

# THE BUSINESS

JOURNAL  
VOLUME 4



TOOWOOMBA  
CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE



**RSM FEDERAL  
BUDGET BREAKFAST**

**QANTAS PILOT  
ACADEMY UNDERWAY**

**CITY DEALS  
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## PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

**JOY MINGAY - PRESIDENT**  
Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce

As we go to print with our latest edition of the Chamber Business Journal, we are facing a federal election – the outcome of which will be interesting for business and small business in particular, for our community.

Chamber actively lobbied both sides of politics and joined our fellow chambers in a nation wide campaign to keep small business front of mind and for voters to support policies that ensure a sustainable future for our SME sector.

The other exciting event that we are looking forward to is the launch of the 2019 Business Excellence Awards – proudly supported again this year by Heritage Bank. These awards are the highlight of the

year for all of us at Chamber and it is always wonderful to hear the stories of the winners and the Hall of Fame Inductees; I am sure this year will be no different. This year's awards programme will see the new category of "Employer of Choice" which will shine a spotlight on local businesses who are making their businesses a place where people want to work – a great accolade and a great way to boost your recruitment.

I do hope you will consider nominating your business or someone you know who you think does a great job and deserves to be the Heritage Bank Business of the Year.

I look forward to catching up with many of you at the Small Business Exchange on May 30 – a great new initiative from your Chamber and an opportunity to perhaps find a new and local supplier.

**Joy Mingay**



## CEO'S MESSAGE

**JO SHEPPARD - CEO**  
Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce

The Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce continues to experience strong growth with business membership increasing and more and more members seeking support from Chamber to advocate on issues facing their businesses.

It was great to see Chamber across Australia collaborate in the "Small Business is a Big Deal" campaign in the lead up to the recent federal election. Our Chamber joined CCIQ and regional chambers from across Queensland and Australia to shine a light on the important contribution small business makes to our economy and overall community. The 'Small Business is a Big Deal' campaign called on candidates from all sides of politics to put small business front of mind and demonstrate policy support for a strong small business future.

Toowoomba Chamber also called for commitments to significant infrastructure projects that directly and indirectly positively impact our local economies. Toowoomba has seen many businesses directly benefit from the Second Range Crossing and the strong commitment Nexus Infrastructure has displayed exceeding local content targets. Some wonderful local business examples are included in this edition of the Business Journal.

The Toowoomba business community is well positioned to maximize the impact on Inland Rail on our local economy. Inland Rail is indeed a nation building project which will significantly benefit regional and rural Australia and will support the continued opportunity for growth across our local business community. The Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce supports the Inland Rail project – industry needs it and the Toowoomba business community are ready to deliver this important project.

Lets continue to work together and get behind our local businesses – shop locally, but also actively support policy at all levels of government that will help the local business community grow and prosper.

**Jo Sheppard**



## 2019 BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS UNDERWAY

Chamber's Heritage Bank Business Excellence Awards are the keynote event on the annual calendar for the Toowoomba business community, and we are excited to have officially launched the 2019 awards program on 9th May.

Heritage Bank have been long term supporters and are the major sponsor of this important business initiative and had joined Chamber in launching this year's awards. Through their support of the awards program, Heritage Bank promote excellence across the Toowoomba business community and encourage businesses to get involved in our local business community.

This year's awards program will see the new category of "Employer of Choice" which will shine a spotlight on local businesses who are making an impact through employee engagement and implementing innovative ways in making their business a place where people want to work. Recognition as an employer of choice will provide businesses with recognition and a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining highly sought-after talent. Focus HR are proud to be coming on board as the inaugural sponsors of this exciting new category.

Toowoomba Chamber would like to thank sponsors and supporters of the Business Excellence Awards, in particular Heritage Bank who have remained steadfast in their ongoing backing of not only the awards initiative, but of the Toowoomba business community for well over a decade.

Key dates for the 2019 Heritage Bank Business Excellence Awards are:

Nominations Open **Monday 10th June**

Applications Close **Thursday 29th August**

Awards Gala Dinner will be held **Saturday 12th October 2019 at The Goods Shed**

We are seeing involvement in the business excellence awards grow year on year and 2019 promises to see a sensational awards program. If you have not participated in the awards before, make 2019 your year to

get involved. It is a great way to review your business, celebrate your growth and gain recognition throughout the local business community of what you have achieved in your business.



*James O'Shea and Joy Mingay*

# INSIGHTS AND ANALYSIS AT THE RSM FEDERAL BUDGET BREAKFAST

The Toowoomba Chamber were pleased to partner with RSM again this year to deliver the Federal Budget Breakfast. Over 180 business representatives turned out to hear insights and analysis on the budget announcements relevant to the Toowoomba business community.

SME's welcomed the extension to the instant asset write-off scheme for businesses with aggregated turnover of less than \$50 million (previously \$10 million) for depreciating assets costing less than \$30,000. Also of interest to Toowoomba businesses was the announcement of an extra \$60 million in funding for the Export Market Development Grant (EMDG) along with \$6.3 billion in drought support.

Health and the aged care sector received some positives including increased investment in mental health and funding across a wide range of medical research initiatives. Budget announcements pointed to increased expenditure on new infrastructure initiatives with \$100 billion allocated towards infrastructure spending over the next decade.

Will Laird, Director (Business Advisory) RSM did a great job providing a detailed overview of pertinent points in the budget and was joined by Mayor Paul Antonio and Hon Ian MacFarlane for a very engaged panel discussion following his presentation.

