

The BUSINESS

JOURNAL
VOLUME 9



TOOWOOMBA
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE



Special Food Edition

MEET OUR LOCAL GROWERS From micro to massive crops	MADE FROM SCRATCH Food manufacturers taking us to the world	THE SUPPORT CREW Get to know our local sellers, servers and advisors	<i>plus</i> people, projects, produce and lots more
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SBX21



TOOWOOMBA
CHAMBER

SMALL BUSINESS EXCHANGE

WHY EXHIBIT YOUR BUSINESS?

Do you have a product and/or service you want to share with our region's small business community? Exhibit your business at the Small Business EXCHANGE.

SME's from across our region, representing all industries, have the opportunity to showcase their business and products to decision makers and clients looking for new vendor solutions and supply chain opportunities. There is no better place that you can connect with hundreds of engaging businesses and cultivate new business opportunities in one day.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?

- Put your business in front of engaged customers and decision-makers in one place and in one day
- State wide event promotion as part of 2021 Queensland Small Business Month
- Reach hundreds of small businesses operators in your target demographic and gain exposure in new markets
- Create connections, generate new leads and strengthen business networks
- Discover collaborative and profitable business opportunities with other exhibitors and attendees
- Build your prospect and email database with new business leads

W E D N E S D A Y

26 MAY

- Exhibition open from 12 - 4 pm
- Over 80 local exhibitors
- 500+ attendees (FREE attendance)
- Located at The Goods Shed
- Exhibitor Stalls starting from \$290
- 2.4 x 1.2m Trade Stall

EXHIBITOR TICKETS INCLUDE...

SPECIAL B@D EVENT

FROM 5 - 8PM

- Complimentary attendance for 2 guests from exhibiting businesses
- Open to all businesses

TOOWOOMBA CHAMBER SBM21

SMALL BUSINESS *Month* WORKSHOPS



SMALL BUSINESS *Month*

THE STRATEGY WORKSHOP

This session is all about how you work on your business.

The speaker will discuss topics of business strategy and business plan development, linkages to day-to-day operations, vision and values and benefits. NOTE | Same topic just different companies presenting across the two sessions.

THE DIGITAL WORKSHOP

This session is all about attracting and retaining customers.

The speakers will discuss how to undertake promotional activities, social media must know for business, utilising digital platforms to increase awareness and potential for your business and accessing your digital target markets. NOTE | Same topic just different companies presenting across the two sessions.

THE CASH FLOW WORKSHOP

This session is all about understanding financial metrics.

The speaker will discuss topics of liquidity, balance sheets, cash flow, profit and loss, earnings, growth and assets. These are the foundations of all small businesses.

NOTE | Same topic just different companies presenting across the two sessions.

THE HR WORKSHOP

This session is all about people. The speaker will discuss topics of attraction and recruitment strategies, on boarding processes, training and development, staff engagement and motivation and key legislative must knows. NOTE | Same topic just different companies presenting across the two sessions.

WORKSHOP OPTION FIRST WEEK

TUESDAY 4TH MAY

THE STRATEGY WORKSHOP

WEDNESDAY 5TH MAY

THE HR WORKSHOP

THURSDAY 6TH MAY

THE CASHFLOW WORKSHOP

FRIDAY 7TH MAY

THE DIGITAL WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP OPTION THIRD WEEK

TUESDAY 18TH MAY

THE STRATEGY WORKSHOP

WEDNESDAY 19TH MAY

THE CASHFLOW WORKSHOP

THURSDAY 20TH MAY

THE HR WORKSHOP

FRIDAY 21ST MAY

THE DIGITAL WORKSHOP

NOTE | Presenters in the first week will be different to the third week
Stay tuned for more information on all presenters and topics



SMALL BUSINESS *Month* EVENTS

THURSDAY 13TH MAY

RSM FEDERAL BUDGET BREAKFAST

FRIDAY 14TH MAY

HIGH COUNTRY HARVEST LUNCH

WEDNESDAY 26TH MAY

SMALL BUSINESS EXCHANGE

THURSDAY 27TH MAY

SMALL BUSINESS IMPACT *Goiree*



yes OPTUS

SMALL BUSINESS MONTH EVENT PARTNER

TOOWOOMBA:

NO SHORTAGE OF

edible delights

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2021
(aka 202-fun)
is now well and
truly in full swing.



The Chamber has already hosted its first event - an educational Business @ Dusk at USQ attended by nearly 200 of Toowoomba's business elite - with many more in the pipeline.

This edition of the Chamber's popular Business Journal focuses on a topic close to my heart: food. Thanks to an abundance of talented cooks in my family (me excluded), I am fortunate to have an appreciation of fine dining.

I am equally lucky to live in Toowoomba, which offers a veritable plethora of quality culinary experiences. Despite

grappling with COVID-19 restrictions, Toowoomba has a thriving hospitality scene featuring cafes, restaurants, bars, pubs and clubs catering to whatever your stomach desires.

The Chamber is proud of its Food and Agri Network initiative and looks forward to showcasing our region's outstanding produce at several events throughout the year.

Given the small outbreaks that are popping up here and there across Australia, it seems that COVID-19 restrictions, particularly on overseas travel, are here

to stay at least in the short term. I therefore request that you encourage your family and friends to visit you locally. Not only does that avoid you having to travel, but our city's food and beverage suppliers benefit.

Please enjoy this edition of our Business Journal as we present the best of what our region has to offer to those who like special mealtimes.

HARRISON HUMPHRIES

President Toowoomba Chamber



Here at **FXBC Toowoomba**
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Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands, the Jagera, Giabal and Jarowair people. We extend that respect to the elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the cultures and the hopes of Australia's First Peoples.

ON THE COVER

Photographer, graphic designer, business owner and foodie; read about Kat Lynn of Foodie Shots on page 31.

The **BUSINESS** | JOURNAL
VOLUME 9

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Send your story ideas and submissions to
communications@toowoombachamber.com.au.



TOOWOOMBA
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

TOOWOOMBA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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Monday to Friday



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

MOVERS & shakers

Brendan STEWART

St Mary's College welcomes Brendan Stewart to the role of Principal for 2021.

Brendan is married and he and his wife Mandy have three children, Sam, Ben and Lara.

Brendan's sons are both studying at University having completed their secondary schooling at Ignatius Park College and Lara is currently in Year 12 at St Patrick's College, Townsville.

Brendan was previously the Deputy Principal at Ignatius Park College, Townsville, a College of 1100 boys with a strong tradition in Edmund Rice education.

He was a member of the Good Shepherd Parish in Kirwan and was highly regarded within his parish community.

He brings a lovely blend of personal and professional qualities to the role, as well as a reputation as a dedicated and highly capable educational leader.

Brendan started his working life as an accountant with

KPMG, before making the move to education in 1993. His formal qualifications include a Bachelor of Business, Bachelor of Education and Master of Education.

He is a music enthusiast and his teaching specialties include Economics and Religious Education. His personal philosophy of education is one of making a positive, indelible impact on students' lives. He is committed to helping young men realise their full potential and to set them up for success beyond school. Brendan is deeply committed to the notion of "learning for life".

Brendan brings a strong and compelling vision for the future of the College and the energy and drive to continue the outstanding work of the previous principal, the College leadership team and staff.

His expertise and experience mean he is well positioned to lead the College to the next level of outstanding academic achievement, pastoral care and community outreach.



If you'd like to share the news of your recent recruits, please send us a photo and a little information about them.

