





NATIONAL WOMEN'S BUSINESS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM 2020/21

Final Report: Sept 2021



A MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER AND CEO

JO BURSTON



While the impact of COVID is being felt throughout the Australian economy, it is clear that women have been affected more. Due to loss of casual roles, loss of access to childcare, home schooling and myriad other circumstances, women have found it tougher to retain their economic security.

That is why programs like the National Women's Business Scholarship are so important. Using a combination of one-to-one mentoring, expert-led business masterclasses, and networking opportunities, Rare Birds is able to positively impact the businesses of women throughout Australia.

The team has been working hard over the past 12 months to create the best mentoring partnerships from our extensive database of more than 600 business leaders and entrepreneurs, to check-in with participants by phone every 3 months and to analyse surveys to monitor progress and provide assistance. We have also run 8 online 90-minute Business Masterclasses as well as facilitated peer-to-peer networking sessions for the cohort to meet and connect. This final report will give you a snapshot of how well the scholarship program went and the effect on the women entrepreneurs' business and personal success.

With 100% of participants stating they have improved business confidence – more than half cited significant improvement – and 97% making improvements in their top focus areas, I am also pleased to report that 95% of the women said in their survey responses that the Rare Birds program has helped their business to become more sustainable and better prepared for post-COVID recovery.

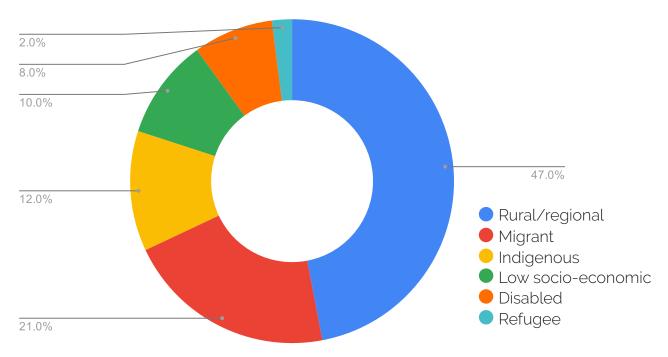
Rare Birds is so pleased to be able to do this important work to support women entrepreneurs from marginal demographics to grow themselves and their business and I thank the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Office for Women for their ongoing support.

Kind regards, Jo Burston



Meet the 2020/21 Participants

Breakdown by demographic:





Abby AitchisonAA Physiotherapy and
Sports Injury Clinic



Adrienne Brooks Elevate Studios NQ



Alicia Isles Namaste Journeys



Alisha Geary Faebella



Alison-McDermott
Baby Sensory Moreland
Darebin and Brimbank



Alix O'Hara Mashblox



Alyona Cerfontyne LOVE ALY'S



Amber KnightThe Beauty of Yoga





Anita Synnott Natural Territory



Anneliese DolphinFamily Farm



Annie-GichuruUplifting Studios



Belinda Humphries Wattle Grove Speckle Park



Bianca Hartge-HazelmanFINANCY



Biljana Konjarski DSM Enterprise



Bronwyn FalconerBIA Consulting



Catie FrySaleyards Distillery



Charity HinchliffeMy Wedding Compare



Charlotte Jordans
My Lilli Pilli



Claire MooreThe Good Life Farm Co



Corona BradyCorona Brady



Debbie Moroney Debbie Moroney Celebrant



Dorinda Cox Inspire Change Consulting Group



Duean WhiteCareer Steer



Elizabeth ThreadinghamPEMSET Solutions





Emily Keys Emily K Creative



Enza Lyons Enza Lyons



Esther Joy Bowles Essential Oil Education With Dr Joy



Eva Sifis By Accident



Hannah Sutton Hannah Sutton Design



Hayley O'BrienTree of Wings



Heidi KennettFour Mile



Iva NovakElements for Excellence



Jacqueline Fleming
Whitsunday Health and
Wellness Retreats



Jancee Benci The Party Girl World



Jeanne Boles
The Well Institute of
Training U/T trading as
JBcoco



Jedess Hudson Jedess Designs



Jemima LewisALPHA Tyres



Jenny Yu JF Studio



Jo TonksWatertight Group



Josephine De ParisotModsie





Kara CooperMount Vic and Me



Karen Demmery TLMC Institute



Karen Martin Yanalla Farms



Karen PerksFirst Food Co



Katherine Palma Cosventure



Kathy Myers Wishing you well



Katie Bowman Made by Bowie



Katrina D'Orchimont
Nambini Boutique
& Tea Garden



Kiara Stephenson The River Block



Kirsten Atkinson YINGARNA Australia



Laura Conti #GoKindly



Leanne SandersVisual Dreaming



Lesley Matthews Pink Diva Nail Supply



Liesl Addicoat The Chilli Chick Shop



Lindy Chen ChinaDirect Sourcing



Lisette ArmstrongTreat Dreams





Lucy Sattler Study Work Grow



Manjot Garcha Essence Ayurveda



Maria Pearce Liodora



Marisol Bogaz Araucana Natural Cosmetics



Meg KummerowFly the Farm /
Future Focused
Business Solutions



Megan Macneill Relevant



Melinda Morris Transport Auditing Services



Melissa Connors This Farm Needs a Farmer



Michelle StabileGroovexone Hip Hop
Dance Studio



Michelle StrotherInjury Prevention Plus



Millie Mae Mooloo



Minnie Chambers Minnie Rose



Miyuki KruseThe Brisbane Japanese
Language and Culture
School



Natalie Bramble iClick2Learn



Natasha McDowell Peninsula Lighthouse



Nonzahriyah Adun Tea Tasters





Rachael KingMyrtle & Pepper Fine
Chocolate



Rebecca Weller Padthaway Caravan Park



Rosie Turnbull Rosie's Boutique Condiments



Samantha Beckmann 2 Bent Rods



Sharon Brindley Cooee Cafe



Sharon Longridge Leadium: Where busy leaders learn



Sheridan Beaumont Sydney Oyster Tours



Sujata Chakravarti Honeyeater Sustainable Backyard Initiative



Suzanna ChristisonGo Yonder



Thelma VlamisThelma Vlamis



Theresa Liew Theresa Liew



Trace Davis skylab



Tracy HardyWattleseed Nutrition &
Dietetics



Venu Cameron Venuzi Pit Paste



Vicki Baensch Australia Expat Travel

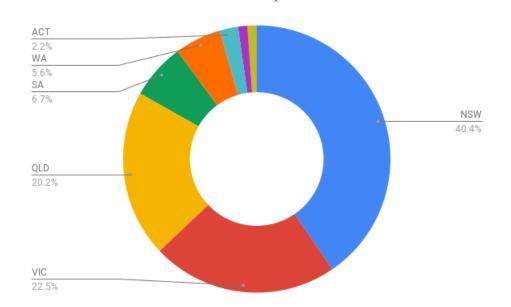


Luz RestrepoMigrant Women in
Business



Participants Overview





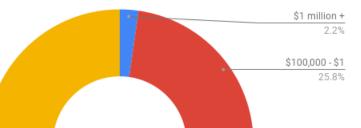
Annual revenue

less than \$100,000

71.9%

BIRTH COUNTRIES OF MIGRANT AND REFUGEE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS





"I feel very privileged to be part of the Rare Birds Program. It is an extraordinary program, filled with wonderful women who are so genuine and helpful – just the tonic I need to keep my entrepreneur's journey chugging along."



Sole Trader 58.4%

TOP 15 FOCUS AREAS

MARKETING STRATEGY

ACCESS TO FUNDING &

INVESTORS

ONLINE

MARKETING

B2C SALES

BRANDING

B2B SALES

STRATEGY AND EXECUTION

PRICING STRATEGY

COMPANY VISION AND DIRECTION

SOCIAL MEDIA

PRODUCT

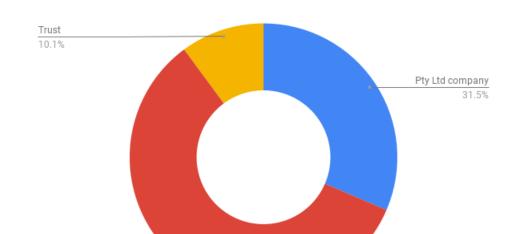
DEVELOPMENT

ACCOUNTING

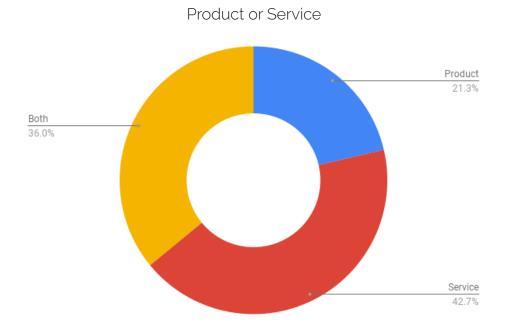
POSITIONING

BUDGETING

PUBLIC SPEAKING



Type of Business



"Living in regional areas, it's harder to come by people who are big thinkers and ambitious. So you don't have anyone to bounce off, become excited with, open up new opportunities to each other and discuss the bigger picture. The 'joy' of my 'enjoying the mentoring program' came from having another like-minded person to learn from and have a conversation with each fortnight. It was so stimulating and refreshing."



