

VIDEO INTERVIEW: Paul Evans - Australian Institute of Waterproofing (AIW) &
Phil Scardigno - Gripset Industries – Transcript Oct 2019

Phil Scardigno: Well, thanks again for joining me on another episode of Sealed for Good. As you can see today, we're not in our normal setting. I'm actually in Melbourne and I'm with Paul Evans, the President of the Australian Institute of Waterproofing, AIW. Paul, thanks for joining.

Paul Evans: Yeah, pleasure.

Phil Scardigno: Paul is a business owner of a contracting firm in Victoria [inaudible 00:00:20] Waterproofing. However, Paul's being the president of the AIW for the last three years. And I thought many of you have asked me questions before about the AIW, what it is in terms of an institution or a body for the waterproofers, and who better to speak to you but the president himself. So Paul, how long have you been doing this for?

Paul Evans: Well it's been nearly three years. I'm in the third year of tenure, so why not give it the best, it's a voluntary sort of set up, so it's difficult to find the time to do what we need to do.

Paul Evans: But with the sixteen strong committee at the moment, it's certainly making it a lot easier than what it has been. We were down to a core of four there the first year when I came on board and it was hard work.

Phil Scardigno: So the AIW historically was a Melbourne based initiative. I remember that...

Paul Evans: Pretty much... [crosstalk 00:00:01:07].

Phil Scardigno: ...easier and it sort of branched the other few chapters in different states. So now where are you at within that one?...

Paul Evans: ...Right across Australia basically to as much as we can. We were represented in a WA it's SA you know, a bit yourself and we've got Sydney, New South Wales, we've got Queensland and that's it for the moment. So, but we've got about just under 600 members strong throughout Australia and it, it's certainly a nice representation now that we have got. We're getting a lot more interest recently we've been going doing a lot of shows and a lot of talks.

Phil Scardigno: And the owner of those talks then Paul, what does it, what does it really, what's the objective of going and doing those shows?

Paul Evans: Well, all I'm using scare tactics, showing the waterproofing failures.

Phil Scardigno: Awareness.

Paul Evans: Absolutely. Yeah. So that's, that's my main drive at the moment just going around to, we taught it with the ADEB, which architects? designers, engineers

and builders. It's a group, it's a WA based company and they set up these seminars and they, a small group might have 50 in a group and that's right throughout Australia in each state they'd been fantastic. Not so much this year but last year was really, really active. I personally went to most states to talk and so with the other committee members we are doing it as well. That was great awareness cause we are getting a great demographic of the construction industry.

Phil Scardigno: So you actually, you've got a an audience of architects, engineers right there at your fingertips.

Paul Evans: Yes, and they're all asking the questions and it's close and personal and it's a really good message and we found that really valuable.

Phil Scardigno: Well I was going to ask what the aim of the AIW is, but you've just covered that question right now. So what was the common thing that came around from that discussion with those shows? Methodology...

Paul Evans: Methodology and there was talk about materials, but methodology is probably the main thing. Everybody wants to know how to do it and what they should be looking for.

Phil Scardigno: This is from a design perspective?

Paul Evans: Yes. From a design perspective that actually drive towards us thinking about how we can get that message out. How we can get some training out there. We tethered up with the Master Builders Association in Victoria and we created a waterproofing course designed specifically for people who are in the industry but not necessarily waterproofers themselves.

Phil Scardigno: So that cause is different than say a certificate three course that have RTR would handle.

Paul Evans: It's really what you're looking at on the job. So when the supervisor for items, so guys here on site and says, okay, "How do I know whether this waterproof is doing the right thing or not?" So we've set up the course to show the key points that they need to be looking for and to make sure that it's prepared correctly, they give the okay for the waterproofer to then go and do those next steps. So that's, that's pretty much in a nutshell what we're doing.

Phil Scardigno: And I suppose I should probably started with this one, but what is the aim and objective of the AIW? Who are you ?

Paul Evans: A bunch of people that care about the industry that's, that's what it really stems down to. I was moaning about this and that some five, six years ago, my wife

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said, Paul, stop laying and get out and do something. So I did, I joined up with the AIW and before I knew and I end up in the chair so.

