



THE VOICE

Monthly Newsletter for our Australian Alumni Community

ISSUE 8 | OCT 2021

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members & Partners,

The recent announcement by Singapore to expand the Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) scheme to include Australia from 8th November in addition to 12 other countries has been touted by experts as a positive step towards the road to recovery.

In the initial stage, it opens opportunities for Australian citizens, PRs and their immediate families to travel to Australia, and allows vaccinated travellers from Australia to enter Singapore without quarantine. Australia has said that this arrangement will be extended to more travellers in the future which is a much-awaited and encouraging news for students and business owners.



What binds us together as Australian Alumni are made up of the shared experiences that we cherish. Opening of the VTL between Australia and Singapore will once again give opportunities for our students from Singapore to continue with the education in-campus, as well as immerse in the culture and experience true Australian hospitality. We at AAS will continue to support the students and our university partners as we transition through this phase. Our team is working to develop programs that will assist both returning students as well as early-career Australian alumni as they chart their path ahead. If you are a university partner or a business and would like to know more about how you can partner with AAS, please reach out to us for more information.

We live in a global economy and many aspects of our lives expand beyond Singapore and Australia. Our success is dependent on collaboration and our ability to overcome the barriers to communication. We are exploring further avenues to collaborate with our regional partners to provide our members further opportunities to grow and succeed by addressing some of these challenges. We are keen to hear from you, our members on what you would want us to develop further that could benefit you.

With the current rise in COVID cases in Singapore, we will have to be patient for a little while longer before we will be able to meet in person. I am hopeful that we will soon welcome you to one of our face-to-face events soon. Until then, I urge you to join one of the Social Interest Groups with your interests. We have set up Social Interest Groups for like-minded individuals to connect and collaborate on meaningful initiatives.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajaneesh R Kurup
#forwardtogether

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AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION UPDATE

Oct 2021- The Australian High Commission in Singapore is turning **green** this month to promote Australia's work to reduce carbon emissions, including our exciting joint work with Singapore.

For example, did you know that Australia and Singapore are developing a Green Economy Agreement (GEA) that will further accelerate both countries' transition towards a green and sustainable future, help create jobs and lower emissions?

The GEA will look at practical initiatives to promote and facilitate trade and investment, including lowering the regulatory burden on businesses. It aims to remove non-tariff barriers to trade in environmental goods and services and to accelerate the uptake of low emissions green technology.



Minister Dan Tehan and Minister Gan Kim Yong at the G20 Trade Ministers meeting in Italy this month

Earlier this month, Australia's Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Dan Tehan and Singapore's Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong met on the sidelines of the G20 Trade Ministers' Meeting in Italy to take stock of the GEA negotiations.

The Ministers issued a **joint vision statement** that outlined their ambition for a GEA, focused on practical and tangible activities to promote green growth, economic collaboration and cooperation on climate change. Australia and Singapore are working together to reduce emissions in both countries by lowering the cost and accelerating the uptake of green technology. The GEA will also build on the many synergies between Singapore and Australia in trade and environmental cooperation. Singapore and Australia already have an open, liberalized trade and investment relationship, and both are strong advocates of an open rules-based global trading system.

The Australian Government is now calling for public submissions from industry, business and community organizations about how a GEA could assist them.

For more information about the GEA and to submit, head to <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/singapore/singapore-australia-green-economy-agreement>.

For updates on Australia's broader work to reduce emissions and promote sustainability, follow us on Instagram at [@australiainsg](https://www.instagram.com/australiainsg).

COUNCIL OF ADVISOR SPOTLIGHT

MICHAEL YAP



Mr. Michael Yap is a Graduate of Chemical Engineering & Applied Chemistry from the University of Swinburne. His illustrious career spans both private and public sectors including the Economic Development Board (EDB) of Singapore and the Ministry of Defence.

Prior to his retirement from full-time roles, Michael was the President & CEO of a Japanese automotive component company. He was responsible for building the company's strong business presence in the Asia-Pacific region. At EDB he held multiple senior positions including as the First Singapore Government Representative in Taiwan and as the Head of EDB mission in Hong Kong.

Michael is currently a non-executive Director of WaterCo International, an ASX-listed company and also provides mentorship and advisory roles to multiple Small and Medium Enterprises and start-ups.