FINAL SURVEY:

1. Are you enjoying the mentoring program so far?

VALUE	PERCENT
YES	100%
NO	0%

2. Please elaborate

Well organised, planned and executed by IRB, matched exceptionally with my mentor.

I'm really enjoying the mentoring program, as it has helped me to think about growth and building my vision and working towards that. Having a mentor has helped me shaped my decision making for my business, provided me guidance and also to have support and sounding board gives me confidence.

Having Roy as my mentor throughout this phase of my business growth has been like having a wise advisor, someone I can look to who I'd never have had access to otherwise.

It's been amazing having a mentor who would help me move along when I would get stuck and not having anyone to turn to with that expertise.

Working with Toni was amazing. As well as practical skills, she helped me develop more confidence as a business owner.

It's keeping me more focused on my goals and working "on" the business rather than "in" the business. And my mentor is really inspiring and encouraging.

I had a great mentor who is just what I needed at the time.

Gaynor and I have been perfectly matched. She really understands where I get unfocussed and how to put me back on track.

It's been brilliant having a seasoned business person invested in my company's success. Mark has helped me in numerous ways including focus our offerings, set targets, think about scaling and energy management.

The program has taken me from the point of giving up on my proposed business to my business going ahead in leaps and bounds and now working out how I can manage the workload!!

Living in regional areas, it's harder to come by people who are big thinkers and ambitious. So you don't have anyone to bounce off, become excited with, open up new opportunities to each other and discuss the bigger picture. The 'joy' of my 'enjoying the mentoring program' came from having another like-minded person to learn from and have a conversation with each fortnight. It was so stimulating and refreshing.

Frances is an amazing source of knowledge and inspiration. Providing clear and practical tools to implement what we discussed. I also find the webinars very helpful.

"MY MENTOR IS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO MY SUCCESS.
HIS ADVICE IS PRACTICAL AND HE IS HELPING ME BE
TACTICAL IN MY BUSINESS. THIS SUPPORT IS
INCREDIBLY VALUABLE."



3. How satisfied are you with your mentor?

(3 = highly satisfied, 2 = moderately satisfied, 1 = not satisfied)

VALUE	PERCENT
3	97%
2	3%
1	0%

4. How much do you feel as if you are heard and understood by your mentor?

(3 = significantly, 2 = somewhat, 1 = not at all)

VALUE	PERCENT
3	92%
2	5%
1	3%

5. How much do you feel as if you're actively working towards the goals you have set with your mentor?

(3 = significantly, 2 = somewhat, 1 = not at all)



"IT'S VERY USEFUL HAVING AN ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURE IN THE FORM OF MEETINGS WITH MY MENTOR, AND ALSO THE INPUT FROM RARE BIRDS WEBINARS."



6. How much have you improved in your top focus areas?

(3 = significantly, 2 = somewhat, 1 = not at all)



7. Have you improved in any other areas?

Yes generally productivity personally. Matt has provided me with the tools that I need to be motivated.

Personally too - been able to work with my mentor to pull myself out of the VIC Covid fog.

Yes, I started a new business while the wedding business has been slow to pick up mostly due to Covid.

Yes, I've improved in my confidence in decision-making skills, employment information in hiring staff and the tax liabilities. Overall just being sure and confident in my sales skills, and having those difficult conversations with staff.

I've found more improvement than expected in soft skills, such as shifting perspective to turn a situation around to my advantage/opportunity for growth.

Most definitely. Starting and not finishing projects has been a challenge for me. Or starting heaps of things and not finishing many. Having Jen has made me accountable.

I went in to work on my business but the biggest take away is the work I have to do on myself first before I can even get stuck into the business. Get out of your own way as they say.

Marketing was a focus area, however we have secured so much work, we have turned all our attention to building and executing. No time for marketing at the moment which is great.

