

TERRY'S COMMITMENT TO KEMPSEY OFFICIALLY RECOGNISED

Terry Hunt, along with the late Steven Keir number three, was responsible for Akubra moving from Sydney to Kempsey in 1974 and Terry has since embraced the town with such a passion that it has been officially recognized.

Terry, a former long time company secretary of Akubra and still a member of the company's board, was awarded an OAM in the last honours list for services to the community of Kempsey.

And although 78 he has no plans to slow down.

After retiring from Akubra in 1999 Terry ran for and was elected to Kempsey Shire Council and remained a councillor for nine years.

"I wanted to put something back into a community which had welcomed Akubra and done so much to make us successful," Terry said.

"Akubra has been good for Kempsey but Kempsey has been great for Akubra.

"I was the only person on council with a financial background and that was where I was able to make a real contribution.

"The others looked to me for advice in those areas.

"Budget time was always particularly interesting."

Terry retired from council in 2008 so he could concentrate on his roles in a number of community organizations.

Apart from his role on the

tertiary studies, treasurer of the Anglican parish and president and treasurer of the Mooneba Bushfire Brigade.

He is also a past president of Legacy and in 1997 was voted Kempsey Shire Council's Citizen Of The Year.



Terry Hunt, Akubra's former long time company secretary and now an OAM for services to Kempsey.

board of Akubra he is president of the Kempsey RSL sub branch, president of the RSL club, chairman of the Kempsey Correctional Centre Consultative Committee, president of Kempsey Advisory Training Enterprises which distributes \$12,000 each year to Kempsey students to help defray their costs to pursue

"I feel flattered to have been awarded an OAM," Terry said.

"I do these things because I enjoy them and want to help the community while I still can."

In the early 1970's Steven Keir number three and Terry were sent north by Steven number two and the Akubra board to look for

a suitable site for the company to relocate to.

"We looked at five towns along the coast and recommended Kempsey because it had everything we were looking for including good road and rail access and an airport," Terry said.

"It was a big event when the first hat came out of the new factory."

Terry joined Akubra as company secretary in February 1961 when the factory was in the Sydney suburb of Waterloo.

The offer came while he was working in England.

"I had been working with the firm of accountants that did the audit at Akubra so I had spent quite a bit of time in the Akubra office," Terry said.

"Later I left and went to England but I received a letter from the then company secretary, Dick Day, who said he was getting ready to retire and would I like his job.

"I was keen to come home and grabbed the opportunity.

"Akubra was a great organization to work for but I never dreamed when I took the job it would take me to such a wonderful community as Kempsey."

TOUGH TIMES CONTINUE

Several outlets that Akubra had significant accounts with have either closed recently or been placed in liquidation. Akubra's managing director, Stephen Keir, looks at the impact on the business.



Adelaide's iconic store Trims, which has been placed in liquidation.

Having just finished looking at our trading and results for the last financial year I thought I might share my thoughts on what has been one of our toughest trading years for some time.

You read the paper and watch the news and it seems like every day another business fails because of the economic climate.

It is as if the global financial crisis skipped a couple of years and is now upon us with gusto!

Akubra has lost three significant accounts in the past 12 months, Top Hatters in Perth (a specialty hat shop), Trims in Adelaide (a family owned enterprise that we have supplied for more than 75 years) and more recently part of the Blowes family group operating retail outlets in Dubbo, Tamworth, Armidale and Port Macquarie.

These are very difficult times and our thoughts are

with the proprietors and employees of these businesses. Of course there is a flow on effect to suppliers such as ourselves, not only in lost future trade but also in the write off of debts that go directly to our bottom line. So I guess everybody is suffering.

We continue to supply more than 1,000 independent retailers in Australia and we firmly believe that retail has an important place in the Australian economic landscape.

Our discussions with businesses indicates a lack of consumer spend which is tightening cash flow along with the global environment driven by internet business placing pressure on retail trade.

This, coupled with locked in lease agreements, is hurting what is acknowledged as the largest employment sector in the country.

This partly comes down to confidence and I hope that with the impending election the country can move on for the betterment of us all.

