

Your Choice

June 2004



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letters to the editor



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Dear Editor

I would like to express my thanks to Capricorn Mutual, especially to Jo Gage [Capricorn Mutual's Claims Manager], for their prompt service in looking after and paying out my claim, which all occurred within 24 hours. Jo was very pleasant to deal with, and I found the process very easy and pain free.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Hewitt
ULTRA TUNE HORNSBY

tips protecting valuable assets

The strength of any company lies in the performance of its personnel. Apart from your legal obligations, it makes very good business sense to look after the health and safety of your employees. Here are some tips to get you started:

- Remove any oil spills immediately.
- Reduce the use of extension leads by installing extra power points.
- Ensure your staff wear the correct safety gear when necessary.
- Ensure your staff do not wear loose clothing in the workshop.
- Ensure there is a fully stocked first aid box on hand.
- Ensure items are replaced before they reach their use-by dates.
- Ensure oily rags, or rags moistened by any commercial fluid are stored or disposed of correctly.
- Ensure staff are always kept up-to-date with the latest safety procedures.

These tips are just a starting point to assist you to maintain a safe working environment. For further information, you can contact the relevant government department.

Australian Members

NATIONAL

Comcare — www.comcare.gov.au.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

www.workcover.act.gov.au

NEW SOUTH WALES

www.workcover.nsw.gov.au

NORTHERN TERRITORY

www.nt.gov.au/deet/worksafe

QUEENSLAND

www.whs.qld.gov.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

www.workcover.com

TASMANIA

www.workcover.tas.gov.au

VICTORIA

www.workcover.vic.gov.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

www.safetyline.wa.gov.au

New Zealand Members

Safety Net — www.osh.dol.govt.nz

better off with Capricorn Mutual



Long time Capricorn Society member, Nigel Garrett, saw no reason why not to protect his business through Capricorn Mutual.

▶ **Nigel Garrett, owner of Plaza Smash Repairs in Western Australia has only ever had to make one claim in the past, so when he made his first claim with Capricorn Mutual recently, things were fairly new to him.**

“We had a customer’s car in our workshop for restoration for about 18 months, and in that period of time we fully restored it and gave it a new paint job. This meant taking out the engine and gearbox, and stripping the car down. It also came in with some insurance smash damage to the front that we repaired. During that time we had had four or five guys working on it, and at the end of the day when the engine was put back in once we had finished all our work on it, someone had damaged the sump,” said Nigel.

“We weren’t aware of the damage at the time. It was only when the owner took it to his mechanic for some other work that it was discovered. The mechanic said that someone jacked the engine up on the sump, squashed it and caused a fracture ... and so it leaked oil.

“So after some toing-and-froing we ended up having to replace the sump — it was one of those modified sumps for racing. It was hard to say who had done the damage because we had the car for so long, and really, it could have happened anywhere, anytime.”

Making a claim of this sort without knowing when it happened or knowing who was to blame, could have

been problematic, but because Nigel’s business was protected by Capricorn Mutual there was no problem at all.

“The claim was for just over \$1,000, and to begin with I was not sure if we had protection for this sort of damage. So I asked Josie, my Office Manager, to give Capricorn Mutual a call to find out if we were covered. We were, so we made the claim, filled in the paperwork and went from there,” said Nigel.

“I did most of the dealing with Capricorn Mutual regarding the claim,” said Josie. “My main contact was with Jo Gage, she was excellent and very helpful. She advised me about what to put on the claims form regarding who was responsible, as we couldn’t place it to a particular person. Once I sent the paperwork in, Jo got the ball rolling straight away. She was really good the whole way through. I think from filling in the form, to the time we got paid,

was about two or three weeks, mainly because we had to wait for the other party to fill in their paperwork, otherwise it would probably have been less.”

As a long-time member of Capricorn Society, Nigel puts all of his purchases through the co-operative and saw no reason why not to protect his business with Capricorn Mutual.

“We wanted risk protection with an organisation that understands our business, and Capricorn Mutual does. I mean, we are better off going through them. The insurers have never done our industry any favours. We’ve struggled in the panel and paint industry with insurance companies because they try to tie you into their package.

“So if a fellow Capricorn Society member asked my opinion about joining Capricorn Mutual, I would say they should look at becoming a member.”

securing the future

► **“Over ten per cent of Capricorn Society’s membership obtained Capricorn Mutual protections within six months of its launch,” says Capricorn Mutual Director and Capricorn Society CEO, Trent Bartlett.**



Capricorn Mutual Director and Capricorn Society CEO, Trent Bartlett, did not want to sell Society members short when looking into insurance alternatives — thus the formation of Capricorn Mutual.

