

IMPACT

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a Tom Buchan tribute



THE BEGINNING

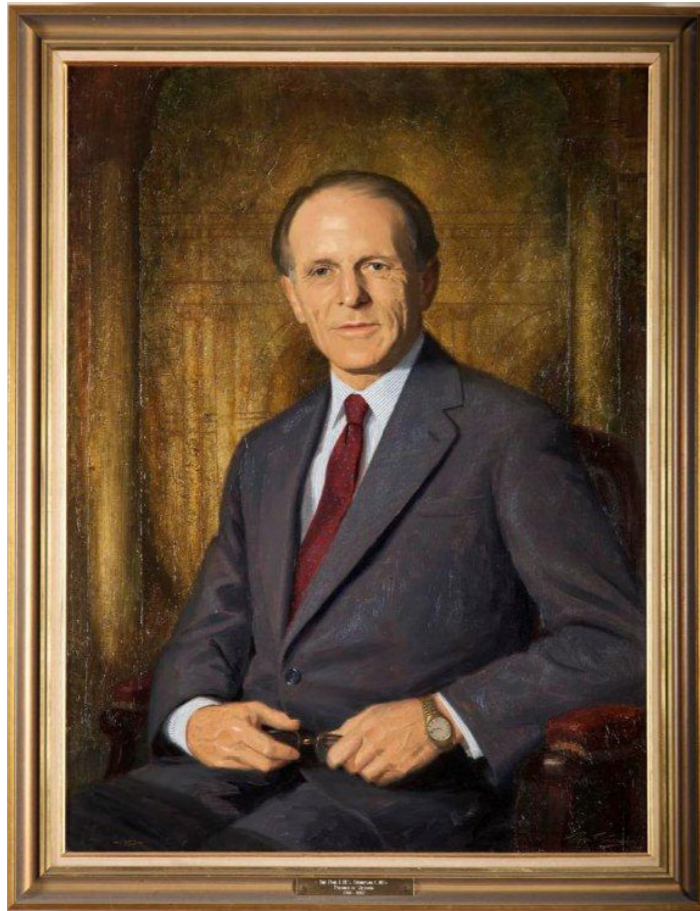
In order to trace Tom's remarkable career, we must first start with his thinking.

From a young age, Tom was a non-conformist. A rebellious and untameable entrepreneurial spirit. When he finished high-school, his father John took him on a trip around the world to show him the most magnificent, architectural wonders, in hope that it would inspire him to follow in his footsteps. Much to John's dismay Tom returned and applied for a Bachelor of Commerce.

Tom was curious. His rigorous pursuit of economic ideas and theories to understand society saw him excel at University and often, challenge his own professors. His love of literature and history, and ability to balance economic narratives and determine what assumptions matter, propelled his interest in understanding the forces behind industries, businesses and governments.

Arguably, most significant to Tom's success, was his ability to disarm people with his wit. His effortless skill to instil trust and respect, saw him become a confidant and friend, to many in the industry.





Premier Lindsay Thompson

CORRIDORS OF POWER

Writing was Tom's tool of trade and this, combined with his ability to extrapolate complex financial figures, allowed him to navigate the corridors of power early in his career.

Tom started as a private secretary to Eric Robinson; Finance Minister of the Fraser Government when inflation was once again on the rise, and opinion polls were less than encouraging.

In 1981, the Victorian Liberal Party was hanging on by a thread after 27 consecutive years in power. Lindsay Thompson replaced Sir Rupert Hamer as the Victorian Premier and flew Tom to Melbourne to be his right hand – senior speech writer – to revive a Party that was perceived as tired and out of touch with its people.

The 1982 state election saw the Liberal Party lose in a landslide and herald a new Labor era with John Cain. Tom was out of the job. But the defeat proved an impetus for Tom to forge his own path and become one of Australia's most powerful strategists and thinkers, for the private and Government sectors.

GREY ADVERTISING

In the 1980s, advertising agencies in Australia were beginning to see the value of public relations and the need for integration.

Once viewed as “unpaid advertising”, public relations was maturing to become a powerful tool for industry, commerce and government, through its ability to enlist and intelligently influence, mass communication media and political opinion.

Grey Advertising recognised this and poached Tom to start up its public relations arm in Australia. In 1985, Tom established Grey Buchan Public Relations as part of the world-wide Grey Communication network.

Tom understood the implications of the external environment – government regulation, public policy, competition, and changing customer and client behaviour – that would inevitably impact and shape the communication environment for his clients.

He was able to influence and change the corporate identity and public perception of Australia’s largest institutions, including JB Were & Son, Arnold Bloch Leibler and the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

His ability to create and execute campaigns that would shift behaviour and move people to action on a national-level, was highlighted in his work with the Howard Government and the Transport Accident Commission, which are still today, among Australia’s most iconic and successful projects.

