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Comvita launches new structure; positions for the next phase of growth

Global natural health and beauty products company Comvita recently launched a new structure and the appointment of key personnel to strengthen the company's growth platform and position it for the next phase of development.

The key initiatives include:

- The creation of the role of Chief Operating Officer to oversee Comvita's marketing, sales and its global supply chain;
- The split of the Asian business unit into one covering Greater China and South East Asia and another covering North East Asia;
- The creation of a new Pacific business unit covering New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the US;
- The creation of a new strategic business unit Comvita Innovation Limited to undertake research and development and foster links with universities and other research institutions;
- The appointment of a General Manager Apiary Development to strengthen and develop the rapidly growing apiary business.

Comvita CEO Brett Hewlett said: "This new structure will ensure Comvita makes the most of the abundant prospects we see around the globe.

"Product sourcing and delivery to market form an integral part of the overall Comvita brand offering. It is important therefore that we maintain a close link between the supply end and demand end of our business via a single senior manager."

"Meanwhile Asia has reached a level of complexity and scale where it is now ready for us to split into two regions – North East Asia incorporating Japan and Korea and Greater China and South East Asia.

"We also have further expansion plans for the American markets and have taken the opportunity to set up a Pacific Region for sales, covering New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the USA."

Finally, in order to give heightened importance to the role that research and innovation plays in plotting Comvita's future path, we have created a new team that sit slightly outside the day-to-day operations of the core Comvita business. This team conducts a range of research programmes, designed to deliver tangible, commercial benefits for Comvita."

"The new business units will complement the existing divisions of Finance, Human Resources and Brand & Design."

In conjunction with the re-structure Comvita announces the following appointments:

Chief Operating Officer (COO): Scott Coulter, B.Tech (Biotech), BBS (Accounting)

Mr Coulter, previously the Chief Marketing Officer, has responsibility for implementing Comvita's global strategic marketing, sales and product development as well as managing Comvita's global supply chain and distribution. He will focus on forging tighter integration between all business units, ensuring the supply chain is responsive to global demand, while continuing to build Comvita's highly

recognised and trusted brand. He will lead a global team, including line responsibility for all of Comvita's offshore entities. Mr Coulter will continue to be based at Comvita's global headquarters in Paengaroa, Bay of Plenty.

Mr Coulter held extensive sales and marketing management roles at Dominion Salt and Tetra Pak prior to his joining Comvita as Sales and Marketing Manager in 2002. He was personally named as winner of the Export Bay of Plenty Achiever Award in 2010.

General Manager North East Asia: Nevin Amos, B. Hort Sci (Hons), PhD (Bioprocess)

Mr Amos is moving from his current role as Chief Supply Chain Officer to this new position, based in Japan. Mr Amos will focus on developing a long term sustainable growth platform in North East Asia that supports Comvita's growth vision. Mr Amos was awarded a 2011 Prime Minister's Business Scholarship which he is completing in Singapore before this new role commences in April.

Mr. Amos has led Comvita's procurement, manufacturing, quality and distribution teams since November 2006. He has a strong background in international food supply and logistics including valuable experience in market access, quality, supply, logistics technology and lean manufacturing. Prior to joining Comvita he held positions with ZESPRI, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) (Australia), the Meat Industry Research Institute of New Zealand (MIRINZ) and Massey University.

General Manager Greater China & South East Asia: Ron Butt, BEng

Mr Butt, currently General Manager Asia, will take responsibility for the Hong Kong, China and Taiwan markets and also Comvita's expansion into the South East Asian market. Mr Butt will continue to be based in Comvita's regional hub Hong Kong, which provides marketing and distribution capabilities in-market and enabling this growth into neighbouring regions.

After attending university in New Zealand, Mr Butt had a 10-year career with ExxonMobil in the Asia Pacific region, and since 2005, has championed Comvita's premium brand positioning in the Hong Kong market. In 2007 Comvita acquired Greenlife, its Hong Kong distributor, and Mr Butt became General Manager for the Asia region.

General Manager Pacific (Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the USA): Alex Hutton, B.Ec, MBA

In addition to his current responsibilities of managing the Australian market, based in Brisbane, Mr Hutton will be responsible for sales and profitability in New Zealand, Canada and the United States. As well as developing new market opportunities, Mr Hutton will continue to be responsible for the implementation of the strategic plan for Olive Products Australia.

Mr Hutton joined Comvita in August 2010 following a senior executive role as Chief Operating Officer at Thompson Group and Thursday Plantation and General Management roles with Amcor Australasia, Smorgon Steel and Pivot Limited. He has extensive experience in manufacturing process improvement, developing new markets, sales force effectiveness and change management. His experience includes involvement in US market development across a number of industries.

General Manager Apiary Development: John Burke, BAgSc

Mr Burke has been appointed to this newly created position in New Zealand, with a focus on establishing a strategic and operating framework to strengthen and develop the growth of Comvita's expanding apiary business and land development opportunities. Partial ownership of their own supply gives Comvita greater control of the quality and cost and security of future supply. Land development and planting of Comvita's special varieties of Manuka, will enable Comvita to grow overall supply for the benefit of the entire New Zealand Manuka honey industry.

Mr Burke's most recent role has been as the General Manager Kiwifruit Vine Health (the entity formed by the NZ kiwifruit industry to combat the bacterial disease Psa-V) and he has an agri-business background. He worked for the Rural Bank, operating a rural valuation and consultancy practice before entering the kiwifruit post-harvest business. He's a former CEO and a current director of, Te Awanui Huka Pak, a six-million tray Kiwifruit Post Harvest facility and is also a kiwifruit grower.

Comvita Innovation Limited (CIL): Dr Ralf Schlothauer, M.Tech, PhD (Bioprocess)

As Chief Technology Officer Dr Schlothauer, has overall strategic and functional responsibility for research and development and leads a team with expertise in research and development and food technology. This will continue, alongside Dr Schlothauer heading up CIL, a newly formed entity, and a wholly owned subsidiary of Comvita NZ Limited. CIL will have responsibility for conducting a wide range of research programmes, designed to deliver tangible, commercial benefits for Comvita. The team will also conduct research and innovation work for external companies that have aligned interests with Comvita. CIL will be primarily based in the Institute for Innovation in Biotechnology (IIB) at the University of Auckland, where Comvita is a co-locator and Dr. Schlothauer is an Associate Professor.

Dr. Schlothauer is originally from Northern Germany where he earned a Masters of Bioprocess Engineering and a PhD in the same field. He has worked in New Zealand for extended periods with Massey University, New Zealand Dairy Research Institute (now part of Fonterra) and most recently at Tatua Nutritionals. In between assignments, Dr Schlothauer was Group Manager - Probiotics for Danisco in Germany.

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About Comvita www.comvita.co.nz

Comvita is an international natural health and beauty products company with a strong New Zealand heritage. We are committed to the development of innovative natural health and wellbeing products, backed by credible scientific research.

We develop and manufacture products in the categories of Health Care, Personal Care (Skincare and Wound Care) and Functional Foods (Health Foods). Manuka (*leptospermum*) honey is at the core of the Comvita product range and we are the largest manufacturer and marketer of this uniquely New Zealand resource.

We sell into more than 18 countries through a network of wholesale and third-party outlets, more than 470 branded retail outlets throughout Asia – including 400 stores in 40 cities in mainland China and online. We have offices in New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and the United Kingdom.