of people support her allowing her to preserver. Since then, she vowed to help others and reciprocate the measure of kindness that was shared with her during her first time in the country. Aside from being fluent in English, Leila has also completed two university degrees and is now the CEO of Victorian Arabic Social Services, or VASS for short.

Leila has been involved in migrant and multicultural services for more than 30 years. During that time, she has helped develop a variety of services for women, families, retired citizens, and more. Moreover, she established the direct services now offered by VASS. Originally, the organisation was a network of people who had identified a gap of services for the Arabic community as well as a lot of racism towards the Arabic and Muslim people of Australia. Over the years, the organisation grew and is now a state-wide key service provider. Leila herself slowly became more involved in the process of management and the organisation was built further while establishing clear visions, values, and a strong engagement with the community.

The principles of social justice

Over the years, Leila has learnt that no single community can prosper on its own.

"One of the key things I've learnt is that no community in Australia will succeed when living in isolation from other communities. I've learnt to build bridges between them and develop strategies with all communities across diverse factors. Everyone is responsible for building peace and no one should say, 'That's not my role'. I believe that we should all stand firmly for social justice and that everyone can do something, no matter where they are. Within their family role, their community role, their parent role, they can all contribute something as long as they have the principles and the values of social justice to their hearts and minds", she says.

After all, one of the things that makes her work in the community so successful is that she tends to generate a lot of support for her ideas and her mission. The community, along with a host of volunteers, have been instrumental to the organisation, their services, and their projects. Leila has received a lot of community support. They have managed to achieve great results in building peaceful communities, educational and women's services, and a host of other activities that have benefited all of the communities involved with the organisation. Like Leila says, "social justice is the responsibility of everyone".

The driving force of multiculturalism

Over the years, multiculturalism has been a major driving force for both Lei-

la and VASS. Almost every year, the organisation is presented with the multicultural services excellence award by the Department of Multicultural Affairs. Leila herself has also received a number of awards including the Leadership award from the Victorian List of Women in Leadership and the Humanitarian award. Though recognition is not the reason why Leila does what she does, such awards help to promote her ideals and the activities undertaken by her and VASS.

With 35 staff spread across four different locations, VASS has an extended reach despite its limited resources. A large body of volunteers and the expertise of people like Leila allow the organisation to complete a multitude of projects and offer a large variety of services. Despite the name, the organisation retains an inclusive approach and are involved with a number of communities. Whoever approaches the organisation will be serviced, regardless of race, ethnicity, social status, or any other characteristic.

Affecting change, one step at a time

One of Leila's goals is to help people understand that they can affect

Though Leila and VASS have a very cooperate relationship with the government, the funding allocated to them is very limited compared to the amount of work they do. In the future, Leila wants to increase the partnership with the government as well as the mainstream services. As she explained to us, there are very critical issues that require a whole-community approach as they affect a diverse range of people. Furthermore, she wants VASS to offer more educational services in isolated areas as such an approach will directly lead to better employability within the Arabic community which is a major concern today. Moreover, she wants to support refugees and humanitarian services in a culturally appropriate way. In addition to all that, she would like to offer increased support for isolated elderly citizens.

change with every gesture. Making peaceful communities is not the responsibility of any one person or organisation but rather of the collective. Right now, VASS has a waiting list of volunteers from a multicultural background who are waiting to work for them. The organisation has a wide range of issues that they can help with, varied creative responses, a rich cultural and social background, and a unique status in many communities. VASS has attracted respect so people wish to be a part of that and have even gone to do placements there in order to gain experience in an active organisation.

As a registered training organisation, VASS has several strategies in place to address the increase of human resource capacity in order to achieve more within each community through both volunteering and paid labour. There's a clear vision and plan for the next 10 years and Leila will be at the forefront of such changes that will continue to influence the community and help establish the peace.

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