ARNOLD BLOCH LEIBLER
SOLICITORS AND CONSULTANTS

LEIBLER RELISHES THE CHALLENGE

Two events in 1986 were enormously significant to the Australian Jewish community. One was the passing, by both Houses of Parliament, of the resolution calling for the rescission of the 1975 UN resolution that equated Zionism with racism. The other was the settlement of the vexed question of possible loss of citizenship for the 7000 Australian citizens living in Israel.

Behind both these decisions was assisting effort by Melbourne solicitor Mark Leibler. 43 And it was this, colleagues say, that had a lot to do with Leibler being made an officer of the Order of Australia for services to the community, particularly the Jewish community.

His work for the community, however, is not new. He began with student groups in the early 1960s. From student ranks he graduated to president of the Zionist Federation of Australia, in tandem with membership of the executive of the Jewish Board of Deputies. Along the way Leibler has collected many awards within this community and since the early 70s has been a force in the international Zionist movement.

Outside the Jewish community, which numbers about 100,000, Leibler is better known as the senior partner of Arnold Bloch Leibler, one of Melbourne's most innovative and fiercely independent law firms.

For example, a property purchased in 1983 for \$1.5 million was not supposed to be subject to capital gains tax. However, if the owner, instead of selling the property for \$3 million dollars, granted a lease for a premium of \$2 million dollars, the whole of the premium would be included as part of the assessable income of the owner for the purposes of the tax, Mr Leibler said.

Adding to the problem, if the owner sold the building for its reduced market value, the resulting loss would not be treated as a capital loss to be offset against the capital gain of \$1 million.

Lawyer and author Mark Leibler
Ins and outs of CGT.

Trusts offer room for tax breaks

Unit trusts with more than 25 per cent of their assets in non-property investments (say, cash) are able to avoid the impact of lost negatively geared interest payments, Melbourne lawyer Mark Leibler says in a new book on capital gains tax.

Such trusts can be used not only to offset losses on property investment



“The best public relations give corporate size a human dimension. It can present industry intentions in terms of a public gain. The apparently insensitive becomes the intelligently concerned. Explanation erodes resentment. Understanding replaces doubt.”

Tom as Managing Director of Grey Buchan

“I was General Manager of Grey Advertising and shareholder during 1985 when my partners and I decided on a strategy to diversify the service offering of the business. We identified public relations, as it was then referred to, and direct marketing as two key communications fields that would enable us to market a more integrated communications solution to clients.

It was during the second half of 1985 that we identified Tom Buchan as a potential target. At the time he had moved out of his involvement working with the State Government of Victoria, working closely with senior politicians. He was working for a small PR firm, Campbell Public Relations, located in East Melbourne.

We commenced discussions with Tom and he was open to the idea of creating his own PR firm and partnering with Grey Advertising group. The deal was consummated later in 1985 and Grey Buchan was established as a 50/50 partnership with Tom as the Managing Director and sole employee at the time.

Towards the end of 1985, I was leading a new business pitch for a State Government mandate and asked Tom to partner with us to present a more comprehensive communications solution. We won the business and that was the start of a long and successful business relationship.

Eventually Tom moved to new premises, as the business was growing and he took on a partner that saw his business continue to grow. He eventually bought out the Grey shareholding and the rest is history.

During this time I forged a close and enduring friendship with Tom and today, after 33 years I am pleased to say that he is one of my closest friends. I am proud to have been involved with the establishment of his business and so very pleased to have witnessed the success he has had.”

David Campbell, Former General Manager of Grey Advertising

GUN REFORM

On 28 April 1996, 35 people were killed at the Port Arthur Historic Site and many others were injured. The newly elected Howard Government took swift and decisive actions to introduce a national approach to gun control – banning military style weapons and instituting a buyback of unregistered, illegal and unwanted firearms.



Grey Buchan was appointed by the Australian Government's Attorney General Department to design a communication campaign that would garner support for uniform, comprehensive gun reform in each state and reduce the number of firearms in the community.

Despite the nation's horror at the event, the amnesty period was divisive. The gun lobby ran a ferocious campaign, and there was deep anger in rural and regional Australia.

But history was on Howard and Grey Buchan's side, and some 643,000 firearms were handed in. The campaign and laws had a lasting impact in changing public perception and reducing the number of gun-related deaths in Australia.



EMBRACING CHALLENGE & CHANGE

"Tom and his team at Buchan Group worked with me for 15 odd years on some of the most difficult projects in Melbourne. Tom was always willing to take on the most challenging projects and sometimes I suspect, he may have regretted it.

Southgate and Citylink were two of those challenges that turned out to be transformational for Melbourne and have been hugely successful. They could have well been the opposite if tough and courageous decisions weren't taken at critical stages."

