

**The Australian  
Friday 20/07/2018**

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CUT STRAIGHT TO YOUR NEWS

press clip

THE AUSTRALIAN

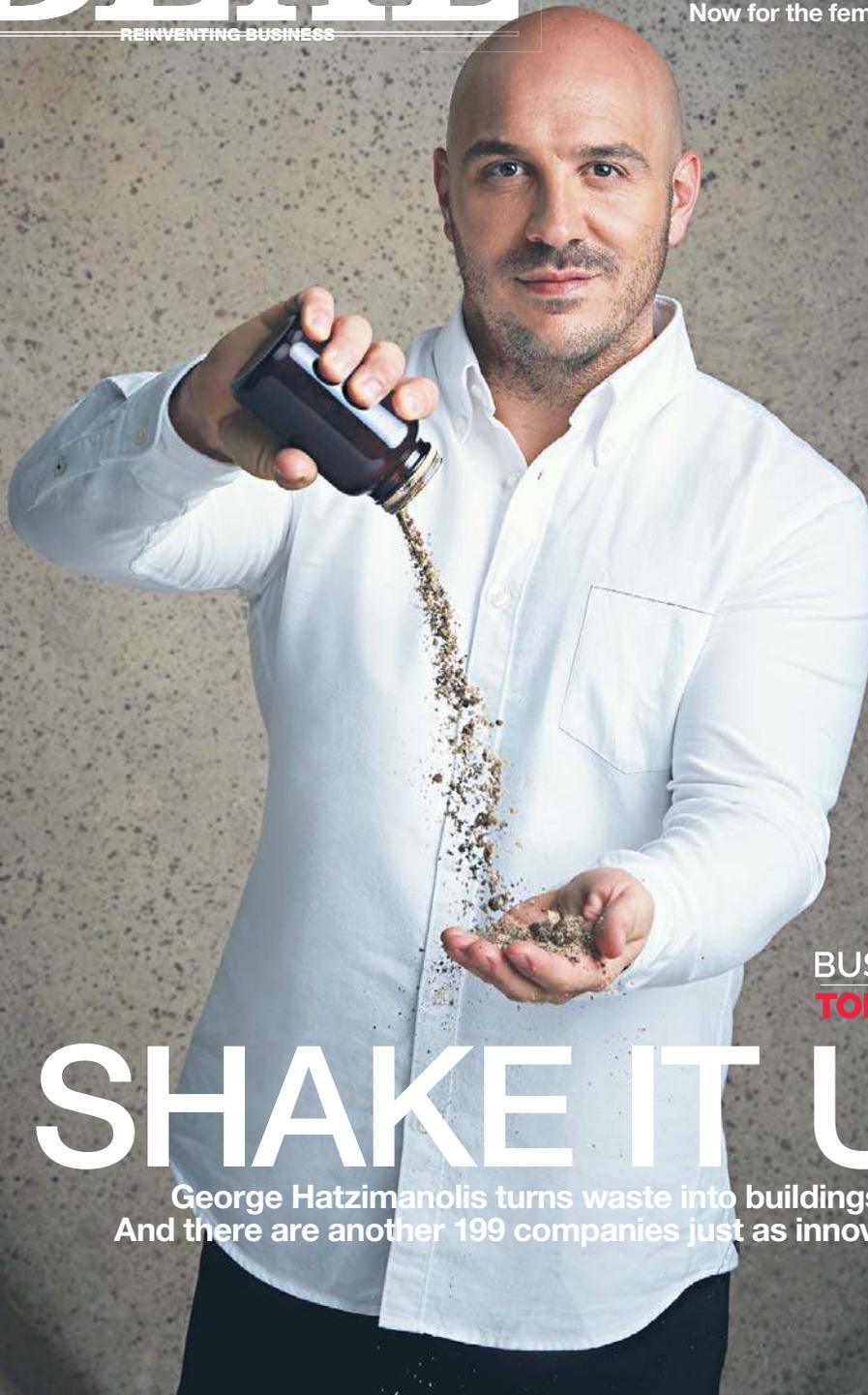
Issue 105 | July 2018

**THE DEAL**  
REINVENTING BUSINESS

The CEO who saved Levi Strauss

Is this the end of the banks?

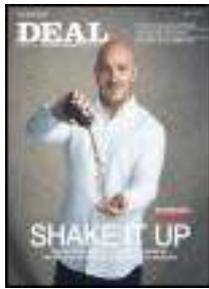
Now for the female midlife crisis



BUSINESSES  
OF  
**TOMORROW**

**SHAKE IT UP**

George Hatzimanolis turns waste into buildings.  
And there are another 199 companies just as innovative



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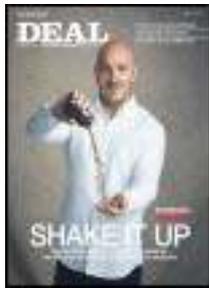
**BUSINESSES**  
**OF**  
**TOMORROW**

in partnership with **Westpac**

Photographs by:  
Nick Cubbin

They are the high-flyers  
of the future – the men  
and women running the  
200 enterprises that will  
help shape the nation's  
new economy

**Poised  
for  
success**



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Adam McCurdie and Joshua Ross, co-founders of Humanitix, which distributes booking fee profits to charities; and Adam Jacobs and Chaz Heitner, co-founders of student workforce recruiter Hatch

**F**or years the conventional wisdom had it that Australians might be clever but the true entrepreneurs resided in the US, specifically in Silicon Valley. But a new generation of locals is proving that assumption wrong, as they grab the opportunity presented by technology and a changing national mindset to launch their own businesses. On these pages we list 200 of those companies, founded by entrepreneurs with big ideas and a heap of energy. Ranging across the sectors from education to building products to house cleaning, they have been chosen as great exemplars of the burgeoning start-up scene in this country.

Selected from more than 1000 companies that entered the 2018 Westpac Businesses of Tomorrow competition, these are businesses that reflect the passion among young Australians to create their own jobs through building new companies.

This is the second year Westpac has run the program – an initiative from the business bank to shift significant sums of money from its marketing budget into promoting firms with high chances of success.

To be chosen, the founders of the companies must demonstrate that they have a clear purpose and vision, understand their customers' needs, and have the capability to meet the challenges of a fast-evolving, disrupted world. The businesses vary from small start-ups with fewer than 10 employees to companies with more than 250 staff and \$100 million turnover. Their "products" range from services for the homeless to advanced software solutions.

The winners were chosen by a judging panel that included Alison Deans, board director at Cochlear, IAG and Westpac; Simon Cant, MD of Reinventure; and Ian Harper, the dean of Melbourne Business School.

Leaders of each of the 200 businesses will now participate in a three-day workshop at the school. The top 20 will attend a study tour in Silicon Valley and will be assigned a mentor for a year. They receive a \$50,000 professional consulting package from advisers such as Allens Linklaters, AT Kearney, PR firm Map and Page and Deloitte.

Last year's top 20 winners had extended group conversations with the founders of LinkedIn and Airbnb on their study tours, learning first-hand how to navigate through the high-growth phase of an accelerating business.

One of the winners from last year, Jordan O'Reilly of online disability platform Hireup, was particularly inspired by Joe Gebbia, the chief product officer and co-founder of Airbnb, who has a personal wealth of \$US3.8 billion (\$5.2 billion). Gebbia told him that business was about much more than money. O'Reilly started Hireup in memory of his late profoundly disabled brother and is committed to helping families get the best out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Still in its relative infancy, the company is already profitable.

O'Reilly says: "Joe Gebbia spoke about the pressure on him to IPO. He said, 'That's not what it's about for me and the co-founders. This is about legacy'. That was music to my ears."

"You can get sucked into thinking along those lines of what the business is worth. As I heard [Joe] say that it gave me permission to say 'I don't want to think about that question.'"

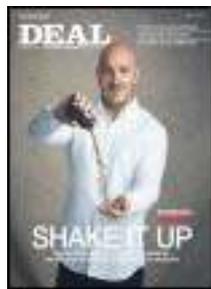
That's the value of a program such as this. It gives company founders a rare chance to step back from their business and reassess why they began the journey and what their next steps should be.

For a young company eyeing global domination, meeting a business rock star such as Gebbia is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Consulting support and mentoring can help fill the gaps between a founder's special ability and the needs of the market. For the people behind this program, the hope is that these are the sorts of experiences that can leapfrog a company from good to great.



Make-up artists Kerri Jane Bailey and Rose Borg prep our subjects, and below, direction from photographer Nick Cubbin and lining up for the call





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## Top 20

These businesses get special treatment, having been judged the best of the 200. Founders will attend a study tour in Silicon Valley in 2019 and receive one-on-one mentoring from business leaders including Jo Horgan, CEO of Mecca Cosmetics, Andrew Gregory, CEO of McDonald's Australia, former Westpac CEO Gail Kelly and former Wallaby John Eales. They will also receive a tailored \$50,000 professional consulting package from advisers such as Allens Linklaters, AT Kearney, PR firm Map and Page and Deloitte.