Absolutely! I was needing help with marketing but during the program we did a complete re-branding of my business and created this amazing brand that I love watching grow and take on its own personality. My business, after 3.5 years, finally feels right. Not only that, my mindset has changed. We uncovered a belief system that has been holding me back for years, acknowledging that and working through it had been my biggest gain from the entire program, and that's a big comment because I got so so much out of my time with Kirsty.

I've improved in so many things and I can actually believe in myself and that I am good enough.

My initial areas I had focused on changed with variables in the business, my mentor's recommendations and the business itself. All very positive changes.

Developing excel skills for financial growth scenarios.

"I HAVE IMPROVED EVERY ASPECT OF MY BUSINESS, PHIL HAS BEEN EXTREMELY GENEROUS WITH TIME, RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE. I HAVE REBRANDED AND CURATED ALL MY STOCK!"



8. How much has your business confidence improved?

(3 = significantly, 2 = somewhat, 1 = not at all)

VALUE	PERCENT
3	55%
2	45%
1	0%

9. Has the Inspiring Rare Birds program helped you and your business succeed?

(3 = significantly, 2 = somewhat, 1 = not at all)



10. In this last quarter, how has COVID impacted your business?

(3 = positive impact, 2 = no impact, 1 = negative impact)



"MY PASSION FOR WORKING IN A MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRY HAS INCREASED, TO THE POINT WHERE I WAS SO CONFIDENT IN THE BUSINESS AND PROGRESS WE ARE MAKING THANKS TO THANH'S SUPPORT AND INSPIRING WORDS, I ACTUALLY QUIT MY SALARIED JOB TO WORK FULL TIME IN THE BUSINESS - A VERY BIG STEP FOR ME MENTALLY AND FINANCIALLY."



11. How much has your mentor assisted your business in mitigating the effects of COVID? (3 = significantly, 2 = somewhat, 1 = not at all)

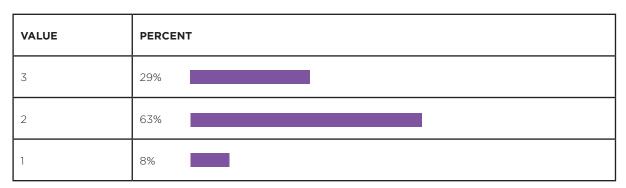


12. Overall has the Rare Birds program helped your business to become more sustainable and better prepared for post-COVID recovery?

(3 = significantly, 2 = somewhat, 1 = not at all)

VALUE	PERCENT
3	50%
2	45%
1	5%

13. How much have the online education workshops increased your business skills? (3 = significantly, 2 = somewhat, 1 = not at all)



"HAVING SOMEBODY WHO IS DEDICATED TO TROUBLESHOOTING IDEAS AND WORKING ON GAME PLANS IS SOMETHING I HAVEN'T DONE BEFORE. I LOVE MAKING LISTS OF THINGS I NEED TO DO, BUT ACTUALLY COMPLETING THEM ALL IS ANOTHER STORY!"



14. Are you engaging with the Rare Birds community events or meeting with other mentees?

VALUE	PERCENT
YES	29%
NO	71%

15. What has been your biggest takeaway from the mentoring program?

My key takeaways are the webinars from Jo Burston, as her segments really resonated with me. Other key takeaways are learning from my mentor Karen on finding solutions and breaking things down to manage a situation or obstacle that I would face with my daily line of work.

Stress management, burnout management and leadership skills.

To create levers - multiple sources of income that you can pull when Covid impacts other parts of my business.

Self-care is a number one priority as a solo entrepreneur. I am the business, and if I'm not ok, the business is not ok either.

The online training have had some good takeaways. My mentor was perfect for me. He was not the same one matched at the beginning - so I am glad I trusted my gut instinct and requested I get someone else.

That you can always work harder than what you are right now. And having somebody on the sidelines encouraging you the whole way, coming up with ideas and creative solutions allows your business to grow. I know where I want my business to be but having somebody push me was something I really needed at this point in time. We got along really well, had the same sense of humour. Would always provide constructive feedback and challenge one another. And ultimately she would always say at the end if you think that is what you want to do or tackle the project than go for it. And that paid off.

Having a mentor as a sounding board and to help guide me through the process of developing my brand is invaluable. I am finding it very beneficial to work with someone very knowledgeable, supportive and who keeps me focused on what I am trying to achieve.