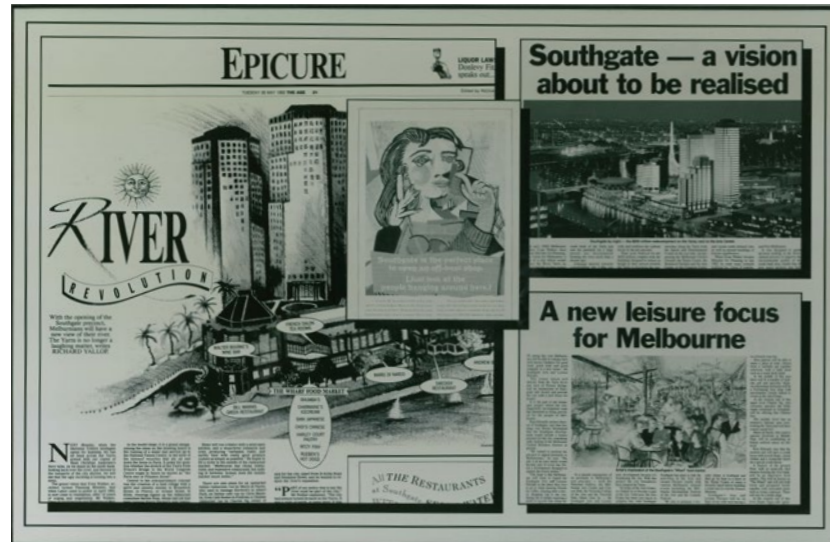
Kim Edwards, Former Managing Director from Transurban



SOUTHGATE

“Southgate was a \$650m (1990) twin office tower, hotel and retail precinct on the south bank of the Yarra. The project was being constructed through the worst property recession in decades.

It is hard to believe now, but no meaningful development had occurred on Southbank - a commercial “desert” at the time and the media and much of the public thought the project would be a white elephant. Certainly, it was thought a retail complex south of the river and the city was lunacy.



There was no doubt the retail environment was going to be difficult. We knew if the retail component failed it would seriously impact the success of the rest of the complex.

Buchan Group was charged with the responsibility to devise a positioning marketing and public relations strategy.

The Arts and Leisure precinct was born. Tom and his team after researching international models proposed a leisure retailing concept built around food and the arts leveraging the adjacent Arts Centre. The concept rejected major retailers and fast food chains seeking to provide a very different experience.

Leisure retailing had never been tried at this scale before in Australia. The concept was signed off with instructions not to “stuff” it up from a group of very nervous investors and banks.

After more than six months of hard marketing and huge financial incentives, not one tenant had signed up! There was much concern that we had blown it. Tom was sweating!

However out of the blue, two highly regarded restaurateurs Andrew Blake and Walter Bourke signed as anchor tenants. The rest of the precinct was tenanted in quick succession.

The Arts and Leisure precinct was an enormous success achieving some of the highest rentals/m2 and precipitating a rush of massive development in Southbank. Tom and his team had been part of history in the development of Melbourne.”

Kim Edwards, Former Project Director from Jennings Group's \$650 million Southgate Development

CITYLINK

“Citylink was a \$2000m (1994) privately financed toll road project linking the Monash, Westgate and Tullamarine freeways, and the port and airport with the industrial heart of Melbourne. Citylink was a vital, badly needed transport infrastructure initiative.

The project was a massive challenge. Extremely disruptive during construction involving: two large tunnels in very difficult geotechnical conditions and a new Yarra bridge; introducing tolls to Melbourne which had been vehemently rejected by the community in the past; developing new high speed multi-lane technology that had not been used anywhere in the world previously; and being financed by the private sector which was universally unpopular.

Tom and the Buchan Group took on the marketing and public relations strategy and implementation task. A huge challenge and a huge risk as the media ran an unrelenting campaign against the project and the public's acceptance and take up of the project was an enormous concern to the Government and Transurban's investors.

The marketing and public relations campaign had to turn around public sentiment to the project, to ensure the early take up of the tolling technology, convince the public and businesses of the time saving benefits of using and paying for the toll road, counter the media and public objections to privately funding the road, and manage the inevitable fall out of a very disruptive project during construction.



Citylink, despite many early setbacks, has been an enormously successful project delivering massive economic benefits to Melbourne. It is hard to imagine what the City would be like without it.

Fortunately, it has also been a very successful project for investors. Credit for much of this success can be attributed to the marketing and public relations campaigns managed by Tom and his team at Buchan Group.”

Kim Edwards, Former Managing Director from Transurban

THE WORLD'S SAFEST ROADS

Road fatalities were becoming an increasingly serious issue in the 1970s and the 1980s in Australia, with the death toll in Victoria trending towards 1000 each year.

It was in 1986 that the first all-encompassing step was taken to combat the road toll. Under the Victorian Transport Accident Act 1986, the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) was established and it declared a mission to 'upset, outrage and appal' Victorians to reduce the number of road deaths in the state.

