

MOVING FORWARD

Tap in and take the pressure off

KEN Wood wants to take the pressure off Mackay businesses by saving them from their IT problems.

Mr Wood's business, IT on Tap, focuses on moving all of a business's information and data away from the office, streamlining the way the company moves and ensuring everything stays safe.

The former Mackay man and self-proclaimed "chief tap turner" said it was about "taking the complexity off" small businesses.

"They don't need servers or IT consultants," Mr Wood said.

"Lots of small businesses are fairly light on IT skills and they probably don't have anyone in-house.

"They rely on a local PC

consultant who might not be a specialist in what they need."

Through IT On Tap, companies are supplied with a web address, where they log in with a name and password, and from there they have full access to everything they need.

There's no need to keep saved data on office computers because it's all kept safely off-site.

Mr Wood said it was common to see businesses not backing up important data or storing their back-up in the office, which could leave it vulnerable in case of fire or break-ins.

"We take it all off their hands," he said.

"We do all the housekeeping, the spam filtering and virus protection.

"If they have a web browser, they can use it.

"It's about as easy to use as we can make it."

He said for those a bit wary of internet innovations, or confronting their IT problems, this would be relatively painless.

"If they can surf the web - they're away.

"If they can't, maybe they need a 10-minute lesson."

Mr Wood grew up in Mackay and was dux of Mackay North State High School in 1984.

RIGHT: Former Mackay man Ken Wood offers small business operators solutions to their IT problems through his business, IT on Tap.



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Market volatility will stay

WE are currently experiencing record volatility on world stock markets as investors try to come to grips with the world financial crisis.

Last Wednesday, Wall Street fell 449 points, the second worst session this year, but then bounced back strongly after news of the \$700 billion rescue package.

We now find ourselves in an interesting situation.

The majority of our leading companies have strong balance sheets, are well run and have great prospects - at current prices they are clearly good buying.

However, prices will not re-



cover until investors are convinced that all the bad news is out of the way.

Consequently, the current volatility will stay with us, and buyers will remain wary until they are convinced our market has bottomed.

It is natural for investors to be cautious during times like these, but it is still important to realise that the Australian stock

market has a lot going for it.

The franking system gives shares a unique tax advantage, while compulsory superannuation ensures a continuing and growing amount of money going into the super system.

When this market eventually turns, the upswing will be quick - those who sit on the sidelines are in danger of missing the bounce when it finally occurs.

Noel Whittaker is a director of Whittaker Macnaught, a division of HBOS Australia. This advice is general in nature and readers should seek their own expert advice before making financial decisions. His email is noel-whit@gmail.com

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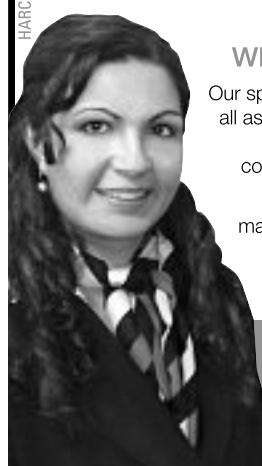
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