Mindset and belief is everything.

I now realise that business mentors make a material difference. Having a considered, outside perspective is so valuable. The suggestions and support I have received have been motivating and really helped when the demands mount up.

My mentor's faith and belief in me as my confidence dropped. My mentor's constant and never ending encouragement that I could do this.

That growth is possible, even from Cairns, and even during a global pandemic!

Everything just feels right: my brand, my direction, my mission, my focus, my mindset everything, it just all finally feels right and exciting after 3.5 years of struggle.

The realisation that anything is possible. There are so many amazing and talented women in business and I thoroughly enjoyed the zoom catch ups sharing knowledge and networking together.



16. Any other comments?

I have a feeling that as I review the materials and notes I took through the program and the recordings I made of my mentoring sessions, I will be able to further implement ideas and processes that will have an enduring effect on my business. I just haven't had time to put them all into effect as well as do the business!!! And thank you to Inspiring Rare Birds... all of you, all of us, for daring to do what we do:-)

Have absolutely loved the program. Your mentor makes a massive difference. It's helped me in all areas of my life.

I actually can not tell you how grateful I am for this opportunity. I was absolutely at my wit's end before the program, if I'm to be honest I was at the point of make or break. Only 9 months later, I am more driven, passionate and excited about the future of my business than I ever have been. I've always loved what I do and to have that love for it all over again and to feel positive about the future is invaluable. To all involved in making this happen, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I have found the program beneficial overall and having a mentor has been a great experience. We're at a stage of the business where we are planning to scale. Although the plan isn't complete I now have a greater insight into where we're heading and how to get there. Thank you Rare Birds and all involved!

My mentor, Naomi, is amazing. She fit me and my needs like a glove!

Now my biggest challenge is the work-life balance and a husband who is so confident in my business he is planning his retirement!!!

Have absolutely loved the program. Your mentor makes a massive difference. It's helped me in all areas of my life.

Thank You for this opportunity. Ang has been an absolute gem throughout the whole process - she has given me so much and is so generous with her time and knowledge.

BUSINESS BUILDING BLOCKS MASTERCLASSES:

A total of eight masterclasses were held during the course of the program, as well as a launch event, with a total of 180 attendees.

Session One: Setting Your Strategy with Kellie Dyer, Senior Commercialisation and Innovation Strategist.

In this session: Participants learnt how to define and articulate their purpose, or their 'why' and then build an effective strategy and model to put it into practice in their business.

Attendees: 40. Overall satisfaction: 5/5

Session Two: The Entrepreneur's Journey with Ellie Gould, Author, Entrepreneur and Professional Speaker.

In this session: Steps in the journey were identified, including potential roadblocks such as COVID, imposter syndrome, knowing when to hire people, to help the women to stay on track and to build confidence in problem solving and innovating.

Attendees: 41. Overall satisfaction: 5/5

"EVERYTHING JUST FEELS RIGHT: MY BRAND, MY DIRECTION, MY MISSION, MY FOCUS, MY MINDSET EVERYTHING, IT JUST ALL FINALLY FEELS RIGHT AND EXCITING AFTER 3.5 YEARS OF STRUGGLE."



BUSINESS BUILDING BLOCKS MASTERCLASSES:

Session Three: Customer Identification with Pip Stocks, Founder at Hearsay.

In this session: Entrepreneurs learnt how to define their customer segments and personas in order to better connect with them and also to ensure a good product fit for the market.

Attendees: 32. Overall satisfaction: 4.5/5

Session Four: Growth vs Scaling with Jo Burston, Founder and CEO Inspiring Rare Birds In this session: We explained the difference between growth and scaling, discussed what is the end game and what does your exit look like. We also covered Debt vs Equity Funding.

Attendees: 26. Overall satisfaction: 4.3/5

Session Five: Cash Flow with Jo Burston, Founder and CEO Inspiring Rare Birds. In this session: Jo covered how to conduct a cash flow stress test. Entrepreneurs then learned how to get a clear vision of where they are at with their business and its cash.

Attendees: 28. Overall satisfaction: 4.5/5

Session Six: Best Practice Talent Management with Karen Cohen, Rare Birds Community Manager and HR Expert.

In this session: Karen explained some of the things we need to know in order to manage a business' most important asset: its people.