Introduction to TOOWOOMBA REGION'S AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCT MANUFACTURING PROFILES FOR 2020

The Toowoomba Region has long been an agriculture hub, leveraging off its extremely fertile farming land. In addition, Food Product Manufacturing makes a major contribution to the Region's economy adding significant value to the agriculture industry by turning raw ingredients into a range of value-added products.



Many Queenslanders probably don't fully appreciate the scale and success of production in our region. For example, some of the high-value food commodities produced in Toowoomba (2018/19) include:

- **Eggs** - \$187.6million
84% of Qld production
- **Horticulture** - \$125million
2.7% Qld Production
- **Avocados** - \$21million
8% of Qld production
- **Lettuce** - \$11.7million
23.4% of Qld production
- **Onions** - \$1.2million
5% of Qld production
- **Poultry** - \$93.8million
17% of Qld production
- **Milk** - \$42.1 million
21% of Qld production
- **Cattle and carves**
\$115.8 million
3% of Qld production

Leverage Opportunities

According to Toowoomba Regional Council, the Agriculture industry's importance goes beyond its own sector with significant flow-on benefits to the broader economy including food processing, machine manufacturing and freight logistics industries. The agriculture supply chain is being enhanced by major investment and research innovation including:

- TSBE Food Leaders Australia
- Agriculture Science and Engineering Precinct
- Rural Economics Centre of Excellence
- The Rural Centre of Excellence
- The Centre for Agricultural Engineering
- The Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Systems
- USQ's Centre for Crop Health

Manufacturing:

Toowoomba produces a diverse range of food products including meat, bakery, dairy and grain mill products. There's Toowoomba Premium Milk (TPM), Stahmann Farms pecan and macadamia processing, CF Oats, Kialla Pure Foods flours, Jim's Jerky, Story Fresh, Mother Meg's baked goods, Oakey Beef Exports and so many more. We have gathered a small selection of growers, bakers and various makers across a variety of fields in this "foodie" edition of Chamber's Business Journal.



Agriculture is a major economic driver for the region generating \$754 million in value added/



Agriculture employs 5,222 people accounting for 6.1% of the total employment which is well above the Queensland benchmark of 2.4%.



The Region exports \$1,051 million in agricultural product which is an increase of 83% over the past ten years.

According to figures from 2019

All data sourced from TRC's industry profiles.



FOOD PRODUCING FUTURE DEPENDS ON *water*

The Hampton region's flourishing horticulture and tourism industries can be directly attributed to water security which has been provided by The Hampton Irrigators Scheme since 2004.

Water is the life blood of horticulture and The Scheme's supply of water has enabled growers to explore and expand new crops including avocados, blueberries, raspberries, native finger limes and rhubarb.

The benefits of The Scheme not only affect growers. Hampton has been the centre of a tourism resurgence in the past 12 months with the advent of the High Country Hamlets micro-region organisation.

CEO of Toowoomba Chamber, Todd Rohl, said The Hampton Irrigators Scheme, which originated as a self-help, grass roots initiative driven by growers had been the key to the region's success.

"The Hampton Irrigators Scheme is a local success story built on the foresight, commitment and dedication of local people and through them there is potential to continue to bring, millions of dollars of income to the region.

"Sixteen years ago, these growers saw an opportunity to secure water supply at a time of changing climate patterns," he said. "With the assistance of the Toowoomba Regional Council infrastructure, The Scheme has delivered consistent water supply to shareholders ever since.

The Scheme even provided vital water supply to the Hampton area during the Millennium Drought and, up until recently, during the current drought.

The region's booming avocado industry is the predominant beneficiary of The Scheme, but

smaller holdings of other crops also benefit bringing an estimated total of around \$4.5M income for growers.

According to Todd, much of that money is directly and indirectly re-distributed locally through wages, accommodation and meals, machinery repair and maintenance, fuel, fertilisers, mulch and other on and off farm expenses.

"To achieve these outcomes the growers invested approximately \$2 million in the original set up of the Scheme. That investment included establishing the Scheme's bore and providing water infrastructure at Hampton. This included internal reticulation network at Hampton and a pipeline from the bore to eastern end of Reushle Rd in Kleinton.

"It's a brilliant scheme and the whole community should applaud the efforts of all involved."

fact The Hampton Irrigators Scheme

- * Currently irrigates 80ha across properties owned and operated by the ten Scheme Shareholders
- * Cost growers \$2M each to set up the Scheme
- * Directly contributes \$4.5M in income to growers across the region
- * Allows growers to employ 10 full time and 45 seasonal workers



Halo Farms Rhubarb and Finger limes





Daryl and Sally Boardman are the owners of Sunnyspot Farms and Sunnyspot Packhouse.

Meet the Boardmans

From grafting and growing to packing and distribution, the Boardmans of Sunnyspot Avocados have it covered.

They grow around 15,000 Hass Avocado trees, 1,500 Shepard and a few Reed varieties (mostly for grafting). Their farms cover 375 acres (155ha)

and are located at Ravensbourne/ Hampton and near Bundaberg.

They are also the owners of an avocado marketing company called The Avolution and a refrigerated transport business, Cool Haul.

The Boardmans employ 12 fulltime staff and have a wonderful stream of around 80 casual employees and seasonal workers throughout the year. Their biggest challenges as a business are water and labour.

To give you an idea of how busy these workers might be during peak season: a good fully mature tree will produce 15-20 trays of avocados. That's 350-500 per tree per season. They also pack fruit for other farmers in the region.

With a keen interest in the industry, Daryl is the Southern Queensland Director of Avocados Australia and he represents the industry on the Hort Innovation Industry Trade Advisory Panel (ITAP) and Export Committees.

STORY *fresh*

They're kind of humble, but crunchy, leafy greens complete a sandwich, wrap or burger – and we sure notice when they're missing! In Subway and McDonalds stores, cafes, cruise ships, airlines and restaurants throughout Australia tonnes of those humble leafy greens come from Story Fresh farms at Cambooya.

"We process 800kg of baby leaf spinach per hour and 40 bags of lettuce per minute. In one day we can make one million serves," Geoff Story

Story Fresh is a family owned and operated business. Geoff Story grew up on a vegetable farm at Middle Ridge and then started his own farming business in 1965. He met wife Anne when they were both studying at Gatton Agricultural

College and they now grow leafy vegetables, such as lettuce and spinach, on four farms covering 1800ha in the Cambooya district.

They employ around 100 people onsite, have 12 distribution partners throughout Australia and warehouses right along the east coast.

It's a year-round, seed-to-salad business and one that insists on perfection as well as the highest levels of quality, freshness and safety.

"We have wonderful growing conditions for leafy vegetables all year round," said Geoff. "Our farms are close to our processing facility and that makes all the difference to the freshness and longevity of the product."

"For example, our baby spinach is cut in the morning, chilled immediately, processed and packaged by the afternoon. Temperature control through every step is key."

It's handy having a mechatronics engineer in the family. Son, Nathan Story, helped design a new \$12M state-of-the-art processing facility which opened in May 2020.

"We travelled all over the world doing our research and chose the best machines for each job and then Nathan drew up a layout to put it all together. We've expanded our capacity by 300 per cent and operate two shifts per day seven days a week," said Geoff.

"Every shift ends with thorough cleaning that alone is a very technical process"

"Last year was volatile – stopped dead and then suddenly we were slammed when businesses reopened. It's hard when you're working with a perishable product and there could be a lot of waste but we keep a herd of cattle and at least we can feed them scraps."

BUDGEE GARLIC & *Herbs*

Frustrated at not being able to buy Australian-grown garlic, Joan and Dan Kambouris started growing their own. Then they started turning their harvest into condiments, pickles and relishes and eventually into a business.

