

## PROFILE

# Street-fighting man faces Oakley's team

Not many people can point to a member of the Rolling Stones as their business motivation, **Mark Fenton-Jones** writes.

**F**ormer policewoman Naomi Oakley was working as part of a crowd control team at Melbourne international airport last year when Keith Richards and his entourage, including at least a dozen minders, headed for the departure lounge.

Oakley was working with a security firm but was also researching the dynamics of crowd control with a view to setting up her own security business.

It was a logical extension of her previous work. After 12 years as a Victorian police officer, some of it undercover, Oakley met her musician husband Jerome. That led her to set up an events management business that organised rock concerts. And during those hectic days she got to see, first hand, crowd control as an interested observer.

As a policewoman she attended many assaults on licensed premises. Her conclusion then was people who were meant to be providing crowd control were often part of the problem, a view that firmed when she ran her events organisation.

"I got to see the crowd control from a lot of different angles and then I decided that I was actually going to research the industry. So I worked for a number of companies," she says. About the same time, cricket legend David Hookes died in a pub altercation with bouncers in 2004. "That was another sort of prompt to go and research it extensively."

She found that the industry lacked effective operators, many did not have basic skills, a desirable level of customer service, presentation or job knowledge.

"I saw it from the employee's perspective as well. Staff were not being properly trained. It was more about putting bums on seats rather than the professional side."

Pay scales were also not attractive and "that will reflect the type of people that represent your company. That's when I decided that my company was going to be different". She decided that most of her employees would be female.

Oakley reckoned there was a niche market for a different approach in the security industry.

But she hadn't quite made the decision to set up shop until she ran into Richards at Melbourne airport in 2006. Oakley knew Richards because her husband had played with the Stones guitarist and she had talked with him several times about her dream of setting up her own security company.

When Richards spotted her working at the airport, he strode over and said, to quote her, "What the f... are you doing here?"

"I realised at that point... enough's enough," she said. "It was pretty inspirational as well. It was like, enough research, let's get on with it."

Soon after that encounter, Oakley, a mother of

three children, two under the age of six, registered Melbourne-based U-nome Security Communication Specialists to provide crowd control as well as security for VIPs, corporate events and personal protection. The business name rhymes with "you know me" as well as Oakley's first name, and reinforces her belief that communication is integral to effective crowd control.

Her biggest hurdle was getting finance for private licences and public liability insurance, which costs her about \$5500 a year in premiums.

The cash came from her sister who, with a marketing background saw the potential of the concept, and her parents, while the Victorian Police Association has also given its support.

"It's unique from that point of view. They don't often support anything like that," Oakley says.

The differentiating factor for U-nome is in the emphasis on a female-owned and largely female-staffed company. "I was trying to remove the company totally from the bouncer mentality."

The feminine aspect is not a gimmick for the business, which now has 25 staff on its books, most of them sub-contractors. Staff are recruited from the security, hospitality and nursing industries, the common denominator being the ability to directly communicate with people.

"That's more beneficial than anything else," says Oakley who recruits and trains her own staff. They also need to be able to think quickly on their feet and be able to react effectively under pressure.

"When males become aggressive either through substance or alcohol abuse, it has been shown that



they are less likely to show resistance when a female is negotiating the situation compared with another male.

"If you bring in a male, you can just about agree that there will be a fight," Oakley adds that none of her staff have ever been injured in any altercation.

Now into its 12th month, the business is making a profit and staff receive bonuses for every new client they bring in. But the challenge is getting the business known. "It's slowly growing," says Oakley.

**Naomi Oakley, at Collins Quarter, with some of her female team. Photo James Davies**



## DEVONPORT CITY COUNCIL

### MEMORANDUM OF INFORMATION MAJOR CBD DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Devonport City Council invites submissions in response to an exciting Memorandum of Information for a major redevelopment opportunity in the Devonport CBD.

The identified development site is located at the northern end of the Rooke St mall and fronts the Mersey River foreshore with adjacent parkland. The Council has not pre-determined any particular built form for this site and encourages a fresh new approach to city development.

Devonport is a city of 25,000 in the central north of Tasmania, serving a rural catchment of 60,000 people. It has an active working port and as the home of the Spirit of Tasmania ferry service from Melbourne, is a major tourism gateway to the state.

Interested companies are asked to contact Council's Strategic Projects Team on (03) 6424 0511 to request the relevant documentation.

Ian McCallum, GENERAL MANAGER

**SICK OF UNCERTAINTY?** SOPHISTICATED INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

Looking for 100% Capital Guarantee?

**EARN 13% PER ANNUM**  
PAID QUARTERLY ON A 4 YEAR TERM

[www.crinvestments.com.au](http://www.crinvestments.com.au) Conditions apply

**STILL CURIOUS? FREECALL 1800 811190** **CR INVESTMENTS**

## Development of National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines

State Emergency Service

**Tender No:** NERA CB 07

**Description:** The project outcomes are focused on establishing national risk assessment guidelines for rapid onset of natural hazards. The purpose of this project is to develop nationally accepted and agreed natural hazard risk assessment guidelines for the use at the local, regional and state/territory and national levels. A recommendation lies within the framework to be able to compare risks, as they exist in different places to inform the allocation of resources in relation to risk differentials.

**Closing:** Wednesday 17 October 2007

**Documents and Enquiries:** Are available from the internet at [www.tenders.tas.gov.au](http://www.tenders.tas.gov.au) or by contacting Chris Beattie on (03) 6230 2772 or email [chris.beattie@ses.tas.gov.au](mailto:chris.beattie@ses.tas.gov.au)

**Lodgement:** Tenders must be lodged at the Tender Box, Police Headquarters, Ground Floor, 47 Liverpool Street, Hobart, Tasmania 7000 or by electronic lodgment at [www.tenders.tas.gov.au](http://www.tenders.tas.gov.au)

**Additional Information:** No late tenders accepted. No tender necessarily accepted.



### EQUITY PARTNERS REQUIRED

Successful Australian Golf Wholesale Business looking for equity partners to fund International expansion into the USA, Japan and Europe.

Established retailer network working in Australia and an Authorised Distributor in New Zealand.

USA subsidiary already set-up and operating with expansion into Japan and Europe under way.

For further information Interested Parties can email [brian@swingmaster-golf.com](mailto:brian@swingmaster-golf.com)

The foundation has been established and the results show this is a great investment with a guaranteed return.

## Profitable Business For Sale

With sales forecast to reach almost \$4M in 2008, this well managed company in the construction industry involved with the removal and replacement of roofs in domestic and commercial markets, and an emphasis on safety and training, is ready for new ownership to take the opportunities that present themselves to the next level.

With an experienced and committed team, with continued, long term works already in place and some highly sought after asbestos licenses, this company already enjoys substantial EBIT figures.

The management team would be willing to work together with a prospective purchaser to ensure the strong relationships with customers and suppliers continue. The business has been operating successfully since 1980.

**Expressions of interest must be received by Friday, 5 October 2007 at 5.00pm.**

**Contact:** Carol on 0438277770

**Email:** bus\_sale@hotmail.com



Tasmania  
Explore the possibilities

Department of Police and Emergency Management