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Workers ditch the commute

An emerging trend of co-working spaces and smart hubs is booming for the new generation of small businesses and start-ups

by ILIANA STILLITANO

WORKERS in Western Sydney are ditching the arduous commute to work and opting for a desk in a shared office.

The emerging work trend of co-working spaces and smart hubs is booming as a new generation of small businesses, start-ups and freelancers swap the traditional office and commercial lease for a shared workspace.

“The trend back in 2014-15 was to be (in a co-working space) in the CBD or fringe but in 2017-18, there has been strong interest from regional hubs across Greater Western Sydney,” said Grant Philipp, chief executive of Office Hub, a website for finding and listing shared and serviced offices and co-working hubs.

“Shared spaces offer flexibility for businesses who simply don’t have the ability to commit to longer term space,”

“They love the shared facilities and the fact that the capital costs are zero and they don’t need personal guarantees and six month bond to secure the space.”

Real estate consultancy Knight Frank said the co-working industry was one of the most prolific changes to workplace design in recent years, putting its growth in the last five years at 597 per cent.

Since its launch in September last year, flexible workspace provider WOTSO has grown to a network of 12 sites, including Penrith.

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Regional Roundup

**NORTH WEST**

**Hills office opened**
Brisbane-based Metro Property Developments has opened an office in Baulkham Hills to accommodate the growth of the home building arm, Creation Homes.

**Cherrybrook Village Shopping**
The $36.9M redevelopment of Cherrybrook Village Shopping Centre has been approved to include a new supermarket, medical centre, a gymnasium and 628 parking spaces.

**Bought for $5.2M**
OLYMPIAN Property Holdings has bought a 1900-square-metre warehouse, at 257 Liberty Road, Huntingwood, for $5.2 million, from Peter Charles Investments Pty Ltd.

**Green Captain tenant**
PRIVATE investor William Wong has secured Captain Green for his 690-square-metre warehouse and office facility, at 13 Nowill Street, Arndell Park, at an annual rent of the $91,000.

**SOUTH WEST**

**Yennora approval for Stockland**
The Department of Planning & Environment has given Stockland Developments approval for a total of 21,000 square metres of warehouse space, 16,000 square metres of office space and space for 165 vehicles, at the Yennora Distribution Park and Distribution Centre.

**GWA consolidates operations**
The bathroom hardware GWA Group is consolidating its manufacturing and warehouse operations into a new $45M purpose-built 31,029-square-metre facility at Charter Hall’s MS/M7 Industrial Estate, at Prestons, on a 10-year lease.

**Sebel jobs saved**
The Rosero Group expects to retain more than 100 workers at the Minto factory of Sebel’s Furniture, which went into voluntary administration in June. Sebel, founded in 1951, moved from Padstow to Minto in 2014.

**Tonnes increase capacity**
SUEZ Recycling & Recovery has approval to increase the overall capacity of its Wetherill Park Waste Transfer Station by 130,000 tonnes annually to 230,000 tonnes annually. The facility will retain its existing capacity to accept 90,000 tonnes annually of general solid waste and 10 cubic metres of asbestos waste weekly.

**CENTRAL WEST**

**Group buys two sites**
DEVELOPER Coronation Property has consolidated its position in the Parramatta CBD buying two Church Street sites for $50 million from Iris Capital. The properties at 263 Church Street, a commercial building, and the Crown Hotel at 295 Church Street are in the heart of the city’s food and entertainment “eat-street” precinct. The properties are close to a 54-floor residential and hotel tower which the company is building in Phillip Street.

**Marriott seeks approval**
JZL Properties has submitted to Parramatta City Council a development application for a 24-storey, 4.5-star Marriott Starwood hotel at 89 George Street in the Parramatta CBD, comprising 300 rooms, restaurant and bar, ballroom and 60 above ground car parking spaces, which will utilise a car stacking system. The hotel will rise 93.5 metres and have a gross floor area of 12,853 square metres.

**Mirvac in $86M deal**
MIRVAC Group has an $86.3M deal for an A-grade twin tower, at 75 George Street, in the Parramatta CBD from CorVal. The asset covers six levels and is currently 100 per cent leased, with St. George Bank occupying 68 per cent as the building’s major tenant. CorVal bought the building in 2012 for $32.5M and has a permit to add another two storeys of 2600 square metres office space to the building.

Scenic Skyway upgrade

THE Scenic Skyway in the Blue Mountains, which turns 60 next year, has undergone a $3M upgrade to increase visitor capacity by 30 per cent and offer a more spacious visitor experience.

**Scenic Skyway upgrade**

Made in the West Film Festival 2018

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Amazing story of Vitex International

From post-war immigrant to building a $100M global pharma business

RED Dwyer

OWNERS of a pharmaceutical firm have turned a small importer into a global leader in the contract manufacturing of complementary medicine products.

Elie Chami emigrated from post-war Lebanon to Sydney in the 1970s when he was 16 years old and over time saw the potential in exporting high quality products.

So in 1989, Elie and his son Aniss established Vitex International Services with an aim, in time, of integrating its operations and becoming a manufacturer.

Fast forward to 2017, the company has now established a $100 million pharmaceutical factory, at Eastern Creek, to meet the increasing demand for high-quality Australian manufactured complementary medicines.

Built over seven months, the state-of-the-art manufacturing plant is, at 26,000 square metres, the single largest facility of its kind in the country offering local and international brands the technology available today.

“‘Our business flourished because of a lot of international demand for Australian-made complimentary medicine,’ said Vitex Pharmaceuticals, CEO, Dr Annis Chami, who succeeded his father as CEO, in March 2016. Elie Chami is now chairman and managing director.

‘[That] will allow [Vitex] to manufacture close to 20 billion doses, tablets and capsules annually,’ which should be able to supply a lot of international markets that have now become dependent on Australian-made complimentary medicines.”

“This is a great Australian story of enterprise, investment and commitment,” said Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, who opened the new headquarters, formerly at Prestons.

“What a great Australian family business story,” he said.

“We [have] achieved what I was dreaming for from day one when I first started.”

Success: Elie Chami and son, Aniss.

founder Elie Chami said

The NSW Minister for Trade and Industry, Niall Blair, was full of praise of the family’s $100 million investment.

“That’s what today is about, celebrating one of those companies that will continue to be a giant on the global scheme,” he said.

The Minister for Western Syd-ney, Stuart Ayres, was also upbeat about the facility.

“The company’s new research lab will provide manufacturing and testing equipment to support clinical trials, research studies and new product development,” he said.

Highlighting the demand for Australian pharmaceutical products, the Australian Financial Review reported Dr Chami saying revenues at Vitex two years ago were running at around $10 million, with the company budgeting for revenues to be above $100 million in 2017-18.

“We will definitely consider in the future some type of public offering,” Dr Chami said.

As vitamins are essential for the body’s general growth and development the "vitamins" Vitex has absorbed over three decades have contributed markedly to the Chami family’s entrepreneurial spirit.
Tropfest best in 26 years

ILIANA STILLITANO

TROPFEST founder John Polson has hailed the annual film festival a great success after its second year in Parramatta.

“I think this was one of the best Tropfest’s we’ve had in 26 years,” the Australian actor and director said of the four day event that saw film lovers converge on the host city.

“The weather was perfect, the crowd was responsive, and the films were arguably the strongest we’ve ever had.”

This year’s range of “culturally diverse” film entries was in part due to the decision in 2016 to move Tropfest to Parramatta, one of Sydney’s most ethnically vibrant areas, Mr Polson said.

“We’ve been trying to ensure we’re not just ‘transplanting’ an eastern suburbs event out to Western Sydney – it’s our true emotional home, not just our geographical one,” he said.

“We definitely had a more diverse selection of films than we’ve ever seen – including two films that were entirely in other languages (Arabic and Spanish).”

Add to that Susan Sarandon, Rachel Griffiths, Tim Minchin and more, it was definitely one of the strongest events in 26 years. The feedback we’ve had has been phenomenal.

Mr Polson said planning was already underway.

“Parramatta is starting to be looked at as a destination and Tropfest is an example of that,” she said.

“It brings crowds of thousands of people who go somewhere before Tropfest and go somewhere after and usually they would stay local so the business benefits from this type of event is significant.”

Mr Polson said it was difficult to determine the exact number of attendees but The Crescent amphitheatre was almost packed.

“It seemed to me like a big increase over last year, which is nice,” he said.

When we moved to Parramatta, the plan was definitely to fill the park so we have some work to do over the coming 12 months to ensure we get the word out even more and it’s standing room only next year.”

And on next year, Mr Polson said planning was already underway.

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*Terms & Conditions Apply. Subject to availability, valid for 20 or more guests on a full day delegate package, for new event business to be quoted, booked and held from the 1st February to 30th June 2018.

EDUCATION Minister Rob Stokes has congratulated Western Sydney maths teacher Eddie Woo for his recognition as one of the top 10 teachers in the world.

Mr Woo, a teacher at Cherrybrook Technology High School, won widespread praise for demystifying maths through his videos – known as WooTube – watched more than 11 million times by viewers globally.

Mr Stokes paid tribute to Mr Woo’s engaging and innovative approach that focuses on student needs in a challenging subject area.

“A wonderful accolade for one of Australia’s great teachers,” Mr Stokes said.

“Eddie was initially motivated to produce his maths videos to assist a student sick with cancer.”

Mr Woo is the only Australian named in the Top 10 teachers of the world in the Global Teacher Prize, an international award run by the Varkey Foundation. The competition has a $1.5 million prize money for the eventual winner.

He was selected from more than 30,000 nominations from 173 countries.
Situated within the picturesque landscapes of Bicentennial Park, Waterview blends modern elegance with tranquil park and lake views, offering the ideal setting for your next event. Boasting soaring ceilings, a large wrap around terrace and an abundance of natural light, Waterview is surrounded by vast parklands, ponds, and lakes creating a picturesque landscape for your guests.

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Sydney Hills Local Business Awards nominations close 6th March, 2018

Blacktown City Local Business Awards nominations open 19th March, 2018
Made In The West back home

Film festival announces WSBA as the new regional print media partner

Western Sydney’s own film festival, Made In The West is heading home to the big screen in Western Sydney this year.

The 2018 gala event will be held on Saturday, November 24 at Event Cinemas, Liverpool.

Made in the West Film Festival is an annual red-carpet event featuring short films and video productions made by independent filmmakers and students in Western Sydney.

Hosted by Still Searchin’ Productions, the festival provides an opportunity for Western Sydney filmmakers to screen their work in front of a live audience.

This year Made In The West has announced that regional news-magazine, Western Sydney Business Access (WSBA) will be the festival’s 2018 regional print media partner.

“We are very proud to have Western Sydney Business Access as our new regional media partner because they’re great supporters of the local arts scene. We look forward to seeing some fantastic coverage for the Western Sydney filmmaker community throughout the year,” said Artistic Director, Ross Page.

Made In The West film festival shines a light on our local film culture and the growing number of filmmakers working in the Greater Western Sydney region.

The festival attracts hundreds of filmmakers from around the region, building stronger collaborative networks across the community and encouraging people to celebrate the creative work being produced out West.

In 2017, Made in the West attracted 53 film submissions from across Western Sydney. The festival line-up included 18 finalist films and 16 semi-finalists, screening to an audience of almost 300 people.