Budgee Garlic & Herbs focuses on providing high-quality products grown without the use of chemical fertilisers or pesticides.

"One year we planted 50 000 cloves," said Joan. "You don't need a huge property to grow garlic so we also grow rosemary, lavender, oregano, tarragon and chives. We are always experimenting and trying new flavours including stevia, salt bush and varieties of basil."

The Kambouris's garlic and herb farm is located 30 minutes from Toowoomba in the rich soil of Budgee. But they also source seasonal fruits

and vegetables from around the region.

"We have our signature salts and seasonings, pickled garlic, tomato relish and sauce but we add to our range with whatever is in season including jams, cordials and fruit butters."

"Some of the recipes I use are passed down from my grandmother (from the 1800s), others are new but all are adapted to taste. We cook and bottle every second day."

"We sell Budgee Garlic & Herbs products to a few stores around the region, at the Toowoomba Farmers Market and various food festivals throughout the year. Our online sales increased during 2020 and we now sell to every state in Australia."



HAVING FUN WITH *Fungi!*

Top of the Range Mushrooms by Robyn Ayles

We started Top of the Range Mushrooms in 2018 as my business partner, Ken Goulter, is a mycologist and was interested in growing various sorts of mushrooms. I also wanted to get back into growing something, so it seemed a perfect fit.

We are especially interested in growing Australian native mushrooms and we have an ever-increasing range including native enoki and native oyster mushrooms.

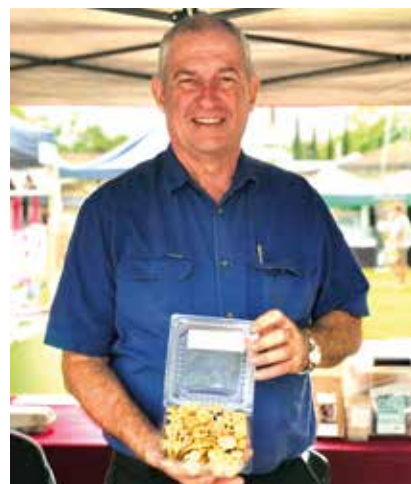
What are the challenges? Getting people interested in new and unusual mushrooms is a very slow process. But we are expanding – just slowly, as we both have other work and businesses including improving the Toowoomba Farmers Market.

There's just the two of us but limited resources means you

find the best practices and fastest processes quickly.

We supply a number of restaurants including Gip's, Rosalie House, Kingfisher and Lily's at Highfields but the bulk of our mushrooms are sold at the Toowoomba Farmers Market.

We would love to expand our production and our range to include Australian grown medicinal mushrooms. We also like to work with other stallholders for example Budgee Garlic and Herbs have created a new seasoning with our Lions Mane Mushrooms.



FLARE SPECIALTY PRODUCE *edible flowers*

Not many of us walk out of school and into our own successful business, but that's exactly what Joshua Paterson did.

In Year 12 he studied Cert 2 in Horticulture and a Diploma of Business at TAFE Toowoomba. He built some greenhouses and when the last school bell rang he was already selling violas, dianthus, marigolds and other edible flowers to restaurants in Toowoomba and at the Brisbane Markets, Sydney and then to Singapore.

Then came COVID!

These days Josh has a full-time job in horticulture, grows as many flowers as he can and has his own online workwear label for growers too. You can find him on Facebook.





TOOWOOMBA FARMERS *market*

Robyn Ayles' biggest joy is when stallholders at The Toowoomba Farmers Market find success and thrive.

The Market sure was a lifesaver for local food growers and producers throughout the trials of 2020. With its loyal following of customers, it was able to provide an outlet for sales at a time when supply chains were uncertain. Thankfully, the flow-on has continued as more new customers discover the amazing provisions available each Saturday morning.

Robyn has a background in farming and fresh produce. She grew up on a tomato farm in Bowen and, after university, took up a position with the CSIRO in the Kimberley region. She then worked in the Research Division for Pacific Seeds for 27 years.

She and business partner Ken Goulter took over the Toowoomba Farmers Market in 2019.

"I bought the market because it was going to close and I wanted to assist local businesses especially farmers who had already been doing it tough with the drought," she said.

"It's great to see many of our businesses have been able to expand or continue when they thought they might have to close. "The stall holders are a family and their happiness is reflected in the atmosphere at the Market. The friendly banter and the

fact that they all know each other helps build that community spirit.

"I love seeing our regular customers chat to the stallholders. They learn from each other and over time there have been many friendships.

"There are challenges in running a local farmers market – that's for sure! But COVID added a new layer.

"We were very careful to make sure everyone was safe throughout COVID by following correct procedure. This meant removing non-essential stalls, putting up signs, providing hand sanitiser, only takeaway. We asked customers to only have one person per household at the market and we became cashless which became a blessing as more stalls increased sales by offering card facilities.

"I think COVID-19 really made people think about local produce and businesses. They supported us because we are outdoors and were doing everything possible to assist with safety.

"We are slowly getting back to normal and even increasing our food line up with The Grassroots Chef and their vegan options, Emeraude will be coming to offer some of their amazing food, as well as Abundant Organic Life, Mauri Food from Whaea's Kitchen, platters from Platter of Fact and so much more.

The number of farmers at the Market is also increasing and our stallholders are always innovating and offering new and unusual food items."





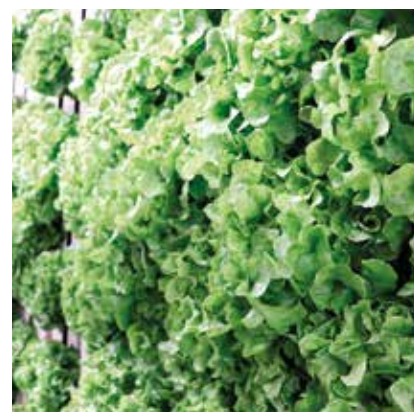
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Bunnyconnellen AND COOLBARDIE OLIVES



A few months ago, Donna and Stephen Emmerton were enjoying breakfast at Emeraude's pop up restaurant at Bunnyconnellen (Amanda Hinds superb restaurant) when they got chatting to Ninian and Anne Stewart-Moore of Bunnyconnellen Olives. One thing led to another and now they are the proud owners of Bunnyconnellen's range of olive products.

Bunnyconnellen's packs and jars of delicious, marinated olives and tapenades are tried and tested, absolute crowd pleasers.

"The recipes came from the original owners of Bunnyconnellen, and they are as popular as ever," said Donna.

"I love the products and we had been keeping an eye out for a local opportunity that fits in with our lamb and this seemed to tick all the boxes. I have no intention of changing the recipes but wouldn't mind extending the range, perhaps starting with more olive oil infusions.

I would also like to expand the wholesale side of the business too."

With a background in agriculture through New South Wales and around Queensland, the Emmertons are no strangers to the food business. They have been selling their own branded lamb, Downs Dorper Lamb, in the Toowoomba and Brisbane regions for the past two years. Prior to that Donna spent six years on the Dorper Sheep Society of Australia Board where her main role was to develop a lamb brand for the Society.

"Dorpers are a low maintenance shedding breed that produce quality lambs with a superior yielding carcass and exceptional eating quality," she said.

The Emmertons downsized from their 160-acre property near Haden to a smaller farm near Crows Nest where they keep a reduced flock (due to the drought) and stud called Davemm Hill White Dorpers.



Artisan Cheesery

A FARMGATE EXPERIENCE

ON OUR DOORSTEP

Feta, Halloumi, Labneh, Pecorino – they're delicious and they're all traditionally made from sheep milk. So, to keep things authentic, we bring you Awassi Cheesery; the region's only sheep cheesery.

