Co-working unearths a gem

What would a cyber security specialist, an industrial psychologist, a computer programer and an illustrator be doing at a jewellers?

The Jewellers Co-working space in Wangaratta has attracted people from several technology specialties, many of them drawn to the digital infrastructure on offer.

As a freelance web developer, Rohan Latimer enjoyed using a co-working space in Melbourne before he decided it was time to leave the hectic city life behind.

"I was burnt-out by the advertising industry. My partner and I decided to get out of the city. She had undertaken regional rotations as part of her obstetrics training and really enjoyed the North East," Mr Latimer said.

"We bought a hobby farm, I learnt to make wine and worked from home on small web projects before remembering how much I'd enjoyed the co-working spaces in Melbourne. I thought it would be cool to have one here.

"It's a bit of a tradition in co-working to take an old building and re-purpose it. This building has a unique and interesting logo on the outside of the building, so we decided to run with that. It's an old jeweller's shop from the 1930s."

Since opening in March 2017, Mr Latimer and co-founder Nate Peyton have been

offering events such as the popular *Get Shit Done! Night*.

"People book in to bring their project along and work on it. They are not all tech projects, but we use the night to collectively solve problems. I wanted to develop a notification system for my CFA group truck. I couldn't have done it by myself; I could do the coding required but others helped with the electronics and 3D printing. Now volunteers get a text when the truck leaves and returns.

"There are lots of benefits to living and working here, but a big advantage we have over the city is that you are just a cog in the system there.
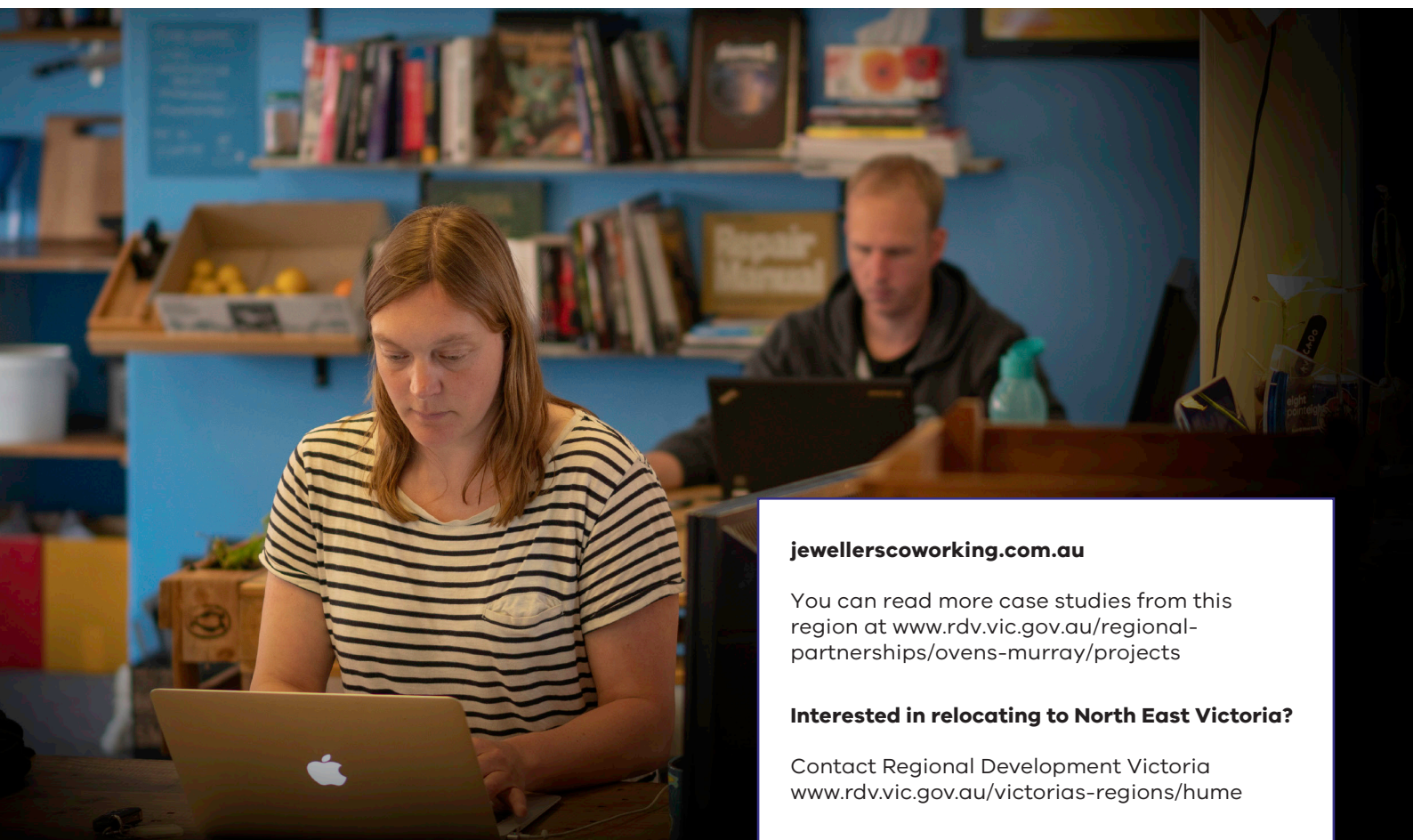
"Here, you are instantly recognised for the skill or knowledge you have and respected for your work. It's great to be a part of a community and with collaborative projects, the broader community benefits," Mr Latimer said.

The co-working space attracts people in all manner of work arrangements.

"Nate moved from Sydney for the lifestyle, some of our regulars are from neighbouring towns and need the infrastructure we have. One of our customers runs a Melbourne-based start-up and has family in the North East, so he turns weekend visits into long weekends and works from here. The cyber security specialist, industrial psychologist, computer programer and illustrator all have clients spread throughout Australia. Some of the businesses using the space are locals starting small, to fit in around family and lifestyle choices.

"We keep getting inquiries and the variety of businesses that people work in is very interesting – people come out of nowhere," said Mr Latimer.

The co-working space offers unlimited 95/35Mbps Fibre – Ethernet and Wireless; tech equipment and 3D printer; multipurpose room for calls, meetings, prototyping and workshops; and the all-important kitchen and chill-out area with games, lounge and library.

jewellerscoworking.com.au

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