RSM offers a full suite of services across

audit, tax and consulting and was recognised in the Client Choice awards as the 2019 Best Accounting Firm in Australia for their category. For further information on RSM check out their website [www.rsm.com.au/toowoomba](http://www.rsm.com.au/toowoomba)

Toowoomba Chamber took the opportunity to launch the "Small business is a BIG deal" campaign as attendees left the breakfast anticipating the Federal election to be called within weeks.



William Laird (RSM)



William Laird (RSM) Ian Macfarlane and Mayor Paul Antonio



Ian MacFarlane, Jo Sheppard  
Small Business is a BIG Deal



# FUTURE LEADERS

Agnes Redulla (Murdoch Lawyers) Taylor Riley (Accession 3) and Lauren Brown (Accession 3)

The Toowoomba Chamber were delighted to bring inspirational speaker Jules Allen to Toowoomba to speak to our Future Leaders group earlier this year.

Over 150 young professionals between the age of 18-35 attended our Future Leaders Connect event sponsored by FKG Group and NRG Services.

Jules Allen first came into the spotlight on MasterChef Australia in 2013 and has taken the troubled beginnings life has dealt her to create expertise in her field of working with at-risk youth and families in crisis.

Making the decision to be not defined by her experiences, Jules turned her adversity in to an asset and is now the face of several Australian charities dedicated to helping women and children escape violence and abuse.

On the night, Jules spoke to the Future Leaders about how they use the challenges they are faced with in both their professional and personal lives to motivate them to become

FKG HR Manager Hayley Hubbard also shared how FKG Group are setting new standards of supporting their staff and ensuring their mental health is priority.

The FKG Group and NRG operate in the construction and trade services sectors, which traditionally are industries known for being tough.

It is an unfortunate yet typical stigma that the construction industry is one where people don't talk about their problems, where you just get on with things, and where it's expected that you just 'toughen up' and deal with whatever the situation, silently.

There is also incredibly high rates of suicide among males aged between 15-44, particularly in construction.

Because of this, FKG Group are passionate about providing support for their people and their families to deal with their own personal challenges and working with others to find a way to prevent as many deaths by suicide as possible.

Under their health and wellbeing program, Wellness Matters, they have intentionally made mental health one of their core focuses.

Like many companies, they are tackling wellbeing from a holistic approach with the view that true wellness and in turn happier and more productive employees, come from being physically, emotionally and personally well.



Jesse Olde-Byvank, Kara McCollom (Carers QLD) and Travis Reynolds (Synagy Accountants)



Emma Rackley, James Monaghan and Crystal Wagner (Joe Wagner Group)



Gavin Taylor (Hutchinson Builders)  
Jason Doig (JJ Richards)



Hayley Hubbard (FKG Group) Jules Allen and Stacey Bosel



Simon Playford, Peter Rowe, Amy Thompson and Jason Doig



Crystal Wagner, Caitlin Easton, Nicole Howell



Lachlan Brealey, Laurence Mackay and Ryan Colclough



James Monaghan, Nick Wagner and Matt Burke



Margaret Spiteri, Matthew Rogan, Tara Russell and Portia Wells



Renae McPhee, Emily Nichols, Natalie Neowhouse  
and Savannah Barber



Louise Venz, Cassandra McDonald and Maddison Berry



# QANTAS PILOT ACADEMY UNDERWAY

In September 2018, the Qantas Group announced Toowoomba as the first of two regional locations for its new Pilot Academy. Home to Australia's newest airport and with over 300 days of Queensland sunshine each year, Toowoomba is a textbook location for a pilot training facility.

It's been a busy couple of months for the Pilot Academy team who have been working closely with the Wagners and the local community to progress plans at Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport, with the Academy on track to open its doors to the first student intake this year.

The Development Application for the project was submitted to Toowoomba Regional

Council last month, with facilities including aircraft hangars, classrooms and student accommodation. Naturally, it takes time to have these designs approved and built so to ensure that training can commence as soon as possible, Qantas is looking at temporary accommodation for the first intake of students.

Qantas is also developing a scholarship program which will make a number of grants available to students who need it, and more information will be available for interested students soon. The details of the student experience, which includes a mentoring program and access to senior pilots across the Qantas Group, are also being finalised.

The construction of the facilities are expected to create more than 100 direct jobs and around 300 indirect jobs in the local construction industry. The Academy site will create ongoing employment for up to 160 people in training and support roles, plus significant flow-on opportunities for local businesses.

There has been significant interest from students in moving to Toowoomba for pilot training, and Qantas will continue to work together with the airport, state and local government and the community to get the Academy up and running.



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**FROM TOOWOOMBA  
TO THE WORLD**

# CYBER SECURITY IN YOUR BUSINESS:

## LEGAL OBLIGATIONS AND OPTIONS

Cyber attacks are on the rise in Australia, particularly those which target businesses - often with quite sophisticated methods. In this article we cover some key legal issues to consider if your business is attacked and what you should do now - before an attack occurs.

### **Mandatory data breach notification**

If you are successfully targeted by a hacker, you must consider whether the data breach falls under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). If it does, you must promptly notify individuals at likely risk of serious harm and the Australian Information Commissioner. The notification to the Commissioner must be made within 30 days or as soon as practicable.

Many companies are embarrassed or overwhelmed by a cyber attack and are reluctant to let their customers and contacts know about it. However, we have found that proactively informing stakeholders of an attack that Clifford Gouldson experienced has only strengthened our relationships with them.

### **The next steps**

You should consider reporting the incident to the Australian Cyber Security Centre, which is part of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and shares information with a variety of organisations working to stop hackers.

