

Our Town

your voice in the local community

No.52 - March 2014



Our volunteers do us proud

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Ray White Works

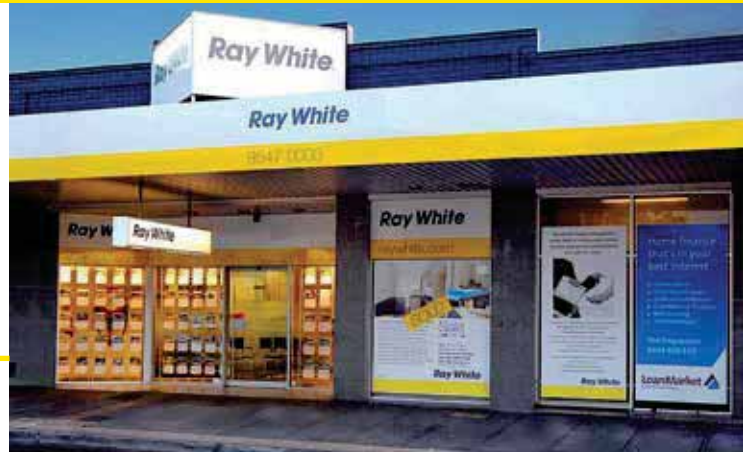
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42 Douglas Street Noble Park

Ray White



Our Town

2013 Publication Dates

Deadline for advertising and editorial copy is
15th of the month before publication
(i.e.: May 15, August 15)

Next edition - June

Our Town

is delivered to homes in Noble Park and
Keysborough and is also available at the
following outlets:

Variety News & Lotto

Noble Park Newsagency

Noble Park RSL

Club Noble

Keysborough Lotto

City of Greater Dandenong Offices

Noble Park Community Centre

Masters - Keysborough

Paddy O'Donoghue Community Centre

Bendigo Community Bank, Dingley

and all participating retailers and advertisers.

Editorial

Is our future at the end of the line?

The recent rash of announced departures from our shores by global manufacturing and production giants, along with the demise of iconic Australian companies, brings into sharper focus an Australia of the future few of us would recognise.

Without attempting to unravel the mysteries of boardroom dynamics and global finance, the fact that so few of our everyday items will be made in Australia was brought home to me in a small way during our recent heatwave.

An almost-new Samsung split-system air conditioner, still under warranty, malfunctioned yet again in my office. It had already received attention previously. A "faulty board" was the diagnosis. With temperatures hovering around the 40-degree mark on a consistent basis, I was informed the new parts had to be ordered from Sydney and would "take a few days". They took a week.

My relief when the new parts arrived was short lived when they too were found to be faulty. With the shrug of his shoulders and an embarrassed smile, the genial service technician gave me the unwelcome news. "We'll have to order more parts - it will be a few days."

This took another 13 days. This time, parts had to come from Korea. I considered myself lucky that the obliging service team attended when they did - other service centres contacted had a three-week waiting list!

In my sweat induced frustration, I called Samsung on a number of occasions. But hopes of speaking to anyone in Australia were non-existent. The well-meaning people on the end of the phone were based in the Philippines and could do no more than refer me back to local service centres. Was there a part available in Melbourne?

continued on page 3

FOODWORKS

Hi customers,

Who can believe it's autumn already? This year is going to be a big one at Foodworks Keysborough as we thank everybody for making us welcome and helping us through a tough and, sometimes frustrating first year at Kingsclere Avenue. Now that we've settled in, it's full steam ahead and we will be offering lots of money-saving specials throughout the year. Come in and say hello and check out our large range of stock and our weekly specials.

Shop locally and we'll look after you.

See you then,
Tony

Kathy and
Mandeep - part of
our enthusiastic team



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Olive's room is a fitting tribute



Above: Dawn Dickson and Mayor, Jim Memeti unveil Olive's storyboard

Olive O'Donoghue's lifelong contribution of community work has been honoured by the opening of Olive's Room at the Paddy O'Donoghue Centre in January. City of Greater Dandenong Mayor Jim Memeti and Olive's niece, Dawn Dickson unveiled the storyboard that will take pride of place in the function room. Olive's love of gardening has also been acknowledged with the establishment of Olive's Garden at the front of the building named after her husband.

