Dear Members & Friends,

Welcome to the German-Australian Business News magazine, for the final quarter of 2018.

Food security has been all across the news lately – both in Australia and Germany, with drought and floods affecting the farming community in both countries. Additionally, experts across the globe suggest that feeding the world securely by 2050 will require doubling our current crop output. Along with this, the world will require more sustainable farming procedures, government policy to protect farmers and their resources, and more intelligent ways to protect crops from parasites, bugs, and disease.

This edition of the Business News sheds light on the opportunities that come along with smart agriculture. For example through new research developments in herbicide chemistry, as showcased by our member Bayer. Fibrosol have lent their insight into the supply of high-grade food ingredients, and explain how their skills in advising other companies with technical know-how in food production benefits us in Australia. Meanwhile, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources have penned an article, explaining what Australia’s ‘2030 Agenda’ looks like: securing water resources and stopping illegal logging in Australia, all in line with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. Bosch Australia is showing us what Smart Agriculture looks like, and BASF is explaining how they are working towards their goal of making agriculture more sustainable.

Our policy update will also give an overview of what our team is currently working on, both within the field of agriculture and food, and outside it. One such example are the changes to Australia’s bio-security laws within the context of the proposed Free Trade Agreement. This is of particular note, and we are working hard to continue our engagement with our members and relevant stakeholders to contribute to an ambitious FTA.

We also welcome the New Zealand Chamber into this issue, with their article surrounding investment within New Zealand and their food industry. It contains information on what areas are likely to expand in the next few years, and where they are seeing strong growth currently.

We hope you find all the information in this magazine insightful, and enjoy reading it as well.

With best wishes,

Alexandra Voss,

Executive Director
German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce

UPCOMING EVENTS

Events range from workshops & seminars to roundtable discussions, receptions, to large-scale conferences. Some events are open to the public, while others are only accessible for members. Our speakers include top-level industry experts, leading government representatives and inspiring thought leaders.

15 Nov  
Cruise with the Europeans, Sydney

21 Nov  
Breakfast Forum: The Future of Mobile Security, Melbourne

22 Nov  
CEO Briefing with Paul Sansom, Audi Australia, Sydney

27 Nov  
Evening Forum: Brexit – Implications for Australian Trade and Investment, Sydney

Nov/Dec  
End of Year Chamber Events, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane

If you are interested in one or more events please contact:

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BN Q4 Cover image iStock/ Julien Eichinger

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Policy Update on Trade and Investment

Trade Agreement negotiations between Australia and the European Union are on track and the German-Australian Chamber continues to argue key issues for its members.

Following the June milestone of European Commissioner Dr Cecilia Malmström and former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull officially launching formal negotiations for the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the first formal round of negotiations took place in Brussels in July.

Through the Brussels office of our global head organisation, the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammer, DIHK), we followed the developments closely.

The first round of negotiations was successful, with progress in several key areas including trade in goods, technical barriers to trade, public procurement, intellectual property, and the highly important area of making the future agreement easily usable for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Both the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the European Union have been extremely transparent in their negotiations. In fact, the European Union has published all textual proposals being provided in the negotiations and they can be found at ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/australia-trade-agreement/.

Both sides are now considering the proposals of the other side in detail, and the second round of formal negotiations will take place in Canberra, in mid-November.

In our view, the progress so far has been above average, thanks in part to both Australia and the European Union being highly experienced trade negotiators who are able to move complex negotiations forward efficiently. We maintain our strong support for a comprehensive Australia-EU FTA, but details matter for the German-Australian business community.

For example, utilisation of a future agreement by SMEs depends on the usability of the agreements. This can be seen in regard to associated requirements for country-of-origin documentation. Therefore, we continue our regular engagement with both negotiating parties and other relevant stakeholders.

In collaboration with members and the Policy Advisory Committee, the Chamber also provided an updated Chamber submission to DFAT in regard to the Australia-EU FTA. In it, we provide more details in regard to the various tariff and non-tariff trade barriers that could be removed as part of the FTA negotiations.

We would like to thank everyone involved in this process as insights provided by member companies help us to understand various trade barriers, their effect, and aid us in addressing them in our discussions with the government. You can find our updated submission via the news section of the Chamber website or through the Australia-EU FTA pages of DFAT. Please feel free to use this public submission in your discussions with relevant stakeholders like your local MP. Any feedback from such discussions is greatly appreciated.

Another important part of our FTA submission is food and agriculture – the focus of this edition of the Business News. German companies operating in Australia in this sector often face special restrictions, especially in regard to biosecurity and quarantine. We understand the unique nature of Australia’s flora and fauna and agree it needs to be protected.

In our work we focus on food and agriculture policies that affect companies in the German-Australian relationship, but do not pose a biosecurity threat in Australia. We also focus on policies where the reasoning behind enacted regulations are unclear. One such recent example has been the seasonal import restrictions in regard to the brown marmorated stink bug, and the inclusion of German exports.

It is worth noting this sector also provides significant growth opportunities for both sides, including the likelihood of increased Australian agriculture exports to the European Union as part of the future Australia-EU FTA.

Global and Australia-specific developments around Free Trade were also part of the Australia-Germany Business Summit’s programme at the end of September in Melbourne. In the opening session, speakers including the new Australian Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Simon Birmingham, provided support for the FTA and emphasised the opportunities for Australia and Germany. This was supported by German Ambassador and Patron of the Chamber, H.E. Dr Anna Prinz, and Volkmar Klein, Member of the German Bundestag, who provided a perspective from Berlin.

We also wish to thank the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation for supporting Herr Klein’s involvement in the Business Summit.

Honorary Chamber President Mr Andrew
Mackenzie has also emphasised the win-win situation of open trade and investment in his speech during the Chamber’s Gala Dinner in Melbourne following the Business Summit. As part of our broad engagement with government, opposition and other political stakeholders, the Chamber also organised a further Canberra Delegation in October. On behalf of the Chamber members, a small group of about 10 people discussed key issues with the new relevant Ministers following the recent government reshuffle. We also continued our engagement with outstanding partners such as Minister Cormann, Ambassador Anna Prinz and several relevant Shadow Ministers and backbenchers.

Further high-level discussions around the Australia-EU relationship will also take place during the upcoming second “EU-Australia Leadership Forum” from 18 to 22 November 2018 in Brussels. This project by the European Union is supported by the Australian government and implemented by a consortium that includes the German-Australian Chamber.

We also encourage our members and partners to consider business opportunities beyond Australia. One often overlooked area are the various projects of the European Investment Bank (www.eib.org) in the Pacific, including Papua New Guinea. The focus of the projects is usually infrastructure, energy, or environment protection/climate action. Procurement opportunities can be found via the OJEU site: www.ojeu.eu.

Stay tuned for more updates on the website about the latest developments around trade and investment developments. As with all our policy projects, please feel free to get in touch if you want to discuss them or want to get involved.

Written by Dr Michael Zettinig, German-Australian Chamber
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**Evening Forum: Disruptive Innovations – Blockchain Technology**

A diverse panel and interesting Q&A made our evening forum on Blockchain Technology a great success for all who attended.

More than 50 guests joined us on Monday, 13 August at the Goethe Institute Sydney to attend our Evening Forum: Disruptive Innovations – Blockchain Technology. With a diverse panel, interesting discussions, and an extensive Q&A session the evening was a huge success!

At about 6pm attendees arrived, mingled, and networked over drinks and canapés before the evening officially started at 6.30pm. The German-Australian Chamber’s Executive Director, Alexandra Voss opened the evening by welcoming the numerous attendees and pointing out the relevance of Blockchain technology for the chamber and its members. She then moved on to introducing the moderator for the discussion, Professor Tom Smith, Head of Department of Applied Finance at Macquarie University. Prof. Smith then introduced the panel: Dr Hayley Maynard, Senior Manager, Market & Competitor Strategy at Allianz Australia; Alec Christie, Partner Digital Law at EY; Chris Francis, Sales Manager at Microsoft, and Darren Younger, Chief Growth Officer at Lakeba.