You can also report the incident to the Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network (**ACORN**) which may refer it to the relevant State's police force for consideration and possible investigation.

### **Can I sue someone?**

It may be possible to start a civil court proceeding against the hacker for trespass to your personal property (i.e. unauthorised access to your data), detainment (withholding possession of your data despite demand for its return) and/or conversion (i.e. using that data contrary to your ownership rights). However, identifying the hacker is likely to present a large practical hurdle.

You may have a potential claim against your IT provider if it can be demonstrated that they have failed in some way to meet the obligations of your agreement with them and that has resulted in the cyber security

breach. But just because you've been successfully hacked doesn't mean your IT provider is to blame.

### **Claiming insurance**

Most traditional business insurance specifically excludes cyber attacks from coverage. We recommend dedicated cyber liability insurance which can cover cyber extortion (e.g. ransomware), business interruption costs and mandatory data breach notification expenses, but may also cover public relations and data recovery costs.

### **Future director liability?**

It is likely that cyber risk management will eventually form an integral part of the legal obligations a director owes their company.

As a result, directors should consider cyber security awareness an important part of their professional development. Such awareness can lead to decreased vulnerability, lower losses from attacks, quicker data recovery and reputational repair, and greater protection from liability.

This article is an abridged version of a longer article that can be found at [www.cglaw.com.au](http://www.cglaw.com.au)

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## CHAMBER AND RDA PARTNER ON “CITY DEALS LUNCH”

*Jim Cavaye (RDA DDSW), Peter Keyte (Port of Brisbane), Past Lord Mayor Graham Quirk, Jo Sheppard and Mayor Paul Antonio*

City Deals are a partnership between the three levels of government and the community to work towards a shared vision for productive and liveable cities.

City Deals work to align the planning, investment and governance necessary to accelerate growth and job creation, stimulate urban renewal and drive economic reforms. City Deals will help to secure the future prosperity and liveability of our cities.

The uniqueness and diversity of cities across Australia means that we will get the best outcomes by tailoring our approach to designing and delivering City Deals.

Nine City Deals have been agreed to date including that of South East Queensland. On 12 February 2019, the Australian Government committed to develop a City Deal for South East Queensland (SEQ) in partnership with Queensland Government and the Council of Mayors (SEQ).

SEQ is experiencing one of the highest rates of population growth across Australia.

The SEQ City Deal sees a commitment from all levels of government to work together to deliver a better-connected region through key transport projects, creation of more jobs, and enhancing the region's liveability.

On 15 March 2019, Minister Tudge, Deputy Premier Trad and Lord Mayor Quirk agreed on governance arrangements for the deal negotiations as well as signing a Statement of Intent.

Chamber partnered with RDA in hosting the “City Deals Lunch” in April with guest speaker past Lord Mayor Graham Quirk and past Chairman of the SEQ Council of Mayors, Port of Brisbane Chief Operating Officer, Peter Keyte and TRC Mayor Paul Antonio to hear about SE Qld's exciting vision for regional connectivity.



Do you have a project you would like to progress? Need to connect with other stakeholders?  
Want to find out more about grants and funding?

For more information about how RDA DDSW can assist you, contact our

Director of Regional Development  
Trudi Bartlett

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## OPTUS SAYS “YES” TO SMALL BUSINESSES IN TOOWOOMBA

It's been almost 30 years since Optus entered the Australian Telco market – in a time when mobile phones were limited to calls and texts and Internet on a phone seemed like a concept from Back to the Future. Optus was the new kid on the block, fighting for a piece of a monopolised market – how times have changed.

Today the new kid on the block has become a veritable telco powerhouse, delivering mobile services to over 10 million users, and a 4G network spanning 97.2% of the Australian population.

With more customers 'making the switch' than ever before, Optus has invested billions of dollars enhancing its regional network to ensure more Aussies have access to reliable network coverage.

As Optus' commitment to Southern Queensland continues into 2019 and beyond, we thought we'd take this opportunity to introduce you to the Territory General Manager in Southern Queensland, Nick Channell. Based right here in Toowoomba, Nick is all about expanding regional mobile and broadband access, supporting the local community and in particular providing assistance to Small Businesses around the region.

"Optus is committed to providing greater coverage and choice to all areas of the Southern Queensland population by investing in additional network infrastructure. We have committed an additional \$6.3million in network infrastructure and capacity upgrades across

the region for the current Optus financial year," Nick said.

Optus' participation in the Federal Government's Mobile Black Spot Program reaffirms their unrelenting dedication to network investment in regional and remote locations across Australia, the program dedicated to providing mobile services to customers in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia.

"We're committed to improving connectivity in regional and rural areas. These investments are aimed at increasing the coverage as well as improving the penetration and capacity of the network in existing areas. This means a reliable network for calls and a faster network in more areas."

This is great news for individual customers and regional businesses, which rely on the superior network performance for their day-to-day operations.

"We're bringing competition to Southern Queensland through innovative technology and efficient, cost effective service delivery. Businesses can see the value in making the transition to Optus – we provide affordable, state-of-the-art telecommunications backed by excellent customer service."

"Great customer service is our point of difference. Our team of experienced consultants are committed to building long-term customer relationships while ensuring effective results.

Whether you're a new customer or an existing one, we want to give you the best

mobile and customer service experience in every situation."

For Optus, being a part of the Toowoomba community involves more than just providing a great mobile network and customer service experience. Optus prides itself on being a member of the community by financially supporting local clubs, community groups and events as well as local businesses.

