



shining bright

A CELEBRATION OF QUEENSLAND SMALL BUSINESS

AT THE HEART OF THE QUEENSLAND
ECONOMY ARE THE STATE'S 403 000
SMALL BUSINESSES. THEY ARE IN
EVERY QUEENSLAND COMMUNITY,
DELIVERING GOODS AND SERVICES,
POWERING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
AND DRIVING EMPLOYMENT AND
GROWTH.

Roma Wire and Steel

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Jamie Dingle decided to trust his own instincts and those of his rural community when he founded Roma Wire and Steel eight years ago.

For Jamie and Natalie Dingle, investing in their own steel supply enterprise was a commitment to rural Queensland business and to their independent ideas.

Jamie spent 12 years as an employee of another large steel company before proposed changes made him rethink his future.

'They didn't seem to be worrying about the bush people', he says. Jamie felt he understood the needs of the rural community, and he could also see the opportunities of the emerging coal seam gas industry.

'We saw an opening, so we looked around, bought a block and started', he says.

That was in 2006, and today Roma Wire and Steel employs nine and is one of the largest steel suppliers in western Queensland—with a customer base ranging from south-western Queensland to the top of Western Australia, into New South Wales and up to the Gulf.

'I suppose it was good timing for us, we bought the business and then the gas came along', says Jamie. 'They use a lot of fencing material as part

of their agreements with graziers and they do try to support local businesses, which is a good thing.'

'We also have a strong buy-local policy and we try to support as many local businesses as possible', Jamie says.

The Dingles are very much a part of their community and support numerous local charities and functions. Roma Wire and Steel can be counted on to sponsor a variety of events, from rodeos and campdrafts to race days and even local school sports days.

Although Jamie saw the niche and took advantage of it at the opportune time, he still felt he could use the advice and wisdom of other business minds.

'One thing about working with a big company is you always have a manager in front of you and you can bounce things off him. But when it's your own business, you have no-one to talk to.'

'Every decision that you make falls back on my wife and I. You don't have that little comfort anymore and I found that a bit tough.'

So the Dingles took advantage of the Queensland Government's Mentoring for Growth Program, which allowed them to access a panel

of experienced business mentors who reviewed their business growth strategy and offered feedback drawn from business knowledge, broad experience and specific expertise.

'It was good to hear from other people, if they thought you're going okay', he says.

One of the best bits of advice he received and he stresses, is to 'always have your business ready for sale'.

Most small businesses, he explains, especially regional ones, have husband and wife teams working full time '24/7'. This can sometimes be a mistake, says Jamie, as the business must be ready for others to 'drop right in without the owners having to be there'. He has followed this advice carefully by ensuring he maintains good staff, and has certain procedures in place that allow he and his family to take holidays from the business.

Jamie has not taken every bit of advice, however.

'I've always said never be frightened to have stock. If you don't have it, you won't sell it', he says, adding that one of the benefits of being a small business owner is that you don't have to explain to anyone else (i.e. a company accountant) that you need more wire.



Department of Tourism, Major Events,
Small Business and the Commonwealth Games

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