Almost every week brings news of another business closure and they are not small or inexperienced operators as you might think but companies that have been around for decades with brand names that have become part of our popular vocabulary.

With the recent and most devastating news that almost 15,000 public servants in Queensland also will be joining the job queues it is clear that no one, even in the most hallowed halls, is immune. Certainly redundancy no longer carries the spectre of failure that it once did, as it has become so commonplace. Indeed, more and more it is seen as a blessing in disguise, as the experts quoted in our story on page 10 point out.

Journalist Mike Starling readily admits he has been through two "voluntary redundancy" programs in less than 10 years and at the time they were both "the best thing that could have happened", forcing him out of roles that may have been comfortable but weren’t going anywhere for him professionally. Instead he was able to explore, and take up, opportunities that added to his skills, allowed him to work in different areas of interest and inject new life into his career. So, far from seeing redundancy as a blight on your career path, heed the experts’ advice and see it as a fresh start.

By the way, in the last issue of bmag Steve Haddan inadvertently referred to the author of the book The Horse that Bart Built as Heather Thomas instead of Helen Thomas.

Lord Mayor's Business Award winners
Mining giant Rio Tinto was the big winner at this year's Lord Mayor's Business Awards announced as bmag went to press. It snapped up both the Optus Business Platinum Award and the Brisbane City Council Award for Corporate Citizenship.

Brisbane Marketing CEO John Aitken says many of this year's winners are successfully operating on a global scale. "These are companies who are leaders in innovation, collaboration, research and development and they are fantastic ambassadors for the Brisbane business community," he says.

Other winners were: law firm Clayton Utz for Employer of Choice; data centre specialists NEXTDC for Business Growth; visual effects specialists Alt.vfx for Creativity; and Acciona for Business Innovation for the design, construction and maintenance of Legacy Way tunnel and Wintergarden for New Investment. Geoff Rodgers, the founder of business advisory consultancy firm Rowland, was named Business Person of the Year while Reload Media managing director Llew Jury was named Young Business Person of the Year.

What passengers want
New technology is helping researchers at QUT's Airports of the Future project discover what passengers want before catching a flight. PhD student Andrew Cave is looking for volunteers to spend about two hours with him walking through Brisbane International Airport wearing a pair of eye-tracking glasses fitted with a video camera to simulate the boarding process.

“We're interested in what clues people might intuitively use to navigate their way through an airport, and what the distractions are. This might include things like signage, airport staff, fellow travellers and the building layout,” Cave says. The research will be used to improve the way airports operate now and in the future providing an easy experience for passengers.

Cave needs female volunteers over 18, who don't wear glasses. Parking will be paid for and participants will receive a $20 Coles Myer gift voucher. Male and female volunteers will be required early next year for the second part of the study. Register your interest by email to ar.cave@qut.edu.au.

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