It is a fitting tribute to the much-loved Olive, who shared Paddy's passion



for local community. Mayor Memeti spoke of Olive's enormous contribution to Noble Park, while niece Dawn remembered a quiet achiever who would do anything to help.

"If there was a job to do, Olive would do it. She must have baked many thousands of cakes".

"This will ensure that Olive's memory will live on", she added.

Editorial cont.

Who knows? No, we must go through the "procedure", which means waiting for the relevant part to come from wherever – but it wasn't Melbourne, or even Australia! All I know is that during one of our longest heatwaves in memory, I was without the use of a product, sold in Melbourne and under warranty, for nearly a month.

Yes, an insight into the future for consumers in this great country isn't all that encouraging. We'll continue to buy products made overseas from companies paying their taxes overseas and with their "service centres" and spare parts based overseas.

And when we need something fixed, whether under warranty or not, we'll just have to wait!

Daryl Pitman
Editor

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Our CFA volunteers do us proud



Fires like this kept the boys busy over summer.

As we begin to count the costs of another hot summer and another cluster of destructive and frightening fires, we should all take a moment to doff our lids to our magnificent volunteer firefighters. Noble Park and Keysborough CFA members have again been in the thick of things and, quite literally, at the coalface as raging blazes threatened communities, properties and lives.

Terence Sanford, a First Lieutenant with the Noble Park CFA, is one of many locals who have answered the call of duty further afield in places like the Grampians and Hazelwood coalmine.

Terence, who has been with Noble Park for nearly six years, explains that it's a team effort when danger threatens.

"We're part of District 8, which is the largest in the state, and when big fires happen, resources from our district and others swing into action.

"It has been a busy summer for us. We've had three members at the Grampians fires and so far, seven members have been battling the Morwell fire."

A few kilometres away, it's a similar story for the Keysborough CFA brigade.

Did you know - 80% of the profits from your Community Bank are returned to the Community?

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Capt. Keith Stokoe, Keysborough CFA veteran

Captain Keith Stokoe, a veteran of more than 20 hot summers, has seen it all during his time.

“Our crews were part of Black Saturday and that is something I never want to see again”, he says with a shake of the head.

“The past few months have been really busy for us. Our crews were part of a specialist task force sent to central Victoria in early January where they put in a few 16-hour days.

“We were then called in to help at the Morwell fire and we’ve got members still there as we speak.”

The Keysborough fire truck was still in Morwell at the time of writing, while the station’s 4WD vehicle has also been swung into use. The Noble Park vehicles have also been in the midst of the action.

After being ‘bussed’ to the fire locations, volunteers work in 10- or 12-hour shifts.

“Some stay for longer if they can, but as most volunteers have full-time jobs, the CFA does a good job of rotating us around”, says Terence.

Of the 30 members at Noble Park, 27 are operational and they undergo comprehensive training for all sorts of contingencies, while there are currently 22 members on Keysborough’s roll.

“But it’s not just bushfires that their crews are called to deal with. “We attend car accidents, gas leaks, petrol spills, house fires, factory fires, search and rescue operations, storm damage and any other emergency situation”, Terence explains.

And they’ve got to get there quickly. Volunteers have a response time of just four minutes after receiving their pager call to be seated on the truck.

Another four minutes are allowed for members to arrive at the scene of the emergency. Noble Park and Keysborough are proud of their 97% records of having a unit at the scene within eight minutes of the alarm being raised.

“You’ve got to plan your routes pretty carefully and local knowledge is a big help”, says Keith.

Crews at each station train once a week. “We’ve got to work to maintain the skills we have learned and to undergo any new courses or equipment training that is required”, explains Keith.

But it’s not all danger and seriousness.

“Some funny things happen”, Terence says with a slow shake of the head.

“When I was serving in the RFS (the NSW version of the CFA), a semi-trailer loaded with chickens overturned on the highway and we spent the next six hours chasing chickens.”

Keith remembers being called out to a possum stuck in a roller door and on another occasion, it was to rescue kittens from a roof.

Amazingly, like most CFA outfits, Noble Park and Keysborough must raise their own funds for equipment and facilities. Only the trucks and their maintenance are government funded.