Whilst I don't believe we are through the worst of the poor trading conditions, I am optimistic that business will eventually improve.

What I have noticed is a resurgence in the demand for locally made quality products. People are supporting the efforts of ethical employers particularly after the horrific scenes in Bangladesh.

My job is to keep our brand strong and to continue to supply you with a quality product that you can reliably offer your customers.

When you have been in business for 130 years current times should be seen as a small bump in the road.

Yet the pace of change to move the company forward will probably mean some changes. Our Board of Directors (including my two sisters) are working hard to identify opportunities that will benefit all of us.

Our range of belts are proving to be well received in the marketplace with sales growing in this category. I encourage you to contact your Akubra agent if you have not seen our belts yet.

Our brand remains well respected and trusted and this is a credit to our 85 employees who work hard to deliver a quality product. I am committed to manufacturing in Australia and whilst the road forward may have some obstacles I am hopeful that with prudent decision making and the seizing of opportunities me and my sisters can pass the business to the next generation of the Keir family.

THIS GAMBLE BECAME A BIG WINNER

Fifty years ago the late Claude Cater, then aged 20 and his 19 year old wife Pam took a business gamble that few would even contemplate today at such a young age, opening a menswear store in Mareeba in far north Queensland.

This year Claude Cater Mensland celebrates its 50th anniversary and despite a rocky start the motto of "customer service first and foremost" carried them through.

The young couple borrowed five thousand pounds from their parents, lost a good deal of that to a fraudster only a month after the shop opened and stocked the shelves with empty shirt boxes to make it appear they had more stock than actually existed.

"We had the boxes displayed in such a way that customers could not see that they were empty," Pam said.

"If someone asked for a size 42 shirt we would tell them we did not have it in stock but could get it in in three or four days.

"Even today, if we don't have something a customer wants we will do everything we can to get it for them.

"Thirty people up and down the Queensland coast lost money to that fraudster.



FAMILY AFFAIR: The Cater family (from left) Raymond, Lina (Raymond's wife), Steven, Pam, Leah (Robert's wife) and Robert.

"We had him checked out, found he owned a clothing factory on the Gold Coast and paid for beach wear which never arrived.

"He closed the factory and disappeared."

The town boasted seven other clothing stores at the time and the young couple were certainly not welcomed.

In fact two of the other business owners did everything they could to make sure the tiny new store would not survive.

Life became even more complicated when sons, Raymond and Robert, arrived.

"We had a play pen out the back and customers and staff from other businesses would often wander out and talk to the boys," Pam said.

Despite this the business flourished and in 1983 moved into much larger premises and later took over another shop to open its Discount Workwear section.

Three generations of the Cater family are now involved in the business.

Pam still plays an active role, Raymond and Robert run the store and Raymond's son Steven has joined the business.

Twelve years ago Claude died, at the age of 58, after a long battle with cancer.

"The business was doing well and Dad was able to start to relax and spend time with his grand children when he died," Raymond and Robert said.

"It seemed so unfair after all that he and Mum went through to make the business successful."

Akubra hats have always played an important role in the success of the business, given that Mareeba lies on the Atherton Tablelands one hour inland from Cairns.

And the town becomes a sea of Akubras when the annual Mareeba Rodeo is run every July.

Mareeba even had its own Akubras at one stage, Akubra The Cater & more recently Cater Country Mareeba

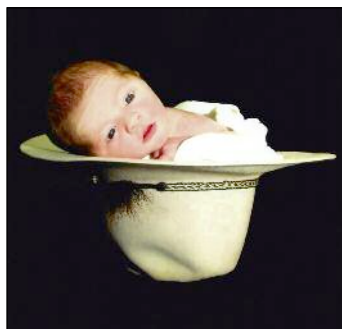
"Akubra made it exclusively for us and the original The Cater was very popular 30 years ago" Pam said.

"The original The Cater had a very high crown and everyone wore those sorts of hats then, but eventually they went out of fashion, demand fell away and it became uneconomical to keep making it.

"We stock nearly all the vast Akubra range so we can cater for virtually every wish when it comes to a hat.

