

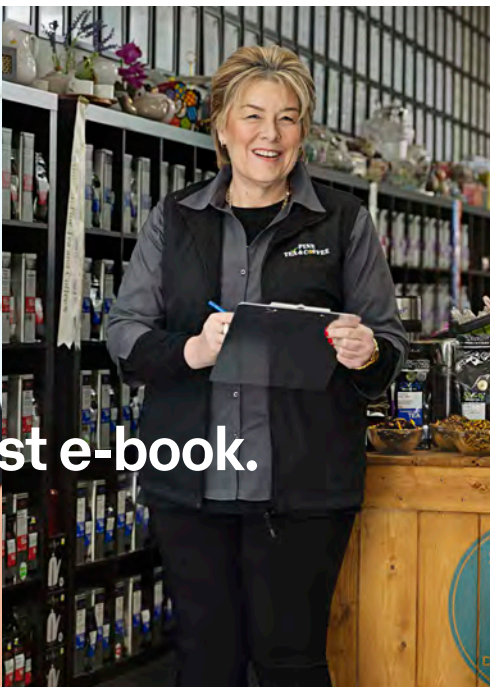


Celebrating Australian Business

Stories of tenacity, adaptation and creativity.



An Australia Post e-book.



Australia Post

Ready for what's next.

Australia's business community consistently demonstrates an abundance of creative flair, drive and resilience.

Over the past few years, businesses large and small have made personal sacrifices, re-engineered themselves, knuckled down and refused to give up in the face of unprecedented economic challenges.

At Australia Post, we're proud to have been able to play a small part in helping businesses bring their ambitions to life. With brighter times ahead, we'd like to acknowledge and celebrate the spirit, energy and relentless optimism of our customers and partners.

We share the stories of just a few of the remarkable Australian businesses who have pivoted and explored new ideas, technologies or markets.

We look forward to continuing to work with you all.



THANK YOU

Postponed sales events drive a switch to Facebook.



Catherine Jenner Uncle John's Licorice

Uncle John's Licorice is a delectable story of old-fashioned products, mixed with a modern, progressive approach to business development. The last of the country's old-fashioned, small-batch licorice makers, Uncle John's makes traditional molasses licorice from a recipe that dates back 35 years.

Owners Catherine Jenner and husband Jason decided to overhaul their outdated website in early 2020. "Jason looked at me and said, 'Imagine if we did something with that,'" said Catherine.

It turned out to be a smart move. When the pandemic started to bite, their biggest sales event of the year, the Royal Melbourne Show, was cancelled, as were other shows and markets in Tasmania, Sydney and Victoria. So they ramped up their online efforts, previously only accounting for 2% of sales.

Last of the old-fashioned licorice makers

Catherine started advertising on Facebook and created a Shopify account that integrated with her eParcel account.

She also connected with Dai Nguyen, the Licensee of her local Licensed Post Office in Dingley. They quickly established a rapport, with Dai suggesting solutions which helped Uncle John's fulfil the potential of their growing eCommerce business.

Says Catherine, "He gives us the service we like to give our customers, that sense of a small family business where we can call him anytime. He's so accommodating, always just around the corner."

In less than two short years, Uncle John's online customer base has grown from 500 to around 5,500. And online sales have grown by a factor of ten.

Days before signing a lease, **everything** changed.

Melissa Murat and Ghada Turner Pantry to Plate

Melissa Murat and Ghada Turner had a brilliant business idea for an artisan herbs and spices business. They worked their hearts out for two years developing it and then, on the verge of signing the lease for their first flagship store, COVID struck.

“It was clear the retail store just wouldn’t be an option,” Ghada said. “It felt like the end of our dream.”

But instead of shutting up shop, Melissa’s ability to quickly transition the business, Pantry to Plate, from a direct-to-consumer model to a wholesale model in just weeks ensured that not only did the business survive, it grew exponentially – earning her the first ORIA Unsung Hero Award for small business.

The two had already built the idea, the product, brand and social presence. All they needed to do was get it into a store. So instead of their own, they thought, why not use established retailers?

Once they’d won their first contract with Coles Local, with an order for a pallet a week, Melissa knew they’d need to scale up logistics. They found an empty 150sqm space and went to work. In just six weeks, Melissa taught herself warehouse management, fulfilment and supply chain logistics, product and packaging procurement and more.

