

Manuka-based consultants going national

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Business Reporter

Burgeoning management consultancy Richardson: O'Rourke has celebrated a national accolade by announcing ambitious expansion plans.

The Manuka firm will be named one of the country's fastest-growing start-up companies in a financial magazine list out today.

Managing director David O'Rourke said yesterday the next stage would be the opening of a Melbourne office in June followed by international growth.

He said the first overseas venture was most likely to be in Hong Kong then Dubai, both within the next 18 months.

And within five years the aim was to have branches in all major Australian cities, Britain and the United States.

Mr O'Rourke and executive director Stuart Richardson founded the business in 2002 and it has enjoyed growth rates of at least 100 per cent every year since.

The bosses chose St Kilda in Melbourne as the location for their first office outside Canberra after



LOOKING FORWARD: Founders David O'Rourke, left, and Stuart Richardson.

feeling the city offered a more familiar business setting than Sydney, Mr Richardson said.

"It was a logical extension," he said.

"The culture of our business is more aligned to Melbourne than, say, Sydney.

"Melbourne has a strong sense of community and is more relationship-based. It's much like Canberra in many ways."

Mr O'Rourke said one key strategy had been to carefully pick a handful of companies to work with, and then focus on achieving greater contracts

within that company to take Richardson: O'Rourke forward. One such partnership had allowed it to move up the ranks of a global financial services firm in Australia and had opened up the possibility of working with its operation in Hong Kong.

The company is expecting international growth rates to outstrip the domestic one before too long.

Mr Richardson said, "Australia is only between 2 and 3 per cent of the world economy.

"But you only get one chance, if you fail in business here you get thrown on the scrap heap."

"The lessons we've learnt in Australia will help to guide our international expansion."

Today's inclusion in *BRW* magazine's Upstarts list is the second consecutive year Richardson: O'Rourke has featured in it.

Among the criteria for being included are the company must have generated more than \$500,000 in revenue in the financial year 2005-06, and that sum must be more than for the previous 12 months.

Entrants cannot have begun trading before June 30, 2002 and need to be Australian, not a subsidiary of a multinational.