Phil Scardigno: The cream always comes to the top. So in that time, but then the AIW is a group of people that care, but it's made up of the...?

Paul Evans: Industry professionals, waterproofers, tilers, manufacturers, suppliers, engineers. It's right across the board and it's a good matrix of people who were involved and, and came to be involved.

Phil Scardigno: And when you say that that's the committee or the members that you getting?

Paul Evans: Both, but the committee, the 16 strong across that, what I just mentioned. And then we've also stemmed there from there, from the members themselves.

Phil Scardigno: So to grow the AIW, I mean, are you really pitching at those contractors that are waterproofing, whether it be a tiler or waterproofer...

Paul Evans: Anything to do with making things watertight. Really. It's, we don't hold back on who wants to be counted. You know, we've got people from overseas, you know, that are just interested. So they become affiliate members and etc and so on and they just keep up with our newsletters and they want to know what's going on in Australia, which is terrific. There's not many, but we might have, yeah, maybe six, seven of them.

Phil Scardigno: And the ideal membership you're trying to drive out there.

Paul Evans: I suppose it's, it comes down, we would love the applicators all to be members so we can be their voice and that's, and we want...

Phil Scardigno: That's a really good point what you're saying. I think you know this program, and we've got followers across different areas a lot of applicators and contractors, but I actually think that a lot of changes themselves for good and look for other similar shows for the fact that they feel like they have got a voice to put their thoughts out there.

Paul Evans: Yeah.

Phil Scardigno: So how does that, ideally, how would you like to be that voice for the, for the applicators in Australia?

Paul Evans: What I keep promoting all the time. I don't get a lot of feedback on it, which I'm a bit sad but every newsletter that goes out I say "Please let me know what's going on, if you've got a problem, talk to us. Talk to me personally. Talk to any one of the committee members. You know, it doesn't matter as long as the

message gets across and everybody says, I don't want to talk about the problems because it makes, they think, they make them look like they're a bad applicator or not. We all make mistakes. I've made mistakes. If you don't make mistakes.

Phil Scardigno: You're not alone.

Paul Evans: So that's really what it's about. So we want them to talk to us to say, okay, here's, here's what's happened. Here's our, I got out of it, or here's here I fixed it, or here's what I should do next time. And then we share that with everybody. We don't necessarily, it's not a witch hunt. We were trying to bag anybody to say, okay, you should have done this. You should've done that. It's really about education and we all learn collectively from everybody else's mistakes as well. And also not just from mistakes, but everything came up with good, innovative ideas. Yeah. And that's really important. We want that as well.

Phil Scardigno: So, when it comes to a contractor that could be in some trouble, let's say he's at a job that he's done...

Paul Evans: Yeah.

Phil Scardigno: And he's had an incident where he's been threatened with action.

Paul Evans: Yeah.

Phil Scardigno: Believes he's done everything right, has a builder that may or may not be around, but a client that's after him. And that knock on the door comes. What can the AIW do for the applicator?

Paul Evans: Talk to him on a one-one-one basis. I get a lot of these. I've got a fair history in [VCAP 00:00:35] background from another business I was involved in some years ago.

Phil Scardigno: So this is some legal advice you can guide him to as well?

Paul Evans: Well, we try not to give advice because we don't want to get involved in that. But, what we do is, it's school of hard knocks. It's actually just saying, "This is what I've been through, or one of our committee members has been through, we share it out and we talk about it.". Get to our meetings and say, "This chap's got this problem, anybody been through something similar to that?". Someone will put up their hand and we get a bit of feedback and then we can then impart that to the person.

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Paul Evans: Quite often we'll connect up that person that's asking the question directly with the committee member and they'll just have a chat on the phone about it, or an email, or whatever. Oh, you know, for better or for worse if we think they're doing the wrong thing, we'll tell them. Say, "No. Look, sorry mate, you've done the wrong thing here, you really need to step up to the plate here and get it sorted."

Phil Scardigno: If someone is desperately needing some sort of advice in terms of, what should I do next?

Paul Evans: Yeah.

Phil Scardigno: Okay, you don't give out advice, but can you guide them on where they're going to get advice?

Paul Evans: Yes, we do. Yeah, we can.

