

5 THINGS I'VE LEARNT



Robert Swan OBE was the first man to walk to both the north and south poles. He recently spoke to the Calliden Group about how important it is for the insurance industry to show leadership in environmental issues.

1. Sustainable inspiration works
 "People need to sustain inspiration all the time, even at home with their families. There's no point doing something just once, you have to go back and re-inspire people as a leader on the issues that count. This is where Calliden is doing a great job. They have said: 'Right, we're on a mission, we're going to get the information out there on this issue, we're going to work with the insurance industry across the board on this, but we also need to make sure our employees stay inspired'."

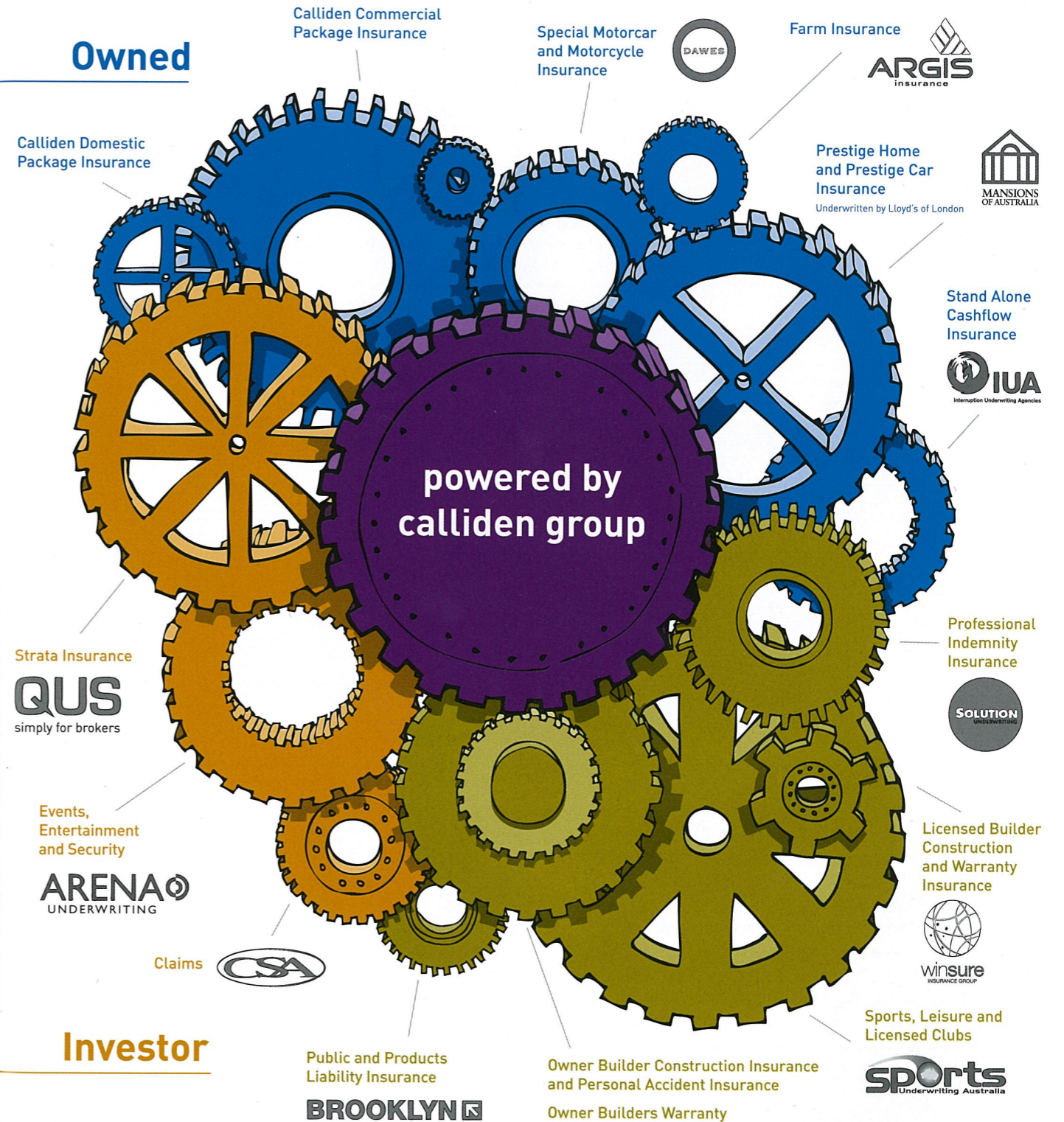
2. Insurance industry has a pivotal role
 "We know the world is going through a time of warming and it looks very likely we're causing this change. What I say to people in the insurance industry is that looking after our world is an insurance job.
 "There's a debate going on right now. On the one side, people are saying the world is going to end tomorrow, while on the other side people are saying we're doing nothing to the planet. In the middle is the insurance industry. The insurance industry has to insure against the fact we might well be moving towards a world that isn't so good. So it should be treated as an insurance job, insure against the possibility that we really are making some monster mistakes."

3. Lead by example
 "Insurance people aren't stupid. Dealing with clients everyday, they're the ones that have to explain why premiums have gone through the roof. If they have some pride in the knowledge their company has responded to the challenge in a positive way, like Calliden has, it shows an effort is being made, which can only help the employee to help their client."

4. Ditch the negativity
 "People are addicted to negative news, but I think we should be celebrating the good news more often. For instance, few people are actually aware that the hole in the ozone layer is fixing itself thanks to a decision made by world leaders many years ago. It shows what can be done.
 "I'm a good-news merchant. I sometimes get down that people aren't listening and that I'm fighting a losing battle, but the first person to walk to both poles doesn't give up easily. The environment can be saved but it's going to take a huge effort."

5. Personal responsibility and business opportunity
 "In the end it all comes down to two things: personal leadership and business opportunity: what we do at home; what we drive to work; what we do as people counts as much as what companies and governments do.
 "In the bigger picture, looking after our environment has to be a business opportunity. I try to move people away from thinking that sustainability is just tree-hugging, and get them to think of it as a business opportunity." **NIBA**

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