Attendees: 12. Overall satisfaction: 4.6/5

Session Seven: Business Management with Jo Burston, Founder and CEO Inspiring Rare Birds. In this session: This class covered Business management, ensuring business owners have the right people at the right time doing the right things. Attendees also conducted an A-Player checklist.

Attendees: 10. Overall satisfaction: 4.5/5

Session Eight: Business Funding Options with Cathryn Lyall, Partner Seed Space.

In this session: The topics discussed included

- · When to look for funding
- What types of funding options are available
- The benefits and risks of each types of funding
- Who are the best people to partner with to grow your business
- What should you look for at your shareholder table, who should you invite? Cathryn shared her wisdom from the view of a VC founder to help attendees understand the options for funding and growing a business.

Attendees: 11. Overall satisfaction: 4/5

PROGRAM GRADUATION:

At the conclusion of the program, all Mentors and Mentees participating in the program were invited to an online event to share their experiences and celebrate their success.

"I NOW REALISE THAT BUSINESS MENTORS MAKE A MATERIAL DIFFERENCE. HAVING A CONSIDERED, OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE IS SO VALUABLE. THE SUGGESTIONS AND SUPPORT I HAVE RECEIVED HAVE BEEN MOTIVATING AND REALLY HELPED WHEN THE DEMANDS MOUNT UP."



CASE STUDY

Katie Bowman, Founder, Made by Bowie



Tell us a little bit about your business and how it came about?

I launched Made by Bowie (my artist name) four years ago. At the time I was working as a copywriter in advertising and suffered a crushing burnout. Pottery was an outlet for me. I started sharing my journey on Instagram and interest grew organically from friends to shops to galleries.

After lockdown one we moved to the Mornington Peninsula. Having taught at several pottery schools in Melbourne I knew there was a huge demand for people wanting to learn the craft. With no contemporary pottery studios on the Peninsula, I saw this as a business opportunity and began formulating the idea for Stoker Studio.

Under my maker name, Made by Bowie, I started pilot testing workshops and they were a sellout. I knew I'd found a sweet spot in the market. Just as I was getting going lockdown two put a handbrake on that.

Describe the situation that your business was in, including any impacts that COVID-19 has had, when you heard the news that you had been selected as a recipient of a Rare Birds mentoring program through the Office for Women scholarship?

With lockdown two settling in for the long haul,

this meant no regular markets - which were my biggest source of income - and no workshops. I had to move my entire business online.

What were you hoping would happen as a result of having a mentor?

With an idea to launch a contemporary ceramics studio on the Peninsula but never having launched a real business as such, I was feeling my way around in the dark. To have an experienced sounding board to run ideas past and a mentor to share their experience and knowledge to help me do it right and successfully.

How did you feel both before and after your first meeting with your mentor?

I remember us both being blown away by how accurately we'd been matched! We both shared the same approach to the relationship in that it felt free flowing and less structured than perhaps some of the other matches, and we always felt inspired after each catch up.

Looking back on the program, what have you found to be beneficial to you and your business?

Understanding the financial side of business and the levers you can pull to drive cashflow.

What has been the short term impact on your



business since commencing your mentoring program?

In the short 9 months during the mentorship Stoker Studio has gone from an idea in my mind's eye to a beautiful studio ready to open its doors. Well, will be when lockdown 6 ends!

We have the right systems in place for growth and strategies to turn a profit, which I have Toni to thank for.

What goals did you set for yourself at the start of the program and how did you set out to achieve them? Did you manage to make any other improvements?

Coming from an advertising and marketing background I felt confident in that area. It was the financial side of business I wanted to wrap my head around and nail. Toni shared so much with me. I now look at margins on products and which ones drive the most profit. I also feel confident reading a P&L. I've actually become quite nerdy about it and a day doesn't go by I don't look at the numbers.

What advice would you give to a female business owner thinking about applying for a mentoring program?

Don't think twice. Back yourself and get your application in. It will help catapault your business.

Katie's Mentor says:

I was so excited after our first meeting, I loved Katie's business, its potential and her creativity - it was a perfect match. I also understood very quickly and clearly how I could support, help and guide Katie in achieving her business goals.

This program has had a huge impact on many levels. Commercially I found after our calls it would make me sit back and revisit and think about key areas in my business, TH Brown, both in the detail and strategically. On a personal level, as we all know being in business is tough, and no matter your success or experience you still have times that you second guess yourself or that little imposter syndrome pops up on your shoulder. This program reminded me each time of my strengths and expertise, it also highlighted areas I still need to grow and lean into.