Located on 160 acres in the Grantham Hills, Awassi Cheesery is just 30 minutes from Toowoomba and it's open daily to the public for farmgate cheese "experiences".

Owners David and Di Piggott planned the business for eight years and opened the gate three years ago. What they have created is much more than a "dairy" and a visit could involve milking sheep, cheese making classes, cheese tasting, themed feasts or just swinging from a hammock in the avocado grove.

Awassi is an artisan bespoke cheesery that only makes small batches of quality product.

Di milks 32 ewes every day to get 60 litres of milk. Then every second day is cheese making day where she

might make camembert, blue cheese or even her special red wine cheese.

"Awassi sheep are very productive and can be milked for up to 200 days" she said. "10 litres of sheep milk will make 4 to 5kg of cheese compared to 10 litres of cows milk which makes only 1kg of cheese."

In addition to the happy herd of 150 Awassi sheep, the property features 500 avocado trees, bee hives and three luxury glamping bell tents.

"Due to the drought, and then COVID, we had to diversify the use of the land, which led to the introduction of Grove Glamping here at Awassi Cheesery. Our luxury bell tents are available to guests all year round and allow people to unplug and immerse themselves in the beautiful scenery that is the Lockyer Valley.





THE PROTEIN BUILDERS

TIME TO PUT QUAIL ON YOUR WEEKLY *shopping list*

ON OUR DOORSTEP

Quail has had a reputation as a “chef’s meat” – a bit fancy and fussy. But according to Banyard Game Birds owners, Clive and Erika Wylie, it’s a simple, wholesome protein, easy to cook and a pleasure to eat.

After a lifetime of agricultural experience in sheep, pigs and cattle, in Australia and Asia, Clive and Erika purchased Banyard Game Birds in 2013. Located on 6ha in Pittsworth, it’s one of Queensland’s few commercial quail farms.

“We’re “downsizing” with quails,” said Clive.

And yet the Wylie’s process around 3000 birds a week (150 000pa) and distribute them to restaurants around Queensland and retail outlets including Angliss Meats, The Paddock, and Toni’s Super Meats in Toowoomba.

“We also supply eggs to order including quail, goose and guinea fowl eggs,” he said.

“We have around 250 free range guinea fowl, and 120 geese all for the meat market but quail is our main focus.”

Banyard Game Birds is an integrated business with the whole production of quail from incubation to marketing and distribution, managed on site and it’s a relatively fast turnaround.

Incubation takes 17-days, the birds grow out for around 35-days. The onsite, accredited abattoir processes and packages the meat which is distributed around the state each week.

Quails range in size from 160g to 220g – now that’s a good serve. They are either sold whole or ‘boned out’ (butterflied or halved).

Erika Wylie knows a thing or two about cooking quail and she assures us there is nothing to fear.

“It is not complicated should not be considered an “exclusive” meat,” she said. “You can marinate it, slow cook it, roast it, or put it on the BBQ. Smoked quail is also excellent, but not appreciated,” she said. “Quail is also famous in Asian dishes such as crisp fried, Hoi Sin or salt and pepper quail. While pickled quail eggs go very well with a beer or tossed in a salad!”

If you’d like to know more about cooking quail – give Erika a call, she is always happy to offer advice.





Jim's Jerky

You've probably seen Jim's Jerky products in supermarkets around Australia, but did you know they are a local company? Let's just say that a visit to the Jim's Jerky outlet on the Warrego Highway at Charlton is very worthwhile!

The story of Jim's Jerky began 16 years ago, when Queensland graziers Jim and Cathie Tanner decided to start making beef jerky. In their first month they created 12kg volume of jerky and had to figure out how to sell it!

From their humble beginnings as a small butcher shop in Charlton, just west of Toowoomba, the manufacturing space has grown to incorporate four other shops on that strip and now sells to over 300 stockists around Australia.

The company now employs 11 fulltime and casual staff between the factory, retail and dispatch parts of the business.

Daughter and now CEO Emily Pullen joined the family business in 2015.

"The last five years have been one big learning curve," she said. "I've worked with my parents to grow the business together which has been a rewarding experience and we are still proudly 'family-owned and operated'."

Jim's Jerky manufactures a range of beef snacks from quality Australian beef including biltong and beer sticks, but they are most famous for their jerky.

Emily says their main client base is anyone who loves to snack.

"More and more people are thinking more about what they snack on and are looking for high protein, low sugar alternatives to chips and lollies. The push toward healthier snacks is also reflected in their minimal processing and focus on quality ingredients."

*flavours

Jim's Jerky started with two flavours: traditional South African spice called Safari and Chilli. The demand for variety grew and the company spent time sourcing the best spice providers to create seven delicious jerky flavours – with a couple of seasonal or limited-edition flavours too. They also offer a range of biltong and dried sausages in different sizes.





Environmental & Sustainable YOU CAN TASTE THE DIFFERENCE!

ON OUR DOORSTEP

In the age of authenticity, high-end markets insist on quality, truth and integrity and they'll happily pay for it. That's where 9Dorf Farms has found its winning advantage.

9Dorf Farms is a fourth-generation family-owned farming business that began in 1918 in the fertile plains of the Lockyer Valley. The family is passionate about sustainable farming, working with and improving the environment and producing from ethically raised animals.

Owner, Bronwyn Neuendorf, said two awards for environmental and sustainable farm practices confirmed they were on the right track.

"We believe that food should be produced as naturally as possible, grazing our animals in a free-range rotational system, which we call "Pasture Raised". We produce chicken and eggs in this rotational system for the high-end market."

Aquaculture

9Dorf Farms produces 30-50 tonne of Barramundi and Murray Cod in a recirculating aquaculture system on farm.

"Our fish are grown in top quality bore water that is filtered in a very natural process through the Lockyer Valley's underground

aquifer system. All fish water is recycled to use on crops," said Bronwyn.

"We believe we are on the leading edge of technology in the aquaculture industry and using this latest technology we are able to cut electricity usage by a third compared to open pond systems. All waste-water is used on lucerne crops with great success."

Superb quality and flavour mean that 9Dorf fish are sought after by Brisbane's top chefs.

Pastured Eggs

9Dorf Farms has four "chicken caravans" which are home to 1200 chickens. Laying hens sleep safely in the caravans at night but freely range all day in open paddocks. The vans are regularly moved around the farm ensuring these birds go well beyond the "free range" label.

Pastured Meat Chickens

9Dorf meat tastes like chicken is supposed to taste and not like the industrially mass-produced chickens at supermarkets. According to Bronwyn, there simply is no comparison.

"We believe it is vitally important for our meat chickens to have fresh air, sunshine and exercise," said Bronwyn. "Here at 9Dorf we want every animal to eat as much green grass as they want. When you buy a chicken from us you know exactly what you are getting "chicken" as it was meant to be."



Homestyle Bakeries *Pty Ltd*

MORE THAN BREAD, FOR MORE THAN 32 YEARS

Homestyle Bake is a vibrant Toowoomba family-owned business, a favourite by not only the Toowoomba community but communities throughout South East Queensland in which the business operates for its wholesale, retail, and fundraising products.

Sure, we know and love their breads and bread rolls, cakes

and donuts, pastries, buns and lamingtons, and many of us have happily helped raise money through Homestyle Bake “Fundraising Drives”. But there is so much more to this family-owned business than great bread and baked goods!

Let’s start with the Staff. Homestyle Bake employs around 180 people to manage the seven-day operation and produce their entire range of products fresh for delivery the next day throughout south east Queensland. The business understands the importance of staff training and developing people’s strengths, ensuring training and opportunities are accessible to all staff, all which contribute to a dedicated team of people.