Film submissions are judged by a panel of industry professionals. Finalists compete for trophies including the Best in the West Award, Best Student Film and the highly coveted Audience Choice Award.

Individual category prizes are awarded for Best Director, Cinematographer, Editor, Sound Design, Actor and Actress, with thousands of dollars in prizes donated by local business and community sponsors.

All films must be under 15 minutes in duration and feature cast members, crew members or filming locations from Western Sydney.

“The quality of films being produced in Western Sydney right now would rival any other independent films being made around the country. We are so impressed by the standard of work being produced in our region and we expect to see it improve even more in the years to come,” said Mr Page.

Now in its seventh year, Made In The West Film Festival has curated over 200 short films that were independently produced in Western Sydney.

WSBA publisher, Michael Walls said the time is right for Made In The West to take the next step as one of the region’s artistic success stories.

“We are proud to be partnering with Made In The West team. Western Sydney is home to movement of talented filmmakers and we are delighted to be playing a role in promoting their work and showcasing the people that contribute so much to our culture,” Mr Walls said.

Made In The West screens films of any genre, from documentary and music video, to animation, drama series, sci-fi and horror.

SUBMISSIONS ARE OPEN NOW at www.madeinthewest.com.au

Scenes from last year’s Made In The West gala event.

Visit us online www.wsba.com.au
Zach unfolds door to success

ILIANA STILLITANO

WESTERN Sydney locksmith Zach Winslade edged out a number of apprentice graduates from across Australia and New Zealand to be named Apprentice of the Year.

Mr Winslade came out on top after eligible apprentices were tested on picking, impressioning, lock fitting, master keying, safe diagnostics and general knowledge by the Master Locksmiths Association of Australasia.

The day-long competition, which included both theory and practical testing, aimed to find the best locksmith in Australia and New Zealand.

Industry specialists reviewed and compared all the workpieces and determined Mr Winslade the best of the bunch after he nudged out two other strong competitors by two points.

For his efforts, the new work-shop foreman at Parramatta family business Independent Locksmiths & Security will head off to Europe in May to visit Abus, a security technology company in Germany, and Italy’s Silca factory where key cutting machines are manufactured.

Joining him will be master keying manager, Keiran McGovern, who said Mr Winslade had set an impressive benchmark for the company’s other seven apprentices.

Among them is Mr Winslade’s brother Harry and Parramatta Eels junior representative player Dylan Brown who said he hoped to follow in Mr Winslade’s award winning footsteps.

Mr Winslade said he was working at McDonald’s part time when he got the call from Independent Locksmiths & Security to join their team.

“It’s very exciting,” he said of being named the 2017 John Andrew Apprentice of the Year.

“I’ve not been to Europe before,” he added.

Independent Locksmiths & Security director Michael McGovern said Mr Winslade’s award win was “well deserved” after he had shown dedication and professionalism on the job.

“This award means a lot to us. We have been very proud to have two previous apprentices win the Master Locksmiths Association of Australasia award: Jason Lane in 1992 and back in 1989 Wayne Eagles won the award. Wayne has been with our business for 30 years and is now one of our Business Development Managers and is a specialist in master keying.”

Mr McGovern started Independent Locksmiths & Security in Parramatta more than 40 years ago and today the business is one of the leading commercial locksmith companies in Sydney, specialising in major commercial projects and national service and facilities maintenance contracts.

Recent data from ABS showed that NSW retained its position as the state with the lowest unemployment rate of any state for 32 consecutive months, 0.6 per cent lower than the rest of Australia.

Record construction activity in NSW

COMPLETED construction activity in New South Wales rose strongly over the year as both building and engineering spending notched up strong growth according to latest ABS construction data, with construction work completed climbing 8.1 per cent in 2017.

Engineering spending surged 20 per cent over the year, led by the NSW Government’s infrastructure program. This is compared with 6.6 per cent growth for the rest of Australia.

Building spending remained at record levels, growing by 2.1 per cent, compared to 0.9 per cent growth for the rest of Australia.

New home construction also remained at record levels in NSW, despite a fall of 7.5 per cent for the rest of Australia.

Recent data from ABS showed that NSW retained its position as the state with the lowest unemployment rate of any state for 32 consecutive months, 0.6 per cent lower than the rest of Australia.
Local business awards underway

HE annual local Business Awards are underway in the Hills and Blacktown

Winning a trophy at the Local Business Awards is a thrill, but every entrant receives an even greater prize – learning what their business is doing right, and how they can improve on it.

That’s the take home message from Business Awards founder Steve Loe and after more than three decades he should know.

The Precedent Production managing director founded the awards more than 30 years ago as an opportunity for members of the community to recognise businesses that provide outstanding goods and services.

“Year after year, the stand-out message from our nominees has been that the awards judging process gives them a framework in which they can reflect on every aspect of their business – from customer service to presentation,” Mr Loe said.

“Business people can often become so immersed in the day-to-day running of their operation, that it’s hard to take time to step back and evaluate what they’re doing from a customer’s point of view.

“The Local Business Awards provides an opportunity and framework for business owners and managers to take an impartial look at what they and their teams are doing, then adjust suit.”

This month there’s a buzz among business people in the Hills and Blacktown as the awards get underway in those areas, Mr Loe said.

In the Hills, nominations have closed and judging is underway, while nominations have just opened for the Blacktown Local Business Awards.

Mr Loe said Sydney Hills residents had taken advantage of the opportunity to lodge nominations via the Awards’ website.

“We launched the online nominations option last year and it was a huge success,” he said. “This year, more people than ever took the opportunity to nominate their favourite businesses online.

“Coupled with the printed coupons, we were inundated with thousands of nominations.”

Precedent Productions staff have already started to review the nominations, find the most popular nominees in each business category and notify those who are chosen as finalists.

The awards’ anonymous judges will then visit each finalist to assess their services from a customer’s point of view.

Mr Loe encouraged members of the community to nominate and vote for their favourite local businesses by visiting the Awards’ website www.thebusinessawards.com.

Nominations for the Blacktown 2018 Local Business Awards close on April 10.

Western Sydney Business Access will provide regular updates on the progress of the awards program and will also run a special Finalists Feature.

For further information on the 2018 Local Business Awards, call Precedent Productions on 8588 5060 or visit www.thebusinessawards.com.au.

Success: winners celebrate last years awards.

Local firm wins WestConnex deal

LIVERPOOL company has won an $113M contract to provide cables to the $1.4B WestConnex project.

WestConnex New M4 contractor, CPB Samsung John Holland JV, has awarded the contract to Prysmian Cables Australia Pty Ltd to deliver 1100 kilometres of product for the road tunnel project.

Fifty per cent of the total supply will be manufactured in the Liverpool plant, with the remaining through affiliates in China, Spain and Germany.

“At our Liverpool facility alone we’ve grown our workforce by 10 percent, adding 30 employees this year to deliver around $11 million in product to WestConnex,” Prysmian commercial manager Adam Talbot said.

“It’s a massive achievement; the total length of optical fibre produced from our plant this year could make five round trips to the moon and back.”

In addition to the cables contract, the company is offering technical support on the project.

Prysmian supplied over 500 kilometres of cables for the Sydney Metro Northwest, the first stage of the Sydney Metro, Australia’s biggest public transport project.

The products were supplied by the Liverpool plant and the company’s affiliates around the world. Prysmian Cables Australia Pty Ltd is part of the Italian-based Prysmian Group.

Prysmian supplied over 500 kilometres of cables for the Sydney Metro Northwest, the first stage of the Sydney Metro, Australia’s biggest public transport project.
More than the HSC at Hills Grammar

There will always be contention around league tables and comparisons when it comes to education. It's understandable - parents need a starting point to make decisions on their children's schooling - a clinical 'fact'. Some parents choose a completely different set of criteria specific to their children's needs, talents and goals.

Whatever your starting point, at Hills Grammar we aim to nurture the individuals' strengths and talents to realise their full potential and guide the students to the best possible outcome. In the short term, for the vast majority of students, this means entry into their first or second option for tertiary learning; optimising their ATAR score. Very different to the school's 'HSC Top 100' placing, the student's individual ATAR is what counts when it comes to university entrance. With around 30% gaining ATARs over 90 in 2017, the vast majority of 'Hills' graduates achieved their academic goal.

Thinking in the longer term, what stays with graduates after their school days are well and truly behind them, are the experiences they have had, the relationships formed, and the deeper learning that is testament to a quality education. More than the HSC, in other words. Brianna Huynh from the Class of 2017 reflects, "Hills Grammar’s core values of respect, integrity, service, and excellence have become ingrained in my own value system. The countless opportunities to extend myself have contributed to the development of my abilities and perspective of the world."

The physical and social environment of Hills has supported the development of each student. Additionally, the sound of native wildlife whilst in the classroom serves to remind students of the grand scheme of things, providing a sense of serenity. My experience at the Hills Grammar was indeed invaluable. The lifelong friendships I have made and foundational skills that I have developed will remain with me and positively influence my future. As the school has grown, the students have developed alongside the campus to become Hills Originals, each with their own strengths. Among the Hills is where I found joy and I am proud to forever be a Hills Grammarian."

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Welcome

WELCOME to KPMG Family Business feature articles, which I hope you enjoy reading. If you would like to discuss these articles or how KPMG can help with your business, please feel free to contact me on 9455 9996 or davidpring@kpmg.com.au

Managing GROWTH in a family-controlled enterprise

Research shows that family businesses across the globe are increasing turnover, employment and profits better and faster than the large corporate entities.

ALAN BARR

All businesses, from startups to family-owned businesses, need to ensure that the business is ready for the growth. Find out the essential areas which should be assessed by a family business on a regular basis.

Recent research has revealed that family businesses across the globe are increasing turnover, employment and profits better and faster than the large corporate entities. Unfortunately, many family businesses are often not prepared for the struggle of managing the business effectively during this growth phase. All businesses, from startups to family-owned businesses, need to ensure that the business is ready for the growth. To help your family business growth planning, KPMG Enterprise have identified essential areas which should be assessed on a regular basis:

- **Value creation and future focus** – Is the business aware of the changing dynamics in its existing market, opportunities to diversify or introduce new products/services? This is especially important in the rapidly changing world we are currently living in.

- **Business strategy and planning** – Many businesses do not have a clear growth strategy that enables the business to understand: Where it is going (the vision and purpose, financial goals and strategic priorities); Where it will play (clearly defined business model detailing the market(s), the value proposition and brands, customers and channels of communication) and How it will win (clearly defined operating model).

- **Business structure, operations and finance** – Are the appropriate processes and structures in place to provide accurate and timely financial and management information? Is the structure aligned with the strategy? Are key performance indicators and incentives in place which are aligned with the strategy?

- **Human resources** – Talent management is critical and therefore the business needs to ensure that they have the right people doing the right jobs. It needs to ensure that the processes for recruitment and retention of the right people are in place, succession plans for key positions are established and training programs are setup to improve internal staff skills.

- **Technology** – Technology is critical in any business including ongoing investment and maintenance. Are measures in place to deal with cyber events or disaster recovery should a significant event occur?