Phil Scardigno: Because we hear, you know, the worst case scenarios are when people are helpless. And guys, you know, they think they've done all the right things but they've come unstuck unknowingly with what's happened on site.

Paul Evans: Yeah, yeah.

Phil Scardigno: Either trade before them or the builders gone bust and done a shitty job and he's really put him in a problem. And, they can come to people like us, but we're manufacturers, always going to look like we're pushing our product. A body like the AIW or the MBA or HIA, the Town Council, et cetera. You know, Landscapers Association Group, active over here as well we know, they're looking for those sorts of bodies. Can the waterproofers be seen to come to the AIW knowing that that's where they can confidently get that support?

Paul Evans: Exactly, that's what it's about. And it's not just members actually. We have a lot of general public approaching us...

Phil Scardigno: Okay.

Paul Evans: And saying, "I've got this problem, a waterproofers done this, what should we do?". We originally don't ask who it is because it's trying to remain impartial.

Phil Scardigno: Yeah.

Paul Evans: Sometimes it slips out but we also say, "This is what you should expect as a consumer from your waterproofer."

Phil Scardigno: Okay.

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Paul Evans: So, it's a way of trying to be fair about the whole thing and just what people should expect and pay for.

Phil Scardigno: Let's get onto the topic of what you've seen in your time as a president, not as a contractor. What have you seen in the national market through the other committee members, the other chapters, about where are we still not getting it right in waterproofing through your eyes at the moment?

Paul Evans: It's a big question.

Phil Scardigno: We've got time.

Paul Evans: Yeah. I suppose to try and summarize it, it's about builders pushing for completion times. You know, and that's the cruncher.

Phil Scardigno: Speed.

Paul Evans: Yeah, speed, get it done, get it now. Not caring about climatic conditions, and this is a big, big topic. Builder says, "Oh, it's stopped raining now, come do the waterproofing." You know, and we all know the problems with that. So, the substrate's still wet and yeah...

Phil Scardigno: And they don't want to pay for the miracle product or the miracle solution.

Paul Evans: That's right. Yeah, yeah, that's right. Yeah, so they might get an extra application to combat that. They're not going to pay for that, that's your problem, you're the waterproofer. So, we see this as a major problem, particularly for the smaller contractors. And they get hit really bad with this, financially. Time's money and they turn up on site to do the job, it's not ready and that becomes a major financial problem for them. Because, as soon as they fall into financial difficulty...

Phil Scardigno: Yeah.

Paul Evans: And some of the little guys might take on a fairly sizeable contract, some small item like that will cause a major problem and it can send them broke overnight.

Phil Scardigno: Yeah, I'm sad when we see that. Yeah, that's what you don't want.

Paul Evans: Yeah.

Phil Scardigno: So then, where are the things that have improved in your time, as you were already saying[crosstalk 00:04:15].

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- Paul Evans: Education. Education is what it's all about. It's really about sharing what, collectively, we know and those that have been through the ringer, if you like, just impart that with the people who are going... Or try not let them go through it in the first place. But, if they're in amongst it, well, that's part of it. You know, we try and help them through it.
- Phil Scardigno: So, have you found that in that time of being with the education side of it, there's been more contractors doing the Certificate Three?
- Paul Evans: Yes. A huge influx...
- Phil Scardigno: And the AIW endorse that and really encourage members to be Cert. Three?
- Paul Evans: We do. I'm of the opinion, and my fellow committee members are of the opinion, that any education is good education. But, what we're seeing is a lot of RTOs coming through, just doing it on the bandwagon, so to speak. Putting out courses that really aren't Cert. Three. They're, you know, a coffee cup and biscuit type of qualification.
- Phil Scardigno: Yeah.
- Paul Evans: We're seeing a lot of that. They're getting subsidized and once they get their subsidies about it, and I've got a personal experience with that which I'm embittered about, and I put my guys through a Cert. Three course and really they didn't learn much.
- Phil Scardigno: So the AIW, are you starting to endorse RTOs that can carry... You say, well, from opinion or...
- Paul Evans: We are.
- Phil Scardigno: Reputation or recommendation.
- Paul Evans: We are. We'll look at what they're delivering and say, "Oh, okay, it's a fair and reasonable course.". And then if someone rings us and says, "Okay, when can we see them?". We'll say, "Well look, we're not going to recommend them, but we know that these people are delivering a decent course so perhaps that's someone you should be looking at.".
- Phil Scardigno: Let's talk about the standards and regulations, where they need to change, because this comes up frequently. Where does the AIW sit with that? Is part of the committee and party members being a voice to hear where change should be driven and what we want? And then, where are we at as an AIW in terms of driving that change? The standard now is four eight, five eight. You know, we can sit and complain, but it's outdated and I've been talking about this. We're

