

opportunities.  
Commissioner Jonathan Coppel said funding arrangements over-

natural disasters in recent years, including the Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria in 2009, 2011's Cyclone Yasi

lion to fix Colleges Crossing Recreation Reserve. The work was finished only weeks before it was extensively

insurance than those in southern regions," Suncorp chief financial officer, Steve Johnston said recently.

# Wearable tech goes from geek to chic

Vanessa Desloires

Wearable gadgets have left the male-only geek club and joined the catwalk.

Designs from Samsung and Google are starting to appear as accessories to labels such as Burberry and Moschino.

Wearable gadgets such as smartwatches are usually the preserve of male tech geeks and are rarely seen on the wrists of fashionable women, but technology companies are catching on to this largely untapped market.

"It makes sense that as wearable technology moves from fitness and boys' toys into everyday life, there will be more uptake from women," said ThoughtWorks's lead business analyst, JoJo Rowden.

The wearables market is in its early stages in Australia, but Samsung already dominates the market, accounting for 80 per cent of smartwatch sales, according to research company GFK.

The feted Apple iWatch, unveiled earlier this month, will be available from next year.

In the United States, the wearable technology market has been estimated to be worth about \$US8 billion over the next four years.

ThoughtWorks's head of retail, Dan McMahon, said it was a common misconception that men were the early adopters of technology.

"Most tech companies have realised that the key to winning mainstream adoption is through appealing to women," Mr McMahon said.

But he said they had struggled to find the nexus between functionality and fashion.

He said while technology companies had realised they had the capability to build innovative products, they weren't as good at understanding the emotional connection people had to fashion, and teaming up with an established fashion label would help bridge the gap.

Apple hired former Burberry chief executive Angela Ahrendts last year to head up its retail division and help develop and sell the iWatch.

Samsung has also crossed the line



ThoughtWorks's JoJo Rowden says uptake in wearable gadgets among women is set to grow. PHOTO: BRETT HEMMINGS

into the fashion world, partnering with crystal jeweller Swarovski to produce a limited range of its Gear S smartwatch.

"We all want to have a smartwatch that is both fashionable but also useful," Samsung Electronics Australia chief marketing officer Arno Lenior said.

"The Gear S can also act as a standalone mobile device with 3G connectivity, making it more practical."

Despite lacking the pedigree of a fashion house, the devices certainly match the prestige price tag, with Samsung's top-of-the-range Gear S retailing for about \$450, while the Apple

iWatch is expected to fetch about \$400.

Telyste analyst Foad Fadaghi said his company's research didn't indicate a bias for targeting either gender within the wearables market. "Traditional tech products have often appealed primarily to male buyers. What we're seeing is an equalisation of that."

# Sir Ronald Brierley caught in rare stamp theft

Patrick Durkin

Legendary New Zealand corporate raider and leading philatelist Sir Ronald Brierley will have to return \$200,000 of stolen rare stamps.

The stamps include a King George V one-penny stamp, a 10 shilling Kangaroo stamp and a block of stamps from the "Sydney Harbour Bridge" series and were stolen from late Melbourne art dealer Justin

art dealer Brian Kino, the son-in-law of Mr Sterling, misappropriated the valuable stamps from Sterling's \$3.5 million collection and sold them to Sir Ronald under false pretences.

Mr Sterling's daughter, Marilyn Kino, claimed the stamps went missing after her father died from renal failure, aged 88, in June 2012.

Judge Peter Vickery rejected claims by Mr Kino that he was given the 44 stamps, worth an estimated \$270,000, by Mr Sterling

take the stamps because, from about 2008 until about May 2010, he had been assisting Mr Sterling in creating, cataloguing and generally maintaining the Sterling Collection," Justice Vickery said. Sir Ron, known in the rarefied world of stamp collecting as "Lionheart", had planned to sell the stamps at an auction on May 2. The auction catalogue entitled *Australian Rarities from the Lionheart Collection* described Sir Ron as "a collector of rare distinction".

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