



Inspiring the heart of towns

WHERE do you want to be on December 31?

Maybe it's bouncing out of bed to milk the cows that morning, or hitting the surf at 10am, maybe it's having the day off or maybe it's welcoming in the New Year with customers at your restaurant or pizza shop.

Everyone's passion and drive are different, and it is that determination and spirit for doing what we love that gets us out of bed.

But how many of us are bouncing out of bed? How many of us are not stressed about finances, costs or interest rates? How many of us are truly enjoying life?

New Year's resolutions aside – you need a plan.

A coffee and hot chocolate in hand, the Sentinel-Times sat down with Rebecca Casey (at a local café of course!) and discussed the hard yards.

Rebecca Casey is a woman of many talented hats – a business coach, a dairy farmer, a mother and surfer, and also the brains behind Nature of Business.

Over the years she has helped countless businesses with her skills and background qualifications which includes a Business Degree, Agriculture Degree, International Coaching Federation qualifications, amongst others.

But what is really concerning Rebecca in 2023 is that not enough businesses, who are struggling, are asking for help.

"There is often so much going on, business owners are unable to sift through their thoughts long enough to make a plan," Rebecca explained.

"With interest rates and costs continuously rising – well above worst case predictions, we are heading into a catastrophic period.

"Businesses, particularly small businesses, are the heart of their town, the impact of these businesses closing has a flow on effect through the community. It's more important than ever that businesses who are struggling reach out for help – remove the stigma."

With free resources available at Business Victoria and Beyond Blue, the importance of asking for a hand up has never been more straightforward.

An example was tabled – imagine if a struggling coffee shop openly said on their door and across social media that they needed to sell 100 medium sized take away coffees that day to help get them out of the blue. No doubt 200 plus coffees would be sold. Those who could not afford a medium would buy a small and those who had spare change would upgrade to a large. In the days of cash, the tips jar would be overflowing with support.

"People are not alone – you are not alone," Rebecca stated.

Step back from the stigma – be open, honest and real, because in times of need communities step up.

"Not only is it important for people to ask for help and seek professional advice (not TikTok, influencer sounding advice – true accredited advice), but businesses need to be putting in place a plan for 2023," Rebecca added.

As American author, Jack Canfield said: "Everything you want is on the other side of fear."

"Failure doesn't exist," Rebecca continued.

"Businesses, and even individuals, miss opportunities because they do not see the tree through the forest – it's too hard, there is simply too much noise.

"People are worried about interest rates, cashflow, cost of items, lack of monies..."

"It's looking at situations from a different perspective."

Professional coaching in underrated, highly underrated.

That is not some advertising spinning, everyone must see a coach recommendation.



"There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure." – Paulo Coelho

It's genuine, firsthand experience – coaching twelve months ago turned this writer's life around.

Holding David Boyds and photographing Minnie Pwerle's, checking near flawless diamonds, may be someone's dream, but tabled with a four hour drive each day, it wasn't mine.

Realising something wasn't right, I reached out to a coach to reconnect me with me, and a mere three months later, I handed in my resignation, and two days later secured a job that gave me back my life, that put the zest back into my step.

In Australia the coaching industry is unregulated, and anyone can simply call themselves a coach, which is why advice from qualified individuals and recognised organisations are crucial.

"Businesses stem from ideas – from a passion to inspire or educate.

"That should not be lost. If plans are put in place, you will have a clear vision of where you are going and can be proactive rather than reactive."

Weathering the storms

And Rebecca is not alone in those storms – she was in the heart of the dairy crisis years ago, and to this day still wakes at the crack of dawn to milk alongside her husband.

But instead of fogged vision, Rebecca is living her life, a life that doesn't involve working when you love what you do – a life that is balanced between surfing at the right tide, milking twice daily and coaching business owners – whether farmers, retail, telecommunications or anything in between.

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work" – Thomas Edison famously said.

And it is no truer, as Rebecca notes there is no such thing as failure.

"You will learn, you will grow, and you have that knowledge moving forwards.

"People need to maximise their potential and start living their life – a life filled with passion."

Walking away from Rebecca I was reminded of three key things...

- Ask for help, you are not alone and seek out the assistance of a professional rather than Google or a neighbour. There are plenty of genuine resources around for struggling businesses – small and large.

- Have a plan for 2023 – there is still 11 months left to achieve your vision, and to be equipped as proactive rather than reactive.

- Remember, failure is not a thing.

And last but not least, its crucial communities support local businesses – shop local and keep your money in your circular economy.

Fixing the health care system on government agenda

PREMIER Daniel Andrews voiced his concerns strongly recently regarding the number one matter for National Cabinet ahead of their first meeting on February 3 – fixing the health care system.

Subsequently on Friday, National Cabinet agreed that Health is the first priority issue for 2023, and discussed the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report, which sets out a pathway to reform the primary care system.

"Medicare is not what it was designed to be, it's a pale imitation of what it was supposed to be – free, fast and local. It has never been harder to find a bulk billing doctor, particularly after hours than it is right now," Premier Andrews stated.

"They are profound (changes), but they are quite simple.

"We've got to recognise that we're not rewarding (paying) them properly for doing their work. Secondly, we have to train more GPs and that means more fully funded university places..."

Premier Andrews also highlighted the Better at Home program.

"You're in a familiar environment, less stressful, and you're freeing up the bed for someone else who can't be treated at home... and it's much better for clinical outcomes as well."

Bass Coast Health is also making sure locals are getting care in the right place, with the Better at Home program getting more patients provided with hospital-level care from doctors and nurses in their own homes than ever before.

In 2021-22, Bass Coast Health provided 1,846 days of care to patients recovering at home – and across Gippsland more broadly, 14,466 bed days were provided at home.

"This is literally hundreds and thousands of patients who aren't in a



Premier Daniel Andrews and Bass Coast Health CEO Jan Child highlighted the importance of the Better at Home program and aged care nursing reforms. C15_0623

hospital bed, that bed is free for someone else, and they're being supported in a familiar environment, providing much more efficient care and better care..."

In highlighting the importance of Better at Home, Premier Andrews highlighted the health care system failures particularly around Medicare.

"No one wants to be in an ED unless they have to be. Category four and five presentations have never been higher; and that's not a criticism of those people, they're simply using the only option that is available to them. That puts stress on the system. It makes it harder for our staff to deal with those patients who genuinely need urgent priority care," Premier Andrews said.

In addressing the recent nursing reforms to Aged Care, Premier Andrews and Bass Coast Health CEO Jan Child both agreed that they would not be impacted by nurses leaving the public system.

"Making sure there is in fact care, in aged care. Minimum staffing requirements and more nurses is a critically important part of that," Premier Andrews said.

"We haven't talked about the fact that there's a cou-

ple of 100, if not more aged care residents, that are in hospital beds that should be back in aged care. One of the ways in which we'll get people out of hospital and back home, is to make sure that at that end, there's a higher clinical profile. There are people who've got different skills and can do more for those residents and patients. That's a really important part of it."

Bass Coast Health CEO Jan Child echoed those comments.

"We run public sector residential aged care facilities, so we already have registered nurses in our facilities. Because of that we are in a really good position," Ms Child explained.

"We've had the opposite where people jump in. They know we've got ratios and staffing base-lines that secure nursing support. It can be quite frightening if you are not quite sure what to do with somebody and you don't have the registered nurse to go to – the public sector has had (the support) for probably 25 years.

"We won't feel the impact and hopefully it will improve the care and support for those staff in some of the smaller facilities."



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