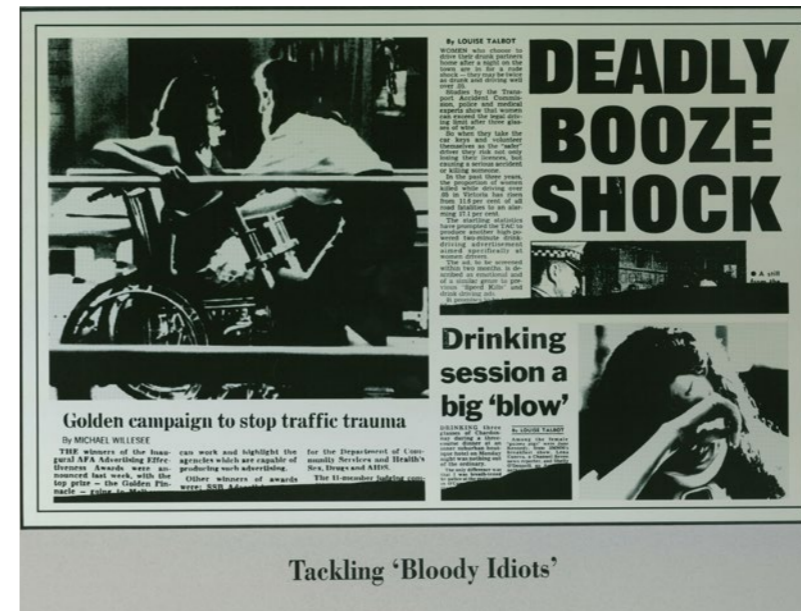
For an agency, that is quite a brief and in December 1989, TAC hired Grey Advertising Melbourne team to develop a campaign that would bring road safety to the forefront of the community's social agenda. Tom was a central contributor to this campaign.

The purpose of the campaign was to make motorists reconsider their attitudes towards drink-driving and speeding, as well as promote two new initiatives: random breath-testing or "booze buses" and speed cameras.

The resulting drinking-driving campaign was a theme that would remain unchanged till the early 2000s. Under the banner "If you drink, then drive, you're a bloody idiot," controversial, emotive and hard-hitting television ads were produced to provide a sobering background for communicating to tough audiences.

In 1989, 776 people were killed on the roads in Victoria, Australia. In 1994, the number had been slashed to 378, a reduction in the road toll of 51 per cent.

In this short period, Victorian the roads became "the safest roads of anywhere in the world" and TAC road initiative was heralded a success due to the integration of three major campaign elements - legislation, enforcement and communication.





"In 1991 I was appointed chair of the TAC, under the Kennett government who intended to privatise the organisation.

A year later Premier Kennett's conclusion was if he sold the TAC the premiums would go up, the benefits down, and the return to government would be reduced.

The tenacity, intellectual strategy and fabulous contribution from Buchan Communications over the year was incredible

Little did Kennett know that lurking in the communications group was one Tom Buchan who had been involved with the campaign from the first moment of "If you drink and drive, you are a bloody idiot."

He was resourceful, bright and dedicated, and just the best service provider ever. We triumphed and the TAC went on to serve all Victorians as it had.

Throughout this period, I formed a wonderful warm fun working relationship with Tom that turned into an enduring friendship.

Tom, it is a pleasure to count you as a friend and I wish you loads of laughter, luck and love in your life ahead."

Margaret Jackson, Former Chair of Transport Accident Commission

AUSTRALIAN FOUNDATION INVESTMENT COMPANY

"Tom has provided extremely valuable advice to AFIC and other listed companies we have managed over the decades. When I first started at AFIC, Buchan was already in place as a media advisor, although with limited scope of work which was essentially about media management through half-yearly results.

We needed to build our aspirations and management of communications through various media, and Tom has guided us effectively and with a great understanding of where this journey should take us, and importantly, what is appropriate for us.

Tom has proved to be a valuable sounding board in areas ranging from media management, to use of new media to even dealing with a more nuanced, political landscape.

More importantly, Tom has become and remains a close friend of the company and has shown he cares about the AFIC shareholders. It is this alignment with the company's values that really stands out and has made for a great partnership.

We know that if there is a complex issue we need to deal with, Tom will offer very sage advice."

*Geoff Driver, General Manager Business Development
and Investor Relations, AFIC*



PRUSHKA

“Prushka Mercantile Agency had been in the debt recovery business for almost 10 years when it approached Grey Buchan. A strong client base had been established but the business was not growing as rapidly as necessary to achieve a sustained level of profitability.

Partnering with Coleman Creative Communications, Grey Buchan created a holistic marketing and communication program that involved the creation of a new corporate identity for the firm, and a major publicity drive on the issues of bad debts and their recovery.

The result? In a period of 18 months, Prushka tripled its income. Of all the mercantile agencies in Australia, Prushka was arguably the most visible and positive identity.

The communication program changed the public perception of the industry, as well as the individual enterprise, for the better.

It was in the year Tom went into business, as Grey Buchan, that I became a client. At that stage, he occupied a little office in the slick Grey Advertising space.



We were both full of hopes and dreams. I was a founding partner of a suburban law firm, which had big goals and Tom had leaped from the security of the corporate world into the abyss of self-employment.