The vivid discussion covered amongst other topics such as the aspect of trust in Blockchain technology, the considerations industries like insurance companies give to Blockchain technology, and the opportunities Blockchain technology can hold for various industries. Then, Prof Tom Smith opened the floor to the audience who took the opportunity to ask questions to each member of the panel.

After an hour of fruitful discussion and Q&A, Alexandra Voss thanked the panellists and the moderator for sharing their insights with our members and friends and invited everyone to further mingle and network.

The chamber would like to thank all who attended the event including our panellists, for helping us make the evening a great success.

Written by Eva Kosinski,
German-Australian Chamber
The German-Australian Chamber's First German Bierfest

It might be debatable what a successful beer fest entails. However, one thing we at the German-Australian Chamber are now sure of: the simple bare necessities you need are beer, Gemütlichkeit and friends to celebrate with. We can certainly say that our first-ever German Bierfest covered all three elements excellently; a successful evening with lots of fun and atmosphere to remember.

More than 170 members and friends joined us for the Chamber’s first German Bierfest at the Concordia Club in Tempe on 16 August. Right from the start, the atmosphere was brimming with joyful people mingling and chatting away while awaiting the evening’s revelations. The MC for the night, our Board Member Bodo Mann, Group Executive Advisory at the Australian Institute of Company Directors – of course fully dressed in Lederhosen (including the hat!) – opened the evening before asking the German-Australian Chamber’s Executive Director Alexandra Voss to stage.

Alexandra welcomed all guests on behalf of the German Chamber, thanked all guests for joining and wished everyone a great night ahead. She then expressed her thanks to the Supporting Partner Sennheiser Australia & NZ for sponsoring the German Bierfest 2018 and introduced Sennheiser’s Director of Operations Markus Dreimann. Markus explained Sennheiser’s role in Australia and thanked his team for their great work, before our house band The Nevilles started to play “Ein Prosit der Gemütlichkeit” – of course with microphones from Sennheiser. Alexandra and Markus sang along and raised their Steins to a proper German Prost!

Over the course of the evening the band played typical Oktoberfest songs, sing-alongs as well as all-time classics which enabled everyone to participate. There was plenty of German beer and German food to be enjoyed, as well as a photo booth with German Bierfest props. And if that was not enough, attendees also had the chance to win great prizes from our Supporting Partner Sennheiser, as well as our in-kind partners Batch Brewing Co, Sauce Brewing Co in Marrickville, All Hands Brewing House in Darling Harbour, the German Butchery in North Bexley, Brezel Bar in Manly, and the German National Tourist Office together with its partners.

We would like to thank our Supporting Partner Sennheiser Australia & NZ for their great support in making the Chamber’s first German Bierfest a great success. We hope to see everyone again soon for another “Prost der Gemütlichkeit”!

Written by Eva Kosinski,
German-Australian Chamber
On Friday, 21 September 2018, the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce hosted Australia-Germany Business Summit at the Sofitel in Melbourne. Over 130 guests attended the one-day conference, which focused on four major topics of ongoing relevance in the German-Australian business context: Energy Strategies, Mobility & Infrastructure, STEM education, and Disruptive Technologies. The day concluded with a Gala Dinner at the nearby Park Hyatt.

The opening session at 9am set the scene for the day from a macro-economic perspective, focussing on the Future of Free Trade. Executive Director of the German-Australian Chamber, Alexandra Voss welcomed all delegates and outlined the relevance for global free trade before H.E. Dr Anna Prinz, German Ambassador to Australia and Patron of the Chamber, spoke about the importance of the bilateral relationship between Australia and Germany. Volkmar Klein, Member of the German Bundestag (federal parliament), then focussed on key developments in Germany and Europe, and their impact on the German-Australian relationship.

A video message by Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Trade, Tourism, and Investment, then concluded the presentations about global free trade. In his message the Minister confirmed the relevance of free trade from the Australian perspective and mentioned the importance of the future Free Trade Agreement between Australia and the EU, sighting benefits for both sides. The session finally ended with a demonstration by Andreas Dammann, Managing Director at Uvex Safety Australia, of a recent successful example of how global trade can benefit small and medium size organisations in a bilateral context.

The first panel of the day focussed on Disruptive Technologies was sponsored by Schaeffler Australia. Moderated by Petra Zlatevska, panellists Bruce McKinnon, Head of Digital Business Services at SAP Australia, Google Australia’s Head of Performance Nick Love, and Darren Younger – Chief Growth Officer and Co-Founder at Lakeba discussed the ‘digital revolution’. The conversation went into detail about the impact Big Data has had on the world, and touched on neural networks and blockchain technologies. The panellists also discussed at length how their companies utilise available data to drive better outcomes for them and their stakeholders.

An extensive networking lunch gave delegates the opportunity to study the exhibition booths in the foyer of the conference centre and engage in discussion with the exhibiting sponsors and other attendees. Upon conclusion of lunch guests were split into two groups, with one heading to the first industry panel on Mobility and Infrastructure, sponsored by Mercedes Benz Australia and Car2Go. The panel moderator Tony Canavan, Global Government Transport Leader at EY Australia, explored the implications for infrastructure from the rapid changes in mobility, in an insightful discussion with Malcolm Noyle, Business Development Manager at Car2Go, Dr. Allison Stewart, Project Director at Infrastructure Victoria, Prof. Majid Sarvi, Chair in Transport Engineering, Director of AIMES and Program Director in Transport Technologies at Melbourne University and Carola Jonas, CEO & Co-founder at Everty.

The other half of the attendees filed into a second room where the conversation surrounded Future Work Skills and STEM. Sponsored by Lebenswerk Consulting Group, all panellists offered valuable, real life input – including Gavin Smith, president of Robert Bosch Australia, Dr Amanda Caples, Chief Scientists for Victoria, Alexander Nowroth, Managing Partner of Lebenswerk, and Florian Dehne, Head of Strategy at SEEK. Mr Dehne introduced the audience and fellow panelists.
to the subject matter before handing over to Henriette Rothschild, COO of iSelect, to guide the session through its many topics including early STEM education, and how to instil the importance of STEM in our society at large. There was a special focus on the Learn@Bosch initiative - a means that Bosch uses to 'spark enthusiasm for STEM'.

After another quick networking coffee break, the final panel for the day began: Energy Strategies – sponsored by SAP Australia and Siemens Australia New Zealand. Jeff Connolly, CEO of Siemens Australia New Zealand, Damien Bueno, CEO of SAP Australia, and Christian Schaefer, General Manager-Systems Capability at the Australian Energy Market Operator discussed the importance of getting the transition from non-renewable to renewable energy right.

Moderated by Dr Anne Kallies from the Energy Transition Hub at the University of Melbourne, they also discussed what lessons could be learnt by observing overseas energy markets, and how cross industry collabora-

It seems justified to note that feedback from those in attendance was predominantly positive, with many commenting on the quality of the preparation and execution of the event as well as the topic selection.

Particular mention was made of the conference app including its networking functionality and its usability as a tool for interactive participation in the panel discussions.

Written by Lars Mehlan, German-Australian Chamber

For more photos visit flickr.com/photos/ahk-australia/
Following the highly successful Australia-Germany Business Summit, the German-Australian Chamber's Annual Gala Dinner took place at the beautiful Park Hyatt Ballroom.

Members and friends of the Chamber as well as conference delegates first enjoyed some pre-dinner drinks with the opportunity to have their photos taken. After an hour of networking and reflecting on the busy conference day, the Gala Dinner was officially opened by the MC of the evening, Rafael Epstein. Rafael is a long-time ABC journalist and host of the successful “Drive” show on ABC radio Melbourne.

We were delighted that Andrew Mackenzie, Honorary President of the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce and CEO of BHP, attended our Gala Dinner, delivering a warm welcome speech. His remarks in regards to the importance of Free Trade, Investment, and especially the support of the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement, were greatly appreciated by the international audience.