"And yes, in keeping with our tradition if we haven't got it we will get it in."

BABY TOBY DOING IT REALLY ROUGH



A PERFECT FIT: Baby Toby Ridgley fits snugly into his Dad's Rough Rider.

Akubra. In fact, our baby in a Rough Rider.

Try as we might we could not find any way to rhyme baby with Akubra, hat or Rough Rider but we are sure you get the meaning.

Ashleigh and Scott Ridgley from Hervey Bay in Queensland were going through their baby photos and found this one, taken two years ago, of Toby when he was just six days old.

"We were having professional photographs taken of Toby and our photographer, Dana Taylor, was looking for something different and

suggested we see if he would fit into Scott's hat," Ashleigh said.

"He was a perfect fit and she got some great shots.

"When we came across the pictures again we decided to send them off to Akubra and share the experience with everyone.

"Since then we have had another son, Duke, who is now nine months old.

"He was exactly the same size and weight as Toby at six days but would not fit into his Dad's Akubra."

Scott is a carpenter and is never without his Akubra

at work while Ashleigh is also the proud owner of a Rough Rider.

"We want to get an Akubra for Toby but are having trouble finding one small enough but we will keep looking," Ashleigh said.

"And, when Duke is older we will get him one as well.

"My parents and Scott's parents have properties outside Harvey Bay and the children love visiting but we believe it is important they have proper head wear.

"There is no better sun protection than an Akubra".

With apologies to Dr Seuss and The Cat In The Hat, this is our baby in an

AND THE WINNER IS ... ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS!

Vassie Comino and Lyn Lawton are two well known business women in the Queensland city of Mackay who are also good friends.

A raffle prize has now brought them even closer.

Vassie is the managing partner of P. Comino and Sons, a long established and well known store in Mackay specializing in country wear and particularly Akubra and R. M. Williams products.

Lyn is the managing director of Payne Print and Vassie's 81-year-old company is one of her longest running clients.

The pair then were entitled to a combined double take when the winning ticket in the lucky gate prize was drawn at the Mackay Canegrowers' AG. Trade Show, where Vassie sponsored Akubra Tablelands hats worn by the officials.

P. Comino and Sons also



BEST FRIENDS: Lyn Lawton (left) about to claim part of her her prize from Vassie Comino.

donated a \$500 voucher for the gate prize and out of the 3,000 who attended, the winner was Lyn.

"No one deserves that win more than Lyn," Vassie said.

"She works tirelessly to raise funds for the Flying Doctor service and never makes a fuss about it.

"She goes about the task

very quietly but very effectively.

"Lyn had been intending to come into our store for months to buy Akubras for her family but they are all so busy with the business they weren't getting time."

Last month the family did finally come together and the winning voucher was used to buy Akubras for

Lyn, her son Jack, her daughter Jaime and Jaime's partner, Patrick.

"Vassie and I are good friends and often chat and we certainly have one thing in common," Lyn said.

"We both love our jobs.

"We have a great business but we are so busy that finding time to get everyone together is almost impossible.

"However we finally all got together then we had to decide what styles of Akubras we wanted.

"There is such a large range but I opted for one from the ladies range."

Lyn and her family were not the only group that day trying on Akubras.

"We have been flat out and the hats have been flying out the store," Vassie said.

"There has not been a proper winter up here this year and with the warmer weather coming on people are getting ready for summer earlier than normal."

Brett, even you look a spunk in that Akubra



Peter Rosethorn, Kim's henpecked husband Brett from the Kath and Kim series, was having the

time of his life at Sails in the Desert Ayres Rock Resort.

After all, Kim wasn't

there to nag him.

One of Akubra's significant clients entertained more than 200 staff as an

incentives and awards program at the resort

Peter (right) was the MC for the celebrations while Dugal McIntyre and Hamish McLeod from Akubra's Corporate Direct ran an Akubra Fitting Station.

Dugal and Hamish fitted the more than 200 guests each with the gift of an Akubra.

Brett... sorry Peter... found a new best friend in Hamish (left) after the fitting was completed.

AKUBRA – ON TOP DOWN UNDER