At that stage, law firms were precluded from advertising, so PR became our way around this. Our public profile leapt and I became a PR convert.

Grey Buchan became Buchan Communications and eventually WE Buchan, with a few little variations along the journey.

I left my firm in 1991 and took control of Prushka Fast Debt Recovery, which I had founded and so I retained the Buchan link.

Tom Buchan has allowed Prushka to appear bigger and better in the public eye and to have a voice at the table.

Over the years I have become friends with the various Account Managers I have worked with. I have seen Buchan become more professional and strategic but never losing sight of the excitement of a story getting a media hit.

It has been a long and fruitful association and one I have been grateful for. I wish Tom all the very best for the next stage in his life.”

Roger Mendelson, Founder of Prushka

JB WERE & SON

"Tom is a man of pure gold.

What started out as a small assignment to perform a PR function for JB Were & Son initially with Tom assisted by Lisa Turnbull, blossomed over the years that followed as a strong and warm friendship with Tom and Judy, and their growing brood of beautiful daughters.

Helen and I cherished our relationship with Tom, which encompassed far more than the business ramifications.

Helen and I had grandchildren at the primary school, which they shared with Eugenie, Lucie and Grace, and there were memorable "garden parties" in the Botanical Gardens, and the occasions in Rockley Road, South Yarra, and Seymour Grove and Embling Road, Malvern.

During the period of business activities, before I retired, hardly a week went by without a Friday chat when Tom and I would discuss the events of the week. These discussions were always very informative, at least, for me!"

Douglas Eddy, Former Executive at JB Were & Son



THE CREATIVE SIDE

“Tom and I met in 1983 whilst working at KM Campbell. I was later head-hunted to Grey and upon finding that Grey Melbourne wanted a PR arm, I introduced Tom to the management there. Just a few weeks later, Grey Buchan was born.

We worked on many iconic campaigns together. Our first client was Prushka Mercantile Agency.

With just a small campaign budget, a hard working logo was first created so that even a business card would convey a strong and impactful selling message for the business. We introduced the ground breaking USP of “No Recovery. No Charge” which creatively translated into “All you can lose is a bad debt”.

Prushka’s creative, which included ground breaking press, radio and television went on to win awards and the logo and tag lines developed over three decades ago are still used today, with the company now the largest Mercantile Agency in the Southern Hemisphere.

Another memorable client was JB Were. The client and our prime objective was to obtain investment in Australia’s resources sector and the first promotional brochure for Were’s Resource Research Division generated millions of dollars in one weekend. I don’t know the exact figure but it was huge, even by today’s standards.

Grey Buchan was responsible for the PR related to the reform of Victoria’s Liquor Laws in 1998 and we were instrumental in developing the image and promotion of the rather complex liquor law changes to the Victorian public. The success of government policy introduction is measured on how least criticism it draws and that campaign featuring a rescue Saint Bernard dog with brandy cask in press and strong print collateral was hailed as one of the most successful run by a Victorian State Government – not just the Labor Government of the day, but the Opposition as well.

Together we developed the first television advertisement for a law firm in Australia with unprecedented publicity for Mulcahy, Mendelson & Round and cutting edge communication for names like Smorgon ARC, Mills Oakley, King Club, Arnold Bloch Leibler, Cody Real Estate, to name a few. Some of those production deadlines along the way (and we never missed one) were killers!

Tom, we worked hard and effectively together. On this, your retirement, I wish you everything you wish yourself as you embark on your next chapter. I have no doubt it will be an exciting one.”

Martin Coleman, Former Head of Creative Services at Grey Buchan



Every Victorian's guide to responsible liquor reform.

From May 3, the new Liquor Control Act becomes law in Victoria.

It has two main objectives:

- 1) To help make hotels, restaurants, liquor stores and licensed clubs more responsive to your needs.
- 2) To continue the fight against alcohol abuse.

And the new liquor laws will ensure that licensees consider the interests of their local community.

The Victorian Government has streamlined the licence and permit processes, which will come as welcome relief to the tourism and hospitality industries.

For example, with the Commission's approval, licensed restaurants, like their elegant counterparts in other great cities, will now be able to sell liquor without meals. B.Y.O.'s may also choose to have a licence. You will still be able to take your own, so their character won't change but their service to you will be even better.

Liquor store trading hours will now be more convenient, between 9.00 a.m. and 9.00 p.m. Monday to Friday, and from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Saturdays, apart from certain public holidays. Ordinary trading hours for hotels (not compulsory) will now be between 7.00 a.m. and 11.00 p.m. Monday to Saturday and between noon and 8.00 p.m. on Sundays, Good Friday and Anzac Day or at other times with an extended hours permit.

These changes and more can be studied in detail in brochures available from the Liquor Licensing Commission.

These Government initiatives add up to a single and continuing objective - responsible liquor reform.

Cheers!

