

Father and son team, Bob (right) and Grant (left) Menzies, have restructured their Adina watch business to ensure the well known name survives COVID-19 restrictions.



+ Watchmaker will stand the test of time after COVID-19

A Brisbane watchmaker which has specialised in designing and assembling timepieces to suite Queensland's harsh conditions for close to 50 years has faced their most significant challenge to date.

Father and son team Bob and Grant Menzies, the force behind the Adina watch brand, have restructured the business to make sure the well-known name survives COVID-19 restrictions.

A COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan has allowed 15 staff to stay in gainful employment and help Bob and Grant prepare the business for the future – including a 'conservative' new collection of watches for a Christmas release which reflect a 'subdued yet optimistic outlook for the current climate'.

“It's one of the biggest challenges the business has ever faced...”

The loan scheme administered by the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA), provides finance of up to \$250,000 for businesses and non-profit organisations impacted by COVID-19 to assist with carry-on expenses such as employee wages, rent and rates and other expenditure.

Grant said COVID-19 presented some of the most significant setbacks in the business' 50 year history, which his father began in 1971, but careful preparation and the ability to adapt rapidly left him confident the business would be able to respond to the changes.

Up to 200 watches leave the Woolloongabba factory every day, sold at their network of 350 independent jewellery nationally. During COVID-19 more than half shut up shop for six weeks.

“Demand went to basically zero,” Grant said.

“When COVID started to unfold, all facets of our business were really working quite well so from a personal point of view when I saw retail stores start to close, I was really quite upset.”

Grant said the online channel was one of the only income streams, for not only the company but for the retailers which had closed.

“The only real avenue we had was online which we've had for about seven years but it was a small part of our business. The bricks and mortar retailers have always been the backbone” he said.



“We had to get creative about how we could include the retailers who had closed in our online channel. It meant customers were still able to enjoy a birthday or anniversary gift or a farmer who had busted their watch could have a new one delivered to them, it worked quite well.

“The loan has given us the ability to keep paying our people...”

“The biggest takeaway from COVID is instead of the usual planning of months in advance we had to become a very reactive business. If we had an idea, it was then about how quickly we could bring it to life. Every sale was imperative.”

The COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan allowed Bob and Grant to retain staff and maintain operations.

“We are very proud of the team and how we were able to respond. The loan has given us the ability to keep paying our people, we were never going to turn our back on them because things got a little tough. The funds were able to help us in that space and keep people gainfully employed as well as supporting other family businesses. When everybody pulls together, it’s a great feeling,” Grant said.

“Money has never been why we get out of bed in the morning, it’s a by-product of running a successful business but when times are tough you need that cash flow to keep operations going.

“It’s one of the biggest challenges the business has ever faced. We’ve been through a hell of a lot but nothing like this before.”

Grant said changing buying behaviour of the public who were actively supporting Australian-made products was also a real positive for the business.

“Australian made products are really resonating in the market place and customers who buy Adina watches are supporting an Australian family business and buying something that was built here in Queensland. The public has always loved that part of our business and even more so at the moment,” he said.

Grant said the COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan allowed him the confidence the business would be as robust as it was 50 years ago when COVID-19 restrictions and the impact on businesses eased.

“We can’t get knocked down by a virus. The products, the service and the team are exceptional and we were not going to let this knock us out. I made a commitment to our staff, while I was still standing, I was not going to let this business go under,” he said.

“We are fighting the good fight every day. I was aggressively positive we could come out the other side of this situation.”

For more information see www.qrida.qld.gov.au/covid19jobssupportloans or **Freecall 1800 623 946**.

QRIDA is delivering the \$1 billion COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan Scheme on behalf of the Queensland Government.