

THE FUTURE

After the successful Eco Splash product launch and winning the Innovation of the Year Award, Placid Pools now seeks to firmly establish Eco Splash freshwater pools and swimming ponds in the domestic and overseas markets.

The AIC has given Placid Pools access to its Commercialisation RoadMap, a sophisticated software tool which guides businesses through the steps of new product development and the commercialisation process.

In addition, the AIC's Innovation Coach, Robert Buhrke has made personal introductions to and prepared further ongoing assistance through:

- AusIndustry Programs, including:
 - Enterprise Connect Program
 - Commercialisation Australia
 - Research & Development (R&D) Tax Incentives
- Queensland Government's 'Mentoring for Growth' program
- Highly qualified external leadership management consultants
- James Cook University and the Australian Centre for Tropical Freshwater Research (ACTFR)
- Austrade and TradeQueensland

www.placidpools.com.au

For further information about the AIC's Innovation program or Ideas2Market workshops please visit www.ausicom.com or call 1300 364 739.

"Receiving customised coaching as part of the AIC's Innovation Coaching Program has provided a truly invaluable opportunity for Placid Pools!"



Over a whole year Robert Buhrke and the AIC team guided us with expert knowledge from where we were at - right through to the reality of now being able to start commercialising our 'Eco Splash' invention.

The AIC filled in all the crucial steps and gaps that a business needs to know about, from legal and patent issues, business structuring, marketing advice to relevant networking contacts in government, R&D and industry.

Especially helpful was guidance about government funding for different stages of our project. We had no idea about how much help is indeed available and how to go about it.

We received tailored and personalised support to guide us every step of the way.

As a result of this knowledge transfer we now have a much greater understanding of the various factors impacting on the success of the commercialisation of Eco Splash, and how to progress through the maze.

The skills we have learnt will prove vital for our future success and we feel extremely grateful for AIC's support.

We honestly would have struggled and wasted valuable time & resources without the Innovation Coaching Program's support.

Thank you – we could not have done it without you!

Sabine Schroeder, Marketing, Placid Pools



Australian Institute
for Commercialisation

Placid Pools and the commercialisation of the Eco Splash System

→ AIC Innovation Coaching and IDEAS2MARKET



ABOUT THE AIC

The Australian Institute for Commercialisation (AIC) is a leading service organisation helping innovators achieve commercial success. The AIC has delivered programs across a broad range of industries including tourism, food technology, clean technology, ICT, nanotechnology, biotechnology and mining, working with governments, multinational firms, universities and small businesses to turn innovation in outcomes and growth.

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THE COMPANY

Placid Pools is a family owned business in Far North Queensland which specialises in swimming pool design, construction, installation and water maintenance services for domestic and commercial swimming pools and spas.

Placid Pools has been in operation for over 32 years and has grown to be the largest pool company in the region; servicing Cairns, the Tablelands, Port Douglas, surrounding remote areas and extending as far north as Weipa and even Papua New Guinea.

As the market leader, Placid Pools is committed to continuous improvement, which is one of the company's core values.

Placid Pools is unique for its distinctive pool construction methodology, for its ability to cover more elements in-house than competitors and for its commitment to customer satisfaction.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Placid Pools seeks to revolutionise the pool industry by introducing chemical free fresh water pool solutions to the market via the Eco Splash System.

The Eco Splash System is a sustainable water-purification system developed specifically for tropical pools.

It relies on natural biofilm cultivation, natural media, specific flow-rates and aquatic plants to produce crystal-clean pure water. Biomimicry eliminates the need for chemicals and saves power and water by replicating nature.

Eco Splash System benefits:

- No chemicals required to maintain a healthy water balance
- Power savings due to environmentally friendly technology
- Water savings through storage and recycling
- Economically and environmentally sustainable
- Increases biodiversity
- Creates a pleasant outdoor entertainment area

Tony Hartney, Sales Manager, Placid Pools, inspects a new 45,000 litre Eco-Splash Pool as part of the quality assurance program:



AIC ASSISTANCE

The AIC, via its Ideas2Market workshops and Innovation Coaching program, assisted Placid Pools in overcoming the challenges associated with the commercialisation of the innovative Eco Splash System.

IDEAS2MARKET

The Ideas2Market program consists of two distinct workshops to cater for those who are looking to start a business or progress an invention, as well as existing businesses that are looking to grow, improve and take their business to the next level.