“Anything else we need, we have to raise the funds to get”, Terence says.

Both Noble Park and Keysborough are fully voluntary. “Some stations have some paid personnel, but we’re a 100% volunteer station”, Terence points out.

Keith is “house proud” of his team’s Keysborough headquarters. “The tin shed that houses the vehicles was all that was here originally”, he says.

“Everything else has been built by volunteer members”.

Noble Park boasts a proud history as a community fire brigade and this year celebrates 85 years of public service, while Keysborough is a little younger, having begun operations in 1956. Today’s members are quick to point out the huge array of competition trophies and awards won by the brigades over the years. At Noble Park, familiar faces of previous leaders beam down from the walls of the Buckley Street headquarters, telling their own history of achievement.

As in all volunteer organisations, additions to the ranks are eagerly welcomed.

“We’re always looking for new members”, says Terence. “The more members we have, the better our ability to serve the community, he adds, while Keith points out that Keysborough is currently in the midst of a recruiting drive.

Both Terence and Keith have nothing but admiration for the volunteers who make up their brigades.

“They’re a great bunch of people and it makes you really proud to be a part of it all”, Keith adds.

So why do these young men and women do it?

“The reward is seeing the look on people’s faces when we arrive”, says Terence.

“They know you’re there to help and that’s reward enough for us.”

So next time you see any of those magnificent young men and women of the Noble Park or Keysborough CFA units at a fund-raising barbecue or rattling a tin on a corner, give generously – it could be your house they save!

For further information on joining the CFA visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au



**NEIGHBOURHOOD
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Neighbourhood Watch Greater Dandenong

Public Forums for 2014

Dates for your diary: Guest Speakers:

- Wednesday, May 21 -
Sergeant Pat Green
- Wednesday, September 17 -
representative from White Ribbon

Paddy O'Donoghue Community Centre
Room 3, 18-34 Buckley St Noble Park
7.30pm - 9.00pm

All residents are welcome to come along (light supper provided). We hope to see you there and have the opportunity to meet socially, the Committee of NHWGD and local Police. Excellent community topics will be covered and there will be time for you to ask questions.

One Way Screws for Motor Vehicle Number Plates:

We now have a range of one way screws for motor vehicle number plates, all we need to know is what make and model vehicle you have, \$2.00 for a set of 4. Can contact us or they are available at our meetings.

Call Triple Zero (000)

As a community it is our responsibility and duty to call Triple Zero (000) for police if we hear, see anything that may be suspicious, only in an emergency where police are needed. For example: any suspected offence in progress, being witnessed or just committed, it could be persons yelling for help at any time day or night

- any situation where life or injury is threatened
- motor vehicle accident where persons are injured
- air, rail or water accident
- any event which might cause danger to persons or property
- explosion or bomb incident/threat
- a disturbance or breach of the peace, for example domestic violence incident or anti-social behaviour.

Copies of our newsletter are available at clubs, libraries, offices, theatres and shops throughout the city, or via email. Call Dawn on 0407 325 030 for details.



NOBLE PARK COMMUNITY FORUM

Douglas Street Streetscape

In the 2012/13 financial year, the Douglas Street streetscape upgrade project received capital improvement funding to undertake a concept design for the street. The concept design follows an extensive review of the different uses, traffic requirements, parking needs and environmental considerations of Douglas Street to ensure that there is a balance achieved between retail trading, pedestrian and vehicle movement, and landscape amenity.

The main design objectives are to reinforce the village character and improve the visual appearance of Douglas Street. This includes the provision of improved pedestrian crossings and widened landscaped areas with street trees where the streets intersect with Douglas Street. The introduction of trees with seasonal colour and more seating areas will contribute to supporting the social role of the street for informal gathering.

Council propose to undertake stage one of the project in early 2014. The stage one project is planned to occur at the Frank Street and Douglas Street intersection and the Noble Park Civic Space. Future stages will be dependent on Council's subsequent budget allocations.



www.nobleparkcommunityactionforum.com

The new Garden centre at Masters invites you to come and have a look at the store that everyone has been talking about. We have a good variety of plants, pots and gardening products – and a friendly garden team that will give you the right information and materials for your project.