After the entrée, the Chamber’s Chairman of the Board Jeff Connolly, CEO & Chairman at Siemens Ltd, delivered a short address, focusing on the importance of the strong German Australian relationship, and especially the progress with the 59 recommendations to broaden, deepen and strengthen the partnership even further.

The last speech of the night was delivered by Brendon Green, State Manager for Victoria and South Australia at HSBC Australia. We would like to thank Brendon and the HSBC team very kindly for their generous support of the Gala Dinner.

We were delighted to present the Walsh quartet from the Australian National Academy of Music to perform Beethoven String Quartet No.4, 1st movement. After this outstanding classical performance by the young musicians, guests enjoyed their main course.

It was then time for some light entertainment and relaxation: Rafael Epstein declared the dancefloor open, along with the Gin & Schnapps bar – a delight for our guests.

Our band for the evening, Popcorn, features the amazing trio of Julie Walter, Rhys Warden and David Van Elst who have been playing in some of Australia’s best concert touring bands over many years. They delivered a great range of songs from past to present and we were happy to see that so many of our Gala Dinner attendees followed our invitation to “put their dancing shoes on!”

We think it’s fair to say that the Gin & Schnapps bar was one of the highlights of the evening. Kindly hosted by Wildbrumby, we would like to thank Sebastian Drüge who travelled from the Snowy Mountains to provide our guests with a taste of Europe, by serving some of their award-winning
schnapps and gin. It seemed the queue was never ending!

Having said that – for Justin Port, Operations Manager at Centric PA, the highlight of the night was most likely the Business card raffle. Presented by Alexandra Voss, Executive Director of the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce and Alexandra Piskar from Qatar Airways, Justin was the lucky winner who was presented with a voucher for two economy flights to Europe with Qatar Airways. We would like to thank Qatar for this very generous raffle donation and we hope Justin will have a great trip to Europe!

We thank our speakers, sponsors & of course our guests, including H.E. Dr Anna Prinz, German Ambassador to Australia and Volkmar Klein, Member of Deutscher Bundestag for making this event a successful one. We appreciate your support and look forward to seeing you at next year’s Gala Dinner.

Written by Caroline Stapleton,
German-Australian Chamber

For more photos visit flickr.com/photos/ahk-australia/
The German-Queensland relationship has become one of the strongest international ties that Australia shares with Germany. These bonds were strengthened through Rheinmetall Defence winning a Land 400 bid, which has allowed Rheinmetall to work closely with the Australian and Queensland Governments. Through this project, the design of the Redbank facility, and the development of the Boxer CRV, Rheinmetall has made itself a pillar of strength in South East Queensland. This has been achieved by supporting the local workforce through the creation on an entirely new industry and providing technology and solutions towards Australian defence. This business dinner was held in celebration of all that has been achieved through Rheinmetall and the Queensland Government’s partnership. It also provided the opportunity for guests to do some key mingling.

The night began with a welcoming speech given by the Executive Director of the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Alexandra Voss, who embraced her first night in Queensland with warm words towards the guests.

Honorary Consul to Germany, Professor Michael Rosemann, followed with a speech detailing the importance of the relationship held between our nations. He commented that although much has been built upon and with these bonds, Germany and Australia are beginning a new relationship that opens an incredible array of opportunities. He passed the podium onto Jeff Connolly, Chairman of the Board of the German-Australian Chamber and CEO of Siemens Pacific.

Mr Connolly spoke of the Redbank project, emphasising that this facility will be the most advanced and diverse in the world, and that there was a great deal of collaboration between the Australian and German militaries on this project.

It was at this point, that the Honorable Anastacia Palaszczuk rose to speak. “It’s difficult to overstate how important Queensland’s relationship is with Rheinmetall,” Palaszczuk said, going onto say that the Redbank facility and Boxer CRV were creating: “a brand new industry that can be developed right here in Queensland.”

“I just want to reassure you that my Government is here to support you,” she said, emphasising how important it is to have good, solid relationships on national and international scales.

After this, guests settled in for the main course. Blackbird supplied a delicious feast of slow roasted lamb-shoulder, oven-roasted chicken, and grilled, red curry cod alongside an equally satisfying platter of sides. Laughter and conversation filled the room, and only settled into an attentive silence when the fifth speaker for the night, Gary Stewart, Managing Director of Rheinmetall Defence Australia, took to the podium.

“It’s not every day that you get to create an entirely new industry,” Gary began, detailing all that the Boxer CRV was able to become due to the partnership between Rheinmetall and the Queensland Government. Throughout his speech, it was plain to see that Rheinmetall is more than a company - it is a think-tank of innovative, forward-thinking people that value relationships, both those that they share internally and externally.

“It has taken two years of hard work to get to this point,” Gary said, wrapping up his speech with conviction, stating that Rheinmetall looks forward to over a 100 years of investment alongside the Queensland Government. The QLD Chapter Business Dinner was a night of connection and industry, of celebrating bridges formed between nations and companies. The Redbank facility is only the beginning, and the future of the German-Australian relationship is bright.

Written by Ron Pennekamp, Queensland Chapter of the German-Australian Chamber
**Fine Food Fair**

The fabulous Fine Food Fair was held in Melbourne this year, from 10 – 13 September. Tina Thoms and Caroline Stapleton spent time meeting the German exhibitors, and the Australian companies who are looking towards the German market.

Through the LMI – Leipziger Messe International’s German Pavilion, 10 German companies like Burgis (dumplings), Kuchenmeiser (frozen pastries), Zott (gourmet Dairy) and Dr Suwelack (coffee) had the chance to speak with Australian importers, distributors and retailers. Famous names such as Rabenhorst, who gave our delicious premium fruit juices samples, have already found a home in Australia through our Queensland-based member company German Beverages Australia.

When speaking with the German exhibitors, there were a couple of themes that emerged, as they strategically scoped the Australian market. One is that the appetite for organic, traditional and sustainably sourced products is growing rapidly. The other is that, increasingly, Australian consumers are willing to pay for high quality specialty products. This, of course, is great news for German companies like Rabenhorst which ticks all these boxes.

The Chamber will follow their expansion in Australia with great interest.

Written by Tina Thoms, German-Australian Chamber

**YEF Stammtisch - Redoak Boutique Bier Café**

About 20 people joined together at the Redoak Boutique Beer Café in Sydney’s Clarence Street on 3 October 2018 for networking over drinks and food.

Guests began to arrive at 6 pm and stayed until 8:30 pm when the event officially ended. The conversation was warm and inviting, with the menu of the Redoak Beer Café being specially themed for Oktoberfest celebrations, alongside the in-house brewed beers.

Some guests stayed on longer to drink in the atmosphere of the Redoak brewery and network with each other some more.

**ABOUT YEF STAMMTISCH**

The YEF Stammtisch is an event which occurs on the first Wednesday of every second month at a venue around Sydney. It encourages Young Executives from all walks of business life to come together to discuss and share ideas, and network with one another.

Written by David Roberts, German-Australian Chamber

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Emirates Concert Evening “Bernstein on Broadway”

On 18 August a small group of Members were invited to a wonderful evening of music at Hamer Hall by our long-time Member Emirates.

Guests were treated to a delicious 3-course pre-concert dinner, hosted by the Emirates Regional Manager for VIC & TAS, Dean Cleaver. During the dinner, Dean mentioned that Emirates has been flying to Germany for more than 30 years, since they launched flights to Frankfurt on 31st July 1987. They now offer 10 flights a day to Germany, including Frankfurt, Munich, Duesseldorf and Hamburg, with many operated by their flagship Airbus A380 aircraft. He also highlighted that Emirates has recently introduced flexible dining in their Business class cabin for long-haul flights. By allowing the customer to decide what and when they eat, Emirates aims to create a casual, comfortable and contemporary dining experience.

Following dinner, the world-renowned Melbourne Symphony Orchestra delighted everyone with 2 hours of songs and instrumental excerpts from favourite Bernstein works such as Wonderful Town, On the Town, Candide, Peter Pan, Fancy Free, and West Side Story. The performance embraced Bernstein’s New York, offering a rare insight into the composer’s mind, with Bernstein devotee Bramwell Tovey at the helm and on the keys.

