



Case Study:
Redspear Safety

CASE STUDY



If you ask Redspear Safety's owners Barry McGuire (Managing Director), Liza McGuire (Operations Manager) and Francois Witbooi (General Manager) what their vision for the company for the next 10-15 years is, it is very clear. They want to build a sustainable business that is the number one provider of safety solutions across Western Australia. There is even some talk about listing on the Australian Stock Exchange in the future.

The passion and ambition they share for the business is infectious.

Perth-based Redspear Safety (Redspear) is a Noongar Aboriginal business that provides safety equipment to the oil and gas, mining and construction sectors through the supply of engineered fall protection (EFP), confined space rescue and retrieval systems, lifting and rigging solutions, mobile structures and materials handling gear.

Redspear Safety "Harnessing growth"

Redspear is one of many Aboriginal businesses that RSM Bird Cameron mentors by providing business planning advice, through the West Pilbara Business Support Program, supported by Chevron Australia.

Chevron Australia is leading the developing of the Wheatstone Project – one of Australia's largest LNG projects. The project is located 12 kilometres west of Onslow on the Pilbara coast of Western Australia. Chevron says its commitment to the West Pilbara Business Support Program is ingrained in its philosophy of helping to make local businesses where it operates more competitive to meet industry and its contracting standards.

In essence, the program is a collaborative partnership between RSM Bird Cameron, Many Rivers Microfinance and Business Centre Pilbara to help build local business capacity and capability. From business concept to operations, this program provides support and guidance to help small local Pilbara businesses grow and compete. Through the program, entrepreneurs and business owners can develop a business idea into a concept and robustly test it to see if it's commercially viable.

The story behind how husband and wife team Barry and Liza met Francois and subsequently roped him into the business is an interesting one and the chemistry and camaraderie between the trio could be part of the winning formula behind Redspear Safety. Andrew Johnson from RSM Bird Cameron even had a role to play in bringing the trio together.

"We met whilst Francois was working for not-for-profit Many Rivers. When he resigned last year, Andrew was quick to plant the seeds in our mind to convince Francois to come on board as a shareholder," says Barry. That he did and the rest as they say is history.

Like any new start-up, they are the first to admit that it takes a lot more than blood, sweat and tears to get a business off the ground.

Francois said, "The business started because we identified a niche in the market, particularly in the resources sector. We found that even though the market wanted to reduce production and running costs, they wanted to do it in a manner which did not compromise on safety.

"Sound product knowledge, willingness to put in the hard yards and a commitment to providing exceptional service are



From left to right: Barry McGuire (Managing Director) and Christ Di Losa (BTS CEO)



Executive Management of Redspear Safety and BTS in the NATA accredited testing facility

the ingredients of a great small business. From inception, it needs to be geared for growth and we believe that at Redspear Safety, everything is scalable.

"We have spent a lot of time getting the foundation right by establishing everything from shareholder agreements to business planning to adopting the appropriate cash flow model to designing an efficient end to end sales process and applying for relevant insurances. Now we can work on growing the business."

Andrew provides the team with strategic business advice and he has helped Redspear make significant decisions as they grow.

Most recently, Andrew assisted with finalising the distribution agreement between Redspear and Beaver Technology Solutions (BTS), an Australian-owned company that specialises in the design and manufacture of innovative engineered industrial safety fall protection products. BTS has been exceptional in the support and belief they have shown in the business and it is clear that the team at Redspear Safety hold them in high regard.

Barry said, "Andrew put things in perspective for us from the start. He has been an incredibly important independent voice for the company in identifying where we stand and deciding on the next stage for the business.

"He is very strategic with his approach and beyond truly caring about the success of the business, he has also been an ambassador for us as he has an excellent reputation in the industry and also in our key sectors."

Barry is a well-respected Aboriginal leader and the network of influential contacts he has made through delivering cultural awareness and cultural safety in the form of 'Welcomes to Country' around Perth over the years has also been pivotal to getting the business in front of potential clients.

The pride he shares for his Aboriginal heritage shines through.

"We want to be an inspiration to other Aboriginal businesses and also show the commercial world that Aboriginal businesses can function efficiently and effectively and we can be self-sufficient."

Liza adds that while being an Aboriginal-owned business is definitely a strategic asset, the team are committed to being viewed firstly as a great Australian-owned business.

"Being an Aboriginal-owned business gets us to the table and gives us the opportunity to pitch for work that other businesses may not have access to but we are committed to providing an exceptional client experience in line with our values of Excellence, Integrity and Innovation. We also want to be role models for other young Aboriginal people who have got the entrepreneurial spirit and dream of being successful," says Liza.

Barry believes that the impact of Andrew's mentoring on him personally and the business has been priceless.

Barry explained: "I call him 'Boylba' (meaning magic in Noongar) Johnson."