



**FIAL**  
FOOD INNOVATION AUSTRALIA LIMITED



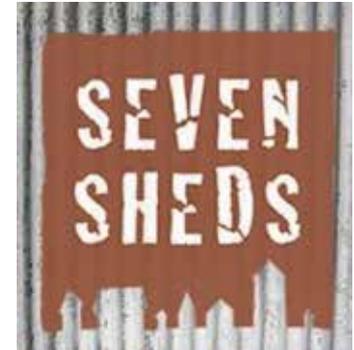
Australian Government  
Department of Industry,  
Innovation and Science

**Industry  
Growth  
Centres**



## An innovative twist on an ancient product has completely transformed its fortunes

Seven Sheds brewery took its business to the next level after a FIAL 'Fast n Furious' Innovation short course inspired a complete 180 in its sales, marketing and production strategy.



### BEFORE:

Lacking inspiration and feeling competitive pressures. They also had a product in their range they had been underselling for the entire life of their business – mead.

### AFTER:

**Doubled mead revenue** through repositioning mead as – 'the drink that time forgot', reducing the pack size and creating a new brand 'Shed 8', targeting the Chinese market. A new platform for growth.

### FIAL'S SUPPORT:

Fast n Furious Innovation short course participation including briefing, workshop and mentoring facilitated by XPotential™

### KEY TIP

**"If you've got an idea, go along, but go along also with an open mind, you just might end up developing something else."**

"We came out of the workshop with a completely new way of looking at a product we've been underselling for the entire life of the business"

"Being off premises and in a mentally challenging environment can be quite beneficial for redesigning or developing new business ideas, but perhaps the biggest impact was about being *Fast and Furious!*"

"what we got out of Fast n Furious is a new way to market our products and differentiate ourselves from others in an increasingly crowded market ... a change in how you think about innovation, business and product development"

"[Fast n Furious Innovation] focused us. The workshop certainly concentrated our creative mind ... really, it's been years, then after that workshop ... we're about ready to launch"

## About FIAL's Fast n Furious Innovation short course

This short course is designed to work on innovation challenges within the participants' businesses. It is a unique, hands-on 3-step program utilising Design Led Innovation & Lean Canvas principals. The course boasts best practice innovation capabilities and rapid consumer insight techniques. Participants are supported with an hour long briefing call (conducted by the facilitator) where a 'live' innovation challenge is identified. This sets them up for their one day workshop that aims to develop an initial 'Minimum Viable Product' concept, followed by an hour long mentoring call 4 – 6 weeks after the workshop. The post workshop mentoring is key as it irons out any further challenges and keeps the process on track.

# Fast and Furious Innovation

## Transforming mead into 'The Drink Time Forgot'

Seven Sheds was suffering from operating fatigue and a lack of inspiration. Tired of “just sitting at the coal face every day”, they were motivated to do the FIAL Fast n Furious program in July 2016. What happened next surprised everyone.

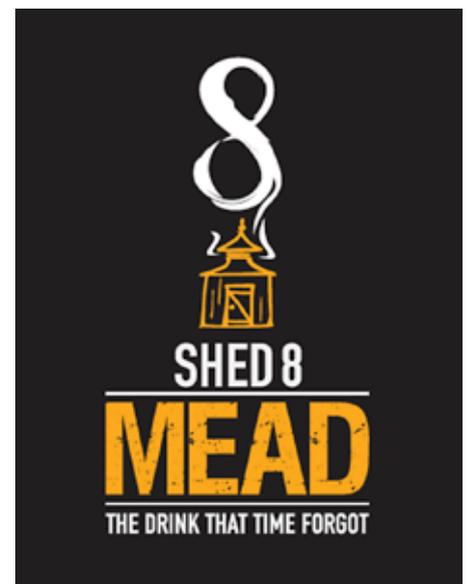
Seven Sheds is owned and operated by Willie Simpson and Catherine Stark and is run from their brewery in Railton, Tasmania. They produce a range of seasonal beers alongside their flagship Kentish Ale, as well as honey wines and Melomels (Mead). The Seven Sheds range is sold in local markets and online throughout Australia. There is an opportunity for expansion into export markets.