Michael is a member of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute - Chartered Chemist Australia (MRACI CChem), Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute U.K. (FCMI), Board Member of Practising Management Consultation Certification Board (PMCCB)/Singapore Business Advisors & Consultants Council, a Certification Board supported by Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board (SPRING Singapore) – a statutory board under the Ministry of Trade and Industry Singapore. Michael was also very active in EDB Society, an association set up in 1989 comprising of former and current officers from The EDB. He also served as an EXCO member of the EDB Society from 2012-2020.

Michael's contribution to the Australian Alumni community in Singapore is immeasurable. In addition to his contribution to AAS as a member of the Council of Advisors, he was also the Chairman of the Business Committee at AAS from 2009-2011. Michael is also the Emeritus Advisor of Swinburne Alumni Singapore Chapter.

PARTNER UPDATES

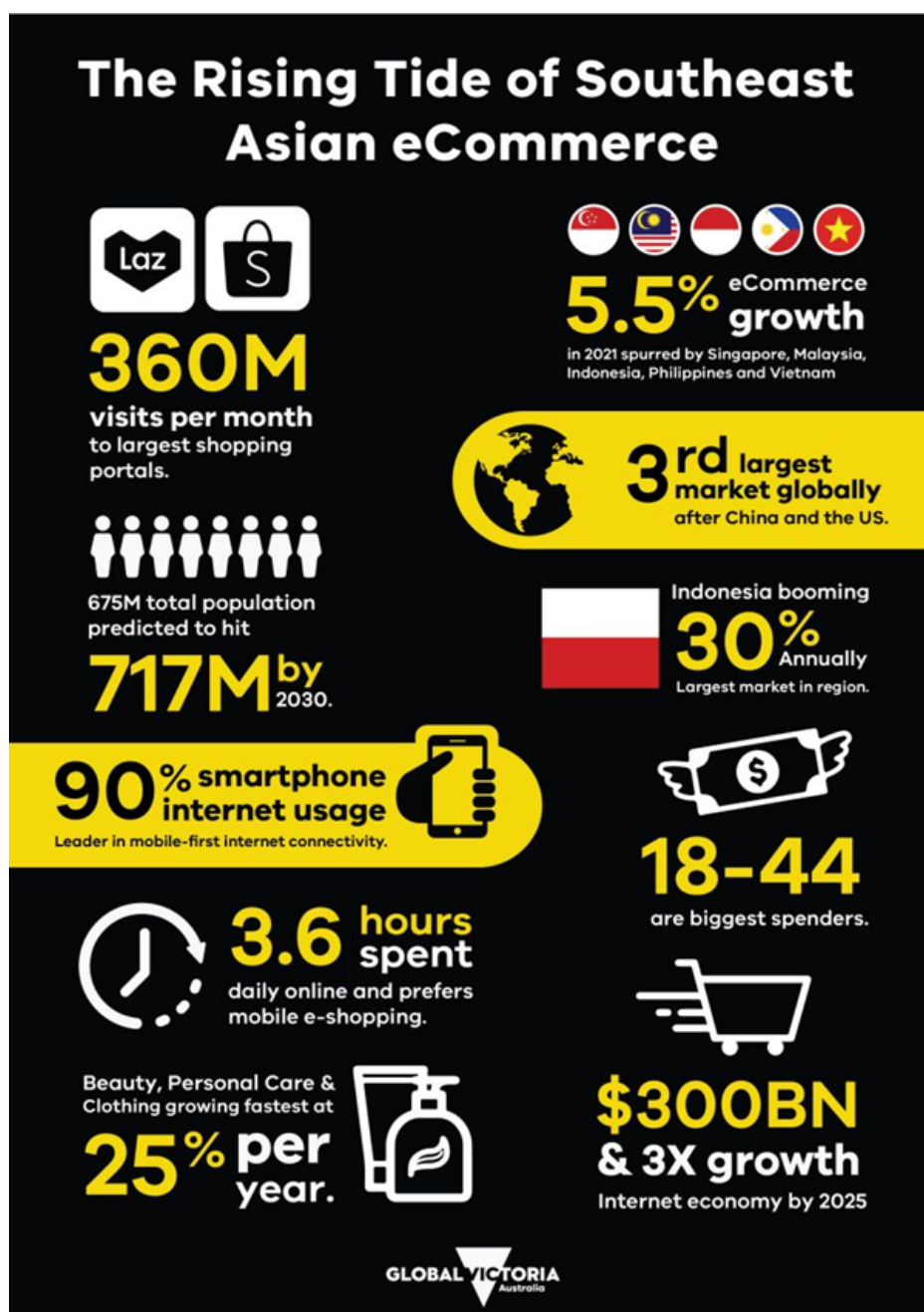
Rise of Ecommerce and Growing Access to Australian Brands