"With two stores in town and a dedicated Optus Business Centre, Optus is proud to be a part of the Toowoomba community. An important part of being a 'local' is having the ability to give back to our community. It adds to our on-going investment into the Southern Queensland region."

"We welcome anyone that would like to know more about how Optus may be able to assist their business to speak directly with the Optus team, who will be at both the Small Business Exchange and Business@Dusk events."





## LOCAL STORIES SHOWCASE

### TOOWOOMBA SECOND RANGE CROSSING CASE STUDIES

The Toowoomba Second Range Crossing has seen strong engagement by the local business community. Success stories can be captured from many local suppliers who worked directly on the project, as well as the positive impact on the broader business community. To showcase some of these great local stories the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning worked with The Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce to develop case studies so that other major projects and businesses can benefit from the learning experience.

### 2ND SHOT – EVERYONE DESERVES A 2ND SHOT

Established by BASE Services Toowoomba, 2nd Shot provides hospitality training and employment opportunities to people experiencing homelessness.



PHOTO Susy Wenitong

2nd Shot were engaged as a hospitality supplier on The Toowoomba Second Range Crossing by providing weekly lunch services and coffee from their food truck on the project site. 2nd Shot Manager, Susie Wenitong says, "2nd Shot is different to other food vans you see around, because we do everything for the social good. 100 per cent of profits go back into homelessness services for the community delivered by Base Services."

Nexus staff have volunteered at Toowoomba Base Services soup kitchen, engaging in conversations with the 80 or more people who come to access the Base Services. Project employees also gave their time to assist with the preparation of Christmas hampers, and blanket and food runs.

Susie believes that partnerships like this help to create sustainable social enterprises like 2nd Shot, while also creating an awareness of what is happening in our local community. "It's not coffee and food, it's actual magic, where people get connection and belonging."

64 lives have been changed since 2016 through traineeships at 2nd Shot's Ruthven Street store and mobile food van.

### NRG SERVICES – LOCAL BUSINESS DOUBLES WORKFORCE

NRG Services provide the design and construct of sophisticated electrical solutions to the construction, civil, mining, critical services, energy and resources



PHOTO Dan Briskey

sectors across Australia. NRG found the tendering process simple when registering with the ICN Gateway and attending the Queensland Government workshops.

There have been several key impacts for NRG as a result of working on the project. NRG's workforce doubled from 40 to 88 permanent staff with apprentice numbers growing from 10 to 25. General Manager, Dan Briskey states that, "A big portion of that can be appropriated to the Second Range Crossing." "It's given great opportunities for locals who would have not normally seen this opportunity in a region like ours," he said.

NRG have also been able to build capability within their business by undertaking additional scope of works on the project. This has resulted in NRG securing further works with local councils and TMR directly. "Companies will now want to engage with NRG because we completed a project of this nature."

The NRG story is a great example of the impact that major projects can have on a local business and the importance of local content.



## TAYLOR SAFETY EQUIPMENT – HELPING FAMILY BUSINESS GROW

Taylor Safety Equipment is a family owned Toowoomba business specialising in all things safety. Being successful through the tender process, Taylor's supply Personal Protective Equipment to Nexus on the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing.

Taylor Safety found that as a local small business, they were able to be responsive to needs that arose as the project changed and evolved. Key to this responsiveness, is ensuring the business has suitable computer programs, up to date policies and procedures and staff with relevant technical skills. "The key advice I would give to other small businesses who want to be successful in winning on major projects is making sure the back end of their business is capable," Karen Chaffey, Taylor Safety Equipment.

An ongoing benefit for Taylor Safety has been the connections made with other contractors working on the project. Assisting to further grow the client base of this small business, Karen Chaffey for Taylor Safety notes, "We didn't have those contacts prior to the range crossing so that's been great for our business."

Taylor Safety Equipment show the positive impacts that major projects can have on local small business in creating continued opportunities through the connection of local suppliers.



PHOTO Karen Chaffey

## TOOWOOMBA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – POSITIVE IMPACT ON REGIONAL ECONOMY

The Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce have been pivotal in driving collaboration with Nexus and the local business community. Nexus exceeded local

content targets, resulting from a genuine commitment to engage with local councils, Queensland Government, Chambers of Commerce and local business. The local business advisory group established by Nexus provided a platform for feedback, accountability and the formation of a strong relationship between Nexus and key stakeholders. "94% of staff who are involved in delivering this project are from our region. So in effect we built it and it's something that we are very proud of," Jo Sheppard, Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce.

The Toowoomba Second Range Crossing has provided extraordinary benefits to the local business community. Local suppliers that have delivered work directly on the project have seen growth in capability. More broadly, feedback to the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce highlight the positive flow on effects to businesses who did not work on the project, reporting increased trade and customers.

On a major project of this size, many local businesses have experienced great success and learnings about what they have implemented to do well. Jo Sheppard states, "It's important that we take time to reflect on what we have learnt as a business community from this project."

# MIGRANT EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS

Under a joint initiative between the Chamber and CatholicCare Social Services, the Migrant Employment Program has been launched to develop and support employment partnerships between Toowoomba businesses and migrants to Toowoomba.

This program provides Toowoomba business owners an opportunity to access untapped skills to fill their labour force gaps.

In delivering the program we also want to better understand the challenges migrants face when looking for work and the level of support available to them.

We spoke with two Toowoomba migrants who have successfully secured employment in their chosen field with local businesses. Here are their stories...