- **Governance** – The appropriate level of governance is important to ensure that the business continues, especially with the increasing compliance with regulatory, tax and financial laws. Are the key strategic and operational business risks being reviewed on an annual basis? Does the business have appropriate insurance coverage? Does the business have the appropriate skills and experience as part of their Board of Directors or management team to help achieve the growth objectives?

Article first published by Alan Barr, Director, Head of Family Business KPMG South Africa

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Reported fraud is on the decline

But the perpetrators are becoming more professional

GARY GILL

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THE headline figures for KPMG’s Fraud Barometer saw, in the period October 2016 to September 2017, 153 frauds reported with a value of $7.6m. There was a sharp decrease in number and value – but the average value of a fraud remains constant at around $3.1m.

This is the good news.

The less pleasant findings show an increasing proportion of fraud against government bodies and increasing levels of cyber-related and identity theft risks.

Firstly, in a few years we have seen a decline in reported fraud – and the scale is surprising. Reported frauds can and do fluctuate, but it does seem lessons from previous years about the need to be more vigilant and aware of fraud risks may have been taken on board by potential victims.

Professional fraudsters are on the rise

The growing proportion of fraud is now perpetrated by professional criminals – this was second only to business insiders.

Management level staff committed the same volume of fraud as professional criminals – each 22 percent of all cases – but the former accounted for 38 percent of total value and the latter 50 percent. General employees accounted for 28 percent, and there were only 4 percent of the value. The number was like last year but much less in dollar value.

Identity theft is growing

Identity theft has risen sharply and while it remained a relatively small proportion of the overall fraud losses, we can expect this to climb as organised criminals use technology to target this area. Often with substantial rewards.

Government organisations were a primary target, with a large increase in the proportion of fraud losses; much of it perpetrated by outsiders.

The need for compensation and funding claims are a growing problem.

But it is encouraging that nearly $10m of funding claims for compensation were identified during this period, most by the CTP fraud taskforce, a multi-agency task force set up in 2016 to “detect, deter and identify fraudulent claims” and, NSW Police’s Strike Force Ravens.

Many of these frauds involved CTP claims made over fake, staged or minor accidents. It showed concerted effort by the authorities to target fraud can be successful. For too long in Australia, white-collar crime was not regarded as a priority – hopefully this is changing.

The southern states rule in value – Queensland in numbers

NSW and Victoria surged past Queensland in the value of fraud, with the southern states accounting for 78 percent of the total, with NSW at $2.19m and Victoria $1.58m. Queensland still toppled the number of frauds, but it fell 44 percent in number and 83 percent by value. In Australia, the number of frauds dropped by 50 percent and the value fell by 65 percent compared to the last period.

Overall, the significant decline in reported fraud last year was good. But, given the drop may have been part of the natural ebb and flow of court cycles and investigative processes, we will need to see a continued fall over a longer period to ensure we can uncork too many champagne bottles.

We will be keeping a keen eye out for the first half findings for 2018.

For those who enjoy the numbers here are some more key findings:

- Government organisations experienced the highest total value of fraud at $199.1m.
- Technologically sophisticated fraud (including hacking, compromising computer accounts, skimming digital data and porting mobile phones) accounted for 6 percent of all frauds and 7 percent of value each ($3.8m).
- Loss due to identity theft also saw a sharp increase to nearly $17.9m.

90 percent of frauds committed against commercial businesses were perpetrated by ‘insiders’, whereas Government and Financial Institutions were mostly targeted by external fraudsters.

75m worth of cases involved money laundering charges.

Innovation that works for the customer and the business

CURTIS DAVIES

ORGANISATIONS that are integrated between customer and operational teams are better positioned to create innovative, leading edge experiences that can be delivered; someone else will.

In today’s competitive environment, organisations need to continually innovate new products and services to excite and delight their customers – leveraging every insight possible to pre-empt their needs.

“New competitors are always looking to identify a niche which the larger organisations have been unable to, or are not flexible enough, to respond to,” says Curtis Davies, National Partner in Charge, Operations Advisory KPMG. “In this era of commodification, if you can’t develop a unique service for your customers that is aligned to what your operational teams can deliver, someone else will.”

Davies says the key is taking a holistic approach to innovation – ensuring that everyone from front to back office, is involved and equipped to identify and contribute to innovation opportunities.

However, the right products need to be desirable, feasible and viable – the magic triangle of Design Thinking. Desirable is understanding the customer need; Feasible is ensuring it can be delivered; Viable ensures there is a value to be generated. It requires deep collaboration from the customer, the middle office (Operations) and the back office (Finance) – an integrated team.

An integrated approach

Taking this whole-of-organisation approach to designing customer experiences means there is a better chance of offering something unique that keeps it ahead of competitors.“In the past, Davies explains, organisations used countless examples of innovations that have not been successful due to ‘silo thinking’.

“The customer side of an organisation can design the optimal customer experience, but it may be too expensive to deliver. Equally, the operations team may have control over procurement and supply chains, but the mentally focused on building the most efficient and least costly – not necessarily reliability or quality.”

When Davies worked at a major airline, he encountered an example of when a silo approach to innovation led to a great customer product, but it had operational challenges that negatively impacted the overall experience.

“One team designed an extremely comfortable and versatile passenger seat; while the engineers designed motors for it to operate functionally well.

“However, we didn’t think sufficiently about how to efficiently maintain the seat in the high utilisation environment, which caused some delays when the seats needed adhoc repairs. We realised that the customer people were thinking about if it was a comfortable and aesthetic perspective, while the engineering people were focused on building it to the most value technically sophisticated. Instead, we needed an integrated way of thinking to optimise the overall value to both customer and operations team.”

Segmented supply chain

When a business has an integrated approach to innovation, they are well positioned to harness their supply chain to offer differentiated experiences.

“Understanding the different segments of your customer base, their needs, and what they are looking for – and seeing the different price points they will pay – is critical to optimise business performance. Some customers will want a low price point; others may want faster delivery; others a particular aesthetic. Each one potentially has a different supply chain.”

This approach is akin to tiered airline travel – offering first class, business class, premium economy and economy.

“Each has to be delivered to meet a brand promise, and each offers a different business model in the most efficient manner, often with its own supply chain.”

Data analytics technology is a great tool to understand your customer segments. KPMG’s 2017 Global Consumer Executive Top of Mind Survey found that 84 percent of high growth companies say data analytics is at the heart of their customer segmentation strategy.

“You need to leverage your operational experts to identify the most efficient manner in which these segments can be clustered and serviced, while the effort can add significant financial and brand value.”

Leadership matters

To ensure everyone is equipped to identify innovation opportunities, leaders need to be set up well to collaborate, Davies explains.

“Culture is so important. People have to be willing to share problems, and ideas, and to work together to solve that challenge.”

For example, the operations function may have control over the supply chain, but they may not have access to the metrics of customer segmentation. It that was shared, they could learn that different groups are willing to pay different prices for tiered services, and they could innovate new delivery models to match.

“Without collaborative leadership you aren’t going to become an aligned organisation that provides a clear service to your customers, that is aligned to your production line,” he says.

Embracing technology

Much innovation in customer products will be enabled from new technology, Davies says.

“The most significant losses were seen as a result of embezzlement, fraudu-

ent investment schemes and ‘boiler room’ scams – the average value of losses due to embezzlement increased this year from $6.6m to $7.6m.

“78 percent of frauds were perpetrated by a person working alone. The proportion of frauds committed by groups has increased from 18 percent to 22 percent. Men committed 66 percent of offences.

“Although Investors represented only 10 percent of victims, their losses were about as significant as the government ($180m). Even so, figures this year represented a drop. Investors were victims of 10 percent of the frauds and 38 percent of the loss, down from 17 percent of frauds and 44 percent of loss previously.”

Article first published by Gary Gill, Partner Forensics KPMG Australia.
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kpmg.com/au/enterprise
What incentives and grants are available to my business?

For small business owners, understanding the incentives, concessions, grants and assistance programs best suited to their business can mean the difference between survival or business failure. Accordingly, appropriate legal advice should be sought.

Incentives and concessions

Crowd-source funding

New legislation introduced better access to crowd-sourced funding (CSF) for start-ups by reducing compliance and disclosure burdens for five years. Start-ups earning less than $2.5 million in annual revenue with less than $2.5 million in gross assets may be eligible to make CSF offers to the market and accept investment from retail investors.

Concessions include:
- Exemption from holding an annual general meeting.
- The option to provide reports to shareholders simply by making them available online.
- An exemption from appointing an auditor until the company has raised $1M or more from CSF offers.

Venture capital limited partnerships (VCLPs) and early stage venture capital limited partnerships (ESVCLPs)

These investment vehicles can provide tax exemptions and concessions for those investing in Australian companies. Broadly, the tax benefits are:
- Flow-through tax treatment for the partnership (ie partners are taxed according to their separate individual tax status).
- Exemption to foreign investors from tax on their share of the profits made by the partnership (provided certain conditions are met) and
- Fund managers can claim their ‘carried interest’ (ie management fee) on capital account, rather than revenue account.

Limited partners in an ESVCLP also receive a non-refundable carry forward tax offset of up to 10% of their eligible contributions. Further, both resident and non-resident limited partners in an ESVCLP are exempt from tax on their share of the profits made by the partnership (provided certain conditions are met).

Early stage innovation company tax incentives

The tax incentives available to early stage investors (or ‘angel investors’) link to the Government’s policy of encouraging innovation and assisting with start-up acceleration. Broadly, eligible investors in Australian companies are provided with:
- A 20% non-refundable carry-forward tax offset for qualifying investments, capped at $200,000 for each investor and their related parties (combined) per year, and
- A deemed capital account treatment, and an exemption from capital gains tax for qualifying investments held between one and ten years. Investors who hold shares for at least 10 years also receive a market value cost base on the 10th anniversary of their acquisition.

The incentives focus primarily on sophisticated investors, although ‘mum and dad’ investors can access them in some cases.

R&D tax incentive

Under this incentive, companies with an annual turnover of $20 million or less may be eligible to claim a refundable cash offset of 43.5% of eligible R&D costs. Among other things, these incentives encourage and incentivise research and development that may not otherwise have been conducted and

Despite the reference to ‘research and development’, the incentive is targeted towards expenditure incurred by innovating systems and processes, such as developing software for the business’ use or creating a new manufacturing process.

The R&D tax incentive is a significant opportunity for innovative start-ups, particularly as certain professional advisers allow for their costs to be deferred and paid from the refunded offset.

Employee share scheme start up (ESS) concessions

These concessions offer benefits to both small business employers and their employees. While small business employers are subject to reduced compliance costs associated with set up and maintenance of schemes, eligible employees receive the following tax benefits:
- No tax is payable until the options or shares are sold, and
- Any gain made on the sale or disposal of shares or options are treated as capital gains, with the 50% CGT discount potentially available.

The ESS start up concessions can allow small businesses to provide tax effective medium to longer term incentives to their employees, compensate for lower salaries and relieve pressure on cash flow.

