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WSUB ranks in top 400

Western Sydney University’s increasing international influence has been recognised in the 2016 Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities.

The international ranking places Western Sydney University in the top 400 in the world, illustrating the University’s growing reputation for producing research of international importance.

The ranking system measured factors of academic and research performance, including six-point indicators of academic excellence. GSIRMultiGrove achieved awards to researchers, highly cited researchers, the quality and quantity of research publications, and the per capita academic performance of an institution.

The University’s STEM research was also recognised, ranking in the top 400 for Environmental Science & Engineering and Electrical & Electronic Engineering.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Barney Glover (pictured) says the strong result confirms the growing international influence of the University’s research.

“Western Sydney University continues to balance research quality with the importance of ensuring relevance and impact at the local, national and international levels,” says Professor Glover. “These excellent results reflect the ongoing respect accorded to our researchers by their international colleagues. Just as importantly, these results show that our concern with real-world problems, development of industry partnerships and focus on impact, supports research at the highest international standard.”

500 guests celebrate WSABE winners

The other winners were:

City of Parramatta Excellence in Innovation
Azrin Pty Ltd
Crown Group Business Leader
Gina Field – Nepean Regional Security
DOOLEYS Lidcombe Catholic Club Excellence in Business Ethics
Holly Kershaw - Fizics Education
ComputerWex & Financemex Excellence in Business Ethics
Evolve Housing
Senses Direct Excellence in Business
Adicitin Group
Commonwealth Bank Excellence in Sustainability
The Kamine Company
Parramatta Chamber of Commerce
Employer of Choice
Macquarie Sports Club
UNE Business School – University of New England Young Entrepreneur
Visual Soo – Nucan Group
Australian Work Health & Safety Excellence in Work, Health and Safety
Children’s Medical Research Institute
Local Chamber of Commerce Wests Region by NSW Business Chamber
Parramatta Chamber of Commerce
DOOLEYS Lidcombe Catholic Club Excellence in Export
The Smith Family
Telstra Business Centre West Sydney Excellence in Marketing

WSU ranks in top 400

By Di Bartok

The 26th Annual Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence (WSABE) was certainly a night of nights with close to 500 guests celebrating the success of a diverse range of businesses.

It was held at Waterview Bicentennial Park on Friday August 19, hosted by Ricardo Goncalves from SBS World News.

The evening started with prize giveaways followed by an overview of Western Sydney as a key business hub.

NSW Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian, representing the Premier Mike Baird, gave a positive economic overview of the region while Opposition Leader and Shadow Minister for Western Sydney Luke Foley shared his insights of small business and the importance of innovation.

Both congratulated the success of Western Sydney businesses, stating that the region was the engine room of the nation. “You are all winners,” Ms Berejiklian said, a theme that was carried throughout the night.

The awards, hosted by Parramatta Chamber of Commerce, are judged by a panel of industry experts who give a rigorous appraisal of every company that enters. WSABE is considered a more genuine assessment of business achievement.

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Damon Henshaw
Principal, Patent Attorney, Davis Collison Cave

Disruption is occurring everywhere. Businesses need to manage how they innovate, develop entrepreneurial skills and ensure that they capture the benefits available through protecting their IP, accessing the best information through cloud solutions, collaborative development (incubators such as the Launch Pad) and accessing government money through grants and tax incentives.

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Tropfest now showing in WEST

ATTRACTION

By Di Bartok

THE next big Hollywood discovery could be premiered in Parramatta Park next year as Tropfest makes its much-heralded move to the west.

Tropfest is billed as the world’s largest short film festival and its films have helped launch the careers of stellar Australian actors such as Rebel Wilson, Joel Edgerton, Chris Hemsworth and Sam Worthington, now big names in Hollywood.

The much-lauded festival, which has launched the careers of directors as well as actors, and attracts entries from overseas, has been in the inner-city for 24 years, starting out in a Darlinghurst cafe, before moving to the Domain and then Centennial Park.

In a deal with the Parramatta Park Trust and Parramatta Council, the festival will be held at the four-hectare Cattle Paddocks in Parramatta Park for at least the next three years.

Tropfest founder John Polson said the move was inspired by Sundance and Cannes film festivals with “a destination we can call our own”.

“Tropfest needed a fresh base where it can be nurtured, expand, and eventually become a multi-event festival,” he said.

“Moving Tropfest to Parramatta also puts us firmly in the geographical heart of Sydney, which is the perfect place for the world’s most exciting and accessible film event.

“The City of Parramatta and Parramatta Park Trust have already demonstrated they are 100 per cent behind helping us ensure Tropfest at Parramatta is a success.”

Filmmaker George Miller and actor Sam Neill added some pizzazz to the announcement outside Old Government House, along with NSW Environment Minister Mark Speakman. “Having such vested partners on board enables us to continue our core mission – to provide a platform for Australia’s incredible filmmaking talent, and to celebrate that talent loudly and for all the world to see,” Mr Speakman said.

“The first of its kind in the world, it remains a well-spring of talent and, thanks to the inspirational John Polson, has never lost its unique, grassroots, ‘give it a go’ attitude,” he said.

“A big shout out to Parramatta for recognizing this and providing Tropfest a warm new home.”

The 25th Tropfest, which features a pineapple as the item to be featured in each film, will be on February 11 2017.

Meanwhile, Ross Page, who runs Made in the West Film Festival, would like to partner with Tropfest to give a greater voice to Western Sydney filmmakers.

“We applaud Tropfest coming to the west, even though we are struggling to find a venue in Parramatta and have to go to Paddington RSL – but we could look to somehow combining the two festivals,” Mr Page said.

The one naysayer, Newtown filmmaker Adam St John, who said he thought Parramatta was too far away for serious film buffs to come, was roundly criticised, with Fat Pizza and Here Come the Habibs creator Nick Shehadie laughing at his comments.

“Parramatta is now the centre of Sydney and has become the new cultural hub,” Shehadie said.

Lights, camera, action

Tropfest starts 1993 Tropicana Cafe
Darlinghurst

Moves to Domain following year

Last year, showed in Centennial Park

2017 finds new home in Parramatta Park

www.tropfest.com.au

Actors and directors

Rebel Wilson, Joel Edgerton, Sam Worthington, Chris Hemsworth, Alister Grierson, Rowan Woods, Clayton Jacobson, Nash Edgerton, Peter Carstairs, Rob Carlton, Robert Connolly, Leon Ford, Justin Drape, Tom Bullock and Elissa Down

Judges have included

Toni Collette, Tobey Maguire, Rebel Wilson, James Woods, Anthony LaPaglia, Trevor Groth and Charles Randolph

Tropfest now showing in WEST

WWW.WSBA.COM.AU
**PROPERTY**

**$1M houses: Mt Druitt is changing**

By Red Dwyer

**REPORTS** that houses have fetched more than $1 million are changing the perception of the much maligned suburb of Mt Druitt.

That $1M is the median price, in recent years, for houses in suburbs, such as Austral, Luddenham, Mulgoa, Pitt Town and Windsor Downs, shows the rising demand for housing in the Outer West.

This demand along with infrastructure investment at Badgerys Creek Airport and the ever-increasing number of mixed-use towers proposed or under construction in Parramatta, Blacktown, Liverpool and Penrith are driving the change.

However, all is not rosy in the region. Over 200 business owners and senior managers from across the region were interviewed to gain their insights and ideas in the report, Making Western Sydney Greater.

It was undertaken by national accounting firm William Buck, in partnership with St George, the Western Sydney University and Western Sydney Business Connection,

"Whilst there are distinct advantages and challenges specific to Greater Western Sydney, it is clear that the different subregions have their own unique experiences," the report said.

"An interesting finding is the importance of the ‘perception of the region’ and the scope of views on this point," the report noted.

For businesses in the West Central and North West the perception was generally seen as beneficial for business, while in the West and South West the perception was seen as an overall negative factor.

"The responses indicated that the perception issues relate to broader social issues rather than business specific factors.

**BRIEFS**

**Chinese buy Mercure**

A CHINESE investment company, Silversea Investment, owned by Frank and Wayne Huang, has acquired the four-star, 165-room Mercure Parramatta, for $40 million. The hotel was sold by private investor Craig Smith, of Smith Property Group, in Orange, which had acquired it for $16 million in July 2013 from Tourism Asset Holdings Limited. The Mercure stands on a large freehold site with potential for expansion or redevelopment.

**Site on the market**

GOVERNMENT Property NSW has put a vacant site, at 127 Argyle Street, opposite the Parramatta train station, on the market for more than $30 million. The site, adjacent to Westfield, has potential for a hotel.

**New legal partnership**

ROAD Freight NSW (RFNSW) has announced a strategic partnership with leading national law firm Holding Redlich which will provide specialist legal support to RFNSW and its members. Under the program, RFNSW General Manager Simon O’Hara said Holding Redlich will become RFNSW’s exclusive legal partner, delivering a range of benefits to the industry group’s members.

**40,000 jobs**

A RAIL connection linking Western Sydney to Badgerys Creek Airport would deliver more than 40,000 jobs for the region, preliminary figures commissioned by the Western Sydney Rail Alliance, show.

**WSU-Navitas venture**

EDUCATION provider, Navitas, has signed a joint venture contract with Western Sydney University. The company runs education programs in Australia and internationally.
**OPPORTUNITY**

**TIME Out for Business Week**

Which provide local goods and services and employ local people. If you want to start a business, the Great South West is the place to do it.

*Time Out Australia CEO Michael Rodrigues said he was excited to return to his home town to share his insights into running a successful business.*

"South West Sydney is very different now to when I grew up. For a number of years Liverpool sat still while other parts of the metropolitan area evolved. But now it's maturing so fast and I think there's real sense of excitement and possibility among the young people who live here," Mr Rodrigues said.

"As is the case elsewhere, digital media and technology have combined to provide unprecedented opportunities for forward thinking businesses to win new audience and spread new ideas. It's the great leveller of our time – and those with passion, conviction and determination, have every chance to succeed."

**Time Out Australia CEO Michael Rodrigues.**

Time Out Sydney is a go-to guide for what’s on in Sydney including food, arts, gigs, theatre and much more. It reaches its audiences through print, digital and social channels.

Young Entrepreneur Ideas with Time Out promises to be a fun evening staged in the stunning Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, featuring a panel of guests eager to share their experiences and insights into being a successful entrepreneur.

"This is going to be a great evening to connect with other young entrepreneurs and learn from local success stories," Mayor Mannoun said.

The event will be held 6pm to 8pm, Thursday September 15 at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, 1 Powerhouse Rd, Casula. The event costs $15. Small Business week runs from September 12 to September 16. Other events include:

- **The Power of Branding with Michael Clarke.**
- **Liverpool Chamber of Commerce Small Business Expo.**
- **Start-Up Essentials** (run by the South West Sydney Business Enterprise Centre).
- **Small Business Success** (run by the South West Sydney Business Enterprise Centre) To follow the latest information about Small Business Week in Liverpool:
  - Follow us on Twitter @Lpool_Council @SBWLiverpool.
  - Visit www.facebook.com/LiverpoolCityCouncilAustralia.
  - Email business@liverpool.nsw.gov.au.
  - Call Liverpool City Council’s Director of Economic Development Julie Scott on 9821 9575.

**Dyldam** has won a Development Excellence Award for their recently completed twin tower project, KOI PARRAMATTA.

Dyldam’s Chief Operating Office, Mr Fayad Fayad, accepted the award for the High Rise – Metro Apartments Development category at the Urban Taskforce’s prestigious 2016 industry event held at the Four Seasons hotel.

The Development Excellence Awards showcase Australia’s leading development projects that shape the urban landscape of Australia’s capital cities.

Guest of honour and keynote speaker Robert Stokes, Minister for Planning, said the 21st century was destined to be the “century of the city”.

Liveability and sustainability were driving factors in development as world’s populations continued to gravitate to cities for employment and residence, he said.

Inspired to fuse both nature’s tranquillity and modern CBD living, Dyldam created KOI Parramatta – a 20 storey mixed use development in keeping with Parramatta’s vibrant evolution into a city of the future.

This vision exceeds the site’s original commercial office DA. 277 apartments reside in two elegant towers that rise above 861m2 of commercial/retail space. City apartment living is enhanced by the ambience of two tranquil large-scale open-air koi ponds.

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12 September

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**Small Business Expo**

13 September

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**The power of branding with Michael Clarke**

14 September

Former Test Captain and successful businessman.

**Essentials of Small Business Success**

14 September

Learn the four factors of business success and 10 ways to avoid business failure.

**Time Out with Young Entrepreneurs**

15 September

Featuring Time Out Australia, WSU Launchpad, Bearded Baker, Ameer El-Issa.

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Blacktown is building the best

Blacktown City Council is a multi-award winning council, having received 13 national and state awards so far this year. “Blacktown City Council has never won so many awards in such a short period of time,” said the Mayor of Blacktown City, Councillor Mayor Bali.

“As a not for profit, Council-owned and operated business, we offer the assurance of appropriate monitoring and governance with a commitment to providing safe, affordable and accessible support services to the community. “Blacktown City Council offers more than child minding,” the Mayor of Blacktown City, Councillor Mayor Bali said.

“The name Kids’ Early Learning better describes what we actually have been doing for 40 years and places a greater emphasis on the positive contribution Blacktown City Council makes to improve our community. “What was ‘Children’s Services’ for more than 40 years has always been more than simply looking after children.

“The new name better explains what we do and what we aspire to,” Mayor Bali said.

“There is now a greater emphasis on areas such as educational programming and practice, children’s health and safety, staffing arrangements, relationships with children, collaborative partnerships with families and communities, leadership and service management, Mayor Bali said.

“We’re also working to increase our communications and engagement with customers and the community to increase the overall profile of Kids’ Early Learning as a leading provider in childcare, he said. "The change of name reflects Council’s commitment to become a leading service provider that gives our community’s children the best start to life and learning," he said.

Kids’ Early Learning continues to be owned and operated by Blacktown City Council and offers families a range of programs and services for children aged between 6 weeks and 12 years old, from long day care, preschool to before and after school care, vacation care and family day care.

Children can be enrolled in Kids’ Early Learning by simply visiting the website www.kidsearlylearning.com.au or by contacting staff on 9839 6868.

The complete list of awards:

- RH Dougherty Award (Highly Commended) Reporting to your Community category for the “Sporting City” themed 2015 Annual Report, Community Report and Community Calendar.
- The Conservation Condensation for Heritage Architects from the Australian Institute of Architects (Restoration of Melrose House) Commendation award from the Australian Property Institute (Restoration of Melrose House).
- Blacktown City Council’s 2015 annual report was awarded a bronze award at the Australasian Reporting Awards in June 2016.
- Peel Reserve at The Ponds was awarded a high commendation in the Playspace: Major (>-$0.5m) category at the 2016 NSW/ACT Parks and Leisure Australia Awards of Excellence.
By Dallas Sherringham

Close Masters? Hardly surprising

The decision to close the Masters Hardware chain came as a great shock to many, but not to me. One visit to Masters was enough to convince me the whole thing was going to come crashing down, you see, I am big on customer service. If I am going to spend my hard earned at your business, the least you can do is say ‘Hello’ and can I help you?” When I go Bunnings I am greeted properly and the sales person takes me to the exact product where my product is displayed. I decided to give Masters a go because I was buying an expensive built-in for the master bedroom. I found what I was looking for and asked a passing staff member for help. She brushed me off and said: “The wardrobe girl is over there”, with a wave of the hand, not even slowing down. So I went over to the anointed one and she was on her mobile obviously talking to her boyfriend. I waited and waited and finally started to get impatient. She kept on talking. I finally made eye contact and she said: “Just a sec babe, there is someone here”. I asked her about the differences between the built-in wardrobes and she pointed at them and said: “Over there!” Then she went back on the phone and started talking to her boyfriend again. I walked out and never went back. Her ignorance and lack of any sales ability cost Masters $2000 plus that day, so imagine how much they lost through similar instances nationwide every day.

What’s the message here?

Justice Robert Hulme is typical of the NSW legal system spinning out of control. Recently he showed how far out of touch our judges are when handing down verdicts. He gave a vicious murderer who stabbed his ex wife to death a total of 15 years in jail. He will be eligible for parole in 2030. It is an utter disgrace. Someone in power has to make a stand against these Potts Point wig wearers who are so far out of touch with the real world that it is mind boggling. Mike Baird can save a few greyhounds, but he can’t control his own justice system. What kind of message does it send to violent wife bashers?

Gone to the dogs

Speaking of Mike Baird and greyhounds, I can’t help thinking the whole electoral disaster was perpetrated so the State Government could get its hands on the billion-dollar real estate site, otherwise known as Wentworth Park greyhound track. The State Government is intent on selling every public asset it can. Now, the racetrack industry must be very nervous because they are obviously taking part in a sport involving animals. The Greens hate horse racing so Mike Baird will have to do a deal with them. Imagine how much race courses like Rosehill, Randwick and Gosford are worth. Then there are the public golf courses in NSW with many of them on prime land. One reliable source told me the State Government had done a deal with the Greens to ban the dogs, in exchange for them ‘keeping quiet’ over damage to trees being caused by the light rail extension. Malcolm Turnbull said he was against the destruction of the greyhound industry but with NSW so anti-sport, he may have to look at way of Federal legislation over riding state legislation. Now that would be story!