Homestyle Bake produces close to 500 products, encompassing breads and bread rolls, sweet and savoury baked products: all packed with nutritious real ingredients from Australian growers. They are dedicated to purchasing local wherever possible helping to strengthen our regional economy. Their flour comes from wheat grown locally on the Darling Downs, the yeast is brewed in Toowoomba from Queensland molasses, and vegetables

are sourced from our region’s food bowls ensuring consumers receive only the purest of ingredients.

While the business still proudly bakes from generations-old recipes, the three Owner-Directors, Lindsay Weber, Brett Pascoe and David Nicoll are passionate about meeting current and new industry trends and providing health and wellbeing benefits through their baked foods. They maintain and continue to support the market growth of healthier foods for consumption and align these products to the Queensland Government’s Healthy Eating Guidelines.

The business proactively contributes to the wellness and sustainability of the environment and actively supports and further invests in the community, striving towards making a difference and leaving a positive footprint. Their initiatives follow the environment management concept of reduce, reuse and recycle.

Homestyle Bake’s next growth stage will bring exciting opportunities for their supply into the future, while supporting Toowoomba people and business, bringing additional employment to the region.





chocolate MADE FROM SCRATCH IN TOOWOOMBA

"It takes two weeks to make a block of chocolate from scratch."

Trevor Smith

National and international award certificates line the walls of the Metiisto Chocolate Factory in Harristown Toowoomba. It's confirmation that Trevor and Magda Smith's dream has become reality; the best quality chocolate in the world is made from scratch in Toowoomba.

"We used to sell more chocolate to the US and the UK than we did in Australia," Trevor said. "People in New York, North Carolina, London and Paris are eating Metiisto chocolate and learning about Toowoomba!"

"But then COVID hit us hard and stopped all exports. We were able to keep going locally thanks to the Toowoomba Farmers Market and our Australian retailers which really spread the word about our product."

Before you head over to the Toowoomba Farmers Market or The

Paddock to buy a block of Metiisto Chocolate, there's something important you need to know: In the same way that XO cognac is not for quaffing, Metiisto chocolate is not for gourmandising. This is premium chocolate, or couverture chocolate, and every mouthful is to be savoured.

"If you eat our chocolate and then eat a mass-produced chocolate, you'll notice the difference immediately!"

Premium chocolate has few ingredients – and they must be superior quality, the process takes time and it is a fussy temperature-controlled business. The result is small batches of an exquisite product.

Trevor began Metiisto Chocolate in 2012 in Sweden and started winning international awards in 2016. Wife, Magda, started in the company when they moved to Australia in 2018.

"We are chocolate-makers not chocolatiers," said Trevor. "We make blocks of premium couverture chocolate from ethically traded cocoa, rather than melting down European chocolate."

"Our chocolate has a high fat content which is what chocolatiers, chefs and bakers need to make amazing chocolates, desserts and baked goods."

Trevor has explored, experimented, and used cocoa beans from growers in Africa, South America, Central America and the Pacific Islands but has settled on beans grown on remote islands in Indonesia and the Solomon Islands.

"We pay between \$9000 to \$20,000 per tonne for the cocoa we use, big companies pay a mere \$3000 per tonne for 'origin unknown,'" he said. "About six tons of raw cocoa is delivered to us each year and we process around 200kg weight each week. We roast the beans grind the nibs to liquor, add sugar, grind some more, conche for a week, temper, mould and then wrap."

Cocoa husks are a by-product of chocolate making and Trevor gives them to local farmers for use in compost or to grow mushrooms.





pechey **DISTILLING CO**

The taste of summer 2020/21 was surely Pechey Distilling Co's citrusy Homestead Gin. But there were moments of ever-so-smooth 1868 Vodka, refreshing Spring Vodka cocktails and of course spiced Harvest sundowners. What a summer!

How we love provenance and it's there in every sip of Pechey Distilling Co's products – it's the stuff mass producers dream of.

For starters, Pechey Distilling Co is a perfect family collaboration: father – that's John O'Brien, is a mechanical engineer with a strong interest in regional tourism and events. Son – that's Ben Pechey-O'Brien, is a chemical engineer with a strong interest in cocktails. While mother Elizabeth O'Brien nee Pechey (yup, she's a real Pechey!) is a passionate gardener and perfect (COVID compliant) hostess.

But the whole Pechey story goes back to 1868 when Edward Wilmot Pechey first came to the Highfields/ Hampton area. Then in 1920 his son Alfred built the picturesque

homestead on Listening Ridge and it's been in the family ever since.

Over the years, the family planted a variety of citrus and fruit trees around the homestead and, lucky for us, in 1920 they planted cumquats which are the stars of the signature Homestead Gin.

To add to the story, John and Ben have created their slick modern distillery in the converted dairy – retaining the property's country charm.

Pechey Distilling Co's popularity has put the business years ahead of its original plan. They sold out of their first batch of Homestead Gin in days and are expecting to produce over 2000 bottles of this gin alone in 2021. Ben reckons we can expect some exciting new products this year including a surprise or two to tempt us.





Crows Nest SOFT DRINKS

Australia used to have hundreds of soft drink businesses – there was probably one in every town and even Toowoomba had three or four including Orford's, Osbornes and McNamara's.

But then the multinational soda companies came along and those small businesses, along with their secret recipes, were either bought out or couldn't compete and closed.

Crows Nest Soft drinks has defied the odds and kept bottling for 118 years.

The business has changed hands 10 times and current owners Murray Rosenberg and Alex Davidson make a good team. Murray is an

engineer, so he can fix things when they break and Alex is a baker, so he can follow recipes.

Moving the factory to the main street of Crows Nest and creating an eye-catching shopfront full of memorabilia and nostalgia has brought another tourism attraction to Crows Nest.

But, according to Murray Rosenberg, soft drink is a treat. It's not for hydration.

"If you're going to have that sweet treat, why not support a local business and buy a quality product with great flavours based on authentic vintage recipes."

fact

- * Current Owners: Murray Rosenberg and Alex Davidson
- * Crows Nest Cordials began in 1903
- * The factory produces 300,000+ bottles per year
- * Key ingredients are filtered (Toowoomba town DELETE) water, Bundaberg sugar and premium essences.
- * Top sellers - double sarsaparilla, creaming soda and ginger beer
- * Makes 16 soft drink flavours and 32 syrup flavours
- * Retail sales make up 40% of the total



Q & A

WITH MARK AND NATALIE HERLAAR OF TWIN PINE LIMES AND MANIFEST KOMBUCHA

How long have you been growing limes? We bought our first baby lime trees in 2011, after they had survived for three months, we planted a few more in early 2012. Twin Pines Limes, 500 trees and going strong. In 2013 our next order of trees brought the total to 4000. Over the past seven years it has been up and down but in 2020, without rain we decided to mulch out half of the orchard bringing it to a manageable 2000 trees.

What gave you the idea to make Kombucha? After brainstorming about how to use our precious water supply more productively, we thought 'Kombucha' - which was something we had been brewing in the family for some 20 years. Water and limes fresh from our farm - Manifest Kombucha was birthed.

How did you go about it? After doing some research, and applying to council for a licence to produce a beverage on site, we were pointed in the direction of Jeff at Darling Fresh Consultancy to help

up with courses, compliances, structuring and all that was needed to help us get up and running.

What's the turnaround time on a batch of Kombucha? We have a continuous brew going, so our product is produced weekly with fresh fruit for flavouring.