This strong result, which easily eclipses the take-up rate of previous arrangements, vindicates the Society’s decision to form Capricorn Mutual. As one of the architects of the Society’s membership survey concerning insurance issues, Trent said, “Some members were so anxious to respond to the survey that they had paid accountants to verify facts in their insurance histories before submitting them.”

The results of the insurance survey led Capricorn Society to investigate insurance alternatives for its members. Amongst the various options considered was a mutual model, and this led to a resurgence of the Society’s earlier interest in mutuals, causing Trent to make the calls that would lead to the formation of Capricorn Mutual.

The Capricorn Society Board was not presented with the final solution when it considered how members’ business and personal situations could best be protected. There were discussions about following the traditional insurance route, more discussions on a proposal from the broking industry, plus consideration of a submission from Charles Taylor Consulting.

The Board decided that forming a mutual was the way to go because the principles of mutuality most closely mirrored those of the Capricorn Society — a co-operative operated for its members by its members. And so, the Mutual was formed and Charles Taylor Consulting was appointed to manage Capricorn Mutual.

“Had we gone any other way it would have been selling the members short because it would have been giving a third party access to our members,” said Trent. “The best way was a mutual where members had control, not a third party.

“The feedback I am getting from members confirms this is their preferred direction. We have been able to demonstrate the benefits of the Mutual to growing numbers of members.”

The success of Capricorn Mutual reflects the enthusiasm of the Capricorn Society members. Due to the high level of positive responses, the number of Liaison Officers in each state of Australia and in New Zealand are being doubled, and the number of staff in the Perth call centre as well as other areas of Charles

Taylor Consulting that provide services to members are being increased.

“A member commenting to me about the Mutual said, ‘I think it’s fantastic. I have three generations of family in my business and Capricorn Mutual is like another Capricorn Society. It’s going to go beyond my lifetime,’” said Trent.

“When you look at it in these terms, I believe we will have secured the membership’s future because it becomes a logical consideration, along with the other benefits of Capricorn Society membership.”

The Mutual’s membership reflects the strict Capricorn Society application process and Capricorn Society’s determination to always protect the interests of its members. This ensures the interests of all are well looked after. Members find that the scope of the business and personal protections offered by the Mutual reflect industry needs.

“I believe that Capricorn Mutual has matched the expectations of those who asked the Society to explore the potential for an alternative to insurance,” said Trent.

business makes room for life

Melbourne automotive identity
Michael Kostos became a teenage car mechanic by choice. The one thing Michael wasn't as a teenager was a budding academic. So when he reached Year 10, his father told him that if he could get a job he could leave school.

Twenty-four hours later, the 15 year-old had pedalled his bicycle into a job as a trainee vehicle mechanic, beginning a cycle of industry activity that we all hope still has decades to go.

By the age of 19, Michael had finished his time and had established his own mechanical workshop in Taunton Drive, Cheltenham.

He remembers early business nerves and the sleepless nights that typify many fledgling businesses. It took all his savings, but as he says, he didn't have all that much to lose.

Fast-forward 25 years.

You will see Michael Kostos still operates out of Taunton Drive, Cheltenham. But now Cosmick Automotive Pty Ltd is a large, freehold, comfortable and squeaky-clean business dominated by a line of four-post hoists, with every aid to modern vehicle maintenance at hand.

It is staffed by a group of senior personnel, experienced and proud of the quality of the work they do. One of Michael Kostos' management principles is simple, 'pay the best to employ the best', and no-one will be disappointed in the results — particularly the customers.

Customer loyalty reflects the quality and service provided as well as another management principle followed by Michael — 'meet or surpass vehicle manufacturer service standards'.

Michael Kostos operates with a level of infectious enthusiasm that encourages everyone in the place to do their best. He counts each of the company's 13 staff members as an ally, identifies wife Vikki as the staunchest ally of them all, and nominates her ability to sum up others as one of Cosmick's most tangible assets.

Vikki is there about three days every week, an essential component of the business. She was there when the couple decided to launch a separate business, Cheltenham Vehicle Inspections. It is also in Taunton Drive, Cheltenham, next door to, but adjoining the back of the Cosmick premises.

Cheltenham does what its name says — it inspects vehicles — for roadworthiness, for the RACV, for private individuals and for others. It also undertakes mechanical insurance work and often looks after new cars that have suffered other unintentional mechanical mishaps.