### Araza

Vic, Professional, scientific and technical services

A technology consulting firm aiming to deliver the latest innovations to the largest organisations

### Avoka

NSW, Financial and insurance services

A software platform that enables banks to build a strong customer acquisition process

### BizCover

NSW, Financial and insurance services

Providing insurance cover options for small businesses in more than 6000 occupations

### Checkbox

NSW, Financial and insurance services

Building customised digital solutions that support compliance and regulation

### Deputy

NSW, Information media and telecommunications

Cloud-based employee-management app for shift workers and employers to set rosters and swap shifts

### Dresden Optics

NSW, Healthcare and social assistance

A simple, durable frame-and-lens system for affordable and high-quality prescription glasses

### GOI

Qld, Education and training

Provides tailored training content for teams and a platform to track learning and development

### Hatch

NSW, Technology, employment and skills, social science

Enabling everyone, starting with students, to identify and develop a career they love

### Humaniflix

NSW, Technology

An online ticketing service that distributes all booking fee profits to 30 Australian partner charities

### Metamako

NSW, Information media and telecommunications

Building network hardware and software that's simple, fast and flexible, boosting speed of transactions

### Orange Sky Australia

Qld, Charitable and community services

Providing free mobile laundry and shower services to people experiencing homelessness

### Planet Innovation

Vic, Professional, scientific and technical services

Partnering with companies in the health sector, helping them introduce new technology and streamline processes

### Redback Technologies

Qld, Renewable energy

Technology for monitoring and storing solar energy for home use or selling to the grid

### Repurpose It

Vic, Recycling and resource recovery

Industrial ecology process taking landfill waste and transforming it into useful material

### Shippit

NSW, Transport, postal and warehousing

A shipping and delivery platform allowing retailers to make efficient logistics decisions

### VendorPanel

Vic, Information media and telecommunications

Web-based procurement service connecting buyers and suppliers to reduce risk and boost value

### WithYouWithMe

NSW, Professional, scientific and technical services

Helping underemployed groups, such as former defence personnel, to find meaningful employment

### Whisppli

NSW, Software

A platform for organisations to uncover internal issues by enabling staff to speak up safely

### Whole Kids

Vic, Manufacturing

Producing a range of certified organic, additive-free and allergen-friendly snacks for children

### Xceptional

NSW, Professional, scientific and technical services

A technology testing and services firm utilising the extraordinary skills of people with autism



### Orange Sky Australia

By Mark Schliebs

Jo Westh doesn't like referring to herself as Orange Sky Australia's chief executive officer. "I prefer to call myself 'the top loader'," she says from the charity's headquarters at Albion in Brisbane's inner north. Each day it sends out vans filled with washing machines for the homeless to use throughout the city.

In the two years since she became "top loader", Orange Sky has grown from six vans operating in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth to 25 around the country.

The charity was launched from a garage in 2014 by then 20-year-old school friends Lucas Patchett and Nicholas Marchesi. Patchett, Westh's son, had been studying engineering and commerce at university and Marchesi was working as a TV news cameraman. Within 18 months they were named Young Australians of the Year and the exposure saw them bring in Westh, a management consultant, to become Orange Sky's CEO.

Westh says she was amazed at how much the boys had achieved, not just because of their ingenuity and dedication to helping to restore people's dignity, but because they barely knew how to wash their own clothes. "Both boys lived with their families and to this day I don't think my son has done a huge amount of washing at home at all," she says.

"The school they went to provided a food service that did breakfast in and around parks in Brisbane, and they were invested in that for a couple of years. When they left school they found that they missed going out and chatting to people."

Now, more than seven tonnes of laundry go through Orange Sky's 25 washing-machine-filled vans, not just in capital cities but in places such as the remote Far North Queensland community of Lockhart River and the NSW Central Coast. Other far-flung communities are next on the charity's expansion list – as is New Zealand, where

the rate of homelessness is double that of Australia, and potentially the US.

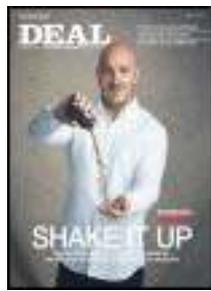
But despite all those statistics and locations, there's a simple driver of the team's motivation: conversation. According to Westh, the idea of volunteers sitting down and talking to those on the streets was an afterthought for the two boys when they started.

"Little did the boys know at the time that laundry actually takes time to do," she says. "I think both of them thought it was like heating food in a microwave – that five minutes later it would be finished. The real magic of the Orange Sky story started when they figured out it takes an hour to do someone's washing. So they got these six orange chairs, popped them in the back of the van with the rest of the gear, and went to parks and drop-in centres."

Now those chats with Orange Sky's 1200 volunteers sometimes attract double the number of people who are actually washing their clothes – with conversations ranging from job opportunities to football scores and the weather.

Says Westh: "Whatever makes people feel comfortable. We're motivated by helping and making a little difference in people's lives, and we're really keen to be able to connect as many of those 116,000 [homeless Australians] as we can back to the community, through clean clothes and conversation."

This is also an expensive proposition. For all Orange Sky's success, there are still sleepless nights spent wondering how things can keep running. Grants and corporate sponsorships have risen, but Orange Sky still relies on general donations, which accounted for \$2.5 million of its \$3.4 million in total income in 2017. Public awareness is the key to keeping those donations coming in, Westh says. "Fundraising is what keeps the managers of all charities awake at night," she says. "How do we continue to fund the growing number of vehicles we have on the road now, and the growing number of staff and infrastructure?"



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THE DEAL | July 2018

19

## The list

### #burgerlove Australia

Vic, Retail trade  
It's all about love on a plate: putting heart and soul into the humble hamburger

### @realty

Qld, Administrative and support services  
Real estate agents and property managers offering the latest digital technology

### IScope

NSW, Education and training  
Platform enabling students to apply for work experience in companies, universities, arts organisations and charities

### 365 Assistance

NSW, Financial and insurance services  
Fast and safe Australia-wide roadside assistance and insurance

### ABS Façade

ACT, Construction  
Specialising in the supply, fabrication and installation of architectural façades

### Activ

WA, Healthcare and social assistance  
Supporting people with a disability with meaningful employment opportunities

### Adactin Group

NSW, Information media and telecommunications  
Providing quality assurance and IT-testing solutions, app development and project management

### Adrenalin Media

NSW, Information media and telecommunications  
Creative agency offering digital marketing services, digital strategy, web and UX design and development

### Advanced Focus

SA, Professional, scientific and technical  
Improving performance at tactical and strategic levels; started with manufacturing, now expanded into 40 sectors

### AgGrow Energy Resources

WA, Other services  
Developing renewable energy, biofuel and industrial carbon products from diverted waste streams and cultivated biomass

### Agronomey

NSW, Agriculture, forestry and fishing  
Deploying drones to drive innovation in agriculture by capturing valuable data sets

### Airdocs

NSW, Information media and telecommunications  
Simplifying and expediting the design, creation and delivery of communications

### Aither

Vic, Electricity, gas water and waste services  
Consultancy specialising in infrastructure, water, environment and emergency management

### Aloha Pools

Vic, Construction  
Custom pool and spa builder specialising in unique designs

### Already Built

NSW, Information media and telecommunications  
Enabling organisations to buy and sell source code to commercially proven web and software solutions

### Aquamonix

NSW, Electricity, gas, water and waste services  
Helping agriculture and local governments to improve accuracy and efficiency of water use and monitoring

### Archie Rose Distilling

NSW, Manufacturing  
Custom-made distillery, boutique bar and online store selling the company's unique concoctions

### Art of Smart Education

NSW, Education and training  
Leading provider of K-12 tutoring; study, career and leadership mentoring; and work-experience placements

### Ashton Manufacturing

Qld, Manufacturing  
Handcrafting quality coffins from solid timbers and precious metals alongside affordable and sustainable options

**BUSINESSES  
of  
TOMORROW**  
in partnership with Westpac

### Audeara

Qld, Healthcare and social assistance  
Headphones designed by doctors and engineers that measure the wearer's hearing to deliver perfect sound

### Audeamus Risk

NSW, Financial and insurance services  
Insurance-tech start-up specialising in business interruption impact data with a platform for open market bidding

### Australian Bay Lobster Producers

NSW, Agriculture, forestry and fishing  
Commercially breeding Moreton Bay bugs using recycled feed and seawater in a recirculating water facility

### Australian Centre for Social Innovation

SA, Other services  
Policy development and service redesign across complex sectors including child protection, ageing, housing and disability

### AutoGuru

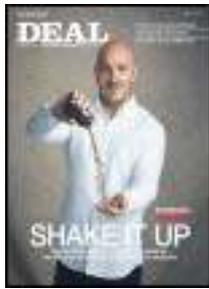
Qld, Other services  
Connecting motorists to a wide network of mechanics to get transparent quotes on car servicing and repairs

### aXcelerate

Qld, Other services  
An online and industry-compliant student management system with features custom-built for training organisations

From left: Evan Wong, CEO of Checkbox; Michael Gottlieb, CEO and founder of BizCover; Philip Copeland, CEO of Avoka; Vu Tran, co-founder at GO1; James Leathem, founder and CEO at VendorPanel; David Snowdon, founder, director and CTO at Metamako and Phillip Livingston, managing director at Redback Technologies





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press clip

20

#### Balyr

NSW, Education and training  
**Smashing the stigma around mental health issues and empowering young people to seek support**

#### BenchOn

Qld, Other services  
**Preventing unemployment by matching underutilised staff in one company to short-term contracts in another**

#### Biarri Networks

Vic, Information media and telecommunications  
**Simplifying and optimising fibre-optic network design through patented and easy-to-use software**

#### Bickford's Australia

SA, Manufacturing  
**Family-owned and managed company producing premium cordials and other non-alcoholic beverages since 1839**

#### Blueforce

WA, Professional, scientific and technical services  
**Providing home and business security systems, cameras and alarms with a 24-hour monitoring centre**

#### Bohr Industries

WA, Electricity, gas water and waste services  
**High-quality, affordable wind energy systems with minimal environmental impact**

#### Bundaberg Brewed Drinks

Qld, Food and drink  
**Making naturally brewed, non-alcoholic beverages since the 1960s, including the famous ginger beer**

#### Cali Press

NSW, Retail trade  
**Producing raw, organic, cold-pressed juices**

#### Catalysr

NSW, Education and training  
**Running entrepreneurship programs for migrants and refugees to help them develop technology start-ups**

#### Christensen Flower Auction

Qld, Other services  
**Brisbane's online flower market and Australia's only online flower auction for growers, wholesalers and florists**

#### cirrus8

WA, Other services  
**Software simplifying commercial property management, including budgets, owner reports, accounting and tenant liaison**

