

Barry Bull's life story is so good that he now makes his money out of telling it as
Blythe Seiner reports

A story to sell

"I saw the book there on the shelf next to Richard Branson's - that gave me a buzz"

IT all started back in the 1950s when he was a pimply faced kid, growing up in the suburbs of Brisbane and listening to his Elvis records.

He loved music and was ecstatic to score a job in a record store - his dream career at the time.

It was back when the Beatles were new on the scene, people were only just discovering the Beach Boys, and Cliff Richard was the hottest thing around.

"It was a wonderful time to be growing up," he said.

"Rock and roll music was everywhere, and I was in the middle of it."

He'd been playing in a band for a number of years, and was excited to be on the other side of the industry - selling the music.

He had a real passion for the job, a passion that the head bosses of record company CBS recognised when they decided to snap him up.

CBS Records was later transformed into SONY Music and handled many of the big name acts, like Neil Diamond, Barbra Streisand, Bob Dylan and Billy Joel.

Barry was shifted to Sydney for the job, where he was promoted to Director of Marketing, which meant recruiting young Australian bands, and bringing the up and comers from the United States to Australia.

"The international careers of Men at Work, Air Supply, Meatloaf and Billy Joel all began with my team at CBS," he said.

The position took him all around the world, from one airport to the next. But as his career reached new heights, his family life began to suffer.

"I was always on a plane somewhere chasing the rock and roll dream."

His wife, Kayleen, was at home in Australia with two little boys and a baby girl who were growing up too fast, while Barry was often in a different time zone.

"I realised it was not where I wanted my life to go," he said.

"So after giving rock and roll the best years of my life, I resigned." It was 1981 and Barry

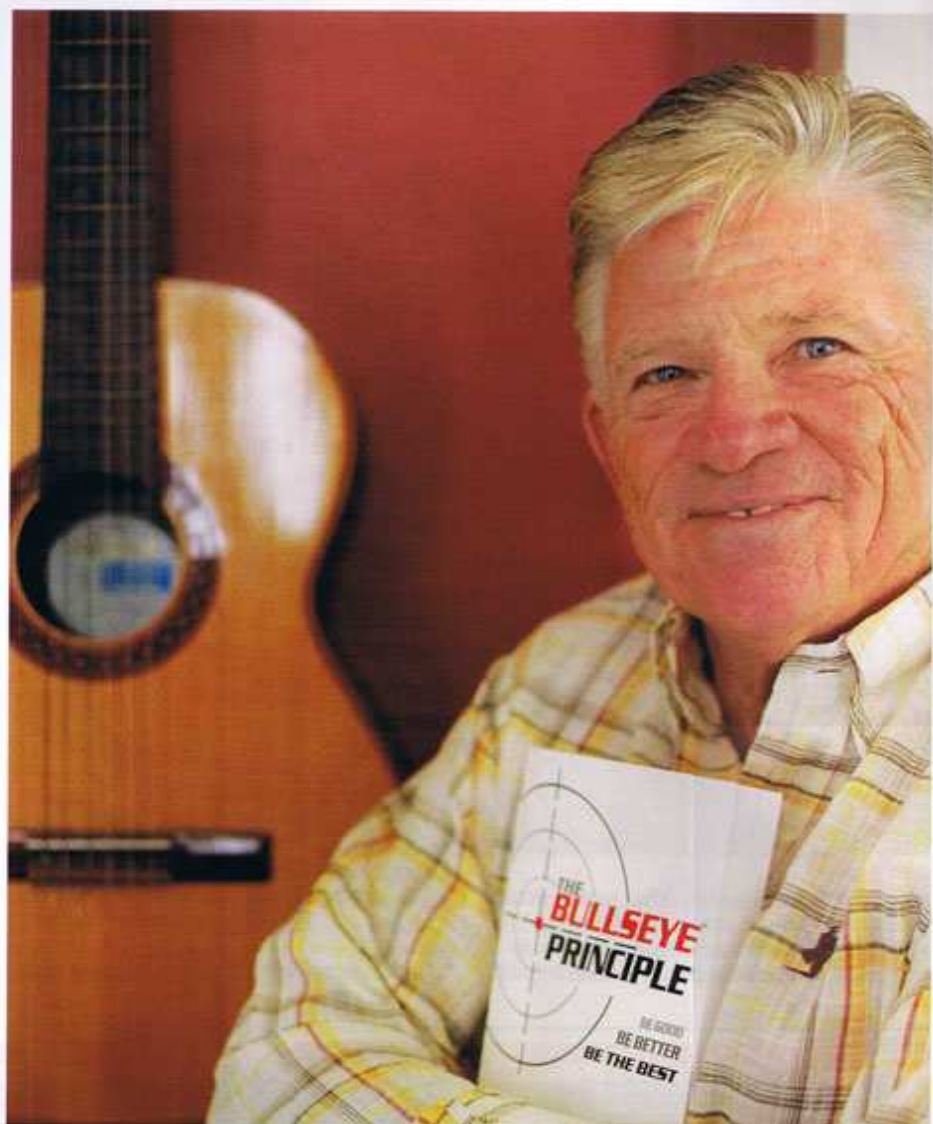


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had to work out the new path for his life.

He packed up his family, and took them back to Brisbane where his passion for music had begun nearly two decades earlier.

And that was when he bought a little business called Toombul Music.

"It was a pretty gutsy move at the time, but it was the best decision I ever made."

It was already an established business, but Barry had some big ideas and plans.

He wanted to use his contact book, to bring some of the biggest names in the business to the Westfield Shopping Centre. He managed to bring Johnny Mathis there in the first year, followed by George Benson in 1982.

On it went from there, with some of his personal icons paying a visit to the store over the years.

He listed Slim Dusty, Cliff Richard and Michael Crawford as his most memorable meetings.

Barry said it was Crawford who actually gave him the inspiration to move into his most recent career shift - as a motivational business speaker.

On one of Crawford's visits to Toombul music, Barry asked him how he'd managed to be so successful.

"I told him I had a dream to become a motivational speaker, to teach others and write a book."

The advice he received was simple - practice and work at it, and you'll achieve

your dream.

"It was the most inspirational thing anyone's ever said to me," Barry said.

"Once I realised he was just an ordinary guy, who'd worked at it, I realised I could do it too."

So Barry decided to leave the family business in the hands of his kids, and take the plunge into motivational speaking.

He was asked to speak at a range of events, about how he'd managed to be so successful in his business life.

His life's motto - "no is negotiable" - must have rung true for a lot of people because what started as a tentative career change then sprang to life with a book, followed by another and then another.

His latest, *The Bullseye Principle*, has just been released, with honourable mentions from Premier Peter Beattie and his icon Sir Cliff Richard.

One of his most satisfying moments came after he landed recently at Brisbane Airport.

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And after a lifetime of career changes, where to from here for Barry Bull is anyone's guess.

But one thing's for sure, he won't be taking no for an answer.

You can buy Barry's book in stores or online at www.barrybull.com