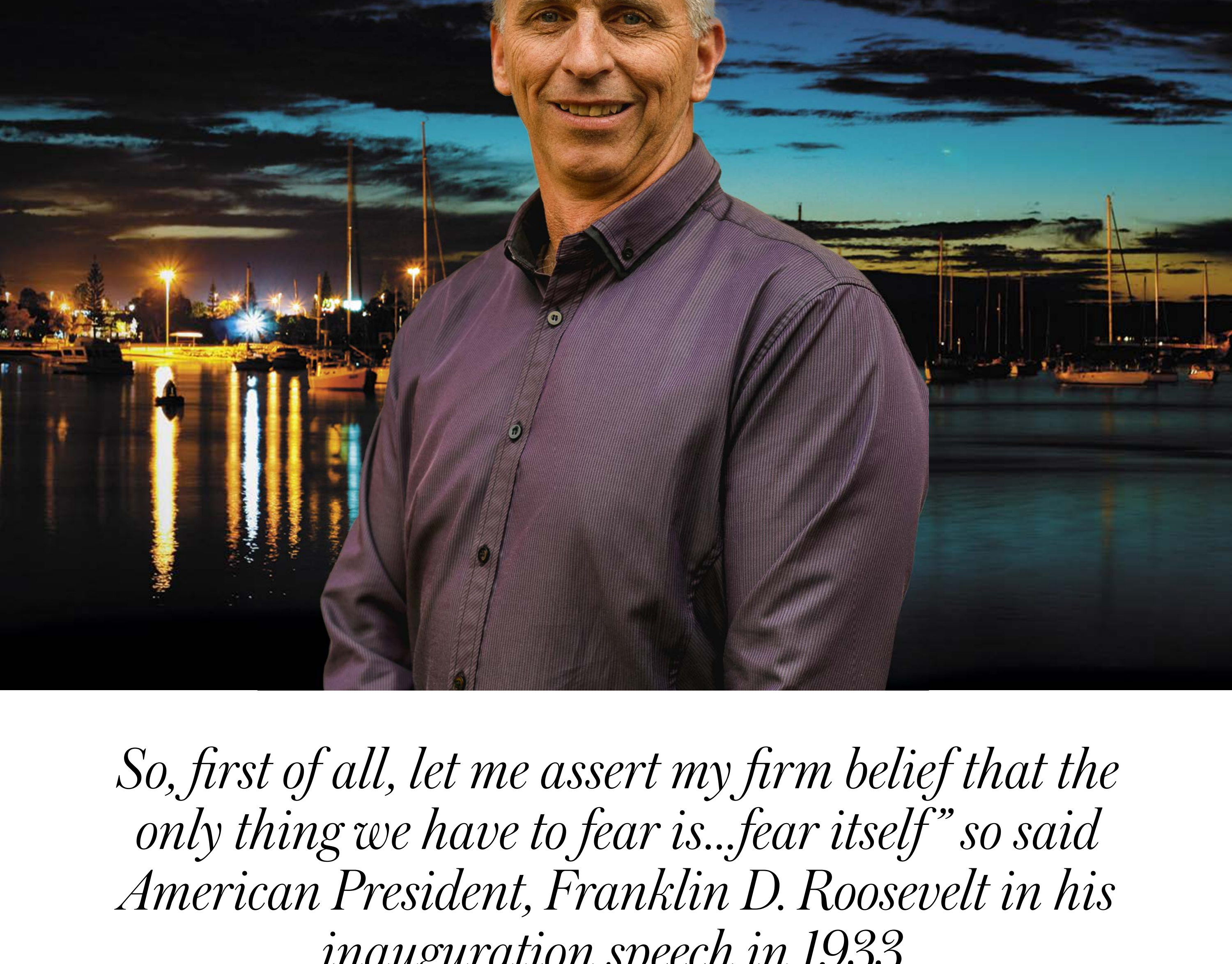


Minding your Business



So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is...fear itself” so said American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt in his inauguration speech in 1933.

The current COVID19 pandemic and worldwide media driven panic needs to be tempered with some cool heads and strong leadership within the private sector, the community and all levels of Government.

There is no doubt that the COVID19 virus is serious, will continue to spread and is resulting in the loss of life around the world and in Australia. However, overreaction and panic will only exacerbate the problem resulting in unintended consequences such as social unrest and elements of martial law needing to be enforced.

According to the Governments’ medical advice the majority of people who contract the COVID19 virus will have a mild illness and they will fully recover. Those at risk such the elderly and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions will need to be hospitalised and possibly treated in intensive care facilities.

The reality is that most people will need to continue going to work and carrying on their lives as near to normal as possible under the circumstances.

In Australia we are extremely fortunate to produce enough food to feed 75 million people or about 3 times our own requirements. There is no need for hoarding or panic buying which has thus far only served to create greater confusion, uncertainty and fear especially amongst the more vulnerable members of the community.

Responsible adults, business leaders, Government officials and representatives can calm this panic by example and by continuing to communicate that;

- We have more than adequate food supplies,
- We should demonstrate some resilience and stoicism, and
- Avoid perpetuating unfounded rumours on social media platforms.

In response to COVID19 and in recent days it is noteworthy that:

- The Morrison Government has announced a ban on gatherings over 500 people outdoors and a ban on non-essential gatherings over 100 people indoors,
- Australian borders are effectively closed to any overseas travellers not citizens or residents,
- Any returning overseas travellers must self-isolate for a period of 14 days,
- These new measures are aimed at delaying the spread of the virus, lowering the risk to vulnerable groups and reducing the impact on the health system,
- The Morrison Government & NSW Government both announced stimulus measures including significant relief for small business – go to: www.portchamber.com.au .

- Business Australia (formerly NSW Business Chamber) has provided detailed advice on their web site for all business and their staff, go to www.businessaustralia.com and click on the link the top of the Web Site.

Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce is recommending that local businesses:

- Have the necessary plans in place to operate as normal as possible,
- Keep up to date and informed with any new developments around COVID19 and amend operational plans accordingly,
- Communicate with staff and customers to reassure them that you have appropriate plans in place,
- Increase hygiene practices and awareness in the workplace,
- Review and communicate your OH&S and sick leave policies to all employees.

There is light at the end of the tunnel with news that Brisbane based Doctors have successfully treated the virus with a combination of well known and approved HIV (Kaletra) and malaria drugs (chloroquine).

Further trials on patients in hospitals around Australia have been foreshadowed with this welcome news. In addition, Melbourne based researches have had success tracking the immune responses to the virus which is a critical step in developing a vaccine. Many countries around the world are also well advanced in developing a vaccine for COVID19 with the US having announced a fast tracking of their efforts.

As a community and a nation we have managed to survive past World Wars, a depression, recessions, Spanish Flu, drought, floods and the recent bushfires. By looking to those past generations and experiences for inspiration and by working together, keeping our heads and looking out for each other we can come through this crisis and see off COVID19 as well.

Remember to support your local businesses – buy local products & services & holiday in our beautiful area.

PORT MACQUARIE CHAMBER COVID19 BUSINESS HELPLINE:

For business assistance and information on available Government assistance, loan repayment relief and other financial support.

Port Macquarie Chamber Office - 65834412

Website: www.portchamber.com.au

Business Australia website:

www.businessaustralia.com.au

Recent key announcements:

- Banks to freeze loan repayments for up to 6 months – call your Bank Manager to apply
- State Govt to waive payroll tax for 3 months