



ACCELERATING COMMERCIALISATION

Life Cell Marine Safety – eyeing off \$150 million global market

Customer Story

United States distributor on board with Australian water safety device invention

A harrowing sea experience was the catalyst for a couple of mates to create their Life Cell Marine Safety invention.

Known as the Life Cell, the buoyant device designed to save lives, is set to cash in on a \$150 million global market after gaining interest from the huge United States marine and boating market.

Safety in all walks of life is big business yet it seems safety at sea had not perfected a package which could help save lives when boats quickly capsize, sink or are swamped by waves.

Rarely is there time in a small-craft emergency to grab, from under seats or from in cupboards, all the safety equipment needed.

Often that equipment is in bags and buckets that become a liability once people are in the water.

The founders of the Life Cell – Scott Smiles and Rick Matthews, found that out when clinging to an esky, with their 11-year-old sons Riley Smiles and Ryan Matthews; after their boat sank, in less than a minute, 10 kilometres off the Sydney coast.

Thankfully Scott could grab and trigger the vessel's emergency beacon and an esky.

The fathers and their boys held onto that esky for almost two hours before the rescue helicopter reached them to drop a life raft.

They were inspired to redefine how boating safety equipment was stored, so everything needed in an emergency could be taken into the water without delay.



The Life Cell is designed to float free of its bracket if the vessel sinks too fast for someone to grab it.

The Life Cell is a high-visibility buoyancy device that stores essential safety equipment and is mounted in a handy position but with the ability to float free of its bracket if submerged.

There are four sizes available, and the equipment which can be placed inside include an EPIRB (emergency beacon), air horn, torch, heliograph, VHF radio, flares and whistles, v-sheet, for example.

The Entrepreneurs' Programme, through Accelerating Commercialisation assistance and funding, is now helping Life Cell Marine Safety to take its simple yet brilliant idea to the world.

“The Accelerating Commercialisation grant has assisted us to achieve international product certification and helped us to meet the requirements of our newly-appointed United States-based distributor.”

JENNY AIKEN, CEO, LIFE CELL MARINE SAFETY

“Attending six trade shows in the US, providing samples, modifying packaging and websites and training sales reps is an incredibly expensive process, but absolutely necessary to successfully commercialise our product.”

“The grant provided us with much needed financial assistance to allow us to gain traction in the US market. I am not sure that we could have achieved this without the grant. We are incredibly grateful for the Government’s support at this critical time for our company,” Jenny says.

Life Cell Marine Safety has international product certification for the Life Cell. It is already being used both commercially and recreationally within Australia.

It was at the time of launching the product in Australia when Life Cell realised they would need funding to survive the commercialisation process.

Jenny Aiken heard about the Accelerating Commercialisation element of the Entrepreneurs’ Programme at a trade show and she realised it could be the key to success.

“I was warned from the very beginning that it would be a significant investment of time but it was worth it. The process really forced us to define our business plan, identify our target market and determine the size of this market,” Jenny says.

“Although the funds from the grant have been invaluable, so too was the business planning process that was essential as part of the application.”

“We feel very honoured to be supported by the Government on what is a difficult journey of business development. It is great to see the Government investing in innovation and the future of our country by developing sustainable businesses that will go on to employ staff and potentially export their products to the world.”

JENNY AIKEN, CEO, LIFE CELL MARINE SAFETY



The Life Cell stores vital emergency gear such as the emergency beacon, which is mandatory.

Life Cell’s Commercialisation Adviser is Maureen Murphy and her vast experience and networks has been invaluable to Life Cell.

Jenny says Maureen is a great sounding board and an Adviser’s guidance adds significant value to the programme.

Maureen suggested to Jenny that she apply for the 2017 Springboard Enterprises Accelerator/Incubator for Australian Female CEOs, of high-growth start-ups.

Jenny was one of 10 successful applicants and started the Springboard Enterprises program in February 2017.

“Without Maureen, I would not have known about the Springboard Enterprises program, and would not have had the confidence to

apply. I think the experience will be a real game changer and further increase my ability to pitch the business successfully for further investment,” Jenny says.

Life Cell is endorsed by Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter, who rescued the Smiles and Matthews’ fathers and sons.

The Life Cell is also being used on vessels operated by NSW Roads and Maritime Services and Department of Primary Industries.

Life Cell employs four people at the moment but CEO Jenny Aiken and the two founders hope interest worldwide will see the company grow.

Visit [Life Cell Marine Safety](#)

Entrepreneurs’ Programme

The Entrepreneurs’ Programme is the Australian Government’s flagship initiative for business competitiveness and productivity.

The [Accelerating Commercialisation](#) element helps small and medium businesses, entrepreneurs and

researchers to commercialise novel products, processes and services.

Check your eligibility by visiting the [Entrepreneurs’ Programme](#) or call **13 28 46**.