Michael Kostos, owner of Cosmick Automotive saw the obvious savings and membership benefits in joining Capricorn Mutual.

Michael sets great store on practical management skills and the advice of others with more business experience than himself.

"Being a skilled mechanic does not equip you to be a trained businessman. But those skills can be learned, especially by example," he says.

One of the lessons he learned was that since you spend more time at work than at home, it is essential to make the workplace as safe and as welcoming as home. That's why this business has 18 hoists — most less than four years old. It's why each one has power right there so no one has to face the possibility of tripping over dangerous extension leads. It's why the floor is squeaky clean, and why the boss lets his personnel get on with the job. That's important. He wants the reassurance that jobs will be done according to 'right-first-time' principles.

Why did Michael join Capricorn Mutual?

"Savings and membership benefits were obvious," says Michael. "The joining process was simple, the protections clear and the ability to pay by the month for no extra cost made perfect sense for our business."



service explains take up rate

▶ “I believe that the quality of member services and the integrity of a product tailored to meet the needs of the members, explains the increasing number of members seeking Capricorn Mutual protections,” says Mark Antoniadis.

Mark is the newly appointed State Liaison Manager, responsible for day-to-day operations of the call centre and the Liaison Officers who are based throughout Australia and New Zealand.

His substantial industry experience was gained initially in South Africa where his dedication saw him move steadily up the ladder of additional responsibility. His insurance experience includes sales, broking and claims.

Mark arrived in Perth to join the family business in 1998, but decided he preferred looking after clients’ business and personal protections. He reasons that each area is so important to the well being of the individual that it demands the highest standards of attention.

Less than a year after arriving in Perth, Mark was working in Brisbane as the prime member of a team seeking to establish a new insurance business. Mark was one of those responsible for the establishment of the business’ parameters in its critical start-up phases. As Sales Manager, he developed recruitment and training processes and formed its national sales team.

It is this experience that attracted Capricorn Mutual. Mark will be concentrating firstly on ‘team work’, so that the call centre and the state-based Liaison Officers work together in a way that makes the most of their skills while maintaining high productivity. In his view, all this adds up to one word — service.



Newly appointed State Liaison Manager, Mark Antoniadis will be increasing the level of customer service provided to Capricorn Mutual members.

Mark is strongly of the view (also shared by Capricorn Mutual) that ‘no matter how good the product is, take up rates always reflect the level of interaction between the customer and the Mutual’. In other words, ‘it is the service that makes the real difference’.

The number of members of the Mutual are increasing, and the number of protections that each member has with the Mutual are also increasing. This means that to maintain the high level of member servicing, more service providers are needed. This is why as this issue goes to press, the number of Liaison Officers are doubling and the number of call centre personnel is also being substantially increased.

Welcome aboard Mark Antoniadis and the new members of the team. A big thank you to the existing members of the team.



help yourself to service



High levels of service, especially following through on promises made are the keys to sustained growth by Capricorn Mutual, according to West Australian Liaison Officer, Carol Richards.

Carol, who has been associated with the WA automotive industry for 17 years, was the first Liaison Officer employed by Capricorn Mutual. She has earned a reputation to be proud of, and is an exemplary role model for those Liaison Officers who have joined the Mutual since her appointment.

Carol Richards is a well-respected member of the WA automotive industry, and has worked with its members throughout the state since 1987.

Her appointment to the Mutual last year resulted in a flood of inquiries from Capricorn Society members. Carol said members were pleased to demonstrate their confidence in the Mutual because it was an initiative of the Society.

"They know how the Society operates," she said. "That coupled with a familiar face is a recipe for success."

Carol, who holds a Diploma in Financial Services, says that by the end of September this year, she will have contacted every WA member of Capricorn Society.



Carol Richards, Capricorn Mutual's West Australian Liaison Officer predicts that many more Capricorn Society members will join the Mutual this year.

She predicts, "Many more will join Capricorn Mutual this year once we have told them what we have done so far and shown them how good the claims service is."

Carol strongly supports the 'service first' policy of Capricorn Mutual and the Society.

Carol can be contacted on 0408 901 407.



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Tom O'Sullivan
0409 884 687



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021 800 449

Our Liaison Officers are trained to assist with membership queries. Each is equipped with a laptop to help organise your membership application for the Mutual, and can provide you with an indication of the cost and content of each protection. These will be emailed back to Capricorn Mutual for consideration. Each Liaison Officer has a personal 'buddy' in the call centre who can quickly deal with member queries or assist you to complete your documentation.

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