



Butts in the Burdekin Dry Tropics

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Finance expert joins BDTNRM Board of Directors

By Terry Butts

Cris Dall' Osto is a prominent figure around the Herbert region and Townsville, well known for a lifelong association with figures - of the dollars and cents variety that is. He is known far and wide as a conservative, quick thinking advisor on matters monetary. And it was obviously for these reasons he was headhunted (out of retirement, mind you) to the Board of Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM.

This, the rapidly expanding natural resource management operation had reached a stage that required qualified hands - on financial guidance. BDTNRM Chairman, the irrepressible Mark Stoneman knew just the man.

Cris Dall' Osto retired two years ago after a very varied career that saw him in control of cattle stations (and 50,000 head of cattle) throughout Central and north Queensland, and a chain of tourist hotels including three in New Zealand. They all belonged to an American Japanese gentleman by the name of George Ishiyama whom Cris met one sultry summer's day in Ingham.

"It was a business arrangement - he came to town to buy a cattle property from one of my clients. He later offered me a job and after careful consideration I resigned my partnership with Sam Cavallaro in the Ingham practice."

And for the next 14 years Cris ran the Ishiyama companies.

"It was a tremendous experience. He was a truly remarkable man. George died two years ago and that was when I decided to retire."

The man Cris talks about with such unbridled admiration, was actually the UTAH man in Australia and the conduit between that giant US corporation, the Bowen basin coal fields and the Japanese coal buyers. They were boom times.

While he might have been desk bound for much of his career as accountant and CEO of Mr. Ishiyama's companies, Cris has a background - however tenuous- with the land and environment, for which BDTNRM is a state and federal government funded guardian.

He is the son of an Italian cane cutter who worked all of his adult life in the field after arriving in Ingham before the war. Cris and his mother arrived from Italy in 1950. All his schooling was in Ingham where he obviously displayed an affinity with maths, so unsurprisingly opted for an academic career.

He believes that the world is fast changing its opinion about the environment.
"There have been a lot of changes in the way we think."

He believes Water and climate are critical issues today and the population is gradually getting its head around them. It's a far cry from the days of the greenies who might have had the right messages to spread - but perhaps went about it the wrong way.

Maybe they were just a little too militant.