

CEO takes off before big jet bill lands

An investor roadshow across the US does not come cheaply. Especially when you charter a brand new Gulfstream 450 jet owned by your former managing director.

The ports and rail operator Asciano Group disclosed yesterday that it paid \$613,259 in corporate jet chartering fees last financial year to a company owned by its former chief executive **Mark Rowsthorn**.

This was well up on the \$268,202 Asciano paid Rowsthorn's jet chartering business, Marcplan, in the 2010 financial year (and \$104,905 the year before that).

The elevated corporate jet costs were especially high given Rowsthorn left Asciano in February, just seven months into the financial year.

One wonders if the increased corporate jet costs might be related to Asciano using Rowsthorn's new \$30 million Gulfstream 450 for a US roadshow last year, just after it was picked up from the Gulfstream factory in Florida.

Maybe Gulfstreams are just more expensive to run than Hawker 800s (the jet Asciano previously chartered off Rowsthorn).

It should be interesting to see whether the Asciano chairman, **Malcolm Broomhead**, still reckons chartering private jets represents better value than airline tickets.

At last year's annual meeting, Broomhead argued: "The use of chartered aircraft occasionally is necessary when you have a large number of people travelling around on a visit to a multiple of locations in a short period of time, where you obviously can't cover that by using commercial flights."

"So it actually saves money in that regard," Broomhead said, noting the private jet was hired below commercial rates.

The private jet fees to Rowsthorn's jet leasing company were on top of the \$1.8 million termination payment, \$1.5 million cash bonus, \$1.64 million in fixed pay and \$803,717 in share payments he received for the year – a total of \$5.8 million.

WOMEN OF STEEL

The Gujarat NRE Coking Coal executive chairman, **Arun Kumar Jagatramka**, has always been known for his slightly unconventional PowerPoint presentations.

He did not disappoint yesterday at an open day at Gujarat's Russell



Vale mining operations in the Illawarra. At the start of his presentation, Jagatramka covered "the story of five extraordinary women and the wars that paid tribute to their love". They included **Helen of Troy**, "the face that launched a thousand ships", **Cleopatra** and the figures of legend **Anarkali** and **Karubaki**. But the one that caught CBD's eye was **Eva Braun** (aka Mrs Adolf Hitler). "Married in a bunker, she died by taking cyanide, but kept her love alive... for a man the world hates," Jagatramka's presentation said.

He noted how all five love stories had led to "epic wars" and advanced the use of steel.

"The use of steel in weaponry also saw giant leaps in the chosen periods," he said.

Jagatramka, in his presentation, also warned of the potential consequences if society was forced off coal.

"Global climate change is a truth that we all must face, but we need to ensure that facts and figures are not used to forcefully slaughter the human civilisation in a fashion similar to the Y2K scare at the beginning of this millennium, which turned out to be one of the biggest hoax calls in the modern era," he said.

Guests at the open day included Jagatramka's old chum and former NSW premier **Neville Wran** and another former NSW premier, **Morris Iemma**.

PAY DAY

The former HIH director **George Oswald Sturesteps** has won, on appeal, his decade-long fight to be paid some outstanding wages, annual leave, long service leave, superannuation and retrenchment pay from the failed insurer.

The NSW Court of Appeal has ordered the HIH liquidators McGrathNicol to pay Sturesteps \$2.75 million, which included \$588,727 in accrued annual leave and \$1.6 million in redundancy pay.

Sturesteps, however, failed to overturn the judgment in the NSW



Mark Rowsthorn's company charged his former employer \$613,259 for jet hire.

Supreme Court last year in which he was ordered to repay a \$US200,000 loan – plus interest – from HIH that funded the purchase of an apartment in San Francisco in 1987 for \$US250,000.

In 1994, HIH paid Sturesteps a \$US300,000 bonus to help fund the purchase of a "replacement" apartment with his wife, Beryl. But when the original apartment was sold for

phantom stock holding for Sturesteps was "not going to work".

It was here Williams allegedly suggested Sturesteps could be given an apartment in San Francisco with no further obligation to pay HIH for the \$US200,000 loan.

TAD A NO-SHOW

Delegates and organisers at the largest mining conference in Sydney for 2011, Mines and Money Australia, were left scratching their heads yesterday after one of the keynote speakers was a no-show.

"We're still waiting for **Tad Watroba**," the MC said, gazing into a crowd of several hundred people at the Sydney Convention Centre yesterday morning.

But there was no sign of the Hancock Prospecting executive director who was scheduled to give an address on the "opportunities and challenges in a volatile market".

CBD meanwhile received some feedback yesterday to an item it wrote about the **Wayne McCrae**-headed copper hopeful Cudeco.

"Why don't you get a life R sole [sic]," said an email from the company, which remains suspended from trading. It is unclear which post the Mr or Ms R Sole holds at Cudeco.

'Ensure that facts and figures are not used to forcefully slaughter the human civilisation.'

Arun Kumar Jagatramka, Gujarat NRE Coking Coal chairman

\$226,000, the original loan was never repaid.

Sturesteps, in his affidavit, recalled a conversation between himself and the former head of HIH **Ray Williams** over the apartment issue.

When the two were in the former Californian capital of Sonoma for a wedding in 1994, Sturesteps complained to Williams over a cup of coffee about his "lack of reward for my success".

Williams, according to the affidavit, said in the conversation a

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