Pantry to Plate is now sold in hundreds of stores and supermarkets along the east coast – from North Queensland down to Tasmania.

“I’m proud of us for being able to be open to new ideas,” said Melissa. “It’s such a huge change from what we were going to do. You have to be open to being agile and go with the flow.”

“I’m proud of us for being able to be open to new ideas.”



Success in tough times.



“Receiving more orders meant we sold through most of our inventory so we had to switch to a pre-order process to convert the extra traffic.”

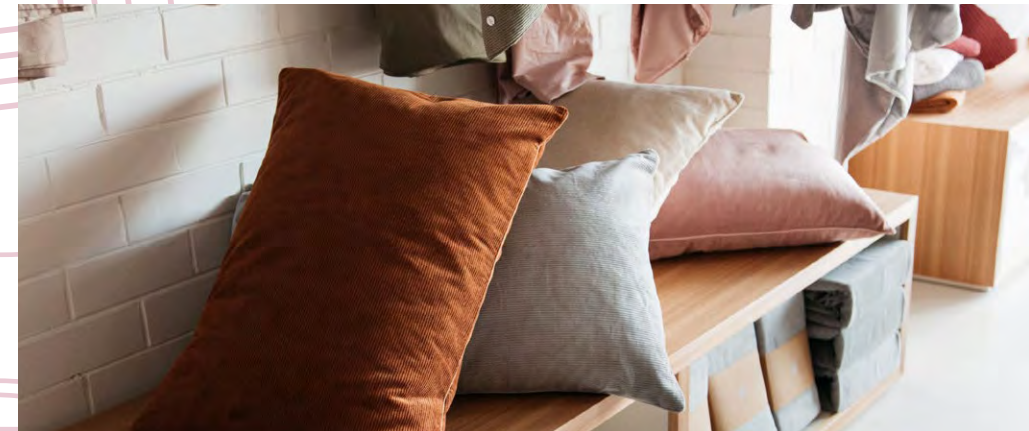
Hayley Worley
The Sheet Society

Australians being confined to their homes for much of 2020 created a big opportunity, rather than a challenge, for The Sheet Society. Remarkably, the pandemic translated into a sales bump of more than 330%.

After trying to buy sheets at a department store and feeling uninspired by the sheet sets - wrapped in plastic packaging and unable to be purchased separately - Hayley identified a clear gap in the market. She set out to create stylish, eco-friendly sheets from 100% long-staple cotton and flax, with sustainable packaging and processes.

Fast-forward a few years and business is booming. Hayley’s instinctive understanding of her customers helped her craft clever marketing campaigns that steered away from standard images of perfectly made beds in pretty rooms.

“Our images portray everyday guys and girls in a bed with rumpled sheets,” she said.



Customer service with fast order fulfilment is a big focus. “We’ve made a huge effort to dispatch orders the same day and provide an exceptional level of service,” Hayley said.

“We ship domestically and internationally with Australia Post. Keeping all our orders with one provider makes things really easy. Receiving more orders meant we sold through most of our inventory so we had to switch to a pre-order process to convert the extra traffic.”

Hayley was also quick to jump on other opportunities to grow the business like targeting digital marketing campaigns to a slightly older demographic of shoppers who weren’t able to shop in physical stores.

When businesses impacted by the pandemic started standing down their people or reducing their hours, she offered them project-based or freelance roles. From a senior graphic designer at a well-known company to a trend director who had worked with some of Australia’s best brands, Hayley says they would never have been able to work with “this calibre of people” otherwise.

Conversations with customers **inspire a virtual styling service.**

Shane Lenton
Cue

Fashion retailer, Cue, is known for sharing expert knowledge and styling advice with their customers throughout their 200 Australian stores. But when COVID-19 restrictions forced stores to close and foot traffic to fall, this was all placed in jeopardy.

According to CIO, Shane Lenton, Cue's response was to open up a conversation with their loyal customers.

"We asked them early on in the pandemic, 'What do you want to hear from us?'" he said. "They understand the brand, so we trusted them to guide us."

In response to customer feedback, the first big change was to create a supercharged online shopping experience - complete with a new virtual styling service.

"In any given week, we'll release about 30 new styles," said Shane. "Our customers love the newness and freshness of our range, but what it means is that sizes sell out quickly in certain locations."

"We trusted our customers to guide us."

