



Grant Thornton

Continuing your Grant Thornton journey

Edition Two September 2011

Alumni News



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Message from the CEO

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this, our second Grant Thornton alumni newsletter. In this second edition we look at what has been going on in and around the offices, both from a social and a professional perspective. We also provide details on forthcoming events, as well as updates on current and former employees.

With the Rugby Union World Cup underway, I was reminded recently of the famous quote from George Gregan, the legendary Australia rugby captain, near the end of their semi-final win over the All Blacks in the 2003 World Cup as New Zealand headed for yet another defeat in the global tournament “Four more years, boys”.

Ignoring for a second the thought of beating the All Blacks, it was the timescale of four years that particularly resonated. Grant Thornton International has recently finalised its 2015 Global Ambition, and here in Australia we are currently in the process of defining our own 2015 Ambition. As an organisation there are exciting challenges ahead, and the goals, ambitions and growth aspirations that we have set for the next four years present great opportunities for our people to progress and develop. I look forward to sharing some of these plans with you in future newsletters.

The Alumni network is a key pillar of our 2015 Ambition, and we continue to encourage your active participation in our Alumni Program. In these challenging economic times, the ability to reconnect with former colleagues as well as staying in touch with Grant Thornton, becomes ever more important.

I wish you a successful remaining 2011, and look forward to catching up at the next Sydney event on 30th November.



Robert Quant
Chief Executive Officer
Grant Thornton Australia

September 2011



Grant Thornton Sydney's alumni event- June 2011

On Wednesday 8 June 2011 Grant Thornton Sydney held their second Alumni event. The event was held in the Darwin boardroom on level 17 at Grant Thornton offices on Kent Street was attended by over 30 alumni members.

Much reminiscing and laughter was stimulated with the photo slide shows of past Grant Thornton occasions. We would like to thank everyone who attended and we hope you can make it to the next one.

Save the date for our next Sydney alumni event on November 30th – formal invitations will be sent nearer the time.



Nicole Bradley, Troy Wilson, Margaret Fisher



Jo Tonks, Karen Mathieson, Wendy Cosford, Andrew Kristallis



Jared Grima, Tahlei Watson, Andrew Archer



Susan Lin, Peter Berg



Karen Gilman, Andrew Gilman, Greg Priestley, Lance Cunningham

Alumni member profile

Clinton Brayne (1990 – 1994)

Audit

Clinton worked at Grant Thornton for 4 years and left in 1994. He was in the audit division with John Warren, Bruce Gordon, Andrew Archer, Geoff Bruce, Peter Caldelis, Michael Clarke and Andrew Fleming.

What are some of your memories of Grant Thornton?

I worked on the Teachers Federation audit and enjoyed meeting all of the colourful personalities. I spent many weeks working on an audit in Taree, nightlife in Taree - not exactly buzzing back then and I think we tried out just about every restaurant in town. Also, I recall a certain manager who I worked closely with, who was not a morning person. He would arrive at 9:30am, shut his office door and then surface to face the world around midday. Funnily enough I learnt a lot from him, very talented if a bit grumpy!

Where are you now?

I am the Deputy CFO of EYE, one of Australia's leading outdoor media companies. EYE provides media space on roadside billboards, airports, shopping malls and universities in Australia, New Zealand, UK, US and Indonesia. EYE is a wholly owned subsidiary of Network TEN. I have worked at EYE for 8 years and have seen the company expand internationally into the US, UK and Asia. My time included a two year stint in Austin Texas, when EYE commenced operations of the US business. The US was essentially a start up, so it was very exciting with plenty of challenges. Austin is a lively little city of about a million residents but with a couple of large Universities and Dell HQ, and is one of the booming cities in the US. Austin has a thriving live music scene and is also known as the "live music capital of the world". I managed to see some Aussie acts that came town, Silverchair and Paul Kelly. Some good celebrity sightings too in the US, Beyonce, Paris Hilton and Lisa Kudrow.

What did you like most about living in the US?