We have all seen the omnipresence of ecommerce, a channel that was already growing in Southeast Asia but took off during the global pandemic and is forecast to grow even more in the years ahead as consumers adopt this alternative retail option.

To capitalize on this growing and important business model, the Victorian Government Trade and Investment (VGTI) team in Singapore recently supported a small number of market-ready exporters access new customers in a pilot 12-week go-to-market ecommerce accelerator program.

We partnered with Momentum Commerce and assisted five exporters working with their existing distributors to help them either improve their current online offering or build their full online footprint in Lazada and/or Shopee in Singapore quickly and efficiently.

The participating Victorian exporters were: Pipan Foods (Mo Milk), Freedom Foods (Milk Lab), Vitality Brands (Cancer Council), Swisse, and Ausbarrel Sticky Balsamic.



These brands meet Singapore customers' growing demand for safe, natural, healthy and nutritious product alternatives.

Jason Fuller, the VGTI's Trade Director in Singapore, reported that the project focused on improving the marketing and distribution of each brand, and also helped the Victorian companies with the onboarding process, optimizing their presence on Lazada and Shopee platforms, and developing sales reporting dashboards.

For more information on export programs like this please reach out to the VGTI Southeast Asia Team.

Do you have a favourite Victorian brand that you would like to see more of in Singapore? Are you involved in the ecommerce ecosystem and want to work with us?

Follow us on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/vgtisea/> and leave us a message.

PARTNER UPDATES

The Hidden Social Cost of Wearing Face Masks



Dr. Chan Kai Qin explores how face masks inhibit social interactions by pondering what the Mona Lisa would look like during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Mona Lisa — arguably the most famous painting in the world — involved a combination of art, science, optics, and more for Leonardo da Vinci to create her iconic smile. Mona Lisa's smile incorporates the science of how our eyes process detail and perceptions, resulting in an elusive smile rich with inner emotion.

Nevertheless, if Da Vinci were to paint the Mona Lisa today, the charm behind the painting would be gone, because Mona Lisa would almost certainly be required to wear a face mask while being painted. More than a year into the pandemic, wearing masks has become commonplace. After all, masks keep us safe by filtering out the highly-contagious virus. However, face masks also appear to hinder social interactions. As such, [Dr Chan Kai Qin](#), Senior Lecturer of Psychology at James Cook University in Singapore, and his students set out to investigate the social implications of wearing face masks.

While firmly pro-mask, Dr Chan says, "This research was inspired by my own personal struggles in the classroom, especially in SP51 2020 when we were all required to wear masks for the first time, all the time. It was just difficult to connect to students. I couldn't tell if they understood what I said, whether they were confused, etc. I tried to portray a warm approach by smiling, but I'd always wonder if they could tell whether I was smiling. I don't think my experience is unique to myself; I'm sure everyone has their own stories and struggles while being masked up. But we never talk about this publicly."

In one study, Dr Chan and his team sought to determine how good people are in discerning emotions of people who are masked up. They presented participants with hundreds of faces — some masked, and some unmasked — and tasked them with identifying the emotion shown on each face, whether it was anger, happiness, sadness, fear, or disgust. Accuracy was nearly 100 percent with unmasked faces, but participants struggled with masked faces because the mouth is an important part of conveying emotions, especially with happiness, sadness, and disgust. Next, the team wanted to establish if people were actually looking at the mouth region. In this particular study, they fitted participants with eye trackers and presented them with various masked and unmasked faces again. Participants had to rate the trustworthiness of faces, rather than point out what emotion they saw (all faces were smiling faces). The results showed that for unmasked faces, people instinctively look mostly at the mouth — the very feature that made the Mona Lisa so charming.

