

Inspirational speaker

The first Connect Networking event for 2016 heralded another great year for members to connect with each other and with fascinating speakers.

The Honourable Catherine King was one such fascinating speaker. For a woman who described herself as incredibly shy at school and an 'introvert' on the Myers Briggs personality type test, she was both forthcoming and forthright in her talk.

Topics ranged from her childhood and supportive family, to juggling family life with community and politics, to the intense stress of fronting ABC Television's Q&A cameras and journos, to the need to keep learning, to keep challenging and testing herself.

Catherine was interesting and inspirational, approachable and real, as proved by the unusually high number of questions from members.

Simon Monk, General Manager of the Mercure Ballarat Hotel & Convention Centre, also addressed the group and provided an update on the revitalised facilities, the new Billy's Bistro and other plans for the site.

The sensational lunch provided for members was wonderful and plentiful – bowls of hot food and salads as well as sandwiches and wraps, fruit and cheese. De-lish!

New members

It was terrific to welcome a number of new members to our group and Abbey Bell from Hip Pocket Workwear, attending her very first event, was the lucky door-prize winner of a gorgeous white Cyclamen pot plant.



Mariska Pelchen and the Hon Catherine King at the February 2016 Connect event

NETWORKING
WITH A
Twist

Join us for Connect Networking's next event on 19 May

Your invitation will arrive soon!

In Brief

A Conference for Office Professionals

Something very special is coming to Ballarat early in 2017...



... a conference organised by Connect Networking which is designed to meet the needs of Office Professionals in the Western Victorian region.

Put 8 March in your diary now!

Save the Dates!

CONNECT NETWORKING events for 2016 will be held on:

Thursday, 19 May - Networking

Wednesday, 13 July Professional Development

Tuesday, 23 August Health & Well-being

Thursday, 24 November – Industry visit

Your contributions welcome

Connect is published four times a year – summer, autumn, winter and spring!

To keep the newsletter interesting and one you want to read, we welcome your suggestions (and contributions) for future editions. Contact Gayle on 5332 1240.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE APOSTROPHES MAKE!

It is sometimes the smallest things that can trip us up! As office professionals, it is important we know the difference between the following sets of words. An extract from an article by [Laura Wallis for The Stir by CafeMom](#) (targeted at parents) provides a simple, yet useful, way to distinguish between them - and make the correct choice.

Words that sound alike but have different meanings and spellings are called homophones, and especially for kids who are just learning to spell, they can cause trouble every time. There are some rules to help budding writers [and office professionals] remember the trickiest homophones, but in many cases it's just a matter of memory. There, their, they're . . . they'll get them in time.

Its and It's

This pair is tough because apostrophes are often used to denote possessives—but not in this case. *It's* is short for *it is*. So, "The dog wags *its* tail because *it's* time to eat."

Your and You're

Kids (and even some grown-ups) get caught on this pair a lot, and it drives grammar-loving parents nuts. *Your* is possessive, while *you're* is short for *you are*. "You have to know your rights," but "I know, *you're* right."

There, they're, their

The first of this trio is the easiest to remember: Just start *here*, then go over *there* by adding a *T*. *They're* is short for *they are*.

The last one, *their*, is possessive and you just have to remember that you add an *I* in the middle: "They got *their* ball and went home."

Accept and Except

To *accept* something is to agree to it. To *except* is to rule something out. "I *accept* that you're a better speller than I am." "I love all of my classes, *except* gym." Think *ex* for things you want to get rid of.

Knew and New

"You *knew* these already, but to kids, they're all brand *new*." Early writers commonly misspell *knew*, because of that pesky silent *k*. But once they remember that it's the past tense of *know* (which is different from *no*) they won't mess it up again.

New CEO for Committee for Ballarat

Melanie Robertson has been appointed as Committee for Ballarat's new CEO following a rigorous election process which attracted a strong field of candidates. She will take up the position on May 2.

Melanie has a track record of advocacy, collaboration and financial management across private and public sector operations. In her most recent



position as Manager of the Waubra Wind Farm and Asset Services, she was responsible for delivering a \$90m budget, improving work place culture and community engagement.

Having made a commitment to Ballarat with her family in 2000, Melanie is passionate about ensuring a prosperous sustainable future for her children in our region.

Her qualifications include a Masters in Environmental Engineering Management and she is currently undertaking an MBA.

Her background in environmental engineering, policy development, education and project management makes her a great fit with Committee's agenda and she is well known and respected within State and Federal Government circles.

Committee Chair Janet Dore said "I know Melanie will take up the challenges we face as a region and be vigorous in her advocacy.

We welcome her warmly and look forward to her collaboration with the other new leaders in our City to take us further into the spotlight in the lead up to the Federal election."

Profile: Glenys Foy

An interview with **GLENYS FOY** Executive Assistant to the CEO City of Ballarat

What does your job involve?

Managing the office of the CEO – keeping across all the issues, keeping the CEO well advised, liaising with the office of the Mayor and councillors, all staff and external stakeholders.



How long have you been in local government?

I started in the typing pool at the Shire of Wendouree in 1992 (prior to amalgamation) and have worked in a number of different roles at the City of Ballarat since 1994.