"So we've been working very hard to ensure customers can shop the entire range from an online experience, by automating fulfilment from any store as well as our warehouse. We call this the 'Endless Aisle', removing out-of-stock frustrations for shoppers by fulfilling a purchase from any location, regardless of the order touchpoint."

Cue's fulfilment system can accurately pinpoint the stock that is closest to the customer and then consignments through StarTrack Premium can be generated by any individual store.

Cue's customers also told them that their style needs had changed as they stayed at home. What to wear on Zoom became a thing.

"We gave our Cue Club Black members priority access to the virtual stylist platform and were blown away by the response," said Shane. "When the pandemic hit, we deepened our connection with our customers and we've been amazed by the support they gave us in return."



“We’ve had quite a few customers say they have bought the same paintings as friends and they paint together for a couple hours at a time via Zoom. It’s a really nice way to connect.”

- Rebecca Keogh, Paint Plot



“We couldn’t go out and do trade fairs or food festivals any more. So we have to think differently, we had to evolve.”

- Lesley Pine, Pine Tea & Coffee



“We can all play a part in making the world a better place. We’re working on changing all our fabrications in our factories and our warehouse is powered by solar.”

- Sarah Timmerman, Beginning Boutique



Mail delivers trust and cut through.



“Mail... It’s a credible message.”



Dario Garma Specsavers

With so many Australians working from home in recent months, it’s been a great opportunity for businesses to make the most of mail’s ability to cut through and connect, with a physical presence setting it apart from email.

Specsavers is one company that’s been using mail brilliantly. It does so by carefully integrating mail into the marketing mix, with SMS, email and other channels all playing their part.

Specsavers Head of CRM, Dario Garma, confirms mail is still extremely effective, especially for clinical communications. “When you get a letter from your optometrist saying you’re due for an eye test, it’s a credible health message,” says Dario.

This is backed up by a 2020 Accenture report commissioned by Australia Post, which found that mail helps build brand trust significantly more than email.

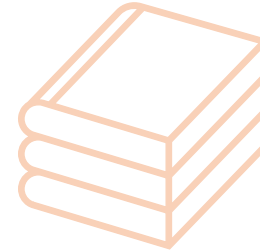
With a database of over 6 million active customers, Specsavers makes the most of mail by taking a carefully targeted approach – segmenting customers by age, buying behaviour and health factors.

“As you get older, your eyes naturally start to deteriorate, so age is a big component.”

Dario says people tend to keep eye test reminders on the kitchen bench or in the home office because they know they’ve got to get it done. “Whereas, with an email or SMS, if you don’t act on it straight away; it’s forgotten.”

Specsavers has addresses for around 95% of its customers, so it can personalise every piece of mail – including their preferred store. “Whereas we’ve only got email addresses for about 60%,” says Dario. “So if we only used email, we’d miss out on 35% of our customers.”

Bookseller manages unpredictable demands during lockdown.



Wayne Baskin
Booktopia

Online retailer, Booktopia, has been through enough market cycles over 16 years to know that book sales can be fairly recession-proof. But nothing could have predicted the effect on sales of a global pandemic.

Deputy CEO Wayne Baskin said they've had to adjust to unpredictable shifts in category demand, which chart the highs and lows of lockdown life for Australians.

After acquiring Co-Op Bookshop in early 2020, Booktopia expected textbooks to make up a third of its ongoing sales. Then all of a sudden, textbook sales fell off a cliff.

"Universities delayed the start date of their courses and international students couldn't get here," says Wayne. When the realities of lockdown life started to kick in, demand fluctuated wildly.

"It started with things to entertain the kids: colouring books and puzzles," said Wayne. "Then people were buying fiction for themselves and then a lot of pregnancy books – which was interesting."

Next, demand for cookbooks took off. Followed by big sales of fitness and self-help books. At the same time, international travel guides took a dive, but now, road trip books are on the up and up.

Despite the changes, sales kept peaking.

Wayne credits an open and honest partnership with Australia Post for helping to manage volumes. "It's been constant communication and collaboration."

"With their help, we now know how to work with this new level of online shopping."

"We've been working at Christmas levels since March."



“Many designers were isolated, discouraged and struggling to promote their work through their websites. We wanted to build a community for Aussie creatives.”

- James Boston, Paperlust



Research found mail still makes an impact and has a place in the home. “Without the catalogue, no one would visit the website, or call to place an order.”

- Bean Kan, Bright Life

“We’re always willing to try new things if it means a better outcome for our customers.”