For further details contact:

The Liquor Licensing Commission,
232 Victoria Parade,
East Melbourne, Victoria 3002
Phone: (03) 412 0611 Fax: (03) 416 1107



Responsible liquor reform. A Victorian Government initiative. **Victoria**

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ST KILDA & INDEPENDENT

In 1986, Tom made the decision that independence would afford him the freedom to develop a highly specialised and agile consulting business that would see him build long term client partnerships.

Buchan Communications was born and would soon be recognised as the most powerful corporate communication agency in Melbourne. In its early days clients included Telecom (Telstra), KPMG, Transurban, Customs House Sydney, Citylink, the Austin Hospital re-development, and Johnson Taylor Potter (now Bell Potter).

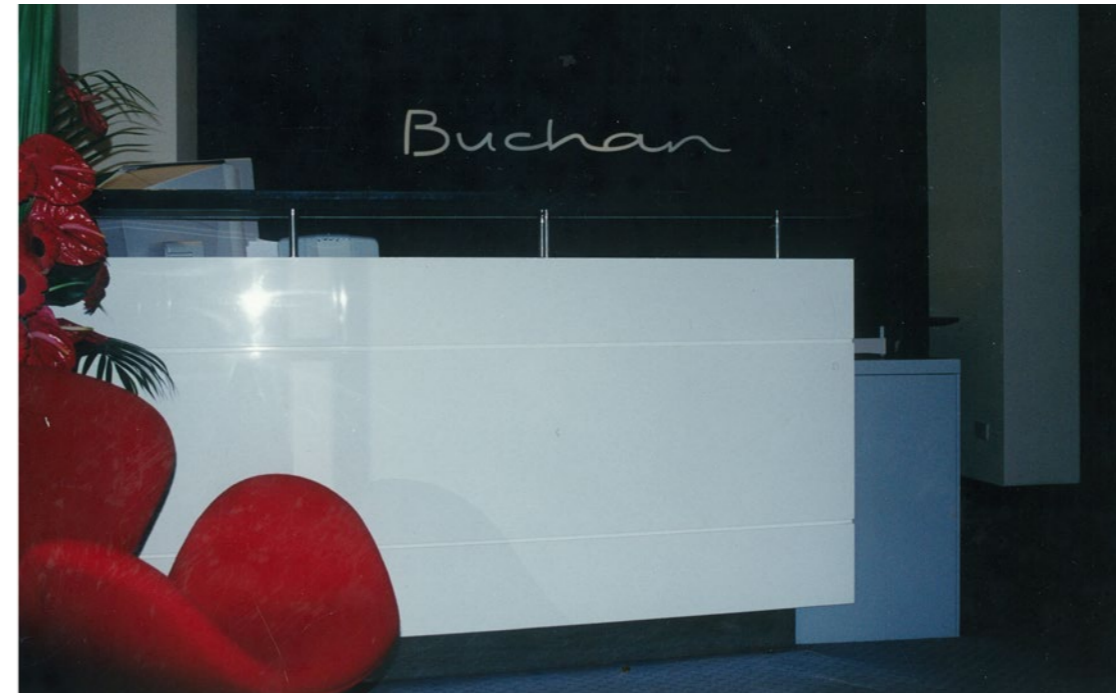
Buchan would evolve by name and capability. Buchan Communications, became Buchan Consulting Group or BCG (irking the other BCG – Boston Consulting Group who were often overshadowed by the smaller but influential corporate affairs agency), to Buchan before embarking on a partnership with the US based Waggener Edstrom independent global agency, to WE Buchan.



This identity evolution was mirroring the constant internal transformation as Tom built a business that would remain a leader of the industry, a confidant of business, and resilient within a constant environment of change.

Tom is a visionary and while that vision often didn't sit on a piece of paper, the building blocks of the future were constantly forming.

Tom's actuarial approach to assessing business trends and customer expectations, shaped an agency that innately understood industry and the macro business environment and always ensured that communication was deployed with this as its foundation.





REMEMBRANCE DAY

“Tom is born on Remembrance Day. Still to this day, every year on the 11th of the 11th I remember Tom. So I guessed it worked.

I started working with Tom in 1990. Buchan Communications Group was full of energy and emergent talent.

We helped create and launch Southgate, Transurban and CityLink, and global consulting firm AT Kearney in Australia. We handled the world’s biggest cork producer, did finance, consumer goods, travel and so many more.

Greer and I lived in one half of Tom’s parents’ house in Fairley Court, South Yarra, when we moved from Adelaide in 1990. What an introduction to Melbourne. Knowing Sir John and Virginia Buchan explained so much about Tom. Even he would blush if he knew the stories Greer and I had heard.

Tom was always, well, Tom. Smart, ridiculously well connected, charismatic, political, and stimulating. He was always the business man I would never be, and I was always the scholar he would never be. I think he won. So it is that on that one day in November I think of Tom Buchan. And I hope I always will.”

