Celebrating our local Hawkesbury businesses

SUSAN TEMPLEMAN

FROM being a kid in my parents' newsagency and growing up in that small business, through having my own company for 25 years, working with a lot of businesses -small, medium and large, here and overseas. I have seen the pressures owners face.

It is a tough road that you choose when you decide to work for yourself, and I really take my hat off to all the small businesses in my community.

Celebrating the important role you play in our community is what I love about the Hawkesbury Local Business Awards.

There are incredible businesses nominated across a wide range of categories. From alpacas, accounting and accommodation to florists, floats, fashion and fitness.

In the list of nominees, we see long-established businesses alongside new operations, and we see older stalwarts of our business scene nominated alongside younger business owners, the whole gamut.

I congratulate all the finalists as the Hawkesbury Local Business Awards gala ceremony draws closer and I look forward to the joy and celebratory atmosphere of the event itself, which will be held in the evening on Wednesday, November 11, 2026, at Hawkesbury Showground.

Susan Templeman is Federal Member for Macquarie.
Visit: www.susantempleman.com.au



Local MP Susan Templeman as a student exposed to small business.

Growing success from the Hawkesbury

FROM a pioneering idea to supplying leading restaurants, Hawkesbury LBA finalist Gourmet Herbs has built its reputation on quality, innovation and a passion for horticulture.

The business was founded in 2003 by fourth-generation farmer Jane Vassallo, Gourmet Herbs has grown from a small family operation into a specialist supplier of premium micro-herbs and edible flowers.

Based in the Hawkesbury, the business emerged from Jane's determination to explore new opportunities in horticulture.

After growing specialty lettuce, she began experimenting with hydroponic micro-herbs in 1998, recognising growing demand from Sydney's contemporary restaurant industry.

What started as a one-woman operation has developed into a successful enterprise supplying restaurants, cafés and food businesses across Sydney and regional NSW, including Newcastle and Canberra.

Today, Gourmet Herbs produces more than 23 varieties of herbs, alongside edible flowers, including violas and zucchini flowers.

Every product is grown on the company's Hawkesbury farm, where dedicated glasshouses and careful handpicking help maintain quality and freshness.

The business combines traditional farming values with specialist horticultural knowledge, placing particular emphasis on understanding chefs' requirements and delivering consistent quality.

Jane has also championed opportunities for women in an industry traditionally dominated by men, building a predominantly female team.

With its commitment to innovation, customer service and locally grown produce, Gourmet Herbs demonstrates how a family farming tradition can evolve into a successful specialist business.

Visit: www.gourmetherbs.com.au



Founder Jane Vassallo.



Mission to help businesses prosper

FOR local businesses seeking finance to grow, invest or manage cash flow, Unitree Finance is helping make the lending process simpler, faster and more accessible.

Based in in Western Sydney with clients across Australia, Unitree Finance specialises in connecting businesses with tailored funding solutions that support their ambitions.

Led by director Aditya Gupta, the company provides access to an extensive network of more than 110 lenders, including major banks and specialist finance providers.

Its services cover unsecured business loans, working capital, commercial property finance, vehicle and equipment finance, construction funding and refinancing.

Understanding that every business faces different challenges, Unitree Finance takes a personalized approach, assessing individual circumstances and identifying suitable lending options.

The company places particular emphasis on helping small and medium enterprises access capital without unnecessary complexity or delays. Its streamlined application process, technology-driven assessments and commitment to responsive service are designed to help business owners make confident financial decisions.

Unitree Finance also supports businesses across industries including transport, construction, healthcare, manufacturing and retail.

With a focus on transparency, practical advice and ongoing client relationships, the company aims to become a trusted financial partner rather than simply a loan provider.

For Unitree Finance, success means helping Australian businesses unlock opportunities, overcome financial obstacles and build sustainable growth.

Visit: www.unitreefinance.com.au