- Danny Efendi, Showpo

It’s important to hire those who are a good fit, rather than those armed with the right skills. “You can teach skill, but you can’t teach attitude.”

Adam Kerrins, The Scent Lab



A strong social community is Steph's best sales tool.



Followers love her refreshingly honest observations and insights about new motherhood.



Steph Pase Steph Pase Planners

Through this pandemic, people everywhere have yearned for a sense of community. Steph Pase's natural talent for communicating authentically with Australian women helped her build a thriving online community, which she has in turn, transformed into a successful business.

In 2016 after the birth of her first child, Steph started a blog called 'Just another mummy blog'. It now has more than 230,000 followers on Instagram, who love her refreshingly honest observations and insights about new motherhood.

And with her community lapping up her accessible advice for busy mums on how to get organised, she

decided to launch a range of planners, which is now a thriving business.

For Steph, a strong social community is her best sales tool, with genuineness and accessibility being key factors in her success. "If your content doesn't feel relevant and authentic, people might question your motives rather than share it," she said.

Steph also enjoys a good relationship with Australia Post, who she moved to after conversations with business owners in her online community. "There are some really amazing businesses that are very open," said Steph. "They all said Australia Post has good service and you can actually talk to someone."

From weekend markets to a wow website.

Rebecca Chan
Artisanale Chocolate

Easter's the most important time of year for chocolate makers. So what do you do when you're a small chocolatier and the effects of a global pandemic kick in just before Easter peak season?

In Rebecca Chan's case, she acted very quickly to boost her company's online capability.

From selling direct to customers at markets and pop-ups, and with a basic website designed mainly for regular customers to re-order, Rebecca turned her company, Artisanale Chocolate, into an effective eCommerce operation.

After moving her platform to Shopify and focusing on navigation to make it easier for customers to

Making it easier for customers to find something they'd love.

find something they'd love, Rebecca then signed up with MyPost Business to take advantage of cost savings and further streamline her fulfilment process. "It was easy to get up and running and it integrates with Shopify through a plugin," she says.

While moving into eCommerce wasn't necessarily what Rebecca had expected, her omnichannel strategy is now paying off.

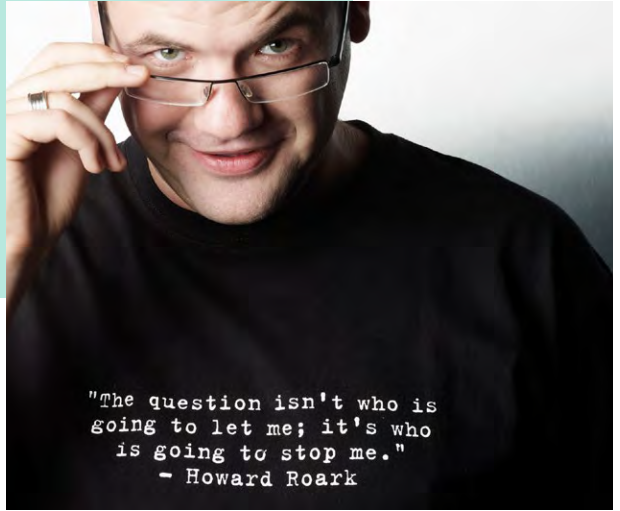
Repeat business is through the roof and corporate customer numbers are surging. "One of our eCommerce customers ordered 1,000 Easter bunnies as a corporate gift and they found us online!"





“Being able to cut out the middle-person and go direct to the customer negates some of the cost disadvantage associated with manufacturing locally.”

- Shannon Ley, Milton Ashby



"The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me."
- Howard Roark

“We are continually learning from our customer feedback and adapting to what they want.”

- Tess Moseley, frank body

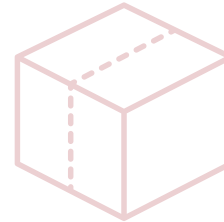
“Our internal philosophy is ‘there is always a better way’ and this mentality has been imperative to our growth and success.”

- Ruslan Kogan, Kogan.com



Social enterprise resonates during COVID.

An opportunity to tackle
a worldwide problem.



Eloise Hall & Isobel Marshall Taboo

While still in high school, friends Eloise Hall and Isobel Marshall saw the opportunity to tackle the worldwide problem of period poverty. With Australian women spending almost \$400 million on sanitary products each year¹, they saw the potential power of this market and launched TABOO, their own brand of organic and sustainable cotton pads and tampons through a subscription model. As a social enterprise, TABOO directs all profits to sanitary health projects in developing countries and local outreach programs.