The Chamber wishes to kindly thank Dean Cleaver and Carl Matto, Emirates Senior Sales Executive, for hosting such a brilliant event.

Written by Tina Thoms,
German-Australian Chamber

CEO Briefing with Rebecca Lee - Covestro Australia

On the evening of the 4th of September, we had the pleasure of welcoming a group of 12 CEOs and top managers of our member companies to an exclusive CEO Briefing with Rebecca Lee, Managing Director at Covestro Australia. Rebecca is also a member of the Board of the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce and spoke on the topic of: “Sustainability- is it a challenge or an asset?”

Rebecca explored three concepts in relation to Covestro’s corporate strategy in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals. For several years now, the “People, Planet, Profit” principle has been applied at Covestro. This means that the organisation wants to foster increased value on the economic, environmental, and social levels, all at the same time. Rebecca explained how Covestro has embraced the triple bottom line principle of the three P’s in the two major areas of Covestro’s business: polycarbonates (where the main customer industries include automotive, electronics, and the medical sector) and polyurethanes (where the main customer industries are construction, sports, leisure, and renewables).

Rebecca also discussed how Covestro is driving carbon productivity and closing the loop on the circular economy by harnessing waste CO2 – greenhouse gas otherwise emitted into the atmosphere – and using it, instead of fossil fuel, as the raw material to manufacture flexible foam used in mattresses and furniture. Finally, she also talked about how a chemical company, such as Covestro, leads the young generation with the purpose to make a world a brighter place.

It was a truly engaging presentation, which provoked many questions from the audience and sparked interesting discussions around sustainability, and the role that corporations and the government play. We hope our guests enjoyed the opportunity to network and exchange ideas with all participants over drinks and canapés in the exclusive atmosphere of the Langham Melbourne. We would like to thank Rebecca Lee for her time, and for sharing some of Covestro’s sustainability journey with us.

Written by Caroline Stapleton,
German-Australian Chamber
German Week Brisbane: Building Stronger Ties Between Australia and Germany

German Week Brisbane began three years ago when Claudia Luettringhaus and Professor Michael Rosemann of the German Consulate in Brisbane approached Brokat Studio with the idea to create a cultural experience to be remembered; bringing a piece of home to the local German community and sharing German culture with Australians.

This project was a labour of love for Brokat, with their Director, Ron Pennekamp, being German-born himself. A driving force behind German Week Brisbane, alongside Claudia and Michael, Brokat built this experience from the ground up. It was not an easy process, but the results are undeniable: since initiation three years ago, German Week Brisbane has been a resounding success.

Asides sharing cultural experiences, German Week Brisbane was designed around the idea of building bridges and strengthening connections. As Michael said, German Week Brisbane is “not about creating something new, it’s about increasing visibility of something that already exists.”

The variety of experiences that German Week Brisbane provides through their programs are not just about education and culture sharing, but facilitating a growth of awareness.

And what better way to connect than over food? Over music? Over fashion, history, and art? Through experiencing a cultures productions, people learn where they are similar, and where they are not – and through these new glimpses of knowledge a curiosity is born.

German Week isn’t just about this, however. It is about showing a side of Germany and German icons that many Australians, or German-Australians having grown up outside of Germany, may not know.

Some events that show the unseen side of Germany are ‘Oktoberfest for Teens’, the ‘German National Day Concert’, and the ‘German Business Day’. Although these programs may seem different, their purpose remains the same: to give something back to the people, to give Germans a home away from home, and to enrich the already existing bonds between Australia and Germany.

‘Oktoberfest for Teens’ aims to show children, those with German heritage and those without, that Oktoberfest, perhaps one of Germany’s most well-known festivals, isn’t just about beer – Oktoberfest is about food, fashion, and community as well. People experiencing fresh Bratwurst, decadent Black Forest Cake, and doughy Pretzels have been blown away by the hearty and tasty menu that Germany has to offer. Over 2000 students and 200 teachers have taken part in ‘Oktoberfest for Teens’ every year!

The ‘German National Day Concert’ saw its first instance in German Week Brisbane’s second year – to a standing ovation. Held upon Germany’s Day of Unity, this concert is a celebration of classical German music.

The 2018 German Business Day was jointly organised by the Honorary German Consul in Brisbane, the Queensland Chapter of the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the German Australian Business Association and the German Australian Business Women Association at SAP in Brisbane.

This community support greatly aided all efforts in getting German Week Brisbane off the ground, with volunteers and more pouring in from all sides – including event spaces, catering, and speakers. However, it was Brokat, which has since evolved into a full Media Partner, that remained a proactive and inspired force behind German Week.

Each year has seen more and more German-Australian businesses join in on German Week Brisbane as hosts, suppliers, partners, and more, as there is opportunity for all to become a part of this family in future German Weeks.

Even as a full Media Partner, to Brokat the German Week project was never about money or esteem. It was about creating something incredible that could, in Michael’s words, act as “a vehicle that brings together different organisations with the same ambitions.” As a founding member of the Queensland Chapter of the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Ron of Brokat knows the value of forming connections between German and Australian businesses.

Starting from small ideas to the grand, diverse entity it is today, German Week Brisbane is an example of what can be achieved with cultural festivals.

Written by Ron Pennekamp, Brokat Creative

ABOUT BROKAT CREATIVE

Brokat Creative is a boutique creative agency that specialises in branding, nurturing social presences, designing promotional material, creating websites, and developing tailored business strategies.

Based in Brisbane, Brokat Creative works with clients of all sizes, on projects of all scales, and to budgets of all limits, to craft handmade collateral. No matter your vision, Brokat Creative will see it become reality.

To start a conversation about how Brokat Creative can help grow your brand, get in touch with Ron at ron@brokat.studio.
Fibrisol Service Australia (FSA) – Bringing “Good Old Europe” to Asia Pacific

Supplying high-quality food ingredients and being a partner and advisor in food processing overall.

FSA (Fibrisol Service Australia) was founded in Melbourne in 1994 and is based in Heatherton (production site) as well as having an Application Center in Somerville. The company is part of the business unit ‘Food Specialities’, a part of Israel Chemical Ltd. (ICL). The headquarters for Food Specialities is in Ladenburg, Germany. Since its founding FSA has established itself as a leading manufacturer and supplier of functional food ingredients and flavours for meat and seafood. These are supplied to processing industries, and companies producing processed cheese and noodles of all types.

FSA services the entire Asia/Pacific region from Melbourne, including Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, as well as the Pacific islands. Around 10,000 tons of food ingredients are sold per year and a large percentage of this volume is utilized by companies producing meat products such as cooked hams, Frankfurter, Salami, retorted meat products (Spam), and countless other types. Ingredients supplied to processed cheese factories predominantly produce high, low, or no melt processed cheese depending on their customers’ requests. In regards to noodles ingredient solutions offered by FSA have an impact on the texture, colour, elasticity, bite and shelf-life of various types of noodles and typical markets for ingredients added into noodles are Indonesia, Malaysia as well as Papua New Guinea.

On top of producing consistently high-quality functional ingredients FSA also puts great emphasis on supporting customers from a technical standpoint, ensuring ingredients are applied correctly during processing. This ensures optimal outcomes in terms of food-safety, flavour, juiciness, colour, and shelf-life. This is where knowledge transfer from ‘Good old Europe’ begins, especially towards meat products. Application specialists working for FSA are not only highly trained food-scientists, but also undergo comprehensive in-house training in meat-processing technology by completing formal training lasting between 3-4 years.

“People in central Europe including countries such as Germany, Austria and Switzerland have more opportunities to become experts in meat-processing technology by completing formal training lasting between 3-4 years.”

Such specific training towards meat-processing technology, as well as the chemistry and functionality of food ingredients, is unique in the Asia/Pacific region. On the other hand, people in central Europe including countries such as Germany, Austria, and Switzerland have more opportunities to become experts in meat-processing technology by completing formal training lasting between 3-4 years. From here, butchers can complete a Master Butcher degree which are still highly regarded in Europe and the rest of the world. As a final step of education people can chose to study meat processing technology in Germany in places such as Kulmbach, Lemgo, or Berlin.