**Zahra Hashimi**

## **What were you doing before you moved to Toowoomba?**

I was living in Pakistan and teaching at a local school. After school, I taught English to a class of adults. I also had my carpet weaving trade and worked in my father's carpet weaving business when time allowed.

## **How long have you been in Australia?**

I moved to Australia with my mother six years ago; we came straight to Toowoomba.

## **What are your main skills?**

- Strong work ethic
- Ability to speak multiple languages
- Problem solving skills
- Willingness to learn
- Resilience
- Positive attitude
- Can teach to different learning styles

## **How long did it take to find work in Toowoomba?**

It took less than a year to find a job.

## **Did you have to undertake further study or training?**

Not at the start. It really helped that I could already speak English when I arrived. My first job was with Multicultural Development Australia (MDA) as an interpreter. To further my English, I then worked at TRAMS as a volunteer.

## **Where are you working now?**

I am now working full-time with Ergon Energy as a 2nd year apprentice. I am completing a Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician.

## **Are you enjoying your job as an apprentice electrician?**

Yes, I love everything about it.

## **What advice would you give to migrants and refugees currently looking for work in Toowoomba?**

- Work hard towards your goals and be open to every opportunity.
- Take on as much work as you can to build up your work experience and improve your English.
- There may be people in your community that will discourage you; let this drive you towards your goal. Always ask for help if you need it.

**Samar Abdulahad**

## **What were you doing before you moved to Toowoomba?**

I grew up in Syria and worked there until I was offered a company transfer to Iraq in 2014. I worked in Iraq for Carrefour, a French food chain hypermarket, as Head of Stores Development.

I have a Bachelor degree in English Literature and have been learning English since Kindergarten.

## **How long have you been in Australia?**

I moved to Australia in 2017.

## **What are your main skills and attributes?**

- Resilience
- Open-minded
- Hard worker
- Ambitious
- Speak really good English
- Willing to help people

## **How long did it take to find work in Toowoomba?**

It took six months to find my first job as a Language Support Officer at TAFE.

## **Where are you working now?**

I am now working at BEST Employment as a Migrant Support Job Coach.

## **Are you enjoying your current role?**

Yes, very much.

## **What do you love most about your current job?**

Helping migrants into their first employment in a new country. Assisting them with all of their job requirements so they can get long term work.

## **What were some of the difficulties you faced in pursuing employment in Toowoomba?**

Initially, I found that my accent was a barrier and I sometimes found it difficult to communicate over the phone. Not having my degrees and previous work experience here was hard.

## **What advice would you give to migrants and refugees currently looking for work in Toowoomba?**

- Don't give up.
- Work hard on learning the language here, this is essential.
- Once you can communicate well, this will open a lot of doors.





## Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) are proven to support:

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# CEO OFFICE CONCEPTS

## INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO BUSINESS



CEO Office Concepts is a locally operated Corporate Office Furnishing business owned by Craig Hess and his wife Michelle for the past 15 years. The business services customers both locally and Australia wide providing industry leading, office furnishing solutions. Innovation is at the heart of the business today, but it was not always the case. Their journey from a traditional operator in an ever-increasingly crowded industry, to innovator delivering customer value beyond their competitors wildest dreams, is a case study in how doing things differently can deliver a different result.

Craig Hess, "We purchased the business 15 years ago and like many other business owners at the time we computerised the systems where we could but that was about it as far as innovation". The marketing channels available to the business were typical of the industry at the time, catalogue driven and rep focussed. Likewise, the general business operations were largely manual, time-intensive and people, not systems, focussed. "It was a successful model for a long time but the industry has evolved rapidly over our journey in it and we had to be responsive".

The Corporate Office Furnishing industry is extremely competitive and increasingly dominated by large multi-nationals with buying power and marketing budgets to match. How does a small local operator stay relevant? They innovate and do things differently.

"We knew we had to do something different but it started with getting our online presence up to speed". CEO turned to Ben Carter of Yoonet for help.

Ben Carter, "At Yoonet we are passionate about providing opportunities for small business to access enterprise-level innovation. The big end of town have enjoyed the benefits of innovation for a long time and we like to provide the avenue for small business to do

the same. When Craig approached us we knew that there was an opportunity to really improve the business".

Yoonet redesigned the CEO website and digital presence, optimised their digital assets through ongoing technical SEO services and developed low cost, pay-per-click solutions to increase brand awareness and reach. But that was just the start!

Craig, "With Yoonet's assistance, we completely digitised our workflow from initial customer engagement through to quoting and correspondence. We automated a lot of processes which saved time but more importantly, added capability. Having systemised the business in a tech solution meant we could then utilise Yoonet's dedicated staffing solution to administer the processes within the system and allow my high-value staff to get on with high-value things even as we grew rapidly".

The catalyst for that growth was further innovation. "Most people are visual in nature, they need to see things to conceptualise them and it is of particular value in our industry".

The problem - digital visualisation is a highly skilled, costly and hard to come by skill in a traditional context. The Solution - Yoonet's dedicated staffing.

Yoonet were successful in recruiting qualified talent to provide visualisation services to CEO at a cost that was affordable. "While our competitors are preparing largely standardised proposals, we are providing lifelike, 3D visualisations of their actual proposed office. Our clients can truly visualise what we are offering and that articulates our value proposition better than anything". And the next step, Augmented Reality, visualising the office space via mobile devices.

The end result, "We have significantly increased our revenue in 18 months since embarking on our innovation journey with

Yoonet and I have reduced the administration time within the business by 50 to 60% meaning I can get on with engaging my customers and not pushing paper, and reduced admin means reduced cost".

