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NSW Legislative Council Hansard

PETALS NETWORK FLORAL RELAY SERVICE

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The Hon. R. H. COLLESS [6.20 p.m.]: Tonight I pay tribute to Petals Network, Armidale's floral relay service company, which was named regional exporter of the year at the Australian Institute of Exports 2000 Premier's New South Wales Exporter of the Year Awards in Sydney last week. Petals Network provides a clearing house for long-distance flower orders worldwide, and has considerably expanded its export operations over the last five years. Since 1995 its export sales have increased from 7.5 per cent of total sales revenue to 16 per cent in 1999-2000.

The export success of Petals Network relies mainly on e-commerce and trades directly with 25 countries. The network's founder is Scott Williams and he is looking to further expansion of their network trade. Scott Williams is a firm believer in what he calls distance marketing, and the name Scott Williams is also synonymous with the development of Internet marketing, e-commerce and Internet service providers in northern New South Wales. Due to the company's unprecedented growth, the Australian market options are now quite limited and the company is looking for further international expansion next year.

Petals Network uses the Internet to develop international markets through the maintenance of web sites to collect orders for floral deliveries to South Africa, New Zealand, England and the United States of America, as well as Australia. It is an affordable communication system which has allowed Petals Network to become a relay service for other Internet services. As an example of how this operates in practice, if someone in New Zealand wants to order flowers for someone in the United States of America, the order will come through Petals Network at Armidale.

Petals Network provides inspiration for regional areas. If a local business of such recognised international standing can operate so successfully from Armidale, other rural areas can do the same. To this end it is absolutely important that all levels of government work together to provide Internet access and speed sufficient to allow this new and emerging business to reach its full potential. E-commerce has the potential to open up the world for rural Australia and we must congratulate companies such as Petals Network for showing the way for all businesses, and particularly in rural and regional New South Wales, to this new, exciting and profitable type of money-making venture.

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