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New business computer is value for money

THIS week sees the release of an outstanding new computer — the MicroBee PC85. This Australian-designed and built machine sets a whole new standard in value for money. It includes many features, which cost hundreds of dollars on other computers, at a very inexpensive price.

Built into the machine on ROM for instant recall is Database, Basic, Word-

Cassette-based unit

Bee, telecommunications, spreadsheet, graphics, Viatel and a calculator. All this in 32K of RAM (and hundreds in ROM).

And it costs an unbelievable \$499. For an extra \$100, there's a choice of amber or green screen.

David Crossley, of MicroBee, says: "This is the ideal system for the small businessman who is prepared to run a small business of a cassette-driven system."

"Cassette-based computers are not totally unusable for business. It only becomes difficult when you have to load the large business programs from the tape.

In memory

"The MicroBee has so much ROM, the programs are kept in memory all the time. So there is no need to load it from tape. It is even faster than disc.

"The only time the cassette drive, which can be any standard home cassette recorder, needs to be used is when saving data from a file. Even this does not take long with the

information transfer rate of the tape.

"The MicroBee PC85 has a built-in battery back-up which means when the machine is turned off, the information is not lost.

"You can see with these features a cassette tape-based system is practical and exceedingly cheap."

Though Crossley argues that the system can be run off a cassette, MicroBee also provides a disc drive system for an extra \$500. And anyone who wants to run the system seriously for business should have this.

Serious

With the cassette storage system for data, this new MicroBee must be classified as a serious enthusiast's machine, with disc drive as a serious small business personal computer.

WordBee is the MicroBee word processor, which is very similar to WordStar but easier to operate. Many "help" functions displayed on the screen allow use of the word processor without reading the instruction manual.

5000 words

WordBee gives 32K of RAM to type in, which translates to around 5000 words. It allows users to format the output and has complete search-and-replace techniques. The help functions can be further accessed to provide more information on certain aspects of the WordBee.

The Database is relatively simple in design and simple to use. It is very powerful and permits 255 records to be set up. There are no help screens in the program, but it is still fairly straightforward to follow.

As with the word processor, the computer

gives 32K for information storage. The telecom section sets up telecommunications for modems, printers and the like.

The spreadsheet, called BusyCalc, is one program which definitely requires study of the manual. It is very similar to Multiplan.

In fact if you understand Multiplan, the transfer time to BusyCalc will be minimal.

BusyCalc is the same as other spreadsheets, but far more powerful than most.

The Graphic section allows creation of line or histogram graphs that can be saved or dumped to a printer. Once data to be graphed has been entered, you can then display text on the graph.

Recall

The MicroBee Viatel is the standard Viatel interface except with the added feature of being able to save screens for later recall. By capturing pages quickly off Viatel, you save money because the pages can be read later without paying the connect time to Viatel, which is eight cents a minute during the day.

The PC85's system menu allows users to adjust the screen position and its colors, set the clock and alarm, plus printer specifications.

One final feature of the PC85 is that it has a built-in user manual on ROM. This brings information on commands with a couple of key strokes.

Overall, the PC85 is one of the few computers which offers real value for money.

It is a real alternative for the small businessman who does not wish to spend too much on a computer system. It is cheap, fast and reliable.

What is even better is that it is Australian-made.

□ David Crossley with the value-for-money PC85.

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Bunbury computer shop caters for many brands

THE spread of computers is such that there is a growing need for country users to have their own locally-based service.

This was brought home to me last weekend when I travelled down to Bunbury for the annual expo.

One of WA's leading computer business houses recently set up shop down there and put on a computer show within the expo.

Heading up the operation are Bruce Thomas and his wife, Melba, and Wally Wesley, who designed and built the Sting fast-loading hardware modification for the Commodore 64.

Their computer store is called Computer Arcade and because they carry so many brands, they were able to put on a really good

computer show within the expo.

Offering the only home computer store in Bunbury, they are catering for a wide number of brands. These include Commodore, Amstrad, the Sony and Mitsubishi MSX computers. They also plan to stock MicroBee.

Computer Arcade also stocks a wide range of software for all the brands in the shop.

Plans are to set up a public domain library of software by converting all Commodore and Amstrad public domain software to MSX. The company also has a

range of computer furniture. This makes it probably one of the most comprehensive computer stores in WA.

The main point is that Bunbury and the surrounding area now has its own computer store, staffed by enthusiasts who know their machines, something often lacking in Perth computer shops.

People of this trio setting up shops in the country is the perfect answer.

Computer Arcade is located at Unit 8 in the Sandridge Village Shopping Centre (097-21 5688).

Security system for computers

COMPUTERS have become the latest target for thieves — especially now Christmas is on the way.

In NSW, police report that computers are disappearing at the rate of 50 a month, and the WA police report a similar rise in computer hardware thefts.

Tandy is one of the first to rise to the challenge and has announced a security package to protect your computer system.

The company has developed a range of 24-hour protection systems for homes, offices and schools. The heart of the system is Tandy's 24-hour telephone security monitoring, operated from Sydney.

Contact Tandy for more information.

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