



Initiatives

CYBI Inc.

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Small steps - valuable outcomes

CYBI (*Creating Youth Business Initiatives*) has been around for quite a while – seven years, in fact. It's a small organisation, run by community volunteers, a modest group with modest aims, which has never sought a high profile.

Nevertheless, during those seven years, CYBI has helped some 50 young entrepreneurs, all of whom were previously unemployed, to launch successful businesses. Their success has flowed on into the community, and they now employ at least 50 others.

INITIATIVES aims to inform you of some of the successes that CYBI has helped create, and generate a wider

awareness of what CYBI does and how. However, this doesn't indicate any change in CYBI's ambitions or ideals. The CYBI model of community-based support for young entrepreneurs has never been more relevant – but it remains founded, as always, on a tight integration with the local community, and on the practical, small-scale nature of the projects it supports.

We hope that *INITIATIVES* will give you fresh insight into the potential of the CYBI approach, and help to build awareness of the programme amongst potential participants, volunteers, and supporting community and Government groups.◊

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Animal Eyes

When Melanie Whitten joined the CYBI programme nearly four years ago, she already had the most important building block for her future success in place – a passion for photographing pets –and, on occasion, their owners.

'Money doesn't matter as long as I'm happy, and happy within myself at getting up every day and doing the hard yards. You really have to love what you do,' she says.

Mel had always known she wanted



to be a photographer, and had been working for free in studios since she left school, with the aim of getting to know the studio environment. This led her into advertising photography. Somewhere along the way, she realised how relaxed her friends looked in front of the cam-

era when she photographed them with their dogs. 'They just let go all their inhibitions, it was natural poses and natural smiles,' she says. She found that she was doing more and more work with animals. Eventually the time came where she said 'Let's do this!' After undertaking the NEIS programme, Mel presented a business plan to CYBI, and received funding that allowed her to buy a computer and the software that are essential to a photographer's practise these days. After three years of building up the business on a casual basis, she went full time a year ago, establishing Animal Eyes.

The NEIS training was very important, because being self-employed you have to be good at everything. 'I hate the bookwork and the computer work, I just love taking photographs,' says Mel, 'but you have to become the bookkeeper as well, and the manager. If you're not flexible enough to be all those three or four people, it could be hard.'

More important than funding or training though, was the mentoring that came with the CYBI programme. Mel also maintains contact with other friends who run their own businesses. 'Networking in Canberra is quite good - there are

lots of seminars going on, and they're free,' she says.

Mel has been operating from a shop in Fyshwick for a year now, but already new opportunities are on the horizon. She has recently landed a contract with a major pet food manufacturer, and will be commuting between Canberra and Sydney from now on. This will probably

'If you're passionate about it, just do it. There's a lot of help out there. I got it right- eventually.'

- Melanie Whitten

Broader Horizons

CYBI is expanding throughout the Capital Region.

At a function in Goulburn at the end of October, organised and sponsored by the Capital Region Employment Council (CREC), CYBI took the first steps towards extending its successful model beyond Canberra.

At the launch the Member for Hume, Mr. Alby Schulz, said that the extension would 'fill a niche in job creation at the micro-business/self employment level.' CYBI is now planning implementation across the Capital region, including Yass, Crookwell, Gunning, Queanbeyan and Braid-

wood, as well as Goulburn.

This project is supported by funding from the Commonwealth Government under its Regional Assistance Programme, administered by the Department of Transport and Regional Services. ◊



Member for Hume, Mr. Alby Schulz, in Goulburn

require her to employ someone to look after the business in Canberra, a big step for someone as conscious of quality as Mel. However, it will also be a step towards a longer-term goal. 'I'd like to take some photos, step away from the business and focus on the creative side,' she says.

Although the business is a full time commitment – Mel is currently working until midnight almost seven days a week - she says it suits her fine. Her advice to anyone wanting to do the same thing is simple: 'If you're passionate about it, just do it. There's a lot of help out there. I got it right- eventually.'◊

Extending CYBI's target group

During the past seven years CYBI has targeted young graduates of the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS). This, and our other partner programmes, continue to be of great importance to CYBI.

However, it has been a long-term goal to expand the CYBI program to provide assistance to a wider range of disadvantaged young people in the ACT and the surrounding region.

New processes for training and supporting small intakes of CYBI applicants from this larger group of young people have been developed. Approximately 9 people expressed an interest in taking part in a trial intake of non-NEIS participants in

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Toast and Video

Not everyone who goes into business considers themselves a business person. That's certainly true of Bryan Fitzpatrick, owner of *Toast*, a café bar in Civic, and of a successful video production company, specializing in music videos.

Bryan's first steps were on the video side. After doing the NEIS course in 1997, Bryan looked to CYBI to help him start up. 'To get 4 or 5 different angles, you need 4 or 5 cameras.' CYBI funding helped him fund the necessary equipment.

Plans don't always work out as expected, of course. Bryan hasn't made as many live music videos as he'd hoped; in order to make ends meet, he branched out into

training videos for the public service. 'Somewhere, someone's making money out of music, but no-one knows who,' he says.

Toast, Bryan's café, started as a way to find studio space for his video

'My main business decision was not to waste money on myself'

- Brian Fitzpatrick

business. 'I didn't want dead space that I only used once a month for filming, and it dawned on me that if I had a café, I could have a nice big space to use when it wasn't open,' Bryan says.

