



JEREMY (JERRY) ELLIS, 1983 AUSTRALIA

Chairman, MBD Energy Limited

When Jerry Ellis departed for his fellowship to the United States in 1983, he was serving as the General Manager for Corporate Planning for The Broken Hill Proprietary Co., Ltd (BHP). BHP was Australia's largest industrial company with interest in oil and gas, steel and minerals. Little did Ellis know that his position in the company coupled with his Eisenhower Fellowship experience would put him in the position to help guide BHP through a process that would become pivotal in its development into the world's largest mining company.

At the time, there was a mining company in the United States known as Utah International. Originally founded as a construction company in Utah, the company had grown into a mining powerhouse based in San Francisco. In 1976, the company was bought by General Electric (GE). When Jack Welch came on as Chief Executive Officer of GE just prior to Ellis' fellowship, Welch was looking to divest GE of its mining interests. BHP was poised to acquire the company and expand their global reach in the industry.

Both BHP and Ellis were aware that the success of this acquisition was largely dependent on the ability for a smooth transition and integration of the U.S. firm into the Australian company. What Ellis witnessed on his travel throughout the U.S. was that while there were many similarities between business men in the U.S. and in Australia, there were many striking differences as well. The corporate governance structure in the U.S. was in some cases antithetical to the Australian model, where U.S. companies would often have the same individual serving as both Chairman and CEO of the same company. The way in which U.S. businesses interacted with government in regard to political contributions was another striking contrast to Australian culture. As Ellis travelled and met with business leaders, he gained key insights into the intricacies of both U.S. business and the individuals who operate within this paradigm.

Upon his return from his fellowship, BHP was looking for someone who could lead the charge in designing a plan for a successful transition and integration of Utah International into their company. Because of Ellis' extensive first-hand experience he had with U.S. business culture on his fellowship, they tasked him with this endeavor. Ellis had the unique opportunity of having been able to meet some of the leadership at Utah International while in the United States, and understood how they operated. When BHP formally acquired Utah International in 1984, Ellis was able to leverage both the contacts he made on his fellowship and his insights into the culture of U.S. businesses to ensure a successful integration. Ellis said, "The modern BHP's most significant act in becoming the world's largest mining company was the successful acquisition of Utah International."



Leaders bettering the world around them.