I have a saying "You are the sum of the 5 people you spend the most time with" so to spend time with someone who is passionate,

driven, ambitious, honest, creative, funloving and real was a great honour and of great personal value.

My biggest takeaway from the partnership was seeing Kate grow and evolve in key areas in her business, and to see her achieve the key commercial goal which was outlined in our first meeting - "to expand her business and take on her own venue/space". But it was so much more because watching her grow and develop as a entrepreneur and person has been a true pleasure.

For anyone considering being a Mentor, my advice would be to be really clear on what you have to offer and how you best work to ensure you achieve a good match. Once you are matched this is really all about the Mentee and what she needs and wants to achieve out of the program and how you can help her to achieve this.

You will also get back so much more than you give, you will learn more about yourself and potentially your business. It really is the gift that keeps on giving!

"IN THE SHORT NINE MONTHS DURING THE MENTORSHIP STOKER STUDIO HAS GONE FROM AN IDEA IN MY MIND'S EYE TO A BEAUTIFUL STUDIO READY TO OPEN ITS DOORS."



CASE STUDY

Bianca Hartge-Hazelman, Founder, Financy



Tell us a little bit about your business and how it came about?

Financy is a data insights and content company that advocates for action on women's financial progress and economic equality. I started Financy as a women's money blog site in 2016 and in 2017 I launched the Women's Index as a way to answer the question: are women making progress?

Describe the situation that your business was in, including any impacts that COVID-19 has had, when you heard the news that you had been selected as a recipient of a Rare Birds mentoring program through the Office for Women scholarship?

At the time of winning the scholarship, which I didn't expect, Financy lacked focus. And Covid made that worse because I lost a major sponsor as a result which made me question: should I just give up?

Financy was without a viable business model and as the founder I felt a lack of confidence in how best to proceed to make an impact as a business leader to grow, to add value to people and of course advocate for a cause that I am passionate about.

What were you hoping would happen as a result of having a mentor?

I was really hoping that a mentor would help me nut out a business model. In my mind I thought that would help me determine if I should keep going or give up.

How did you feel both before and after your first meeting with your mentor?

Immediately I felt excited to work with Cathy. I didn't know much about her but I did know she understood business and understood where I was at in the process of a start-up and having children.

Our first conversation was the kickstart that I needed to have faith in the process that I could do it and that someone outside believed in what I was trying to do.

Looking back on the program, what have you found to be beneficial to you and your business?

The regular catch-ups were huge. Cathy and I made an early decision to talk weekly and I felt compelled to always have actions that I had taken to update her on. She inspired me to deliver and even as I have fallen flat she has helped me keep going. She has always had a positive, progressive, task focused and empathetic attitude - these have been significant for Financy's development and my own personal journey. I also found the regular webinars and



coaching inspiring and informative and only wish I had watched more.

What has been the short term impact on your business since commencing your mentoring program?

Financy has a real commercial and impact focus and we have a plan for growth. We have created a Financy board and I have also embraced partnerships that can help us achieve our short and longer term goals. Financy is about to launch a new website and Membership offering, a new equality tool to help organisations, plus an equality pact. Our initiatives support each other and the business' core objectives.

If you have employees or a team, how has it impacted your staff?

I don't have employees yet but I need them as a result of the growth and roadmap for Financy we have created. I have also realised that this next step of hiring employees or contractors is critical to Financy's success.

What goals did you set for yourself at the start of the program and how did you set out to achieve them? Did you manage to make any other improvements?

I really just thought I needed to crack a business model and naively thought that was the key to everything. But what I realised and got was so much more than that goal.

What advice would you give to a female business owner thinking about applying for a mentoring program?

Definitely apply for this program and trust the process that if you share with Rare Birds what you need and the type of person you are and the goals you want to achieve, that they have a process that really matches you to a mentor who can help you succeed on your business journey. Also give more of yourself to this process. Have weekly catch-ups and chip away at the targets that you and your mentor set. Believe that you can get there and that the program and it's amazing courses are there to support you.

"[MY MENTOR] HAS ALWAYS HAD A POSITIVE,
PROGRESSIVE, TASK FOCUSED AND EMPATHETIC
ATTITUDE - THESE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT FOR
FINANCY'S DEVELOPMENT AND MY OWN PERSONAL
JOURNEY. I ALSO FOUND THE REGULAR WEBINARS AND
COACHING INSPIRING AND INFORMATIVE."