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seeing things like modular, pre-fab enter the market in a big way starting to disrupt construction in a good way. And it's not... Well, I know first hand, is it's not keeping up with the standards. So, there's designers that have actually designed methods that, actually, better than what we're doing on site. Yet, they don't comply. Where is AIW going to start to sit in terms of pushing for change in that area?

Paul Evans: Yeah. Yeah, well the awareness of it is just a general osmosis throughout the public and the industry. But, we're also lobbying the government. So, we're talking to the Victorian Building Authority here in Melbourne and that's what myself and David, the secretary, David [Hepworth 00:06:58]. He and I spend a lot, we've spent so much time in there. But it's red tape to cut through.

Phil Scardigno: Yeah.

Paul Evans: We get so far and then they'll change the committee. So, then we've got to start afresh. We've done this four times now and it's to a point of exhaustion whereas I'm a little standoffish now, where I think we're wasting our time.

Phil Scardigno: Is it, and this is just a question [inaudible 00:07:21], but is it a way that the AIW could engage with some of the powerful bodies like the MBA, HIA, Town Council, to drive it as a group towards one making change?

Paul Evans: [crosstalk 00:07:33].

Phil Scardigno: Back to the government.

Paul Evans: You're on the money. Spot on. That's exactly the way we're starting to look at it now. We're starting with insurance companies.

Phil Scardigno: Yeah, okay.

Paul Evans: So, starting the drive from that angle, from the financial aspect. So we're driving backwards, where we've got some meetings set up in the very near future. Some insurance, you know, professionals that won't go [inaudible 00:07:50] at the moment. But we want to talk to them about how we can facilitate that and get the insurance companies on our side to get that message back to the government to say, "Look, this is a very real problem. It needs to be addressed, it needs to be looked at."

Phil Scardigno: These government... Sorry, not the government bodies, but are you finding there's a confidence to be in common alignment with the HIA, the MBA, and the Town Council, for example? Have we all got the same best interests?

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- Paul Evans: It's getting closer. I mean, like Master Builders doesn't talk to each other through eight states. We're sliding a little bit of a direction there through the waterproofing course. The HIA we don't hear a lot of. There's not a big voice there. We'd love to get more direction from them. And I suppose, time and emotion again, as well. So, you know, if anybody in the HIA is watching this, please come and see us, you know. That's what it's all about.
- Phil Scardigno: They are.
- Paul Evans: Yeah.
- Phil Scardigno: Yeah, well, there's HIA members out there and HIA employers. I've sent a few discussion points with a couple that were definitely watching and came to see. But, I think it's more than just the HIA. We need to get, I think you started off with the best description, it's about people who care. We've got a situation in industry where we don't just have waterproofers and tilers are getting in trouble. Builders are, but more importantly, the incline, which is the asset out of the building owner, or homeowner.
- Phil Scardigno: And they are very helpless in many ways. We've seen the horror stories from that.
- Paul Evans: Yeah.
- Phil Scardigno: We've documented on this program a couple times. Where can we educate, I mean, you know... Some of the things we see in waterproofing just would not be accepted in other [tryers 00:09:28] like plumbing or electrical. Yet, like you said before, the builder just says, "Well, hey, I need this done. It stopped raining and hurry up and do it. I'm not paying an extra dollar.". If the electrician were dealing with it, piss off. You know, I've got to comply with... But I've got to do this properly.
- Paul Evans: Yeah.
- Phil Scardigno: Ideally, have you... Has the AIW thought, in the perfect world, how we want this lined up? Because, the other thing is, waterproofing is not our respective trade. We're in a acknowledged trade. So, you know, we talk about architects as vocations, we see it bundled into the brick layer's package, the landscaper's package, the tiler's package. There's no waterproofing package. Rarely, we see that.
- Paul Evans: Yeah, yeah. That's true. Yeah.
- Phil Scardigno: So what's the ideal picture for that?