Grants and assistance

The Federal Government maintains an online directory (https://www.business.gov.au/assistance/) which can be used to search for Federal grants and programs by State, territory, industry, annual turnover and more. Here are some examples of grants and assistance programs available nationally:

- Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) – Provides exporters aiming to increase their international sales with reimbursements of up to 50% of promotional expenses between $15,000 and $150,000.
- Australia-China Science and Research Fund Joint Research Centres – Provides Australian research organisations with grants of up to $1 million to participate in Joint Research Centres that link Australian and Chinese research institutions to conduct research-related activities.
- Innovation connections – Provides small and medium sized businesses with access to expert advice to address technology and knowledge gaps and collaborate with the research sector in developing new ideas with commercial potential. Support includes up to $50,000 in matched funding for collaborative projects.
- Incubator support – Provides new and existing business incubators with matched funding (ie from applicants) of up to $50,000, to assist Australian start-ups to succeed in international markets.

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The Palais Royal: P28
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at the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan is the research and storage facility for seed conservation of NSW and houses over 5,300 species of seed all on ice. It’s also an award winning architectural phenomena winning six awards since opening two years ago.

BUT NOW //

It is the space for you next staff planning day, training session, workshop or even gala dinner. The rooms have been built with the latest technology including Apple TV, drop down projectors and screens and of course WIFI access throughout the building.

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australianbotanicgarden.com.au/corporatehire or call 02 4634 7903 for more information.
The NATURAL venue choice

The Australian Botanic Garden at Mt Annan is the perfect venue for conference organisers who are looking for a venue surrounded by the beauties of nature, yet still in Greater Sydney.

The boutique venue space was built specifically to cater for meetings, conferences and workshops, and is certainly a good way to impress event goers.

The Duke and Duchess of York officially opened the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan on October 2, 1988 as the final NSW Bicentennial project.

The Garden showcases approximately 2000 species of Australian native plants. It is part of the Royal Botanic Garden and Domain Trust and home to the Australian Plant Bank, a major scientific research and conservation centre for NSW flora.

Surrounded by spectacular bushland and wide-open spaces, the Australian Plant Bank easily lends itself to events that require outdoor team-building activities as well as recreational options such as bushwalking and yoga.

Venue features
- Two break-out rooms for up to 16 attendees, boardroom-style.
- One major theatre with capacity to hold 120 people and the option to break down into two spaces.
- A classroom for up to 30 attendees.
- Two strikingly beautiful outdoor break-out areas.
- Outstanding gallery space for exhibitions and cocktail/dinner functions.
- Convenient and free parking, right at the front door.

The venue can also arrange tailored tours of the Australian Plant Bank led by expert science and horticulture staff.

Of course, the success of a conference also hinges on keeping attendees well fed and watered.

The Mt Annan conference venue can supply a wide range of delicious menu options that are guaranteed to make any event an occasion to remember.

There are many high-quality accommodation providers nearby, including Rydges and Quest, which makes organising accommodation for multi-day conferences a breeze.

The Australian Botanic Gardens at Mt Annan set on 416 hectares and is just 45 minutes south-west of Sydney via the M5 in the growing Camden-Campbelltown region.

The state-of-the-art facility is at the heart of the country’s cutting-edge plant science and conservation research.

It may be an award-winning research centre; however, the venue lends itself to so much more - with meeting rooms that comfortably seat up to 120 attendees.

The Australian Botanic Gardens at Mt Annan also offers conference and seminar organisations the very latest technology for presentations built into venue hire including:

- Drop-down projectors and screens in each room.
- AppleTV.
- Free Wi-Fi throughout.
- An in-built PA system.

For more information visit www.australianbotanicgardens.com.au or phone 02 4634 7933.

Make a grand impression at the Carrington

Corporates conference organisers who want to make a grand statement will find that the Carrington Hotel meets all their needs for charm, ambience and first-class facilities.

The Carrington Hotel is a unique heritage venue centrally located in the iconic Blue Mountains National Park two hours west of Sydney. It has been restored to its former grandeur and the result is a venue filled with the charm and elegance of yesteryear, making it the perfect venue to host any conference, meeting or corporate event.

The team at The Carrington Hotel understands that each event is unique and offers the flexibility to tailor packages to suit each client’s individual requirements.

Team members also take pride in delivering personalised professional, quality services to ensure every event runs smoothly.

There is an option to suit all individual requirements, with 65 accommodation rooms ranging from the traditional budget rooms to premier rooms and our executive suites.

There are three venues at the Carrington Hotel, which can cater for events up to 200 delegates.

The Carrington Hotel offers half day and full day packages that include WiFi for all delegates, data projector and screen, room hire and catering.

For more information email events@thecarrington.com.au, call 02 4782 1111 or visit www.thecarrington.com.au.
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Stay and play with flexibility
Stay and play on the edge of the World Heritage Blue Mountains with StayKCC’s low cost, flexible accommodation options. Groups of up to 350 people can be accommodated across budget to quality private conference centres.

There is free, fast and unlimited Wi-Fi and 10 large meeting rooms available with AV as required. StayKCC has a huge oval for carparking, sport and recreation and 25-acres of natural bushland with local wildlife.

Located in Katoomba, on the edge of cliff top lookouts with views of the Three Sisters, there are a variety of activities available including: abseiling, archery, basketball, BBQ, campfire, challenge course, cinema, driving range, foot-golf, Indigenous experiences, Scenic Race, stargazing and volunteering options.

More natural adventure attractions are just across the road with Scenic World, Katoomba Falls, great bushwalks and the Three Sisters within walking distance. Since 1903, Katoomba Christian Convention has a long history of Christian hospitality and sizeable gatherings.

StayKCC is now serving as a unique location for iconic large events such as Ultra-Trail Australia. Groups of trail runners, outdoor enthusiasts and other appreciators of raw natural beauty are enjoying the choice of private accommodation centres on offer here.

While StayKCC is particularly suited to schools, churches, not for profits, sport and recreation groups, it has much to offer the business and corporate market with its remarkable size for large events and low cost, flexible accommodation options.

Visit www.staykcc.com.au

Largest conference resort in the region
NESTLED on the edge of the Jamison Valley in the heart of the World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains, the award-winning Fairmont Resort Blue Mountains creates memorable event experiences.

Located only 90 minutes from Sydney, this 4.5 star resort boasts 15 flexible, pillarless conference spaces catering for up to 750 delegates with several naturally lit spaces and outdoor options.

From a conference centre to corporate retreats, the Fairmont Conference Resort is the largest in the Blue Mountains region.

Fairmont’s 15 conference rooms can be configured to suit any needs, in any layout, from theatre, boardroom, banquet or cocktail style; and the personalised event production team combines attentive service with high-level production management expertise to get you results.

The Fairmont Resort’s creative and consistent chefs specialise in a food philosophy centred on tastes of the region and beyond.

Delegates are welcome to dine in any of the multiple bars and restaurants, each with their own distinctive menus, or experience one of the many outdoor venues such as lakeside drinks under the stars or a sunset barbecue dinner overlooking the escarpment from the Jamison Valley Lawn.

Delegates will feel at home as they retire after a busy day to one of our 222 upscale rooms or suites during their conference retreat.

For more information visit www.fairmontresort.com.au or call 02 4785 0000.
Panthers proud to host your event

Situated on the Western Sydney fringe and the gateway to the Blue Mountains, Panthers Penrith is one of those places you must visit a few times to understand just how big it is.

The glass façade entrance, the grand and modern foyer with marble floors and a sandstone feature wall should be the giveaway on the sheer size of this mega venue, but as you make your way through, the club envelopes you with warm and welcoming arms, enticing you to eat, play and stay.

The Evan Theatre, newly refurbished in 2017, brings a host of great acts every year, including only recently, Daryl Braithwaite, Dave Hughes, Jimeoin, Mental As Anything and more.

Versatile in design, the Evan Theatre can also host luncheons, corporate dinners and award nights, as well as large conferences.

The Events Centre @ Panthers caters for a wide range of different events, including celebrations, exhibitions, conferences and meetings.

With most spaces for hire located on the top level of the club, rooms can be seamlessly converted from a conference space to a corporate dinner setting. Some rooms, like the Fernhill, offer large windows that overlook breathtaking views of the grand Blue Mountains.

Outside, the Events Centre also run events in the Marquee, a space where the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

Marquee by design and air-conditioned by nature, this location hosts an extensive range of events including award nights, corporate dinners, exhibitions and more.

It will again play host to the Diesel, Dirt and Turf Expo in 2018, while introducing The Sydney Brick Show for Lego fans in Sydney and beyond to name a few.

Always a hive of energy, Panthers Penrith is a versatile venue that can cater to everyone’s needs. From conferences, corporate or casual meals, team-building activities, shows and accommodation, why not come down to Panthers Penrith and check it out for yourself.

To find out more about how Panthers can help make your next corporate event a success call 1800 061 991 or visit www.penrith.panthers.com.au/event/details/event-centre/

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The early owners of Palais Royale.

The Palais Royale in Katoomba will truly make conference goers feel like royalty. Its old world charm makes a perfect setting for any corporate event, whether it is a one-day event, or a multi-day conference.

The Palais Royale started as two separate cottages built by Mr Spear of Summer Hill in 1890. He had built them for his daughter and named them “Glen Eric” and “Hillside”.

The cottages joined together to become Mount St Marys College, a day and boarding school for young ladies. The college was relocated to a purpose-built building at some point before 1912.

Mr and Mrs A. E. Marsh bought the guesthouse in 1922 and named it the Palais Royale. Mrs Marsh had a new cream façade added to the building’s exterior.

The Palais Royale flourished in the 1920’s alongside the tourism industry in the Blue Mountains.

In 2012 the current owners of the Palais Royale, a Sydney family, came to own and fall in love with the Palais Royale.

They are working hard to continue to restore its beauty and glory to keep its heritage for generations to come.

The magnificent ground floor Grand Ballroom serves as an exceptional conference venue for groups of all sizes and comes complete with state-of-the-art facilities and a selection of conference menus that can be tailored to suit all tastes.

Delegates can enjoy sumptuous morning and afternoon tea in the relaxing Royale Lounge, while lunch and dinner are served in Gazelles – the beautiful restaurant on the lower ground floor, where the property’s original restaurant was first installed over 75 years ago.

The ballroom can be configured to meet any requirements and every event has a dedicated conference coordinator works closely with organisers to ensure the event is a success from start to finish.

The conference team can also devise exhilarating team building packages that take in some of the region’s most unique offerings, including an exploration of Jenolan Caves, a visit to the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, a trip on the Explorer Bus, a chocolate-making experience at Joseph’s Fine Chocolates, a bush survival course or a day spent abseiling, rock climbing or hiking deep into the mountains.

Classically elegant, all 40 of the guestrooms are designed to encourage absolute relaxation.

Whether guests are travelling solo or have booked in for a romantic getaway, family reunion or corporate gathering, the Palais Royale has the perfect room for guests’ needs.

Guests are welcomed on arrival into the luxurious Royale Lounge, which features original leadlight windows, fine artwork, a cosy fireplace and a relaxing atmosphere.

There are two additional lounge areas that can be used always, and guests are invited to take advantage of the heated spa and sauna during their stay.

A hearty breakfast is served daily from 7.30am to 9.30am in Gazelles Restaurant, on the lower ground floor.

Conference goers can savour the ambience of this beautiful dining room as they enjoy a delicious selection of continental and hot items with juice, tea and coffee before the day’s activities.

For more information, call 02 4784 6100, or email functions@palaisroyale.com.au.

Old world charm and elegance.

The early owners of Palais Royale.