Guest writer Dallas Sherringham is a journalist and editor of many years standing. He is currently CO-CEO: WTFMEDIA with around one million readers nationwide.
Forum affirms Liverpool’s future

By Nini Lazaman

LIVERPOOL City’s future is bright with Badgerys Creek Airport building on Sydney’s connectivity and bringing infrastructure to the south-west Sydney region, leading social commentator Bernard Salt told a recent Invest Liverpool forum.

Mr Salt, from global advisory firm KPMG, said Sydney, ‘one of the most multicultural places on earth’ was poised to become a global city.

Global cities have multiple major airports and Badgerys Creek Airport will give Sydney a global-city credibility, which in turn will give Liverpool jobs, infrastructure and connectivity on a grand scale, he said.

‘As a collaborator with Sydney, Liverpool with its great impact on connectivity and other attributes, has the potential to be globally significant,’ Mr Salt said.

Mr Salt told the more than 200 forum participants at Casula Powerhouse:

- Liverpool had a diverse, vibrant and young population with more than 45 per cent aged under 30.
- Its population was projected to grow by about 132,000 by 2031.
- There is a kids’ wave coming over the next 10 to 15 years,” he said as he outlined the opportunities to invest in job-creating businesses and industries, housing, health and education services in Liverpool.

“The challenge for Liverpool is to retain social cohesion, creating local jobs through innovation and building an entrepreneurial culture,” he said.

A big plus for Liverpool is that while 43 per cent of its population were born overseas, its community is “demographically united,” according to Mr Salt.

Figure show a significant number of people in Liverpool’s more affluent areas are cosmopolitan and conservative, 95 per cent have strong religious beliefs and majority embrace volunteering, he said.

Mr Salt’s upbeat assessment of Liverpool’s potential was echoed by Sheridan Dudley who oversees the south-west Sydney district for the Greater Sydney Commission.

“The airport (Badgerys Creek) is a game-changer,” Ms Dudley said.

About 600,000 additional people will be added to the south-west Sydney region and Liverpool will be the heart of this region and be able to position itself for smart jobs, she said.

LIVERPOOL’S UNIQUE SELLING POINTS

Health precinct: Liverpool Hospital, the largest in the country, is right in the Liverpool CBD.

Two universities: The University of Wollongong and Western Sydney University will come to Liverpool in 2017.

Badgerys Creek Airport: To be located entirely in Liverpool Council area about 33 kms from the Liverpool CBD and, when built, will dramatically boosts connectivity, infrastructure and jobs.

Population: Young, vibrant, multicultural (140 languages spoken at home) community

Population growth twice the average

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Penrith unit approvals sky high in CBD

INVESTMENT
By Red Dwyer

UNPRECEDENTED private investment has contributed to 2050 town houses, units and apartments development approvals in the Penrith CBD.

“The value of development applications determined almost doubled, from $589 million to $1.2 billion, in the last financial year,” said Penrith Mayor Karen McKeown, at the State of the Cities – Penrith event.

“Apartments continue to sell off the plan indicating interest is high,” she told more than 150 delegates, at Penrith Panthers.

“Downtown living will serve the growing and diverse needs of our changing population and with each new resident spending nearly $35,000 on average each year, our local economy will continue to thrive.”

The current investment boom continues the trend of recent years.

Delegates were told the in the past five years more than $3.5 billion in DAs had been determined in Penrith and there was another $2 billion in current applications.

These developments, coupled with the future Western Sydney Airport and the $2.55 billion Sydney Science Park, at Luddenham, ensure Penrith’s future as the heart of the New West,” Clr McKeown said.

“Council owns 47.8 hectares of City Centre land (and) as a key landowner, council has the capacity to directly leverage positive change by strategically using publicly owned land to unlock the city’s potential.”

Clr McKeown called on Canberra and Macquarie Street, in Sydney, to follow suit.

“Penrith is at the heart of the North West and South West growth centres – Australia’s fastest growing region,” she said.

“It’s time for the state and federal governments to invest in our city, like the private sector is.”

NSW Business Chamber Western Sydney director, David Borger, said the transformation of the CBD had the potential to attract new retail and office jobs including public service jobs.

The Western Sydney Business Chamber, along with Penrith Council and sponsors, sponsored the event.

Affordable housing and it’s all built with timber

By Red Dwyer

CAMPBELLTOWN is believed to be the location of the largest affordable housing development in Australia to be built in timber.

The Gardens complex, comprising 101 apartments, is being constructed thanks to a timber product from Austria.

Cross Laminated Timber (CLT), the first shipment of which arrived in 78 containers, is being used as an alternative to steel and concrete in the construction of the three-tower residential project.

Construction of the basement and concrete podium had been completed in readiness for the shipment’s arrival.

The almost-3000 cubic meters of CLT, manufactured using layers of timber to create solid panels, is a relatively new method of timber construction to Australia but has been widely accepted as a preferred method in Europe and the US for over 15 years.

CLT, manufactured using layers of timber to create solid panels, is a relatively new method of timber construction to Australia but has been widely accepted as a preferred method in Europe and the US for over 15 years.

By Red Dwyer

Erby Place transformation begins

THE public open space at the corner of Erby Place and Phillip Street in Parramatta’s popular East Street precinct will be upgraded to provide a more relaxed urban refuge for workers and restaurant goers.

The shaded open space, known as Erby Place Pocket Park, adjoins the East Street car park and is a high traffic area for pedestrians and vehicles accessing the car park and nearby restaurants.

The project will include the installation of high quality granite paving, new floral plantings, an integrated lighting and music system, landscaping, and improved seating and drainage.

New power outlets will also be installed to allow workers to recharge their phones and laptops. The popular, established jacaranda trees will be retained as part of the upgrades.

Work on the $600,000 Erby Place Park project started last week and is expected to be completed before Parramatta Lanes in October.

Council recently appointed Regal Innovations Pty Ltd as the successful tenderer.

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NEW PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT LIVE MUSIC IN PARRAMATTA

CITY OF PARRAMATTA COUNCIL HAS ESTABLISHED A FORMAL PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LIVE MUSIC OFFICE TO FOSTER THE GROWTH OF THE CITY’S LIVE MUSIC SCENE.

The new partnership will involve the delivery of key projects to establish a thriving local music culture in Parramatta.

“Parramatta is a city that is evolving into a true cultural destination. There has long been support for live music in the region, and the opportunity to develop this further with the Live Music Office is an exciting one,” City of Parramatta Administrator Amanda Chadwick said.

A vibrant live music scene will complement Parramatta’s thriving restaurant precinct and will support the development of small bars. It is expected to provide an economic boost to the city through increased patronage and visitor spend, particularly as part of the night time economy.

“Live music has a way of invigorating a space, creating atmosphere and drawing people in. We expect the local community, visitors, workers and businesses will greatly enjoy and benefit from the creation of a live music scene in the city,” Ms Chadwick said.

As part of the new initiative, City of Parramatta is recruiting for a Live Music Programming Coordinator to facilitate the delivery of the project.

The 12-month, part-time contract role will work closely with Council, the Live Music Office and local businesses and stakeholders to create a dynamic live music industry in Parramatta.

“We welcome this new partnership with the City of Parramatta,” Live Music Office Audience and Sector Development Director Damian Cunningham said.

“Integrating sector development initiatives and policy planning is essential to growing live music from the grass roots up. The appointment of a Live Music Programming Coordinator will benefit artists, audiences and businesses in Parramatta.”

PARRAMATTA WELCOMES WORLD’S LARGEST SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

PARRAMATTA WILL BE THE FOCUS OF THE GLOBAL FILM INDUSTRY NEXT FEBRUARY WHEN TROPFEST RELOCATES TO ITS NEW HOME IN PARRAMATTA PARK.

The move coincides with the 25th anniversary of Australia’s most prestigious and largest short film festival. It will give the world-class festival an opportunity to expand and make it more accessible for film lovers from across Sydney and beyond.

Moving Tropfest to Parramatta places the event at the heart of Global Sydney, and adds to the city’s growing reputation as a thriving centre for arts and culture.

It is expected that more than 50,000 people will attend the event, providing major tourism benefits for Parramatta and injecting at least $2 million into the local economy.

Only a short 30-minute train ride from Sydney’s CBD, Parramatta is transforming into a vibrant cultural centre, and offers great economic opportunities and lifestyle choices.

THE FUTURE WILL BE HERE SOONER THAN YOU THINK

PARRAMATTA HAS DOMINATED THE HEADLINES OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS AS IT TRANSFORMS WITH A $14 BILLION URBAN RENEWAL AND REGENERATION PROGRAM TO EMERGE AS AUSTRALIA’S LEADING ECONOMY. BUT WHAT WILL THE CITY LOOK LIKE IN FIVE YEARS AND WHERE WILL THE OPPORTUNITIES BE FOR BUSINESSES?

Join us as we present Parramatta 2021 and gain an insight into how the City and economy will transform into a vibrant cultural centre for growth. Uncover the facts, figures, vision and business case for why Parramatta should be front and centre in your business growth and expansion plans.

The opening address from Lucy Turnbull, Chief Commissioner at the Greater Sydney Commission, will outline why Parramatta holds the key to the future growth of Global Sydney as the economic engine room of the region.

Jeremy Thorpe, Partner at PWC, will illustrate how Parramatta will emerge as a visionary, world class city. A panel discussion will further explore the future of workplaces, 30 minute cities and the new demographics of Western Sydney.

Event details
Thursday 13 October 3.30pm – 5.30pm.
Location: Town Hall, Parramatta.
Followed by a VIP Parramatta Lanes Experience & Jamie’s Italian outdoor bar.
Shahzad: I come from a very large family. I am also fortunate to be able to call many fantastic human beings my friends. My family and friends play a very important role in my life outside working hours. They are my motivation and my aspiration. I interact with them on a very regular basis to de-stress. I am also an avid reader of history and high fantasy. Regular time in the gym helps me maintain energy levels for a packed working day. I am currently training to trek to the base camp of Mount Everest this October with my dear friend James Mills. We are going on this trek to raise funds for children in Nepal and also to challenge ourselves physically and mentally. Such activities help me achieve a sense of balance in life and keeps me invigorated.

WSBA: Please describe your greatest life lesson.

Shahzad: Nothing is too easy or too difficult. We make things easy or difficult for ourselves. The biggest battles in life are the ones we fight with ourselves, not the wider world. To win these battles, to make things easy for ourselves, we must maintain a degree of discipline in life through personal sacrifices, commitment and unwavering pledge to ourselves.

WSBA: If you could have dinner with anyone, dead or alive, who would that person be and why?

Shahzad: Ah, it has to be Julius Caesar. The hardships, challenges and obstacles he had to face, while still very young and then to grow to such stature in history and achieve what he did, are absolutely astonishing. The man was a very learned senator, an expert on Roman law, an extraordinarily successful military leader and a highly accomplished ruler and administrator.

WSBA: Your favourite book?

Shahzad: I like many books but nothing beats professor JRR Tolkien’s The Lord of The Rings.

WSBA: Your favourite movie?

Shahzad: The Godfather. You knew it didn’t you?

WSBA: If you could change one thing about the world today, what would that be?

Shahzad: I would end poverty in the world. I find it disturbing that there is very little we, as human beings are doing to help those who are less fortunate in our world.

WSBA: Thank you Shahzad, for your insights and for being our September TIME WITH guest.

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$40 million centre
THE $40 million Ponds Shopping Centre located on the corner of The Ponds Boulevard and Riverbank Drive in The Ponds, is the first and only retail project in Australia to receive a 6 Star Green Star – Retail Centre Design v1 rating, which represents world leadership in sustainable design.

$2.38 million
A 1117-square-metre factory building, on a 2090-square-metre site, at 3 Prince William Drive, Seven Hills, was sold at auction for $2.38 million.

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$265 million project
A $25 million collaborative project between Astina Group and Devcon Partners will see the construction of two, six-storey buildings, an a 4152-square-metre site at 144-148 High St and 35-37 Barber Ave, Penrith. The project includes 97 apartments and 130 basement car parks.

Park wins award
THE historic Bungarribee Homestead Park in Blacktown, has won an Australian Institute of Landscape NSW award for cultural heritage landscape architecture. Clouston Associates designed the project.

18-storey project approved
THE Sydney West Joint Regional Planning Panel has approved an 18-storey apartment complex in First Ave, comprising 16 levels of residential units above a two-storey commercial podium, in First Avenue, Blacktown.

Investor pays $5.3 million
A PRIVATE investor has purchased a free-standing industrial property at Condell Park for $5.3 million from Marion Developments. The 12,100 square metre property, at 390-396 Oxford Street, Epping.

$7.5 million grant
CANCER researchers at the Westmead Medical Research Institute have been granted almost $7.5 million of NSW Government funding to support groundbreaking cancer research, including renewed support for a multi-disciplinary bench-to-bedside translational cancer research centre.

Commercial conversion
DUNNETT Properties plans to convert one of its commercial holdings, at 44-48 Oxford Street, Epping, into 200 apartments.

DEXUS wins approval
DEXUS Property Group has won approval for a 25,000-square-metre, A-grade office development, at 105 Phillip Street, in the Parramatta CBD, to house 1800 Department of Education employees from March 2018.

OK for 22-storey project
APPROVAL has been given for the construction of a 22-storey shop-top housing development with basement car parking, at 35 Oxford Street, Epping.
Meet the Principal

Azeem thrives on the opportunity that the Real Estate arena offers him — meeting new people on a daily basis, the freedom, the challenges and the ability to really make a big difference in people’s lives. He recognized early that to become a true real estate professional he would need to be experienced in all facets of the real estate industry. Azeem loves challenges, may it be big or small.

Azeem also understands the importance of developing a strong relationship with vendors & purchasers alike. He has a strong work ethic, “never say die” attitude and a consultative, approachable personality. Being able to converse in 4 Languages gives Azeem the added advantage over the rest.

He has completed his Business Qualification from Massey University in New Zealand and has assisted a number of overseas investors and developers, mainly from China, Singapore and Malaysia.

Testament to Azeem’s ability to assist his clients with the right advice for their next move, whether it be residential or investment related, is Azeem’s ever growing client base who are continually recommending him to their family and friends.

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INVITATION TO

Make Bullying History Gala Dinner
Reduce bullying in schools by up to 70% within 12 months
Saturday, 6.30pm, October 29, 2016.
Novotel Sydney, Parramatta.

$120 per head or $1000* per table of 10
(*if purchased prior October 17)

Australia is top #3 in the world for the most number of teenagers that commit suicide because of bullying. The Make Bullying History Foundation is making an impact and have reduced bullying in some schools by up to 70% in 12 months - but they need your support to continue to do so.
The night will include a delicious two course dinner, drinks, a charity auction and five star entertainment.
Please call 0452 446 443 or email michael@mkgevents.com.au to book or for further information.

MAJOR SPONSORS

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Shelia Cabacungan is the Principle Financial Adviser of Carnegie Financial Planning. She has over 19 years’ experience in helping her clients build, protect and manage their money. She’s a Certified Financial Planner, Self-Managed Super Fund Specialist Adviser and Registered Tax (Financial Services) Agent. In 2009 she established Carnegie Financial Planning as an independently owned Australian Financial Services Licensee (AFSL No 389528). Her advice and recommendations are not influenced by the fear or favour of being tied to any financial institutions.

Carnegie Financial Planning specialises in providing advice and financial solutions to Western Sydney’s: • Small Business Owners looking to grow a profitable business that produces personal wealth and financial independence. • Professors looking to achieve financial independence and • Private Clients looking for wealth education and coaching to build, protect and manage their wealth.

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**FINANCIAL PLANNING** with Sheila Cabacungan

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**CONFERENCING** with Kylie Cleverly

**SYDNEY NOVELT**

Kylie Cleverly is the Meetings & Events Sales Manager at Novotel Sydney Norwest apart of the Accor Hotels portfolio, boasting 21 years’ experience in her field including such roles as Director of Events at a variety of global hotel chains. She enjoy meeting a wide variety of people. Every event is different, and re-inventing the wheel is part of our fantastic sales journey,” she says. Kylie values the strong relationship the hotel has with the Hills community along with the Novotel Sydney Norwest people being authentic, transparent and genuine, therefore creating a great hotel; a home away from home.

Contact Kylie on +61 (2) 9634 9661
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• Is consistently being in the top 3 business advice centres in NSW.
• Helps our clients increase turnover above their expectations.

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Identity theft and fraudulent payments

**Security**

Your organisation receives a call from a legitimate supplier inquiring as to why their invoice hasn’t been paid. This enquiry may be nothing out of the ordinary, until your organisation looks at the accounting records which indicate that the invoice has been paid. What might this mean?

From recent media articles and our own experience, this turn of events may suggest your organisation has been the victim of the latest scam being embraced by external fraudsters, potentially involving organised criminal elements.

The Australian Competition & Consumer Commission’s ScamWatch website has recently highlighted this as a scam for small businesses to be aware of. However, we have seen that local councils and larger corporations may also fall prey.

