

# Wild Saffron

“As a business owner you take on big responsibility. You’ve borrowed money, hired the staff, signed a lease. You are responsible for debt. The first principle is the business needs to make money now, so you can do what you want later.”

*Jodi Weckert*

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## The Business

Owned and developed by Jodi Weckert since 2006, Wild Saffron is a gourmet ‘provedore’ stocking local Clare Valley produce and food products from other regions. They serve lunch 5 days a week meeting strong local and tourist demand, complimenting Clare’s standing as a leading wine region. In addition to food service, Wild Saffron is an outlet for producers to showcase their goods. In their first 12 months of operation Wild Saffron won 3 business awards and have gone from employing 4 to 9 staff.

## The Challenge

Jodi swore against becoming a café. Her vision was to be a gourmet outlet, but it didn’t match the market demand for a quality regional food place for the lunch trade. The enterprise

had the same overheads of a café but without the same returns. It was soon clear food products alone weren’t generating enough sales to cover overheads. By holding onto the ‘dream’ the cost was being felt in the owners’ quality of life, by needing to work longer to achieve the same margins they could get from refocusing on opportunities, over less time. Panic set in about financial commitments. The owner was at a cross road; she realized it was one thing to run a business *she* loved, but another to run a sustainable business by providing a service the *market* wanted.

## The Solution

Martin analyzed the figures, did different scenarios and showed financially Jodi could work less days if they sold wine and lunches. Wild Saffron started to use staff more effectively over 5 days and ways to increase margins where possible. They reviewed the pricing structure of serving a meal versus a take-away food portion and developed an experience around eating in a food and wine region. Extra seating was added, a new chef employed, a liquor license granted and now breakfast is served.

## The Impact

“I’ve had to toughen up as a business woman, but now I’m confident the money will come in because my understanding of what needs to be done, has grown,” said Jodi. Things got busier and the business is again applying for awards. The owners now see how they are capitalizing on opportunities and able to ‘do more’ when they ‘have more’ and know what has to be done to keep the business running. They developed a trusting relationship with Martin Pike that went beyond the ‘9 to 5’. “When we won our last Award, I rang Martin at 10pm to tell him—he was on holiday, and he was thrilled!”



Above: Owner Jodi in Wild Saffron premises, Clare, SA

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