

Flor-Hanly: life balance is key



Tony Olsen of Flor-Hanly has a strong rural background and loves dealing with clients in primary production.

By HELEN WALKER

SUCCESSFUL Mackay based business Flor-Hanly was established in 1971 by Cliff Flor, a highly respected Mackay businessman with cane farming and grazing interests.

The business services a client base scattered interstate and even overseas, but most are based on the Mackay-central coast area and Central Highlands.

These days, the firm has two directors – Tony Olsen and Andrew Zammit – and employs 26 staff who service primary producers, self-funded retirees and a wide array of small to medium-size businesses.

Tony Olsen, who has a strong background in primary production, said he specially loved dealing with clients in primary production.

"We have an 'open door' policy, with clients encouraged to pick up the phone or drop into the office regularly to talk about the direction of their business," Mr Olsen said.

"We get a kick out of seeing their businesses and lives move in the direction that they want them to," he said.

"It's not always about making money – lifestyle is important to people, too."

Many business owners including primary producers go from year to year without really knowing where they are going.

More recently, Tony Olsen was a guest speaker at a Rabobank forum at Mt Coolon, where he delivered a very timely overview on the need for beef producers to plan for the future of their business.

"Many business owners, including primary producers, go from year to year without really knowing where they are going," Mr Olsen said.

"They often make decisions without knowing what the ramifications will be.

"Before you can plan for the future you need to know what you are working with.

"Also, you need to know your balance sheet, your profitability, your cash flow position both past and future, each other's dreams and goals, and if all parties to the family

operation are on the same page.

"All businesses need to be profitable to survive."

Primary producers have to deal with forces they cannot control such as weather and commodity prices, and as such very few get through year after year without making a loss somewhere along the line.

"What is important is what you do with those profits and that there are more profitable years than loss years to generate sufficient cash flow to cover all outgoings and to generate surpluses," he said.

Many businesses make good profits but still end up getting into trouble financially.

Not only does a business need to make profits to succeed, it also needs to manage its cash flow to generate cash surpluses.

"How many times has your accountant told you that you have to pay a lot of tax because you have made a lot of money only for you to reply 'if we have made that much money, where has it gone?'"

"If your profit is not enough to cover all outgoings, then funds have to be found from somewhere else such as additional borrowings.

"Funding the shortfall with more debt might get you out of trouble one year but if this is repeated year after

year, the debt will quickly escalate, and sooner or later the bank will say 'no more'.

"In our firm, we have seen several business owners with good solid, often very profitable, businesses that have come to us and said they have had enough and they want to sell.

"They have worked extremely hard and built up successful businesses only to burn out.

"When we work with them we often find that if their lifestyle can be fixed, they start to enjoy their business and life again and still make good profits. In fact, their profits tend to go up because they are actually focusing on and enjoying managing the business.

"Most primary producers work very long days, sun up to sun down and often stretching either end of that, and weekends generally don't exist.

"I often advise clients that the best investment they can make is a holiday. Many people on the land often comment they cannot remember the last time they had a proper holiday.

"Getting away from the property and spending time with family and friends can end up saving you or making you money.

Lenore given big send-off by team

AFTER an amazing 36 years with the team at Flor-Hanly, long-standing employee Lenore Hughes (pictured) has decided it is time to enjoy her retirement.

Lenore joined the team at Flor-Hanly back in 1976, and has since given 36 years of loyal service.

"I don't think many businesses around town could say that they have had employees stay with them for 36 years – it's remarkable to say the least," said company co-director, Andrew Zammit.

It is with such high regard that Lenore was held, her send-off was a week long and enjoyed by all the team at Flor-Hanly.

Starting with the firms' traditional pumpkin scones morning teas, there were then team luncheons, and farewell drinks.

Fellow colleague, Judy Harris, who worked with Lenore for some 32 years summed it up this way:

"Lenore would walk in every morning not knowing what to expect next. We had surprises planned for every day," said Judy.

"We had designed Flor-Hanly retirement T-shirts and business cards; one of the staff members rewrote the lyrics to a song and sang for Lenore.

"It's been such a great week celebrating her time at Flor-Hanly."

The pinnacle of the week was an evening function held at Bridges on the Waterfront, where

staff, family and clients gathered to recognise Lenore's working life achievements.

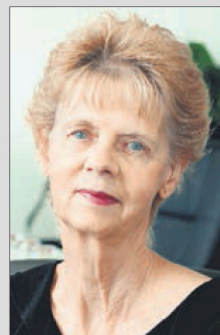
And while founding partner of Flor-Hanly, Cliff Flor, was unable to attend the function he had a speech prepared for the night and it was delivered on his behalf.

It was Cliff Flor who employed Lenore back in 1976.

"Successful organisations are not established through the efforts of one or two people, but are a reflection of the efforts of every person involved over the years," Cliff said.

"Of course, the longer one is involved the footprints are more, and this is certainly the case with Lenore.

"The clients for whom Lenore has been responsible, all have a very high regard for a job well done." – Story: HELEN WALKER



Lenore Hughes.

"Stress is a killer, and most of us don't realise how stressed we are on an ongoing basis until we get away and start to unwind or something worse happens.

"Spending quality time with family may have prevented many of the relationship breakdowns and divorces that are more and more all too common.

"Many family partnerships may

have survived longer if each partner had to take time off to enjoy their life and spend it with their respective families.

"Getting away from the property for a decent period of time not only helps you de-stress but also helps you get a different perspective on your operation, what your goals are and life in general."