The Americans sure know how to celebrate their holidays. I enjoyed the 4th of July, a chance to buy my own fireworks and set them off in the garden, lots of fun! I also, enjoyed Halloween very much, every household in our neighbourhood participated and my three daughters came back with heavily laden buckets of candy. Halloween also included a fancy dress day in the office. I went as Fred Flintstone one year and a Vampire the next!

The last film I saw was....

Red Dog, great Aussie movie, mostly funny and upbeat. A movie I saw with my daughters that didn't put me to sleep.

What do you do to relax?

I run few times a week and completed my first half-marathon last year, managed to break the 100 minute barrier with 4 seconds to spare! Also hanging out with my daughters aged 11, 8 and 6 and managing their very active social lives.



Want to reconnect with Clinton?
Drop and email to: fiona.drake@au.gt.com
and we'd be happy to contact him on your behalf

Grant Thornton what's happening

Thought leadership

JUMEX survey

This survey examines the views of junior mining and exploration companies in Australia, and was completed in July 2011, prior to the announcement of the Gillard Government's Carbon Scheme. The results reveal a buoyant outlook for the JUMEX community, even though there is still much volatility in their environment. [Click here](#) to read the findings on our website.



Grant Thornton's bi-monthly newsletter for corporate and listed businesses, **Summit** examines a range of topics relevant to these organisations in Australia. [Click here](#) to read the articles on our website.

Grant Thornton's **Industry Intelligence Units** blend the latest information and analysis of specific industries drawn from publicly available sources (including the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the national press) with pragmatic, commercial and practical initiatives to improve stakeholder value.

The edition in August focussed on Retail ([click here](#))

The new R&D tax incentive is now a reality

On 24 August 2011 the bills putting into effect the new R&D tax incentive were passed by parliament and now await Royal Assent.

Companies with a group turnover of less than \$20 million will be able to access a 45% refundable tax credit. The tax credit will first offset existing tax debts with any excess to be refunded.

Companies that exceed the turnover threshold will be able to access a 40% non-refundable tax credit. Any excess can be carried forward to offset against future tax liabilities.

[Click here](#) to read the full article on our website.

The Clean Energy Legislation: What it means for you

On 28 July 2011, the Government released its exposure draft Clean Energy Legislation Package, which will establish the Carbon Pricing Mechanism (CPM) for Australia.

This draft legislation codified the Government's 10 July 2011 announcement on Australia's Clean Energy Future and is expected to be introduced into Parliament in final form during September 2011. It is currently open for consultation and comment by the public until 22 August 2011. Grant Thornton will be preparing a submission on the legislation based on feedback from our clients.

In the meantime, the links below contain some details on the CPM and associated provisions.

[Frequently asked questions](#)

[Proposed changes to the Fuel Tax Credit regime](#)

[The compensation package](#)

[Enforcement powers](#)

[Implications for business](#)

Alumni boomerang: Mark Sellars, Associate Director Privately Held Business

Mark joined Grant Thornton fresh from high school in 1999 as an undergraduate. He left in 2007 to take some time out to relax and travel. In between travelling Mark continued to consult to Grant Thornton on a number of ongoing projects. He rejoined Grant Thornton in mid 2009.

Why did you come back?

I agreed with my wife that when she finished her studies and got a job I would also get one again. She did both in 2009... The fact that I was missing the daily interaction with all the people in our team and the client interaction/advisory also played a part.

If you didn't work for Grant Thornton what would you do?

Changes every couple of years but all have a common theme – outdoors getting dirty looking for old stuff. The most recent ones are some type of modern historian/archaeologist and an antique picker.

What do you do to relax?

All types of video games, TV, documentaries, sport and searching for weird and wonderful items for our apartment, with my wife.

What's your ultimate career goal?

Partner at Grant Thornton.

What's your ultimate personal goal?

Using the skills/experience from my career to work with charitable organisations to meaningfully give back to the community, particularly in the area of health & research.

The last book I read was.....

Gaspipe – story about a New York mafia boss.

The last film I watched was.....

Rambo III - late night TV at its best.



My hero is....

Michael Jordan.

What's the best career advice you've been given?