The scam itself may be perpetrated via a variety of methods, however the main goal for the fraudster may be to execute this “hijacked” bank account not associated with the supplier. The fraudster may execute this scam as follows.

- Fraudster obtains legitimate supplier information from target organisation, potentially through public tender, social media, or other information sources.
- Fraudster impersonates supplier and makes contact with the target organisation, occasionally initiated by notifying of a change of the legitimate supplier’s contact person to an alias the fraudster has created, before sending through fabricated “official looking” documents requesting a change of bank details.
- Target organisation updates the supplier’s bank details and makes a regular payment to the new bank account, to which the fraudster has access – often having been seized or hijacked from another victim.
- Fraudster may withdraw the funds or transfer to other bank accounts, thereby making tracing and recovery of funds extremely difficult.

As highlighted by the opening hypothetical situation, this scam may only be detected when the original supplier, completely unaware of their identity having been stolen, asks why they haven’t been paid.

Therefore, depending on agreed payment terms, this may be some time after the scam occurred thereby further reducing the possibility of recovering the fraudulently obtained funds.

Whilst the risk of detection in attempting to “adopt” the identity of an entire organisation may undoubtedly be higher than that of an individual, as with the recent slew of individual identity theft scams, there is a potential for higher “rewards” for the fraudster.

So, how do organisations protect themselves from the threat of these, often sophisticated, fraudsters?

- Employees are often the first line of defence in protecting the organisation from those trying to elicit funds through such scams. It may also be prudent to review processes and controls in place to verify the identity of, or instructions from, third-parties that your organisation deals with.
- Encourage employees to embrace their own intuition and if uncertain, ask another “sniff test”.
- Flagger” or indicators of activity which fail the

It’s not what you see, but how you see it.

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This article was first published by Stephen Roberts, KPMG Associates Director Advisory Australia Practice.
Why to adopt governance mechanisms?

PERFORMANCE

There is no cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all method to establish governance mechanisms.

- Bill Noye

WHAT IT TAKES TO GET TO NEXT GEN

What it takes to get to NEXT GEN

Better governance – better performance!

Good governance and formal governance mechanisms have a positive effect on the performance of the company, as they enable the owner to keep his finger on the pulse of the business progress.

A deeper look in the governance structures of high-performing family businesses confirms this statement. Specifically, the analysed high-performing family businesses:

- Had a formal board of directors, usually with a non-family non-executive director;
- Adopted already the governance mechanisms that lay out the expectations of the company and individuals and facilitate agreement and better communication between all parties involved (business / family / owners);
- Had a shareholding agreement in place (36% in 2013).

These included adopting a Family Constitution, shareholder meetings, shareholder agreements, and policies for family and non-family employees, as well as a succession plan outlining strategically the future of the family in the business.

Used business management practices that observe what goes on outside of the business. These involved benchmarking, competition as a success strategic plan, and progress reports.

Unique company – unique approach

There is no cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all method to establish governance mechanisms. One of the best ways is to let the governance evolve as your business progresses and goes through its necessary ownership and family lifecycle.

For example, while not all firms will benefit from implementing a formal board of directors, establishing one will become increasingly important and valuable as they grow. It helps lead to better management of risks, a more professional work culture, a higher calibre of management, and makes it easier to procure outside investments.

Another example is a Family Constitution or Code of conduct, which is usually established by companies when the business is transitioned from a founder-controlled institution to a sibling partnership.

Outside VS inside non-executive director

Choosing a non-executive director from outside of your family offers the potential benefit of a more objective, fresh perspective on the business and can lead to a superior performance.

Despite this, more and more family-owned businesses are doing the opposite, putting a family member in the position of a non-executive director of the board. Some of the reasons for such decision are:

- A family member wanting to continue to be involved in the business, transitioning from managing the family business to ensuring loyalty.
- A deeper look in the governance structures of high-performing family businesses:

- Alignment family and business needs

Family governance is critical for aligning the needs of both family and the business, and for developing a shared vision for the future of the business.

Creating a family council or code of conduct is imperative as it significantly decreases the likelihood of conflict between family members. It is also the perfect forum for family members to discuss any issues of concern and to clarify their expectations of each other.

A formalized governance is definitely an increasing trend within the family business community. That said, as a family business owner, you still need to continually examine how you can make the various governance mechanisms more effective.

Board roles should be abundantly clear. You may also need to formalize the way you share your own your family and evaluate the board performance. Whatever the case, by instituting family governance mechanisms, you are definitely moving in the right direction.

This article was first published by Bill Noye, KPMG Partner, Sydney Office.

WHAT IT TAKES TO GET TO NEXT GEN

What it takes to get to NEXT GEN

NOT every family business makes it to the second generation of ownership, let alone the third. In fact, the odds aren’t in the favour of the majority at all.

So how do the luck few owning family business transitions from a founder-controlled business to a sibling partnership.

This is when it is especially advantageous to have a non-executive director who can better observe the development of the business, help to develop leadership and management approaches, and also mentor the younger family directors.

Mentor the next generation in the ‘family office’

Whether your child’s traditional role is to follow in the family business, or to choose a different career path, they need to learn the value of what the family business has done to make a difference to the local economy, and how it has contributed to the wellbeing of the local community.

What it takes to get to NEXT GEN

WHAT IT TAKES TO GET TO NEXT GEN

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Assess liabilities in property settlement

By Eleanor Lau

The general rule in family law property settlement is that all assets, liabilities, superannuation and resources will be considered and valued as at the date of the settlement being carried out (or date of hearing).

As you will see, however, things such as how a liability came about (particularly if post separation) can impact how the law will then deal with that item in the overall settlement.

We do, of course, also need to consider the assets and liabilities as at the date of separation.

Therefore, if either of the parties to the relationship has a debt at the time of the hearing, then such debt will be taken into account in calculating the net pool of assets available for distribution between the parties.

For example, a mortgage secured over the former matrimonial home jointly held by both parties will ordinarily be included as a liability when calculating the net assets available.

However, sometimes, we may be dealing with certain debts which are not as straightforward, for example:

1. Debts that are incurred following separation without the knowledge of the other party. This may be of particular relevance if parties have been separated for a lengthy period of time, have not finalised their property settlement, and their respective financial circumstances have changed significantly since separation.
2. Debts incurred to pay for the party’s legal costs.
3. Unpaid taxation liabilities.
4. Debts which are unlikely to be repaid, such as family loans.

The assessment of debts and liabilities is not necessarily arrived at by a strictly mathematical or accountancy approach in all cases.

Exclusion of such debts mean that these debts would become the sole responsibility of the party who incurred it in the first place, and the other party need not share that responsibility.

If a liability is excluded when calculating the net asset pool, but there is evidence to show that such a liability is nevertheless enforceable, then the Court may have regard to such a liability when considering other relevant factors under section 75(2)(o) of the Family Law Act in reaching a final decision for a property settlement.

Each case is different, and depending on the circumstances different approaches might be warranted.

At Watts McCray Lawyers, our specialist experience means we are well aware of all the possibilities and the importance of looking at the whole picture and how to best present the case to achieve the desired outcome.

Eleanor Lau is a solicitor with Watts McCray. www.wattsmccray.com.au
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By Brett Murray

THIS month we want to bring a little more clarity to the subject of workplace bullying. Let’s revisit some information I shared last month and expand a little.

According to the industrial relations laws now in place, any enterprise that employs more than three individuals must provide workplace anti-bullying training.

These same industrial relations laws that involve directly the Fair Work Commission (FWC) can be confusing at best. We aim to bring some much needed clarity, as many organisations ask us to do as we deliver our MBH Workplace anti-bullying training.

Let’s uncover what bullying actually is. Bullying is the ongoing, repeated and often targeted violence, threats of violence or antagonising behavior by a person or group of people resulting in an imbalance of power carried out towards another person or group of people.

The FWC states it as this: 789FD When is a worker bullied at work? 1. (1) A worker is bullied at work if: (a) while the worker is at work in a constitutional-ly covered business: (i) an individual; or (ii) a group of people resulting in an imbalance of power.

2. The exception is as follows: (2) To avoid doubt, subsection (1) does not apply to antagonising behavior by a person or group of people resulting in an imbalance of power carried out towards another person or group of people.

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EACH day we rush to squeeze the most value from every precious minute.

Our lives are feverishly focussed on our commitments of the day, making sure we are on time for that next meeting, picking up the kids from school or simply getting home in time to put on the dinner.

And as we go about our daily grind, we are so focussed on ourselves that we fail to notice those around us, the invisible people. You know the ones, they may look a little unkempt or dishevelled, they avoid direct eye contact.

They may try to approach you for small change, or they simply sit quietly on a park bench wondering what happened to their lives to bring them here.

Those that are even more invisible are the ones you never suspect. It could be your next door neighbour who carefully hides the bruises, a child confused and untrusting as a result of a dysfunctional home life, an elderly man who lives down the road, but you’ve never seen him because he is too frightened to leave his house. We fail to see their pain, loneliness and despair.

**In short I believe we are forgetting how to be part of a community**

We are so focussed on all those transient things that become so important to us that we forget to pause long enough to look up from our smart phones, look around and care for each other.

And, to me at least, that is a sad indictment of our society today. I want something better.

I don’t want to be like that, I want to be a better person, I want to be a person who not only “sees” that need but actually does something to assist them.

**When I was approached to accept the role of Chair of the Western Sydney Business Appeal Committee a range of thoughts catapulted through my mind; the first: “oh I don’t think I have sufficient time to devote to the role, after all I have my business DMC Advertising Group to manage”; then: “I don’t think I have the skills to lead such an important concern, surely there are others more aptly suited” and finally the best thought, the one that convinced me to accept; “here’s my chance to make a difference, to work with a dynamic team of business people and Salvos officers to effect change and encourage a sense of community responsibility into the local business community”.**

**So I said yes**

As a business person in Western Sydney I believe we have a responsibility to give back and support the community in which we live and work. To me that can only be described as a good investment.”

It is so easy to sit back in our comfortable, air conditioned offices and complain about the situation expecting someone else to fix it.

I believe we are the ones who need to fix it. We need to be involved, to engage, to get our hands dirty, and open our wallets to support programs by organisations such as The Salvation Army.

Most of us know the Red Shield Appeal as that time of year when a well-meaning volunteer, or perhaps a Salvation Army officer, knocks on our door requesting a donation and we dutifully hand over a few dollars, after all “God Bless the Salvos.”

That is only part of the program. The Business Appeal Committee’s role is to work with businesses to raise much needed funds for so many amazing programs and initiatives developed, supported and managed by The Salvos.

As Chair of the Salvation Army Western Sydney Business Appeal Committee it is my role to pull together a team of business people who share a common passion, who are prepared to get out there and influence other business people to share the same focus and become involved.

Our appeal launch next year is on May 19, we are already planning a wonderful collection of highly influential speakers who will definitely draw a crowd and we hope to raise an even greater sum this year.

But more importantly during my tenure as Chair I hope to be able to increase the number of businesses who realise that the ‘social health’ of their community is an issue they MUST invest in.

That it’s simply good business logic. I want the many programs available through The Salvation Army in Western Sydney to be well supported by the business community so that we can truly call ourselves a community in the truest sense of the word.

Stephanie Dale is the incoming Chair of the Salvation Army Western Sydney Business Appeal Committee. She also owns and runs the DMC Advertising Group. She can be contacted at: SDale@dmcadvertising-group.com.au

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Time right for BRAND SYDNEY

By Jonathon Flegg

WITH the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) now in place, have we reached the moment to invent a new brand for Sydney that represents all of our city's citizens? The GSC, Sydney's first body that co-ordinates planning across the whole city, states that Sydney is a "city of ambition and we need to match this ambition with boldness."

In the spirit of our iconic Opera House and Harbour Bridge, a new city brand for Sydney, created and adopted by the people, could be exactly what we need to rekindle both our city's boldness and ambition for a new generation.

The forces of globalisation and receding national economic borders have meant that international competition is increasingly between great cities rather than great nations. The time has come for all areas of Sydney to claim their status as part of a global city, not just the suburbs around the dazzling harbour and beaches.

One of the great tragedies of the global trend towards urbanisation and densification is that whilst people are living physically closer than ever before their feeling of social disconnection is similarly on the increase. Democratically designing Sydney’s city brand would be an endeavour that goes beyond the symbolic in addressing this disconnect.

On one level it would heighten a sense of belonging and public ownership, and on another it would stoke more active civic participation and social capital amongst Sydney-siders.

Innovative city branding also speaks to our global audience, including all potential investors, start-up entrepreneurs, skilled workers and discerning tourists.

The emotional connection individuals build with a brand designed by its citizens, if done well, can speak volumes about how attractive our patch is to others.

International design expert Roman Mars makes the case for why a well-designed city flag could be the ultimate piece of branding for an international city and the most potent symbol of its transformation:

"As we move more and more into cities, the city flag will become not just a symbol of that city as a place, but also it could become a symbol of how that city considers design itself. Especially today as the populace is becoming more design-aware and I think design-awareness is at an all-time high. A well-designed flag can be seen as an indicator of how a city considers all of its design systems: its public transit, its parks, its signage."

Many of the great metropolises of the world, such as Chicago, Amsterdam and Tokyo, are represented by great and surprisingly simple flags. Designed, sustained and adapted by the people, a city flag is an unquestionably democratic exercise.

As such, these flags have become much more than a symbol of a city’s administration. They represent the people as an organic, living whole. A flag is a visual representation of a city’s positive values, civic pride, social cohesiveness and overall attractiveness and can play a key role in an overall citizen brand.

Cities are the engines of growth in the 21st century, recently reflected in Australia with the establishment of a national Cities Agenda, something we haven’t had since the 1970s.

Central to driving this growth is the concept of ‘place making’ – rethinking the traditionally rigid urban environment so that our city’s systems can truly operate as a living ecosystem.

Great design and putting the citizens first, whether when thinking about a new citizen brand or an urban rejuvenation program, lie at the heart of each exercise.

Jonathon Flegg is Associate Director at Deloitte Access Economics.
Time for a hidden gem to shine

TELOPEA PLAN

By Geoff Lee
State Member for Parramatta

TELOPEA has always been a hidden gem and now it’s time to make it shine. This is an exciting time for Telopea! The release of the Draft Master Plan sets out a vision for the future. It clearly lays out the enormous opportunities that are going to see Telopea reach its potential.

The billion dollar vision creates integrat-ed public, affordable and private housing with community facilities new, shopping precinct and improved open space.

The plan sees Telopea repositioned as a highly sort after, attractive and vibrant city. Telopea is named after the Telopea speciosissima, the New South Wales waratah. Telopea has many natural assets. It’s no secret that Telopea’s concentration of social housing and instances of crime have somewhat detracted from Telopea’s many natural assets and otherwise close knit and caring neighbourhood.

Telopea’s demographic profile is expected to change through a variation in the concentration of social housing.

The plan sees better integration of social and private housing. Aining social housing stock will be replaced with modern, well designed dwellings that can only improve the experience for social housing residents. A 70:30 mix of private and social housing will deliver a more harmonious, vibrant and diverse community.

A town centre at the light-rail stop will be created and includes a pedestrian precinct with cafes, shops and community facilities. Telopea Village will be enhanced by the tree-lined streets and upgraded landscape environment.

After months of public consultation, the vision addresses important community needs such as better security, enhanced road access and the replacement of the dilapidated social housing.

The Master Plan process provides a road map for Telopea to reach its full potential.

I would encourage all interested par-ties to take a look at the detailed draft plan. It can be found online at communitiesplus.com.au/Telopea.

Key points
- Master plan being developed for Telopea
- 3,000 currently people live within the area
- 4,000 new homes over next 20 years
- Parts will have views to the city

From early settlement, Telopea was known for its rich fertile farm lands and beautiful and abundant native vegetation and is named after the Telopea speciosissima, the New South Wales waratah.

The area has retained its leafy green streets and abundance of vegetation that juxtaposes its proximity to the states two major CBDs.

The area experienced its biggest growth spur in the 1960s and 70s through large scale residential development, although there has been little population growth since the 1990s.

Today, Telopea has a population of just over five thousand people, and around thirteen hundred families. The plan estimates the population could reach over 11,000 people over the next 20 years.

It’s an exciting plan and one I hope that all groups will embrace. The plan heralds a new era for Telopea with contemporary homes, modern well designed community facilities, open spaces and better public transport and road links.

Telopea has many natural assets. Parts of Telopea, particularly those located close to the rail station benefit from being elevated and offer fantastic views through to city.

From early settlement, Telopea was located just 23km from Sydney CBD but more importantly only around 6kms or 10 minutes’ drive from Parramatta CBD. The suburb is well connected by rail and road and this connectivity will only improve with the introduction of the user friendly light rail network.

To meet the ever increasing demands for new private, social and affordable housing. It also engages the community and other stakeholders in the discussion about what the future of Telopea will be for generations to come.

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By John Glover

Benefits of outsourcing your back office

You get access to the latest technology

Back office services that specialize in accounting and bookkeeping functions pride themselves in developing their accounting systems and techniques to ensure that they’re at the forefront of technology.