I have been in the role of Executive Assistant to the CEO since January 2008.

How would you describe a normal day on the job?

What is “normal”? I work in an environment of constantly changing priorities, which is what makes my job so challenging and also so enjoyable. It is never dull – no two days are the same.

I am a “Taurus” which means I am a born organiser and I get to do that every day. I also love talking to people which is a big part of my role.

I am very privileged to have a job that I enjoy which gives me the opportunity to work with great people throughout our whole organisation.

What do you do on your days off?

Spend time with my family, which includes three beautiful grand-daughters - ages 7, 4 and 18 months.

I love to catch up with my girlfriends over lunch. My husband and I have a great circle of friends and we like to get away for weekends to play golf and relax. I also enjoy some quiet time with a good book.

Given your extensive experience, what would be the key pieces of advice you would offer to other EAs?

Have confidence in your own ability. Enjoy the challenges of a constantly changing work day – be flexible and adaptive to change. Be understanding and respectful at all times.

Most of all – enjoy your job.

Easy to make and healthy: a winning combination!

Planning meals or work-day lunches can become a real chore for busy office professionals.

Sometimes, there are just not enough hours in the day to get everything done!

What we will have for lunch or dinner tonight? tomorrow?

We all have our *go to* recipes that we can throw together in a short space of time. But sometimes it would be lovely to have a few more of these recipes up our sleeves!

We would love you to send in some of those quick, simple and healthy recipes that we can share with other Connect members via the Newsletter.

Send to gayle@committeeforballarat.com

Our first contribution – a recipe for a flourless carrot cake.

FLOURLESS CARROT CAKE

Ingredients

350g carrots (grated)
150g walnuts (chopped)
5 eggs
10g baking powder
50g bi-carb
250g almond meal
220g brown sugar
10g cinnamon
50g nutmeg
10g ginger



Method

1. Combine all ingredients
2. Mix by hand (or in a mixer) until all ingredients are combined
3. Transfer the mixture into a lined flat tray
4. Bake in moderate oven (160 degrees) for approx. 40 minutes
5. Check with wooden skewer; if it comes out clean the cake is done
6. Let the cake cool in the tray

Icing (lemon or cream cheese) on the top provides the finishing touch!

Executive Assistants exert quiet influence

If you define power as simply who makes the most money, then the most powerful person at a corporation or startup is the CEO or founder.

But if you define power as access and influence, then executive assistants are downright formidable.

People might dismiss executive assistants as glorified gofers. But these employees are often well-educated individuals with a broad range of responsibilities like event planning, scheduling, research and IT support. Depending on the relationship, an executive assistant can morph into a trusted confidante or de-facto adviser.

Business Partner

"When I was looking for an assistant, what people didn't understand is what I was not looking for was a senior secretary, I was looking for a true business partner," Cisco Systems CEO John Chambers once told the Executive Assistants Organization in San Francisco, "someone who makes it a point to know the business, what my priorities are, and who could represent me, as well as the organization, in the absolute best professional light."

They certainly know the business. As the employees who spend the most time with top executives, they are often the gatekeepers of information at companies.

"You know things before other people," said Michelle DiGiacomo, the executive assistant to Pinterest co-founder and CEO Ben Silbermann. "You handle a lot of confidential information. I have a front-row seat to some of the most fascinating business events for our time. I don't think there has ever been a better time to be an executive assistant."

DiGiacomo and Shana Larson, executive assistant to Pinterest product chief Tim Kendall and head of engineering Michael Lopp, were speaking to their peers at a leadership conference in Santa Clara,

"Behind Every Leader." Or perhaps a more appropriate name would have been "Leading from Behind," since the work of executive assistant, though crucial, does not get much attention. Unless you screw up.

"You're doing a job that, when done well, goes unnoticed," DiGiacomo said. "And you learn to accept that."

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Some executive assistants lack the confidence to speak up, said Bonnie Low-Kramen, who worked as the personal assistant to the Oscar-winning actress Olympia Dukakis for 25 years. "I know what it's like to be mute or paralyzed," she told the conference. "I had difficulty finding my own voice. I felt stupid and didn't talk."

That can be because it's difficult defining the position, especially if the assistant's responsibilities are mundane. It's tough to find time to talk strategy with an executive when you are picking up the dry cleaning or on the phone with caterers.

Undervalue our work

"We undervalue our work, and we underestimate our value," Low-Kramen said. "We're comfortable being the eyes and ears of managers but not the voice. But (assistants) hold more information than they do. You're already natural leaders because you have to manage the managers."

Sometimes employers might not know what their executive assistants should do. Many CEOs or leaders, especially at startups, will not instinctively hire an executive assistant, and will only do so once someone offers such advice.

Take DiGiacomo at Pinterest. She went from working for two demanding veteran real estate investors in Los Angeles to serving a 29-year-old tech entrepreneur who didn't really know what to do with her.

"You constantly need to define yourself," DiGiacomo said. "You have to say: 'These are the things that I'm doing to make it work for you.'"

Over time, that relationship can grow into a true partnership.

Taken from www.sfgate.com/business/article/Executive-assistants-are-powers-behind-the-throne-5684501.php



connecting
conference

Mercure Ballarat
8 March 2017