Be patient, listen and learn. There is plenty of time to do what you want after that.

My favourite travel destinations are....

Medieval cities.

Three things you'd take to a desert island?

Firestarter, survival knife and backpack. I've watched enough Bear Grylles to know if I have those things anything is possible!

Want to reconnect with Mark?

Mark's email is mark.sellars@au.gt.com

Grant Thornton staff activities

CEO Sleepout

On Thursday 16 June 2011 the Vinnies CEO Sleepout took place in capital cities across Australia. The event challenges business and community leaders to experience homelessness first-hand for one night, raise important money, and with fresh insight go on to effect change in social opinions on this serious issue. Robert Quant attended the Perth CEO Sleepout at the WACA to help raise money for this worthy cause. In total, Grant Thornton's collective efforts have raised more than \$19,000 for St Vincent de Paul which will go directly towards the provision of Vinnies' homeless services across the country.



Robert Quant (circled) at the CEO Sleepout



2011 City2Surf – 33 Sydney office staff competed (pictured: Ryan Underwood, Kate Bonner, Michael Wilson, Paran Thangarajah, Jamie Hennessey and Louise Willdrige)



2011 End of Financial Year Ball
Starship Harbour Cruise
(pictured: Danielle Franjic, Caoimhe Byrne, Leisl Wratten, Lisa McGarry and Himaja Paramatmuni)



End of Month Drinks hosted by the IT team – Hero theme
(pictured: Shweta Gudipally, Tim Nghiem, Aimee Carson, Luci Jones, Brad Bazley, Michael Nemeth, Kristiaan Velasco, Simon Hall, Sharon Kang)

Current Partner Profile

How long have you worked for Grant Thornton?

I started my career as a graduate in the Recovery & Reorganisation team in the UK in 2001, moving to Australia in 2004 on a 12 month secondment... 7 years later and I am still here!

What do you do to relax?

I play soccer for Dunbar Rovers, home ground Rushcutters Bay. It is a great way to keep fit, release stress and I have made some great friends at the club. We are always keen for new members and having played at various clubs in Sydney - I highly recommend it as one of the best clubs around!

The last film I watched at the cinema was.....

The Hangover 2 – slightly embarrassed that it is not more highbrow, but in my defence, I didn't buy the tickets!

Any embarrassing stories?

Well having pretty much grown up at Grant Thornton during my 20's there are more than a few – however one that still brings a smile to my face happened in the UK when I first started as a graduate. I was taking minutes of an important Board meeting, which had been going on for several hours. At the end of the meeting the Partner turned to me, in front of the room and asked "Gayle, thanks for taking the minutes, have you got new shoes?" Surprised by this question I looked down at my shoes and responded "no I have had them for a while..." the Partner looked at me equally bemused and then I realised he had asked me "if I had any issues?!"

What do I enjoy most about my role?

There is always great variety and no matter is ever the same – from trading a large resort in the Blue Mountains for nearly a year to working on the restructuring of a high fashion retailer.

The work is challenging and you are dealing with potentially high-pressure situations, but I find it satisfying when you can work out a solution which can save a business.



Gayle Dickerson

Partner – Recovery & Reorganisation

Career highlights

During my 10 years at Grant Thornton I have had a number of amazing experiences, which I doubt I would have had anywhere else...here's just a few:

- Attending Grant Thornton's Advanced Manager Program - a truly unique program whereby over 60 senior managers from 25 countries get the opportunity to meet across 3 weeks in 3 locations where Grant Thornton has a strong global offering. I have met some genuinely amazing like-minded people who I will be friends with for a very long time. I can also now pretty much ring someone in any country in the world and ask for help (plus hopefully some local tour guides for my next holiday!).
- Receiving my liquidators' licence from ASIC – which is particularly special as I am one of only a few women practicing liquidators in the country (less than 3% of liquidators are women).

What's the best career advice you've been given?

Take risks and don't be afraid to make mistakes - however make sure you learn from your mistakes and you will go a long way.

From a career and personal perspective - follow your dreams. None of us will ever achieve all of our dreams. If we do, we will just make up new ones! If we go for it, we can at least say at the end, "I tried!" instead of, "Why didn't I at least try?"