When you outsource your accounting needs to a back office, you’re not only getting trained staff to handle the job, you also get access to the technology that the back office is developing and using. If you’re aiming for seamless business operations, it pays to invest in the latest technology.

A back office service is a way to do this without having to expend the time and financial resources yourself.

You have the freedom to choose which services are relevant to your operations

Whether you’re scaling up or scaling down on your accounting operations, a back office gives you the freedom to choose services that are relevant to your operations. You shouldn’t feel obligated to sign up for all services; just the ones that you feel are relevant to your business. In a way, outsourcing allows you to simplify your operations so that you can focus on more important things.

You have more time and energy to focus on your core business

Running a business can be very tricky, especially if you’re trying to oversee multiple departments all at the same time. If your main goal is to boost efficiency and improve productivity in your company, then outsourcing specific business operations will help you focus on your core business.

For instance, ask yourself this: “Why spend valuable resource in an area that you’re not good at (or just don’t like doing) in the first place when you can delegate your accounting needs to a pool of experts?”

You can rely on quick and accurate reporting

Most accounting back offices make use of the cloud to store and retrieve financial data. This not only keeps your company at the forefront of technology, but it also gives you instant access to quick and accurate reporting when, and where, you need it.

Choosing to go cloud based (through a back office service) will help you analyse data faster and more accurately, giving you more time to make crucial business decisions that will improve operations within the company.

Outsourcing reduces costs

At the end of the day, business is all about how much money you’ve made or saved. If you’re spending too much money on keeping your accounting in-house, then it’s time that you start focusing on the long term. Outsourcing your accounting department to a back office may seem like a daunting move but it’s guaranteed to help you become even more focused on your core skills and profitable in the long run.

Outsourcing your accounting functions may seem a bit complicated so make sure to weigh all your pros and cons and talk to some experts before you make your move.

John Glover is MD at Pendragon Management. For more information on how Pendragon Management can become your back office contact us at 02 9447 8700 or at backoffice@pendragon.net.au

You can maintain operations without reducing quality

During rapid growth periods, the back office operations of a company will expand. This expansion may start to consume both human and financial resources at the expense of the core activities that have made your company successful.

Outsourcing those activities allows you to refocus on the business activities which are important, without sacrificing quality or service in your back office.

You can regain operational control over departments

Over time departments may have evolved into uncontrolled and poorly managed areas, creating prime motivation for outsourcing. Outsourcing can bring better management skills to your company that would have otherwise not been available.

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– John Glover

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INTELLIGENCE
Can businesses really adapt?

The Access News Australia Regional Roundtable is an invitation-only forum of influential people that have an interest in developing business excellence, exchanging ideas and networking. The ANARR meets in a private board room setting. Following is an edited text of the latest Round Table session.
Nicole Baines: Welcome everyone to the inaugural Access News Australia Roundtable in the Hunter Region. Before getting into our discussion this morning, I’d like to say thank you to Hardeep Girn of Know My Business for hosting this morning. Let’s start with introductions. Michael, why don’t you start?

Michael Walls: My name is Michael Walls. I’m a journalist and editor. I publish a newspaper called Western Sydney Business Access and also Northern Sydney Business Access. My background is in journalism. I’ve worked for NewsCorp, Fairfax and managed media for Universities and have a master’s degree in media. It’s great to be working here with these talented people.

We’ve been doing these round tables now for about four years and we’ve had about 40 of them. Thanks to Hardeep for sponsoring this one.

Edward Geschke: My name is Edward Geschke. I work for a company called AP Eagers Limited. We are an automotive retail company operating dealerships and dealer groups across Australia. I am the Group General Manager for our Newcastle and Hunter division. We represent 9 different franchises and employee 500 people locally. It’s great to be here.

Nicole Baines: Thank you for being here.

Jason Kolevski: Hi everyone. My name is Jason Kolevski. I’m a business leadership mentor. So we specialise in human dynamics. So we work with leaders of organisations as well as their teams to enhance communication and relationships amongst people so they get better performance. We do both private mentoring, one on one, with leaders, as well as group workshops to ensure that people are doing the right things in the right way, but also at the right time.

Nicole Baines: Fantastic. Thank you. Hardeep?

Hardeep Girn: My name is Hardeep Girn. I’m the Managing Director for a couple of companies. One is Know My Business which is the business that we’re here today under. The company’s been around for four years, and we help with companies that wish to get introduced to opportunity. That may be direct business, it might be partners, or in some cases businesses that are actually looking to sell off and move into, retirement or into other areas. The other company that is in the group is Know My Life, with film production, used as a door opener, media, being a powerful industry, we’ve certainly got some great success out of producing content which then does bring us closer to the mid to large size sector for our clients.

Nicole Baines: Fantastic. Thank you. Paul?

Continued on page 31
Paul Van Bergen: Paul Van Bergen. I’m a partner with KPMG in our Parramatta office, and my main role is to help clients who want to be high tech and high growth companies. So, we get money from the government in terms of R&D Tax Incentives and help them structure their business so that they can participate in growth that comes through the knowledge economy – whether they’re manufacturers, engineering services companies, media companies etc. So, we work across the whole spectrum.

Nicole Baines: Very good. Thank you. Richard Varnish: Richard Varnish from Advanced Drug Solutions. We work with organisations to help them develop appropri- ate policies, then train their people on the effects of alcohol and other drugs, and how it could affect them in the workplace. And then, our core business is going out and doing the testing on a regular basis – so, weekly, fort nightly, monthly. And it’s becoming regulated in some industries. So there’s a high degree of compliance for us that’s a challenge. And so, the unique situation – I’ve mentioned it to a few – we are Sydney based, but we’ve bought into a whole new business, a Newcastle based business. So that’s an interesting dynamic for us. So Richard, from Advanced Drug Solutions.

Nicole Baines: Fantastic. Thank you. And Colin?

Colin Links: My name is Colin Links. I’m currently semi-retired. I’ve had 42 years’ experience in media – various positions, from Business Development Manager for News Limited or Newslocal, to running papers, to actually running divisions, and a lot of looking at acquisitions and various elements within the media. I had my own media company for 5 years. Also I have worked for more independent media organisations as well. And I’m a past member/Director of local Chambers of Commerce including the Central Coast or Gosford, Penrith, Merrylands. And I’ve also had a heavy involvement with other organisations such as the Salvation Army and various other elements. So, I’ve had a very strong community background as well as the media background.

Nicole Baines: Awesome. Very good. Well, great to have you all here, guys. And so, now you know who’s in the room, be sure to use the opportunity to do a bit of networking, when the event’s over, as well. That’s part of why we get together in this environment, as well as talking about a relevant topic. So, the topic for today is disruption and change. And, doing a bit of research on this topic, I certainly learnt quite a bit about the official theory of disruption. But I’ll throw it open to you. This morning, we just want a flowing conversation. And I certainly learnt quite a bit about the official theory of disruption. But I’ll throw it open to you. This morning, we just want a flowing conversation. And I want to do a little facilitation and more guiding if need be, the conversa- tion. I thought it would be a great place to start to just get an understanding from you all about what you think disruption means. And I thought, Paul, you might be a good person to start with, bearing in mind that you tend to work in an area where businesses come with some “crazy” ideas, what do you understand disruption to be?

Paul Van Bergen: Well I think disruption is actually – a lot of it’s driven lately by just the power of digital and the increasing acceptance of digital. So if we think about just even 5 years ago what your handheld smart phone could do – not much, compared to what it does now. And if you look forward another 5 years, with things like the internet, etc. – the rate of change will increase. We’ll see more change in the next 5 years than we’ve seen in the last 5 decades. The second one – I think it’s part of the human condition to always try and find easier, smarter ways of doing things. And, if you’re in a free society like Australia, the opportunity exists for people to actually create businesses that add value to people. And that’s how they make their living. And so, therefore, I think it’s just a natural extension that people who are disruptors – they’re disruptors not to disrupt somebody or hurt somebody – they’re actu- ally disrupting in a good way. They’re actually creating value for people.

Nicole Baines: Yes. Edward, do you want to add anything to that?

Edward Geschke: I think it’s something enters the market at low cost or low qual- ity and then completely takes over that entire market at all cost and entry points.

Nicole Baines: It seems, from the research I’ve done, that there’s 2 schools of thought around disruption or 2 methods of disrupting a marketplace. There is the low market entry points and then there’s a brand new market – something that didn’t exist before. It was fascinating reading all of that. Harvard University have done quite a bit of work on this. What about you, Jason? What’s your interpretation of all of this?

Jason Kolevski: Pretty similar I guess. Technology is always the first that comes to anyone’s mind. I mean you just have a look at how much media exposure something like Pokemon Go is getting, and how people are just going wild with something that is fun but interactive. And I think people are looking for opportunities to step outside of normal, everyday life. And through busi- ness, people are using their commitment towards wanting to be different, or gain some level of significance, by introducing things into the marketplace that will have a large impact. I mean I think nowadays it’s more opportunistic than ever that some- one could be the overnight millionaire by developing an App. And then on the other side, I see a lot of small or medium business owners that, to them, disruptive would be simply the opportunity to change their lives for the better. However, I think a lot of small businesses now you know who’s in the room, be sure to...
to medium businesses are struggling out there. In fact, I’ve been speaking to a lot of people, you know, in the accounting space, for example, and just asking: ‘Are small to medium business owners’ – you know, a lot of them would be better off employed from a financial perspective. However, from a more personal perspective, they’re better off in a space where they can control their own destiny. So, I think disruptive at one end is extreme influence and power at a large nation or global level. And then, on a small level, disruptive simply means having a chance to do things differently and better, because we’re just struggling.

Hardeep Ginn: I’ve got a background in technology and it was an e-commerce start-up for about 6 years. And that was about 10 years ago I decided to get more into the business side of things. I’ve seen disrupt by information technology that’s now much more accessible, to allow easier market analysis, because you’ve got the knowledge to actually tell you an opportunity. But I think it’s actually bigger than that. We’re at that point where right now, that change and disruption is happening to so many different industries. And 80% of what’s happening is technology driven. But the other that’s really interesting is where there’s cultural change that starts to occur. And part of that disruption is that the norm is being disrupted. So, it’s cultural. One of the interesting companies is called Flipout. Flipout have trampolines centres for kids and young adults. They’ve got a number of different locations across Australia and they are multinational. They’ve got 57 locations around the world at present. How old do you think that company is? It’s only 3 years old.

Nicole Baines: Wow.

Edward Geckle and Michael Walls: The owner used to live in Penrith. He now lives in the UK. This last week alone he opened up 7 centres. So to me that shows franchising has worked and he hasn’t got anything to do. Despite the councils raising concern on the accidents it could cause, he’s captured his market in such a big way that he’s getting growth rate – exponential growth rate – in many different countries. And then the other thing is that the technology is mainstream. But then’s other thing is that changing the cultural lay of the land, as well as where there’s a gap in the market that business can fill.

Michael Walls: So, what’s enabled him to grow so fast?

Hardeep Ginn: He took a punt. He went into Penrith Panthers car park at $300, created his first store in 2012.

Michael Walls: I think it’s interesting that norm changes have happened. I mean that in the sense that the airline franchise is a model that thrives whereas some years back franchising was a major feat.

Colin Links: And he’s got a very interesting business because he’s going to have some big challenges going forward because the industry is new and exciting and unknown, whereas now there’s a health risk factor being brought in. So he’s actually going to change his guidelines and his health risk so. He’s got an evolutionary business is he going to have to adjust not only in Australia, but elsewhere overseas too. So, he’s got a very interesting journey ahead of him.

Nicole Baines: Well, you raised an interesting point there around change as a response to market forces or as an opportunity in 2016, maybe years back franchising was a major feat.

Colin Links: And it’s a very interesting business because he’s going to have some big challenges going forward because the industry is new and exciting and unknown, whereas now there’s a health risk factor being brought in. So he’s actually going to have to change his guidelines and his health risk so. He’s got an evolutionary business is he going to have to adjust not only in Australia, but elsewhere overseas too. So, he’s got a very interesting journey ahead of him.

Nicole Baines: You get that situation. Like take an industry like ours, 10 years ago, it was deregulated. There were no standards and basically everyone could pretty well do what they want. And if a potential client rang an organisation, they were considered the front of all knowledge, and there was no competitive pressure. Now there’s regulation. Now there’s a standard that has to be adhered to. That puts increased hurdles. So, for example, Uber – the people that are Uber drivers have to now pay their insurances, just like taxi drivers. So the original disruption that was supposed to make it easier, cheaper and everything like that… The other week we had an example. I went to use Uber. And Uber, at that time of night, was actually more expensive than a cab because of this system that they’ve now had to put in place due to demand. So yeah, I would just say if you just another pathway to the market, rather than a disruptor.

Nicole Baines: That’s right.

Richard Varnish: It was a disruptor to begin with. But now it’s just another booking system. And a consumer can now choose, like we did. We choose – OK. What are we going to do? Are we going to wait 20 minutes in queue at the rank, or are we going to pay – I think it was like a $75 premium – you know, to get out to Baulkham Hills at midnight, you know, on a Saturday night? No $75 bucks. I’m sorry. I’ll wait 20 minutes. So the consumer was the winner, which is what ultimately chose this. And Mr Uber didn’t set out to be a distributor. He just – like Mr Flipout – he just found a gap in the market. He’s exploited it. And, you know, you can take the word “exploit” positively or negatively; so he’s up and running, but the government’s now stepped in. And so, that’s put in hurdles. The consumer stepped in with increased demand. So therefore Uber has to some way of sorting the jobs. And they do it through price.

Paul Van Bergen: I think we’ve noted the pivotal role that governments all across levels have on business. And the NSW government announced that they’d saved $900 million of red tape for business. And they actually got pinged by the Auditor General who said: “But you didn’t measure how much red tape was costing business before, so how can you say how you’ll save.” But, it’s interesting. Uber said: “To hell with the regulations. We’re actually – we’re actually going to create an App that enables people to push the boundaries of the hire car legislation.” And then, to be heard, the government’s actually created some new regulations that’s actually going to enable them to operate legally. In business, if you are a disruptor or the disrupted, you need knowledge of the regulations and you need to be flexible in your business, so that you can actually cope with changes to your market – whether it’s because of changes of regular or easing of regulation, you need to actually be really aware of the things outside your business that will influence you.

Hardeep Ginn: Expect to be disrupted. The last 5 years with News Limited and also with Fairfax – a major change in how do they operate business. And the disruption to the business has been just quite dramatic in both camps. And News has actually gone back to a bit of the old model to actually recover from a community point of view. So, it’s had a major impact on their business because now the sales source or sales resource has limited time in the marketplace where they need to have – they were supposed to create extra time in the marketplace with the advent of using, you know, smart phones and also iPads.

Nicole Baines: So the driving force for the change has been technology?

Colin Links: Technology.

Nicole Baines: But – And then, as a response to changing technology, the business model has changed.

Colin Links: Yes.

Michael Walls: Is that against newspapers, Cole?

Colin Links: That’s on the newspaper side of things. They are forging ahead. No problems there. The big challenge is that the newspapers in certain sectors are dead, going forward. In other sectors, they’re still a vital part of the community. So you’ve got to balance that. And you’ve also got to educate your audiences to be – move from newspapers to a mind element, which is another bit of a challenge. All of these have had major consulting businesses working on the business to actually help them and guide them. But what they’ve missed on that part is they haven’t got down to the street level and found out what the full impact will be. So therefore, they’re going to have to go through this sort of journey and readjustment. And they’ll get there. But they’re going to lose a lot of good people on the way and they’re going to do a lot of damage. They’re going to lose a lot of – I suppose capital growth, because the growth in newspapers is actually decline rather than grow through this period. So, there’s a challenge around that.

Michael Walls: It is common thinking that newspapers simply missed the disruptor effect of smart phones and the internet hat’s the common thinking but I think it’s a bit more complex than that. I think the whole psychology of readership, of culture, and the way we absorb information and news is changing. What we prioritise in our heads has changed, thanks largely to social media. So, you talk to kids 20 plus and what they think is news is just not news when held against the newspaper values of 10 or 20 years ago. Now it’s a very celebrity based and petty. So I think our psychology is changing.

Nicole Baines: That goes back to what you were saying before about this cultural change. So as culture changes, therefore market changes, demand changes for different things, and business needs to respond.

Richard Varnish: In some cases it is as simple as that – newspapers failed to see it because traditionally there was a culture of arrogance particularly among the major metros you know the fourth estate and all that. There was a sense that they’re just so powerful, so rich, so influential that nothing touches them. But in some areas we are seeing newspapers expand – particularly in niche markets, they’re very powerful, more powerful than ever. But some are just withering on the vine.

Nicole Baines: Disruption is a term this gentleman coined in 1995. But what I’m wondering now – it is just the same thing that we’ve always had to deal with in business since the beginning of time – that over time, markets change?

Colin Links: It’s faster. It is faster. That’s basically it. We’ve all gone through change, and various changes through your business career. And they’re all elements – they’re traumatic when they happen. And then, the implications of that is they have to introduce so much new stuff in a short time, and digesting that and educating your team to that level, is another disruptor because you’ve actually got to get them up to speed ASAP.