Feel like royalty at the Palais Royale

CORPORATE SPACE WITH A DIFFERENCE

PEATS RIDGE • CENTRAL COAST

Set amidst the tranquil rural properties of Peats Ridge ideally located just 40 minutes from Wahroonga and only 1 hour from Newcastle, The Springs is your ultimate conference and seminar venue. We cater for a variety of corporate conferences from seminars and retreats, corporate golf days and can include a variety of outdoor team building activities, including archery, outdoor chess and lawn games. Our Executive Chef, Dan Capper with produce straight from the local farms can create the ideal menu package for your requirements.

We look forward to welcoming your next conference or seminar with us at The Springs. Contact our events team on 02 4373 1522 or email us at events@the-springs.com.au

Conference and Seminar VENUES GUIDE MARCH 2018
Friends team at Dooleys will plan everything for you

Choosing the right venue for your event is a key decision that will have a lasting impact on its success.

Service, amenities, accessibility, parking and ambiance are five of the critical success factors to consider when choosing the venue for your event.

Events at Dooleys prides itself on offering all this and more. “We have beautifully appointed function spaces located across three venues in Lidcombe, Silverwater and Regents Park,” Group Events Manager John Jansen said.

Dooleys is the ideal location for your next corporate event or special celebration. We offer a range of event spaces, catering for intimate events of ten guests, through to larger events of up to 500 guests.

“Our rooms feature sophisticated audio-visual capabilities, stylish furnishings and flexible layouts to be tailored specifically for your event.”

“Events at Dooleys are coordinated with meticulous detail and executed to an impeccable standard by a dedicated and service-oriented team of event professionals.”

Combined with a varied selection of menus prepared by acclaimed chefs, we are certain you will find the perfect package to suit your needs, guaranteeing an event you and your guests will long remember.

Dooleys friendly and accommodating staff are ready to ensure your next event is an overwhelming success.

For further information call 02 8745 6100, email functions@dooleys.com or visit www.dooleys.com.

Springs in a beautiful bush atmosphere

Stylish, sophisticated and set in a bush area of unparalleled beauty – it’s hard to go past The Springs as a conference and seminar venue.

The Springs is nestled among the tranquil rural properties of Peats Ridge, ideally located just 40 minutes from Wahroonga and only one hour from Newcastle. The Springs is the ultimate conference and seminar destination venue.

The Springs caters for a variety of corporate conferences from seminars and retreats to corporate golf days, networking nights, gala dinners and multi-day events.

Team building is an excellent way to build up trust and camaraderie among colleagues. It also provides a relaxing break from the talks and information sessions of seminars and conferences.

The Springs makes team building fun for everyone, and a breeze to organise. There’s no need to bring in external providers, as The Springs provides a variety of outdoor activities that include archery, outdoor chess and lawn games.

Wet weather is no problem, as indoor team building activities include cocktail making classes and farm-to-plate cooking classes.

Executive Chef Dan Capper can create the ideal menu package to suit any requirements, making The Springs the perfect venue for networking nights, gala dinners and multi-day events.

Because The Springs is located among the local farms of Peats Ridge, the quality and freshness of its food is unsurpassed as it comes straight from the farm to the plate.

The venue’s 18-hole par 72 golf course promises to be a first-class golfing experience for all players, with designer state-of-the-art showers and locker rooms. It’s considered one of the best courses on the Central Coast and is suited to golfers of all levels.

Then there are the ottomans, chill-out lounges on the deck and the relaxed vibe of the Duck Inn bar that ensures all guests are treated enjoy the exclusive Springs experience.

For more information call 4373 1522, email events@the-springs.com.au, www.the-springs.com.au, or Facebook thespringspeatsridge.
I want to share a secret...

Daniel Brian

You want something exciting; something mysterious; somewhere new to experience...

I know just the place, there’s a new bar in town, sure to become your new favourite digs for great food, great drinks, and unforgettable times.

Kendall’s cocktail bar opened in November 2017 in the centre of Gosford, ground floor of the Central Coast Leagues Club. Everything in the bar, from the name to the cocktails to the menu, is inspired by the historical local Thomas Henry Kendall. Kendall was a 19th-century Australian author and bush poet, born a few hours south in Ulladulla.

He was a lover of nature and the Australian bush and is most famous for his distinctively Australian nature poems and tales. Kendall’s has been a staple “pub” feature in the club for decades. However, recently as part of CCLC’s refurbishments, Kendall’s was given a little TLC and the club sought out to find the perfect bar manager who would love, cherish and embrace the historical value of Kendall’s while bringing it into the modern world of small bar meets big city.

The search was short lived when Josh, resident bar manager and cocktail maker extraordinaire took the challenge and began to create what is nothing less than an inspirational cocktail, whisky and fine wine and tapas menu.

Kendall’s is the just the place to plan a get-together with your special someone, a group of friends or your work crew.

The location is ideal for those Friday afternoon chills, located just down the road from Gosford station, allowing the commuters to escape the rat race and head home to the Coast, offering the ability to enjoy the inner city feels of a small bar, only 15 minutes from home.

The Bar also reserves VIP spaces appropriate for groups of two to eight people. So now you’re on the “in”, I’ll be seeing you down at Kendall’s for whisky or two.

For more information visit www.cclc.com.au or call 02 4325 9888.

Daniel Brian is Operations Manager at Central Coast Leagues Club.

Simply unforgettable: Kendall’s cocktail bar at Central Coast Leagues Club.
Confirm your Day Delegate Package at $70.00 per person. Minimum 20 people per booking.

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To celebrate the refurbishment of the Mercure Penrith, the Event Centre @ Panthers and the Mercure are offering conference clients this special deal.

Enjoy a Complimentary Accommodation Room for every 11 rooms booked with a bonus upgrade to a Superior King Room.*

To book your next conference, please call the Panthers Event Centre on 02 4720 5511 or email eventscentre@panthers.com.au.

*Terms & Conditions Apply. Subject to availability, valid for 20 or more guests on a full day delegate package, for new event business to be quoted, booked and held from the 1st February to 30th June 2018.
Grounds has location, location, location

PERFECTLY located, The Entertainment Grounds is within easy access of the M1 Freeway and within proximity to Gosford Railway Station. About 80kms from Sydney and Newcastle, located in the heart of Gosford, The Entertainment Grounds is perfect for your next corporate event. A major advantage of the Entertainment Grounds is the versatility of the rooms. Function spaces can accommodate up to 500 delegates in a range of styling layouts from theatre style seating to large sit-down banquets. Dedicated presentation areas, individual workshop rooms, trade exhibits and product demonstration areas are just some of the options our venue and team can offer your next event.

Our Panorama and Lakeview Rooms feature floor to ceiling glass windows that open up onto the outdoor terrace overlooking the racecourse. Natural lighting fills the rooms, allowing guests to work and relax in a comfortable environment.

Featuring the latest in AV technology, our team will assist you in creating the most professional arrangement for your next business meeting, conference or seminar. Complimentary WiFi, projector screens and quality audio are a few of the technical facilities available. The finest in house caterers can provide an assortment of fresh, locally sourced produce to suit any function requirement. Your guests will be spoilt for choice with everything from decadent seafood buffets to freshly made sandwiches and wraps.

With ample parking, the finest in house caterers, flexible working spaces and a dedicated team to help you create the most appropriate setting, The Entertainment Grounds is the perfect location for your next corporate event.

For more information on how The Entertainment Grounds can help with your next corporate function, visit www.theentertainmentgrounds.com.au or call 02 4325 0461.

Perfect location and high tech capability distinguish The Entertainment Grounds.
VOCA Beach Hotel & Resort is located on 15 landscaped acres in beautiful Avoca Beach.

The Avoca Beach Hotel offers a wonderful variety of meals with classics such as burgers and schnitzels as well as daily specials.

The Hotel offers a variety of entertainment every week, with live music every Friday and Saturday and, most recently, added Tuesday Trivia and Busking in the branches on Thursdays.

Tuesday Trivia is open to all ages and any size team, run by the very professional Trivialities, with prizes to be won every week. It is a great, fun night out for the whole family or just a good way to show off your smarty pants to your mates.

Busking in the branches is Avoca Beach Hotel’s open mic night, which is run by the very talented Trent Crawford, of One Dollar Short. It has a great following and is supported by Sea FM and locally based Fairplay Entertainment.

Busking in the branches is a great opportunity for anyone who wants to jump on stage. It is open to all ages, with prizes for best performances on the night, plus the opportunity to get a headline gig at the hotel.

Avoca Beach Hotel & Resort offers a free courtesy bus that services the local area. A Sports Bar, Saltwater Bistro and the terrace nestled in the trees make the hotel a great place to dine for a relaxing night out or for any occasion.

For more information on how the Avoca Beach Hotel & Resort can help with your next event visit www.avocabeachhotel.com.au or call 02 4382 2322.
Where first impressions count

FOR 30 years, the Holroyd Centre has been a popular venue for business functions to stellar weddings.

And while many are delighted with the versatile event space that is ideal for a variety of different functions, it’s the centre’s flexible approach to clients that has people most impressed.

“We provide a personalised service and are meticulous in our planning with our clients to ensure that their events run smoothly and are a success,” said Venue Manager, Dean Savetta.

“We continually adapt and learn, and strive to exceed expectations and provide service excellence.”

The centre’s motto “large enough to understand your needs and small enough to ensure they are met” has given rise to the staff’s customer centric approach.

“Working at the Holroyd Centre is more than a job, it is a passion and the love is shown in all that we do,” said Amanda Pavlovic, marketing and administration assistant.

Function Co-ordinator Narelle Penny, Function Coordinator explains: “The most important characteristic of our business is that we are solution orientated. Our team is accessible and available every step of the way in your event planning process, we are here to help you achieve your outcomes, ensure a successful event and provide a positive experience before, during and after your event.

“If you need help with catering, entertainment, scheduling, room configurations, additional AV needs or anything else, we will help, we can suggest, we can do the research and also recommend great vendors.”

The dedicated events and functions team can help plan any event in one of the three air-conditioned function rooms. The meeting room can be configured to hold up to 300 people and catering packages can be tailored to suit any event and accommodate any cultural or dietary requirements.

First impressions count and guests will be impressed the moment they approach the horseshoe driveway, ideal for VIP drop-off and pick-up, to the welcoming grand foyer entrance.

The private courtyard can be used for pre-function drinks and canapes or simply for an outdoor break.

For corporate events, the Holroyd Centre also provides audio and visual facilities, a PA system, on-site IT support, whiteboards and Wi-Fi.

“We pride ourselves on quality service,” Ms Pavlovic said.

The Holroyd Centre’s events team can remove the stress from organising your next event. Arrange an obligation free consultation by phoning 9840 9900 or email the details of your event and any requirements to holroyd-centre@cumberland.nsw.gov.au for a quote. For more information visit www.holroydcentre.com.

The Holroyd Centre has been a popular venue choice for 30 years.
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Kendall’s

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DONE DEAL
United for the Aerotropolis

Historic signing: NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull with Western Sydney Mayors pave the way for the Aerotropolis. Inset: Artist impression of the development.

