

JEDDA BOOMERANGS – REBECCA MCNABOE AND HAMISH BEETSON

DUBBO NSW

Reasons why they went into business

- to produce something unique to Australia – beautiful, authentic hardwood boomerangs;
- to develop an Indigenous tourist business manufacturing artefacts for sale both domestically and internationally;
- to incorporate tours of their site and the manufacturing process;
- to demonstrate the potential of Jedda Boomerangs to the IBA/banks to help secure a loan; and
- to expand the business by opening an Aboriginal Art Gallery and Museum.

The story so far

Rebecca started her association with Jedda Boomerangs by working for the previous owners for five years as a decorator/artist. She then set up Kangarra Aboriginal Art Gallery in Dubbo around two years ago. She used this location to display her own work as well as ceramic work from potters from the local area.

Rebecca and her partner Hamish were disappointed and frustrated to see that many products sold to the tourist market as Indigenous souvenirs are produced overseas and seem to be of a poor quality.

Fortuitously the owners of Jemma Boomerangs wanted to retire and sell their business and offered it to Rebecca and Hamish. A lease was negotiated and the couple could see a market for providing quality, authentic Indigenous goods.

Word of the new owners soon spread and orders were coming in for the “Indigenous owned and operated” boomerang manufacturing operation.

They manufacture and distribute the following products both locally and internationally:

- Mulga hardwood boomerangs
- Ply boomerangs
- Aboriginal Artefacts
- Clapsticks
- Digging Sticks
- Emu Callers
- Didgeridoos

Funding (if any) to support their business development

Apart from some assistance for marketing from the NSW Department of State and Regional Development, they have not received any funding assistance.

They have received mentoring and business advisory services from the Parkes Forbes BEC (through the following programmes - Orana Business Advisory Service, Aboriginal Enterprise Development Officer and Business Ready Program for Indigenous Tourism) (BRPIT).

Stakeholders within their business or who have helped them

Rebecca and Hamish operate their business as a partnership. They have strong support from both their families and they have gained vast knowledge from the experiences of the previous owners.

At present they are undertaking a Certificate IV in Business (Small Business Management) through the BEC to help develop their entrepreneurial skills.

Business planning, how implemented and timeframes for the development of their business

A business plan is being developed to facilitate the expansion of the operation. This includes time frames for the purchase and development of the existing complex/facility.

Objectives of the five year time frame include:

- Enlarge the business
- Create more employment
- The inclusion of an Aboriginal Gallery and Museum

Economic and employment impact

Both Hamish and Rebecca work full time at Jedda Boomerangs. They also employ six staff who are involved in the manufacturing process; making boomerangs, didgeridoos etc through to decorating the finished goods.

Rebecca and Hamish hope to establish their operation as the premium supplier of hardwood boomerangs in Australia.

Success factors and lessons learnt

The previous owners passed on the winning combination of providing a quality product coupled with superior service and Rebecca and Hamish strive to uphold these standards.

They have learnt many valuable lessons through trial and error. These include employing the right people and establishing good relationships with your clients.

Factors necessary for success also include ambition, passion and commitment.

Advice to others contemplating the enterprise option

- make use of all available business resources from both the government and the private sector including your local BEC, accountant, solicitor etc.
- plan before implementing – market research is essential prior to making decisions
- confirm that finance is in place

Best practice

Make sure that your product is of a high quality. Rebecca and Hamish take pride in the quality of craftsmanship, the beautiful wood grains used, the colour and artistic design of all their products.

Both Rebecca and Hamish feel that small business management skills play an integral part of any business. Also, it is better to ask for help sooner rather than later when problems may be irreparable.

Collect and access key information. Continue self education and training of staff to improve knowledge and understanding of business.

Operate the business profitably with collection and payment of accounts in an appropriate timeframe.

Time management is very important as is communication with clients, letting them know of changes, new products and short falls when necessary

Contacts, links and resources

- Tourist Advisory Board, Dubbo City Council
- Aboriginal Men's Business, Dubbo
- Parkes Forbes BEC



Hamish Beetson and Rebecca McNaboe