Richard Varnish: I think it’s kind of interesting from my point of view with it, in terms of the role of traditional business. And the – whether it’s disruption or whether it’s the sexy word of “innovation” that everyone throws around, how does traditional business innovate and ultimately find ways to disrupt? And it’s very challenging in traditional businesses, because we have a past. And in this situation where with the trampoline, there is no past. It’s like: “I’m going to have a go. And if it doesn’t work, I don’t want it.” And in traditional business, we don’t have that luxury. We’ve got year on year profits, earnings per share, portfolio psychology is changing.

Nicole Baines: Positioning in the market-place that perceives us as a certain thing.

Richard Varnish: All of those KPIs, that we have to satisfy – and that makes it really tough to go out on a limb to do things. So how
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do you do it? And the way you feel you have to do it is (1) you've got to have leadership that says: We're going to try things, and it's OK to fail. But one of the things that I believe is the biggest vehicle for doing that to happen – and this sounds really kind of strange – is actually making sure you're profitable, in your traditional business. Because the results. Because results allow leaders to allow their change ideas to fail. They allow the security of results to allow their change ideas to fail.

Hardeep Girn: And in these traditional businesses – like ours is a great example. Take marketing, for example – if you wind the clock back 40 years, we spent money on press, radio, TV and on big blown up gorillas. And in 2016, we still spend all our money on press, radio, TV, and on big blown up gorillas. And that's a huge challenge. Right? Now, the challenge for us is: we've still got to make sure we have a big blow up gorilla this month. And in addition to that, we have to find ways to do things a little differently. And that's where leadership comes in. You've got to take these traditional results to have the freedom to try new things. Satisfying the traditional KPI's allow low leaders the freedom to allow their change ideas to fail. If you don't get traditional results, unfortunately, all those things stop and you stop innovating.

Michael Walls: So you still rely on those traditional media channels to... still? That's it? Hardeep Girn: Well, you know, but I mean the world's changed so much. When I was a kid we had 2 channels that worked in our house. Now I think it's a bit of a hyperbole of worked. And after dinner, we'd watch Dad's favourite show on the TV. And up pops your car dealer that says: We've got the biggest sale event going on this week – end... I mean there's more media channels now like Carsales, Carsguide, that deepen the pool of available mediums.

Colin Links: Although the other area that they've moved into is that you have, at any time you have a sale, every contact you've had gets an SMS the sale is on. So you have exponential results. And you have to be something that's relative to the people.

Hardeep Girn: But I think that's what's perhaps another avenue now – that people aren't responding so much traditionally to this: oh there's a sale on – and you have to be able to provide more to people which is where content is so important. And you can't be something that's relative to the people.

Hardeep Girn: Some people are time poor. So they – there's many different forms of messaging. I think about 20 or 30 years ago there were fewer forms of messaging, because you had to stop everything you were doing. But now, there was no social media. So your attention to the 2 or 3 prominent sales messaging channels was you have more of your attention in front of the box with the family. Now, if I think back 24 hours and sitting with the family last night, you know, each one of them has one or two elements doing different things. My wife was watching the internet. She was watching her son playing games on the internet. I was doing my email. My kids were on playing games, but with an internet access. So I think that that whole multi-channel point. Colin, on having the different ways that people are communicating and messaging is just so fragmented now. It might be you get a safe message one suit and somebody does come along, walking down and knocking on the doors and actually saying: Well, we've got a sale on, because they felt they got back to the older ways of attracting attention.

Colin Links: Also, you've got to look at who your customer base is now. They're more educated. So they'll walk in now. And the first thing they're trying to do is bargains with you. They've got an expectation of what they think they can buy the car for, what their trade's going to be, and they're going to bargain to the best level they can. And they also know there's seasonal periods during the month.

Nicole Baines: So they're more – they're a much savvier consumer. Colin Links: Yeah. It's just the same real estate if we're selling a property.

Edward Geschke: Look, I mean you know people are more informed. And as a business, it's very important that you can adapt to that environment. And that's something that we spend a lot of time on as a company. Moving away from what a traditional model is where we've got lots of things we do internally, not just from a customer point of view, but from a staff point of view – to challenge the way that it's traditionally been done.

Paul Van Bergen: And I think that's a really good example of successful innovation. So, there's one model. And all of the firms are doing it. Hardeep talked about EY and KPMG – we've got our innovation hub. But the other thing that we're doing is that cultural thing of actually skillfully people up to actually be able to change the way they work so they're adding more value to your customers. And that's innovation. So it's innovation in process; it's innovation in approach. And that's going to change – so you can't just have a little innovation in the factory. You actually have to make it better at handling disruption and becoming a disruptor. You actually have to make innovation deep in the DNA of the company. So the people keep selling the cars and keep pumping them out. Generally, you think about other ways that they might engage.

Edward Geschke: Exactly right. It's not just something that happens off to the right hand side of the organisation that we forget about. We did something internally we called “technodreaming”. We took 3-5 of our staff through a journey asking the question – if you could change anything about your current role, what would it be? Let's dream a little?

Michael Walls: What a cool thing to do! Nicole Baines: They're doing some amazing things at AP Egers. When I met Edward he delivered a presentation in the room around the corner here – and showcased some of the things they're doing to motivate and inspire their staff. And the things these guys are doing are incredible. Tell them a little bit about some of the innovative ways you're working with your teams now.

Edward Geschke: Well it's probably – so much about disruption or innovation. But perhaps it is an innovation in terms of trying to do new things.

Nicole Baines: It's definitely innovation. Edward Geschke: But I think it comes back to the fact that people are at the heart of everything we do. And it doesn't matter how well the spreadsheets add up. If you can't get people to come with you on a journey to do something, then it's going to be really challenging. And ultimately, people have to feel like their work matters. Or if you can't get people to feel like their work matters, then it's going to be very, very difficult to get any kind of traction on things. And so, that was a good example of where we took people. And we said: If you could change anything, where are the pain points? If we could change something for your customer, where would it be? And we put pizza around the place and have an hour and a half with groups of 15 people. They come in with just exceptional ideas. Now, some of them might work; some of them won't. But we're going to try them. We're going to go after them. And some of them we're throwing a bit of money behind. And, if it doesn't work, it doesn't work. But what it does do is make employees feel like we're having a go and we're trying something and they feel part of it.

Jason Kolevski: I think one of the biggest disruptors we've seen in the last probably decade is the fact that the youngest generation of employees have very different expectations of what the previous generations had. So that's nothing new, it's not an innovation. It's not technology. It's just human nature, having a very different expectation as to how they think things should happen and the way they should happen and in what timeframe. And it's very interesting that, you know, I was talking to a family business. And they said: One of the biggest got innovations that we've had – and we've saved over $1 million a year – was to change what Edward was saying – it's just sat around and said: If you could change one thing about your role, what would it be? And it was this organisation that painted these particular parts. And the paint that they were using was the largest of the time. So they had to work on the other side of the workshop. And the painter said: Well, I'm going to go across the other side of the workshop, interrupt the fork lift that's going across, to get this paint on the back. Why can't we just stock that particular paint colour next to where I'm painting the actual widget, so to speak. So they did that, and they tracked it. And they realised that the time saving was as – off for the painter, as well as the forklifts that need to cross that same path – that they realised that, over time, over the span of a year, they were saving $1 million a year in time. Now that's a huge – if you want to call it “innovation”. But in this day and age we constantly think that ‘innovation’ means ‘I'm bringing something brand new to a market’.

Nicole Baines: Great point. Very good point.

Jason Kolevski: But it's not new. It's just simple. So when Hardeep mentioned Flipout, the first thing that I started to think is: you put a helicopter view over everything that's happening in the world at the moment, it seems to be this whole: Let's just go back to basics. Let's simplify things. What are kids doing? Kids want to jump. You know. The old get off the TV, get off the lounge and stop watching the TV and just jump and... And what are human beings wanting to do? They want to feel free spirited to create. And then, in Edward's situation... a human being without purpose is just totally lost and not engaged.

Michael Walls: Very true. Very true. Jason Kolevski: Which is why you know, mothers have a child and several years later they want to re-enter the workforce. They feel like they've lost a bit of purpose. So they need re-engagement. Or that person that, Continued on page 34

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MY VIEW

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- Michael Walls

“I think it’s kind of interesting from my point of view with it, in terms of the role of traditional business. Whether it’s disruption or whether it’s the sexy word of “innovation” that everyone throws around, how does traditional business innovate and ultimately find ways to disrupt? And it’s very challenging in traditional businesses, because we have a past.”

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you know, after passionately working for 60 years and all of a sudden doesn’t have anything to do. And many moons ago I used to be a financial planner and one of the saddest things we used to see was a person that was very committed to their role or their business, they retire, and then suddenly just lost. And they go into depression. And they just feel like there’s no life. So, these core fundamentals of what a human needs – forget about business – of choice and creativity, movement and the freedom to be connected to a purpose that really matters to you – I think they’re the ultimate choice and creativity, movement and the free-edge works. So, these core fundamentals of what a human needs, they’re the ultimate choice and creativity, movement and the free-edge works.

Richard Varnish: I’ve picked a couple of things up. And that’s, you know, people keeps coming up. You know... how you manage your people – you give them your chance. And I remember a really old first life experience in a manufacturing plant. This German MD came out and he was going to restructure the organisation. You know. And he put up the presentation, the organisational chart. And you know, there was him MD, and there were all the silos and all that. And then he said: And watch this! And he just literally – the next slide was the organisational chart upside down. And this was – this was sort of like early 80s. It still stuck with me. And this was this manager that came over to tell us how to fix this manufacturing plant in Australia, you know. He said: That’s how we’ll run the business. These people that were traditionally seen as the bottom part of the organisational chart – you’re the people that will actually drive this organisation, you know, out of its mess. And that’s really – that was 1983. And really, what we’re saying now is if you give the people that work for you the chance to say: Hey, I’ve got an idea – and you give them the option to run with it – then you’re going to get somewhere.

Colin Links: But you go back to the 80s and that period: when you worked for someone you felt as though you were part of a family. And that’s the difference. We’ve lost that family atmosphere, which means that you don’t see yourself as valued. The more you feel valued, the more you put in, the more hours, the more work, the more ideas you’re going to come up to and make the business grow.

Nicole Baines: So it seems like there’s plenty of opportunities that can come from change, certainly – from coming up with a disruptive idea or a disruptive way of doing something, a new process in your business. And you’ve talked about having that kind of thinking, from the top down, right through-out, integrated thinking all geared towards change and doing things better. How does a small business put all of that into place? In a big business where you’ve got lots of people and departments that can be focussed on innovation and driving that through, how does a small business do that?

Jason Kolevski: I’ll come at it from the angle that I do a lot of work in, which is human dynamics. And one of the base needs of a human being – and that’s a need, not a want – a need is the need to feel secure. And I think – and Edward touched on it as well – that if you don’t feel secure to try something new then you’ll withhold instinctively and not want to try something new. So, I think a small business has the advantage of – bringing in Colin’s – you know, making it feel like a family environment and that everything will be OK. I mean it’s not like, you know, you have a child that, you know, attempts a sport, they fail, and you go; Sorry, you’re no longer part of the family. You know: No matter what, I’m always going to have Mum and Dad’s support, and you know, be part of this family. And I’ll get things as a go. And I think if you can instil that sort of culture. The bulk of the work that I’m doing these days is around Culture – bringing core values back into play, having a shared Mission and a Vision – you know, these things that at one point were a language that people just put on a website are actually very strong and meaningful now. And I think that’s – the key is just everyone needs to feel safe and OK to have a go and try something new – and then people will want to do more, as long as they’re purposeful and they’re connected.

Nicole Baines: Sounds like there’s a theme there, isn’t there? Provide a safe environment for people to try and it OK if they fail.

Paul Van Bergen: And we spoke earlier about the Millennial Generation – that they don’t see a job as being for life. And it’s, you know, called the ‘Gig’ economy. You get a job or a project. You finish the project and move on. It’s just as well that Millennials actually think that way. Because the ‘job for life’ by and large has gone, you know, you don’t get the person who starts, you know, finishes their HSC exam and goes to a company and then gets his gold watch or her gold watch 50 years later. The other side of that is that the company and the individuals need to actually develop skills to be constantly learning. And really, the role now of parents and educators is to actually teach people who can learn quickly, adapt, work in teams, to actually deliver good outcomes. So, 10 years ago, how smart you were – your TEL was the key thing. That chose your University; that chose your job. Now, it’s – yeah, a little bit of attitude. But the big one is being aff able – friendly – and actually being adaptable, and actually being somebody who’s actually good to get along with, cause you’re actually working in small teams. It’s a very dynamic world that we live in now.

Jason Kolevski: It’s a relationship. Paul Van Bergen: And it’s actually interesting. I was looking at the Jobs for NSW Plan, which is a NSW Whole of Government thing. At the moment, less than half of the people are in what we call “knowledge” jobs. You’ve got about 24% doing routine jobs – call centres, etc. – where they’ve just got a script and they’re just following it and gosh, that would be so boring. And then 29% are physical. Now, machines are replacing the physical. And technology is replacing a lot of the routine jobs. So we’ve actually got – you know – to actually employ people and for businesses to be successful, it’s actually getting knowledge workers. But what skills do they need? And it’s almost a pull-through thing. So I think the challenge for small business is: how do you actually attract knowledge works and how do you actually harness the human condition of actually wanting to... people want to do good stuff – and how do you harness that. And it’s a mixture of leading, providing the vision, the why. Why are you here? And then, the other side of this – OK – the employee themselves is actually the contributor. That’s a tough balancing act. But I think that’s – and if you’ve got that environment, it’s a really good environment to become a disruptor.

Nicole Baines: That’s a good point.

Michael Walks: Is that the same for small business, Paul? Like SMIs, as it for big business?

Paul Van Bergen: I reckon it’s crucial if you’re an SME – because the big guy will have economies of scale and can wear some losses for a while, until you’re gone. So, you’ve got to be – you’ve got to be savvy. You’ve got to be able to out-innovate the competition.

Nicole Baines: So, you’re saying one of the things that needs to happen is we need to change the way we recruit into our businesses is: Is that what you’re saying?

Paul Van Bergen: Yep. It’s end to end.

Paul Van Bergen: It’s recruit – it’s selection recruiting. It’s actually working out why you’re recruiting somebody and what role they will have. And then, it’s a matter of actually getting that shared purpose. It’s getting to the why: why am I here?

Jason Kolevski: Yeah. For the reason as opposed to the process of recruiting.

Edward Geschke: I think that that doesn’t happen. There’s this common thing. Even when I spoke the other day, someone said: Oh, you know, I can’t quite do that, because I only have a small business. I don’t – I don’t have 100 people. I’ve only got 20 people. And I just don’t buy into that at all. I think with 20 people it’s easier to do it than it is with hundreds.

Jason Kolevski: Speed boat versus ship.

Hardeep Grewal: There’s change management around that.

Colin Links: The challenge for that sort of purpose is that they’re so engrossed in their own business; they don’t step back and look at and try and work with developing their business, and giving the outside time in, on the business.
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Edward Geschke: But likewise, big companies think that, you know, jeans and T-shirts is how you create innovative work.

Colin Links: No. They come up with – they don’t come up with phrases. Or they come up with phrases like “care factor” and things like that. They come up with things which is supposed to be around life/work balance. And it’s really only – it’slip service.

Jason Kolevski: As human beings, we do need safety and security, but we also need change and variety. You can’t have one without the other though. Like, you know, you don’t really thrive off change, innovation and new, as long as to some degree he’s also got you, you know, this other box ticked where I’ve got safety and security. And I guess, even that word, I mean it’s so different to different people. To one person, safety and security means: I’ve got the trust, which is how you grow. To another person it’s: I’ve got the skills to be able to go anywhere I want. And therefore, I could be there for 5 minutes. What’s my next move?

Colin Links: Yeah, the other thing is, if you go back again and look at – you know – you’re appearances, you know – my early days I was challenged every 2 years. I was promoted every 2 years. Never got comfortable. So, those – they’re the sort of things that disappeared from large organisations and ours as well. You don’t have those challenges to grow you.

Edward Geschke: One of the things, even with my business in terms of capability development and leadership in the organisations, I was talking with our General Managers about a leadership programme – and they say, “What is the mindset of success?” And one of the KPIs that I think is very important that we include is – how many people come through our program and graduate and go and work in a higher position for someone else. What they do is, they come into the door – and we’ve made a decision to them in such a way that the industry as a whole is better off because of our companies investing in people – and hopefully we’ve got better people, and we’ve got to get out of this mindset that employees solely stay with one employer for their entire career.

Hardeep Ginn: There’s something to that. Intelligent people who have been educated here in Australia have left for overseas markets through the “Brain Drain”. There’s a good example in Western Sydney University. A past student, who’s in the automobile industry. But to your point: over time, there will be changes and downturns. And I think, more to a point, it’s not the people, it’s not the place to be. And in most cases a lot of Australians with that international experience aren’t able to find that edge, that edge that they have mind about, if you’re going; OK, I’m just going to you know – the roller shutter door’s going to come down and everything stays within the company. We’ll be OK. It’ll get 100%, but it’ll get 100% of a smaller number. The smart businesses – it actually becomes part of the value chain and evolves with the value chain, because… I can tell you what: every industry is being disrupted. You know, the panel beater who shuts – who’s panel beating – his doors, he’s got to – he needs to think about a different business model because the insurance companies have changed their business model.

