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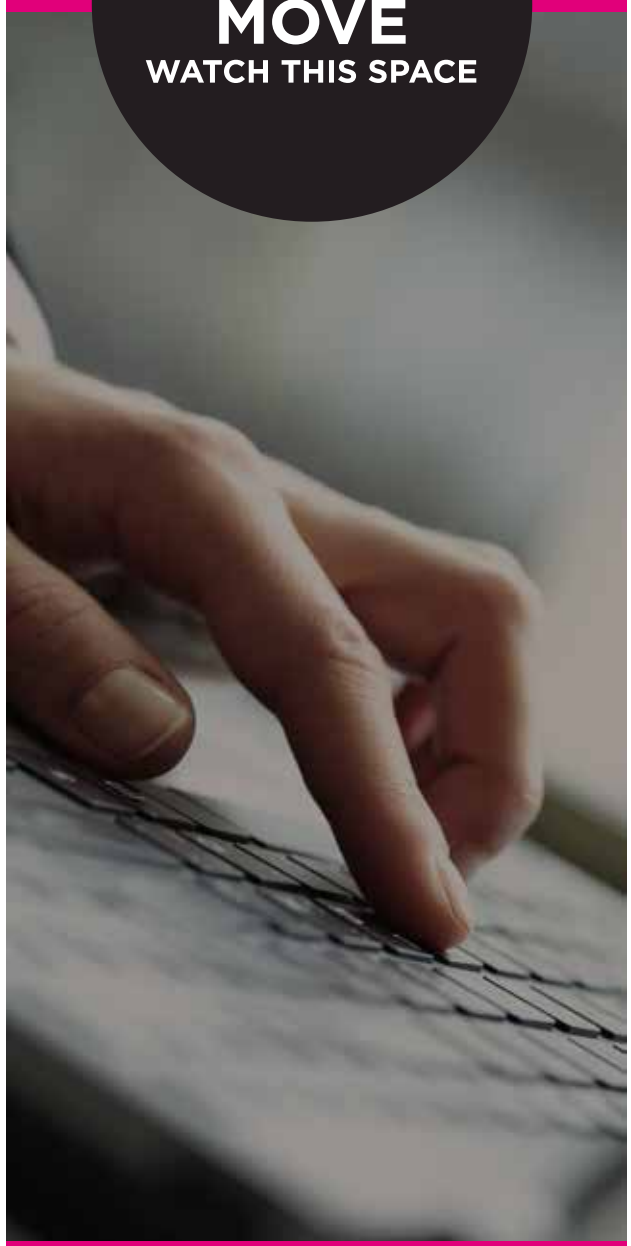