How much do you make and where do you sell it? We are currently producing around 95 litres a week and selling predominantly at the Toowoomba Farmers Market with our fresh limes as well. We recently acquired labels so we are starting to supply a few local businesses: Dani at The Paddock Darling Downs and the new WholeLife Pharmacy & Healthfoods Highfields.

Do you have plans to expand? We hope Manifest Kombucha will thrive and we are looking forward to seeing where it goes. We will be expanding our brewing facilities and we might downsize the orchard again so we are more productive with less water.



Lime

Bitter Lime

Mojito

Ginger

"You add the Sun!" Rum!



FOUR BROTHERS *brewing*

After almost two years of careful planning Adrian Cubit opened the doors of 4 Brothers Brewing in April 2017. "Coming up with the name was fairly simple, I've got three brothers, and I thought that by calling the business 4 Brothers Brewing, it might motivate my brothers to get involved in the company. But that didn't really eventuate.

"Having a limited budget, we opened the brewery with a pretty small system. Just a 200L single Vessel brewhouse and 525L fermenters and we were able to start selling some beer. There were a few struggles in that first year, but we were able to grow fairly well

from that low base. Even during Covid we have been able to maintain our staff numbers and expand our product range, especially our takeaway options by introducing 500mL cans.

"We've managed to win a few medals along the way, but our main focus is to brew a good variety of beers that we and our customers want to drink"

4 Brothers Brewing is also putting the finishing touches on plans for expansion. Adrian confirmed that he has signed a lease which will see a move into a new venue, The Brewhouse, on Margaret Street in the Toowoomba CBD, with an expected opening in April 2021.

BUSH *tucker*

Come on a journey through native Australia with Native Oz Bushfoods. It's an Aboriginal family owned and operated business online, at the Toowoomba Farmers Market and at specialist delicatessens.

The quality of the range of sauces, relishes, jams, spices and salts is exceptional. Try lemon myrtle and wattleseed for next level divine shortbread biscuits; Quandong Chilli & Native Lime Sauce is just about the best dipping sauce on the market. Davidson Plum Relish is going to elevate any cheese platter while the range of bush blend native salts should be kitchen staples ready to improve any meat or vegetable dish. Can you tell we love them!

Check out Native Oz Bushfoods' full range of delicious salts, spices, jams, sauces and preserves at www.nativeozbushfoods.com.au/





RESTAURANTS *and cafes*



**WINNER TWO
CATEGORIES AT THE
FOCUS HR BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS 2020**

Rosalie House Vineyard and Cellar Door Restaurant

Winner of both Tourism and Hospitality Categories at the 2020 Focus HR Business Excellence Awards

Rosalie House is only 15 to 20 minutes from the Toowoomba CBD and yet it feels like world's away: a real escape to the country.

Located on the Thompson family property at Lilyvale, near Meringandan, Rosalie House has an amazing view. It's also where Doyle, Vicki and their three daughters Renee, Teshla and Emily hand-planted grape vines in 2005. According to Renee, it seemed like the perfect location for a restaurant.

"We are one of the few wineries in our area that also has a fully functional restaurant and I believe that sets us apart," she said. "We are often a place of celebration and we love helping our guests have a memorable experience. Our food is wholesome, fresh and delicious and pairs perfectly with our home-grown wines.

"We definitely offer an escape to the country but not just for Toowoomba locals. We have visitors from Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast each week. They hear about the food, wine and location and they are prepared to drive to enjoy the experience."

The Finch, The Finch2 And Icooked

Edwina Farquhar's Bachelor of Business Management (Marketing) and years of experience at Tesco.com in the UK and Dominos is perfect for her current life and future business plans. Together with husband Dan, the Farquhars owned the Westridge Dominos for many years before starting The Finch Café, iCooked and now The Finch Top of the Range.

What inspired you to open The Finch in Toowoomba?

Our Domino's Franchise taught us a huge amount about running a business and it was great to have the head office support, but the hours were very difficult with our young family and we wanted more control and input on product, marketing, menu etc. We took an opportunity to sell our franchise and created The Finch. We'd always felt there was a gap in the market for our offering and five years later, with our customers visiting every day, voting with their feet and hard earned money - I believe we were right.

What makes The Finch special?

The people – our team and our customers! For me it's like one big extended family. The building has great bones and a lovely feel. I love the space and when you mix in awesome food and coffee you have a winning combo.

The Finch Top of the Range

We have been ready to open a second site but waiting for the right opportunity. When the site next to the old Weis's became available, we couldn't say no. The Finch Top of the Range will open seven days like The Finch downtown but it will also have a Pizzeria open from Wed-Sun as the space lends itself perfectly to a family friendly offering.

iCooked

icooked won 2019 Micro Retail Business of the Year at Toowoomba Chamber BEA: great recognition for Dan, Edwina and their hardworking staff. iCooked.com.au is currently for sale so the Farquhars can focus on The Finch Top of The Range and spend more time with the kids before they fly the coup.





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OzHarvest

HERITAGE BANK SPONSORS FOOD RESCUE GROUP OZHARVEST

Heritage Bank has launched a national partnership with leading food rescue organisation OzHarvest that will fund the delivery of 200,000 meals a year to people in need – making Heritage one of their “Awesome Partners”.

Heritage’s partnership will support OzHarvest’s national food rescue operations, helping to deliver an additional 200,000 meals a year, which equates to saving nearly 70,000 kilograms of food from landfill, and preventing 140,000 kilograms of greenhouse emissions being released into the atmosphere.

The partnership will also provide valuable support to grow OzHarvest’s local operations in the Toowoomba region. OzHarvest has boosted its food rescue and food relief services in Toowoomba from two days a week to five days a week.

Since starting Toowoomba operations in 2018, OzHarvest has delivered nearly 600,000 meals across a network of 21 charities. In addition to the powerful community benefit, this has prevented more than 350,000 kilograms of greenhouse emissions being released by diverting food from landfill.

Heritage CEO Peter Lock said supporting the great work that OzHarvest does across Australia was an ideal way for the bank to deliver on its values.

“Heritage is a people-focused organisation. Our sponsorship philosophy is all about providing a helping hand to those who need it most and OzHarvest definitely does that,” Mr Lock said.

“Not only do they provide food to people who might otherwise go hungry they also



encourage greater environmental sustainability and awareness.”

The two year partnership includes opportunities for staff to volunteer for OzHarvest activities and to participate in other OzHarvest events.



SECLUDED, SPECTACULAR HISTORIC GABBINBAR *Homestead*

Everything about historic Gabbinbar Homestead is exceptional. The romance of a bygone era meets contemporary sophistication wrapped in stunning grounds with magical gardens and sweeping lawns. You just know that any event here will be outstanding.

For 148 years, the historic Gabbinbar Homestead was a private residence used by the governors of Queensland as their summer resort. In 2012, the homestead began hosting weddings, offering a magnificent estate for couples to use as their exclusive home for their special day - complete with award-winning food, exceptional service, and breathtaking ceremony and reception locations.

State and national catering awards speak for themselves as head chef Bernhard Kohlhuber continues to inspire his team of talented professionals. Their philosophy is all about quality fresh ingredients sourced from the best suppliers – and luckily for Toowoomba they are mostly found locally.



WHERE ELSE WILL YOU FIND LOCAL PRODUCE IN *Toowoomba?*

Many local businesses are throwing their support behind the region's growers, producers and makers. You can do your bit too by choosing local at every opportunity...



Miller's Meats



Westridge Fruit & Vegetables



Monkey Business Catering

DARLING FRESH *consulting*

Let's suppose you have a great recipe that you'd like to commercialise and turn into a business. According to Jeff Schultheiss of Darling Fresh Consulting, it's one thing to have an idea but another thing to make it a success.