Nicole Baines: Yes. Nicole Baines: Yes. The panel beater who shuts – who’s panel beating – his doors, he’s got to – he needs to think about a different business model because the insurance companies have changed their business model.

Nicole Baines: So if every industry has the potential to be disrupted, like a potential sitting duck, effectively – what services are available at the moment that can be tapped into by the business community to assist them to be ready to adapt to change? So, when you think about, training, education – that kind of thing – where do they get that? Where do they get support? When I was researching this topic, I searched for courses on disruption. And there was only one course that I found that answered that brief. Lots of change management courses, but that’s different.

Paul Van Bergen: Once people read this article, I reckon Western Sydney Uni and TAFE will have courses on disruption.

Nicole Baines: So, back to my question: what services are available for business to go to?

Colin Links: A couple of things. The 2 prominent things that come out in our discussion – 1, a lot of small businesses small to medium sized business – don’t even...

MY VIEW

“And in these traditional businesses – like ours is a great example. Take marketing, for example – if you wind the clock back 40 years, we spent all our money on press, radio, TV and on big blown up gorillas. And in 2016, we still spend all our money on press, radio, TV, and on big blown up gorillas. And that’s a huge challenge.”

- Edward Geschke

“So, if you’re a small business, the smart thing is the concept of pair-up, up rather than scaling up. Don’t try and do everything yourself. I think the small businesses that’s limited is where the MD is the CEO, the CFO, the Chief Marketing Officer and makes the coffee. The smart business is one where the CEO is actually an integrator and he works out where that small business is one where the CEO is actually an integrator and he works out where that small business is the core to your business. If you don’t understand your value proposition, you are not maximising the opportunity that’s out there. Nicole Baines: Nicole Baines: I would say adapt, listen and exercise judgement – back yourself in certain situations but always listen. Edward Geschke: Don’t rely on jeans and T-shirts, I say.

Nicole Baines: Nicole Baines: Nicole Baines: Well done guys. Thank you all very much. Fantastic. Ahh: Thank you. Michael Walls: And thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you. Nicole Baines: Thank you for having me. Please exchange cards with each other.
How Business Introductions can GROW SALES

Trust, loyalty and generating business doesn’t just happen with a good product or service. It takes hard work to develop your brand, understand the market and convert prospects into customers.

In our technology focused and fast operating world, traditional marketing and sales techniques, still apply. We still need to network with others and develop revenue channels. Have you found yourself too busy servicing your existing clients or apprehensive in making first contact to promote your brand further?

We help businesses use their value proposition to land business introductions with targeted prospects or referral businesses. Every engagement tracks business that has been generated for our client as a direct result of business introductions organised by Know My Business.

Steps To Getting A Quote
1. Call us on 13000 INTRO to make an appointment
2. We discuss your business, operating model, and typical client
3. Together we discuss your goals and targeted types of business
4. We give you a formal quote for introductions

Steps In Our Engagement With You
1. We document and agree your value proposition
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Power behind new knowledge jobs

Western Sydney will become Western Sydney’s economic powerhouse with a cluster of up to 50,000 knowledge jobs by 2036, according to the report Western Sydney Innovation District, Building Western Sydney’s jobs engine, commissioned by the Westmead Alliance.

Western Sydney Director of the Sydney Business Chamber, David Borger, says the report identifies an action plan for investment to capitalise on the job opportunities for Western Sydney’s next generation.

“Over the next 20 years our region faces staggering growth. This is our opportunity to harness the potential of an educated and innovative population creating high value jobs on their doorstep,” he says.

Modelling within the study identified the Toronto discovery district in Canada as a role model for Westmead, because of its concentrated mix of research, biomedical companies and business support services. Toronto currently houses approximately 200 jobs per hectare, while Westmead only has 72; we have a long way to go to achieve our potential.

“To drive this change Westmead needs to focus on being a dynamic Innovation District where investment attraction and government support for will be critical.”

City of Parramatta Interim General Manager Greg Dyer says the Council has long identified Westmead as a precinct with incredibly strong growth potential, and now is a critical time for all stakeholders to work together to enable that potential to be realised.

“Already home to a number of world-leading medical institutions, there is now opportunity to leverage Westmead’s reputation as a pioneering health precinct to facilitate a broader vision for the area which places innovation at the core. This report is an important step to realising Westmead’s potential to become a globally-competitive Innovation District,” says Mr Dyer.

Dr Michael Brydon, Chief Executive Officer of the Sydney Children’s Hospital Network says: “The innovative plans we are making today at Westmead will have a profound impact on clinical care, research and education on a global scale.”

Dr Michael Spence, Vice-Chancellor and Principal at the University of Sydney says the University has long recognised Westmead’s potential as a global centre for innovation and excellence through the integration of health care, education and research.

“Our commitment to the area’s importance is reflected in our plan to increase our student community at Westmead from the current 1,200 to 6,000 students by 2035,” he says.

Professor Barney Glover, Vice-Chancellor and President of Western Sydney University says world-leading, industry engaged and community embedded research will be at the forefront of Western Sydney University’s presence in the revitalised Westmead.

“This will include technology-infused clinical teaching and start-up incubation,” says Professor Glover.

The Westmead Alliance advocates for the interest of the Precinct, and encourages business/industry growth. Westmead Alliance members who contributed to this report include Children’s Medical Research Institute, Cumberland Council, University of Sydney, Western Sydney Local Health District, Western Sydney University, City of Parramatta Council, Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network, Sydney Business Chamber, Westmead Private Hospital, Westmead Institute for Medical Research and UrbanGrowth NSW

Student takes on gaming world

Julian Wilton isn’t your average design student. At 22 years old the Bachelor of Design student at Western Sydney University is ready to take on the gaming world as part of a game company Massive Monster.

The graphic designer is one half of the fledgling company, which is looking to make a big splash in the market through their multi-platform development of “The Adventure Pals”.

The game is an adventure quest role-player that will support local co-op play across 125 mini-games and more.

“I started programming in year 10 but I wasn’t exactly the best at it. I gave graphic design a shot and found out I was a lot better at that.”

“I’ve made 16 games so far, all on desktop at the moment. This game will be the first to be available on console,” says Wilton.

“Through Western Sydney my approach to design has become much more professional with a strong emphasis on concept which is something I struggled with before.”

While Massive Monster is mainly a two-person operation, with Wilton working alongside friend and developer Jay Armstrong, the pair does get others involved in the development side of the game.

“Primarily there are two of us working on it but we do get friends involved to help us test the game.”

The game is now set for release onto desktop and consoles; however Massive Monster is still in need of support.

A Kickstarter campaign has started to support development of the Massive Monster.
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Self-control APP for drinkers

Dr Omar Mubin from the School of Computing, Engineering and Mathematics was first published by The Conversation

AUSTRALIA is known to be a nation of drinkers with almost 18% having a drink on a daily basis at a level that is considered risky. But the ill-effects of such behaviour extend to binge drinking, impacts on health and well-being, assaults, drink driving with resulting car accidents and many others.

Various governments and organisations have launched campaigns and policies to combat problem drinking, such as Danny Green’s Coward Punch Campaign and the lock out laws in New South Wales and Queensland.

Lock out laws have met with some success in reducing alcohol-related serious injuries in some regions. But they have also been criticised with the claims the laws are harming businesses or that the cultural image of a high profile and vibrant urban centre such as Sydney is being distorted.

But there might be another way to tackle the problems related to the over-consumption of alcohol that doesn’t require large-scale government intervention.

Install an app

When it comes to overcoming bad behavioural habits, such as drinking too much, technology can help by providing a subtle and more personalised solution to the problem.

Smartphone apps can provide real-time intervention on the go. They allow people to get the right information at the right time regarding their drinking habits.

Popular alcohol control apps include examples such as Stop Drinking with Andrew Johnson (for Apple or Android) which relies on relaxation and hypnosis and other apps which simply count the intake of alcohol (Sobriety Counter is one such app for Android).

Such mediated, anonymous and indirect interaction can also help people suffering from a drinking problem who are otherwise reluctant to visit rehabilitation and facility centres.

In this way technology can facilitate a change in behaviour through persuasion but not coercion. This is known as persuasive technology, a term originally coined by Stanford University researcher BJ Fogg.

Self-control apps, possibly because they did not want to be controlled by an app that was too insistent or fast in its interaction.

Users not only preferred gradual notifications from the apps but they also wished to have full control over how the app interacted with them. We found that a key design guideline for these apps is the ability to customise the way users interact with them.

What users want

Our results showed that users preferred self-control apps, possibly because they did not want to be controlled by an app that was too insistent or fast in its interaction.

Users not only preferred gradual notifications from the apps but they also wished to have full control over how the app interacted with them. We found that a key design guideline for these apps is the ability to customise the way users interact with them.

We noticed that a number of users preferred apps that provided incremental targets. This allows them to attain positive milestones on each step of the behaviour change process. A number of users also stated the importance of sharing their progress on social media.

Implementing persuasive applications is a fraught with challenges, particularly for contexts such as alcohol intake, where real-time monitoring can be difficult. But there is great potential to use mobile technology to promote positive alcohol behavioural change, particularly if the apps follow certain design features. If the appropriate governmental authorities can benchmark and recommend apps based on the proposed guidelines, that will go a long way in assisting many in overcoming their alcohol related problems.

There are a number of web and mobile applications that help people with their alcohol intake. But web-based applications usually cannot be accessed at a user’s own discretion as they require some form of synchronisation with the user’s phone.

Which app is best?

While mobile apps may be best suited to tackling drinking problems there isn’t much of an understanding as to which are more suitable or what features people prefer.

The National Health Service in the UK does provide a list of apps that can assist in tackling health related problems. But there is no government or other reputable organisation that maintains a similar list in Australia.

There are some online rankings of alcohol control apps, but these are not maintained by official health services. This motivated us to analyse more than 200 user reviews of apps available on the iTunes store so we could better establish design recommendations for such apps.

Quit That app indicating alcohol consumption trends and money saved. Screened, Author provided

We focused on 18 apps, such as Quit That, that were meant to reduce alcohol intake through behavioural change strategies. We specifically excluded apps that were purely for facilitating alcohol intake, such as alcohol recipe apps.

We noticed that there were two main types of strategies that were prevalent in such apps. Some used motivation and others self-control to help reduce or monitor alcohol intake. The former rely on different persuasive strategies such as praise and reward mechanism, social interaction with avatars, competitions, reminders and notifications, etc.

Step Away app highlights the usage of warnings as a persuasive strategy - an example of a motivational app. Screenshot, Author provided

Self-control apps mostly rely on users to monitor and manage their intake by providing information, such as blood alcohol concentration levels. Self-control apps do not explicitly inform the user when their alcohol intake crosses a level of high risk.

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Increasing understanding of and trust in the sharing economy is likely to be at the heart of this greater willingness to participate.

Demand is increasing

Research from the report suggests Australia’s sharing economy is set to go from strength to strength, with over two thirds (68%) of Australians willing to use sharing economy services in the next six months – an increase of 27 percentage points compared with six months ago.

Increased understanding of and trust in the sharing economy is likely to be at the heart of this greater willingness to participate.

The report also noted that the average amount earned by mums and dads aged 45-64 through the sharing economy increased the most of any age group (49%), when compared to the previous six months.

This represents an increase amongst earners from $91 to $121. The research shows that parents are increasingly selling goods online through peer to peer marketplaces (68%), lending out their spare rooms (7%), driving people around (5%), sharing their car with strangers (3%) and investing through peer to peer (P2P) lending (5%).

Daniel Foggo, RateSetter CEO, said the findings showed that nearly two thirds of all Australians used the sharing economy in the past six months, and that somewhat surprisingly mums and dads showed a healthy appetite for using the sharing economy to generate income and invest funds.

Sharing economy a hit with mums and dads

The Bank of Mum and Dad is set to receive a capital injection as Aussie mums and dads are finally putting a price on their spare rooms, lifts, the use of their car and the life skills according to the latest RateSetter Sharing Economy Trust Index.

The research suggests that kids might find it harder to get that free ride, have their mates to stay or get help with their odd jobs as mums and dads follow the leads of their kids by leaping on the sharing economy bandwagon and putting a price on their services.

RateSetter recently released the RateSetter Sharing Economy Trust Index, a bi-annual report that measures the attitudes and behaviour of Australians towards sharing economy services, such as Uber, Airbnb and eBay.

The report revealed that the average amount earned by mums and dads aged 45-64 through the sharing economy increased the most of any age group (49%), when compared to the previous six months.

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Tips for work-life SUCCESS

TIME OUT

By Zoë Spark

S

TRIKING a perfect work/life balance whilst running a business or working full-time, no matter what your position, can be a constant struggle for most people in today’s busy world, so here’s a couple of my tips to help you in your quest.

Take a Digital Detox

Consider a ‘Digital Detox’! I know it sounds scary and almost ridiculous by today’s standards but have you ever taken notice of how much time you spend each day on social media, email and the internet? I mean, have you really taken notice?

So here’s the tip: Give yourself a digital detox one day a week, on a Saturday or Sunday may be best. Just one day a week, cut back on your digital devices and social media! Don’t check your emails on the weekend and after 5pm/6pm each night. For one day on the weekend, switch off… completely! Turn your back on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and focus on the real people you share your life with every day, just for one day a week!

I try not to check my email over the weekend. I figure that if someone really needs you urgently they’ll send me a text or try to call. The time ‘saving’ is huge, as my working life is conducted almost 99% by email. Steering clear of email over the weekend is fantastic, I feel as if I have my life back.

Limit your use of social media on one day of each weekend and you’ll be amazed at the number of hours you get back into your life. Use the time for a better purpose, such as spending time with loved ones (why not actually go and enjoy something that you can talk about later?), catch up with friends, read a book, go for a walk, or enjoy an exercise session. Actually live and enjoy life for at least a day each week and you won’t look back.

People can literally be frightened of missing out if they go ‘offline’ for a day, but I assure you, it’s a great thing and one that will give you literally hours of your life back. Once you’re feeling recharged and refreshed, you’ll be ready to re-join your digital world but will feel so much better after the rest and time out. Your eyes, back, and neck will thank you for it.

There’s nothing worse than not being able to communicate with someone because they constantly have their headphones on. The importance of connection is huge, so bear that in mind. It’s great to listen to music and watch videos or clips but make sure that people can sometimes talk to you and hold a conversation.

Smartphones are an additional, permanent appendage for most of us these days. Apparent-
ly, 33% of people aged under 30 would rather have access to their phone than have sex (and I’m sure this will have increased since I have written down) and we check our phones on average at least 1,500 times per week. Clearly we are obsessed!

And this obsession will continue to grow, but again remember that it’s okay to take a break. We don’t always need to be contactable and accessible. We don’t always need to know exactly what is happening everywhere instantly. Downtime from our mobile devices is vital for our health, our wellbeing, and our minds. Just a little time out will make all the difference.

We do live in a virtual world but humans also last after connection. After all, that’s what we are really chasing with our obsession with our devices, connecting, but in a different way. However, it’s important not to forget the value in ‘real’ connections that are tangible, meaningful, and fulfil a much greater need that our digital devices ever can.

A digital detox is just what the doctor ordered. It will give you time to think about what’s important to you, time to think of new thoughts and ideas, and time to rejuvenate and regroup.

Have a Life Outside of Your Business

For many years I was a bit of a workaholic, and many would say that I still am, although I know that I have become better and a little more removed as I’ve gotten older. When you absolutely love what you do, it’s easy to throw yourself 100% into your work or business.

When you are passionate about your work, truly passionate, things also tend to snowball quite quickly; you will gain momentum and grow very quickly as people will naturally want to do business with you. It’s easy to get caught up in all the excitement, which is fantastic by the way, but it is also vital to take time out and step away to focus on other interests, hobbies, family, and friends.

Don’t allow your business or work, even if it is a great passion of yours, to dominate your existence, shutting out all the other good stuff that life has to offer. Relationships are a vital part of human life. Not only are they wanted, they are needed! Humans thrive on human connection, love, and feeling valid. Relationships with our partners, children, parents, extended family, and friends are so important, and yet when we are busy, they are often the first thing we neglect.

Make sure you focus on and nurture your relationships; make them your first and foremost priority, second only to working on the relationship that you have with yourself.

Ensure you take time out for you and enjoy other interests and hobbies. Enjoy exercise, take up yoga, go ten pin bowling, or go hiking.

Any form of exercise is uplifting and will improve your body and mind. Perhaps cooking, reading, going to the spa, getting your nails done, or going shopping may be your thing.

Whatever you enjoy doing in your own time, make sure you prioritise some of your time to enjoying these activities on a regular basis.

A rested mind is a clear mind. An active body is a healthy body. We all thrive on connecting to our loved ones, pursuing our personal goals, taking holidays, and enjoying time out. Take time out to smell the roses, refresh, and rejuvenate.