Our new Garden Club workshops will be commencing soon – why not join – it's free!



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See you all at Masters
Keysborough soon



Local Footy Show returns for 18th season

The award-winning *Local Footy Show* returns to our television screens again in 2014, bigger and better than ever. The show, which is filmed and produced in Noble Park and screened on Channel 31 (44 digital), will revert to its original, full 90-minute format on Friday nights at 7pm, with a full replay on Saturday mornings at 9am. It is the only 90-minute program that is screened in prime time on Channel 31 and has always commanded a huge audience.

Program producer Daryl Pitman is pleased that the show has reverted to its old format.

"We did a 30-minute program on Friday nights last season and a different 90-minute show on Saturday mornings. But so many of our viewers who were actually involved

in local football, were unable to see the full show on Saturdays and the feedback was quite strong.

"Our audience is really split into two main parts and now both components can see the full show."

This year's show will also sport a new look with a new set and some new faces, along with a stronger emphasis on stories across Victoria and many high-profile guests.

Pitman is proud that *The Local Footy Show* team is doing something unique.

"The mainstream media would have us believe that football is all about the AFL, but local footy, along with netball in regional areas, is the social glue of our suburbs and country towns", he said.



The Local Footy Show team gears up for another busy season

"Ours is the only show on free-to-air television or otherwise that covers the game at the grassroots level on a weekly basis."

Technical Director Wayne "Cec" Steele, another Noble Park local, has been the guiding technical force behind the show since it began in 1997 and will again be at the helm for all things technical.

The first *Local Footy Show* for 2014 will go to air on Friday, April 4 at 7pm.



RSL launches courtesy bus

Getting to the Noble Park RSL for one of their delicious bistro meals, a flutter on the pokies or just a cold frothy with friends – and then getting home again – has just been made a whole lot easier and worry-free with the introduction of a members courtesy bus.

The members-only service was introduced on February 28 and is already proving popular. It will operate within a 5km radius of the club on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

"The service is in its infancy and will undoubtedly alter as we receive

constructive feedback from our members", said Noble Park RSL President, John Meehan.

"It is not an 'on-demand' service and will run to a set timetable, with pick-ups and drop-offs to the members' residences only", Mr Meehan pointed out.

A map of the areas covered by the service, which is not available to non-members, is available in the club foyer.

Bookings and further information, including membership enquiries, can be made by calling the club on 9548 3750.

Peter Brown

Councillor

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Rotary at work in our community

Douglas Wood tells his story

The Rotary Club of Noble Park recently hosted guest Speaker Douglas Wood. Douglas was kidnapped in Baghdad, Iraq in 2005 and held captive for 47 days before being rescued.

His recounting of this personnel experience was very moving and his responses gave an emotional insight to an exceptionally dire situation.

He was in the country to administer some large contracts to build infrastructure in Iraq and by using local labor, to help put income into the local community.

He was taken to a local building to have a meeting with the local Government representative. However, he was captured in this house and held with two other people whilst a request for ransom was made to the Australian Government. His two local guides were taken away and he was left with the other two captives. Many demands and accusations were made and he was forced to be videoed to request the government to pay the ransom of \$25m. He made an impassioned plea to save his life and has always felt like a traitor since that recording. However, when faced with the knowledge of his situation he made a very conscious choice, not withstanding the gun held at his head just off camera.

He was moved to another house in Baghdad, along with the others and many harsh beatings ensued. Other captives were added to the mix and some of them were shot, while one was released after \$50,000 changed hands. Douglas's plight continued. Fortunately, a local Iraqi security man overheard a conversation and he started to look for the captives, with house searches initiated in the area where they were being held. At this point Douglas detailed one point of the culture of the Middle East. No man looks at another's woman. When the search of the house where he was being held was completed the report came that there were only two women in there. A second search was instructed and the same reported. What the captors had done was to throw shawls over the two captives and the local soldiers would not lift these to enquire. They were instructed for a third time to search and specifically look.

This discovery rescued the men and it was later learned that the plans were to execute both within the next 12 hours of the day of rescue.



