

Small NZ business cracks some big nods

Goodbye Sandfly as been accepted as approved product by major grocery offices in New Zealand, giving the small NZ business an opportunity to establish a nationwide brand.

Becky Cashman formulated Goodbye Sandfly 12 years ago while working as a canoe guide on the Dart River out of Glenorchy. "At the time we offered our customers a mix of dettol and baby oil as a repellent that was a pretty horribly brew." Newly trained as a massage therapist, Cashman decided to make her own repellent based on the oils used in massage. She spent the summer of 1999 trialing different blends with willing canoe guests, getting feedback and refining the formula. The resulting product is a blend of 6 aromatherapy grade essential oils in a base of expeller pressed almond oil.

Until 3 years ago, Goodbye Sandfly ticked along with about 40 locations offering their product. However, having two children and a move to the West Coast gave Cashman a whole new focus. "All of the sudden I was in Karamea with 2 small children, a husband working very hard to support us all, and using Goodbye Sandfly everyday because we needed it." Living with sandflies, and watching other families dealing with sandflies, allowed Cashman to gain a new respect for the product. She decided to focus on growing the business. Her husband John Sanderson started helping bottle product in their kitchen after the children were in bed.

Last year Sanderson was given notice that his contract working for DOC was not going to be renewed. Seeing its potential, Sanderson and Cashman decided to make Goodbye Sandfly into a family business with Sanderson officially joining the business at the end of 2009.

As a side interest, Cashman developed the Sandfly Map in late 2009, to provide people with a clearer picture of the location and intensity of sandflies in NZ. Providing information and interaction is as much a part of Goodbye Sandfly as the product. Born in the US, Cashman first came to NZ in 1996. "I had no understanding at all about sandflies, or dealing with them. And the Kiwis around me hardly seemed to acknowledge them." Cashman responded very badly to bites, reporting swelling and itching for weeks. This experience, as well as living with sandflies on a daily basis, helps her stay motivated to help people have access to good information so they can have a better experience.

This year, with key approvals in the grocery sector, Cashman estimates that they will be in 600 locations by November. Cashman says she's grateful for the opportunity, and hopes to translate that opportunity into seeing Goodbye Sandfly becoming an iconic New Zealand brand.