CASE STUDY

Anneleise Dolphin, Family Farm



Tell us a little bit about your business and how it came about?

It's a farming business that has been in the family name for 100+ years and is now transitioning to the 5th generation of farmers. We are grain and wool growers with an intense focus on soil and animal health and wellbeing which the 5th Generation is teaching us.

Describe the situation that your business was in, including any impacts that COVID-19 has had, when you heard the news that you had been selected as a recipient of a Rare Birds mentoring program through the Office for Women scholarship?

At the time of selection I was struggling with the communication of two generations of farmers (my husband and my son), along with my parents who thought they still have control over us as people and business which was creating havoc.

Plus dealing with a poor season on the farm – drought/change of weather circumstances that still always throws us as farmers.

What were you hoping would happen as a result of having a mentor?

I actually I don't know what I was even expecting but I knew that I really needed to find some guidance and clarity in my life.

How did you feel both before and after your first meeting with your mentor?

Before it I felt very nervous but by the end of the meeting I felt relaxed and comfortable and very privileged to be a participant. It felt as if I had known Susanne for years. There was an instant trust and bond between us.

Looking back on the program, what have you found to be beneficial to you and your business?

The unpacking of unconscious habits that take over my whole operations and the reptilian brain that jumps into action from habit that is inhabiting and destroying relationships within our business. I tend to default back to learnt childhood patterns and destroy any success before the chance to give it a go, in case it might fail.

Confidence and a new toolbox of tools to use within our business has improved our communications that have repaired and enhanced a lot of opportunities. We have changed the organisational structure of communication so that everyone feels heard.

I also gained an understanding that our business is going well and that I am also an important part of the team. I need to stop dismissing my opinion and different viewpoint.



What has been the short term impact on your business since commencing your mentoring program?

Better communication across the whole family business. Immediate confidence that has encouraged positive decisions for the business. And the ability to immediately stop the poison being poured over our immediate family by a negative controlling father-in-law/my father (who is not even in the business) who has been killing off the confidence and draining the employees with his controlling nature our entire life.

If you have employees or a team, how has it impacted your staff?

The tools Susanne was able to help me implement into our family farming business has encouraged confidence with our decisions and new hard respectful discussion together.

Listening and being comfortable and even happy to feel uncomfortable as it is all a learning process. As the main negotiator I have found myself having better listening skills and feel more comfortable to bring in the new tools to our business. We are discussing topics that have not been spoken about for a while and by wording them more carefully we are getting better outcomes.

I will follow through on jobs and if others do not want to do them I will question why. It is becoming an easier path to make positive change. There are a few bumps in the road still, but a great deal smoother after much learning.

What goals did you set for yourself at the start of the program and how did you set out to achieve them? Did you manage to make any other improvements?

I had to commit to this program 100% AND I DID. And there is more to come after the program. We are lifetime friends – Sistas.

I wanted family change and I have been assisted to create boundaries. Some are pretty harsh but they are there for our protection and personal growth. I now understand that what I think is not always how others understand things.

We have made amazing improvements. I have bounced forward to improve myself worth and value. I kinda like the new person I feel like. Occasionally I fall back into old habits and that's ok. I have understood my role in the lies I tell myself about family. I am not a people pleaser anymore. I know that I am worthy of a good life.

What advice would you give to a female business owner thinking about applying for a mentoring program?

Mentoring programs are life changing. As a female business owner I haven't ever found any guidance how to manage or learn how to think through situations. With confidential conversations once we established a respectful trusting relationship – that happened instantly – I spoke and shared things that I have never been able to. This has propelled my life forward into a space of more truth.

Anneleise's Mentor says:

I was curious and also a little nervous before the meeting with Anneleise, not knowing what or who to expect and whether we would be a good match. It was clear very early on that we were very well matched and I was excited to be able to work with Anneleise after that first meeting.

The most rewarding part of the program is to have been provided with an opportunity to support somebody in a managed framework,

including feedback mechanisms and support webinars to ensure that neither the mentor nor the mentee are alone on this journey. This provided a feeling of comfort, knowing that if a hurdle would show up that was too difficult for just the two of us to jump over, we had the option to ask for help.

As for the partnership, the most rewarding part was to connect, share honestly and be able to work within a mutually respectful and caring partnership.