#### Civic Disability Services

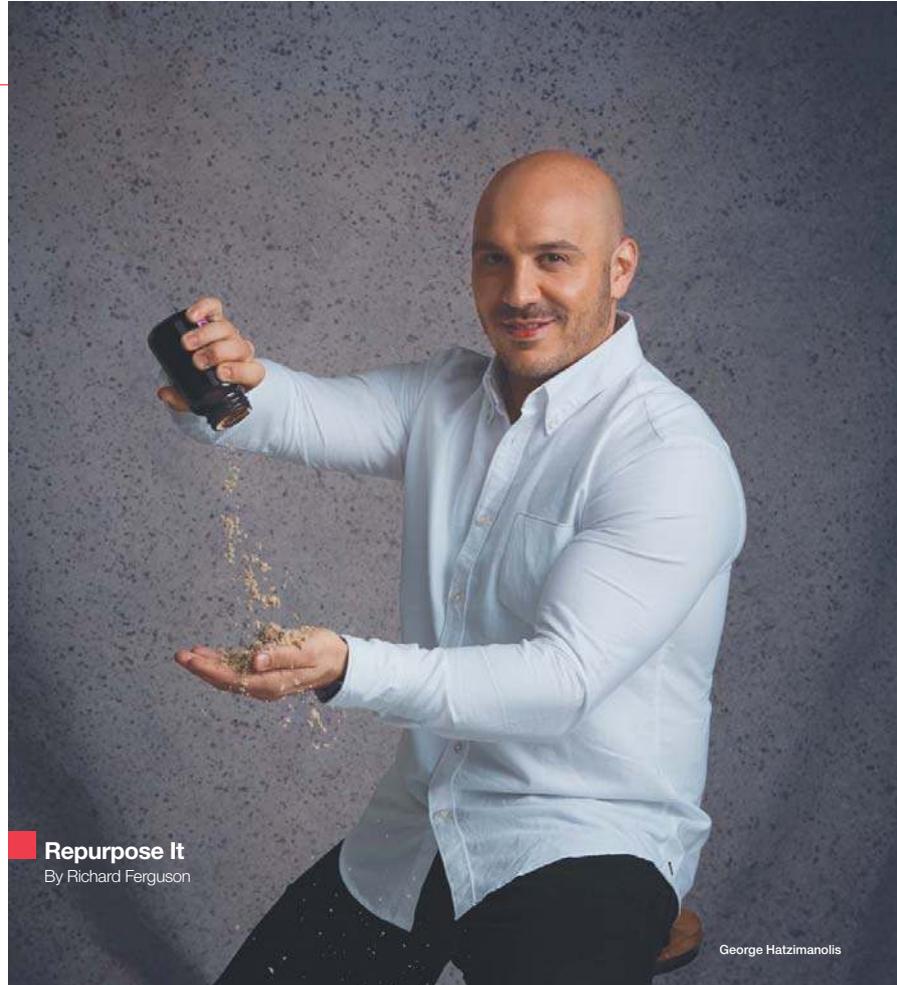
NSW, Other services  
**Accommodation specialists for people with disabilities, helping them to exercise and participate in their communities**

#### ClickSend

WA, Information media and telecommunications  
**Customer communication made easy through SMS gateways, email marketing tools, fax, post and geolocation services**

#### cloudyBoss

NSW, Information media and telecommunications  
**Enterprise resource planning architecture and tools for making safer, smarter decisions around emerging requirements**



George Hatzimanolis is a co-founder of Repurpose It, a waste management company that sweeps up waste from some of Victoria's biggest infrastructure projects and turns it back into materials for construction companies.

#### What does Repurpose It repurpose?

Repurpose It is a resource recovery business that believes all waste can be converted to valuable resources. We work with large-scale constructions and big infrastructure projects and recycle their waste into materials for the construction industry.

#### What kind of things are you making?

We're trying to reduce construction's need for natural resources such as aggregates, sand and soil. We also work with organic waste and convert that into things such as compost.

#### Where did the idea for the business come from?

Repurpose It is a partnership among four different parties. My background is predominately in infrastructure. I worked for a company called Downer for 15 years and I was the general manager for Victoria and Tasmania for their road surfacing business. In that role I wanted to find substitute materials for roads and started playing with different technologies, from recycling printing cartridges to asphalt and tyres. I became passionate about waste and recycling and thinking about how we can reduce our reliance on quarries. I had a few contacts in the industry – one was a company called MetroUrban, which does large-scale street cleaning and is now a partner. Another partner is an ex-director of a

company called BioGrove who is an expert in organics. Our fourth partner is Eastern Plant Fire, one of the biggest earthmoving contractors in the state. We've been established for about 15 months.

#### Fifteen months is not a long time. How is the business going?

Our growth has been well beyond our wildest expectations. We've timed this one right. We've secured a very strategic site out at Epping. It's an old quarry and it's recognised by the state government as an important site for resource recovery. We've been endorsed by our local council and we've got a lot of support from them.

#### What kind of gap is Repurpose It trying to fill in the waste management market?

What makes us different is our willingness to invest in large-scale technology that's never been used in Australia. We're building a washing plant to wash excavated waste and produce manufactured sand. We've got a \$500,000 grant from Sustainability Victoria to build that plant. That kind of investment has garnered us a very good reception in the market. That and our willingness to take risks with this new technology.

#### Have you been getting a lot of attention from bigger companies, and competitors, wanting a taste of this new technology?

At the moment everyone is watching and waiting to see. We've had some high-profile projects, including taking waste from the Victorian government's railway level-crossing removals and even the spoils of their Metro train tunnel. That's helped get our brand out there. And we've been

taking on projects others won't touch, such as abandoned stockpiles. We've been able to work with the state Environmental Protection Authority on some of those sites.

#### Is there actual money to be made in sustainability?

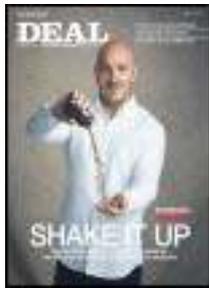
Absolutely. We find it quite difficult to comprehend that we're going to be quarrying our riverbeds and filling them with waste when many materials are perpetual. We have an infrastructure boom and a big demand for materials. Quarries are being pushed further out of the city, so the costs of recovering them are going up. Where we come in is that we can recover those materials from existing waste and reuse it to go back into new infrastructure.

#### Is this a golden age for infrastructure companies, with state governments pouring their surpluses into the sector?

We do feel we have timed our venture well. There is a great demand for extractable resources, especially sand. And we can't just keep opening up sand quarries due to the environmental impact. Our technology is an Australian first and this will reduce our reliance on those quarries.

#### Are there any plans to expand outside of Victoria?

I think that for the next 12 to 24 months our focus will be to get established and expand across Greater Melbourne. But from there, we definitely want to take this technology across other states in Australia.



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## Mentor Q&A

### Deborah Hutton

Founder,  
Balance by Deborah Hutton

#### What is your advice on launching a business?

It requires a deep understanding of the consumer you're targeting. Burrow down into detail so you fully understand the purchase decision from the consumer's point of view. Identify direct competitors and your point of difference. Learn to clearly articulate the benefits you offer.

#### What's the best piece of business advice a mentor gave you?

Face your fears. What's the worst thing that can happen? Look at that scenario, feel it in yourself, identify what the fear really is, and then put it behind you and have a go.

### David Hill

CEO, Deloitte

#### What is your advice on launching a business?

Do what you love, persevere and surround yourself with people who complement your skill set.

#### What was your scariest moment?

When the volume of work slows and your loyalty to your staff is tested. I've always believed in never wasting a crisis; such situations can really unite a team around a common cause.

### Jo Horgan

CEO and founder  
Mecca Cosmetics

#### What is your advice on launching a business?

Do a business plan – things won't go to plan but it's reassuring to have one.

#### What's the best piece of business advice a mentor gave you?

BCG's George Pappas' advice to try to fund the business at the outset and get to proof of concept before contemplating investors.

### Tim Fung

CEO and founder  
Airtasker

#### What's been your biggest hurdle?

This is one of the biggest challenges: knowing that every time you solve a problem new ones will pop up.

#### Why are mentors important?

Mentors are especially critical for founders of start-up companies as it can feel like you're going on a journey by yourself and you often end up with "tunnel vision" as you just want to get to the next step. Having mentors allows you to zoom out from the day-to-day and see things from another perspective, which is critical to help you see what you can do better.



Rob Hango-Zada and William On, co-founders of Shippit, and Sylvain Mansotte, co-founder and CEO of Whispli

#### Compliance Quarter

NSW, Professional, scientific and technical services

Online and in-person service to streamline and update corporate compliance programs

#### Cocooned

Vic, retail trade

Simple, adaptive clothing for babies and children in hospital; tips for self-care and support for families

#### CoolDrive

Vic, Wholesale trade

Supplying automotive air-conditioning, engine cooling, engine management, rotating electrical, accessories and workshop products

#### CreativeCubes.Co

Vic, Rental, hiring and real estate services

Creating collaborative co-working spaces with fast internet, 24/7 access, presentation facilities, parking and meeting rooms

#### Creatively Squared

Qld, Information media and telecommunications

Stylists and content creators capturing customised images of products in homes and lifestyle contexts

#### CryptoPhoto.com

Qld, Information media and telecommunications

Fast, easy transaction signing and security authentication that blocks phishing attacks, scams, malware and credential theft

#### Cutting Edge Post

Qld, Information media and telecommunications

Providing picture and sound post-production, bringing ideas to life for feature films, advertising and television

#### dealPad

Vic, Financial and insurance services

Centralised platform for raising capital promoting your deal to investors and finding the smart money quickly

#### Devika World

NSW, Professional, scientific and technical services

Building capability using emerging technology in software development, project management, design thinking and creative collaboration

#### Digital Crew

NSW, Other services – marketing and PR

Multilingual digital marketing agency (Chinese, Japanese, "Hinglish" and more) offering creative services to global brands

#### Dimerix

WA, Professional, scientific and technical services

Drug discovery company working to advance new drug therapies through the clinic for unmet medical needs

#### DoneSafe

NSW, Professional, scientific and technical services

Compliance management and workplace health and safety software everyone can use

#### Duress

Vic, Technology

Monitored 24/7 security app to protect people at work, from sole proprietors to large companies

#### Ecoentric Energy

WA, Electricity, gas, water and waste services

Using hardware and data to help businesses understand where their energy is being used

#### Ecoloads

NSW, Transport, postal and warehousing

Online freight marketplace connecting those needing goods delivered with transporters who can deliver them

#### Elula Group

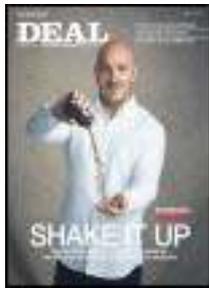
NSW, Professional, scientific and technical

Using applied artificial intelligence to determine the best methods of customer retention and pricing

#### Empired

WA, Information media and telecommunications

Providing IT solutions – cloud services, customer relationship management, business intelligence and enterprise resource planning



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**Araza**

By David Swan

Victoria Kluth

**V**ictoria Kluth kicked off Araza four and a half years ago with the simple dream of being able to work with her friends.

