

News Release:

Armidale seminar focuses on Internet business

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The co-founder of Petals Network, the award-winning florists' relay service, will discuss Internet options with members of the Armidale business community at a seminar next week.

Mr Scott Williams, the Chief Executive Officer of Petals Network Pty Limited, says e-commerce "can help some small businesses in regional Australia dramatically increase their market".

Petals Network markets around the world, with 21 international websites. "In fact," Mr Williams said, "international trade delivered over the Internet accounts for about 25 per cent of Petals' turnover, and is growing at around 30 per cent per annum."

The seminar – one of a series organised by Armidale and District Business Enterprise Centre (BEC) and the University of New England's School of Accounting, Finance and Entrepreneurship – will be at the BEC Conference Centre, Hanna's Arcade, at 5.30 pm on Tuesday 26 June. During the seminar, titled "E-commerce: an important resource for your business", Mr Williams will examine individual cases from the audience, analysing their potential for success on the Internet.

Petals Network achieved 21 per cent of market share in the first four years after its founding in 1992. In 1996 it was National Telstra and Australian Government Small Business of the Year in its category. Business Review Weekly rated it among the 100 fastest growing private businesses in 1997, 1998 and 1999, with an average growth of 60 per cent for each of its first eight years. It was the NSW Premier's Regional Exporter of the Year 2000, and won the National GIO Innovative Service Award 2000 and MIS magazine's Innovative Supply Chain Management Award 2001.

In 1995, Mr Williams founded Cowley Internet, which assists small and medium-sized businesses promote themselves on the Web.

Mr Williams, who has been based in Armidale since 1969, is Chair of the University Council's Finance Committee at UNE. He was an elected representative on Uralla Shire Council for eight years, including three years as its President.

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