On the other hand, when viewing faces that were masked up, people focused on the eyes. After all, with masked faces, the eyes are the next-best cue that would give more information about that person with whom they are interacting. The more they focused on the eyes, the less trustworthy they found the person to be. This has significant implications for fields such as counselling and customer service which require more human connection than other fields.

A similar phenomenon was observed during the 2014–15 Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The healthcare workers — outfitted head-to-toe in white, faceless personal protection equipment (PPE) suits — looked intimidating (drawing comparisons to Stormtroopers from Star Wars) to the very patients they were supposed to care for. By sticking smiling headshot portraits to the outside of the healthcare worker's PPE, they were able to show patients just who exactly was taking care of them. This humanized the healthcare workers, thus reducing patient isolation and fears while increasing trust and connection with the healthcare professional.

"In some sense, before COVID-19, we were like the Mona Lisa — we were most charming when we smiled. People trusted us when we smiled, and could tell how we were feeling if they saw our full faces," Dr Chan says. "But during COVID-19, we have lost our charming smile, and along with that, it has become more difficult to establish trust and to establish emotional connection. These are the hidden social cost of wearing face masks."

Find out more about our [Psychology courses](#).

Check out [Dr Chan Kai Qin's staff and research profiles](#).

Discover further information on [areas of research and research strength at James Cook University in Singapore](#).

Contacts

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KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE MEMBER

SEAN LIM, HEAD OF PUBLIC SECTOR



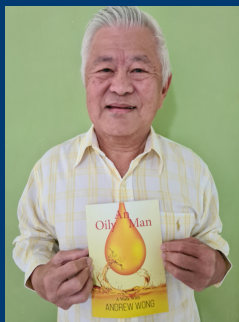
Sean is the Head of Public Sector at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Singapore. He is responsible for leading a new strategic business unit that includes client engagement, P&L and execution of assignments for the Government, Education, and Non-Profit sectors.

Being a strategic thinker and strong hands-on implementer, Sean has more than 2 decades of business-technology experience in the Public, Private and specialized Healthcare-IT sectors. Prior to joining TCS, he was Head of IT in the Ministry of Finance with a concurrent appointment as Director and Chief Information Officer in VITAL.

Sean volunteers in education institutions, grassroots organizations and social service organizations. Social causes that he is passionate about include, mental health, children and youth, adults with disabilities/ special needs and elderly care.

Sean holds a Master of Science from Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), underpinned by a Bachelor's degree in IT from Monash University (Australia). His passions include traveling, cooking and sports.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - ANDREW WONG



Andrew Wong started his career as a teacher with the Ministry of Education in 1967. However, he discovered his talent in marketing after attending a marketing course. He then left the teaching profession and joined mainly MNCs in the oil industry.

In 1972, he joined BP Singapore, after which he worked for Elf Aquitaine which was renamed Total Oil (a French State-owned oil company), and then Agip Petroli (now ENI), an Italian State-owned oil company.



After graduating from the University of South Australia in Adelaide (UniSA) with a Master in Business Administration (MBA), Andrew started his own business birthing Strike Petroleum Pte Ltd in 2000.

At ELF, he pioneered the sales of marine lubricants from the ground up in the brand new markets of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar. He overcame the cultural shocks he found in every market and was promoted to Deputy Managing Director cum General Manager (Marine Division).



Mr. Andrew has a "never-give-up" attitude strongly embedded in him. In the year 2009-2010, despite a worldwide recession, Strike Petroleum managed to acquire commercial property with a loan. And in 2014, Strike Petroleum was honoured with Singapore's Outstanding Enterprise (SOE) Award.

Mr. Andrew recently wrote a book "An Oily Man" in an attempt to reach out to young entrepreneurs seeking to find their feet, business executives who are facing difficulties especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, pioneers and respected seniors seeking to live a purposeful and fulfilling life.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Public Lecture: Theorizing Communication from an Asia-Centric Perspective

3 November 2021, SGT 4pm via Online Webinar



Overview

Theories, research concepts, and methods in most communication studies in Japan have been imported from and imposed by Western inquirers since the early 1970s when communication was first recognized as an academic discipline. Many dichotomous concepts, including collectivism – individualism, and high- – low-context communication have been blindly employed in cross-cultural comparisons. Asian scholars have increasingly argued that such constructs mislead the characterization of Asian cultures. This webinar presents the argument that conventional theories and concepts to account for Japanese conflict communication must be overhauled, by demonstrating that “avoidance,” regarded as the most ineffective strategy in the West can be identified as effective by the Japanese.