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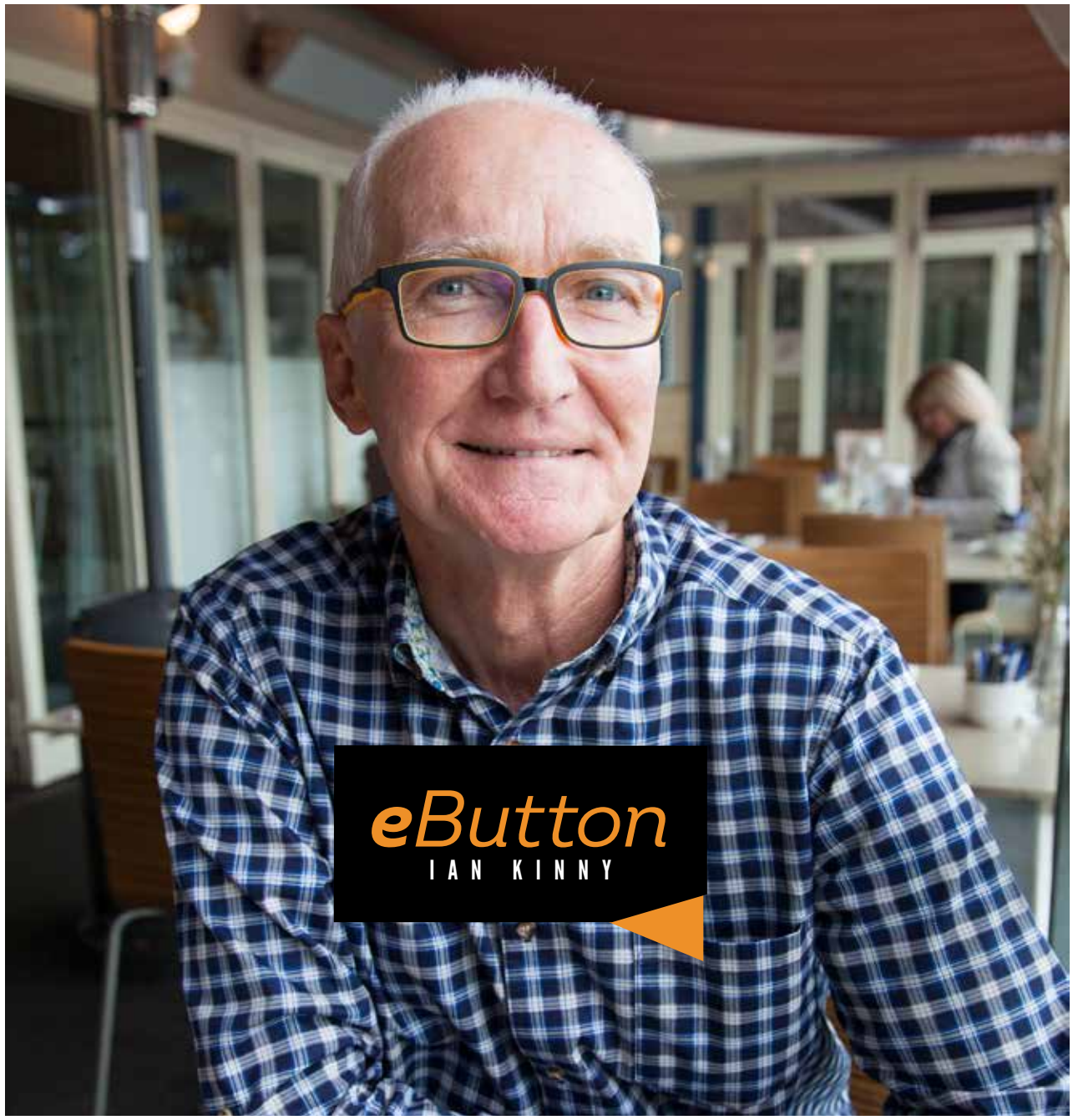

After observing his elderly neighbour try to maintain his independence and struggle with existing emergency alert options, ***eButton Inventor Ian Kinny knew there must be an easier way.*** *With a background in engineering and an appetite for innovation coupled with a determined attitude to solve any problem that arises, he has created a dynamic and innovative solution for an ageing population.*

Hi Ian. Tell us a bit about your background and your connection to the Coffs Coast ...

I originally came to Coffs Harbour as a Civil Engineer to establish a precast concrete facility producing bridge girders for a major contractor in 2008. My wife and I liked it here so much, we decided to stay. I became involved with programming as an undergraduate in the 1970s, taking a computing elective in my final year. I have been involved with computers and programming at some level ever since.

Can you briefly explain what the eButton does?

The eButton is a simple to use emergency alert and personal safety device. It enables you to call help with just one click. It is a mobile solution that works wherever your smart phone has coverage. One click on your eButton initiates the free app on your mobile smart phone. There is no need to touch your phone. It is that simple. So if you are feeling faint or you are unable to access your phone, perhaps you have had a fall or are feeling threatened, you can quickly and discreetly click your eButton to alert the people you trust that you need assistance. You don't need to fiddle with passwords, locate an app or contact on your phone, and dial for help. The eButton alert also gives your location and updates for locations if you move. One click calls help. Simple.

Where did the inspiration come from for the solution?

I was talking with my neighbour, who had recently undergone major heart surgery. He had an active social life and was always off somewhere playing tennis, bridge, going to restaurants and leading an active life. He was experiencing fainting episodes, and this caused him and his family concern. We discussed some of the help devices on the market, but they were not portable, and Bill really did not want to be confined to his home. He needed something that was simple, worked wherever he went, and told people where he was if he needed help. I discussed it with my wife and son, and the whole concept developed from there.