Want to reconnect with Gayle?

Her email address is:

gayle.dickerson@au.gt.com

Where are they now?

Julieann Breese 1995 - 1998

I joined Grant Thornton's Computing division back in 1995 and was responsible for new business development opportunities and managing the business consulting team. My treasured memories of that time were the twilight races on Sydney Harbour with the GT racing team!

In '98 I joined the business consulting team at Ernst & Young and after several years at the corporate end decided that I really wanted to lend my skills and knowledge to SME's and start-ups. This led to setting up my own company, Breese Dynamics and due to the introduction of GST in 2000 work was in great demand. In 2005 an opportunity to help launch and expand the business of one of my clients resulted in a 3 year stint in London as General Manager which was extremely challenging and rewarding.

On leaving the UK and a 4 month sojourn through Rajasthan (India), Bhutan and Thailand, I reluctantly return to Sydney and began volunteering in the not for profit sector and re-launched Breese Dynamics in 2010 (see www.breesedynamics.com).

Being a typical Aquarian I unleashed my creative side many years ago and developed a passion for Aboriginal Art and am a keen collector and curator. This love of art combined with my business experience served me well when I was asked to establish an Arts Centre as a social enterprise for Weave Youth Family Community in Redfern/Waterloo where I now work 2 days a week.

I have remained friends with several ex colleagues aptly named the GT Girls who catch-up every six months or so and now at the GT Alumni parties.



Helen Knowles 1999- 2006



After seven crazy, but fantastic years doing marketing at Grant Thornton, I finally left in January 2006 to move to Perth with Sam. We drove from Sydney across the Nullabor and promptly got married. Since then we have had two beautiful girls, Aisling who is now four and Allie who is two. Being a mum and domestic goddess has kept me busy since 2007, however this year I decided to return to work to do something I have always had a passion for, food. I do kitchen appliance and cooking demonstrations three days a week. I have also developed a passion for boxing, and get to as many classes a week as I can manage.



As a family we enjoy a busy lifestyle and particularly enjoy our beach and swimming activities. Life in Perth is very different (but just as satisfying) to the busy work and social life I enjoyed at Grant Thornton, Sydney. I made some of the best friends I will ever have during my time at Grant Thornton, and met some wonderful mentors and colleagues.

Where are they now?

Joanne Tonks (Brophy) 1996 - 2001

I worked in the Sydney office of Grant Thornton from 1996-2001. I joined the Business Services Group very green straight after my HSC. I was in Graham Watman's team and worked with some wonderful people who are still terrific friends. I completed my undergrad degree at UTS and PY while at GT.

I left Grant Thornton in 2001 to travel. I spent 6 months in Africa and parts of Europe and worked at JP Morgan and Lloyds in London but winter in London was not for me. Whilst in London, through a GT connection (Martina Hughes) I landed a fantastic job back in Sydney with The Walt Disney Company as a Finance Manager in 2002. I worked at Disney for 4 years and completed my Masters in Business Law at Sydney Uni. My pet project was working on the Australian theatrical production of The Lion King in Sydney and Melbourne. This also took me to work in Shanghai for a period of time setting up Disney's first show in mainland China.

In 2006 I was approached by a friend to work as a change agent at the AJC in Sydney (now the ATC). I worked with the AJC for 3 years in various roles including Acting CFO and Executive Director of Business Development. It was a time of enormous change for the club. My own challenges included restructuring the Finance function: people, systems, controls and processes in the business and the WYD2008.

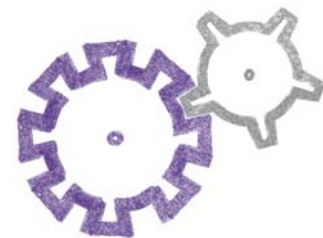
In 2007 I started my current business - Limeblue Consulting P/L. I wanted to have a family and work on a small portfolio of clients/projects that could fit around this. This has led me to some great projects including a part-time role as Director of Transaction Services with Deloitte, consulting to Disney on Mary Poppins (currently in Australia) and growing my family's business K&D Plumbing based in Milperra (approx 40 staff).