To RSVP, please click on this [LINK](#).

Speaker Profile

Professor Akira Miyahara

Professor of Communication Studies, Faculty of Foreign Language Studies, Seinan Gakuin University. Upon completion of MA and PhD in communication at Pennsylvania State University, Professor Miyahara spent four years teaching at the West Chester University of Pennsylvania. He has been on the faculty at Seinan Gakuin, his alma mater since 1986. Professor Miyahara's research interest has been in the areas of interpersonal, intercultural, and medical communication. He has served several academic organizations as a director including International Communication Association, National Communication Association, Japan Communication Association, and Japanese Health Communication Association.

Australian Aboriginal Elders Wisdom Series

2 November 2021, SGT 2pm via Live Webinar

You are invited to join the Australian High Commission's first webinar in our Aboriginal Elders' Wisdom Series with distinguished speaker Aunty Bilawara Lee, Larrakia Academic in residence at Charles Darwin University and Senior Elder of the Larrakia Nation.

A recipient of the Female Elder of the Year 2021 NAIDOC Awards in Darwin and the first and only Larrakia Academic in Residence at Charles Darwin University, Aunty Bilawara will share her wisdom on Aboriginal Culture and Protocols on Tuesday 2 November at 2-3 pm.

The Australian High Commissioner to Singapore, the Hon Will Hodgman, will be hosting this webinar and please feel free to access the webinar through [Australian High Commission Singapore's Facebook page](#).



Australian High Commission: Singapore

Australian Aboriginal Elders Wisdom Series

Meet Aunty Bilawara Lee

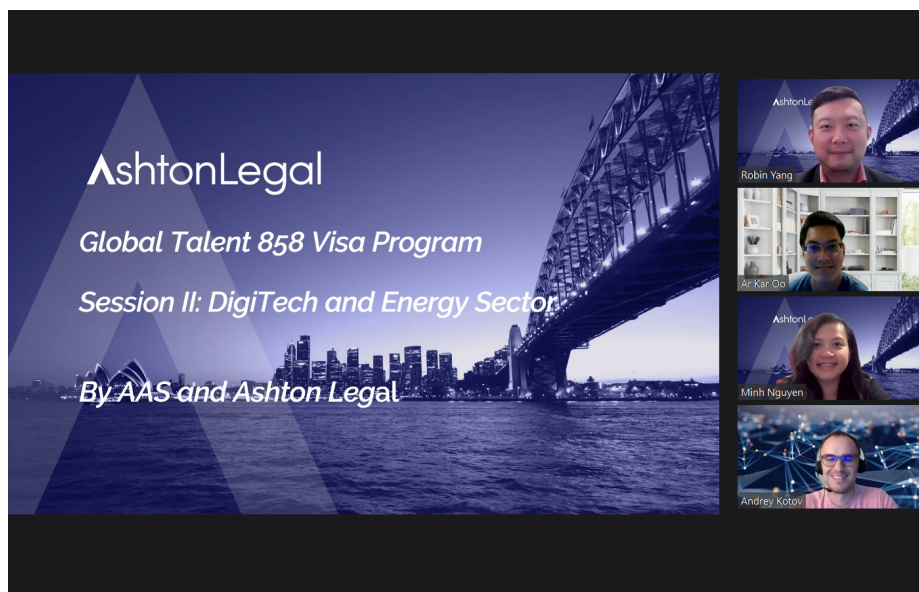
Respected Larrakia Academic in Residence at Charles Darwin University and Senior Elder of the Larrakia Nation

You're invited to join us for a Live Webinar on

Tuesday 2 November, 2-3 pm (SGT, GMT+8)

PAST EVENTS

13 October 2021, SGT 5-6pm via Zoom Webinar



As part of Australia's strategy to attract the best and brightest skilled migrants from across the globe, the Global Talent Visa (GTV) Program focuses on attracting highly skilled individuals with entrepreneurial ideas and cutting-edge skills within priority sectors, who can contribute to Australia's economy by driving innovation and creating local jobs.

The GTV Program is a streamlined visa pathway for highly skilled professionals to work and live permanently in Australia. In this webinar, Mr Ruobing Yang from Ashton Legal - Australian Immigration Law focused on 2 specific target sectors i.e. DigiTech and Energy.

