

Jobs for NSW helps The Glass Lab ride the wave of success

Adam Wessel first got a taste for surfing when he was 12 years old. As a boy, he could never have imagined that his passion for the salt and waves would one day translate into career success.

In 2009, Adam established The Glass Lab, a surfboard manufacturing company that supplies to global brands and has recently moved to a larger warehouse in Tweed Heads South.

The Glass Lab employs a team of 20, and counts surfboard brands Channel Island, Stacey, Joystick, Hammo, Alex Crews and Morning of the Earth among its clients.

‘Our client companies bring their shaped boards to us and we’ll fibreglass, sand and finish them ready to be shipped domestically or internationally, whether that’s door-to-door to the customer or wholesale to their stores or retail outlets’, Adam says.

The Glass Lab also has the licence to American brand Sharp Eye Surfboards, enabling it to create a line of boards to be sold under that label. The goal is to take on similar licence arrangements down the track.



The need for investment: The Glass Lab meets Jobs for NSW

In order to allow the company to further expand nationally and internationally, the local Office of Regional Development referred Adam to Jobs for NSW, who assisted with a \$300,000 Regional Growth Loan. This is an interest-free loan that will help to create 17 new jobs in the company.

‘The loan allowed us to move our business into a bigger, world-class facility, which enabled us to increase our production and put on more staff’, Adam says.

In turn, the bigger premises provided the space for new manufacturing techniques and a repair service for local surfboard outlets. The Glass Lab has also branched into epoxy resin finishes that are ‘going crazy’ and have allowed access to a bigger slice of the market.

The Glass Lab was inspired by what Adam describes as ‘gaps’ he started to see in the market for a high-performance product combined with second-to-none customer service.

‘We concentrate on the quality of the product and top that off with even better service, where we are solely focused on a customer’s needs and wants’, he says.

That emphasis on quality is underlined by the numerous professional surfers who are using boards manufactured at The Glass Lab—and when the next Olympics opens in three years’ time in Tokyo, it could be a local Tweed board that helps turn in a performance worthy of the first-ever gold medal for surfing.



Future focus

The Glass Lab is now the biggest business of its kind in Australia and Adam says the level of growth they've enjoyed in recent months would not have come about as quickly without the assistance of Jobs for NSW.

Long-term, Adam would like his business to continue on a strong growth trajectory and is encouraged by what he sees as a buoyant surfboard market, where consumers are starting to recognise the value in quality boards. Adam thinks this will receive a further boost when the 2020 Olympics roll around.

But, when it comes down to it, his ultimate goal is as crystal clear as the waves he loves to ride: 'Quite simply we want to be here in 50 years'.

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Adam Wessel
Founder, The Glass Lab



Find out more

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