How long has it taken to develop?

The development of the android version took around six months of solid work to bring to fruition. The Apple side has taken quite a bit longer. The original Apple development stalled for a while. I have found a different way forward, and the Apple version is now very close to being released.

What hurdles have you had to overcome in the production of the eButton?

There is a lot of cutting edge technology built into the eButton. There wasn't a lot of documentation available for these technologies, and this meant a lot of trial and error in the early days. Finding a suitable pathway to comply with Apple's requirements has been another big challenge in developing the eButton. The

> *"The eButton has been created to help people. If the eButton can save just one person in a crisis all the hard work will have been worth it"*

Apple version of the eButton was stalled for over a year until I found some newly emerging technologies that overcame Apple's restrictions while still giving the same simple, easy to use experience for the eButton.

Are there other devices on the market that are similar or is the eButton unique?

eButton is unique in that it is mobile and has a modern, sleek design. The eButton will work wherever your mobile phone has reception. Other alternatives on the market have a base station that is often hard wired to the home, and the device can be quite bulky to wear. Many have ongoing fees. With the eButton, you choose who you want to contact when you require assistance, and only those trusted people are ever contacted should you need help. The eButton enables the user to have walks, go shopping, socialise and even hang glide (they do say adventure before dementia).

How does the eButton compare with your competitors on price?

eButton is roughly half the cost of the next cheapest competitor. There are no ongoing costs after the initial purchase.

I priced the eButton deliberately so that cost isn't a barrier to safety. That way, more people can benefit from the peace of mind the eButton brings.

Do you need to re-charge the eButton often?

A great question. One of the many features of the eButton is that you don't have to constantly recharge it. The new low energy bluetooth technology built into the eButton means the eButton runs on an ordinary coin cell battery and typically has a battery life of over a year. The eButton battery level is monitored by the app, which alerts you when the battery is need of replacement.

Who is likely to use the eButton?

The eButton was originally intended as a medical emergency alert button. The more I talked to people about the idea, the more ideas came up about where it could be used. It is now obvious that the eButton has extensive applications beyond its original intended use. Almost every week someone comes up with a new possibility for its use. It really surprises me that people can see so many possibilities. I've had a lot of people interested in getting an alert device for their parents who live independently and are getting a little older. I've also had a lot of interest from mums whose teenagers travel on public transport, have late finishing jobs or attend lots of parties. Quite a number of business people have indicated that they are concerned about their Workplace Health and Safety obligations when they require staff to see clients alone. They feel the quick and discreet nature of the eButton may be a significant tool in improving employee safety and ensuring that they, as the employer, meet their duty of care. But the uses go on and on. I think the discreet use of the eButton would have an application in domestic violence situations. One use that really appeals to me is having my son carry an eButton as he travels overseas. I find I don't worry quite so much.

Do you see a lot more things becoming connected over the next few years?

Imagination is the only limitation as the technology accelerates into every facet of our day to day lives. It is an exciting time to be alive. Although some friends believe I should be looking at retirement, I am excited about developing more ideas in the years to come, being inspired while enjoying time in the great coffee shops around our beautiful town.

What's next for the eButton?

The release of the Apple version of eButton is imminent. We are extremely excited to finally have found a work around that meets Apple's requirements. With the Android app, anyone with a mobile phone can be a help contact. It is not restricted to just Android users. Similarly, the iPhone app will be able to have help contacts who are Android users. I have some more exciting ideas about what comes next for the eButton. I'll keep these under my hat until I get a bit closer to a release date.

What are your hopes for the future of the device?

The eButton has been created to help people. If the eButton can save just one person in a crisis, all the hard work will have been worth it. It would give me immense satisfaction to have the eButton help one of our senior citizens to get help after a fall, to help a student being harassed on a late night train, or to get a timely intervention when someone is being threatened. If the eButton can reduce the amount of anxiety that family and friends feel for the people they love, or can be instrumental in getting help to someone in a crisis, then the eButton will be a success.

It is a wonderful project to be involved with.

Where can people find out more about yourself and the device?

Go to our web site "http://www.ebutton.com.au" for more details.

Thanks Ian.