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- Paul Evans: Yeah. It's a big task, but then on the same take we're... Yeah, we're trying to get, I suppose everybody involved, talking about it. So once we're talking about it we get a cohesive group together. So if you get the cohesion then, as you mentioned before, you got a chap comes in and the builder might say I've got to get it done. Somebody who's strong will say, "No, I'm sorry. I can't do that today, I'll come back when it dries out.". [inaudible 00:10:39]. Keep it simple.
- Paul Evans: Whereas, [inaudible 00:10:43] will come in and say, "I'll do it mate, no worries.".
- Phil Scardigno: [crosstalk 00:10:46].
- Paul Evans: Chuck him out, get him in. We've got to stop that from happening. And that's about the cohesion of getting everybody like-minded. And be strong enough to say, "No, it's not right. It's not going to happen.". Or, "We can offer these solutions.". And that's part of it.
- Phil Scardigno: Yeah. In most industries there's always the point of accountability. And so when these things end up in court, the ugly stories, it'll come back to the bugger that's actually accepted the [substruck 00:11:10] and work on it. But, what we don't have in the industry is accountability. And that accountability gets passed around. If I'm in a room of different people here at the moment, one will point at the manufacturer, one will point at the replicator, one the designer, the builder... Where does it sit, you know, wholeheartedly, and where does it need to... Is it sitting in the right position at the moment, or do we need to make sure that we direct accountability... Because it needs to start somewhere and then filter down. Instead of, at the moment it's just like, you know, it's a moving target. Just point at whoever you can.
- Paul Evans: When Victoria had been lopping for registration that's been going on for a long time...
- Phil Scardigno: When you say registration, explain that.
- Paul Evans: Yeah, as a registered trade.
- Phil Scardigno: Great.
- Paul Evans: I mean, it would be great to have apprentices and all the rest, but I don't... I think we're a long, long way off that.
- Phil Scardigno: Yeah.
- Paul Evans: But we've been pushing for registered trade. Queensland just got a registered trade, so at least we've got a little bit whooping hand there.

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- Phil Scardigno: Yeah.
- Paul Evans: So they've got to be... If we can get that registration nation-wide, I think that's a great start.
- Phil Scardigno: And some people might be asking, that are watching now, "Why can't we do it nationally, why does it have to be by state?".
- Paul Evans: It's got to go through the government. They've got [inaudible 00:12:16] certificate.
- Phil Scardigno: [crosstalk 00:12:16].
- Paul Evans: It doesn't happen if the government says its not going to happen. That's why we've been lobbying with the government to try and get that to happen. And we got a long way forward with it, and then it just stopped. So the community gets broken up, as I mentioned before.
- Phil Scardigno: Yeah.
- Paul Evans: We will try again. I think we'll give it another shot, see what happens. But, I'm not quite sure how we get around it. We've been looking for some help, I suppose, from anybody that might know more about it, to talk to us. We've spoken to various people that say, "Yes, we can help, we can help.". We get so far, and then it seems to stop.
- Phil Scardigno: If there's any lawyers out there that have had major leaking problems, they're probably the best ones to make contact with, because they're the ones who've started.
- Paul Evans: That's it, yeah. That's it.
- Phil Scardigno: But, have you... Is the AIW modeled themselves on another associational body and going, "Oh well, they've got it right. We need to try and capture that."?
- Paul Evans: We haven't [crosstalk 00:13:09]. No.
- Phil Scardigno: Benchmarking against someone else?
- Paul Evans: Yeah. I suppose, as far as an association goes, the direction's minor as far as with other bodies where...
- Phil Scardigno: Why is that, Paul?