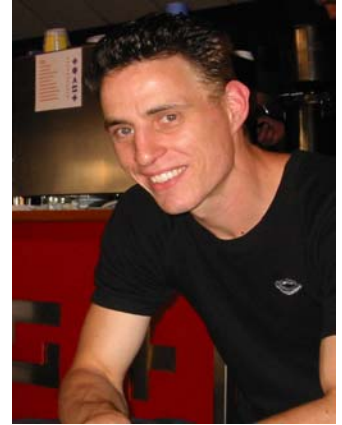
'I'm more the creative person full of energy than a sound businessman who concentrates on the bottom line,' Bryan admits. At *Toast*, the priority is definitely the cus-

tomers. 'I waste money on all sorts of things for customers,' he says. Nevertheless, Bryan believes customer satisfaction is good business. 'I'm absolutely sure if you think of your customers, they'll think of you.'

Starting *Toast* wasn't easy. 'If anyone else ever gets taken seriously at 25, they're doing better than me,' he says. 'I know that banks don't care about anything except a house they can seize if you default on payments; I know that real estate agents didn't want to take me seriously because there was no dude standing next to me in a suit with a briefcase doing all the talking.' Despite the pressure, Bryan has absolutely refused to change to fit into a mould. He arrived to sign the lease for *Toast* on his fold-up aluminium scooter.

This doesn't mean Bryan doesn't take his business seriously. 'I enjoy the challenge of working hard. I was really excited when I realized I was working less than 100 hours a week,' he says.

Getting through has also meant a lot of personal sacrifices. 'My main business decision was not to waste money on myself,



says Bryan. 'I still have the same bearings on my skateboard that I did in high school!'

The business matters; but other things matter more. 'It does matter that this continues and perpetuates itself and makes some money, but not as much as that I don't die of a heart attack or become an evil corporate bastard,' says Bryan.

The future holds a lot of possibilities. Bryan wants to get involved in rally driving; and he wants to set up a 'mobile *Toast*' to deliver coffee wherever it's needed. 'The whole world needs good coffee all the time,' he says.

For anyone else intending to do what he's done, the advice is simple: 'Make sure you want to do it.' Once you start, failure ceases to be an option. 'I'm always going to be glad I've done this,' he says, 'even if I don't really know why I did.' ◊

Expanding CYBI's target group

(Continued from page 2)

late November, 2002. However, only 2 people were prepared to commit to undertake the training. CYBI needs a minimum of 3 participants to trial the training. CYBI will aim to have an intake of non-NEIS participants in Feb 2003. For more information about NEIS see <http://www.nna.asn.au> ◊

Ponderings

'The strongest oak tree in the forest is not the one that is protected from the storm and hidden from the sun. It's the one that stands in the open where it is compelled to struggle for its existence with the winds and rain and scorching sun.' - Napoleon Hill 1883-1970



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Creating Youth Business Initiatives

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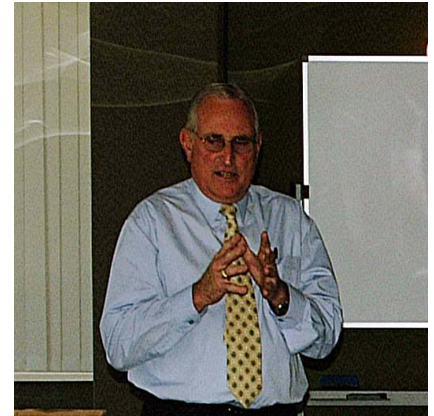
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www.canbas.com.au/CYBI/

Stepping Down—but not Out

For seven years, Bob Jones has served as a member of the CYBI Committee. At a recent morning tea, held to recognize his contributions to the programme now that he is stepping down, his fellow members thanked him for his high level of commitment and for the support he had given them. He has played a central role in the running of CYBI, with his get up and go, can do attitude.

Participants in the programme have first hand experience of Bob's special abilities in helping and motivating them, and his particular talent for developing their self-confidence and empowering them during the initial difficulties and uncertainties that dog any project. It was fitting that the morning tea was held at *Toast*, a café owned and operated by CYBI graduate Bryan Fitzpatrick.



Bob at a recent workshop

As a permanent reminder of Bob's role in making CYBI and its participants a success, the Committee announced an annual *Bob Jones Award for Excellence in Small Business Development*.

Bob will continue to contribute to CYBI, in his role as Business Development Officer supporting CYBI's Regional Expansion Project.◊

Introducing Brendan Preiss

In each issue of *Initiatives* we intend to introduce one of the Committee members. This issue, we focus on Brendan Preiss.

Brendan has a long experience of employment assistance programmes, founded on his many years as a senior public servant. He joined the Committee of CYBI in 1996, convinced by his professional and family experience of the value of the CYBI approach.

'I've greatly appreciated the opportunity to assist some very interested, and interesting, young people to gain entry to their own business,' says Brendan of the experience so far.

Currently, Brendan is taking the lead role in extending the CYBI programme to regional and rural centres near the ACT. In this, he continues to work with Bob Jones.

'So far, local reaction has been very positive,' he says, and expects to have several projects running early in 2003.◊



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