“There are girls who aren’t able to attend school because they don’t have access to sanitary products. We want to bridge this gap and get a positive outcome from all the money we’re putting into this market every month out of necessity. We can drive it into the right cause,” Eloise said.

To deliver those monthly subscriptions, Eloise knew postage costs could be a major burden on the small social enterprise. Using MyPost Business helped the young founders save on sending to get their social eCommerce enterprise off the ground.

They also knew reliability was vital, given the essential nature of the products.

TABOO now saves up to 40% on postage costs within Adelaide metro. “It’s really beautiful to watch orders increase while postage rates decrease, especially as we’re now delivering Australia-wide,” Eloise said.

1. [Feminine Hygiene Market in Australia – April 2020](#)

Making the most of an opportunity driven by ‘work-from-home’.

Rashid Roumani Pod Co

As with anything that dramatically impacts markets, some sectors suffered during the pandemic; others thrived. For Pod Co, demand for their Nespresso-compatible coffee pods skyrocketed.

When COVID started to take hold in 2020, coffee pod panic buying set in straight away. “Everyone talks about toilet paper,” said co-founder Rashid Roumani, “But coffee pods were huge. Especially those first few months when the whole country was at home.”

“Coffee pods were huge. Especially when the whole country was at home.”

But it was far from easy pickings; they worked tirelessly to create blends that made demanding coffee aficionados happy - and which would work best with their fully biodegradable and compostable pods.

Pod Co partnered with Australia Post to deliver its coffee across Australia.

“We were using MyPost Business from the start,” says Rashid. “It made it quick and easy for us to manage our shipping. Because you just pay as you go, it was tailored to the start-up situation we were in.”



“Very often, innovation can come from finding small but important ways to make someone’s life better. You don’t need to mastermind a major breakthrough like inventing the smartphone.”

- Audrey Khaing-Jones, GlamCorner



“We’ve always been about empowering the customer; we listen, care and give them the experience they desire.”

- Sarah Mullen, Adore Beauty

“Social media has given us social validation, especially since this is a new way of cleaning for many people. This would never have happened in the way it has if we were a bricks and mortar store.”

- Adam Lindsay, Koh



Local Business Heroes recognised for helping others.

“I feel like I’m contributing to people’s wellbeing and mental health.”

Simone Hubble
Happy Hubble

Bridgette Vartiainen
Red Sparrow Tea Company

Two small businesses. Separated by 4000 kilometres. Each doing remarkable things to improve the wellbeing of their communities.

Happy Hubble and Red Sparrow Tea Company are two of Australia Post’s 58 Local Business Heroes for 2021. Both were nominated by their local Post Office managers in recognition of their resilience, innovation and business success in the face of adversity.

Simone Hubble started Happy Hubble after making her own tools to help her three children manage life with autism.

When the first of her three children was diagnosed, Simone didn’t know what to do. “The whole process just feels impossible and isolating,” Perth-based Simone said. “The diagnosis can sometimes take a year or more and all the while you don’t know how to help your child.”

So she spent her evenings making tools and visual aids - reward cards, routine cards and happy/not happy cards - to help her own children. When she brought the tools to her kids’ therapy sessions, the occupational therapist asked to share them with other parents with autistic children. One day a clinical psychologist told

Simone she could turn her tools into a business.

She now sells more than 200 products on her website - all over the world - including a start-up kit which helps guide parents from the early signs of autism and reassures them they can handle what’s to come.

In Coffs Harbour, Bridgette Vartiainen opened her Red Sparrow Tea Company store after testing the waters at local markets. The response was fantastic.

She says her range of over 100 loose-leaf tea varieties brings real comfort to people.

“I feel like I’m contributing to people’s wellbeing and mental health. A lot of people just come into the store to talk,” she says. “It really does bring the community together and we get a buzz out of people leaving the shop with a smile on their face.”

Bridgette has built up a loyal customer base, with regulars bringing in out-of-town visitors. And when last year’s COVID pandemic led more customers to search for teas that could be home-delivered, her eCommerce business grew 55% year-on-year. It now represents 35% of her business.



Giving customers more delivery choices grows loyalty.

“The service gave us a competitive edge by providing customers with more delivery choices.”