Fast forward to 2018 and her consultancy firm has expanded from five people to more than 300, working with some of Australia's biggest brands on their digital transformation.

Unlike other consultancies, Araza casts a wide net, with the projects it tackles covering everything from Microsoft Office 365 integrations to robotics. And sometimes it even turns down business if it is not a good cultural fit.

It also has true gender balance, with about a 50-50 male-to-female split across its staff. Kluth says Araza doesn't have gender quotas but relies on hiring and interview processes that are free from bias.

"We feel we have our finger on the pulse; when you're talking about the businesses of tomorrow, that's what they're going to look like," Kluth tells *The Deal*. "They will strive to be gender equitable. Businesses will learn that having women in decision-making roles is going to bring them more money. All the data shows this is what will happen, and I think my competitors will finally be smart enough to realise they too can have it."

Kluth spent her career working in public companies with shareholders expecting judicious decisions based on quarterly financial goals. She says running her own company means she can make decisions predicated on other factors entirely.

"You can make decisions based on politics, or feelings, for example," she says. "Each of our own salespeople has their own bias – they'll say 'Victoria, this isn't a good partnership', and we can discuss that. Last week I had dinner with a client but I kindly rejected their offer... It just wasn't a good fit. To say you can do it all is silly and old-fashioned."

Kluth says she has worked for systems integrators and consultancies since graduating from university. It's the only sort of work she has ever done.

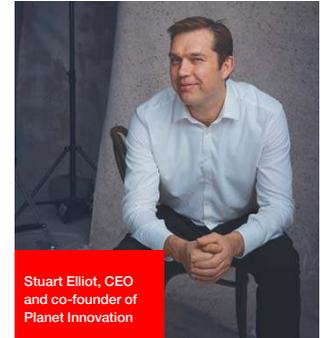
"I was working for a large consultancy, and they were changing my role," she says. "I thought if I'm going to change my role, why don't I just go and start my own company? I quit the next day with no business plan."

"I started with a couple of clients, and I just backed myself from there. It is really hard giving up the expense account and the security, but you just have to know you can do it and trust that."

Growing as fast as Araza has comes with a cost, and for Kluth the challenge is to minimise the risk and ensure growth isn't merely for its own sake.

"Growth sounds great, but growth for growth's sake isn't how you want to operate as an organisation," she says. "Cash flow is queen. Some people say king, but I say queen. But while we've only been a business for four years, we're now a medium-sized business and that comes with complexities."

"We just keep our eyes on the prize, and the end game for us is to have successful delivery where clients keep coming back to us. And to do that you make sure your people are doing really good things."



Stuart Elliot, CEO and co-founder of Planet Innovation

### Employment Options

SA, Healthcare and social assistance  
Community-based not-for-profit helping people find employment, gain education or training, and navigate a secure future

### Ete Swimwear

WA, Retail trade  
Beachwear range featuring unique designs and exclusive, handpainted watercolour prints by a WA artist

### eWater Systems

Vic, Other services – biotech  
Biotech company supplying electrolysis units to generate sustainable and effective alternatives to chemical cleaners and sanitisers

### Exaptec

Vic, Other services  
Delivering state-of-the-art service robots, social robots and telepresence robot solutions in health and business settings

### Fab Dock

Qld, Manufacturing  
Providing boat owners with simple, affordable dry-docking, reducing water pollution and maintenance costs

### Forbidden Foods

Vic, Wholesale trade  
It's all about rice: black rice, red rice, green rice – view recipes, buy online or find stockists

### Frank Green Enterprises

Vic, Retail trade  
Stylish reusable coffee cups with inbuilt chip allowing users to pay through the CafePay app

### Future fitouts

Qld, Construction  
Providing stress-free fitouts by managing projects from start to finish

### GlobalCQ

Vic, Professional, scientific and technical services  
Helping employers meet gender and cultural diversity goals by connecting them to professionals from all backgrounds

### GMG Digital

Vic, Information media and telecommunications  
Digital marketing agency specialising in strategy, data and analytics, media, user experience design, social and creative

### Good Goods

Vic, Other services – direct-to-consumer eCommerce  
Making Who Gives a Crap? toilet paper then donating half the profits to build toilets in developing countries

### Good Super

Vic, Financial and insurance services  
Personalised superannuation – choose the social, environmental or corporate issue in which your money is invested

### Gourmet Basket

NSW, Other services  
Click-and-send delivery of Christmas, food, wine and new-baby gift baskets and hampers

### Grace Papers

Vic, Other services  
Award-winning programs empowering expectant and working parents to navigate family and career

### Graphene Manufacturing Australia

Qld, Manufacturing  
Developing technology to manufacture graphene, a semi-metal stronger than steel and more conductive than copper

### Gronade

NSW, Professional, scientific and technical  
Scientific problem-solving, growth and social change through data science, design thinking and real-world validation

### GroupPrezzie

NSW, Other services  
Group gift-giving made easy online – invites, reminds and collects money from your group

### Guide Dogs Victoria

Vic, Other services – charity  
Providing services to people living with low vision or blindness to maximise their independence and mobility

### Hart Sport

Qld, Retail trade  
Selling all kinds of sporting equipment to keep people moving regardless of age or ability

### Hello Cars

NSW, Retail trade  
Buy and sell used cars online – delivered to your driveway with a seven-day/500km money-back guarantee

### HoMie Street Store

Vic, Retail trade  
Retail clothing store and fashion label providing occupational training for young people experiencing homelessness

### Hydrobiology

Qld, Professional, scientific and technical services  
Environmental consultants specialising in risk and impact assessment, water quality, freshwater and marine ecology, geochemistry

### Hydrox Technologies

Qld, Manufacturing  
Developing solar-shrink mulch film to help farmers minimise costs and waste – and use less plastic

### Imbros

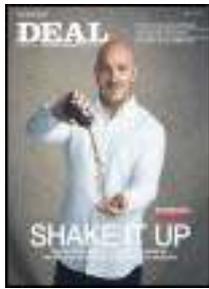
Tas, retail trade  
Distributor of oceanographic, marine, aquaculture monitoring equipment and scientific laboratory instruments

### InDebted Australia

NSW, Financial and insurance services  
Collection services and technology provider, helping clients improve recovery rates, reduce risk and lower costs

### Inklings Women

SA, Education and training  
World-class training that directly and substantially lifts the percentage of women at leadership level in organisations



# The Australian Friday 20/07/2018

Page: 1  
Section: The Deal  
Region: Australia, AU  
Circulation: 94448  
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Size: 12,091.00 sq.cms.



# slice

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press clip

**Inspac XR**  
NSW, Other services  
Computer-aided design and virtual reality tools for architects to experience and develop ideas in 3D

**Inspiring Rare Birds**  
NSW, Education and training  
Helping women entrepreneurs develop their businesses through mentoring, events, education, publishing, grants and speakers

**IntegraPay**  
Qld, Financial and insurance services  
Helping businesses get paid – recurring, automated payment solutions through Mastercard, Visa, direct deposit and more

**International Creative Services**  
Vic, Information media and telecommunications  
A diverse collective of creative services for marketing and advertising from around the world

**Inventia Life Science**  
NSW, Manufacturing  
Developing 3D printing for biomedical research and clinical (tissue engineering)

**iSeekPlant**  
Qld, Construction  
Online machinery and plant hiring platform for the civil construction and mining industries

**IVE Group**  
NSW, Marketing and Communications  
Marketing services provider, designing, producing and managing tailored communications across all channels

**JDRF Australia**  
NSW, Other services  
Non-profit organisation seeking a cure for type 1 diabetes and its complications by funding research

**Kalleske Wines**  
SA, Other services  
Credentialed in 1998, the oldest certified organic, biodynamic vineyard and winery in the Barossa Valley

**KeyPay**  
NSW, Financial and insurance services  
Cloud payroll system for employers, bookkeepers and accountants, with tools for penalties, overtime and reporting

**Kimberlin Education**  
NSW, Education and training  
Digital marketing agency providing educational resources with brand messages and real-world relevance to the classroom

**Kinnect**  
Qld, Healthcare and social assistance  
Providing pre-employment medical checks, physiotherapy and manual handling training for work health and safety

**KJR**  
Qld, Professional, scientific and technical services  
Technology-focused strategic advisory firm, helping clients build resilient, technology-based businesses

**Knowledge Global**  
NSW, Electricity, gas, water and waste services  
Changing the way consumers buy energy through a quick, digitised comparison process

## Mentor Q&A

### Alison Deans

Director Westpac, Cochlear, IAG, kikki.K Holdings

#### What is the best piece of advice given to you by a mentor?

US executive Meg Whitman said: "Whenever you are stuck and you really don't know what to do, ask a customer."

### Leslie Chong

CEO and managing director Imugene

#### What is your advice on launching a business?

Upright research and market analysis is critical, even if you have to spend some money hiring good consultants and researchers, experts in the industry/business you are going into. Interview experts or successful people in your field – experts love to give advice.

**What has been your biggest hurdle?**  
Finding good role models and asking them for help.

#### What was your scariest moment?

Making the leap from something very comfortable to the unknown and unproven. Moving from Genentech in San Francisco to a small biotech company with no infrastructure in Sydney as a CEO was the scariest career decision I have ever made.

### John Eales

Former Wallabies captain

#### What is your advice on launching a business?

Believe in the reasons your business will succeed but be diligent on the detail of why it won't.

#### What was your scariest moment?

When you look around you and realise that the success of your business will have a direct effect on the lives of those around you.

#### Why are mentors important?

Mentors can be an unbiased, unfiltered yet safe avenue for feedback.