The Head of Application for FSA has undertaken all of the above, and also worked for two years in Ladenburg where he was extensively trained in the composition and functionality of food ingredients. He then joined FSA in 1998 and moved to Melbourne. All this knowledge has since then been passed on to Application specialists at FSA for meat, poultry, and seafood. This makes those well-trained people valuable partners and sources of knowledge for customers within the Asia/Pacific region. The connection to Ladenburg, as well as other Application centers within the business unit, is also a vital part of staying abreast of latest developments in processing technology, ingredients as well as future food-trends. Needless to say, such insights are being passed on to customers of FSA who truly appreciate such support.

As part of FSA’s dedication to customers, and staying relevant as a leader in food ingredients, FSA operates an Application centre in Somerville. In short, this building is a miniature factory for meat products as well as noodles, being fully equipped to simulate factory processes and conditions. The Application centre operates under a council-approved food safety program with its own food production license. It’s here where new ingredients are tested for their impact on finished foods. During the evaluation and testing of such new ingredients, all in-house knowledge of food chemistry and food ingredients is applied to find the characteristics which ultimately would be of benefit to customers. During the evaluation of such ingredients, a lot of time is spent discovering how such ingredients would become part of the manufacturing process of food. Again, having great in-house knowledge on the processing part of food provides the platform for such thoughts.

Training forms another significant part of activities taking place in Somerville and various types of training is carried out. Firstly, training Application staff is critical as those people provide technical service to customers. This often includes trouble-shooting at a customer level when finished products do not turn out as expected. In order to trouble-shoot effectively, detailed knowledge of additives and manufacturing processes is required – knowledge most often originating from Europe. Secondly, members of the Sales force working for FSA are trained whenever new products are launched into the market. Thirdly, FSA works with agents in the Asia Region and representatives of such agencies frequently travel to Somerville for training. Lastly, FSA also trains customers and processes.
sors in Somerville on food ingredients and new developments, as well as carrying out joint development projects physically producing new meat or noodle products. This intimate level of customer support is highly appreciated and also gives FSA the opportunity to pass on knowledge and experience from ‘Good old Europe’.

FSA has enjoyed considerable growth since it was founded. Having great customer support from an Application and Technical point is one of the key-strengths of the business. Customers see FSA not only as a supplier of high-quality food ingredients but also as very competent partner and advisor in food processing overall. Especially when it comes to processing meat products FSA enjoys a great reputation throughout the Asia/Pacific region – and a large amount of that highly sought-after knowledge has its basis in ‘Good old Europe’.

Provided by Firbrisol Australia
Australia’s 2030 Agenda: Sustainable Development Goals, Water Management and Tackling Illegal Logging

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – a universal roadmap for sustainable development applying to both developing and developed countries.

The 2030 Agenda, which includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) covers a broad suite of economic, social and environmental goals, targets and indicators. Accordingly, it also recognises the important role the private sector and civil society, play along with government, in achieving sustainable development.

Australia is committed to the 2030 Agenda, and recently produced its first Voluntary National Review which outlines how Australia is giving effect to the SDGs through a variety of policy frameworks and initiatives targeted to the Australian development context.

The SDG’s are highly relevant to the agriculture sector, with goals, targets, and indicators relating to food security, water management, forestry and fisheries management, biodiversity and genetic resources, and food waste.

Australia’s Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is contributing to achieving the SDGs in critical areas such as sustainable water and forestry management.

Water Management

Australia is the driest inhabited continent on earth, making water a scarce and valuable resource.

Australia’s current science-based national water policy and adaptive water management practices aim to manage water in a sustainable way to build water security and are well in line with the SDGs.

State governments and the water industry have also developed strategies and initiatives to integrate SDG6 (clean water and sanitation) targets into their water management planning activities and existing operational frameworks for local context.

Australia has made significant efforts and investments over many decades on provision of safe drinking water and sanitation, wastewater treatment and reuse, efficiency use of water in both rural and urban sectors, groundwater management, which has improved water quality and environmental protection.

Internationally, Australia has taken a global leadership role in advocating acceleration of SDG6 implementation. As a member of the two-year UN High Level Panel on Water (HLPW), Australia championed three initiatives on Water Efficiency, Data Initiative and the Innovation Challenge.

Australia has initiated work to develop an international standard (through the Interna-
International Organisation for Standardisation) for water efficiency testing and rating of domestic water-saving products such as taps, showers, toilets and some white goods, building on Australia’s Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) scheme. WELS has been a highly successful partnership between government and industry within Australia, and has generated considerable savings in water, energy and greenhouse gas emissions. Some 13 countries, including Germany, are participating in the ISO standard development process, which will help achieve the SDGs. By 2030, WELS is expected to reduce Australia’s domestic water use by nearly 150 billion litres [6,000 litres per person] each year.

Australia has also established the Australian Water Partnerships (AWP), a commitment of $20m over to four years, to support the sharing of Australia’s water reform experience and expertise in the Indo-Pacific region.

**Illegal Logging**

Illegal logging is damaging to the environment, our communities, and the global economy. Australia, like the European Union, has a strong stance on combatting illegal logging and associated trade. Through laws that promote the legal production of timber products, Australia is demonstrating its commitment to achieving the SDGs.

Australia has a large sustainable forestry sector. However, we still import approximately $8 billion each year in wood and wood-based products, highlighting the need to manage the risk of illegal timber entering Australia’s marketplace.

Australia’s Illegal Logging Prohibition Act reduces the risk of products containing illegally harvested timber entering the Australian market. Under these laws, businesses and individuals who import timber and wood products to Australia must undertake ‘due diligence’ to assess and minimise the risk of importing products containing illegally harvested timber.

The Australian Government is committed to educating importers on doing the right thing, conducting public facing webinars and developing educational materials. We also work with international trading partners to support the transition to transparent supply chains.

Meantime, technology and innovation are emerging to play a significant role in helping to combat illegal logging. The Australian Government has supported the University of Adelaide—a partner of Germany’s Thünen-Institut—in demonstrating the use of DNA timber tracking technologies for verifying timber origin and legality claims.

Tackling illegal logging is just one element of Australia’s commitment to achieving sustainable production and consumption as set out in the SDGs. Recognising the critical need to expand and promote our sustainable timber sector, the Australian Government recently released the National Forest Industries Plan – Growing a better Australia. Setting a vision to establish a billion new plantation trees for Australia’s renewable timber and wood-fibre industry, the Plan is supported by $20 million to ensure we achieve the right trees at the right scale in the right places.

Australia is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a universal, global approach to reduce poverty, promote sustainable development and ensure the peace and prosperity of people across the world.

Provided by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
Sustainable Agriculture for a Sustainable Tomorrow

Our world has always been in a state of change. The advent of technology, however, has intensified both its speed and scale. We know that, in just over 30 years, the global population is expected to reach 10 billion people. We also know that the planet’s resources are finite. Every aspect of our world will need to adjust to these facts. How we—as collective communities, public and private sectors, civil society, and the general public—act in the face of the reality that awaits us in the year 2050, will determine the continuity well-being of humanity as a whole.

The rise in the number of the planet’s inhabitants will mean more food will be needed. Our societies will need larger volumes of nutritious and high-quality food; with shrinking resources and scarce arable land that is subjected to various forms of degradation. The world will be increasingly dependent on our ability to develop and maintain sustainable agriculture and healthy environments.

At BASF, we recognise that sustainable agriculture, driven by innovation, is a key prerequisite for ensuring food security and economic well-being. Both will have a direct and indirect impact on a number of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the reduction of poverty and eradication of hunger. Healthy and nutrition-filled food means better health and well-being, whilst a thriving agriculture industry contributes to economic growth and resilience. A prosperous economy and better livelihoods effectively translate into increased opportunities for rural communities, and hence increased access to education and health.