An initiative of the Queensland Government's Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI), the Ideas2Market program is delivered by the AIC to provide innovators and small-to-medium-enterprises (SMEs) with information and skills to improve their competitive advantages.

Tony Hartney, Sales Manager at Placid Pools, attended both the Ideas2Market Introductory and Masterclass workshops as recommended by the AIC's Innovation Coach Robert Buhrke.

After attending the Introductory workshop in Cairns in March 2010, Tony said "I found the workshop to be abundantly factual, informative and easily absorbed, thus being beneficial to our future goals and growth."

Tony also attended the Masterclass and summarised his experience as "Informative, motivational and necessary! It is a must."

"AIC support was imperative in allowing our idea to manifest from a concept to bringing it to the marketplace and ready for commercialisation.

AIC provided a solid platform to work from, playing a vital role in facilitating our growth and awareness of the steps we needed to move forward.

The outcomes were absolutely priceless!! What a fantastic tool the Innovation Coaching Program is; we are grateful and blessed for this opportunity and strongly recommend it to anyone with a great idea!

Amanda Spelta, General Manager, Placid Pools

"A big thankyou to the AIC and its Innovation Coaching program.

This was absolutely instrumental in literally catapulting us with our ideas into being well on the road to commercialisation of our Eco Splash concept.

Being supplied with an Innovation Coach and supported with the tools, knowledge and support of the AIC we were able to conquer all the challenges smoothly to bring our great idea to market.

I could not recommend using the AIC and its innovation mentoring program more to achieve your goals quickly, efficiently and successfully".

Tony Hartney, Sales Manager at Placid Pools

INNOVATION COACHING

The Innovation Coaching program is a joint initiative of the Queensland Government's Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) and the AIC.

The Innovation Coaching program is a key element of the Queensland Wide Innovation Network (QWIN) which assists SMEs to access a range of innovation services and innovation support programs.

Innovation Coaching covers and offers assistance with:

- Innovation strategy
- Knowledge transfer
- Commercialisation advice
- Access to networks, technologies and funding specialists (e.g. intellectual property, market research, etc)
- Referrals to specialists

Placid Pools engaged with the AIC's Innovation Coaching program which through 20 sessions, guided and supported the company along the Eco Splash System's commercialisation journey.

The Placid Pools team collecting the "Innovation of the Year" Award at the inaugural Tropical Innovation Awards 2010:



OUTCOMES AND CLIENT BENEFITS

- 1. Knowledge Transfer from the AIC to Placid Pools via:**
 - 20 Innovation Coaching Sessions
 - Ideas2Market (Intro + Masterclass)
- 2. IP Identification and Protection:**

Intellectual Property has been identified and protected, including

 - Trade secrets (internal know-how and processes)
 - A new patent has been filed
 - Trademarks and domain names have been registered
- 3. Introductions & Referrals to**
 - Queensland Government (DEEDI and its Jobs Assist Program)
 - More than 10 other specialists (Patent Attorneys, R&D Tax Consultants, and others)
 - Australian Tropical Expertise Consortium
 - Researchers, Scientists and Leaders at James Cook University (JCU) and the Australian Centre for Tropical Freshwater Research (ACTFR)
- 4. Formation of two new spin-off Companies in Cairns, which will help with the strategic commercialisation of the Eco Splash solution**
 - Eco-Splash Pty Ltd (Trading Company)
 - Natural Water Technologies Pty Ltd (IP Holding Company)
- 5. New product launch:**
- 6. Free media coverage, via:**
 - Local and regional television Channels
 - More than 20 Newspapers and Magazines
 - Social Media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc)
 - Various newsletters and websites
- 7. Innovation is now an integral part of Placid Pools strategy and culture**
- 8. Hosting an Innovators Forum, thus providing vital industry spill-over and knowledge diffusion in the areas of innovation and commercialisation.**



"What an eye-opener that was! I can't say thank-you enough for all the doors that the AIC helped open for us.

It feels quite daring, and at times chaotic enough to make a leap of faith with any new invention, but even more daunting to know all the steps necessary to put it to market and make it a success.

We appreciate the AIC's fantastic support and can only strongly recommend to be part of the Innovation Coaching Program to any fellow business!".

Joe Spelta, Owner, Placid Pools