### Andrew Gregory

CEO, McDonald's Australia

#### What is your advice on launching a business?

You need to get the basics right. You need a strong plan, great people and sufficient capital to ensure the business can survive short-term cash-flow challenges.

#### What was your scariest moment?

I was under 30 and given a great opportunity to lead a significant team of professionals in a field I was not an expert in. I was incredibly nervous and initially lacked confidence. However, I believed in my abilities.



## Xceptional

By Jane Nicholls

**H**e has degrees from Oxford and Harvard, but when Mike Tozer was job-hunting in a new city, he says, it was "a real reminder to me that it can be really hard for anyone to get a job".

Tozer and his wife Helen moved to Sydney from Hong Kong in late 2016 to chase the best education for their son Josiah, now 7, who has Fragile X syndrome, a genetic condition that predisposes sufferers to autism. Tozer's adult sister Sarah is also autistic, and his own frustrating work search made him think about her. "If I'm finding it challenging, gosh, think how hard it is for someone who's not good at selling themselves, who thinks very logically, who might not answer questions in a conventional way," he says.

"I've lived with autism my whole life and it's had a profound effect on me. UK-born Tozer's tech-centric career has included a Hong Kong start-up connecting businesses and non-profits and working as a software developer on the UN-Business Action Hub. He says a series of steps rather than a single inspiration led to Xceptional, a software-testing services company that uses the unique strengths of certain people on the autism spectrum to find bugs in websites and apps.

If there was a lightbulb moment, it was an episode of the UK series of *Employable Me* and the story of Brett, a young man with autism, and his journey to get a job in computer-aided design after almost a decade of unemployment. "I thought, wow, what would a whole firm look like made up of people like Brett, who were embraced for their strengths rather than the challenges associated with their disabilities," says Tozer.

Tozer floated his idea with friends in IT and they got it right away. "They were, 'Oh yeah, I've got a colleague on the spectrum', or 'I know people who struggle in interviews', and they all started to fly the flag for us." Early in 2017 he put out feelers and soon had testing work, finding staff via his personal networks: "Even before I had a name for the company I realised, wow, this is really happening!"

Tozer and Tim Walton subsequently featured in the first episode of ABC-TV's Australian version of *Employable Me*. Walton's intellect and skills earned him a job at

Xceptional, and his whisper-quiet courage won an outpouring of emotional admiration on social media. Since the program aired in April, Tozer says, "we've had a 400 per cent increase across the board: candidates

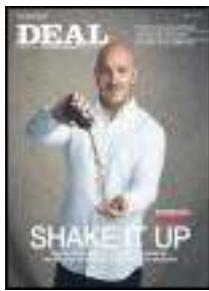
contacting us and companies understanding the autism advantage and wanting to hire us".

Now those businesses are hungry to tap into the talent pool of "hard workers who are in it for the long haul" with exceptional skills in pattern recognition, precision and attention to detail, and Xceptional is rapidly expanding from testing and into data analytics, cyber security and recruitment. "We have people coming to us with multiple degrees," says Tozer. "One chap we placed with one of our partners has a PhD in astrophysics but he really struggled to sell himself in job interviews." Through their work with Infosys, says Tozer, "we placed five people with Westpac in their software testing as interns and they performed so well that all were offered permanent contracts, and one of them came up with an algorithm change that's been implemented across the whole bank."

An app to help recruiters and people on the spectrum use Xceptional's method of qualifying candidates – games and tests rather than formal interviews – is in development. "We're a business, but because of my passion and my particular circumstances our goal is to have a social impact," says Tozer. "The app will be a big part of helping us expand that impact and grow across Australia and Asia."

An investment round later this year will help fuel that growth. "There are 230,000 people in Australia with autism, so there's a huge amount to do," says Tozer. "Our goal is to create 1000 employment opportunities ... by 2022, but given how fast it's growing I think we might have to revise that upwards."

Tozer's sister Sarah will visit from the UK in December. "She's doing well – she's in about three choirs and can tell you anything about any musical," says her brother. "She's into the arts, so even though I've started a business focused on IT, she now also regularly talks about Xceptional and the fact she's the inspiration behind it. I'm not saying everyone on the spectrum should be a software tester; it's about carving out opportunities for them in niche areas that match with their skills."



# The Australian Friday 20/07/2018

Page: 1  
Section: The Deal  
Region: Australia, AU  
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Size: 12,091.00 sq.cms.



# slice

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Ashik Ahmed

## Deputy

By Jane Nicholls

**F**ive years after starting his first job out of uni, Ashik Ahmed became the co-founder of a completely different business, along with his boss, Steve Shelley. Shelley recruited the Melbourne University computer science graduate for AeroCare, the aviation ground services business he had grown to the point where organising his employees was burning him out. Freshly minted software engineer Ahmed was tasked with building an in-house staff-management system to alleviate the pain of the staff juggle.

"It was 2003, before the evolution of mobile and cloud computing," says Ahmed. Nevertheless, he built an in-house rostering, pay and performance-management system that transformed AeroCare's business.

"Over the next three years we grew the business seven times, without additional head-office admin or IT staff," says Ahmed. Shelley sold AeroCare and proposed to Ahmed that they join forces to take what Shelley calls "these beautiful systems" to the rest of the world.

Just shy of a decade later, Deputy – the name pitches it as a business owner's trusty 2IC – has more than 80,000 customers, including Qantas, Amazon, Nike and NASA, in more than 80 countries.

"Steve was very kind in giving me the opportunity," says Ahmed. "Working with him in the aviation industry and being able to solve things in that complex business allowed us to build Deputy to work for any business ... from aviation to eCommerce, government, retail or a cafe."

A 2017 capital raising attracted \$US25 million (\$33 million) from US-based venture capital firm OpenView, and the Sydney-headquartered Deputy now has offices in Atlanta and London. The investors suggested that co-founder and CTO Ahmed should consider becoming CEO too. While at first unsure about making the leap, he now quotes Seek co-founder Paul Bassat: "Hunger trumps experience."

"Everybody in the business uses Deputy, not just one department, so there's complete visibility," says Ahmed of the app-based system. Prices start at \$2 per user per month

for scheduling only, or \$4 for the premium model, including payroll exporting and attendance tracking, and customisable enterprise solutions for large companies.

Deputy integrates with more than 35 payroll systems, including Xero, MYOB and QuickBooks. Early on, reveals Ahmed, they intended to include payroll but decided that the jurisdictional tangle would thwart their ambitions to be a global company. Workplace laws and awards for many countries can be applied from a library that is constantly being added to, or configured in the back end.

"Sixty per cent of the working population in the western world is hourly paid, and so many people are dealing with it on Excel, on paper or with in-house solutions that aren't handling it very well," says Ahmed. With Deputy, "the same product runs a small coffee shop or Qantas, but it's configurable and scaleable – and we have a lot of AI capability, so it builds the schedule knowing the complexities of the team and you can view your wages bill for the week before publishing your schedule."

As Deputy builds a roster, it automatically checks things such as correct qualifications, clashing shifts, a shift too close to the end of the previous one, annual leave or requests not to work. If a worker constantly swaps a Saturday shift, it stops assigning that shift to that worker. It communicates changes through the app (no more frantic ring-arounds when someone calls in sick), and can even plug into the weather forecast and alert the owner of an outdoor cafe that they may want to reduce their staff numbers on a stormy Saturday.

Ahmed says Deputy customers report saving at least 10 per cent on their wages bill and "we've freed them from the mundane task of organising shift workers and they can invest their time and money into growing their business."

Since starting work with Shelley almost 15 years ago, he has married and now has two kids. "In those early years when we didn't have customers my wife supported me," he says. "She's probably my biggest investor through this. It's hard growing a business but spending time with my family is validation for all that work."

### LawPath

NSW, Professional, scientific and technical services

Online legal services for setting up a business, including a free quote from one of 700+ lawyers

### Leezair

NSW, Other services – travel and tourism

Connecting travellers on the go with experiences, tours and activities in 182 countries and counting

### Legal and Consulting Services

Vic, Professional and legal services

Helping in-house lawyers to succeed through continuous improvement, managed services and technology solutions

### Lendi

NSW, Financial and insurance services

Platform for helping people maximise their home loan through finding, choosing or refinancing

### Lens Immersive

NSW, Information media and technology

Technology infrastructure company focused on accelerating streaming delivery of 4K, VR and AR – everywhere

### Liberate eLearning

Vic, Education and training

eLearning solutions for the corporate, government and higher education sectors, including onboarding and workplace behaviour

### LittleScribe

NSW, Education and training

Taking children's handwritten, illustrated work from classroom or home and transforming it into digital books

### Luina Bio

Qld, Manufacturing

Drug development and manufacturing company serving the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and veterinary industries

### Lumen Freedom

Vic, Manufacturing

Providing research, design and manufacture of high-quality automotive components for various systems throughout a vehicle

### MadeComfy

NSW, Rental, hiring and real estate services

Professional short-term rental managers taking care of bookings, guests, housekeeping and maintenance

### Manly Spirits Co Distillery

NSW, Other services

Bar and artisan distillery producing premium spirits using sustainably sourced Australian native and marine botanicals

### Manrags

Vic, Retail trade

Premium socks and underwear for time-poor gents looking for quality and convenience

### Mayasoft

SA, Professional, scientific and technical

Team of developers, IT architects and consultants specialising in web development and customer relationship management

### Mechanical Equipment Group

WA, Wholesale trade

Uniting specialist companies in power transmission, bulk materials, engineering services and parts under one umbrella

### MedApps

NSW, Healthcare and social assistance

Digital solutions made by doctors for doctors, including hospital onboarding and clinical handover apps

### Medical Billing Experts

Qld, Administrative and support services

Helping medical professionals maximise income through outsourced billing, along with practice reviews and bookkeeping support

### MindTribes

Vic, Other services

Helping companies develop the resources to sell, service, and negotiate sensitively when expanding overseas

### Momento Hospitality

NSW, Other services

Hotel operator that includes a charity organisation focusing on sport, education, rehabilitation and environmental challenges

### Moneytech Group

NSW, Financial and insurance services

Making finance, payments systems and foreign exchange solutions accessible to small business

### MTB Direct

Qld, Retail trade

Online destination for mountain bike parts, clothing and accessories – latest and greatest gear delivered fast

### MSL Solutions

Qld, Information media and telecommunications

Software start-up supporting sports, leisure and entertainment venues to keep patrons engaged and expand membership

### NJ & T McMullen

SA, Construction

Fully licensed commercial and residential building company and repair and maintenance services provider

### Notion Project

NSW, Information media and telecommunications

Artificial intelligence platform that rapidly builds comprehensive, accurate reports to enable executive decision making

### Office Hub

NSW, Rental, hiring and real estate services

Website for browsing and comparing shared office spaces, serviced offices and co-working hubs

### Oz Design Furniture

NSW, Retail trade

Furniture and homewares retailer helping people make houses feel like home since 1979

### Ozius

Qld, Professional, scientific and technical services

Spatial technology start-up providing remote-sensing analytics and solutions for environmental applications

### Payments Consulting Network

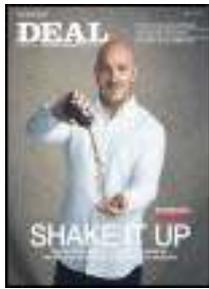
NSW, Professional, scientific and technical services

Consultancy offering in-depth expertise in a wide array of business payment platforms and systems

### Pharmako Biotechnologies

NSW, Manufacturing

Specialising in premium ingredients for the nutraceutical, pharmaceutical, functional food and cosmeceutical industries



# The Australian Friday 20/07/2018

Page: 1  
Section: The Deal  
Region: Australia, AU  
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Size: 12,091.00 sq.cms.