"With so many factors affecting the success of food development and innovation, it can be hard to plan and implement each part of the project perfectly," he said. "From branding and concept development to formulation, packaging design and shelf-life, costings and viability, procurement, production scale-up, accreditation and launch through distribution, there are so many things to get right.



"Darling Fresh Consulting offers support by understanding these challenges and implementing them for success for example

"The Herlaar family had developed a fantastic product called Manifest Kombucha and were serious about commercialising. We helped them with a Quality Management Plan, securing a Food licence and setting the foundation for future scale-up growth.

"Then there's 2020 Food and Beverage finalist, the Upple

- it's an apple in a bottle, fresh with all the peel and fibre of an apple. Far better than just juice, it's 99.9% apple and the rest is Vitamin C. This innovation from a prominent Stanthorpe Apple Grower needed full process scale-up commercialisation support as well as Quality system implementation with process validation, and we were there to help. Now available in grocers across Queensland and New South Wales with sales growing.

"GF Oats in Highfields has been growing steadily and developing products complimentary to their gluten free oats. But when there were challenges launching their ANZAC biscuits, we helped find an alternate local Toowoomba co-manufacturer and implement the transition for success in market.

"We have so many food opportunities in this region, with many people and businesses giving it a red hot go. It's exciting to see so much activity in this space!"



Darling Fresh
CONSULTING



Cooking Classes

People LOVE to learn new skills – in fact they're desperate for it! Have a look at the local cooking classes below but get in early because they do sell out fast.

Foodie Shots

Kat Lynn of Foodie Shots runs a variety of classes including Food Photography for cooks and food bloggers. She also has monthly classes on topics like Jams & Preserves, One Chook Wonders, Learn to Make Pasta and more. Check out the calendar at www.foodieshots.com.au/cooking-workshops/

Awassi Sheep Cheesery

Get a bunch of friends together and spend a day at the farm in Grantham where you'll learn to milk the sheep and then make your own cheese or perhaps some sheep milk soap. By arrangement with www.awassiqueensland.com.au or with Verity Rose – see below.

Verity Rose

Verity Rose runs all kinds of cooking classes from cake making and decorating with Mary Reid to lemon butter as well as craft classes. Visit Verity Rose on Facebook.

Caution! Wedding Cake on Board

By Mary Reid

Available at The Party Hut in Toowoomba and online.



Is it really a celebration without cake? At birthdays, weddings and anniversaries we come together in a sublime moment of shared sugary indulgence and we LOVE it. How cakes look (and taste) is part of the ceremony which is why cake decorating has evolved into a highly skilled, highly creative wonderland of possibilities.

Toowoomba has an extraordinarily bright and successful cake decorating community mostly due to the mentoring of Mary Reid, one of the industry's most lauded, most enthusiastic and most loved decorators.

Her recently published book, Caution Wedding Cake on Board, gives us a peek into the close-knit, very sweet community of cake decorators. It is somewhat autobiographical (from a cake perspective); trade secrets are revealed (occasionally) and there are sensational recipes to follow (in a separate booklet). But mostly, it is highly entertaining, informative and educational account of Mary's 50 years in the cake business.



Bruno and Catherine Loubet of Willowvale Cooking School
Top, Willowvale Cooking School Miso Eggplant dish



Willowvale Cooking School in Toowoomba

info@willowvalecookingschool.com

Celebrated French chefs, Catherine and Bruno Loubet, have brought their cooking school to Toowoomba through Kiron Barui and Wearing Memories. Classes are super indulgent and all things French: cookery and champagne. But you'll also learn about Bruno's sustainable gardening and his flexitarian lifestyle – which is a more plant-based with smaller amounts of quality meat. Keep an eye out on the website for four to six cooking schools a year.



THAT IMAGE MAKES ME *hungry!*

Kat Lynn and Foodie Shots

Creating effective visual content across multiple social media platforms is serious currency in the foodie world. Kat Lynn – Owner of Foodie Shots states there's so much more to great food photography than whipping out your smartphone and crossing your fingers.

Foodie Shots knows the importance of professional images. She channels her design experience and her passion for food, into creating images that make people want to lick their screens in anticipation.

"I love food, and I love photography, they are both so emotional," Kat explained. "My focus is showcasing food in a light designed to delight the senses and reach through the lens to make a connection."

Confirming her passion is on target, a client returned six months after their first visit as they commented that they needed her to capture their remaining products. Why? They realised the only products that were selling on their website, were those with photos taken by Foodie Shots.

Another customer credits Foodie

Shots' photography, coupled with new label designs by local business, Vigour Graphics, for helping them go from a hobby to a business and achieve international exposure.

That's the kind of testimonial you really can't buy and is a true testament to Kat's skill and enthusiasm. Still, Kat sees Foodie Shots as more than just an opportunity for professional photography.

As COVID has highlighted, digital media platforms are powerful business tools, making unforgettable images a pivotal point of success. Kat understands this and knows by improving your photography skills is one of the easiest ways to not only achieve amazing images, but also to grow your business.

"As a business owner myself, I wear

many hats. However, if I can help small businesses to learn some of the photography skills to tell their brand story, then they will benefit, and so will our Toowoomba community."

With this in mind, Foodie Shots run Photography Skills Workshops in their Highfields studio and online, tailored to help small businesses expand their skill-set and grow their digital footprint.

But no foodie can avoid an opportunity to talk about food, so Kat also runs monthly cooking immersions with local food specialists. Just another chance for her to share her passion and support local business.

Visit her website www.foodieshots.com.au or Facebook page for details on her photography packages and workshops, or to indulge her more delicious classes.



THE TOOWOOMBA CHAMBERS FUTURE LEADERS

The Future Leaders Advisory Group is excited to welcome 2021 with some fantastic events, professional development and ultimately investing in the next generation of business and community leaders. We are also thrilled to welcome two new FLAG members into the leadership of Chamber being Shelley Burchett and April Lancaster-Smith. They will join Jacob Carlile and Peter Rowe for the 2021 year. We also wish to thank publicly Jason Doig and Amy Thompson for their distinguished service to FLAG as they step down leaving the group in a strong position.

We finished 2020 on a high at the Focus HR Business Excellence Award and crowned another talented Future Leader of the Year in Lauren Janson-Roberts, a hard-working local entrepreneur. She now joins the esteemed company of previous winners Jason Doig and Catherine Ardi who have achieved business success in their own fields. Jason most recently promoted to Vice President of JJ Richards American operations, and Cat's continued successful growth of Excavation Equipment under her leadership. We feel the Future Leader of the Year Award is the preminent accolade for aspiring leaders and highlights the depth and breadth of talent locally.

Keep a look out for our upcoming events, engage with us on our social media, and reach out to stand out!!!



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT REVITALISATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CBD-RAC is a Toowoomba Chamber initiative designed to facilitate and advocate for the transformation of the CBD of Toowoomba. It was born out of concerns raised by small businesses and was identified as a priority by the Toowoomba Chamber in the 2020 Local Elections advocacy document.

The CDB-RAC has undertaken detailed consultation with businesses including retail, industry, hospitality, accommodation and professional services and found there are common themes across all sectors including the role of the CBD, public assets interventions, activation, car parking, connections and brand.

Having considered the matters raised by the CBD business community, the CBD RAC has identified three priorities to help breathe life back into the district. These are: increase foot traffic in the CBD; rebrand the CBD and invest in public assets.

