



Success stories

Kauppila Pty Ltd

manufacturing new homes
and accommodation for
Kangaroo Island



Origins

Luke and Sharon Kauppila established their Kangaroo Island business in 2005. The couple had previously worked overseas in UK, Canada and New Zealand.

KI Bushfire recovery

The Kangaroo Island bushfires of January 2020 devastated over half of the land area, lives were lost, property and infrastructure destroyed, local business and wildlife severely impacted.

Recovery would be a long process and the community desperately needed replacement homes and accommodation for workers and future tourism.

The Kauppila's recognised that the island required construction solutions which would meet local conditions but that minimised costs to construct as much as possible.

The Kauppila's worked with their Consultant to develop a bespoke solution for affordable development – whether in

bushfire affected areas or not. It was recognised that the costs of home construction on the Island were not particularly affordable and that standard designs, materials and construction methodologies all contributed to driving costs up. They also established that it wasn't all just about the freight cost to the island, it was also about examining each element from design, through compliance and then construction.

Kauppila successfully tendered for the development of a 10-person Worker's Accommodation Project for the Western Kangaroo Island Caravan Park. This initiative, funded by BizRebuild (the bushfire recovery initiative of Business Recovery Australia), was to underpin the provision of accommodation lost in the fires for the workers during the rebuild period in the far western end of the island. The project was successfully completed on time and budget in March this year.

Planning for growth

Luke and Sharon have ambitious plans to grow their business. In May 2020, they made the decision to invest over \$300,000 into new, purpose-built facilities and equipment in Kingscote.

Luke and Sharon describe the company vision and mission *"As an Island business, we strongly advocate for the building and construction industry on Kangaroo Island, recognising the importance of using local, skilled trades and suppliers."*

Entrepreneurs' Programme

"This is a remarkable local success story. Kauppila has applied new building concepts and materials to initially meet an urgent need for accommodation following the early 2020 bushfires, but then further developed the product to fill a gap in the market for affordable, quick-to-establish fully compliant housing and commercial buildings suited to the Kangaroo Island Environment" says Business Growth Facilitator Dr Mike Williams from Delivery Partner Business SA.

Sharon Kauppila adds *"The \$20,000 match funded Business Growth Grant certainly assisted the decision Luke and I made to invest in the R&D and the consultancy support we needed to confirm our initial thoughts and to assist in commercialising the concept"*.