Willie and Catherine knew that they needed to take their business to the next level to remain competitive and achieve further growth and profitability. They recognised that Seven Sheds needed a new platform that aligned to their broader brand

philosophy whilst taking advantage of new production capacity which was coming on stream.

Willie and Catherine arrived at the Fast n Furious workshop with the intention to work on ‘barrel aged beers’. However, early on in the workshop, they did a complete 180 and identified Mead as a product that they had been underselling for the entire life of the business.

They were inspired by the ‘Fast n Furious’ concept and perhaps being out of their comfort zones.



“What we got out of Fast n Furious is a new way to market our products and differentiate ourselves from others in an increasingly crowded market. What, in fact, the course gave was a change in how you think about innovation, business and product development,” says Willie / Catherine.

## The Fast n Furious Innovation Challenge

Great innovation starts with a challenge. 'The Fast n Furious Innovation' short course encourages participants to articulate the challenge to focus on delivering business results quickly. The final Seven Sheds challenge was to:

"... generate 10% more gross revenue before 30/6/18 by increasing production and distribution of a unique product that has poor visibility in the marketplace. We must: test a range of mead products in different environments to establish consumer preferences; identify & implement production requirements and turnover needed to meet revenue forecasts."

### Target Market and Consumer Problem Definition - a major focus in the workshop

Seven Sheds is featured on the Cradle to Coast Tasting Trail, attracting many visitors (including affluent Asian tourists) with high disposable incomes seeking premium, exclusive and indulgent food experiences. Many visitors know nothing about mead - it is not recommended on menus and it's not well represented in bottle shops.

"The main problem was that we had done nothing! We were part of the problem. The problem that needed to be solved for the target market is how to educate consumers and promote our mead in a way that is meaningful and different," says Willie / Catherine.



"We came out of the workshop with a completely new way of looking at a product we've been underselling for the entire life of the business"

"Being off premises and in a mentally challenging environment can be quite beneficial for redesigning or developing new business ideas, but perhaps the biggest impact was about being Fast n Furious!"

## Minimum Viable Product Launch – getting to market with pace

A key output of the Fast n Furious short course was development of a rapid prototype that is fit for sale and can be tested in market or Minimum Viable Product. We recommended people get out and test products at Farmers Markets and Fairs to get direct feedback and learn about how to pitch their product. Willie and Catherine already had some of the mead so the first step was to get feedback from people tasting the product and telling the mead story.

In parallel, they created a new label, which was launched in April 2017, featuring the Chinese lucky number 'eight' and Chinese calligraphy to help generate interest from Asian visitors.

"I wanted an Aussie shed with a big EIGHT around. It was gonna be this mythical shed with the Asian mystique, the Feng Shui and the whole thing. They tested it on the label at the Tasmanian Craft Fair and when someone said 'it looks expensive, so that's pretty good feedback'", says Willie / Catherine.

"What we got out of Fast n Furious is a new way to market our products and differentiate ourselves from others in an increasingly crowded market ... a change in how you think about innovation, business and product development"

## Lead Measures and Learning – build, measure, learn

Apart from doubling sales which has meant limited availability of stock until future production ramps up, Seven Sheds has utilised a number of lead measures with their target market to assess the attraction of Shed 8 mead. A starting point was to survey current Facebook followers to learn more about the different market perceptions of mead. Through understanding what potential customer's think of mead and feedback from the sampling, they have been able to make improvements in how they position the product, its design, size and therefore increase the likelihood of success.

## Next Steps

The future for Shed 8 is to expand mead production in the upgraded brewery and improve production to get consistency in taste and alcohol content. This will allow full market entry and promotion into new channels. The Shed 8 brand will also be expanded with different variations of honey and alcohol strengths. Seven Sheds is attending Farmers Markets twice a month and making their beer and mead available at all their events. This is now being extended to having hot mead available seasonally to expand consumption occasions.

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