

QLD CORONAVIRUS NEWS

Buy Australian: Noosaville mums find new revenue streams during COVID

Chyna Hayden, The Courier-Mail
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Life is all about fun and games for Barbara Clack and her team at Swingz n Thingz.

Their “fun and funky” range of outdoor products have seen an increase in demand since COVID, with the Sunshine Coast business not only surviving, but thriving, in recent months.

“Our swings and things provided entertainment for kids, and relief for parents, during lockdown while the playgrounds were closed,” Ms Clack said.

“We already had a well established online presence and we work from home, (so) we have been able to continue trading with minimal disruption.

“Hopefully we’ve provided a little joy to people’s backyards during this very difficult time, when finding outdoor activities away from screens has been a challenge for families.”

It’s this idea of bringing joy to families that has been the foundation for the business, which started with a single product, their hanging chair, at the Eumundi Markets back in 1993.

With the support of her friends and family, Ms Clark has since developed a range of “good quality, well made, functional products” that can withstand the rough and tumble of the Australian family backyard.

“After my partner and I separated in 2000, my good friend Sue, another single mum, came to work with me and as our children grew up in and around the business, they became the inspiration for our new products,” Ms Clack said.

“My son designed our first website when he was in high school, and although he now lives

interstate, he and my partner make up the IT team.

“My daughter, who also lives interstate, helps with marketing and my 97-year-old mum likes to be involved and help wherever she can; she’s a wealth of wisdom, creativity and practicality and loves the challenge of recycling our surplus bits and pieces into something useful, usually for the garden.”



The hugely popular swinging hammock chair from Swingz n Thingz . Picture: Supplied



Six-month-old Ensley Damiri in a custom baby and toddler swing made in Australia by Swingz n Thingz. Photo Lachie Millard

With a strong relationship with her local community, Ms Clack has also been able to employ a neighbour, who had lost her job due to COVID, with the team working hard to ensure all orders are dispatched on time.

“Our studio feels a bit like Santa’s workshop right now; we’re working round the clock to ensure we can deliver lots of joy this Christmas,” Ms Clack said.

Stocking a variety of swings for all ages as well as teepees, swags, ladders, outdoor pouffes and cradles, the Swingz n Thingz family stand by their ethos, being to create products that endure and can be relied upon to provide good old fashioned fun.

“We often receive emails from customers who tell us they’ve had their chair for 24 years and it’s still their favourite place to sit, or how all four of their children have used the same baby swing over the years,” Ms Clack said.

“When supporting a local business, you are dealing with real people who in turn support each other and the community.

“We outsource some of our timber work to a local Men’s Shed and a local wood craftsman, and we have over the years donated our scraps of rope and fabric to local preschools, and to Woodford Folk Festival workshops.

“There’s a quote I’ve seen that sums up local business for me: ‘when you support a small business, an actual person does a little happy dance’.”

“We are excited to see where the creative process takes us next year.”



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