



small wins to big things

CAMP COVE SWIM'S KATHERINE HAMPTON MAKES RETRO-TINGED BIKINIS – AND CALLS HER OWN SHOTS.

Words Chris Harrigan Photo Carine Thévenau

Tell us a little bit about your small business, please. I founded Camp Cove Swim in 2013. It's an Australian-made and designed swimsuit label for real women. Our swimsuits don't just look good on models; we want everyone to feel great in a bikini.

Where'd you get the idea to start your own swimwear label? I grew up in a coastal town – Newcastle, NSW – so swimwear was just something I was always exposed to. I studied fashion design at TAFE, and started making my own swimsuits after work and selling them online. It started off very small. My mum did the sewing for the first collection, and I had some generous housemates who let me take over the living room for a couple of years.

How did it go from side hustle to full-time business? A few years ago I had to have some knee surgery, which meant I couldn't work my retail job for a few months. I took that as an opportunity to see if making swimsuits full-time was feasible. When I was well enough to go back to work, I realised I didn't need to – the business was flourishing.

What makes your swimsuits special? Our prints. They're retro-inspired and feature lots of Australiana, like kangaroos and flowering eucalypts. Our designs link to who we are and where we're from.

What's the best thing about being your own boss lady? Making your own decisions. Whether they work out or not doesn't matter, I'm just happy knowing I've made my own calls.

And what's the least best thing? You're always on. I can't see a flower in a tree without thinking about work.

What tools were useful in getting Camp Cove Swim up and running? I always found the financial side of the business overwhelming. Eventually I realised I needed some accounting software to help with that side of things, so I did some research and came across MYOB. It lets you see what's coming in and what's going out, which is really helpful with cash flow. It's helped me transition into being that little bit more professional.

How has it helped you go from small wins to big things? I wanted a program that could do as many things as possible. MYOB can handle pay, superannuation, tax and GST all at once, so I don't need a subscription for this, a subscription for that. It just simplifies things, and saves you time – I don't have to stop doing what I'm doing to collect all that info.

What's the thing you love most about what you do? Hearing women of different shapes, sizes and colours tell me how happy they are with their swimsuit. An email or direct message can make you stop and go, "Ah, this is why I'm doing this." ❀

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Katherine uses cloud-based accounting software from MYOB to get stuff done. Go to myob.com to find out more about how you can simplify your business success.