We had two guest speakers who are Global Talent visa grantees Mr Ar Kar Oo and Mr Andrey Kotov to join us and share their GTI journey, life experience and job opportunities in Australia.

28 October 2021, SGT 8-9pm via Zoom Webinar



AAS had the great privilege of having Mr Jonathan Kuek, the co-founder of [Total Wellness Initiative Singapore](#) to share his great insights with AAS members and guests on how to care about our well-being in this informative session.

Kindly find an abbreviated version of the slides and the Menti room responses on this [link](#) .

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The graphic is set against a yellow grid background. It features the Lendlease Plus logo in the top left. A central illustration shows a woman with a megaphone (Step 1), a hand holding a smartphone with the Lendlease Plus app (Step 2), a smartphone displaying a \$5.00 e-voucher (Step 3), and a group of people celebrating with a leaderboard showing 'TOP 5 REFERRERS' each earning a '\$200 E-VOUCHER' (Step 4). A speech bubble from the group asks 'What are you waiting for?'. Text boxes include: 'Have your next shopping spree on Lendlease Malls!', 'From now till 12 November', '*Terms and Conditions apply', 'Start sharing & be rewarded', 'Refer a friend to sign up via the Lendlease Plus App with your unique member referral code', 'Earn a \$5 E-Voucher for both you & your friend for each successful sign up', and 'To top it all off, be amongst the Top 5 Referrers & stand a chance to receive a \$200 Lendlease E-Voucher each!'.

Lendlease's Referral Campaign is back by popular demand!

From 20 September to 12 November 2021, earn a \$5 Lendlease E-Voucher when you get a friend to sign up for Lendlease Plus using your unique referral code! Your friend will also receive a \$5 Lendlease E-Voucher.

To retrieve your unique referral code, simply head to [More > Refer a Friend](#) page within the app. Tap on the unique referral code to copy it and share it with your friend. Or you can click on the [Share](#) button to share your unique referral code through multiple channels. Limited to the first 10,000 redemptions so hurry and start referring now!

BONUS TIER! Want to earn even more rewards? Simply refer at least 50 new sign-ups to qualify for the Bonus Tier of our referral campaign where the top 5 referrers will be given a \$200 Lendlease E-Voucher each! Winners will be announced and contacted within 2 weeks from 12 November 2021. A minimum of 50 new sign-ups is required to qualify for the Bonus Tier.

T&Cs apply. For more information, please click on this link

The advertisement features a background image of the Sydney Harbour Bridge at dusk. The Ashton Legal logo is prominently displayed in the upper left. At the bottom, white text reads: 'AAS Members who engages Ashton Legal for professional immigration services will enjoy Exclusive Discounts.'

The advertisement features a background image of a woman in a white tennis outfit holding a racket. Below the image, the text reads: 'Individual / Group Tennis Lessons by Coach Chris'. At the bottom, it says 'WhatsApp contact' above a QR code.

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- * Social distancing rules will be strictly applied.

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Refer your friends to join AAS membership (any category) and get them to indicate your name on the 'referred by' section. Top 3 referrers at the end of the campaign period i.e. 31 Dec 2021 will be awarded with 3, 2 or 1 bottle(s) of Wolf Blass wine respectively.

To sign up for membership, please click on this [LINK](#)



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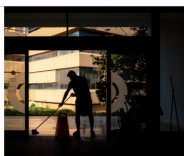


2 in 1 Hand Sanitizer & Disinfectant

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Cleaning & Disinfection

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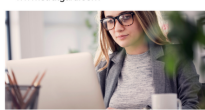
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Thomas Ang
University of Wollongong
Founder & CEO
StratGard and StratBiz



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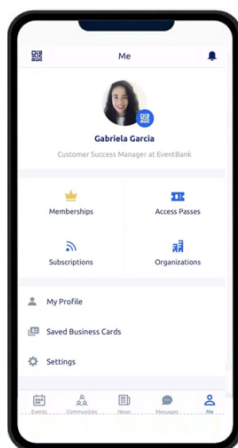
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- Edit your company info and your virtual membership card
- Saved BusinessCards
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2. If you are a new user, register for My Glue, otherwise log in to your existing account.
3. Select the server to log into, from our three options: .com (default), and .ru (Russia-based users), .cn (China-based users)
4. Start exploring My Glue!

