

The Pacific Collective



Pictured: Louise Hardman
The Pacific Collective

Plastic in the ocean is at epidemic levels. Louise Hardman has built a machine to help recycle waste and empower the people most affected by the problem.

The Pacific Collective

“Co-working spaces are fantastic for Startups, but there also needs mentors coming in regularly to direct and support new businesses because it is really hard to get going by yourself when you have limited funds and input.”

Louise Hardman | CEO/ Founder
The Pacific Collective
thepacificcollective.com.au

Briefly describe what it is that your business, company or organisation does?

We have created waste plastic solutions which enable remote communities to recycle all their waste plastic into valuable resources, using a Shruder (shredding and extrusion) machine and specialized training/ education program.

What is unique or innovative about your approach to delivering this service or product?

Two aspects:

Firstly our machines are designed for communities with limited power and resources, as such they operate on single-phase power but with a three phase motor. We also have alternative energy sources – solar units to go with them. The machines are 95kg making them mobile and able to fit a trailer or small truck.

Secondly we deliver a training program focused on understanding the chemistry of plastics and applying a wholistic waste plastic management approach. This will ensure longevity of the program, and we will provide ongoing support and network opportunities.

How is innovation addressed within your organisation?

Innovation is the key feature of our business, everything revolves around innovation. Our team now consists of specialists in their respective fields and we rely on each other to find more efficient, cutting-edge ideas which will enable us to create ground-breaking machinery, training and delivery.

If it is embraced – what are some of the examples?

Some of the examples, include our engineers constantly refining the efficiency of the machinery through new ideas, as such when I first started there was one version

of the Shruder, now we have 6 options to suit the needs of the community. We are currently developing telemetry remote sensing data loggers, where we can record machinery production in remote areas and troubleshoot problems remotely.

Another example is the training program is the first of it's kind where the chemistry of plastics is taught as environmental solution, complete with manuals, posters and training resources.

Do you currently collaborate with other organisations and industries within the Mid North Coast?

Yes, we are collaborating with a range of businesses, universities, TAFEs and NGO's – including Emalte International, SI Clean Energy, National Marine Science Centre, NSW TAFE Creative Industries, NevHouse and Ocean Recovery Alliance, to name a few.

What have these collaborations resulted in?

The collaborations are forming an amazing ground swell of interest, networks and collaboration in marine debris and waste plastic management for communities, through the diverse ideas and expertise of the organisations and industries.

Why were these collaborations formed?

Simply because people care about the state of global plastic pollution and marine debris and want to do something about it.

And how?

The formed naturally as our business started to grow. This was accelerated after winning the StartUp Coffs Coast Innovation awards, then transitioning from a sole trader to a company, more people became connected through introductions and a lot of media.

What roadblocks or problems have you had to solve for the business, company or organisation to be successful?

Mostly working on my own for the first 12 months, the financial aspect and staying afloat. The other big learning curve for me is learning about business when I am trained as a zoologist/ secondary science teacher these are two very different worlds. Luckily, I met some very helpful people who mentored me in the early stages, which really allowed me to transition from an idea to a reality.

Have you had any assistance from government or local council?

Yes, Kristina Cook (Coffs Council) who operated the 6 Degrees co-working hub was invaluable, particularly as a business mentor, learning how to pitch and as sounding board for the first 12 months. Then I managed to secure a R&D grant from JobsForNSW (Oct, 16' Dept. Industry) which enabled me to complete the majority of the machinery development. After this I entered (and won) the Pitch contest (Coffs Coast StartUp- June, 17'), which is when it really accelerated the business, now a company with experts in all fields- management, machinery operations, technical, training, etc.

“Luckily, I met some very helpful people who mentored me in the early stages, which really allowed me to transition from an idea to a reality.”

In your opinion what needs to be improved on the Mid North Coast?

Co-working spaces are fantastic for Startups, but there also needs mentors coming in regularly to direct and support new businesses because it is really hard to get going by yourself when you have limited funds and input.

What do you enjoy about being based on the Mid North Coast?

Location between two major cities, access to the ocean and beaches and surrounding by amazing small communities that really care about their surroundings.

In regard to your business, company or organisation what are your plans for the next 12 months?

We are planning a launch of a pilot program to a Pacific Ocean country close by. We are setting up a business model that will enable 'polluter pays the polluted' style funding. We also plan to scaleup our team and operations quite considerably in the next 12 months, and deliver presentations at a number of key events very soon.