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- Paul Evans: Ah, I think it's just time and emotion really. I don't think it's standoff or anything like that. I think it's just really the fact that everybody's in time pour, really.
- Phil Scardigno: Because it's a subject that no one wants to talk about until the shit hits the fan.
- Paul Evans: Yeah, that's true. Well, that's changing. I think that's really changing. You know, with this voice that we are going out there and doing it. We're about to get with the Acro to go and have some talks with them. In fact, that's booked for the twenty-fifth of September, I'm going up to Queensland to talk with the Acro association.
- Phil Scardigno: Yeah.
- Paul Evans: That's great, that's the first time we've been involved there from since I've been involved. So I'll be going up to do that and we'll see how that roles. I think that'll be great.
- Phil Scardigno: Yeah.
- Paul Evans: And get a bit of a interaction there and get some synergy happening. We've also got, I'm trying to think of the acronym, but it's the Building Material Suppliers is a group or body that we're just connected with as well. And we're going to get a bit of synergy going with them as well.
- Phil Scardigno: Just on that matter, so at the moment with your members... Well, let's just look at the community, because they're the major decision makers. Where's your percentage split up between, sort of, contractors versus manufacturers versus specifiers. Can you give a snapshot of that?
- Paul Evans: It's probably, I'm thinking through, contractors will probably be about less than a third. And the rest would be made up of manufacturers, engineers, suppliers, yeah. It's a broad, sort of, angle. They're coming from different aspects. We've got a, you know, oh remember who's ex-CSRA, somebody who's been with them forever.
- Phil Scardigno: Barry?
- Paul Evans: Barry [crosstalk 00:14:59]. Great man, knows his stuff.
- Phil Scardigno: He's very knowledgeable, yeah.
- Paul Evans: Yeah. And Barry's a great, sort of, person to come back to and begin. You know, he's in retirement so he's doing what he needs to do.
- Phil Scardigno: In between the golf days?

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- Paul Evans: Yeah. And you know, just gives up, he gives up a lot of his time actually. He's really good.
- Phil Scardigno: So to wrap it up from here then, if anyone want to actually become a member or know more about NAMWI or up in Queensland, Northern Queensland, or [Tezzy 00:15:26], when in regional area of Australia, what do they do, Paul, from here?
- Paul Evans: Contact [Dav 00:15:31], I mean, just his website. Come on the, you know, just jump on the website and have a look at it.
- Phil Scardigno: And that website is? ARW...
- Paul Evans: Yeah, ARW dot com. It's simple, yeah. It's a dot org site and people call me direct. You know, I'm happy to take calls directly and send them an application form, talk to them about what's available. I mean, what we're offering, basically, is support. We've got a website with floor drawings, we've gone through the drawing... They still need a little bit of work, but generally, they're pretty good. We've put practical approach on those drawings, not just the straight out of the Stan's book. But we've said, "Practically, it needs this. Practically, it needs that.". So we've put practical notes with all those little drawings. So, if applicators and the like, or even architects and engineers, they can look at those drawings and go, "Oh, okay. It makes sense on how this needs to happen on this part of the job.". You know?
- Phil Scardigno: And in terms of suppliers like, around the country they're involved in waterproofing, even other manufacturers. They can just do the same and get on the website and inquire about becoming a member?
- Paul Evans: Sure. Yeah, and actually, really encourage our suppliers and contractors and everybody, to each month give us their stories. And if you've got...
- Phil Scardigno: [crosstalk 00:16:42] few of those, were they.
- Paul Evans: Yeah, there's lots. But we don't go for product sell, it's not a product sell. But it's really about, we've done a job, we used A) Polyurethane, or, A) [inaudible 00:16:53]. We used something. And we got great success out of it and had clients. And we like those stories. And they go into the newsletter, we write three or four of those in each month, or each quarter now it is. And what more, sort of, information we can get back from all our members and collectively put it in the newsletter and share it.
- Phil Scardigno: All right guys. Hey, look, if you want engage this discussion any further you heard it from Paul Evans from AIW. You can get onto the website, inquire about membership or just inquire about even that voice that Paul discussed. And if

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you've got any messages or chat about it to me, put it in through a DM or just engage in the conversation for us on our YouTube channel. Don't forget to subscribe and if you want to find out more about AIW, get hold of this man here, he said you can call him. The president is available.

Paul Evans: Thanks very much.

Phil Scardigno: No worries.

Paul Evans: Cheers.