



members without incurring undue charges and emotional pain. Troy's presentation was strengthened by his ability to draw on many case studies to illustrate his points and to speak with authority on legal matters.

Mathew Raad, company owner and business broker was also able to draw on his experiences to give us real insights on how to "dress up" a business for sale or, if you prefer, identify factors to look for when buying.

Debra Lynch contributed a different perspective to the morning. Debra is Executive Officer with DSRD's Small Business Development Corporation and outlined the Department's workshop on "Maximising the Value of your Business". A real synergy developed between Debra and Mathew and hopefully we will see joint seminars by these two sometime in the future.

### *Diversification Strategies for Global Survival- the Byron Group Experience*

The Byron Group started in aviation but continues to be innovative in seeking out niche markets and building on its current successes. Byron comprises four companies in the areas of aviation, stretchers and rescue equipment, and emergency transport technology. Under the guidance of Tony Nelson, our host for the morning, the seminar focused on the latter two areas. It was such a stimulating and informative morning that we hope to return in the near future for a visit to the aviation facility.

In exploring the growth and diversification of the company, participants raised a number of issues. Tony himself explained the need for moving into export markets and the value of production partnerships with Asian neighbours. Issues such as the difficulty of finding skilled employees and the value of bringing together teams of engineering graduates with "smart tradespeople" were discussed.

Tony explained that whilst Bryon held a number of patents, the emphasis was on maintaining an innovation push, rather than seeking protection of IP which in many cases can not be covered under current laws.

We spent quite some time finding out the factors that encourage innovation, especially in the identification of niche products. As is often the case, those who are living and breathing innovation accept their environment without

spending time analysing how this innovation happens. One of the factors that did emerge was the importance of CEO Alan Moses as a leader with enthusiasm, vision and focus.

*For further information, please contact Ross Pearce at the University of Western Sydney on 02 4620 3009 or visit [www.uws.edu.au/itn](http://www.uws.edu.au/itn)*

### Building and Construction Innovation Cluster

#### *Profiting from Your Ideas*

The IDC-Hunter has been supporting inventors and innovators since 1992 and assists more than 1,000 each year. Troy White, Commercialisation Manager for the IDC, explained that the building industry is a fertile breeding ground for new and innovative ideas and products. Many of these great ideas arise because something annoyed the inventor so they worked to come up with a better way to do it. Troy explained how the IDC works with these inventors to take their idea to market. Two IDC clients then explained their inventions and how they got to where they are now.

Coastal Innovations has developed "Clickity Clack", a unique way to join panels that provides the builder with a neat, finished surface to disguise the connection point of two adjacent sheets of material. Clickity Clack can be used to join panels in any material of any size in any application and may be used by builders, carpenters, developers and owner builders.

Alan Taylor from Coastal Innovations explained how they developed the product and worked through a number of prototypes to the current version. He also stressed the importance of having someone like the IDC that could make sure they stayed on track and focused on a commercial outcome for their efforts.

Neal Borland, a licensed plumber, has developed the FLOWSTOPPER™ plugging device that assists plumbers when cutting out and repairing broken copper water pipes by stopping the residual flow of water on the outlet side of a water meter or other control valve. When using the FLOWSTOPPER™ plugging device the plumber can oxy-acetylene weld whilst the high temperature resistant stainless steel hose remains in the copper pipe. The FLOWSTOPPER™

is now distributed through a number of specialist plumbing supply outlets.

Neal developed this product for plumbers to overcome a real problem. He explained how the product developed, taking nearly 10 years to finally bring it to market. Neal is working with DSRD and Austrade to further develop the market for this innovative product to take it to the world.

### *BASIX – Lessons Learnt So Far.*

In July 2004 the Building Sustainability Index (BASIX) became mandatory for all new homes in NSW. BASIX forces designers to incorporate energy and water saving features into buildings. In July 2006 the mandatory energy savings will increase from 25% to 40% and the scheme will apply to renovations and additions.

Each development application for a residential dwelling must be submitted with a BASIX Certificate. A Certificate is issued once a BASIX assessment has been satisfactorily completed, using the on-line tool ([www.basix.nsw.gov.au](http://www.basix.nsw.gov.au))

The building applicant, (e.g. architect, builder, owner builder) is responsible for completing the assessment, ensuring the BASIX commitments are clearly marked on the plans, and submitting the BASIX Certificate with the development application.

Bernard Hockings from the Sydney Building Information Centre, walked the Cluster members through the online site and demonstrated the impact on BASIX ratings using different combinations of strategies. By drawing on his extensive experience in the sustainable building industry he demonstrated that relatively simple adjustments could result in significant improvements. Rather than see this process as “another hurdle that the builder must overcome” Bernard demonstrated how ongoing operating savings can result in the recovery of the initial cost over a shorter time frame and how this fact can be used as a marketing tool to increase work.

Bernard could not stress enough that the building contractor must be completely familiar with the requirements of the Schedule of Commitments associated with the BASIX Certificate. He used current real world examples to demonstrate how failure to understand the implications of these commitments impact not only on the profitability of a job, but also on delays in getting completion certificates issued.

Access to a sustainable supply of water could possibly be the greatest threat to future development projects. BASIX attempts to address this issue.

*For further information, please contact Darrell Nicholls at the Industry Development Centre - Hunter on 02 4962 0999 or visit [www.idc-hunter.org.au](http://www.idc-hunter.org.au)*

### Wollongong Technology Demonstration Program

With the help of DSRD Wollongong Office, the first DSRD Technology Demonstration Program on-site seminar took place at BlueScope Steel Ltd at Port Kembla Steelworks, Coniston, on 23 March. Member for Wollongong, Ms Noreen Hay, opened the event. Feedback was positive and most participants would like to join similar seminars on a monthly basis.

Over the last 18 months, DSRD has held two best practice workshops, in conjunction with the University of Wollongong, on E-Commerce and Supply Chain Management for SMEs. The next on-site seminar will be held at Port Kembla Port Corporation on 8 May, focussing on bulk handling technologies and managing business partnerships.

The DSRD Technology Demonstration Program is designed to support the State's SMEs to adopt current technologies and best practices. The on-site seminars provide business owners an opportunity to see modern technologies and management practices in action.

*For more information about the Wollongong Technology Demonstration Program please email [donatella.d'amico@business.nsw.gov.au](mailto:donatella.d'amico@business.nsw.gov.au) or call Donatella D'Amico on 4225 9055.*