



1997 GOLD RHINO WINNER Crowe Horwath



Crowe Horwath has come a long way from the days when it was known as WHK Group and the award-winning Darcy Kennedy – the second business in Dubbo to win a prestigious Gold Rhino in 1997.

Darcy Kennedy was established in 1981 through a partnership between Frank Darcy and Michael Kennedy and later merged with several local firms across the Central West to form Darcy Kennedy Accountants and Advisors. In 2000, all firms joined WHK Group to become the largest accounting firm in Dubbo.

Reflecting its long-standing membership of one of Australia's top accountancy and business advisory firms, in 2013 WHK Group rebranded to Crowe Horwath. Today, the firm continues to deliver practical accounting, audit, tax, business and financial advice to individuals and business from a network of over 80 offices Australia-wide.

Based in Dubbo, Yvette Pietsch leads the Crowe Horwath firm in Central West NSW along with six other Principals.

A qualified accountant with a Masters in Tax Law, Ms Pietsch provides clients with specialist accounting, business and tax advice. She is also responsible for the overall performance of the teams at all Crowe Horwath firms across the Central West region. In 2014, Ms Pietsch was announced as one of three finalists Australia-wide for the NAB Women's Leadership Agenda Awards.

The other Principals in the Dubbo firm are Peter Carnell, Tom Larkin, Clare Wagner and Vicki O'Connor. They are supported by two Associate Principals Belinda Murphy and Joel Bones.

Starting with just six staff in 1981, today the Dubbo office alone employs 67 staff with 173 staff employed across the Central West.

Ms Pietsch said she enjoys managing an award-winning business that has grown and evolved to meet customer needs.

"I quite enjoy providing local individuals and businesses the opportunity to engage with a team of professional advisors who can provide a holistic range of services from the one convenient location," she said.



1997 GOLD RHINO WINNER Crowe Horwath



“Our people also enjoy engaging with other local businesses to form strategic partnerships in order to provide additional value to clients in the region.”

Ms Pietsch said Dubbo and the surrounding region provided an ideal environment for businesses like Crowe Horwath to flourish.

“The region has a rich diversity of business and industry which is continuing to grow, as it services a much wider geographical area,” she said. “The local business community is very approachable and highly supportive towards assisting people to grow and develop their businesses in order to be successful.

“Dubbo is very accessible from other regional areas and from Sydney, which brings together a strong network of support services.” Ms Pietsch said there were a number of new businesses that have opened up in Dubbo over recent years and developed into successful organisations.

“The Dubbo business community continues to grow at a time when many other surrounding business communities are struggling and in decline,” she said.

“It is in a strong position to support additional businesses and there are many opportunities, especially in agricultural, mining, media, health, government, transport, education and the building and construction industries. Much of the growth of the Crowe Horwath firm may be attributed to the firm’s specialisation in these areas and Principals and our people working closely with clients in these industries.”

Ms Pietsch said the Dubbo Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Regional Development Australia - Orana are proactive and supportive of the local and regional business communities. “The Chamber aligns the local Dubbo Rhino Business Awards to the Central West Orana and State Business Awards which enables local businesses to be recognised for their achievements on a much broader scale,” she said.

“The Chamber has also hosted a number of networking breakfasts with public company CEOs as guest speakers which is a wonderful example of bringing people to town for our local business community to meet and understand the common and shared business issues and keys to success.”



1997 GOLD RHINO WINNER Crowe Horwath



She said maintaining Dubbo's strong business community would help build individual success, and assist the City in attracting and maintaining services locally – providing faster and quicker access to the tools and resources they required to succeed.

“Individuals cannot succeed in life by operating in isolation. They rely heavily on family, friends, peers, colleagues, mentors and others from which they learn and grow,” she said. “Having a strong business community enables individuals to build trusted relationships and important networks. These open up new opportunities for individuals to thrive personally and professionally.”

Ms Pietsch said as a Managing Principal her role ‘is to maintain a healthy balance and focus on our clients, our people and the firm’s operations.’

“We want to work closely with our clients. Be collaborative. Listen and not tell. Take the time to develop a trusted relationship with them, understanding what it is they are trying to achieve now and where they want to be in the future,” she said. “If you can understand their holistic goals, you can add so much more value in the advice that you provide.”

Ms Pietsch believes the success of Crowe Horwath over the years can be attributed to effectively collaborating with all team members in the business to develop alignment and engagement towards common goals.

“If your team members don’t understand your mission, purpose or strategic vision, and don’t understand the role they play towards achieving these, then no matter how hard and how smart you work, you will fail to achieve your overall firm goals,” she said.

Ms Pietsch said one of the biggest lessons she has learned throughout her career was that there is no “I” in team.

“Work with your colleagues to bring together unique skills and experience in order to achieve greater outcomes rather than doing it alone,” she advises.