# slice

CUT STRAIGHT TO YOUR NEWS

press clip



Jason McDermott

## Dresden Optics

By Jane Nicholls

It took a couple of shortsighted guys to take on the eye-watering cost of prescription spectacles in Australia. For those used to shelling out several hundred dollars for prescription glasses, the price of a pair of single-vision reading or distance specs from Dresden Optics when the company opened its doors in Newtown, Sydney, in July 2015 was a thrilling surprise: \$49.

"We were just trying to find a solution for ourselves, as customers," says Bruce Jeffreys, who founded Dresden Optics with his friend and fellow specs wearer, Jason McDermott. "The last impression I want to give is that we knew that there was such a big problem right here in Australia, with people unable to afford what's a basic medical necessity. We went into it looking for something that would work for us: strong, reliable, durable, affordable glasses."

Jeffreys is the maverick who disrupted the auto industry when he and another mate co-founded a car-share service in Sydney in 2003. After selling a majority stake in GoGet to Archer Capital in 2014, he sank \$4.8 million of his share into launching Dresden to upend what he calls the "staggering, indefensible margins" common across the optometry retail industry, and to promote local advanced manufacturing.

He and McDermott met when the latter was interviewing him for a podcast. "Bruce was winding down his involvement with GoGet and had a head bristling with ideas and wanted to find someone to work with him," says McDermott. "We started on a few concepts, ranging from food production to education, and Bruce had this idea for an eyewear company with accessibility as the number-one value—it was the runaway project that we couldn't say no to."

To make its modular, colourful, lightweight nylon frames, Dresden partnered with a western Sydney manufacturer best known for its car badges, a business in a death dive along with Australian auto manufacturing. Astor Industries was remaking itself and, says Jeffreys, open to trying all sorts of things to manufacture the frames, which come in one style in several sizes and easily interchangeable arms, and are designed so that the Zeiss lenses pop in and out easily. Most of Dresden's single-vision glasses can be made up on the spot.

Dresden, now the only manufacturer of prescription eyewear frames operating in Australia, also received a \$2.7 million grant from the federal government's Advanced Manufacturing Fund to refine its process of turning waste plastics—from milk-bottle tops to the dreaded "ghost nets"

that are the scourge of marine life—into specs. "We want to make that the majority of our production, rather than using virgin plastic," says Jeffreys.

There's also an Australian manufacturing link in Dresden's partnership with German industrial giant Zeiss, which makes its lenses. Jeffreys explains that plastic prescription lenses were invented in Adelaide in the late 1950s, using a plastic known as CR-39. SOLA (Scientific Optometric Laboratories of Australia), the Australian company formed to make and market the lenses, was "at one time the world's biggest manufacturer of plastic prescription lenses", he says. "They had factories all over the world. They were sold to Pilkington Glass, eventually almost went broke and were bought by Zeiss in a fire sale."

Today, the "fantastic" general manager of Carl Zeiss Vision Australia, Hilke Fitzsimons, is a former SOLA employee, and Jeffreys regards "our partnership with Zeiss as a bit of a spirit of that original Australian lens company. We're trying to turn around what's been a very strong narrative of Australia as a commodities exporter."

To expand Dresden's reach, Jeffreys and McDermott designed a mobile optometry trailer that's been on the road in partnership with Vision Australia and more recently with HCF (which made Dresden one of only three preferred no-gap providers and has it in its scale-up accelerator program, Catalyst, and). "There's a revolution in the quality of portable diagnostic tools, which means we can take all this lightweight, hand-held equipment on the road and bring the eye doctor to you," says McDermott.

The trailer has been out to indigenous and regional communities, but Jeffreys is keen to dispel any suggestion they're doing charity work. "It's just normal work, we're doing it commercially and we're making money... the current industry is simply too expensive, so people who can't afford glasses go through a charity program—or they go without," he says. "Our approach is: glasses have been around for a long time, everyone can afford them, and we're making it so they can."

Dresden's growth inside three years is testament to the need: five branches in Sydney, a third opening in Melbourne this month and the first international store up and running in Toronto, Canada. In June, it announced a \$4 million cash injection from the Investec Emerging Companies fund, which Jeffreys says will help them expand to "sell in developing countries as well as rural and regional areas here at home... Our challenge is to get it out there... we don't see any limit to it in terms of demand".

## Mentor Q&A

### Mark Ritson

Adjunct professor  
Melbourne Business School  
Media columnist for *The Australian*

#### What is your advice on launching a business?

From a brand point of view, give your new business some latitude. Most successful brands move and morph in their first year or two and become something quite different from their initial idea.

#### What has been your biggest hurdle in business?

Time. Just time.

#### What was your scariest moment?

Starting to work as the branding professor for LVMH. I took the Eurostar to Paris with no clue about France, luxury or most of the brands I was about to start working for. On day one I met most of the presidents and my balls shrivelled to the size of peanuts.

### Steve Persson

CEO, The Big Issue

#### What was your scariest moment?

When we hosted the Homeless World Cup in Melbourne 10 years ago. The event was far more complex, deep and all-encompassing than any of us could have imagined. Then, 24 hours before the players were due to land in Australia, there was the very real possibility that some players were not going to be allowed into the country. The story ended well.

#### What's the best piece of business advice a mentor gave you?

Persistence is the key to success. You'll have knock-backs and face barriers, and you might spend years chipping away at your plan. But hold onto your vision and put in the hard work.

### Mia Freedman

Co-founder  
Mamamia Women's Network

#### What is your advice on launching a business?

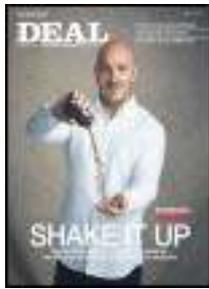
The hardest part is cutting through the avalanche of information. It's overwhelming. It was astonishing to me when I started my business that nobody had collated all the key elements and links in one place in a way that was easy to understand.

#### What was your scariest moment?

Running your own business means navigating a lot of emotional highs and lows. Fortunately my business partner is much better than me at being a calm head and a steady hand on the wheel.

#### Why do you think mentors are important?

It's vital to retain perspective and guidance from outside your business, especially as you grow.



# The Australian Friday 20/07/2018

Page: 1  
Section: The Deal  
Region: Australia, AU  
Circulation: 94448  
Type: National  
Size: 12,091.00 sq.cms.



# slice

CUT STRAIGHT TO YOUR NEWS

press clip

26

## Enterprise Bernard Salt



## Energy unleashed The future is now

**L**et there be no doubt about the entrepreneurial energy and ambition bubbling away in every corner and in every sector of the Australian continent. From agribusiness to energy to manufacturing, education, technology and software development, there are people – generally young – looking at ways to improve processes, reduce costs, leverage information and contribute to society.

And they're doing so not in the expectation of becoming rich but because they have a passion to build something, to create something.

These entrepreneurs are able to do all of this maybe just that little bit better with the help of the Westpac Businesses of Tomorrow program.

At a big-picture level, the overwhelming impression conveyed by the summaries of the Top 20 finalists is the scale of the movement of the Australian economy into the digital world. There are two manufacturers, a charitable service organisation, a recycling business, and another business that delivers financial services products. I would classify the remaining 15 businesses as being involved directly in technology or in some kind of software development.

I'll discuss the businesses in a moment. The bigger point that needs to be made is that in an exercise that canvasses the best businesses in 2018, the overwhelming picture is of an entrepreneurial energy that is fizzing and buzzing around technology.

From New South Wales, there's Araza, which specialises in evaluating the performance of existing technology. Here is technology being used to evaluate other technology. Queensland company Redback Technologies uses new technology to manage the storage of solar energy in the home and then sell it back to the grid. And from Victoria there's Planet Innovation, which helps commercialise health technology.

Whichever way you look at innovation and entrepreneurship, there is often a new technology component. For example, another of the Top 20 finalists, the Metamako group, sits at one end of the technology spectrum, building hardware and software to help businesses improve transaction rates. At the other end of this spectrum are groups such as Humanitix, which works in the field of charity support but does so using new technology. It runs an online ticketing service with booking fees directed to partner charitable organisations.

In one sense this business is about entertainment, but in another it's about the charity sector. And in another still it's about taking a new form of technology (event booking) and reimagining it.

Some of the Top 20 finalists come from outside the technology/software sectors. Dresden Optics, for example, manufactures while-you-wait affordable prescription lenses from ultra-durable nylon in fun and funky frames. They're so cheap (less than \$100) you can buy several pairs. Repurpose It specialises in turning waste into resources such as soil products and additives, as well as a range of materials used in road construction.

