

**HD      Sunshine Coast business shines throughout 2014****WC**      1,300 words**PD**      22 December 2014**SN**      Sunshine Coast Daily**SC**      APNSCD**ED**      Main**PG**      8**LA**      English**CY**      Copyright 2014 APN Newspapers Pty Ltd. All Rights Reserved**LP**

Our companies and shops set the standard, writes Rebecca Marshall.

business year in review

**TD**

THIS may have been the United Nations International Year of Family Farming, Small Island Developing States and Crystallography, but for Sunshine Coast businesses, 2014 was the year of milestones.

Several local businesses celebrated memorable moments this year, including two decades or more of trade, significant national award wins, expansions and mergers.

The year began, as it often does, with solid hope for a recovery in confidence and spending. That did not translate to reality for some pockets of the market in what was still a tough year.

Interest rates stayed low, jobs remained hard to get, Joe Hockey hit a mason's dozen of brick walls with his Federal Budget and it took a while for an uncertain electorate to understand the new landscape once the dust settled from the September 2013 election.

The year has ended with perhaps even stronger and more realistic hope for recovery, buoyed especially by the astounding development at the Kawana Hospital precinct and a rebounding property market.

Next year brings a State election, hopefully some movement on the Maroochydore CBD and the long-awaited opening of the revamped Big Top in Maroochydore.

And business will be asking itself what will happen to Sekisui, light rail and Clive Palmer in 2015.

January

Mayor Mark Jamieson writes a column in the Daily about the importance of confidence, using the Aussies' Ashes victory as an example. He highlighted November 2013 housing approvals which rose 150%, ahead of a 7% increase in Brisbane and a 92% increase on the **Gold** Coast. He said there were encouraging signs like low interest rates and wages growth to deliver a positive trend line.

Mini Movers founder Mike O'Hagan speaks at an Innovation Centre Boardroom Briefing about how his business started with \$200 and a ute to one that has 350 staff and an annual turnover of \$21 **million**.

Staff from Mapleton business Australian Farm Forestry rub shoulders with Geoffrey Rush, Naomi Watts, Cate Blanchett, John Travolta and Jacki Weaver at G'Day USA events in LA and New York. The team was there to provide Australian native flowers for table centrepieces.

Accounting **firm** Poole Group signs on as a partner with the Innovation Centre, offering taxation and investment advice to the IC's start-up companies.

POMO Creative unveils its beautiful natural timber studio set among the Rosemount forest. The owners of the digital marketing agency, Lisa Harrison and Stephen Burton, would go on to win a number of awards for their sustainable building design.

Bli Bli Butchery owner Charlie Van Beelen announces plans to sell his award-winning shop after nine years.

February

Fresh PR and Cafe Envy each celebrate 10 years in business.

Community transport organisation ComLink offers 12 new jobs to the market, thanks to a \$1.2 **million** Home and Community Care funding boost.

SJW Mushrooms installs what is believed to be the biggest **solar** system on the Sunshine Coast – a \$100,000 60kW behemoth with 240 **solar** panels. The move was triggered by blackouts at the Chevallum Farm, costing thousands in lost stock.

The Rose Room in Noosaville celebrates a successful first year in business, owner Anne Flack putting the good start down to the mobile phone-free experience of drinking tea from fine **china**.

Noosa ex-litigation lawyer Kym Foster launches the Share Shop, an online barter website allowing people to trade products, talents and services. Share Shop would go on to feature on Sunrise and other national media.

More than 140 people attend Aitken Legal's Eat Drink and Be Happy annual networking event at Fish on Parkyn.

Go Transit Media Group wins a lucrative contract to "wrap" Darwin buses in advertising.

The National Beverage Group is launched, with a head office in Peregian and a new range of soft drinks under the Great Australian Beverage **Company** name. NBG handles distribution of brands like Lipton iced tea, Red Bull and others.

Iconic Mooloolaba Esplanade store Zara's Shoes celebrates 25 years in business.

Demi International Beauty Academy moves to new premises on Plaza Pd, almost doubling in size.

March

Sunshine Coast Skydivers celebrate 20 years in business. Owner Tibor Glesk is still jumping, preparing for the national and world championships.

Coast building **company** owner Sam Sheppard is inducted into the Australian Businesswomen's Network Hall of Fame, joining Maggie Beer and Liz Davenport.

Engineer John Norden retires after a 34-year career building some of the Coast's most recognisable buildings, including Platinum Noosa, Netanya Noosa, Coolum Beach Resort, Bali Hai Noosa Heads and others.

The old WOW Sight and Sound site at The Zone on Wises Rd transforms into the Coast's first IGA Marketplace store, featuring a deli, in-house butchery, florist and coffee bar.

Sunshine Antenna Service opens bigger new premises on Fishermans Rd after 36 years in business.

Financial planner Mark Oliphant goes from advising 70-year-olds on retirement savings to owning a chain of skin-piercing stores with grand plans to roll out SKINKandy franchises across the country.

Shaun Levings sells a 50% **stake** in the global surf tours business he started, World Surfaris, to Sunshine Coast man John Finlay, retired from Macquarie Bank.

Harvey World Travel undergoes a massive rebrand to helloworld affecting offices in Kawana and Buderim.

Trade Secret opens its first homewares affiliate, Home Secret, at Home Central Kawana. The move creates 10 jobs.

April

Leading commercial property agency Property Only merges with Ray White Commercial Maroochydore.

**Gold** Recruitment manager Sam Johnson wins entry into a female entrepreneurship course only available to business owners with a turnover of \$7 **million** or more.

Young Coast entrepreneur Brock Sykes discusses the success of his online sock retailing business Odd Pears, which sells socks in threes: two matching, and one odd.

Sunshine Coast Council's new economic development manager Paul Martins lists implementing the regional economic development strategy as his top priority.

Cooloom business Aussie Soles sends 20,000 pairs of thongs to under-privileged communities in Africa.

The buzz around the new Ocean St dining precinct begins with the opening of Tony Kelly's new spot Hello Harry.

May

Former Beirut taxi driver George Bou Mansour opens Middle Eastern restaurant Zahtar in Ocean St.

Airmail founder Ben Duncan steps down as CEO, but stays on as chief technology officer.

Red **Energy** Promotions celebrates 10 years in business.

Maroochydore McDonald's manager Rebecca Wilks returns from the chain's global conference in Florida, having won the \$15,000 Charlie Bell Scholarship. She was one of 12 ambassadors chosen to attend the conference, and the only one from Australia.

Airport bus transfer businesses Sunair and Col's Shuttle **merge** to form Con-X-ion.

Claire De Lune and partner Zeke Rowland sell their Mooloolaba cafe The Velo Project to David and Sarah Nash. Claire and Zeke want to concentrate on their other venture, The Factory.

Megan Meineke launches Little Harvest, selling the Fresh Squeezed system of blending and storing baby food for on-the-go meals.

SunnyKids launches its P100 club, partnering with 10 businesses who each agree to direct debit \$100 per month to the children's charity to fund its operational needs.

Bill Gates' right-hand man in Australia, Daniel Petre, discusses the digital future at a forum arranged by Mal Brough. He was inspired by pitches from local tech companies.

Community Solutions manager Natasha Read abseils down the face of Brisbane's **Gold** Tower, dressed as Batman's sidekick Robin, to raise money for Save The Children.

Buderim Ginger announces a share offer, putting a \$10.35 **million** target on its rights issue.

TO BE CONTINUED IN TOMORROW'S SUNSHINE COAST DAILY

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