So how do you apply this in your small business? Ben Carter, "Innovation needs to be approached as a journey and Craig's story is a testament to this approach, it starts with your digital assets and ends with automation, and then you do it again!".

Yoonet recommended innovation approach for small business:

Step one: Get your digital assets in order, maintain them like any other asset, consistently and concertedly. Give your customers somewhere to go to get your message - it is cost effective and relatively easy to do.

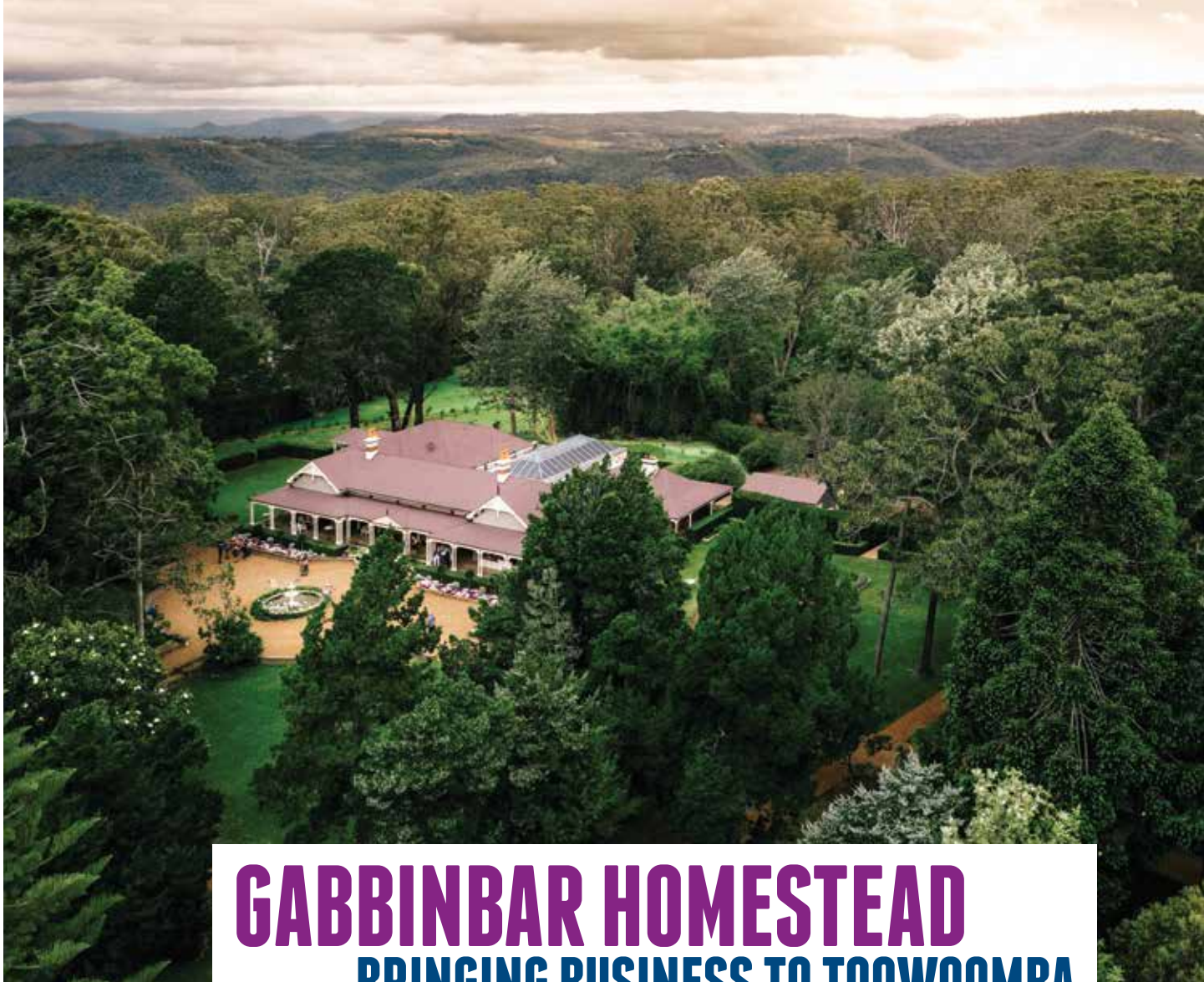
Step two: Amplify the reach of your digital assets by utilising Pay Per Click advertising that drives business to you at a cost that is unmatched by any other form of advertising. It is cost-effective and the insights you gain on your clients is incredibly informative.

Step Three: Digitise your process and access global talent to administer that process. Add capacity and capabilities to your business at a fraction of the cost of a traditional approach.

Step Four: Automate. Further, reduce the burden of administration on your business by automating wherever possible. You will be surprised what software and robotics can do.

Step Five: Rinse and repeat - it is all about continuous improvement.

Ben, "Craig and Michelle's journey with us is a blueprint of how local business, regardless of industry or size, can access and leverage innovation to improve business outcomes. We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to assist CEO not just now but into the future".



## GABBINBAR HOMESTEAD BRINGING BUSINESS TO TOOWOOMBA

Small business is the absolute engine room of our local economy – providing two thirds of all jobs but also contributing in diverse ways to our overall community. And Gabbinbar Homestead is indeed not only pulling its weight but is also a perfect example of what a significant impact and flow on affect a successful small business can have throughout a whole supply chain.

Did you know...

