

BUSINESS

Family company cleans up amid coronavirus fears

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6th Mar 2020 1:40 PM

A SUNSHINE Coast company is cleaning up amid the coronavirus outbreak, with this month's demand for hand sanitiser "skyrocketing" from one tonne to 100.

Warana-based Concept Labs have received orders from across Australia and internationally from Hong Kong, China, Malaysia and New Zealand as their major competitors struggle to meet increased demand.

General manager Naomi Elliott said her parents founded the company 22 years ago, and the recent "unprecedented" spike had strengthened their supply and distribution chains, and put their product in front of new customers.



Concept Labs is receiving orders for their products from across Australia and the globe as their major competitors struggle to keep up with the demand. Photo: John McCutcheon / Sunshine Coast Daily

She said Concept Labs point of difference over competitors was that they were more flexible in the products and quantities they were able to supply, and that they manufactured their own brand as well as other brand's formulas.

"Our major competitors in retail are out of stock and difficult to stock for a few months," Ms Elliott said.

"Apparently word got around we can supply. We are, in comparison, only a small business so we are quite flexible and reactive, we just source as much packaging as we can locally."

Ms Elliott said in response, they had put on three extra staff and were looking to employ more next week as they worked seven days a week from 7am until midnight to pump out the orders as quick as they came in.

"We have a full one-stop-shop for our products," she said

"We just came into work one week and our orders and email inquiries have just skyrocket.

"We have been in business 22 years and having seen anything like this before, it's quite unprecedented."



General manager of Warana-based company Concept Labs Naomi Elliott said they have put on more staff to pump out orders for their in-demand products. Photo: John McCutcheon / Sunshine Coast Daily

Ms Elliott said all orders received until the end of February had been supplied, but more recent orders would be dispatched within a couple of weeks.

She said though the current orders were circumstantial and largely driven by "coronavirus fears", she believed there would be long-term benefits having now networked with more suppliers and distributors, including international.

She said the Australian market was predominantly schools, childcare minding centres and government departments, but they now had orders flying in from major retailers and pharmacies within Australia.

"I can definitely see that it's a spike, and it's very reactive, so I don't think it's going to maintain the levels it's currently at," Ms Elliott said.

"However it's given us the opportunity to get our product in front of people that wouldn't have otherwise seen it.

"A lot of people don't know our brand and products, so it's allowed us to get that opportunity that I have no doubt will be ongoing as well.

"It's helped strengthen our supply chain ... and distribution."