

# Peel Agri-innovation Ecosystem CASE STUDY

## Thorny Devil



Growing the Peel's agri-innovation and food production sectors is a priority for the Peel region as outlined in the Peel Development Commission's Strategic Plan (2023-2025) and the Peel Regional Investment Blueprint. This case study highlights the outcomes of an agribusiness engaging with the agrifood innovation ecosystem, supported by the Commission's programs, investments, and partnerships.

### About the business

Thorny Devil has been around for over ten years. They make beer and cider and distribute throughout Western Australia and Singapore.

Created by Peter McAppion, a proud WA local and zealous beer nut, Thorny Devil is in a constant state of moving forward but remembering its roots, striving to unite perceptive beer drinkers with handcrafted brews in irresistible flavours that carry a little bit of Mandurah in every sip. (Source: Thorny Devil website)

*"Working with The GrowHub was a positive experience and I recommend that producers get in touch with them if they want to test the export market or other markets."*

- Peter McAppion, Chief Beer Officer, Thorny Devil

### Engagement with FIPWA/agri-innovation ecosystem

Through the **Regional Economic Development (RED) Grants** they received in 2020, Thorny Devil was able to develop export capability, and through that process, identified Singapore as a key export market. As a result, they were referred to **FIPWA** and The GrowHub, and a pallet of their product was sent to Singapore within a week.

The RED grant of nearly \$50k enabled Thorny Devil to expand its production facility and capacity by 400%. Prior to receiving the grant, they produced beer in 400-litre batches. The funding enabled them to construct new production equipment and they now produce beer in 2,500-litre batches.



## Benefits to the business

The grant allowed Thorny Devil to expand a lot quicker and increase their daily production capacity from 2,000L in a very long day to 10,000L in a reasonable day. If not for the grant, it would have taken the business a lot longer to deliver the project and expand.

Aside from the production side, the **RED Grant** allowed Thorny Devil to create additional jobs, between 3-5 FTE including a full-time Brewer's Assistant & Sales Agent, and Package Line Workers, and the business is still expanding.

Turnover has increased as a result of the expansion. Being able to produce their beer in a shorter period of time has allowed them to sell and distribute a lot quicker and they have reportedly been able to double their revenue since receiving the grant.

The partnership with **The GrowHub** enabled Thorny Devil to test the Singapore market with 10-12 different products ranging from easy drinking lager to heavy 9% chocolate maple imperial stouts. The business believes it would not have been able to put its products in Singapore without the relationship with GrowHub.

## The Brewery

"Nobody is more familiar with beer's inspiration and passion than Peter McAppion, a proud WA local and zealous beer nut. Frustrated with beers that seemed all head and no body, Pete decided to grab conventional brewing tactics by the thorns.

Knowing he could harmonise his broad knowledge base, Pete realised it was time to transform his frustration into inspiration. Out of this dream, Thorny Devil was born." (Source: Thorny Devil website)



## Benefits to the business (cont.)

The GrowHub relationship has allowed small businesses to get a foot in the door and test the waters in the export market in a relatively lower-risk way. Particularly as they are willing to distribute small quantities of product and see how it goes. This is easier than sending a full shipment and the business wearing all the risks.

According to Mr McAppion, "The GrowHub relationship reduced the risk to our business, such as transport and shipping costs, and has given us some export experience."

For more information about the Food Innovation Precinct Western Australia please visit their website:

<https://fipwa.com.au>

For further details about Thorny Devil, visit: <https://thornydevil.beer>

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[peel.wa.gov.au](http://peel.wa.gov.au)

*"Thorny Devil has transformed into a true contender in the craft-beer world, winning numerous awards at the Australian International Beer Awards, Australian Craft Beer awards and Perth Royal Beer Show.*

*Beer is all about experimenting, having fun, and exploring, which perfectly encapsulate the story of Thorny Devil"*

*(Source: Thorny Devil website)*