Don’t be a slave to your work or business no matter how much you love it. You’ll actually end up feeling happier, bursting with ideas, and ready for action when you return from a little bit of downtime. This is a ‘win-win’ for everyone concerned and also for all aspects of your life.

This is an extract taken from Zoë Spark’s latest business book – Healthy & Wealthy – 100 tips to ensure YOU & Your Business are Performing at Their Best. For more information, check out www.zoesparks.com or email info@zoesparks.com
Entrepreneurs on the board

New study identifies a hotbed of expertise to boost firm value

It's clear that entrepreneurs do bring the same attributes which made their own companies successful to those where they are board members."

--- JERRY PARWADA

Small and competitive

There were some nuances, however, with differences between larger and smaller companies.

“We found that it's more likely to be the case for smaller firms, and these tend to be the ones who benefit from the presence of the entrepreneurs,” says Parwada.

“There are several reasons for this. Their own firms are small, or have started small, but also smaller firms do not have too many resources they can access, so the entrepreneur, as generalists, can have a stronger influence.”

Another finding was that entrepreneur directors had more of a positive impact on companies that were in competitive industries. Extensive modelling of this trait found that the presence of an entrepreneur director in this context made a “positive and significant” difference.

It was clear from the research, says Parwada, that the entrepreneurs brought something “unique” to the performance of these companies.

Entrepreneurs are creative, less risk-averse and have a broad range of skills particularly useful to smaller firms with fewer resources. They tend to be younger and better educated than other directors, and they also offer firms a combination of skills that would otherwise require several specialist directors to replicate.

“Configuration of boards is a critical element for smaller firms, because they don’t have access to such a large pool of prospective professional directors,” says Parwada.

Small firms are at a disadvantage in attracting experienced directors, but Parwada suggests that this could be redressed by focusing on attracting entrepreneurs.

This would have the dual benefit of making a statement about the company to the market, and also the skills, expertise and experience the entrepreneurs were able to transfer. Risks to drive growth

Their presence also attenuates management’s understanding of risk and helps in the identification of growth opportunities, and can have a positive outcome on governance.

Shareholders, who are protected by limited liability, are generally tolerant of a higher level of risk-taking than managers, whose private benefits are tied to the firms’ survival.

Managers tend to avoid risks which shareholders find acceptable, and prioritise projects with lower risk and more immediate cash flow against projects that have the potential to deliver higher value.

Entrepreneurs have experience both as shareholders and as managers, and their experience in starting and nurturing their own business can attenuate risk when they act as independent board members.

Parwada and his colleagues suggest that firms with entrepreneur directors will be more likely to take risks to drive growth and value, and that this is one of the more important positive contributions these directors can make.

In their study, they measure investment in research & development and find that firms with entrepreneur directors have a significantly higher R&D spend.

These companies also display higher levels of corporate risk-taking. Risk-taking is either value-enhancing or, as the study says, “repre-"ents reckless experimentation”.

The co-authors suggest that where risk-taking is associated with higher levels of R&D, then that risk-taking is more likely to enhance value.

We often think of entrepreneurs just as people who make money for themselves."

--- JERRY PARWADA

Hotbed of expertise

Parwada believes there are some key lessons here, particularly for smaller companies, and that the message has significant relevance in Australia.

“Well over 60% of the Australian economy is driven by entrepreneur firms, and so that is a hotbed of expertise sitting right there where managers and founders of those firms could well be making additional contributions to the economy by transferring their skills sets,” he says.

Policy-makers should take heed. Entrepreneurs could be seen as a public resource around which new policies and programs could be constructed which harness their experience and insights to the good of the wider economy.

“We often think of entrepreneurs just as people who make money for themselves,” says Parwada.

“But here we have shown they have an influence beyond their own firms, and can make significant contributions in other ways.

“That is an interesting lesson and a finding which can be acted on, not just by smaller firms looking to recruit board members but by our policy makers.”

This article was first published in BusinessThink, the online business analysis journal of UNSW Business School.
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NEGATIVE gearing has commonly been the driving factor for many property investors, but there is another model for property investors to follow – positive gearing. This is where the rent covers the costs and the property actually produces an income. These properties are commonly found in regional areas with good growth prospects. The rent is higher than the costs, something that is difficult to achieve in the more expensive capital cities where prices are high compared with rents.

Negative gearing is where rental income doesn’t cover expenses and the landlord has to subsidise the investment from personal income.

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Neighbourhood Centre opens at The Ponds

COMMUNITY

URBANGROWTH NSW has handed over a 533m lakeside neighbourhood centre to Blacktown City Council as part of its award winning master planned community at The Ponds.

The Lake Neighbourhood Centre features over 650m of internal and external spaces and an adjoining 2,000m landscaped park with a children’s playground, informal performance space, play equipment and shelters. The design was influenced by the centre’s bushland setting, as well as its lakeside environment.

The centre supports the existing community hub on Riverbank Drive, which opened in 2015. These two facilities reflect URBANGROWTH NSW’s commitment to building strong communities in our master planned developments,” said URBANGROWTH NSW’s Head of Western Sydney Projects, Matt Beggs. “We hope to see the same success here as at the Riverbank Drive community hub which has been embraced by many community groups for various activities including exercise classes, birthday parties, children’s playgroups, and learning classes.”

Blacktown City Mayor, Stephen Bali welcomed the new facility. “This neighbourhood centre compliments our portfolio of 28 neighbourhood centres and Community Hubs which Blacktown City Council has delivered for the local community,” Mayor Bali said.

With over 348,000 residents calling Blacktown City home, it is vital that quality infrastructure such as this is readily available to accommodate the needs of our growing community.

URBANGROWTH NSW has again delivered an iconic building that will provide significant opportunities for the Blacktown community. We look forward to partnering with them again in future developments.”

URBANGROWTH NSW managed the project, with building architect and lead consultant Brewest Hyther Architects, and the landscape architecture designed by Taylor Brammer.

The building is made up of two pavilions which are simple yet elegant, contrasted by a playful curved wall which showcases aboriginal artwork to present a bold entry statement. “The building opens onto the central spine to encourage a connection between the internal and external areas,” said Brewest Hyther Architects’ Architect, Maria Coilella.

“It is anchored by the timber sculptural central spine that is used to transverse the building allowing for the parkland and built form to fuse seamlessly, and strengthened by its material palette of steel, timber and glass for texture and colour.”

The Lake Neighbourhood Centre incorporates steel artwork designed by local indigenous artist Chris Edwards. “The artwork, called Bloodlines, reflects the way people are connected through place, kin and community. Bloodlines wraps around the entry to the building, both inside and out, and symbolises the way the community welcomes and nurtures people,” said Mr Edwards. Mr Edwards was engaged through URBANGROWTH NSW’s Creative Shift Project which supported visual artists to undertake public art projects.

An open day for the new Lake Neighbourhood Centre will be held on Sunday, October 16 to showcase the facility to the community. It is located adjacent to Ironbank Lake on the corner of Spearmint St and Camomile St in The Ponds.

About The Ponds

The Ponds comprises more than 4000 homes and more than 12,500 people will call the new suburb home by 2017. More than one billion dollars was invested in major infrastructure projects and housing, creating thousands of jobs to help stimulate the New South Wales economy.

Major infrastructure projects included two community hubs, a shopping centre, two playing fields, five ponds and lakes, seven neighbourhood parks, children’s playgrounds, four kilometres of cycle and walk paths, three primary schools, one high school and a public art program.

More than 1.5 million trees were also planted as part of the rejuvenation program for Second Ponds Creek. The Ponds has won 15 industry awards, including the coveted title of most advantaged suburb by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and during its peak was the fastest selling master planned project in Australia.

North Ryde attracts major tenants

SPT’s two flagship North Ryde Assets, 1 and 2 Julius Avenue, are proving popular with tenants, with over 2,000sqm committed by new and expanding tenants over the last nine months.

A blue chip tenant has relocated from Castle Hill to 2 Julius Avenue, taking the ground floor and level one, encompassing 3,403sqm. Occupied by the central location and large floorplates, the client was also impressed with the building allowing for the parkland and built form to fuse seamlessly, and strengthened by its material palette of steel, timber and glass for texture and colour.”

2 Julius Avenue has undergone a major refurbishment after Fujitsu vacated the four story building last year. And another 2,000sqm has been leased at 2 Julius Avenue to Sharp Australia.

Meanwhile earlier this year, Inghams relocated to North Ryde from Liverpool, taking level four of the nearby 1 Julius Avenue. “This asset has undergone a major refurbishment during 2015,” said Michelle McNally, General Manager, Commercial Services of SPT.

“The foyer, café, outside seating area and bathrooms have been upgraded, and level four was completely refurbished to an A-grade open plan office space. We have also added end of trip facilities to this asset, adding to the many lifestyle benefits that come with North Ryde.”

1 Julius Avenue has a 4 star NABERS rating, and with its large floorplates was attractive to Inghams, who could fit their workforce onto one floor. Inghams has committed to a 3,118sqm space.

Existing tenant, Datacom, who is currently located on the ground floor and level one, expanded and has taken an additional 3,117sqm on level three.

Veolia committed to 655sqm of Level 2 at 1 Julius Avenue in early January 2016.
ROAMING

By Linda Music

Stay connected when travelling

Luckily, staying connected while overseas no longer means relying on expensive hotel and unreliable public phones.

With most smart phones activated with international roaming and free Wi-Fi in many locations, keeping connected isn’t as difficult as it was in the past.

However, it can be expensive so it’s important to know what the costs are before you leave and plan accordingly.

Steve Sebbes, Director of the Telstra Business Centre Hills and North West Sydney, offers some tips to business people heading overseas.

International roaming

“International roaming allows you to make and receive calls anywhere in the world as well as access emails and the internet,” says Steve.

However, the cost of making and receiving calls can be huge, and the cost of data usage in particular has seen some people reeling from shock when they receive their bill.

Steve explains there are a number of options you can take to minimise costs:

Keep data roaming switched off

To prevent being charged for data use, Steve suggests switching off data roaming until you need to use it.

“I generally know when travelling I should switch off data use but what is less frequently known is to switch off location services and any push notifications that have been enabled by apps which also use up your data,” he said.

Buy an international data roaming pack

If being connected to the internet is essential for your business while overseas, Steve recommends buying an international data roaming pack such as Telstra’s travel pass.

Telstra’s travel passes can be bought in three to 30 day blocks which not only allow you to make unlimited voice calls and SMS but also include a data allowance.

“Buying a data roaming pack means no costly surprises at the end of your trip,” he said.

Travel passes can be purchased via Telstra’s 24/7 app, by logging in at “My account” or “My plan manager” which is only accessible on your mobile phone.

Use free Wi-Fi

With free Wi-Fi you can make phone calls, send text messages and get online at no cost. However, you will need to find a Wi-Fi hotspot.

Some hotels offer free Wi-Fi as do some restaurants and cafes. Check with your hotel before booking.

“With some planning, you should be able to avoid a hefty bill at the end of your trip,” Steve said.

For help with your telecommunications needs for your move and beyond, contact the team at Telstra Business Centre, Bella Vista on 1300 721 400.

Linda Music is marketing consultant for Telstra Business Centre, Bella Vista.
Empathic robots a long way off

INTELLIGENCE

By Skye McDonald
Professor of Clinical Neuropsychology, UNSW Australia

The Japanese robot Pepper, made by Aldebaran Robotics, has sparked interest regarding the potential of robots to become companions.

According to its makers, Pepper can recognise emotions from your facial expressions, words and body gestures, and adjust its behaviour in response.

This heralds a new era in the development of sociable artificial intelligence (AI). But it raises the inevitable question as to whether AI is ever likely to be able to understand and respond to the experiences of humans in a genuine manner, i.e. have empathy.

In their shoes

In order to answer this question, it is important to consider how humans experience empathy. In general, there seem to be two kinds. The first is “cognitive” empathy, or the ability to judge what another person might be thinking, or to see things from their point of view.

So, if a friend went for two job interviews and was offered one job but not the other, what might you be expected to think? Should you be pleased or disappointed for them, or see it as a non-event?

Your response to this depends on what you know of your friend’s goals and aspirations. It also depends on your ability to put yourself in their shoes.

It is this particular ability that may prove difficult for a machine to master. This is because empathic judgement is dependent on our capacity to imagine the event as if it were our own.

For example, fMRI scans have shown that the same region of the brain is activated when we are thinking about ourselves as when we are asked to think about the mental state of someone else.

Furthermore, this activation is stronger the more similar we see ourselves to be to the person we are thinking about.

There are two components here that would be hard to manage in a robot. Firstly, the robot would need to have a rich knowledge of self, including personal motivations, weaknesses, strengths, history of successes and failures and high points and low. Second, its self-identity would need to overlap with its human companion sufficiently to provide a meaningful, genuine shared base.

Share my pain

The second kind of empathy allows us to recognise another’s emotional state and to share their emotional experience. There are specific cues that signal six basic expressions (angry, sad, fear, disgust, surprise and happy) that are universal across cultures.

AI, like Pepper, can be programmed to recognise these basic cues. But many emotions, such as irritation, boredom, pride, embarrassment, etc., do not have unique sets of cues, but rather vary across cultures.

Some emotions, such as happiness, are typically more evident from our facial expressions. But many emotions, such as pride, embarrassment, etc., do not have unique sets of cues, but rather vary across cultures.

Someone may feel a strong emotion but not wish for others to know, so they “fight against” it, perhaps laughing to cover sadness. Like with cognitive empathy, our own experiences and ability to identify with the other person will assist in identifying subtle and complex feelings.

Even more challenging for AI is the visceral nature of emotion. Our nervous system, muscles, heart rate, and hormones are affected by our own emotions.

They are also affected by someone else’s when we are empathic. If someone is crying, our own eyes may moisten. We cannot help but smile when someone else is laughing. In turn facial movements lead to changes in arousal and cause us to feel the same emotion.

This sharing may be a way of communicating our empathy to another person. It may also be critical to understanding what they are feeling.

By mirroring another’s emotions, we have insight by subtly experiencing the emotion ourselves. If we are prevented from mimicking, say by clenching a pencil between our teeth while watching others, our accuracy in identifying their emotion decreases.

Some robotic research has used sensors as a means to detect a human’s physical emotion responses. The problem is, once again, constellations of physical changes are not unique to particular emotions. Arousal may signal anger, fear, surprise or elation. Nor is recognising the physical state of another the same as empathic sharing.

Feeling it

So are empathic robots coming? New advances in computer technology are likely to continue to surprise us. However, true empathy assumes a significant overlap in experience between the subject of the empathy and the empathiser.

To put the shoe on the other foot, there is evidence that humans smile more when faced with a smiling avatar and feel distress when robots are mis-treated, but are these responses empathic? Do they indicate humans understand and share the robot’s internal world?

The world of AI is changing rapidly, and robots like Pepper are both intriguing and potentially endearing. It is difficult to predict where advances like Pepper will lead us in the near future.

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ENROL IN YOUR FUTURE TODAY!
RIVERSIDE Theatres’ major annual fundraising luncheon, Get On Stage, returns for its seventh year on September 9. Get On Stage is held to support the venue’s artistic programs and accessible arts access for people with disability. Driven by the regional business community, the luncheon will invite patrons to the Riverside stage for a unique two-course dining experience alongside fantastic live entertainment, silent auctions and raffles.

Providing the entertainment at this year’s luncheon will be acclaimed Australian actor, singer and television host, Tom Burlinson. Best-known for his lead roles in The Man from Snowy River, Phar Lap: Heart of a Nation and Flesh and Blood, Burlinson will delight the audience with his impressive repertoire of classic songs including timeless hits by Frank Sinatra.

Since inception, the Get On Stage fundraiser luncheon has hosted more than 1,000 people and contributed more than $240,000 to the venue’s disability programs. Current business supporters of the event include Gold Sponsor NAB, Silver Sponsor Champion’s Business Growth Advisers, Bronze sponsors Coleman Greig Lawyers, de Vries Tayeh and Signum Business Advisers.

What: Get On Stage Fundraiser Luncheon
When: 12 to 3pm on Friday 9th September
Tickets: Single ticket $150, corporate table $1,400. From the Box Office (02) 8839 3399 or www.riversideparramatta.com.au
Where: Riverside Theatres – Corner of Church and Market Streets, Parramatta

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“It means so many more people from Western Sydney can have access to this extraordinary [Powerhouse] museum, and its collection and its exhibits.” – Professor Barney Glover, chairman, of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Trust, the board that governs the museum to be relocated to Parramatta.

“The growth of Badgerys Creek Airport in the short to medium term is predicated on outbound leisure and business travellers from Western Sydney and inbound Chinese tourists.” – Christopher Brown, convenor, Western Sydney Rail Alliance.

“This acquisition is transformational for Noni B and brings together four highly synergistic and complementary brands with each catering to its own loyal customer.” – Scott Evans, MD and CEO, Noni B Group, on its purchase of the Pretty Girls Fashion Group.

“Unless we start building railway stations in the West and focus on increased levels of density around major transport nodes there will be little respite from the debilitating effects of traffic congestion on the economy, our people and our communities.” – Clr Tony Hadchiti, president, WSROC, on the region’s rail deficit.

