

DARRYN LYONS

Chairman of Big Group of Companies

Darryn began his career at 17 as a Geelong newspaper photographer and was the first local photographer to win the prestigious title of 'Best Cadet' in the national Press awards.

He started work at London's Daily Mail in 1987, was a war photographer in Sarajevo, covered revolutions in Romania and Czechoslovakia and the historic fall of the Berlin Wall. For this, he was awarded the coveted Press Photographer and Best News Photographer awards.

Darryn established his first business, Big Pictures, from a bedroom in his North London flat in 1992. Two years later, he left the Daily Mail to focus full-time on the business, increasing turnover from £300,000 to £1million in his first year.

The business grew with Darryn opening Big Pictures offices in New York in 1995, Sydney in 1998 and Los Angeles in 2005 as well as building an impressive property portfolio around the world.

He went on to create a range of successful brands, launched clothing labels, owned yachting, private aircraft and limousine businesses, car companies, UK night clubs and establishing a television production company ... all of which culminated in him being recognized as a finalist in the 2004 UK Entrepreneur of the Year award.

Under his brand, 'Mr. Paparazzi', Darryn launched an awarding winning online celebrity gossip and breaking news portal, *Mr Paparazzi.com* which was awarded the prestigious Yahoo Award for Best Entertainment Website in 2006.

He achieved global sales with his autobiography, *Darryn Lyons, Mr. Paparazzi* and starred in the UK's Channel 5 production of *Celebrity Big Brother* and many other television series around the world. His series "Paparazzi" which he co-produced with BBC Worldwide was a finalist in the UK BAFTA awards.

In 2013, Darryn was elected Mayor of the City of Greater Geelong, bringing his trade-mark energy and entrepreneurial vision to the popularly elected role, focusing on building the city's national and international profile and identifying opportunities that will drive the city's economic future.