Plaut plans to bring jobs home to Wollongong

Plaut IT Australia has developed into a leading provider of business software solutions to organisations around Australia, after having its genesis in Wollongong two decades ago.

Geoff Armstrong with some of the Plaut team in Wollongong.

Plaut was founded in Wollongong by some local residents and while today it has expanded into offices all around Australia, it still calls Wollongong home. It is still majority owned and managed from Wollongong and is currently looking at expansion opportunities for its Wollongong operations.

Plaut specialises in software for corporate human resources management, financial management, purchasing, logistics and administrative support, and is a national leader in SAP business solutions software applications and support.

The company provides a full range of IT-based business consultancy, software development and support services to government agencies and corporations in the manufacturing, utilities, telecommunications and financial services sectors. Its extensive client list includes BHP Billiton, BlueScope Steel, CSR, the CSIRO, ANSTO, NSW Treasury, NSW Transport and NSW Fire Brigades.

Geoff Armstrong, who is Plaut's National Solution Lead – Business Intelligence – says while the company's roots in Wollongong are historic, the city has been an excellent base for its national expansion.

"Half the management team started as trainees at BHP Steel (now BlueScope), which provided us with outstanding training and experience," Mr Armstrong said. "We then took that to the rest of Australia and found that we could compete with anyone. Most of us entered the consulting world with major corporations such as Deloittes, PriceWaterhouseCoopers and Accenture, then we all reformed 10 years ago (after a management buy-out of German IT firm Plaut's Australian operation).

"The Steelworks was one of the first SAP rollouts in Australia in the early 1990s, so we learned SAP from the ground up and have been working with it for 20 years," Mr Armstrong said. "That gives our team unmatched experience in Australia in working with SAP software."

Plaut employs 150 people around Australia, with around 20 in the Wollongong office. The company is now hoping to double its Wollongong operation. "We have received great support from the NSW Government in pursuit of our Wollongong-based SAP Services arm, and that has really opened our eyes to what is available here," Mr Armstrong said.

"We have spent most of the last 20 years exporting our skills to the rest of Australia and now we want to import jobs to Wollongong. We have been appointed to the NSW Government's procurement panels (for ICT and 2020) which allows government agencies to engage us directly in their projects. We anticipate this will support 20 direct jobs in Wollongong."

He said Wollongong had a number of key advantages for the company, including competitive rent, a high quality, experienced workforce and low staff turnover, due to the coastal lifestyle the city offers.

"Our people love living in Wollongong. In my case I live 10 minutes from the beach, golf course and work – how many people in Australia could say that? We're a family-oriented company and being only 10 minutes from my children's school allows the flexibility to attend their important school events.

"In Wollongong the workforce has an extremely high level of experience and education. However there is a massive gap in the opportunities available locally. The opportunity for Wollongong is clearly a technology play. Five years ago we could not have done this however the advent of mobile technology, cloud computing, video conferencing and high speed internet access allows us to service clients anywhere in the world from Wollongong, and for the personal touch (with clients) Sydney and the airport are within easy reach."

Mr Armstrong said the company planned to utilise IT graduates from the University of Wollongong to develop the next generation of company leaders, and wanted to expand its connections with other Wollongong-based IT companies to help the city become a preferred location for Shared Services in Australia.

"The University of Wollongong is world-class and I believe that Wollongong offers a compelling case for other ICT companies to locate here in terms of value for money, highly trained workforce and outstanding lifestyle benefits. I have seen this model work brilliantly in the UK and I can see the same shift happening now in Australia. This momentum will benefit all the other ICT players in town," he said.

Plaut is currently working with Wollongong-based IT software development company Selera to develop an innovative business software product called Cash Tracker, designed to help organisations to keep better track of invoices to avoid duplicate payments. The software has already saved one large company hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

2001 - 2011
PLAUT
CARING ABOUT RESULTS.

For more information
02 4225 1110
www.plaut.com.au

NSW GOVERNMENT | Trade & Investment

innovation campus

University of Wollongong

wollongong
city of innovation