Especially like Orange Sky Australia, which started in Brisbane and takes a mobile laundry service to the homeless. What started out as a good idea for the city's down-and-out has now inspired the creation of 20 such services across Australia run by 1000 volunteers. This is not so much a new technology as just a great idea that improves the health and the self-esteem of the homeless.

The Westpac Businesses of Tomorrow program is one way we can help create the businesses and the prosperity that will deliver a stronger Australia.

*Bernard Salt is a columnist for The Australian and an advocate for Westpac's Businesses of Tomorrow program. bernard@tdgp.com.au*



Monica Meldrum

## Whole Kids

By Richard Ferguson

Monica Meldrum is the co-founder of organic food company Whole Kids. For 12 years, she and her husband James have been selling healthy snacks to children both here and overseas. And they're not afraid to delve into the politics of children's food.

**What does Whole Kids actually do?**  
We create healthy, organic food for children. We're a certified B Corporation [companies that use the power of business to solve social and environmental problems]. And we believe businesses are perfectly placed to solve the world's social and environmental problems. Whole Kids runs advocacy campaigns around kids' nutrition, and we're campaigning for tighter regulations around junk food marketing and banning dangerous food additives. We also work with NGOs to distribute food to families in need.

**Where did the idea for the business come from?**

My husband James and I didn't have kids at the time. I led an aid team to Indonesia for the Department of Foreign Affairs back in 2006. There were 16 Australians and we had to decide how we would use the aid funds to help these children in poverty – we were all really struck by them. It just made me question everything about my purpose, the meaning of life, all of that. James had studied for an MBA at the same time in the US and he'd seen how businesses there were doing much more to create social change.

**And how does an epiphany result in you setting up an organic business empire?**

We both came back to Australia to our 19 nieces and nephews. One of them has severe allergies, and we also noticed how frustrating it was for our siblings and parents to deal with the pressures from the junk food industry. I spoke to a dietician at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne and some organic growers, and we thought we could build a brand. James and I went to the Organic Expo in Sydney with a range of products and we were overwhelmed by the response. We got 80 stores to place

orders in the space of a weekend. So we quit our jobs the week after and threw everything into it.

**You clearly have good intentions, but does that always equal good business?**

Well, as a B-corporation we're clearly purpose driven. But to achieve that purpose we have to be profitable. It's important to have a business head and to be quite structured if you're going to use the funds you raise to help people in need in ways that really help.

**Has it been a battle to set up the business? The big food companies must not like you much.**

We're taking on the conventions. It is a battle and some of the big brands dominate the distribution. We really have to think differently about how to get products out there. We have also had to say no to opportunities that don't fit with our ethos. But we have incredibly loyal customers. We conduct hundreds of focus groups to see what parents want, and we've recently rebranded and so many customers have put up their kids to model on our product packages. The difference between us and the big brands is we're listening to customers.

**What are the big challenges for Whole Kids right now? Are there any new products or initiatives?**

We're always putting our minds to new products. And distribution is another big issue for us to tackle, especially with pushback from the big food brands. We have to use our voice to put our products out there – working a lot with local supermarkets but also exporters too. We're getting a lot of interest from overseas.

**Where are you looking to export?**

We're getting a lot of interest in South-East Asia, and Whole Kids is currently exporting to the Middle East. But we want to export in a way that stays true to who we are, not just push products to places that have

completely different buying patterns and food cultures to ours. We're working very closely with partners on the ground to develop products that are suitable for families in those countries.

**What's your advice to someone who's about to quit their job to start a B-corporation?**

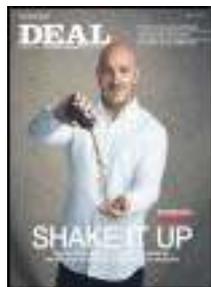
Research the market really well and just stay true to the business. We've been pulled in so many different directions but we keep coming back to what we do. There have been opportunities that seemed really lucrative at the time but we knocked them back because it didn't fit. You're best doing things slowly and getting your business right.

**You're a mum yourself these days. Do you still struggle to get your kids away from junk food despite making a living out of kids' organic food?**

Oh yeah. I think children are incredibly fussy but it's just driven me more. I saw a product recently that said on the front that it had nothing added. You look at the back and it's just filled with additives. I wouldn't give it to my daughter and I threw it in the bin. And in a way our own kids have also become the first tasters of our products.

**So what really drives Whole Kids?**

Ten years ago we set this goal of providing parents with 50 million healthier choices by 2020. We're on track to achieve that. But it goes back to Indonesia and using this business to make the world better for kids. We're currently working with Plan International to provide school meals to kids in developing countries. Businesses should support charities more; we can't rely on government. And I love the fact that we're creating a healthy product for kids here and using those proceeds to help children across the world.



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**slice**  
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THE DEAL | July 2018

**Planit Testing**

NSW, Professional scientific and technical services

Enabling clients to accelerate delivery of quality software through testing services and digital solutions

**Platinum Electricians**

NSW, Professional, scientific and technical services

Residential, commercial, industrial and project management electricians online and on call

**Powertec Telecommunications**

Qld, Information media and telecommunications

Distributor of Cel-Fi mobile boosters, mobile phone antennas, wi-fi, cellular gateways and other mobile technology

**Pressed Earth Juices**

WA, Wholesale trade

Supporting local businesses to bring Western Australia's best produce to the retail market

**Property Shares**

Vic, Financial and insurance services

Driving the future of real estate investing through debt finance and peer-to-peer property dealings

**Real Active**

NSW, Retail trade

Selling workout towels and drink bottles and donating 10 per cent of proceeds to mental health charities

**RedEye Apps**

Qld, Other services

Apps for solving issues across industries including engineering, water, healthcare, mining, manufacturing, oil and gas

**Roller**

Vic, Other services

All-in-one software for managing leisure and entertainment venues such as amusement, trampolining and fun parks

**Rotor Studios**

NSW, Other services

Full-service production company, post-production facility and computer-generated imagery studio, creating VR and immersive experiences

**Safe Ag Systems**

SA, Agriculture, forestry and fishing

An online work health and safety program prioritising injury prevention for farming and agribusiness

**Saski Collection**

Qld, Retail trade

Luxury athleisure and activewear label for women who combine fitness and fashion, strength and style

**See Civil**

Qld, Construction

Value-for-money civil construction solutions emphasising safety, environment, community and quality

**She Thrives**

NSW, Education and training

Psychology-based, self-led online programs to support working mothers to thrive through education, inspiration and community

**Simint**

Qld, Information media and telecommunications

Simple systems giving frontline staff in health and corrections the full picture to better serve more people

**Skipp Cash Flow**

NSW, Insurance and financial services

Finance platform helping small business to forecast and boost cash flow through invoice financing

**SLIKR**

Qld, Information media and telecommunications

A barber and beauty salon queue and booking app designed for the dynamic business

**SmartShepherd**

NSW, Agriculture, forestry and fishing

Agri-tech that tracks the maternal pedigree of lambs, generating breeding advice for farmers about profitable offspring

**Social Status**

NSW, Information media and telecommunications

Analytics platform for marketers and advertisers

**Solar D Skincare**

NSW, Manufacturing

Making broad-spectrum sunscreen that lets in a little UVB light to help make vitamin D

**Sonder Design**

NSW, Manufacturing

Making keyboards that adapt to display specific shortcuts on the keys for all your applications

**SoundFix Acoustics**

Vic, Professional, scientific and technical services

Delivering affordable acoustic solutions – sound absorption and echo elimination – in hospitality, corporate and educational settings

**SpacetCo**

WA, Rental, hiring and real estate services

A platform for finding and booking space by the hour to connect, collaborate or co-work

**Sportitude**

SA, Retail trade

Retailing performance sports gear such as shoes, clothes, equipment and supplements from leading brands

**Sports Performance Tracking**

Vic, Technology

GPS devices enabling coaches and athletes to understand speed, endurance, injury prevention and training load

**Stakeshop**

NSW, Financial and insurance services

Buy and sell US shares in the palm of your hand – access to more than 3000 stocks, no brokerage fees

**Starts at 60**

Qld, Information media and telecommunications

Website offering curated news, inspiration, stories, offers and travel deals for the baby boomer generation

**Stock in Store**

Vic, Other services

Retail technology telling online shoppers which nearby stores have the item they're seeking

**Strata Alert**

NSW, Rental, hiring and real estate services

An easy way for owners, tenants and office workers to keep current on maintenance issues



Tom Moore. The kangaroo has a long history as a military mascot

**WithYouWithMe**

By Jane Nicholls

In a conference space at Sydney's Maritime Museum, dozens of pairs of chairs are set up facing each other for an afternoon of speed dating. The heavy-hitting corporate suitors – their names are on the chair backs – include EY, Stryker, Accenture, PwC, Westpac, Cordelta, Splunk and Amazon. They've come along to this career expo with more than 100 open positions for candidates who have one qualification in common: military service.

In early 2015, Army veteran Tom Moore was frustrated by his own transition into the workforce and knew many fellow vets struggling with depression, unemployment or underemployment. He decided to follow what he'd learnt in the military: "Fix a problem, don't walk past it." By May last year, he had "about six people working out of my kitchen", and today 42 staff in offices in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Washington DC, are working for WithYouWithMe.

The unusual moniker comes from the lingo soldiers use as they go through a building in room-to-room combat, "one of the most dangerous things you can do, and we did a lot of it in the Middle East", says Moore. "The drill is when you come up to a doorway, the person behind says 'with you', and the person in front says, 'with me', and you go through the doorway together to protect each other." WithYouWithMe is his saying: "we're already through the door, we can help you through on your next journey."

Moore joined the Army at 18 and was only 23 when he led a 60-man combat team in Afghanistan in 2013. After he was injured, he ran one of the Army's outplacement projects. "I helped more than 400 people transition, and the process was crap ... which I discovered for myself when I went through it." Hundreds of fruitless applications finally led to a job in sales, "doing 50 cold calls a day after managing 100 people ... so it was a bit of a shift". Fellow veterans were either jobless or in part-time work that didn't line up with their real skills and experience. That's when Moore decided to try to fix the problem, with the analytical focus and determination you'd expect of a combat veteran.

