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The Editor
Jeweller Magazine
PO Box 26
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4th October 2016

Dear Editor,

I refer to your article entitled "JAA's perfect storm; Nationwide quits association" and would like to set the record straight about Nationwide's decision for the 2017 jewellery fair.

I have worked in the jewellery industry for over 55 years. For a good part of that time I was heavily involved with the JAA, first representing Prouds Jewellers and then Nationwide Jewellers. I served on the NSW and Federal committees and I firmly believed that if you work in an industry you should give something back to that industry.

The recent personal attacks by the JAA board on Colin Pocklington, my fellow director of Nationwide Jewellers, has left me bewildered and repulsed. I have known Colin for approximately forty years and never in that time has his integrity or honesty been questioned on a professional or personal level.

Colin is the recipient of the Australian Sport Medal presented by the Prime Minister and Governor General for Services to Tennis, he is a life member of the JAA, a FCPA for forty years and a Justice of the Peace. In his many roles within the JAA he has at all times acted in the best interest of that association.

These recent attacks on Colin stem from our decision to participate in the Darling Harbour jewellery fair managed by Expertise Events, rather than the new fair being organised by the JAA.

The truth behind our decision

Colin and I were in a difficult position, we wanted to support the JAA but also wanted to offer Nationwide Members the very best trade fair experience. Both the JAA and Expertise made us the same offer for floor space and associated costs. We toured both venues, the brand new state of the art Exhibition Centre at Darling Harbour and the other, consisting of The Hall of Industries and the Horden Pavilion located in what used to be the Sydney Showground in Moore Park.



The Royal Hall of Industries



The Sydney Exhibition Centre

One venue is close to hotels and the restaurant precinct of Darling Harbour, the other is a bus or taxi ride from any hotel and, with very few restaurants close at hand. We considered our members travelling from interstate and New Zealand who like to enjoy the Sydney sunshine and meet colleagues and friends for lunch and to be able to walk to their hotel whenever they wish to leave the trade fair.

We surveyed members and suppliers and arranged for three senior Nationwide staff to tour the Showgrounds facility. We also considered that 2017 will be the first JAA trade fair BUT we have successfully participated at the Expertise Event's trade fair for over 20 years so the question for us was should we change our successful formula for what is and unknown and untried event?

Our decision became a simple one. We decided to listen to our members and suppliers, and stay with the Darling Harbour trade fair and to see how the first JAA event worked. None of our suppliers would be disadvantaged as we would make our interest free finance available to members to use at both events but our members' lounge would be in Darling Harbour.

We could always change the following year if member, suppliers and Nationwide thought it was the better event.

Our process and decision was well considered and yet we have had scurrilous, unsubstantiated and untrue personal attacks on Colin Pocklington and the Nationwide Group by the JAA.

These actions have now put an end to our long history and support of the JAA and any future cooperation between Nationwide and the JAA, at least as long as the present board and executive director are in place.

Sincerely,

Barry Jackson