Douglas Wood

The Australian government had provided support but would not negotiate with the captors. Douglas's health had severely suffered and he spent time in recuperation and debriefing but he was not able to provide any specific information.

The Club members expressed their appreciation to Douglas for his recounting of this difficult experience.

A small gift of a good "Red" was provided for his experience.

School equipment for East Timor



Students in East Timor have been sitting on the floor and using the back of the student in front of them to rest their blackboard as they write, so the supply of school equipment is so desperately needed.

With the help of local and neighboring primary schools, the Rotary Club of Noble Park is sending school equipment to East Timor, kindly donated by the schools after their own equipment was upgraded. Noble Park Primary School Principal David Rothstadt and St. Anthony's Primary schoolteacher Jeannette Quinn have provided a number of school desks, teachers' desks, chairs, bookcases, whiteboards, filing cabinets,

pens, pencils and stationery which will be sent to East Timor for use in primary schools. A major fund-raising event at the home of Honorary Rotarian Tom Quinn and his wife Jeannette attracted 100 people and helped to raise the necessary funds to pay for the container, which will leave for Dili in East Timor at the end of March. A group calling themselves "Friends of East Timor" also kindly donated a \$7000 generator to this very worthwhile cause. Other primary schools that also provided equipment were Carlton Park, Kingswood in Dingley Village, Mentone Park, Camberwell and Sunbury West.

Ron Damon - International Director

Keely does locals proud in Sydney



The Rotary Club of Noble Park was treated to a very special guest speaker last week when 11-year old pint-sized powerhouse Keely Ortland from the Springvale and District Netball Association, a grade 6 student, recounted her experiences at national level netball in Sydney in December 2013.

Keely's hard work and dedication caused her to be included in the squad of the under-12 indoor netball team run by indoor sports Victoria to play in the national competition. A reserve or "shadow" player, Keely, through her effort and will power, made sure that she was included in all games. She also had to overcome a high temperature and a rolled ankle to succeed.

Keely spoke to the club about her experiences and was one of the youngest guest speakers the club has hosted.

Keely explained the experience of the interstate competition. It was her first experience and she acquitted herself exceptionally well. The competition was fierce and the team from Victoria finished 4th overall in the tournament, which included teams from all over Australia.



back chat

OMG my back's gone!

Oh that terrible feeling of acute sudden back pain accompanied by not being able to straighten up. You look like the leaning "Tower of Pisa" as you walk down the street.

So what's going on inside your back?

The back is steered by a series of hinge like joints called facets. Each vertebra has two on top and two below and there are 24 movable vertebrae in the spine. Each hinge can move through six directions. So that's a lot of movement the brain has to steer with billions of nerve impulses to hundreds of muscles that move these joints. That movement relies on nerve messages going from the joint to the brain (proprioception). The brain then interprets these messages and decides the most appropriate movement to occur. It is thought that if these messages are interrupted due to nerve irritation at a spinal level or a sluggish response from the brain due to chemical or emotional stress, that the movement goes haywire and misalignment causing a pinch of the hinge joint or tearing of a disc occurs.

It is thought that prolonged bending forward increases the likelihood of nerve irritation and poorer proprioception.

Certainly we see this Tower of Pisa look more often in patients after prolonged bending activities such as long hours in the garden.

If the problem tears the disc the treatment and recovery can take weeks to months. However if the problem is from the hinge joint, treatment and response occurs over days.

If the disc is torn, it will hurt to cough and bear down, it will hurt to lean forward and often the pain goes into the legs as well as the back. If it comes from the hinge joints, it is sharp back pain and less often in the legs. Other tell tale signs that the hinge joints are causing the pain is they are tender to touch



on examination and moving backward is worse than forward.

And of course you can have a mixture of both hinge joint irritation and disc tearing.

Treatment is based around regaining normal movement as quickly as possible. This is done using hands on care and gentle stretching in pain free directions. Ice in the early stages is helpful. Then proprioception is improved with weight bearing balance exercise.

Remember when your back "goes" get some help and get on top of it early. It may mean a problem of days rather than weeks.

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Hazel's Recipe



Cookie Nests

With Easter not far away, here is an easy treat to make with the kids.