What the deal means for Western Sydney:
- A North South Rail Link from St Marys to Badgerys Creek.
- An Aerotropolis to drive new investment and attract high value jobs to the region.
- New planning regime to cut development costs and boost housing supply.
- A $5.1bn Western Parkland City Liveability Program to deliver community facilities.
- New STEM-focused education facilities to train skilled workers needed for the Aerotropolis.
- A 5G strategy with plans to implement a trial led by a telecommunications carrier.
- A feasibility study into an agribusiness precinct for the Western Parkland City.

The long-awaited landmark Western Sydney City Deal has been signed, promising to deliver transformative public transport projects, more jobs and affordable housing across the region.

The state’s first city deal – which had been 18 months in the making – was signed by the mayors of eight Western Sydney councils, dubbed the Western Parklands City, and NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

At the heart of the deal is the Badgerys Creek Aerotropolis – an advanced manufacturing, research, medical, education and commercial hub – at the door of the new Western Sydney Airport.

The deal’s lifeline is the much-anticipated North South Rail Link connecting St Marys to the Aerotropolis. The NSW and federal governments committed $100M for a business case on the full line including the route, station locations and scoping study.

Rapid bus services will also link Liverpool, Penrith and Campbelltown to the Aerotropolis by the time the airport opens.

Of the Aerotropolis, Mr Turnbull said: “It will create tens of thousands of jobs in the aviation, aerospace and defence industries, jobs that will flow into other sectors such as education, agribusiness, health, hospitality and retail. We see the potential for a STEM-focused university, vocational facilities and high schools, all with links to smart industry, growing inside the Aerotropolis.”

In a joint statement, the mayors of Camden, Campbelltown, Liverpool, Penrith, Wollondilly, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Fairfield said: “We will continue working together over the coming months to clarify more details which will flow from this deal and ensure our communities will benefit from this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a smart city that is more liveable, more productive, more skilled and more innovative.”

Federal shadow infrastructure minister, Anthony Albanese, criticised the North South Rail Link plan for excluding a link from the Macarthur region to the airport and failing to extend to Rose Hill in the north-west.

He commended the community and local councils for advocating for the rail line to the airport which would create thousands of jobs.

“But to achieve the project’s full potential, the people of Western Sydney must be able to access those jobs via reliable public transport,” Mr Albanese said.

Welcoming the deal, Western Sydney University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Barney Glover, said the university had been working throughout the Western Parklands City.

“The deal coincides with the opening of our campus in the Liverpool. These students and their graduates are looking to see at the Aerotropolis, and its people for generations to come. “Th e deal also aligns exceptionally well with the University’s commitment to a health and medical research facility in Campbelltown.”

Remarking on the historic change the City Deal would deliver, Mr Turnbull said: “I know that we will look back on this deal in a decade’s time – when the airport is operating, when the Aerotropolis is educating and employing a new generation of Australians, when this is one of the most liveable and connected communities in the nation – and we’ll recognise we began a great endeavor; to ensure the prosperity, the livability and the sustainability of the Western Parkland City and its people for generations to come.”

Details of how the Western Sydney City Deal will be implemented are expected to be released later this year.
Fujitsu starts work on new HQ

Fujitsu General Australia has celebrated the start of construction on its new national headquarters at Eastern Creek.

The new headquarters will be a 5-star Green Star energy rated building, providing additional space to encourage business growth and increase employment opportunities within the surrounding region.

Fujitsu General has signed a 10-year lease with the current site landlord, Jacfin Pty Ltd and has appointed Vaughan Constructions to complete the construction of the multi-million-dollar development.

The 11,093 sqm building will be a state-of-the-art facility and will house Fujitsu General Australia’s head office, Fujitsu General Assist and an 8,500 sqm distribution warehouse. The new offices and warehouse will improve operational and distribution efficiencies across the Fujitsu General network, nationally.

“I’m very excited to announce that construction of the new Fujitsu General headquarters has begun at Eastern Creek,” said Philip Perham from Fujitsu General.

“The development will provide space and resource for Fujitsu General’s continued growth in the air conditioning market. The new office design will include a Fujitsu General showroom, on-site gymnasium, auditorium and outside green areas, which will encourage innovation, development and strengthen our ‘people first’ culture.

“The building design has a 5-star Green Star rating and follows the company’s sustainability philosophy, to ensure we continue to safeguard a rich natural environment for future generations.”

Andrew Noble, Managing Director, Vaughan Constructions said: “This pivotal piece of infrastructure, will not only support the operational needs of Fujitsu General, but provides a superior work environment with exceptional staff facilities.”

The initial design concept was completed by Sydney based designers, ODCM, in conjunction with Fujitsu General and Vaughan Constructions. Completion of the new headquarters is set to take place in October this year. Fujitsu General will relocate to the new site late December 2018.

Fujitsu General Australia is part of Fujitsu General Limited - a leading, global manufacturer of air conditioners.

Support for new women’s refuge

City of Parramatta has announced a $25,000 contribution to the establishment of a refuge for local women escaping domestic violence.

Lord Mayor Andrew Wilson said Council was pleased to be supporting plans for the new refuge in conjunction with Women’s Community Shelters.

“Domestic violence is a dreadful crime and survivors continue to need crisis assistance 24/7,” the Lord Mayor said.

“Council is pleased that our financial contribution means that victims of domestic violence will now have another haven within the City.”

Women’s Community Shelters Chief Executive Officer Annabelle Daniel welcomed Council’s funding commitment, saying the search was now on to find suitable premises.

“Women’s Community Shelters are absolutely delighted by the commitment of City of Parramatta Council to a WCS crisis accommodation shelter in the local government area.

The funding, approved at the final meeting of Council in December 2017, matches the $25,000 raised by the Wentworth Point Community Central Association.

A community forum will be held from 6pm on Wednesday, March 21 at the Parramatta Library in Fitzwilliam Street for all interested stakeholders to find out more about the shelter and how they can support its establishment and ongoing operations.
WSABE 2018 Program Key Dates

The Launch - Tuesday 1 May 2018
A cocktail style event attracting major Western Sydney businesses and corporations.

Finalists Recognition - Friday 24 August 2018
An event that honours and recognises our outstanding Western Sydney business finalists and celebrates their success stories.

Gala Awards Dinner - Friday 21 September 2018
Join over 500 guests, including VIPs, celebrities and parliamentarians over a seated plated black tie gala dinner as we announce the award winners.

Winners & Sponsors Celebration - Thursday 1 November 2018
Join us over a celebratory evening with the WSABE 2018 winners, partners and sponsors over a relaxed cocktail-style environment.

Interesting in showcasing your business?
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Sydney property market – a BBQ stopper

GEOFF LEE

EVERY BBQ that I go to, the conversation eventually turns to property.

We face a dilemma in Sydney. Some suggest that Sydney is growing too fast with units springing up on every corner. Others say that Sydney prices are unaffordable with the next generation unable to buy their first home. A few even say Sydney is full.

Affordable housing is a key issue for Western Sydney families.

As Western Sydney continues to grow, we need to plan and invest for its development. It is essential we as a government implement the right policy settings that guarantee the best outcomes for our communities, both now and into the future.

I like many economists suggest that increasing supply of homes is an essential part of solving the issue of affordable housing. Research from the Grattan institute argues this would ultimately assist low-income earners in owning a home.

Affordable housing remains a priority for the NSW Government. With the next generation unable to buy their first home, a few even say Sydney is full.

Affordable housing is a key issue for Western Sydney families. As Western Sydney continues to grow, we need to plan and invest for its development. It is essential we as a government implement the right policy settings that guarantee the best outcomes for our communities, both now and into the future.

I like many economists suggest that increasing supply of homes is an essential part of solving the issue of affordable housing. Research from the Grattan Institute argues this would ultimately assist low-income earners in owning a home.

Increasing supply through the construction of new apartments, rather than single dwellings, has the added benefit of allowing buyers to obtain these affordable options whilst remaining in high demand suburbs, allowing families to be closer to amenities and jobs.

Sydney house prices have rapidly risen over the past five years due to the ‘perfect storm’ of factors. These include unmet demand from previous years of under-supply, a strong performing NSW economy attracting workers from around the country to Sydney, historically low interest rates and strong foreign investment.

These factors have resulted in a ‘cumulative shortfall in the number of dwellings’ since the mid-2000s, as articulated in the Housing Affordability Report to the Premier by former RBA Governor Glenn Stevens AC.

The solution is already being implemented with Western Sydney seeing a steady increase in the construction of new homes. In the last financial year, we saw more than 35,000 homes completed in Greater Sydney with Parramatta LGA topping the list at more than 4,600 new homes, while Blacktown, Camden, Liverpool, Cumberland and the Hills Shire LGAs were also at the top of the list.

NSW Government initiatives are already helping first home owners-occupiers get into the market. The measures included abolishing stamp duty for first home buyers purchasing a property up to $650,000 and provided discounts for homes up to $800,000. This equates to significant savings of up to $24,740.

Stamp duty exemptions for first home buyers to a $10,000 grant if they build a new home up to $750,000 or buy a new home up to $600,000. It also abolishes insurance duty on lender’s mortgage insurance, increasing surcharges for foreign investors and removing stamp duty deferral for investors on residential off-the-plan purchases.

These are important measures in delivering more affordable homes.

A strong and robust property sector is good for Western Sydney, it not only builds and delivers homes but is a major employer in the region. Greater prosperity means greater consumer spending helping our economy.

In my electorate alone, the sector employs more than 7,000 people directly, accounting for close to 12 percent of all jobs in the electorate. Across NSW, the property sector accounts for some $90 billion, with jobs in the trades and construction as well as in finance, insurance and other professional services.

With the NSW Government’s record investment in mega-projects like NorthConnex, Sydney Metro, WestConnex and Westmead Hospital redevelopment, you can see why NSW leads the country in job creation and record low unemployment.

With a buoyant property sector and significant NSW Government investment in infrastructure, employment in Western Sydney has grown by 3.4% to more than 1 million people employed in the year to November 2017.

So not only is one in every four workers in NSW employed either directly or indirectly in the property sector but the sector is also a major player in the NSW economy accounting for 12.7% of the state’s gross domestic product and $20.9 billion in taxes.

Affordable housing remains a priority for the NSW Government. We recognise the important role the property and construction sectors play in contributing to Western Sydney’s and the state’s prosperity.

The great Australian dream of owning one’s own home is still alive and well.

IS YOUR BUSINESS KEEPING UP WITH WESTERN SYDNEY’S GROWTH?

Geoff congratulates Parramatta first home buyers, Jenny & Craig.


TOBY can’t believe it. This nine-year-old rollercoaster and Wet N’ Wild aficionado is dumbstruck as our fast, custom-built open boat roars out of Adventure Bay on Bruny Island.

Toby’s eyes widen as the boat engages the 2-3 metre waves, skipping over the surface of the Tasman Sea and occasionally landing with a thump that sends spray over the thirty passengers. And the look on my grandson’s face tells me that the exhilaration we’re experiencing easily eclipses that of any theme park ride.

Getting to Adventure Bay is easy. Our day trip with Pennicott Wilderness Journeys starts at 8am in Hobart. On the way down to the Bruny Island ferry, our bus driver/guide Nick gives us plenty of information about the towns we pass through and the history of this part of southern Tasmania. After 45 minutes, we reach the small town of Kettering, where we board the vehicle ferry.