Dr Ross Honeywill, Former Director of Buchan Communications Group

A MASTER WORTHY OF FOLLOWERS

“I have had the pleasure of working with Tom, since I was Chief of Staff to Senator the Hon. Nick Minchin. Tom was the already Director and Founder of Buchan Consulting. Our first meeting was some 20 years ago.

Our early contact was strictly work-based. You won’t be surprised to know that it took me quite some time, before I discovered that Tom had other talents; including a rich personality and a magnificent dry humour!!

It has been a pleasure and an honour to get to know Tom. I count him as a close friend as well as a valued mentor and confidant. His capacity to think strategically; his incapacity to suffer fools, his amazing network of contacts and his laconic humour make him a fun person to work with and spend time with; albeit in moderation, unless copious amounts of alcohol are on hand, preferably not half bottles...!!

No reflection of Tom would be complete, without recognising his brilliance as a strategic consultant. Tom built an impressive business, which he founded and managed. He developed a succession plan where members of his own management team ended up taking equity in the Business, together with WE as the majority shareholder from abroad.

Very few have ever met this benchmark in small business. Even fewer have had the foresight and humility to put a succession plan into effect.

Tom is a Master who is worthy of followers. I am privileged to be one.”

Kiernan Schneemann, Director of Government Affairs, Astra Zeneca

TRAIL BLAZER

"Tom is a trail blazer. He supported women in leadership long before Champions of Change became a thing. He embedded his DNA, rich with entrepreneurial chromosomes, into the foundations of an agency that has not only stood the test of time, but has constantly stepped up and out.

From its genesis Tom created an agency of the future where predictive analysis existed, not in the online world but within the people he hired and nurtured. An agency where challenging the status quo was the status quo, that would define the industry breaking and leading work done over three decades, and allow people to create their own career destinies. And he's done it with heart, with purpose and with soul, constantly putting people at the centre.

I would know as I've been one of many beneficiaries. I am who I am today thanks to my mentor, my friend and my business partner."

Rebecca Wilson, CEO and Business Partner





FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS

"The Beginning: Tom interviewed me for an AM role. He asked me nothing about PR. We ranged over our favourite writers and books. He said he wasn't sure if there was a role in Melbourne – "maybe the growth is in Sydney". (I was being interviewed for a Melbourne role). It was classic Tommy B, and I'm pretty sure he hired me based on my penchant for Patrick White novels.

The Middle: I thought I was a good writer ... until I met Tom. He deleted, replaced and refined my work until I was a business writer, not a PR writer. He raged against weasel words and adjectives. He advocated for adverbs. And we had many laughs in the crazy world of consulting. Pitch stories, workshop stories, client stories: so many stories.

The Afterwards: Tom taught me gravitas: how to tone down the blonde PR girl and dial up the serious communication adviser. It was invaluable to my career. He mentored me in the truest sense of the word. I went into Buchan a young and naive 20-something, and came out eight years later as a team leader, a PR professional and a better human being. Tom played a huge part in my life and career, and I owe him a great deal. He remains a valued friend to this day."

*Belinda White, WE Buchan Alumni
& Director of External Affairs, Qualitas Group*



CHAMPION OF CHANGE

In both his professional and personal pursuits, Tom has always been a champion of change.

Long before “diversity” and “inclusion” became buzzwords in the corporate world, Tom built an agency founded on the miscellany of ideas, skills, languages and styles. Tom understood the need for gender diversity at all levels of the agency, and took an active role as a mentor and advocate to push his female colleagues through the ranks into leadership.

A passion project for Tom has been reducing the stigma around mental health issues of young men. Today, Tom continues to be a role model and mentor to young men and encourages them to have conversations about their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

BRAIN RESEARCH INSTITUTE

"Tom was the foundation Chair of the Brain Research Institute. I was CEO at the time. Creating a world class research institute that needed expensive equipment to begin should have been impossible.

Tom was an inspiration as Chairman, an honest sounding board, and a great strategic adviser. We did it and it persists as part of the largest Neuroscience Institute in the Southern Hemisphere.

The quality that I most appreciated is the speed with which he grasped the essence of a (sometimes) badly told set of problems and just "got it". The Board that he led was the same ilk as he, and of equally high quality.

His ability to grasp things from minimal inputs, draw out all the thinking and insights of those in the room, and to create insight in the mind of the advised (me), along with a crystal clear direction of action on my part was remarkable.

It greatly helped my ambition of creating world class research, and always gave me confidence to 'pull the trigger' and act – always knowing that the ideas had been tested in the group mind he was able to inspire.

Thanks Tom. You are humble, principled and believe in people. Not everyone creates something good, not everyone ends their career admired for it. Not everyone makes a difference. You do and will continue to do.

Thanks, you are a genuine good bloke."

Professor Graeme Jackson, CEO of The Brain Institute



EXPANDING INFLUENCE

With the agency's reputation growing nationally, so did its footprint. In 2002 Tom decided to set up an office in Sydney, which set in motion a 15 year growth period that would see WE Buchan receive multiple Large Agency of the Year awards, and deliver client campaigns recognised across multiple award titles.