You will need:

- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup butter
- 3 cups rolled oats
- 4 Tbsp. cocoa powder
- pinch salt
- 1 cup coconut
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- mini chocolate eggs and shredded coconut, for decorating

Method

1. Bring sugar, milk and butter to a boil in a saucepan. Simmer 3 minutes.
2. Remove from heat and stir in remaining ingredients until well incorporated.
3. Spoon into lightly greased muffin cups (or use un-greased silicone muffin cups for easier removal). Using the back of a spoon press the mixture down in the middle and up along the sides, forming a nest. Allow to harden.
4. Using a knife, loosen the edges and gently pop out the nests.
5. Store covered at room temperature for up to two days. Freeze for longer storage.
6. To decorate: sprinkle with coconut and fill with mini eggs.

Makes 12 large nests

Enjoy...

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10 Our Town

Our Town counsellor 5 Tips on How to deal with Rejection



1. Know what you are feeling: emotional awareness
2. What are the core beliefs?
3. Process the issues/memories of your past. Don't let the past baggage create the future.
4. Respond don't react. Be intentional about your choices moment by moment.
5. It's not about you. Don't take it personally.

Rejection is a universally human experience. We all at some level know the pain of rejection. Whether it's missing out on that desperately wanted perfect job, or the pain of a relationship break-up. It hurts. Sometimes it feels like it's something we won't recover from. Sometimes there is grief and loss and sometimes it does take time. However, there are things we can do to facilitate the healing process.

We often seek to avoid feeling painful or difficult feelings. However, we need to feel the feelings. This is the very thing we most need to do to heal. Repression, denial, avoidance, distraction are common ways of warding off the difficult emotions. But they don't work in the long run and are pretty unsatisfactory as far as promoting our growth and maturity. The more we avoid feeling the pain of rejection, the more it will run us from our subconscious. So, when you are feeling hurt, it helps to pause and actually see what it is that you are feeling. It helps to allow yourself to feel your feelings. It's an old adage but a truism: feelings are neither right nor wrong, they just are. We feel what we feel. It's the avoidance of the feelings that keeps us stuck. It's also the stories we create around them. So step number one is commit to becoming aware of what you feel. Face right into it and let your feelings be your guide.

Next is to look at the stories around your experience. What does this remind you of? What do you tell yourself about yourself? Is it, I'm not good enough? I'm not worthy, I don't deserve to be happy/loved etc?

When we feel pain, sadness, loss, missed opportunity, or alone, we tend to go into a whole big story about our experience. Rarely is this

helpful. But it is useful to know and recognise what stories we have playing out. These stories are of our own making. We can change our stories. We do not need to keep them going around like old bad movies inside our head getting reruns, long past their use-by date. It is far better to be curious about the meaning we make of our experience and what we tell ourselves about ourselves. When we look at the patterns we have around our stories and what we do with them, we can then be in a place of empowered choice. We do not need to act on automatic but rather can choose moment by moment. So the question to ask is: Is it true? Once we have acknowledged how we feel and allowed ourselves to feel that, together with recognizing the story or meaning we make of it, then we can move to look at how we may be overloading the experience in the present with the old stories of the past. For each person it will be different. We know this because we know that what we react to another person could be fine with. When we react rather than respond we know we have been triggered.

Rejection is painful but it does not need to have the last word. If we use the experience as a learning one, we can develop our sense of self and our resilience. We learn that despite what is happening we can say, "that's ok, it hurts and I'm ok".

Finally, it is helpful to remind ourselves that we all act based on our history and our past experiences. As Don Miguel Ruiz says in The Four Agreements "Nothing a person does is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their reality, their dream." Understanding this can prevent a lot of needless suffering.

Margie Ulbrick

Margie is a Melbourne Relationship Counsellor and Collaborative Family Lawyer

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Reflections of a Grumpy old man

Where have the laughs gone?



Like many of my vintage, I enjoy the 'golden oldies' radio stations and when singing along with 'My Old Man's A Dustman' the other day (and hoping nobody was watching), I got to wondering whatever happened to the novelty songs that gave us all a bit of a laugh back in the 50s and 60s.