Bruny Island is approximately the size of Singapore. The difference is that Bruny Island has fewer than a thousand residents rather than five million. Bruny is beautiful and remote, without the five-star resorts and big hotels found elsewhere. On the way to Adventure Bay we stop at a lookout giving a wonderful view of the Neck, an isthmus joining North and South Bruny. Fifteen minutes later we are eating freshly baked muffins for morning tea in Pennicott’s new beachside café.

The staff at Pennicott are quite open about the conditions before we set off, telling us that there is a decent swell running for our trip down the coast to the Southern Ocean. The tidal swell has apparently been increased by the recent ‘super blue blood’ full moon, and it’s well known that the Southern Ocean can be wild at any time.

The choppy conditions don’t stop us from cruising beside the majestic sea cliffs, which are among Australia’s highest. The cliffs are made of Jurassic dolerite, an extremely hard and distinctive rock. Two albatrosses follow the boat and a dolphin leaps out of the water nearby. We stop for some minutes on the southern side of a massive rock formation known as ‘the monument’, which stands alone some metres offshore.

As we go further down the wild and enchanting coast, we see many more birds, including an ‘improbability’ of shearwaters (I learn that an improbability is the name for a group of these birds). Around 50 shearwaters rise from the ocean’s surface in front of us, creating quite a display.

We reach the turning point at some rocks known as the Friars, where there are thousands of fur seals. The Friars are known as a ‘haul-out’ place for seals, where they spend time on land for reproduction and rest. It’s a stunning sight to see so many seals gathered in the one area, and all the cameras on board are clicking away frantically.

We have reached the Southern Ocean and the next stop is Antarctica. So we head back up the coast, using the heavy swell to propel us towards Adventure Bay. It’s an exciting trip, with plenty of sea spray as our boat surfs the waves.

When we return it’s time for a leisurely lunch at the beachside café. The ocean journey has made us hungry. Toby hoes into some fish and chips, while I enjoy homemade pumpkin soup and a salmon and salad roll.

On the way back to Hobart, I reflect on the wilderness cruise experience. I now understand why it has won so many awards, including ‘Australia’s best tourist attraction’ three times. To my mind, this cruise stands out because it’s accessible to all ages. And it’s fantastic fun.

The writer travelled courtesy of Pennicott Wilderness Journeys

Contact: (03) 6234 4270
Email: info@pennicottjourneys.com.au
Feature supplied by: www.wtfmedia.com.au
Delegates experience the homely feel

OXLEY on Bellbird Hill is the ideal venue for conferences, seminars, board meetings, executive meetings, team building and special events.

We are mindful that every organisation has specific goals that need to be achieved from their retreat. Our professional and friendly team are there to assist you to ensure your conference needs are met.

Our unique and relaxed country-style conference rooms and many outdoor breakout areas, make Loxley a particularly comfortable and encouraging learning environment. Loxley has two main conference areas: Kauri Room and the Explorer’s Retreat.

Our Kauri Room can cater for up to 170 for a cocktail style product launch, 100 delegates theatre style and designed for smaller groups in a cabaret, class room or in u-shape.

The Kauri Room is fully air-conditioned and features an abundance of natural light as well as the picturesque view of the Blue Mountains. The Kauri Room veranda overlooks the Sydney Basin and the Hawkesbury Valley.

The veranda is a perfect area for your conference delegates to enjoy a homemade morning tea or a buffet luncheon utilising some of the Hawkesbury’s finest produce.

After a full day conferencing, your delegates can expect a gourmet meal prepared by Loxley’s executive chef, using some of the best produce sourced locally through the Hawkesbury region.

Catering up to 20 delegates, the Explorer’s Retreat conference meeting room has been designed in a country style, with timber

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Your Perfect Wedding from beginning to end without leaving Loxley.
Stunning exhibition of our pearling heritage

A RARE 2,000 year-old pearl, a historic hard hat diving helmet and examples of luminous carved pearlshell are among the beautiful objects that tell the story of the nation’s pearling industry in a new exhibition, Lustre: Pearling & Australia, now on at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra.

The result of a special partnership between the Western Australian Museum and Broome’s Yawuru Aboriginal corporation Nyamba Bura Yawuru, Lustre showcases the beauty, significance and intrigue of pearls and pearlshell across time and cultures.

Intertwining ancient Aboriginal trade stories with recent industry developments that have transformed Australia’s north, the exhibition features a rare and remarkable 2,000 year-old near-round natural pearl, recently found in an archaeological shell midden in WA’s Admiralty Gulf.

National Museum of Australia Director, Dr Mathew Trinca, said he is delighted to bring this important travelling exhibition to Canberra and thanked the Western Australian Museum for the ongoing partnership.

“Lustre is both beautiful and historically important, exploring how Aboriginal people have valued and collected pearlshell for at least 20,000 years, and examining the modern industry which has developed around this highly prized resource,” said Dr Trinca.

WA Museum CEO Alec Coles said Lustre is an exhibition about pearling told largely from an Aboriginal perspective, and pays tribute to the skills of Asian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander indentured workers, many of whom gave their lives to the industry.

“Lustre also investigates the biology of the pearl oyster and its environment as well as the devastating impact of cyclones on the industry. It tells the unique Australian story of the pearlshell and the pearls that they produce. It also explores the relationships between the people of pearling and the industry that emerged in Australia,” Mr Coles said.

Pearlshell remains highly valued among many Aboriginal communities and has been a vital element in long distance trade across northern Australia and into the desert for thousands of years.

The exhibition features beautiful examples of pearls and pearl jewellery; carved pearlshell and pearlshell cutlery; and diving equipment, including a historic hard hat diving helmet.

The exhibition includes vibrant audiovisual material, and visitors can access personal stories on an audio tour through their own smart device.

Lustre was developed in close consultation with senior Yawuru, Karajarri, Bardi and Jawi, and Mayala elders from Saltwater Country in the West Kimberley and is supported by the Visions of Australia regional touring program, a federal government initiative aiming to improve access to cultural material for all Australians.

Lustre: Pearling & Australia will be on display at the National Museum of Australia until 22 July 2018.
Love, politics and other things you shouldn’t talk about at dinner…..

Black Is The New White

BY THE GIRL FROM MOUNT DRUITT WHO HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT COMEDY VOICE

SYDNEY Theatre Company’s sold-out, smash hit romantic comedy, Black is the New White will take to the stage at Riverside Theatres from March 21st to 24th.

Black is the New White is by award-winning playwright Nakkiah Lui, a Gamilaroi/ Torres Strait Islander woman. A notable personality and talent who grew up in Mt Druitt, Lui has become a successful actor, playwright, comedian and star of the ABC TV series, Black Comedy.

Now, exclusively for the Parramatta and Canberra seasons of the East Coast tour, Lui will take to the stage in one of the leading roles as Rose.

Black is the New White follows the story of Charlotte Gibson, a lawyer with a brilliant career ahead of her. As her father Ray says, she could be the next female Aboriginal version of Waleed Aly. But she has other ideas. First of all, it’s Christmas. Second of all, she’s in love.

The thing is, her fiancé, Francis Smith, is not what her family expected – he’s unemployed, he’s an experimental classical composer…and he’s white! Inviting him and his conservative parents to Christmas is a bold move that has all sorts of unintended consequences.

Secrets are revealed, prejudices ousted, and old rivalries get sorted through. With a toe-tapping soundtrack and an array of brilliant, eccentric, lovable characters, this is a great night in the theatre and a thoroughly beguiling, and very Australian story.

Directed by Sydney Theatre Company’s former Richard Wherrett Fellow, Paige Rattay (now Queensland Theatre Company’s Associate Artistic Director), the cast also includes Tony Briggs, Luke Carroll, Geoff Morrell and Shari Sebbens, with set and costumes by former Resident Designer Renée Mulder.

What: Black is the New White When: 8pm on 21st to 24th March; and 2pm on 24th March Where: Riverside Theatres - corner of Church and Market Sts, Parramatta Tickets: Adult $69, Concession: $54. Discounts available for Riverside Theatres’ Members. Transaction fees: phone $4.60, web $3.60 and counter $2.60. Bookings: https://riversideparramatta.com.au/show/black-is-the-new-white or from the Box Office (02) 8839 3399

Following Riverside Theatres, the tour will continue to the Canberra Theatre Centre from 28th to 31st March.
In the early years of this decade, small businesses were struggling to compete against large businesses with big budgets, in the online world. A bigger budget always meant a higher ranking, and SME’s could not keep up. Recent changes to Google’s algorithm now allow small businesses to rank higher in Google using local search marketing strategies. With local search strategies, you don’t need to shell out hundreds of dollars to reach your target customers. Small businesses can take advantage of local SEO to increase their exposure to potential customers online without breaking the bank.

What is Local Search

Before 2016, Page 1 of Google Search results was usually dominated by large companies that had large budgets to help them rank higher. However, when consumers were searching, they were looking for because search results were not tailored to their location. Then a change in the Google Algorithm increased Local Search results. This change was known as Google Possum. Google Possum filters search results based on where the consumer is located, or where they are searching from. Local Search is an effective digital marketing strategy that targets specific geographic locations. It is viewed as the digital Yellow Pages, and any business, big or small, can utilize it.

In the last 2 years, Google searches without the term ‘near me’ have grown by 150%, due to local search algorithm updates1. With Google Possum, consumers no longer need to search for results using ‘near me’ or their suburb, because Google can automatically calculate where they are located and deliver more relevant search results. This is especially helpful in an increasingly mobile world where nearly one-third of mobile searches are related to location2.

Optimising Local Search

More and more consumers are turning to search engines to find local businesses. A local search strategy will help your business connect with more qualified leads, which in turn will increase your conversion rate. Small businesses should take advantage of local search strategies to increase their customer base. The first step to good local search is to create a Google ‘My Business Page’. It is free and helps consumers find your business in Google results. Once you have created an ‘My Business Page’ you need to focus on optimizing the content on your website for your target audience.

Local SEO works through selected keywords and geographic targeting. Creating fresh and informative content, around your keywords, regularly will help improve your websites overall search rankings. Customer reviews are also important in local search results, so it is vital for you to encourage your customers to leave feedback about your business on both Google and other online directories like Yelp and Four-square.

Benefits of Local Search

Local Search is highly targeted and timely, you can position your business to reach potential consumers, when they need you. Local Search has a higher conversion rate, which can sometimes be as high as 50% meaning you could be getting 1 out of every 2 potential customers to come to your business. Local Search is especially good for mobile searches, as more consumers turn to their mobile devices as a way of finding businesses to reach their needs. Although Local Search is highly beneficial for businesses, it is important to remember that this type of strategy is a marathon, not a sprint. Once the strategy is implemented, it could take weeks, or even months for your business to see real results. But the benefits of local SEO are worth the wait. It is never too late to start becoming a digital business, and local search is the best way to begin taking advantage of potential consumer searching online.

Annika Scott is an expert copywriter at Digital Presence. Visit www.digitalpresence.com.au
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The African continent is home to a large number of young people—and it simply doesn’t have jobs for them all. Youth unemployment is high across the continent. Some countries, like Nigeria and Kenya, have tried to tackle this problem by equipping children with entrepreneurial skills while they’re still at school.

This equips children with essential foundational knowledge and skills such as emotional intelligence and risk taking—it also develops their appreciation for self-employment opportunities.