“Because it is in a central location and because it is close to different transport options, you are able to pull in a huge catchment of potential employees.” – Gladys Berejiklian, NSW Treasurer, on the growth of Parramatta.

“The more people that we get here, the more value it seems to add to our members and create a real buzz in the space as well.” – Becky Pascoe, Oran Park Smart Work Hub, which has increased membership fivefold in less than two years.

“We had a lot of businesses, people that lived in the buildings close by, and investors. A majority of them purchased multiple spaces.” – Greg Andison, director, Century 21, who managed the listing for 23 basement carpark spaces which sold for $11,000-$15,000 in the Liverpool CBD.

“It’s no secret that Telopea’s concentration of social housing and instances of crime have somewhat detracted from Telopea’s many natural assets and otherwise close knit and caring neighbourhood.” – Geoff Lee on the redevelopment of Telopea.

“One of the great tragedies of the global trend towards urbanisation and densification is that whilst people are living physically closer than ever before their feeling of social disconnection is similarly on the increase.” – Jonathan Flegg, Deloitte Access Economics on the need for a Sydney flag.

Liverpool is ambitious in its future goals – in its economic growth and creating an environment that is good for investment.” – Property Council NSW executive director, Jane Fitzgerald

“We are so focussed on all those transient things that become so important to us that we forget to pause long enough to look up from our smart phones, look around and care for each other. And, to me at least, that is a sad indictment of our society today. I want something better.” – Stephanie Dale, incoming Chair of the Salvation Army Western Sydney Business Appeal Committee

“Moving Tropfest to Parramatta also puts us firmly in the geographical heart of Sydney, which is the perfect place for the world’s most exciting and accessible film event.” – Tropfest founder John Polson.

“All businesses have goals. The point to remember is, people also have personal and career goals. I admire people with personal goals because their goals in life motivate them in their careers which results in a much better work rate rather than long hours.” – Novotel Norwest, Shahzad Khan.
Budding musicians, dancers and performance artists from Parramatta and beyond are encouraged to let their talent shine, with auditions for the second annual Parravision talent competition now open.

Auditions will take place on Saturday, October 8 at Parramatta Town Hall, when the best acts and groups will be selected to perform in the grand final as part of Parramatta Day on Saturday, October 29.

“Parramatta is home to a diverse pool of talent and Parravision is a fantastic way to support undiscovered or emerging artists,” City of Parramatta Administrator Amanda Chadwick said. “Parravision is a great platform for artists to get valuable performance experience in front of a live audience and a judging panel of industry experts, while competing for a host of prizes.”

“I encourage local solo acts and groups to take advantage of the opportunity to get yourself noticed and most of all have some fun performing for your local community.” The Parravision talent competition will be hosted by singer and The Voice star Darren Percival and will be judged by industry professionals with three category titles up for the taking.

Abbey McPherson, 16, who won last year’s Best Vocalist for her inspiring performance of The Wizard and I, encouraged young performers to get involved.

“It was one of the most incredible experiences I’ve ever had. The competition was tough and the talent was awesome. I was so happy to be chosen as the winner,” Ms McPherson said.

2015 winners also included hip-hop crew Phoenix for Best Performance with the Parramatta Prize going to the Motown-inspired boy band, the Southern Bois.

Judging categories for the 2016 grand final will be:

**Traditional and contemporary performance**
Includes cultural performances groups, traditional or contemporary.

**Vocal performance**
Most outstanding entrant judged on vocal talent and delivery.

**Parramatta Prize**
Based on audience participation and reaction.

Auditions will be held Saturday, October 8 between 12pm and 4pm. Further details on the audition process will be provided upon registration.

The grand final will be held at Parramatta Day on Saturday, October 29, from 6pm to 8.30pm at Experiment Farm in Harris Park.

Entrants must submit their registrations online by Monday, October 3 to secure their audition place.

About Parramatta Day
Parramatta Day celebrates Parramatta’s birthday (its foundation in November 1788), its rich history and contemporary culture. A free, family-friendly event, Parramatta Day features live music and performances, farmers markets, historical tours of Experiment Farm, free kids’ activities, workshops and plenty of delicious food.

In the evening the stage transforms to host the Parravision decider followed by a fireworks finale. Bring your picnic rug and enjoy a wonderful day out with family and friends.
Is it time to provide preschool education for three-year-olds?

By Stacey Fox
Policy Fellow, Mitchell Institute, Victoria University

Relax has just become the latest country to make preschool programs available to all three-year-olds. There is a clear move internationally towards delivery of two years of preschool, with early education being understood as a critical investment in human capital.

Who offers preschool to three-year-olds?

Many European countries, including France, Germany and Norway, have provided universal preschool for three and four-year-olds for decades.

More recently, the UK and New Zealand have made moves to join them. And East Asian countries that consistently top education performance lists are rapidly gearing towards universal access for three and four-year-olds.

Australia has much lower levels of participation in ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) and preschool programs than our OECD peers.

Enrollment rates at age 3 in early childhood education, selected OECD countries, 2013 OECD

We currently provide universal access to one year of preschool in the year before children start school, delivered for 15 hours per week (or 600 hours per year). This is either free or subsidised, depending on which state you live in.

Is it time for Australia to join other countries and consider a second year of funded preschool for three-year-olds?

Why are other countries investing in preschool?

Preschool programs (also known as kindergarten) provide an environment for children to develop their skills, capabilities, interests and talents.

Preschool is about helping children learn to get along with others, to be creative and collaborative problem solvers, to understand and talk about their emotions, as well as supporting the foundations of literacy, numeracy and science.

Skilled educators use teaching strategies that are appropriate for the age of the child. They extend children’s thinking, encourage them to ask questions, engage them in conversations about things that excite them, and integrate learning into play and exploration.

Research from the UK shows that attending two years of preschool improves children’s readiness for school more than one year’s attendance, with particular impacts on their early literacy and social and emotional skills.

Continued on page 53

Enrollment rates at age 3 in early childhood education, selected OECD countries, 2013 OECD

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And 16-year-olds who attended at least two years of preschool were three times more likely to take a higher academic pathway in post-secondary school.

Preschool has benefits for all children, but the biggest impacts are seen with the children who need extra support the most – the 23% of children arriving at school developmentally vulnerable.

Evidence shows that one year of preschool isn’t usually enough for these children to catch up.

What are other countries doing?

Increasing access to early education, especially for the children who will benefit most, is not a light undertaking.

Many countries face challenges maintaining or increasing quality and managing affordability (for both families and the government).

Even so, the clear trend internationally is to invest in preschool for three-year-olds, and provide it universally – for all children – not just a small proportion with high levels of need.

Ireland has historically low levels of participation in preschool. Universal access for four-year-olds was introduced in 2010, with universal free preschool for three-year-olds coming into effect from September 2016.

The UK established an entitlement to subsidised early education for four-year-olds in 2000, this was expanded to three-year-olds in 2005, and more recently to disadvantaged two-year-olds. There is near-universal attendance in part-time programs from all three and four-year-olds.

New Zealand introduced 20 hours of free early education for all three-year-olds in 2007 and also has near universal attendance. The introduction of a free entitlement increased overall participation slightly, and number of hours attended significantly.

Many European nations introduced free or highly subsidised preschool programs for children, starting at least at age three, decades ago. These programs are very high quality, and they are both good for children and helpful for families going back to work.

Norway has near universal attendance in preschool from age three and for around 30 hours per week. They introduced preschool for three-year-olds nearly thirty years ago, and participation has been steadily increasing.

By 2010, 97% of three-year-olds were attending, largely because there are enough places for all children and fees are low enough that all families can afford to send their children.

France has a long-standing universal preschool platform for all children aged three to six.

The program is free, integrated with the school system, supports full or part day attendance, and runs in three age-based classes. Since 1980, all three-year-olds have had a legislated right to an early education place, and attendance is near-universal.

The countries at the forefront of global education innovation that perform highly in international education benchmarking exercises, such as Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Korea, are rapidly moving towards universal early education for all children from age three.

China currently has two thirds of four-year-old children attending preschool programs, and is aiming to subsidise universal access to two years of preschool by 2020.

National education strategies identify early childhood education as priority for lifting human capital and educational participation and outcomes.

Korea currently has nearly 75% of three-year-olds in preschool programs, with universal access to early education for three to five-year-olds. All three to five-year-olds receive a subsidy to attend early education. In a report released earlier this year, Mitchell Institute identified boosting access to preschool programs as one of the top five early childhood education policy priorities. It is opportune for governments to consider whether or not three-year-olds should have access to preschool too.
How to tell if your boss is a psychopath, and what to do about it

By David Tuffley
Senior Lecturer in Applied Ethics and Socio-Technical Studies, Griffith University

Being in business calls for a determined if not ruthless mindset, the ability to be confident and in control, and to be forceful, calculating, and a meticulous planner.

Attributes that few possess. But there is one category of person that has them in abundance – the psychopath.

Researcher Robert Hare estimates 1% of the general population fits the profile, though the percentage of CEOs might be four times that figure.

Oxford University psychologist Kevin Dutton surveyed 5,400 people across a wide range of professions. He compiled a list of the top 10 jobs ranking highest for psychopathy. Top of the list? CEO, followed by lawyer, media personality, salesperson and surgeon.

While psychopathic individuals are more likely than other people to commit crimes, most of them manage to live successful lives, their psychopathic personality helping them along the way.

The problem is, it’s the psychopathic boss who makes the culture and sets the tone for the way some organisations go about their business.

Does the boss like to operate ethically, or do they slide around in the grey zone between ethical and legal? Or worse, do they like to step over the line into illegality if the risks are low and the benefits outweigh the legal liability?

Those that work for such a boss can sometimes get caught in the trap, so set on not upsetting the boss, they develop a case of ‘ethical blindness’.

These workers are not usually conscious of being unethical, it is simply that management has created an environment in which ethics are not much considered, allowing otherwise decent people to become established in that behaviour.

Put an otherwise good person in a toxic environment, perhaps one created by a psychopathic boss, and that person will find it very hard to resist the slide into ethical blindness and harmful behaviour.

What to watch for

Psychologist Phillip Zimbardo, best known for his Stanford Prison Experiment, came up with a set of social processes that “exploit evil”. Reading them is a reminder for how we are all perched at the top of our own slippery slope.

Mindlessly taking the first small step. Its easy when there is something to be gained and little to lose. Its the “thin edge of the wedge” that creates forward momentum. In business, you might be expected to cut a few corners as an acceptable part of getting the job done. As time goes by, the practice moves beyond “is this right thing to do” to “can I get away with it?”, a transition that is easily made in a culture of ethical blindness.

Dehumanisation of others. When tribal “us and them” thinking leads people to see outsiders as sub-human. The blood-soaked history of warfare shows the destructive potential of this thinking. When a boss tells everyone that this is war, that we must “smash the competition”, or “bury them” they are creating a hostile environment in which survival is linked to killing the enemy.

De-individuation of others. People who mask their identity are more likely to behave in anti-social ways because anonymity gives permission to behave badly. If a worker is an anonymous cog in a machine-like organisation, they feel less than human themselves, and so less governed by human decency.

Confusion of personal responsibility. Become swept up in the mob mentality (eg. lynch-mob), and you are capable of almost anything. Thousands of usually law-abiding Londoners became looters and arsonists during the 2011 riots because “everyone else was doing it”. A workplace with “the end justifies the means” culture makes it easy for people to do what everyone else is doing.

Blind obedience to authority. When an authority figure like the boss orders you to do something it is difficult to refuse, particularly if not complying carries serious consequences. In the past, such disobedience could be fatal.

Uncritical conformity to group norms. Norms exert a powerful influence over our behaviour, particularly if disobedience or being a nonconformist will get you fired from the organisation. In the evolutionary past, social exclusion was tantamount to death so our instincts are to conform.

Passive tolerance of evil through inaction or indifference. As Edmund Burke noted: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing". You don’t need to be a perpetrator, it’s enough to simply stand passively by.

Bottom-up leadership

You can still establish yourself as an ethical person in your own sphere of influence provided the boss is not diabolical. This is a form of bottom-up leadership that sets a good example for others to follow.

When enough spheres of influence overlap, the culture changes. In the end, your best option may be to look for another job and exit gracefully.

But don’t underestimate the power of collective action to create an ethical workplace.

This article was first published at: www.tradewarriors.com.au

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Looking to escape the last of Winter?

Why not try Paradise and the Islands of the Pacific?

By Michael Osborne

How many millions of words have been written? From early explorers such as Captain James Cook. From early travel writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson. And so many more.

We have had a fascination on tropical islands with crystal lagoons inside pounding reefs. Green mountains staining towards the heavens. Mostly friendly were the Polynesian and Melanesian peoples, well, some didn’t like the idea of strangers trying to take over their part of paradise.

Over this period, one of the most visited groups has been the Fiji Islands. So when the invitation came from Blue Lagoon Cruises to come and explore some of these islands, surrounded by the comfort and safety of one of their specially designed expedition style small ships – we were off.

Blue lagoon Cruises

The Four Night Wanderer Cruise

Our itinerary includes – The Sacred Islands – Blue Lagoon – Sawa-i-Lau Island and Drawaqa Island.

A morning coach ride allows us to meet some of the other passengers, as we head to embarkation from Port Denarau, where we will be transferred to the Fiji Princess.

To link with the Fiji Princess, we are ferried in a high-speed catamaran. While enjoying the wonderful islands and reefs as we glide along, we are able to enjoy some welcome ‘bubbles’ and snacks. As we slow down to navigate a crossing into a large bay, there she is, out home for the next four days, Fiji Princess.

If you are looking for the ‘high end’ of cruising luxury, then this is not the vessel for you! But if its comfort and a small ship, designed to allow access to magical islands and bays, well, please read on.

Island Time

Fiji works on Fiji/island time

Fijians live their lives on ‘Fiji time’ with family and friends as their first priority. If something doesn’t happen now, the Fijians don’t worry at it is sure to happen sooner or later. This can take a bit of getting used to if you are accustomed to western-style service where drinks arrive at the snap of a finger and tours are run with military precision.

However, one of the best things about visiting Fiji is that it reminds you to slow down and focus on what is really important: spending time with those you love. Switch into ‘Fiji time’ and you will quickly embrace the Fijians’ ‘don’t worry, be happy’ vibe.

Guests on board Fiji Princess are enchanted into slowing down, enjoying the moment. The crew are amongst some of the most courteous and loveable you will meet. They quickly remember your name and your preferred beverage. Nothing is a trouble. The ship is very clean and the cabins, although small are well fitted out and the pod coffee maker was a boon for Australian’s who enjoy a real tasting coffee.

Meals are delightful, with a great variety of fresh dishes presented on the festive board. Each of the islands and beaches the various cruises land at have been specially researched by Blue Lagoon, thus allowing passengers the perfect opportunity to enjoy the beauty and to appreciate a Fijian way of life.

As you can see by the accompanying pictures, a Blue Lagoon Cruise is the perfect place to capture those very special memories, ones that will last a life time.

Usually we try and highlight a special part of the experience, but for this cruise, we couldn’t separate them:

• The arrival in Fiji and the excitement of boarding the ship.
• Our first sight of the Fijian Princess.
• The Bula welcome.
• Sailing around the islands.
• The meals and friendliness of the crew.
• The Fijian BBQ’s on the beach.
• Having our own private beach to enjoy.
• The entertainment by the crew.
• Visiting the schools.
• Exploring the islands.

What we can highly recommend is that you contact Blue Lagoon Cruises: www.bluelagooncruises.com and take advantage of the special deal below, or your licensed travel agent today.

BULA!

Feature supplied by: www.wtfmedia.com.au
This Christmas, Have a Pandora’s Christmas

We’re open for lunch this Christmas here is the 3 course à la carte menu:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intérée</strong></td>
<td>Tempura Soft Shell Crab (gf) (df)  Wild baby rocket, avocado salsa, lime aoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sticky Pork Belly (gf)  Cucumber &amp; baby herb salad, plum sauce</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lemon &amp; Thyme Quail  Toasted brioché, red wine poached egg, English spinach, truffle oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main</strong></td>
<td>Pan fried Barramundi Fillet (gf)  On crisp smashed potatoes, green beans, topped with cajun salsa and lemon butter sauce</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golden Duck Breast (gf)  Sweet potato mash, soy &amp; sesame greens, Cherry jus</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turkey Saltimbocca  Creamy herb polenta, grilled asparagus, Red wine jus, cranberry sauce</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Char Grilled Beef Tenderloin (gf)  Creamy potato dauphinoise, asparagus, wild mushroom ragout, red wine jus</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dessert</strong></td>
<td>Christmas Pudding  With custard and vanilla bean ice cream</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vanilla Bean Crème Brûlée  Lemon and pistachio biscotti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summer Pavlova (gf)  Double cream, fresh fruits &amp; raspberry sorbet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Price**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (under 12)</td>
<td>$30*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (under 5)</td>
<td>$15*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Children’s menu different from above

Contact Us

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(02) 8883 1733

www.pandorasrestaurant.com.au