And the list can go on; for a sustainable and booming agriculture industry can impact all aspects of life. Moving towards and achieving sustainable agriculture will not just affect the two mentioned goals; for efforts to ensure sustainable agriculture indirectly influence our other global aspirations as well.

For over 100 years, BASF’s Agricultural Solutions business has worked with growers, agronomists, agricultural professionals, pest management experts and others to help contribute to a sustainable future.

Our global – and recently expanded – Agricultural Solutions portfolio includes seeds and traits, chemical and biological crop protection, soil management, plant health, pest control, and digital farming. Through the strengthening of this portfolio and our services, we hope to equip farmers with more advanced tools to overcome the impending challenges of producing larger yet safer and healthier volumes – in the face of growing demand and more erratic climate patterns.

Here in Australia, our Agricultural Solutions portfolio is very well placed to meet the existing and emerging challenges that Australian growers face on a daily basis. We offer traditional and innovative solutions for broadacre and horticulture crops, techniques and tools for better pest management, turf production and maintenance, inoculants and biological solutions and the emerging topic of digital farming. Throughout our operations, we have established and continue to maintain close working rapport with a range of stakeholders in the industry – from agronomists to regulators – to be able to better deliver on our mandate of supporting local farmers with solutions to meet the growing needs of the society.

I particularly see focus on two key areas as catalysts that enable us to deliver on this vision: innovation, and partnerships centred around inclusive dialogue.

Firstly, Innovation is key in overcoming challenges in coming decades. The complexity and magnitude of those challenges demand that we promote the use of science and technology to produce innovative tools and effective solutions. This is across all sectors, but particularly important when discussing the agriculture industry.

Innovation in agriculture helps to feed the world. Technologies that enable us to strengthen agricultural production must be promoted and prioritised. The private sector and industry must structure their pipeline and
research towards tools that can help growers and farmers produce quality, safe, and nutritious food.

At BASF, we recognise research and development as a key driver for creating value – for all of our stakeholders. Across the world, we have 3,000 running projects and some 10,000 employees working in R&D. Our Agricultural Solutions segment leads in all R&D-related expenditures when compared to other segments. At BASF in Australia and New Zealand, we utilise such global expertise in science at a local context; allowing us to bring global solutions to local problems of Australian growers.

We are also proud of the contribution we make on a local level to BASF’s global portfolio. Our research centres and facilities across the country work proactively to identify innovative solutions for the agriculture industry. Through a number of R&D facilities and a research farm, we proactively seek, and trial, new farming technologies and solutions to benefit farmers.

Secondly, close partnerships and dialogue are imperative if we are to – collectively – secure the well-being of our societies in the future. Building innovative partnerships, and strengthening existing ones, will be crucial. We must take proactive steps to help materialise this.

A few weeks ago, our Agricultural Solutions team hosted more than 100 agronomists from across the country at our Tamworth Research Farm in New South Wales. There, our global and local scientists presented some of the emerging innovations that we hope to introduce to the market place in the coming years. But besides introducing our products, the farm tours were a great opportunity to directly engage with our stakeholders in the industry. We learned about gaps which are most pressing in the market place. We also learned about trends which will have long term impact on the state of agriculture in Australia. Through a two-way exchange with agronomists, we discussed what future solutions need to look like to make farming more efficient in the future.

Partnerships can also produce productive benefits as seen in a current partnership that BASF has with Seednet, an Australian seed company. The company had identified and developed a legume for waterlogged saline soils. The plant needed an inoculant to survive salty soil conditions, and with 65 years of experience in biological inoculants, BASF worked closely with Seednet to create the needed solution. The seed will now turn dormant land into plentiful paddocks across Australia.

Through innovation and establishing inclusive partnerships and conversations, we hope to be a part of the solution for the existing and impending challenges that the world faces.

The magnitude of tomorrow’s challenges should not be a source of discouragement. Science and technology have enabled us to seek, find and use solutions to solve our problems. It is now upon us to responsibly and proactively identify and deliver answers that can secure the well-being of our communities.

Sustainable agriculture leading to safe and healthy food will be critical in achieving these goals.

Written by David Hawkins, Chairman and Managing Director, BASF Australia and New Zealand
Australia is said to have the second-highest number of herbicide-resistant weeds in the world. This is according to a recent report with investment from Australia’s Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) which estimates weeds cost Australian grain growers almost $3.3 billion a year.

From big data and machine learning through Postdoctoral researchers from Australia and New Zealand are tackling this challenge as they work to identify new herbicide chemistry as part of an international R&D partnership between the GRDC and the Crop Science division of Bayer.

Under the joint venture – the Herbicide Innovation Partnership (HIP) – 33 postdoctoral researchers received positions at Bayer’s global centre of excellence for weed control research in Frankfurt, Germany.

The postdoctoral program is one component of the partnership that will see the GRDC invest $45 million over five years to increase herbicide-discovery efforts and provide resistance-busting herbicides.

Bayer Australia’s head of public and government affairs, Richard Dickmann, says the young scientists have already helped advance the discovery of new chemical molecules for Australian weed control. The first cohort of 11 researchers based in Frankfurt in 2016 and 2017 synthesised more than 4,000 new molecules for laboratory and greenhouse testing.

Of these molecules, about 10 were selected for field testing at Bayer’s HIP trial site near Horsham in Victoria’s Wimmera region. “A number of new molecules have already shown potential and may advance to the early stages of commercial development later this year,” says Mr Dickmann.

Putting this progress into context, Bayer scientists generally screen about 50,000 molecules a year for herbicide activity to help identify new chemical modes of action. Just one branch of a chemical family can have 30 million options for creating new chemical derivatives.

Decade-long quest

“There is a long way to go in the development phase,” Mr Dickmann says, “We are currently about one or two years into a 10-year process. But if successful, the molecules currently being tested in trials would provide new chemical entities or new mode of action groups for Australia.”

By chasing this objective, 10 Australian weed species have been added to Bayer’s screening program, with the aim of identifying active ingredients able to suppress difficult-to-control and herbicide-resistant weed populations.

“For the first time, tough Australian weeds such as feathertop Rhodes grass and double-ggee are being examined in Europe as part of the screening cascade.” Mr Dickmann commented.

This is an important step under the partnership, he explains, one that reflects Australia’s new status as a “top focus country” for Bayer, alongside the US, Canada, France, Germany and Ukraine.

Mr Dickmann says Australia’s robust weed biotypes have set a new benchmark in weed research programs used by scientists in Germany to guide the development of herbicides.
Melbourne biochemist

One of the scientists analysing modes of action and the herbicidal effects of chemical compounds on weeds from her home country is Australian postdoctoral biochemist Roxanne Smith. Dr Smith relocated from Melbourne to Frankfurt for a two-year tenure at Bayer as part of the second cohort of 10 researchers, who were appointed in December 2017.

She says the HIP venture has provided a rare opportunity to work overseas for a multinational life sciences company that complements her long-term career aspirations.

“I have always wanted to contribute to improved human health - through either the protection and production of food or pharmaceutical products,” she says. “During my PhD, I realised that one of the biggest issues we now face is keeping up with the emergence of resistant organisms.”

For her PhD at La Trobe University, Dr Smith studied an essential protein in the pathogenic bacteria Neisseria, which colonises the mucous membrane surfaces of many animals, including humans. She then targeted this essential protein to develop narrow-spectrum antibiotics with the potential to treat Neisseria.

Now Dr Smith is drawing on her PhD background in structural biology and assay development to decipher the mode of action for several potential herbicides at Bayer.

Mode of action probe

Another Australian postdoctoral chemist from Melbourne, Zelong Lim, has been contributing to the HIP research effort since December. Working in collaboration with Dr Smith at Bayer’s small molecules research division, Dr Lim is focused on ‘lead finding’, which involves synthesising chemical entities for herbicidal screening and, ultimately, generating new molecules with novel modes of action.

“Developing herbicides that require lower application rates and control herbicide-resistant weeds is always the goal,” Dr Lim says.

“I’m keen to contribute some chemical compounds that show potential and can be progressed into the product development pipeline – the dream is to see a compound that I helped discover being used in the field.”