This means that when such children find themselves in a situation where they are unemployed, they don’t give up and succumb to helplessness; instead, they are able to use their skills to create new opportunities as entrepreneurs.

Both have long made entrepreneurship training part of their schools’ vocational subjects and technology classes. For some years, teachers in these subjects have been trained in entrepreneurship education. The problem of youth unemployment. But it immediately becomes more valuable.

In Botswana and South Africa, entrepreneurship-related programmes are offered to people who have already left school. Botswana’s government has introduced initiatives like the Youth Empowerment Scheme and the Youth Development Fund to encourage and empower young people with entrepreneurial and survival skills such as interpersonal, risk taking, emotional intelligence, as well as being able to identify opportunities, and financial skills in general. In South Africa, the National Youth Development Agency includes an entrepreneurship development programme.

This aims to help young entrepreneurs access the relevant skills, knowledge, values and attitudes needed to develop and create their own businesses. But entrepreneurship programmes are not coordinated and often not managed well in South Africa. So very few young people actually benefit from them.

In principle, the programmes are good. But they haven’t worked because the people they’re meant to benefit don’t have the right skills to take advantage of what’s being offered. This could be addressed if entrepreneurial skills were being instilled at an early age—in the school curriculum.

Use existing resources

So why don’t schools in Botswana and South Africa simply introduce an entirely new subject that’s devoted to entrepreneurship? The reason, as we point out in our research, is that the school curriculum is a hugely contested space in any country. Many subjects are competing for space and recognition, and it’s a long, complex process to introduce an entirely new subject.

That’s why we suggest that the southern African neighbours could learn from Kenya and Nigeria by merging entrepreneurship education with another subject. Technology, Design and Technology is the ideal home for this since these subjects already incorporate a number of skills any good entrepreneur needs. These include problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork and production or making skills, which learners develop in Technology when they design and physically make a product.

When learners can see the results of applying their knowledge and skills into actual products—which could be sold or somehow used to create an income—their learning immediately becomes more valuable.

Technology teachers will need to be trained in entrepreneurship education. But this is a worthwhile investment both for the individual teachers and their own skills and the value they’ll be able to add for their pupils.

This article was first published at www.theconversation.com.au. Michael Gaotlhobogwe is Senior Lecturer in Curriculum and Instruction, University of Botswana and Adria Du Toit is Lecturer in Consumer Studies and Technology Education, North-West University.

Why kids should be taught how to start a business at school

Why kids should be taught how to start a business at school

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Why putting the words ‘learning’ and ‘Facebook’ together isn’t an oxymoron

CRAIG BLEWETT

I’m a rather impressionable, if controversial, resume for a teenager: blamed for the election of Donald Trump, increased divorce rates, rising syphilis cases, and the advent of fake news.

Facebook turns 14 on February 4. And the controversies continue unabated. But there’s one aspect of Facebook that should not be lost in all the noise: the extraordinary change it has brought about in how we connect, communicate, consume and share content – in the classroom, as well as in other spaces.

Putting the words “Facebook” and “learning” together may seem like an oxymoron. But my research has delved into the role Facebook is playing in shaping how the new generation communicates, consumes and shares content – in the classroom, as well as in other spaces.

Understanding this is pivotal to understanding how we should be using technology to teach in the digital age. Quite simply, Facebook has changed the way that children learn.

How students learn

That’s what I’ve discovered through my research, which used a cyber-ethnography approach to try and determine how students are learning in our modern digital age. This involved essentially “living” with students while they connected, communicated, and learned in a Facebook space.

I spent an entire semester watching and interacting with students at the University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa as they used a Facebook page as their primary learning portal. The students were given admin access to the space.

This meant they could determine how the space was used: who had access to it, how it was designed, what was posted on the page, and even the level of anonymity of their posts.

This provided me with an opportunity to watch the students learn, unfiltered from traditional learning constraints. However, it would take a while for the students to fully explore their learning within this new space.

Initially the students would often attempt to defer to me and my guidance. Only after I repeatedly refused to control their learning did they begin to behave in a self-organising way and allow me to observe their natural learning patterns.

The research revealed that Facebook provided students with a series of learning affordances. Affordances are “can do” opportunities, some intentional and others unintentional, that technology spaces provide.

In this instance the research revealed that the affordances at play were accessibility, connection, communication, control and construction. These affordances provide valuable insights into how students learn in digital spaces.

Once I understood this, I could turn my attention to the key need: developing ways of teaching, called pedagogies, that are appropriate for the digital age. Currently the focus on technology – the what, has distracted us from pedagogy: the how. Without understanding how best to apply these new technologies’ affordances, educators will not be able to effectively impact teaching in the modern classroom.

However, providing educators with a list of “how tos” isn’t much use without a system that makes the list easy to implement. As Dan Schwartz, dean of Stanford’s Graduate School of Education, says: “I can tell people they need to teach better. But if I don’t give them things that are easy for them to implement, they won’t do it.”

Activating the classroom

That’s where the Activated Classroom Teaching (ACT) model comes in. I developed this model in a bid to create a taxonomy of teaching and learning for 21st century classrooms. A taxonomy is an ordered arrangement of items. One of the most famous of these is Bloom’s taxonomy of thinking. The ACT model attempts to provide a taxonomy of digital-age teaching approaches.

The ACT model consists of five digital-age pedagogies that seek to maximise the affordances of technology, modern students’ approaches to learning and the development of key 21st century skills such as creativity, problem solving, curiosity, critical thinking, etc.

The focus is a shift from passive ways of teaching (consumption) to active approaches (curation, conversation, correction, creation and chaos). This aligns with research that shows children are spending more than half their online time actively engaging: creating content, getting involved in “interactive consumption” and communicating.

Ignoring the tectonic shifts taking place in our classrooms is not the solution. Simply dropping technology into our classrooms is not the solution. Simply training teachers to use computers is not the solution. As British author and education expert Sir Ken Robinson has said, we need a paradigm shift, but it’s more than that – we need a pedagogy shift.

The young teen, Facebook, has changed how we connect and learn. But, as the OECD pointed out in its global study about educational technology: “If we want students to become smarter than a smartphone, we need to think harder about the pedagogies we are using to teach them. Technology can amplify great teaching but great technology cannot replace poor teaching.”

This article was first published at www.thecconversa.com.au Craig Blewett is Senior Lecturer in Education & Technology, University of KwaZulu Natal.

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3 essential online health checks

KATHERINE HAWES

ONLINE business is constantly evolving and as your own business develops, you should ensure that your business is compliant with the law and protected from liability.

There are three essential health checks that you should undertake for your business on a yearly basis. These are renewal/update of business name, business structure and terms and conditions.

Renew your business name
You can register a business name with ASIC for either one or three years at a time. This means that everyone or three years, you will need to renew it. ASIC will send you a business name renewal notice 30 days before your name expires. You can conduct a search on the business names register. This search will not reveal all details that are held by ASIC. Details such as your residential address, email address and any other details you have chosen to hide will not be publicly viewable.

Certain details will need to be updated within 28 days of the change occurring. For example, you will need to update your business name addresses, business name holder details, representative details, business name partner details and ABN within 28 days.

Business name
As time passes and your business grows, you will need to consider your business structure. There are 4 main business structures used in Australia. These are sole trader, partnership, company and trust.

Each of these structures has different characteristics in licensing, taxation, whether you want to be considered an employee or a shareholder, personal liability, ongoing costs and how much control you have of the business.

Most start-ups begin with a sole trader structure. This is the cheapest structure with the easiest set up so it makes sense to start off this way. The business operates under your individual tax file number and you only need to register for GST if your annual GST turnover is above $75000. You are also personally liable for your business.

As your business begins to grow, the tax and liability ramifications can become a worry. To limit legal liability and tax burden, you may consider changing your structure to a company.

You can find more information about business structures on https://www.business.gov.au.

Your terms and conditions
Terms and conditions are extremely important for an online business. Not only do they stipulate the terms and conditions of use for visitors, but they also provide the business owner with some protection from liability.

Terms and conditions should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to keep up with any changes that occur in your business. Some clauses which you should consider for your terms and conditions are:

- Privacy policy,
- Cookie policy,
- Website ownership,
- Visitors agreement,
- Intellectual property,
- Consequences of use of the website
- Amending terms and conditions
- Copyright information
- Refund policy.

Katherine Hawes is principal at www.digitalagelawyers.com
"The weather was perfect, the crowd was responsive, and the films were arguably the strongest we’ve ever had. Add to that Susan Sarandon, Rachel Griffiths, Tim Minchin and more, it was definitely one of the strongest events in 26 years. The feedback we’ve had has been phenomenal.” – Tropfest’s John Polson on this year’s festival.

“I could give just some of the students an opportunity and a chance to make their lives better, fulfilling and more positive than they are at the moment, I will look back on my career and say it has been worthwhile.” – Sydney principal Carolyn Blanden on having spent 30 years teaching at a mix of elite private and independent schools including Blacktown and Fairfield campuses.

“The deal coincides with the opening of our campus in the Liverpool. These students will be critical to supporting the type of innovation the Prime Minister and Premier are looking to see at the Aerotropolis, and throughout the Western Parklands City. The deal also aligns exceptionally well with the University’s commitment to a health and medical research facility in Campbelltown.” – Western Sydney University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Barney Glover on the City Deal announcement.

“As time passes and your business grows, you will need to consider your business structure. There are 4 main business structures used in Australia. These are sole trader, partnership, company and trust. Each of these structures has different characteristics in licensing, taxation, whether you want to be considered an employee or a shareholder, personal liability, ongoing costs and how much control you have of the business.” – Lawyer Katherine Hawes on business structure.

“We’re very proud to have Western Sydney Business Access as our new regional media partner because they’re great supporters of the local arts scene. The quality of films being produced in Western Sydney right now would rival any other independent films being made around the country. We are so impressed by the standard of work being produced in our region and we expect to see it improve even more in the years to come.” – Made In The West film festival, artistic director, Ross Page.

“Proactive local government responses to domestic and family violence are increasingly important in combating this ‘whole of society’ issue, and we commend Council for its positive action.” – Women’s Community Shelters Chief Executive Officer Annabelle Daniel on the announcement of a new women’s refuge.

“The development will provide space and resource for Fujitsu General’s continued growth in the air conditioning market. The new office design will include a Fujitsu General showroom, on-site gymnasium, auditorium and outside green areas, which will encourage innovation, development and strengthen our ‘people first’ culture.” – Philip Perham from Fujitsu General on the firm’s new HQ.

“At our Liverpool facility alone we’ve grown our workforce by 10 percent, adding 30 employees this year to deliver around $11 million in product to WestConnex.” – Prysma commercial manager Adam Talbot.

“The weather was perfect, the crowd was responsive, and the films were arguably the strongest we’ve ever had. Add to that Susan Sarandon, Rachel Griffiths, Tim Minchin and more, it was definitely one of the strongest events in 26 years. The feedback we’ve had has been phenomenal.” – Tropfest’s John Polson on this year’s festival.

“The trend back in 2014-15 was to be (in a co-working space) in the CBD or fringe but in 2017-18, there has been strong interest from regional hubs across Greater Western Sydney. Shared spaces offer flexibility for businesses who simply don’t have the ability to commit to longer term space.” – Grant Philipp, chief executive of Office Hub.


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