Gabbinbar Homestead first opened as a business in January 2012 and just 4 years later, Gabbinbar Homestead won 2016 Business of the Year at Chamber's Heritage Bank Business Excellence Awards.

Gabbinbar went on to be awarded Queensland's best wedding

caterer and Queensland's best function caterer by the Restaurant and Caterers Association last year 2018 – just six years after commencing operations. Gabbinbar is now a renown leading AND the busiest destination wedding venue of its kind in Australia aiming to host 200 destination weddings a year, which translates to 4 weddings a week.

When you look at the flow on affect that this has to our local economy and supply chain – it is significant. Destination weddings are one of the highest value types of tourism with a high per visitor spend - the majority of guests booking local accommodation for multiple nights and eating out at restaurants and food outlets. Gabbinbar Homestead is a key tourism accommodation driver for our region being responsible for over 20,000 rooms booked in Toowoomba each year.

Gabbinbar Homestead enables dozens of small local businesses to thrive - from photographers, florists and makeup artists. Talk to the likes of Potters Hotel, The Quest and The Finch Café about how Gabbinbar Homestead positively impacts their business and you will start to get a sense of the positive, direct flow on affect. Gabbinbar currently employs a total of 60 staff including 20 full time.

All in All – Gabbinbar is a shining example of one of Toowoomba's jewels in the crown and a clear example of the contribution a small business makes to our community and economy.





# DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED ATTENTION?

Did you start your business with visions of a great work life balance and the allure of financial freedom?

Is the reality that you have a business that is running you rather than the other way around?

Are you wishing your team would work more effectively and you could rediscover the fun of doing what you love?

**Based on our real life experience, we designed our Small Business Group Workshop specifically to help you uncover the opportunities in your business and unlock a renewed sense of purpose in both you and your team.**

Our two day Small Business Group Workshop brings together owners and senior managers from five local businesses in non-competing industries to share their experiences and define the direction for their businesses in the coming financial year and into the future. Our experienced facilitators will support you to develop a clear strategic plan with the tools to articulate the direction and goals to your team, backed up with a realistic action plan to ensure you see tangible changes and measurable outcomes.

**DATE:** Wednesday 10 and Thursday 11 July 2019

**TIME:** 8:30am - 4:30pm both days

**COST:** \$3800 for up to 3 leaders from your business

**YOUR TICKET INCLUDES:** Prework, business profiling, comprehensive benchmarking, strategic plan, implementation plans and lunch on both days

To secure your place, for more information or to register your interest for future sessions, please call the Small Business Group Workshop facilitator Alistair Green on 0422 130 671.



**07 4765 3456**  
**[focushr.com.au](http://focushr.com.au)**



# AGETAL AGRICULTURE UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

AgEtal is a broad-based Agricultural/life sciences laboratory delivering services for the whole of Australia from Toowoomba since 2014. We estimate that we are supporting Agricultural trade in and from Australia with a value exceeding \$7 billion per year.

AgEtal boasts a friendly, professional and highly committed staff of 18, including a number of long-term casual staff who are instrumental in providing flexibility to ensure that all tests are started on the day a sample is received. We have two centres of operation.

Our state-of-the-art Seed and Grain testing facility is located at Unit 9/24 Carroll Street, Wilsonton. From this facility we provide a full range of Seed Quality testing (Germination, Purity, Vigour and Tetrazolium tests) and Grain testing (Grain quality and export compliance testing). Customers would typically be seed companies and farmers for seed, and grain processors, packers, exporters and farmers for grain. We are NATA Accredited for most of these services.

AgEtal Specialist services work from 23 Sowden Street, Drayton. Their services include: Microbiological testing for common food pathogens, Allergen and Mycotoxin testing, (small scale soil and water testing), Nematode testing and \*Pathology testing. Our microbiological services are in the process of acquiring NATA Accreditation for a wide range of testing services. The Pathology testing that we do is so much more than that. Apart from traditional pathology diagnostic methods, we are also using molecular (DNA) based methods that are reliable and rapid.

\*DNA exists in all organisms! Consequently, we are able to detect so much more than just pathogens. As long as we know what organism we are looking for, our specialist services team are able to design tests to suit. We have a growing list of bacteria, fungi, plants and invertebrates on our list of diagnostic capabilities.

The aim of AgEtal is to provide reliable testing services in the shortest possible time!



# CHAMBER NETWORKING EVENTS BUSINESS@DUSK



January B@D (L-R): Emma Heidrich, Carmen Traise (Fuji Xerox), Brad Siddans (Oakey Beef) and Fraser Border (USQ Ambassador)



January B@D (L-R): Jeremy Lewis (LJ Hooker), Chris Black (Fortress Financial) and Mike Stewart (LJ Hooker)



February B@D (L-R): Allysha Hannant, Cheryse Bliesner (Gabbinar Homestead) Emma Linton Doig (Fortress Financial) Renee Currie



February B@D (L-R): Adele Spurgin & Yee-Shin Rosethal (Q Super)



March B@D (L-R): Derek Barker (Grace information Management) Uziel Mazwell (Comm Bank), Peter Compbell and Bart Brown (Taylors Removal)



March B@D (L-R): Cameron Strachan (Golf Marketing Services) Lisa Moore (LM Bookkeeping) and Steve Kelk (McNab)



April B@D (L-R): Kathy Ryan, Matt Burke (Garden City Construction) Michael Ryan (Darling Downs Taupaulins)



April B@D (L-R): Renee Tregoning (Fortress Financial Solutions) Emma Jane Aspey and Mark Brown (JJ Richards)