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Oliver James is a leading recruitment business within the Insurance sector with a global footprint. The business works with major insurance companies in the world helping them with resources across different disciplines.

Over the years they have diversified and now support businesses within a wider Financial Services and commercial sector. Please visit their website for more information: www.oliverjames.com

OliverJames

Lead Architect with EA Experience

The Lead Architect is accountable for all enterprise architecture, all portfolio architecture and adherence to group architecture practices within our client's entity. The job will manage a team of architects within an architecture sub-function.

Responsibilities

The Lead Architect has three primary areas of accountability:

- To define, maintain and own the enterprise architecture for the supporting Chief Information Office function, ensuring compliance with group standards and policies
- Lead and own the development and implementation of architecture strategy and standards pertinent.
- Introduce new practices, processes, operating model, techniques, products, services, technologies and standards where needed against identified use cases, via the appropriate governance bodies
- To manage the design activities associated with the portfolio of change
- Accountable design authority for technology decisions and leadership of the appropriate governance bodies
- Where appropriate, provide full life cycle architectural guidance to development teams and ensure quality technical deliverables
- To lead the Enterprise Architecture & Design Practice within the Chief Information Office function, including ensuring that the target for architecture (as defined with the Technology TOM) is implemented consistently across the Chief Information Office function and respective DevOps teams
- Stay abreast of technology trends and advise Technology and the business about potential benefits/impacts
- Provide a consultancy role to Technology and business teams where appropriate
- Define the scope of the strategic responsibility for architecture against their aligned remit area

Key Requirements

The key experience required for this role is delivering solutions over a number of years in roles other than architecture alongside Life Insurance domain knowledge

- Expert Communicator and Excellent Stakeholder Management experience with strong analytical and problem-solving skills, leadership skills and capability to influence and champion new ideas and technical direction within the organization
- Ability to work with other Global Businesses/Functions (GB/GF) architects to understand inter GB/GF dependencies and solutions
- Accountability for significant architectural decisions and provide justification for decisions taken
- Comfortable working with ambiguity and conducting research as well as working with third party vendor(s)
- Strategic thinker and driving business decisions, considering relevant risks, long term implications, commercial realities and stakeholders' needs

Knowledge of:

- Cloud technologies and architecture
- Data modelling and Data Architecture concepts
- APIs and Messaging infrastructure and standards
- Integration concepts, techniques and patterns
- Security concepts and design
- Infrastructure Design and concepts

Business Analyst with Enterprise System knowledge

We are currently seeking a high calibre professional to join a major integration program (probably the largest integration in SGP in the last decade) as Technology Business Analyst aligned to the Insurance Enterprise Systems workstream.

The principal responsibility of the Business Analyst is to manage the analysis of processes for our client to oversee and manage all or some of the associated activities during change implementation

Responsibilities

- Capturing, analysing and documentation of business process (including IT processes). Contributes to the development of the BA elements of the IT Portfolio and Programme Management practice.
- Designing and Implementing solutions or change interventions. Works with business and IT teams to define Non-Functional Requirements for systems
- Provides expertise in process and a low-level understanding of multiple areas, such as: disciplined Agile software delivery, production support processes, continuous DevOps pipeline
- Managing the tracking and documenting progress and managing status reporting. Assures delivery through the entire life-cycle of the project of user requirements through to live
- Provides expertise in DevOps pipeline tools like Jenkins and Ansible. Leads Agile engineering teams using DevOps practices such as test automation, continuous integration and continuous deployment
- Supports the Product Owner to evolve Product roadmap, creation of epics and writing of user stories and managing the product backlog

Key Requirements

The key experience required for this role is exposure to enterprise level application implementation within insurance preferably, else other industry.

- Excellent experience in Business Analysis with strong track record of delivering requirements for enterprise systems.
- Strong data analysis skills, including data modelling and creation of data dictionaries. Experience in data migrations would be an advantage
- Proven and demonstrable knowledge of best practice within Business Analysis standards, tooling and process.
- Ability to bring analytical rigour, structure and effective solutions to poorly defined problems
- Strong interpersonal, influencing, persuading and communication skills - applicable through multiple channels (written, spoken, workshops, presentations)



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