Don't we have a sense of humour any more? In the days of the old top 40, there was always a healthy spattering of novelty songs that created a sense of fun. Now I'm no expert when it comes to today's music and stand to be corrected, but it seems to me that there's a distinct lack of fun in the modern music scene.

Remember Alan Sherman's *Hullo Muddah, Hullo Faddah*, or Charlie Drake lamenting that *My Boomerang Won't Come Back*? And just when you thought things were getting a bit serious, *Along Came Jones!* The versatile Ray Stevens had us guffawing at Ethel in *The Streak* and the antics of *Ahab the Arab*, while the talented British showman Tommy Steele made us laugh with his *What A Mouth and Little White Bull*. And who can forget *Alley Oop* and *Snoopy* taking on the *Bloody Red Baron*?

Yes, admittedly they're a bit on the corny side when you look back, but they did engender a sense of light-heartedness sadly missing now. No longer does anyone ask *Donald Where's Your Trousers* or *Does Your Chewing Gum*

Lose Its Flavour on the Bedpost Overnight, which is all a bit sad really. Have we simply outgrown such nonsense? Are we all a bit too focussed on political correctness and social campaigns? Does everything now have to have a deep and philosophical message?

Yes, I hear you yelling at me that there's still lot of good music about, but that's not what I'm asking. Where are the classics like *You Can't Roller Skate in a Buffalo Herd* and *Who Put The Bomp in the Bomp, Bomp Bomp*? You see, they just can't write 'em like that any more.

Come Outside, Right Said Fred, Ernie the Milkman, Yackety Yak, Lady Godiva, I'm Henry the Eighth I Am . . . oh yes, the list is endless – remnants of a lost art.

We had our own Aussie classics too – like *Pub With No Beer, Have You Ever Been To See King's Cross, I've Been Everywhere and Shaddap Your Face*, while *Sadie*, the song that launched the career of John Farnham (I still call him Johnny) was a novelty piece too.

I'm sure that the answer is in the writing. I think we've simply lost the knack of penning tricky lyrics like "Ooh ah, ooh ah ah, ting tang, walla walla bing bang" from *Witch Doctor* that did so well for Alvin and the Chipmunks – now there was a group!

Ah well, that's progress I suppose. I think I might ponder the subject further over a frothy Ballarat Bitter as I listen to a few gems from George Formby.

MANAGING MONEY

ATO & Audits – Will You Be Just Another Number?

Part 1

It seems as though 2014 has signalled the ATO will be flicking the 'on' switch in regards to the number of questions, reviews and audits they are set to conduct. Maybe they are just trying to clean up their internal affairs or it's a directive around raising some extra revenue! Whatever the reasoning, the ATO is set to cause many people and many businesses out there one big headache!

Let's examine some things that may cause a trigger around your affairs;

1. Have financial performance that is out of line with your industry

The ATO analyses all tax returns, from small ones right up to the larger ones. For any business they pay extra attention too is the business performance standard compared to that of their industry peers. This is based upon the industry type declared on the front page of the tax return. The ATO consider that if you're inconsistent with the general industry averages, this can be highlight tax issues. For example, unreported (cash) income.

2. Don't pay the legal minimum amount of superannuation on behalf of your employees

What happens if an employee complains to the ATO that their employer has not paid them the right amount of superannuation, or hasn't paid it on time. We have seen this happen on many occasions and it is a trigger for a review or audit from the ATO. Often these types of audits can begin as a review of superannuation guarantee obligations but quickly escalates to include income tax, GST or even Capital Gains Tax issues if the process isn't appropriately managed.

3. Variances between BAS's and tax returns

Reconciling business activity statements and tax returns is an integral component of any tax risk management. Quite simply, discrepancies between the information reported in a tax return when compared to the activity statements is likely to trigger an ATO review or audit. Your proactive accountant needs to make this a key part of their preparation process – just like we do at ZJL Partners.

4. Poor record of lodging returns on time

Are you always late with your lodgements? I'm not just talking about your tax return, you must consider all reporting obligations. This would include activity statements, superannuation responsibilities, fringe benefits, etc. Late payment of any tax liabilities will also be frowned upon. A good compliance history can be invaluable due to the way it improves the ATO's perception of you and your business.

To be continued

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