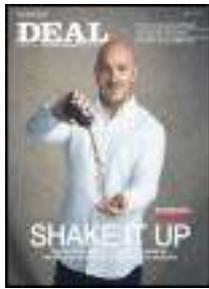
His idea was to use technology to identify known gaps in the labour market and the people best suited to fill them. "We're playing a supply and demand game," says Moore. "It's a simple methodology: what does the market need, what does the individual need and what can they do, then giving them the skills so they can be hired and pairing them with companies that need them." The skills-gap analysis, which is continually building using AI, pairs with a second piece of technology that matches people with jobs through online testing of "aptitude, intellect, psychometrics and culture fit". That test suggests 10 career paths and highlights skills gaps that need to be bridged to get there, plugging right into the WithYouWithMe online training platform "for things such as cyber security, robotic process automation and systems engineering," says Moore.

The software is all proprietary to WithYouWithMe and, as the company approaches 500 job placements for veterans the program is being piloted for retiring athletes and parents returning to work. "It's applicable to anyone who's going through unemployment or under-employment, or who is transitioning to a new career, which there's going to be much more of in the next 10 years," says Moore.

To that end, he believes his solution can help companies preserve their human capital in the face of technological change. "Not all of the new jobs are engineering related – a lot aren't, and four to 12 weeks of upskilling or retraining can get people up to the standard to do them," he says. "We've got a platform that allows companies to work out what they need and who among their staff are suitable for it, and an online training system that's quick and helps them to shift their workforce rather than replacing them."

As WithYouWithMe grows it will continue to serve and remain free for veterans (recruitment fees support that business model), including in the US. But Moore reckons they can "flip recruitment on its head" in the wider world, too.

"The company's at the top of the road; we've got a lot more to learn," says the 28-year-old. "Hopefully in the next few years we'll make a real dent in the issue for veterans and move on to something else. We're here to solve problems, and we've worked out that creating a sustainable business that helps individuals and companies is the easiest way to solve the underemployment rate."



# The Australian Friday 20/07/2018

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# slice

CUT STRAIGHT TO YOUR NEWS

press clip



## Navigating a lonely road Fellowship, writes Jackson Hewett, makes all the difference

I remember as a kid watching my dad staring out the window of the converted picker's hut that was his office, surrounded by whiteboard markers, stacks of newspaper clippings and overdue bills, and a brass plate that read "a messy desk means success". He spent a lot of time there, waiting for the phone to ring, hoping the next call would be from that one big investor, that farsighted buyer, or a politician who bought into his dream for our district.

Dad had lots of good ideas but he was before his time, a farmer who cottoned on to organics and sustainability before it was trendy. He spotted the avocado craze – 20 years too early.

Entrepreneurs see opportunities we don't, and through sheer bloody-mindedness, it seems, set about trying to prove they're right.

Some are wrong, some have terrible luck,

some can't execute and so, sadly, very few make it. Fewer still make it big.

So my enduring memory of Dad is of him on that phone, talking not to the investor, the buyer or the politician, but to his brother in Melbourne, strategising for hours about what to do next or just getting a sympathetic ear.

We need entrepreneurs and more of them, particularly in Australia, where the rate of new business formation is in decline. Add to that a high failure rate and the more support we give to those who are giving it a go the better.

I never truly realised how lonely the entrepreneur's life was until I joined 20 of the founders pictured above on a global study tour last year to such companies as LinkedIn, Airbnb, Uber and Alibaba as part of Westpac's inaugural Businesses of Tomorrow program.

### The 2017 Top 20 Businesses of Tomorrow leaders on the roof of LinkedIn

July 2018 | THE DEAL

These entrepreneurs, ranging from their teens to their early 60s, were like kids on school camp. I don't think I've ever seen adults bond so quickly and so permanently. It was as if all those years of obsession and grind and the manufactured bravado required to keep it all going had been lifted, and a feeling of freedom and joyous curiosity took its place.

"For the vast majority of small businesses it's a very lonely affair and everybody gets self-doubt," says David Hodge, CEO of recycling business Plastic Forests. "Are we going to make it, is it really going to happen after millions of dollars spent? There isn't that support for small business, and you end up boring your wife and your parents, your children, to death about how important it is doing what you do. So I've found winning the Businesses of Tomorrow has helped me through a lot of pain."

Vikram Sharma, CEO of Quintessence Labs, a company that uses quantum computing for cybersecurity, also found the camaraderie hugely beneficial. "Growing a business is a very solitary journey, and having that group of people to share the challenges and experiences is very comforting and affirming," he says.

A softly spoken, humble man with two masters degrees and a doctorate, Sharma was also moved by meeting the founders of Airbnb and LinkedIn. It helped him confirm that the stereotype of hard-charging leaders crashing or crashing through was more myth than reality.

"They told us of the importance of valuing and fostering your corporate culture during high growth. Sometimes that can take a back seat, and where that cultural element comes second to the focus on growth, growth plans can be impacted. Uber was an example of that."

Hodge and Sharma have already seen opportunities expand since they entered the

program. Hodge's recycling company is now in the box seat thanks to the Chinese government's decision to ban the importation of waste, and is fielding calls from major corporations around the country. Quintessence Labs has increased its staff from 40 to 60, and opened operations in the US and UK. Last month it was named as one of the World Economic Forum's tech pioneers for 2018 – an exclusive cohort that has included the likes of Google, Spotify and Atlassian.

Other members of the group have also used the program to expand their horizons. Will Davies, CEO of the peer-to-peer car-sharing platform Car Next Door, completed a successful capital raising of more than \$5 million by refining his pitch and selling a global vision. "This trip has freed my mind from thinking 'buy us now for \$100 million' to 'we're world class with this amazing technology,'" he says.

Hana Krawchuk, whose company Love to Dream makes swaddles that let babies sleep with their arms up, is on track to reach \$100 million in revenue and thinks she can triple in size after securing 'Target in the US as a customer. She used consulting support via the program to assess the potential of the business.

The 2017 Businesses of Tomorrow participants are going from strength to strength, and drawing strength from each other. A WhatsApp group buzzes with updates, questions and encouragement daily, and the members regularly meet to swap ideas and problems and to just be themselves.

David Hodge has this advice for those about to enter the program: "Bond quickly and openly – no non-disclosure or confidentiality agreements. Get open, get honest and get into the sharing." And get into a WhatsApp group of supportive peers. If anyone has one around sustainability start-ups, my dad would love to join. **D**

#### Superdraft

Qld, Professional, scientific and technical services

Leading architecture firm offering complete house design solutions for residential or commercial projects of any size

#### Swipe Health

NSW, Professional, scientific and technical services

A new model of pharmaceutical digital communications aiming to improve healthcare education among providers and patients

#### Tablo

Vic, Information media and telecommunications

Create and publish beautiful books, online and in paperback, to many retailers the world over

#### Tap into Safety

WA, Education and training

Health and safety training software and apps helping organisations engage workers and reduce injuries

#### Teach Starter

Qld, Education and training

Making classrooms buzz with time-saving resources for primary school teachers, including unit and lesson plans

#### TeleMed

WA, Healthcare and social assistance

Providing telenuclear medicine services to rural and remote communities, focusing on cardiology and oncology

#### The Bread and Butter Project

NSW, Manufacturing

Artisan bakery reinvesting profits into baker training and employment for refugees and asylum seekers

#### The DPoA Group

Professional, scientific and technical services

Providing premium customer service in novated leasing and salary packaging for both employers and employees

#### The Impact Suite

Qld, Other services charity and not-for-profit

Helping ethical charities build trust with donors, build fruitful relationships and create great impact

#### The New Royals

Vic, Professional, scientific and technical services

"The most interested creative agency in the world" producing arresting work generating cultural currency among consumers

#### The Social Science

Vic, Professional, scientific and technical services

Specialist knowledge for optimising social media in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine

#### Throat Scope

NSW, Healthcare and social assistance

Unique medical device for depressing the tongue – lights up in the mouth illuminating throat, palate and teeth

#### TM Insight

Vic, Professional, scientific and technical services

Specialist consultancy with in-depth industry experience in supply-chain management and industrial property development

#### Touchpoint Technology

NSW, Other services

Buying and selling new and refurbished IT hardware, leasing, secure data destruction, recycling and repairs

#### Transit Systems

Qld, Transport, postal and warehousing

Operating public bus services on behalf of state governments, transporting 60 million passengers a year

#### Travello App

Qld, Other services

App enabling travellers everywhere to connect, sync plans, create events, request help or make suggestions

#### Trend Lighting Co

NSW, Manufacturing

Collaborating with designers, architects and engineers to provide unique lighting systems for businesses

#### Truck Dealers Australia

SA, Information media and telecommunications

Online classifieds for buying and selling transport equipment, built by dealers, for dealers

#### Turbine MachineGenes

Qld, Professional, scientific and technical services

Research and development entity for technologies that enable machines to understand and control complex systems

#### Unbound Global

Vic, Education and training

Social enterprise working with universities to provide overseas educational programs connecting students to vital global issues

#### UrbanYou

NSW, Information media and telecommunications

A quick and easy way to book trusted house-cleaning and garden maintenance

**BUSINESSES OF TOMORROW**  
In partnership with **Westpac**

#### V2i Realtime and V2i Group

Qld, Information media and telecommunications

Creating 3D visualisation and software products for the mining and resources, health and eLearning sectors

#### Viewport

WA, Professional, scientific and technical services

Digital studio producing world-class virtual reality and augmented reality applications and immersive 360-degree visual experiences

#### Virtual Legal

Qld, Professional, scientific and technical services

Fixed-fee online law firm using technology to provide a broad range of legal services

#### Workbox Safety

Tas, Administrative and support services

Cloud-based health and safety software for maintaining safe systems of work and managing legislative requirements

#### WorkingMouse

Qld, Professional, scientific and technical services

Software developers who partner with clients to transform ideas into commercially viable apps and businesses

#### Yume Food

Vic, Wholesale trade

Wholesale marketplace for quality surplus food, connecting suppliers who have surplus products with buyers

#### ZiggyLabs

NSW, Professional, scientific and technical services

Research-led start-up focused on a blood cancer in companion animals, particularly golden retrievers and German shepherds