NOVEMBER B@D **BERNETH PROPERTIES** | DECEMBER B@D **HERITAGE BANK**  
 JANUARY B@D **USQ** | FEBRUARY B@D **ASPECT JOINERY**  
 MARCH B@D **PROVINCIAL DISTRIBUTORS & BEST EMPLOYMENT** | APRIL B@D **GRAND CENTRAL**



March B@D (L-R): Jessica Baker, Landri Van Der Westhuizen (USQ SRC) and Samantha Brimblecombe (Hooper Accountants)



January B@D (L-R): Louise Sanderson (SQRH), John Pikramenos (Kehoe Myers Engineers), Tess Lawry and Michael Flemming (Feather & Lawry) and Geoff Argus (SQRH)



March B@D (L-R): Jim Walmsley, Adam Sergent, Derek Kirstenfeldt (Aspect Joinery)



December B@D (L-R): Simon Playford (Clifford Gouldson Lawyers), Naomi Wilson and Alistair Green (Focus HR) and Johnathon Stark (Morgans Financial)



April B@D (L-R): Matt Greg (Civic Assist) & Kathleen Hart (QIC)



December B@D (L-R): Steven Spurgin (White Label Management) and Adele Spurgin (Team Building Agents)



November B@D (L-R): Kathy Ryan (DDT) and Debbie Ryan (St Ursula's College)



December B@D (L-R): Travis Smith (Morgage Choice) Ryan Baddock (RB Finance) Russ Jones (Commander) Lachlan Brealey (LJ Hooker) and Chris Black (Fortress Financial)



# NEW DEVELOPMENTS RAISING THE BAR

## IN TOOWOOMBA'S COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY SCENE

The Toowoomba commercial and residential development industry continues to show resilience and a high level of commitment to the city with a slew of new projects about to come out of the ground or in the pipeline.

The Bernoth family have begun what will be one of Toowoomba's' first real mixed developments with the commencement of the Bernoth Lifestyle precinct on the corner of Perth and Ruthven Street featuring one level of retail, one of office and 25 two-bedroom luxury units. This architect-designed development is destined to set new standards in the area for design quality and style featuring good interior proportions with high-end inclusions and elevated outlooks over the surrounding area.

The building rises seven stories above the city with many apartments enjoying lovely views that stretch easterly towards the range and escarpment and around to the CBD to the north. The Bernoth Centre Extension and South Central has been designed by a collaboration of Architect's each specializing in delivering different aspects to bring a unique blend



of luxury, functionality and wow-factor to Toowoomba's vibrant streetscape.

In the office arena Industry leader, FKG is about to set a new standard in working accommodation with the commencement of 7 Kitchener Street. The building is striking in its appearance with a sleek façade wrapped in a combination of modern materials including energy efficient glazing, green walls and laser cut screening. The building is sure to set a new gold standard in the burgeoning Garden City Skyline. A uniquely shaped allotment has allowed for a wedge-shaped floor plate to be created offering unrivalled access to dual street frontages and a 180° outlook.

Careful planning has resulted in a A-grade commercial space that is filled with an abundance of light, air & offers views over Toowoomba's iconic parklands and gardens. Car parking access from both street frontages result in a clear division between public and staff car parking along with avoiding the need for internal ramping. Additionally – responding to current trends in sustainable lifestyles, extensive secure bicycle parking and end of trip facilities have been planned along with direct access to public transport.

Exciting times ahead for the Toowoomba property market.

# WHY JOIN CHAMBER?

The Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce is one of Queensland's largest regional Chambers. Together we represent a significant voice and as a group we can make a positive difference for our local business community.

Contact our Chamber team today to learn more on how we can help you. We work for business. Email: [admin@toowoombachamber.com.au](mailto:admin@toowoombachamber.com.au)



## MEET YOUR CHAMBER TEAM



**LOUISE VENZ**  
Events & Admin Officer  
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**JO SHEPPARD**  
Chief Executive Officer  
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# THE FIRST OF ITS KIND 100% AUSTRALIAN OWNED.

Toowoomba's own Pulse Data Centre (Pulse DC) is the first of its kind offering highly resilient, Tier III Uptime constructed large scale data centre capacity outside of major capital cities.

Designed to support corporate and enterprise customers; local, state and federal government and global technology giants. With high power capacity and a large available footprint, this facility is ideal for any size business. Pulse DC guarantees exceptional delivery of first class data centre services at a competitive price.

All components of Pulse DC design are optimised for the local climatic conditions which are ideal for utilising free cooling capability providing excellent operating efficiency and PUE (Power Usage Effectiveness). Pulse DC is located in the Toowoomba Energy Precinct and will have access to large capacity renewable energy.

Pulse DC is a wholly owned subsidiary of the FKG Group, which is a privately owned and operated Australian company.

## OUR CAPABILITIES

Pulse DC is an environmentally sustainable data centre designed to scale support for corporate clients, through to governments and global technology giants.

-  Ideal primary site for corporate and government users
-  Easily accessible by road and air, with ample parking
-  Carrier neutral
-  Green energy available
-  100% Uptime SLA guarantee
-  Optimal connectivity location
-  Strategic disaster recovery location
-  Large scale expansion up to 50MW
-  High security with 24/7 access
-  4380m<sup>2</sup> technical floor space
-  Tier III design up to 7.5MW
-  Large boardroom available and customer breakout area
-  500m above sea level

For further information regarding Pulse DC or to organise a tour of our facility, contact our team on 1300 651 904 or email [sales@pulsedc.com.au](mailto:sales@pulsedc.com.au)