In 2008, Tom brokered a relationship with two powerhouse women in Seattle who were the architects of Microsoft's communication over three decades. This relationship would evolve to Buchan becoming part of a global communication network, and with WE becoming a major shareholder and partner. It also triggered another name change.

Today, WE Buchan is one of APAC's most successful integrated agencies, working with more than 100 client partners across Australia, US, Asia and UK, 50 staff, and six high performing teams.

This was his vision and it was all possible thanks to Tom.





TRANSFORMATIONAL GLOBAL PARTNER

"My admiration for Tom can be summed up by one experience I had with him: to announce our partnership Tom hosted a dinner in 2016. Over 25 people attended - CEOs, Government officials, clients and agency friends.

Through the toasts I could see the huge respect, confidence and friendships these powerful and deeply impactful people have for Tom. Then Tom got up and responded, with warmth, humility, and compelling and wise authority.

In a single evening, the whole story of Tom was clear: he is not only vastly respected and relied upon, but a true gentleman and a wonderful human being. I'm very lucky to know Tom and deeply appreciate his partnership over the last decade. I look up to Tom and always will."

Melissa Waggener, Founder and CEO WE Communications



"Congratulations Tom on an incredible career.

While I only crossed paths with you toward the end of your journey, I am privileged to have benefited from your wisdom, counsel and humour.

You've been a mentor, partner and sounding board to me and countless others. The industry and the world is a better place because of you.

Cheers to you good sir!"

Matt Lackie, Former Executive Vice President of WE Communications in Asia Pacific



VISIONARY

"Let me start with when I first met Tom.

I'd had a great first interview with the company, so the next step was to meet Mr Buchan himself. Feeling pretty confident, I came in to the interview, only to be greeted with "Here's what I don't like about your CV".

Luckily I managed to convince Tom otherwise, and here I am 12 years later still proud to be working with Tom, and still learning from him. My first meeting didn't turn me off Tom – I've always liked his ability to speak his mind, be unconventional or irreverent, and cut straight through to what matters.

Tom is a visionary, he has always been a step ahead of everyone else – whether it was predicting how we need to embrace digital, well before any client dared to dip their toe in the water, or his quick assessment of not just what a business needs to address in its communication, but its strategy.

I still to this day hear (and repeat) many of Tom's mantras. One of the great lessons he has taught me is about the "theatre" of consulting, and how it must be balanced with the technical. It's a lesson I endeavour to pass on to others.

I'm so lucky to have had an employer, a mentor, and a friend in Tom. Thank you for the lessons, the laughs, and the support over the years."

Kyahn Williamson, Head of Investor Communication



IMPACT & INFLUENCE

"The impact Tom has had on me professionally is disproportionate to the time we've worked together - a mere blip on his esteemed career timeline, yet an everlasting influence on me.

From the first conversation over coffee I had with Tom, I knew I was extremely fortunate to have joined the agency he set up and the team he'd cultivated over the years.

Tom has been a humble leader and patient mentor; he has an incredible ability to influence while always remaining approachable. Aside from these traits, I've always been impressed most by his sense of social justice, including his belief in the importance of financial literacy. And in particular, supporting financial literacy for women.

I feel privileged to have learnt from Tom and to have had him support me in my career. And I hope to be able to pass on the invaluable 'Tom Buchan lessons' to others over the years (including ensuring THAT list of words never see the light of day in written communication!).

Enjoy the adventure - and the balance - of this next chapter of your life, Tom. You deserve it!"

Michelle Ryan, Head of Corporate, WE Buchan



BLOODY LEGEND

"Tom, Tommy B, Thomas, Founder, Chairman, Director of HR (self-proclaimed!). So many names and roles but there's two words to best describe you.... BLOODY LEGEND.

From my first meeting with you (otherwise known as my strangest ever interview), it was clear things were going to be unconventional. But what a ride it's been ever since. While I've only been around in the last five years, I count myself lucky to have had the opportunity to work shoulder to shoulder with you and I'm so proud of the agency we've built together with Beck.

I've loved every minute and learnt so much along the way. You've challenged me, mentored and guided me and I'm a better consultant and business woman because of it. So a big thank you for taking a chance on this opinionated Liverpool Lass and sharing your Buchan baby with me.

Looking around your team, past and present, it seems you were always destined to spend your Buchan days surrounded by strong-minded, feisty independent women. But hopefully you've loved it as much as we all love you and your cheeky spirit."

Gemma Hudson, WE Buchan MD and Business Partner



TOM, YOU LEAVE AN INCREDIBLE LEGACY.

From all of us at WE Buchan – past and present - thank you for your unwavering determination, humility and charm that has created an agency (and family) we're so proud to be a part of today.

We can't wait to see what the next chapter of your life will bring.

Now go write that damn book.