As part of his PhD at Monash University, Dr Lim developed synthetic pathways for making small molecules. These molecules, which mimic a common protein structure, were then used in anti-cancer chemotherapeutics.

Dr Lim is applying the chemical synthesis strategies gleaned from his PhD to make molecules that target plant proteins as part of Bayer’s herbicide discovery research effort.

To this end, Dr Lim works inside a 1,100 square metre state-of-the-art research facility, part of which was purpose-built under the HIP agreement. The facility comprises laboratories and offices for a team of 40 chemists and technicians, including the postdoctoral researchers, Bayer employees and young scientists from around the world.

The GRDC is set to receive royalties and milestone payments on herbicide products derived from the bilateral agreement. “The day-to-day focus of the HIP program, however, is the delivery of new solutions to reduce the cost of weeds for Australian growers,” Mr Dickmann says.

Provided by Bayer Australia
Global food production needs to double by 2050 and the world’s arable land and water resources are finite. Yet approximately 50% of all food grown is lost in the production process or not consumed at all. The advent of connectivity, dubbed the Internet of Things (IoT), and advances in automation, robotics, and how we communicate has provided an ideal opportunity to advance agriculture, the least digitised of all industries, to become more efficient and increase productivity.

With this background, Bosch is increasingly engaged in Smart Agriculture via the introduction of technology including sensors, connectivity, automation, and robotics to provide decision support to farmers, improve yields, and increase agricultural output.

Bosch is a lead investor and technology partner of The Yield, an Australian Internet of Things (IoT) company on a mission to transform food and farming practices by building secure and scalable digital technology.

The Yield’s proprietary solution, Sensing+, unites hardware and software with predictive analytics and artificial intelligence to help growers make critical on-farm decisions. By connecting farms with The Yield’s solution and Bosch’s hardware expertise, the two companies are helping to take the guesswork out of farming.

In Japan, Bosch has invested in the development of an innovative disease prediction service using sensors and artificial intelligence to help increase yields for greenhouse grown tomatoes.

Our Brazilian colleagues are fusing artificial intelligence, IoT, and cloud storage to change the way we produce cattle in Brazilian feedlots. The precision livestock farming system aims to make beef production more efficient by automating the weighing process using "smart" walkover weigh stations.

A land of opportunity

Australia can play a leading role in Smart Agriculture. The broader food and agriculture industry, from paddock to plate, is estimated to be 12% of Australian GDP and a substantial part of Australia’s export performance. Free Trade Agreements often focus on the agriculture opportunity for Australia to help feed the world. And farmers are seen as the backbone of our working economy.

This is against the backdrop of Australia being the driest inhabitable continent with the least fertile soils, high labour costs, high energy costs, and no real subsidies. Australian farmers face especially challenging conditions, but therein lies the tremendous opportunity for technology innovation and adoption.

The Australian Federal Government is taking proactive measures to help digitally transform Australia’s food and agricultural industry. This has seen the establishment of a $50 million funded program over ten years through its Cooperative Research Centres program. The Food Agility CRC aims to integrate the agile culture and processes of the digital economy through a whole-of-value-chain lens for fresh and processed food. Bosch Australia is applying its expertise and resource to projects in connected agriculture and automation in conjunction with the CRC.
Agriculture 4.0 is the notion that we are entering a fourth revolution in agriculture, one that uses connectivity and technology to build an ecosystem in the same way manufacturing has adopted a similar approach.

Bosch Australia is lending our expertise to one of the world’s most important Ag-markets, assisting in bringing this ecosystem together. In his investment statement to the Parliament, The Hon. Steven Ciobo MP, followed his remarks about Bosch Australia with, “Just as Germany is at the forefront of Industry 4.0... Australia’s world class innovation in agribusiness and food is helping drive Agriculture 4.0, using smart devices to drive production efficiencies.”

A glimpse into the farms of the future

Monash University will establish an AgTech LaunchPad that will occupy one hectare at the Bosch headquarters in Clayton. A first-of-its-kind ag-tech facility, the LaunchPad will allow firms to collaborate on future-oriented smart agriculture including cropping trials and early-stage prototype development, enabling the development of artificial intelligence, automation, robotics and advanced sensor technology.

In addition, Bosch are part of a collaboration with global crop protection giant ADAMA, local Queensland based robotics start-up SwarmFarm, and the University of New South Wales to develop vision based, variable rate spray systems for the Australian apple industry. This is an example of cross-sector collaboration between global players, local start-ups and highly regarded academic institutions.

Away from field connectivity, Bosch Australia’s Manufacturing Solutions (BAMS) business is invested in automation for packing sheds and farm machinery. In 2017, BAMS partnered with Swarmfarm on their automated and modular farming platform in an example of mature automotive engineering expertise being applied to innovation in agricultural machinery.

Partner or Perish

Doubling global food production by 2050 cannot be achieved alone. Bosch is a technology enabler that has engaged the local industry through strategic partnerships and will continue to do so. With 132 years of industrial experience and a network of willing partners, there is opportunity to grow a new sector for Australia that is fundamentally ‘invented for life.’

Written by Jesse Reader,
Agronomist and Bosch Australia’s Agriculture Specialist and Business Development lead
New Zealand – Quality Food Bowl to the World

“Kai” the Maori word for food/meal and “kaitiaki” as an extension being the guardian/minder of the food/land is important to understand in a country such as New Zealand. Everything produced –by the land– must be of high export quality. This is why New Zealand’s primary industries are focused on export markets and rely on New Zealand maintaining and growing access to those markets. Growing this export base further provides opportunities to all involved in the processing, packaging and transportation of food & beverage products, from New Zealand to the world.

With a population of only 4.7 million people and a land mass of 266,680 km², New Zealand is the world’s 12th largest by-value agricultural exporter. It is the largest exporter of sheep meat and dairy products worldwide, and second largest wool and softwood log exporter.

New Zealand has a clear comparative advantage in food & beverage (and the wider agricultural value chain, with food & beverages exports valuing NZ$22b and accounting for 43% of New Zealand’s total exports. This success can be attributed to work ensuring primary sector exporters can access overseas markets. The negotiation of valuable free trade agreements and New Zealand’s contribution to the development of international standards, whilst monitoring export quality and safety through robust auditing systems makes New Zealand a favoured partner. New Zealand is in itself an international food brand with world class biosecurity, food safety, animal welfare, and fisheries management systems.

According to the Emerging Growth opportunities in NZ Food & Beverage Report, issued March 2018, the 20 strongest growth categories can be distinguished as unique, counter seasonal, on-trend, and/or leverage provenance. They attract a significant price premium in the market and target key markets such as China and Australia. The actual products where New Zealand believes there is major growth potential have been identified as follows: infant formula, innovative foods, honey (Manuka), dog or cat food, salmon (chilled whole), cherries, filled chocolate bars/blocks, breakfast cereal, muesli bars and flavoured beverages. New Zealand exports obtain a significant price premium over the world price in nearly all the growth categories; honey for example achieving 707% over the world price.

Investment opportunities highlighted in summary

Investment opportunities are plentiful but it must be remembered the domestic market is small and has relatively low growth, so investors should focus on opportunities and comparative advantage to drive strong export growth. In the two largest sectors, dairy and meat, potential areas for new and/or external investment are primarily in the transformation of ingredients rather than the production of more ingredients.

In the processed foods sector, current investment success is occurring in a handful of key segments. These segments use low cost New Zealand inputs as ingredients, such as infant formula, chocolate/confectionery, frozen meals & sides amongst others. Investors, especially those in the position of category leadership and who have the capacity for leverage in these or related areas should investigate greenfields investment. Past research...
suggests New Zealand can make a strong business case to more than half of the top 200 global F&B firms not yet in the country. For example, Germany is the second largest exporter of processed foods in the world, but only one significant German firm has invested in the wider New Zealand food industry.

Opportunities to invest in large wine firms are diminishing as these are either already foreign owned by global majors or have committed NZ family owners. However opportunities do exist for new investment in next tier down (e.g. Giesen, Allan Scott, etc.). These firms are looking for smart investment which gives them access to a global salesforce and a route to market.