There's never a dull moment at our place. Paul and I have two children, Leila (3) and April (9 months). We live on the Georges River close to our families. We wakeboard in summer and travel to Falls Creek every winter and in between my current hobbies include trying to steal a few hours of precious sleep....

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/joannetonks>.



If you would like to reconnect with any of the above Alumni, please drop an email to: fiona.drake@au.gt.com



It's your alumni

Benefits to alumni members

Apple and Grant Thornton Australia Ltd are pleased to announce the introduction of the Employee Purchase Program, which provides preferred pricing on the latest Apple products and accessories to Grant Thornton employees and alumni members.

Program benefits:

- Special employee pricing on Apple products
- Exclusive promotions
- Free shipping on all products
- Free engraving on all new iPod models
- Mac customisation
- Ratings and reviews on accessories and software

For more information please visit

store.apple.com.au/epp/grantthornton or call 1300-300-308

We'd love to hear from you

We want these newsletters to be about you. If you would like to be featured in our next edition, scheduled for Summer, please get in touch.

Ways to be featured:

- Alumni Member Profile
- Where are they now?

It could be a great way to promote your business whilst reconnecting with other alumni members.

For more information please contact:
Fiona Drake, Market Engagement Manager
fiona.drake@au.gt.com
+61 (0)2 8297 2522

Refer others to join

Our alumni programme is still in its infancy and our aim is to reconnect with as many past colleagues as possible. We need your help to pass on our joining form to past colleagues you may be in touch with that we haven't been able to reach.

Alumni membership is open to all previous employees of Grant Thornton Australia, whether you were with us for 6 months or 20 years, we'd love you to continue your Grant Thornton journey.

Fly like a boomerang!

Inspired by Mark's interview? Would you like to return to Grant Thornton? Please check out the careers section on our website

www.grantthornton.com.au/careers to view current vacancies across Australia.

Save the date – 30th November 2011

Our next alumni event to be held in Sydney will be on Wednesday 30th November. Put the date in your diary now!

Times are to be confirmed, but it will be an after work event.

We hope to see you there!

Getting in contact with other alumni members

Unfortunately due to data protection laws we can't list alumni member's contact details.

However we'd be happy to contact an alumni member on your behalf and facilitate an introduction. Simply email Fiona Drake at fiona.drake@au.gt.com with the name of the person you'd like to reconnect with.

The best way to reconnect with other alumni members is to attend one of our future events!

Did you know?

Some of you may have left Grant Thornton recently and will know how the firm has developed, but for some of our more long term alumni we wanted to keep you up to date on changes to Grant Thornton Australia and Grant Thornton International and also let you know about some of our awards.

Grant Thornton Australia is one national firm with over 800 staff nationally

Grant Thornton member firms operate in over 100 countries

Grant Thornton Australia has offices in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney

Global strategy, global values, global brand, global tools and methodologies

Finalist in Debt Market Deal of the Year in the 2010 Australasian Law Awards

APAC Venture Capital deal of the year, 2010

Finalist in Restructuring Deal of the Year in the 2010 Australasian Law Awards



Auditor of the Year (Large Six) 2010, Highly Commended Auditor of the Year (Large Six) in 2009 and Winner in 2008 and 2007



Accountancy Firm of the Year M&A Awards 2010



Best Tax Investigations Team (2010), (2009, 2008 and 2006) and Best High Net Worth Team (2007)



Accountancy Age Awards 2010 Audit team of the year - Not for Profit



Institute Canada – Best workplaces 2011



Working Mother 100 Best Companies Best in Class Top 10 2009



AIM Accountant of the Year 2010 and Accountant of the Year 2009 Growth Company Awards



Golden Dragon Award that is issued to the best foreign invested enterprises in Vietnam – Grant Thornton Vietnam won an award for 2010 for customer service



Grant Thornton Bernoni & Partners has been named the best international tax firm in Italy by leading Italian business sector publishing house, Finanza e Diritto. July 2011