Guy Nappa OZ Hair & Beauty

‘Last mile delivery’ - the final stage of getting a parcel to the customer - is an increasing priority for eCommerce businesses. Australian companies are realising that with 30% of customer addresses being apartments where delivery can be difficult, it’s important to offer alternative ways to collect.

As eCommerce picked up in Australia, OZ Hair & Beauty began exploring other ways to differentiate themselves, by improving their customer experience.

In 2020, Chief Operating Officer, Guy Nappa, received word from his Australia Post Account Manager about a new Collect service that offered alternative delivery options.

It was the point of difference they’d been looking for.

“The success rate of the Collect service depends on how well it’s presented at the checkout. We’ve found that retailers who implement this well usually see

an immediate uptake of 4-6%,” says Australia Post’s Product Manager of Collect, Abdul Rehman.

Integrating the Collect service into their checkout was a seamless process for OZ Hair & Beauty, with Australia Post on hand to assist if necessary. Customers are now able to choose an alternative collection point at the checkout which is then automatically filled out in the delivery address field.

It’s good news for businesses. Australia Post’s Delivery Experience Report found that the Net Promoter Score (NPS) doubled when customers chose to send their parcel to a Post Office.

For OZ Hair & Beauty, first time delivery rose by 20% between July 2020 and June 2021 after implementing the service. In July 2021, they received a perfect NPS of 100 for the Collect service - a testament to its growing popularity.

Nextdoor creates a **virtual neighbourhood.**

Jennie Sager
Nextdoor

The everyday human connections we normally take for granted have been seriously challenged during the pandemic. But a very different kind of private social network has been helping to counter this, bringing people together in their neighbourhoods.

Whether it's finding local business recommendations, helping to keep each other safe, planning a local event, or just making new friends, Nextdoor has become the hyper-local neighbourhood networking 'hub' for more than 260,000 neighbourhoods across 11 countries.

And even though the Nextdoor app operates in the digital world, the people behind it turned to the intimacy of physical mail to drive online conversions and organic growth.

An 'invitation' model enabled members to invite their neighbours to join Nextdoor, without them needing to already know each other.

“Members embraced invitation letters as an important community building tool.”

“Nextdoor members have embraced invitation letters as an important community building tool,” says Jennie Sager, Head of Nextdoor Australia.

Frank Flynn from Cape Paterson in Victoria used Nextdoor to help grow his local network to a point where most full-time residents are now members.

“Pretty soon after the whole COVID-19 thing blew up, someone on Nextdoor suggested we distribute a handwritten flyer to all the neighbours who were self-isolating, offering to help with picking up groceries, or deliver a precooked meal, or just have someone to talk to,” said Frank – further demonstrating the effectiveness of the letterbox to build connections.



Libraries use their data to customise book deliveries.



“We were sending around 1,000 boxes a week right through Melbourne’s Stage 4 lockdowns.”



Premal Niranjana Eastern Regional Library Service Victoria

When Australia’s libraries were deemed ‘non-essential services’, closing their doors during the initial lockdown restrictions in April 2020, they were missed by many Australians. But many libraries found creative ways to continue providing their community a much-needed sense of connection, via digital access to resources.

For Victoria’s Eastern Regional Library Service the answer was book delivery.

Working with Australia Post, they quickly turned their 13 local libraries (across three Melbourne council areas) into fulfilment centres – keeping their core team of 85 employed throughout.

Premal Niranjana, the library’s Business and Technology Manager, said his “very adaptive team

wanted to do something for the community” during Victoria’s lockdowns.

Eastern Regional Library’s approach was a significant shift from the traditional ‘supermarket-style’ self-serve model to a personally curated selection. Members could request a box of books to be sent to their home – based on a combination of loan history data and suggestions of what they liked to read.

Each box could fit around 10 books and library staff were encouraged to fill them with a tailored selection. “We thought we were going to send out around 1,000 boxes of books a month. But we were sending around 1,000 boxes a week right through Melbourne’s Stage 4 lockdowns,” said Niranjana.

Future Brighter.

It's inspiring to see how resilient and adaptable Australian businesses have been in the face of recent challenges.

There are so many examples of this country's brilliant thinkers, sellers and adders-of-value responding to challenges and opportunities.

We're committed to keeping Australians connected and helping Australian businesses grow. So we'd like to reaffirm our support for you, as we head into a brighter new year.