Similarly, there are limited entry vehicles for new investors into the seafood sector, as industry ownership of larger firms is locked up by, Maori interests who are unlikely to sell. Family businesses (Talleys, United, Independent, Solander, Vela) are unlikely to sell without generational change, as well as cornerstone shareholdings of large global seafood companies (e.g. Nissui in Sealord), or long-term cornerstone shareholders in publicly-listed firms. Like the wine industry, investors seeking smaller opportunities will find a wide range of opportunities among the second tier of interesting and innovative firms. There are also opportunities for investment in further processing of New Zealand bulk ingredients (e.g. “white fish”) into consumer ready products, however this is primarily a greenfields opportunity for firms with transferrable skills.

New Zealand is also a major apple producer and exporter. Investment into the produce sector has been visible with the two largest apple exporters having changed hands in the last few years, but there are also opportunities for further consolidation among smaller pack houses. Of particular note is regional consolidation in Hawkes Bay and elsewhere (e.g. Scales acquiring Longview, New Zealand). New emerging third generation IP-controlled varieties have high potential for growth, particularly in Asia (e.g. Rockit apple). New Zealand has a strong track record of developing successful new varieties of apples; including the Gala and Braeburn which now account for one in six apple trees planted globally (outside China).

Interestingly, the cider industry in New Zealand has experienced strong growth, both for domestic consumption and export. Exports have shown strong growth over the past decade, primarily to Australia. While there are a large number of producers, most export volume is produced by the two main brewers (Heineken/DB & Kirin/Lion).

Strong opportunities also exist for further investment by major global value-added vegetable processors. New Zealand is strongly competitive with key temperate producer/exporters such as the Netherlands, Canada, the US, and France. EU producers should consider New Zealand as an Asia-Pacific production base.

Finally let us not forget the developments in the AgTech sector. As CTO of Robotics Plus, Dr Alistair Scarfe, explains: “The paradox is that while global demand for fresh produce continues to grow, labour shortages make it increasingly difficult to manage crops. The available labour for orchard and packhouse work is steadily reducing while new plantings will require significant increases in available labour”. New Zealand has been producing an array of top notch companies but the word is out with companies such as Compac and BBC recently being snapped up by global player Tomra. Others are still out there such as Robotics Plus, Autogrow, RipeTime and DataPhyl to name a few.

Summarised by Monique Surges, CEO of the German–New Zealand Chamber of Commerce

Sources: www.foodandbeverage.govt.nz, NZ Ministry of Primary Industries, NZ Ministry of Business Innovation & Employment
Company directors working in Australia are under more public scrutiny than ever before. Insurers of directors in Australia are paying more claims than ever before. The cost is in the billions of dollars.

My role as the Financial Lines Underwriting Manager at HDI in Australasia and ASEAN is, I believe, to inform as well as to insure directors.

Calls from political circles, the media and consumer groups for greater regulatory power, demands for Board spills by activist shareholders, the deliberately publicised pessimism of short sell investors, the ongoing battle to prevent cyber breaches, the growing confidence of employees to bring lawsuits regarding workplace harassment are just some of the trends we are seeing as directors are increasingly held responsible for any actual or perceived imperfections in their governance.

As one of Australia’s leading Directors & Officers insurers, we at HDI look across “Corporate Australia” and see the increase in the numbers of threats of litigation by parties whose main or perhaps sole motivation is simply to milk the current litigation climate for cash, to hustle an out-of-court settlement from directors and their companies. Such nuisance settlements have the potential to run to millions of dollars. And to prove that a director has not been in breach of Australia’s stringent corporate governance laws usually requires appropriate legal representation from a street-wise lawyer, the cost of which can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Even in a successful defence, not all of that money will be returned.

This year the trend has continued for directors to be brought in at the wrong end of investigations, class actions, royal commissions and the many regulators’ prosecutions. There are almost no commonalities in the industry sectors in which company directors are being targeted. Whether you are a director of an ASX top 50 member or of a local not-for-profit or indeed of a subsidiary of an overseas parent company, according to the corporate law of Australia, a director is a director is a director.

There is little expectation of or allowance for human error. Forgiveness is not part of the deal.

It can be the “optics” that count more than the legal technicalities. How does the behaviour look to the outside world, the average Australian worker, the opportunistic litigation lawyer? If it looks less than perfect it isn’t always going to cut the mustard. And that can lead to a corporate crisis.

The phrase “Crisis Management” is not always associated with matters where allegations are made against company directors yet it is clear to me that those companies who prepare to cope with and mitigate the negative effects of unexpected allegations against directors will be those who are most likely to survive the ordeal. We have fire alarms and sprinklers in our fire proof buildings and practice fire drills for an event we hope never happens to ensure that on the day itself we are not caught short. We ask ourselves the unpleasant “what if?” question. Yet very few organisations do anything similar to test their corporate governance protocols and simply assume they must work. Is there a crisis management committee well versed in how to cope in the case of allegations being made against one of or all of the Board? Is there a law firm retained which is experienced in handling such matters? Is there a PR firm immediately on hand to protect your brand? Do you know who needs to contact your insurance broker and who is to be contacted to ensure your insurer is put on notice and can look to assist you?

And finally, a top tip: learn from those who have been there before - speak to other directors of other companies who have experienced claims being made against them. There will be so much to learn from their experiences that could be useful to you.

As a director, you can not know everything. But you are able to act and prepare against the day when someone alleges you should do.
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**Dammann German-English Translations** is offering all Chamber members a 30% discount on the translation of personal documents.

**Audi Australia** are delighted to offer you as a member of the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce benefits and superior servicing of the Audi Corporate program on the entire range of premium new Audi vehicles.

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We have prospered for more than nine decades through a combination of professional, personalised service based on sound advice and a careful focus on our clients’ needs. While numerically not large, the firm has maintained blue chip clients and quality staff over many years as we are dedicated to providing advice that is underpinned by understanding our clients’ needs and commerciality.

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I am a Swiss-born, Melbourne based professional photographer with a background in marketing & business.

I provide high-quality photographs that promote your company, feature your sponsors and reflect the atmosphere of your key events. I am a non-intrusive photographer who knows the etiquette of small and large corporate events. Time is money and that is why my clients love the client gallery which makes the distribution of your branded photos after an event a breeze.

Some of my clients include the State Library of Victoria, Google, various foreign chambers of commerce (SWISSCHAM, AHK, FACCI, ACBC, AMCHAM), Switzerland Tourism and the Australian Water Association.

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- promotional photography
- corporate head shots

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The Group has Australia-wide coverage and regularly undertakes assignments in New Zealand, China, Singapore, UK, Middle East and Africa.

Luerssen Australia Pty Ltd is a newly incorporated subsidiary of Luerssen. The family-owned Luerssen Group, based in Bremen, specialises in the design and manufacture of yachts, marine and coastguard vessels and has been known worldwide for the highest product quality as well as innovative technologies in yacht and naval shipbuilding. The new build sector also includes extensive after-sales service, including repairs, refits, maintenance and global logistics services.

Luerssen Australia was the successful bidder for 12 new offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) for the Royal Australian Navy. The first 2 vessels will be built in Adelaide and the remainder in Perth over a period of 10 years. The project will be delivered by “Australian workers, in Australian shipyards using Australian steel”. Luerssen Australia will help to develop the sovereign capability to build world-class naval vessels in Australia.

Market Access Services Australia (MAS) is run by experienced German-Australian entrepreneurs to assist companies in market analysis, market entry strategy and business development.

Specialising in the environmental and utilities sectors, MAS provides advice on the relevant market conditions, the best market entry strategies, relevant locations and also assists businesses in establishing subsidiaries or distribution channels. MAS are saving their customers time and money in clearly identifying the path of entry with the highest chance of success.


McCullough Robertson is a leading independent Australian law firm. For 92 years, major Australian and foreign-owned corporations, financial institutions, governments and high net worth individuals have trusted our advice on their most critical legal challenges.

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