Examples of some of the activities discussed to achieve these priorities include de-risking inner city living, incentivizing small business operators to fill empty tenancies and the creation of a lively and safe streetscape to enable a 24-hour economy.

In addition, it is hoped that the CBD will become the home of food, art, culture and boutique retail with better car parking facilities as well as better walkways and bike paths from the surrounding suburbs and using the existing rail line to move people across the city.



FOOD & AGRI
NETWORK

FOOD ADVISORY GROUP

Toowoomba and the Darling Downs is a foodie hot spot which celebrates abundance. The mouth-watering truth is that food growers, producers and manufacturers make up a large percent of our local business community and Toowoomba Chamber's FAN (Food Advisory Network) plays an important role in bringing the industry together.

FAN is all about creating links for food producers and the wider business community. It takes "buy local" to the next level of business-to-business transactions.

This year FAN will set about fulfilling goals and objectives that were difficult to achieve in 2020. The committee has a number of events planned to showcase our local food industry – some big, and some smaller.

In the meantime, we want to get to know all our food industry businesses so that we can include you in our activities. Please make yourself known to Toowoomba Chamber and let's start a conversation about you.

Join the Food and Agri Committee at our exclusive

High Country Harvest Lunch

ON 14 MAY FROM
8.30AM UNTIL 4PM

At Bunyconnellen featuring
local produce prepared by
celebrated chef Amanda Hinds



A LEGISLATIVE WHIRLWIND: RECENT CHANGES TO THE INSOLVENCY LAW LANDSCAPE

The financial impact of COVID-19 on individuals and businesses was a real catalyst for a raft of insolvency law amendments, some temporary and some permanent.

The key temporary measures, which applied from 25 March 2020 to 31 December 2020, included:

- relief for company directors from personal liability for insolvent trading;
- the minimum debt for creditor's statutory demands increased from \$2,000 to \$20,000;
- the minimum judgment debt for bankruptcy notices increased from \$5,000 to \$20,000; and
- the timeframe for debtors to respond to creditor's statutory demands and bankruptcy notices was increased from 21 days to 6 months.

The most recent changes, which have been in place since 1 January 2021, include:

- A.** the **Bankruptcy Notice Threshold** has increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000. This means that only creditors who have obtained judgment against an individual debtor for at least \$10,000 can issue a bankruptcy notice to the debtor. This is the first step in forcing a debtor into bankruptcy;
- B.** a **Simplified Liquidation Process** is available to companies that have total liabilities of less than \$1 million and aims to reduce the cost of liquidation for smaller businesses by cutting down the steps a liquidator would usually have to take in a "traditional liquidation" as follows:
- i. no reports to ASIC;
 - ii. no meetings of creditors;
 - iii. varied requirements as to preference payments; and
 - iv. ASIC or creditors cannot appoint or involve a reviewing/provisional liquidator;
- C.** a **Small Business Debt Restructuring (SBDP) Process** is available to companies that:
- i. have total debts of less than \$1 million;
 - ii. are up to date with all ATO lodgements;
 - iii. are up to date with all employee entitlements; and
 - iv. have no directors or former directors who have used the SBDP process in the last 7 years.

The aim of the SBDP process is to allow an eligible business to propose a plan to its creditors under which the business will pay off its existing debts over time while continuing to operate as normal under the control of its directors and avoid liquidation.

D. **Additional Temporary Restructuring Relief (TRR)**, which is available to companies that are eligible for the SBDP process and directors of those companies who seek to appoint a small business restructuring practitioner (**SBRP**). If, during the period 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021, a company's director/s:

- i. make the required declaration about the company's eligibility for TRR (see ASIC Form EX07);
- ii. publish notice of the making of that declaration on ASIC's website; and
- iii. give ASIC a copy of that declaration no later than 5 business days after it is made,

then for three months from the date that the declaration is published:

- creditors of the company cannot take the first step in forcing the company into liquidation by issuing a creditor's statutory demand to the company unless owed at least \$20,000 (as opposed to the usual \$2,000 minimum);
- if a creditor does serve a creditor's statutory demand on the company, then the company has 6 months to respond (instead of the usual 21-day timeframe); and
- the company's directors are relieved from personal liability for any insolvent trading that occurred in the ordinary course of business before any appointment of an administrator or liquidator of the company during the period of safe harbour protection.

As the various forms of government assistance like JobKeeper end, it is important for businesses to know how these recent changes to personal and corporate insolvency legislation may affect them.



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Going Green

with Cr Nancy Sommerfield

How your business can help save the planet.

“Does your business have expanded polystyrene (EPS) in supply packaging? It’s such a pain - environmentally and storage wise...

Now you can feel better about having to use this packaging as EPS recycling is available at no charge for domestic customers and small volumes for commercial customers at the Greater Toowoomba Waste Management Facility - GTWMF or O’Mara Road - whatever name you have for it - or even ‘the dump’

although in my view O’Mara Road is a bit posh to be called that!

The foam goes in one end and comes out a squishy sausage the other end which folds into a brick like form which is then reused in the building industry. Foam takes up an enormous amount of airspace in our landfill so this is a great start to reducing that and repurposing. Council hopes to expand this recycling product to other facilities.

I have a video on the process on my Cr Nancy Sommerfield Facebook page, dated 4 June 2020. It’s well worth a look!



EPS materials that can be recycled include appliance packaging, fruit & veggie boxes and similar products that are free of all labels, stickers, shapes, strappings, packing films, plastic wrap, hard plastics, adhesives etc.



Foam cups, meat/food packaging trays, takeaway food containers, packing “peanuts”, bean bag fill etc are **not recyclable and must be disposed of** in your kerbside general waste bin (red lid) or as residual/land filled waste at your local WMF.

EPS materials can be identified by the No. 6 Plastics Identification Code (PIC)."



From L to R Don Bryce, DOE and Cr Nancy Sommerfield. Don from Downs Office Equipment had been looking for a solution like this for sometime and was most appreciative that Council had found an environmentally friendly solution for their foam packaging waste.

CHAMBER UPCOMING EVENTS

March

- 3 Winning Government Business and Building Business Confidence
Burke & Wills Hotel 12 – 4pm
- 10 NBN Breakfast
The Oaks 7am – 8.30am
- 17 B@D Grand Central
5.30pm – 7.00pm
- 25 Future Leaders
Autumn Social

April

- 2-4 Easter in the CBD
- 21 B@D Toowoomba Anglican School
2 Campbell Street
5.30pm to 7.00pm
- 28 Opposition Leader Breakfast
- TBC Members Only Golf Day

May Small Business Month

- 13 RSM Budget Breakfast
- 14 High Country Hamlet Lunch and Farm Tours
Bunnyconnellen 8.30am to 4pm

plus Mark your diaries:

Chamber Tourism Business Lunch.....03 Jun
Toowoomba Chamber Race Day.....03 Jul
Focus HR BEA.....16 Oct

You’ll find more information about Chamber events on our website, on social media and through emails.



LEADING TEAMS TRAINING.

Managers are usually in their roles because they are an asset to the business, but too often they don't get much guidance on how to lead their team.

Our series of practical, interactive two-hour workshops are ideal for supervisors and managers across any industry.

Covering topics like Managing Poor Performance, Delegation and Follow Up and Creating a High Performance Culture, these affordable sessions are also able to be delivered in-house for your management team.

SMALL BUSINESS GROUP STRATEGY WORKSHOP.

Ambitious goals are powerful, but setting them can be quite daunting.

Our two day Small Business Group Workshop brings together owners and senior managers from five businesses in non-competing industries to define the direction for their business in the coming 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.

Enable your leadership team and build a bold strategy for your business with our practical, interactive workshops.

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