

Shannon Townsend

Sionna Lifestyle & Aquatics



“WiRE” was an amazing opportunity to network with a group of inspiring and passionate women entrepreneurs. I enjoyed the journey of learning and communicating with them on a weekly basis, seeing each person and their business grow. The skills learned and connections made are invaluable to women with an entrepreneurial spirit all around Australia, and I am grateful I took part.

YOU AND YOUR VENTURE

What words would describe you as a person?

Enthusiastic

Describe how you would pitch your venture

Sionna is a water goddess, the business is based around water and wellness. *Sionna Lifestyle & Aquatics* provides consulting to create engaging programs, entertaining training and team building activities within the Aquatics industry, along with providing opportunities for mindfulness and movement for all.

At what stage is your venture?

Start-up (however it's been running for numerous years as a side venture to full time work).

What is your service or product?

Entertaining training and professional development for swim teachers, swim schools and the aquatic industry. Product and process development for businesses and charities around water, wellness and swim safety. Mindfulness, movement and yoga instruction and retreats. Goal setting, team building and creative facilitation activities for teenagers and businesses.

What is the structure of your venture?

Solo (I do partner with Swim Australia).

Does your venture reach local/national/international markets/audiences?

All markets. I have presented in person and over Zoom to audiences internationally, within Australia and locally. I have worked alongside NGO's to create SwimSafer programs for those in need.

IDENTITY

**In one word, characterise your life as an entrepreneur
(why this particular word)?**

Opportunities.

What does success mean to you?

Enjoying the journey, learning and growing, having fun along the way!

What is your favourite aspect of being an entrepreneur?

Sharing my love of water, wellness and fun!

MOTIVATION / MINDSET

What mindset(s) helps make you successful?

Growth mindset, high levels of energy and positivity.

**What ignited the spark in you to start a new business venture or
to make significant changes in an existing business?**

I saw opportunities to share my enthusiasm and the skills I have developed over the year. I have the ability to engage and entertain.

**How do you conquer those moments of doubt that so often stifle
or trip or stop so many entrepreneurs with great ideas...what
pushes you through?**

Become aware of the self talk and simply tell it to 'stop'. I've been practicing this for years.

What is your favourite quote?

If somebody offers you an amazing opportunity but you are not sure you can do it, say yes - then learn how to do it later! Richard Branson

VISION

What is your vision for your venture?

To use water as a medium to spread wellness and SwimSafer messages. To create opportunities that have a flow on effect e.g. swim teacher retreats to teach local adults to become instructors, and therefore opportunities for communities to teach vital swimming and water safety skills.

SELF-EFFICACY AND SKILLS

To what do you attribute your success in progressing your entrepreneurial journey?

My parents always encouraged me to try new things as a child (and now), supported my many crazy ideas and gave me the stability and love to have a go!

What would you say are the top three skills needed to be a successful entrepreneur?

- Learn from your mistakes
- Keep your eyes and ears open for opportunities
- Believe in yourself.

What was your biggest mistake in an entrepreneurial context?

I started swim schools as a teenager. If I had continued, I would have been financially set-up now (but I did have some other cool jobs and opportunities that allowed me to explore the world).

What sacrifices have you had to make to be a successful entrepreneur?

Late nights, time away from the kids.

In your view what factors help individuals make the transition to self-employment?

Belief in self and ideas, plus finding the right market to target.

STRATEGY

What would you say are the top three key elements for starting your business?

- Follow your passions and interests
- Take opportunities to network and learn
- Break tasks into smaller, achievable chunks.

What has been your most successful form(s) of marketing?

Word of mouth.

Where did your venture funding/capital come from?

Self funded.

Do you want to grow your business? How will you do this?

Yes. At this stage my kids are at school and I like the stability of a stable income. I have a few years to work out my plan for self-employment and financial freedom!

How do you stay motivated when things get busy with family and other things?

Focus on each moment. When with the kids, focus on them. When working, stay focussed on the task (close emails!!).

NETWORKS

To what extent do you agree with the following statement and why?

“The connections and networks that exist between people and enabled cooperation is one of the most important things in entrepreneurship”

I absolutely agree with this. The WiRE program is a perfect example of the statement. Sharing, learning and the support of others helps you feel connected and that you are not alone in the journey.

What kinds of networks do you access to help your entrepreneurial journey?

WiRE, Swim Australia, online workshops, and local business groups.

Do you have a mentor? If so, how have they helped you? If not, was that a conscious choice?

I have life mentors, however I think a business mentor would be helpful to keep me on track.

IMPACT OF THE WiRE PROGRAM

Why did you decide to participate in the WiRE Program?

I have been watching over the years and the timing was right, with the start of COVID lockdowns.

In what aspects of the WiRE Program have you participated in so far?

Face-to-face bootcamp, online bootcamp, WiRE Hub, two workshops.

What knowledge/skills have you acquired?

Customer persona, deep work, marketing funnels, opportunity crunch, strategy, mindset, SCARF, sense making, storytelling.



How useful were these skills in developing your venture and/or your future career?

They act like building blocks. Each piece of learning assists to move forward/change direction, become more specific about what you want in life.

What has been the impact of the WiRE Program? (on both you personally and your venture)

Collaborating with an amazing group of women and supporting each other through the journey was the highlight. Each week learning something new, and using the information to create/ develop the next part of the business.

What benefits have you derived by participating in the program?

New friends, potential business opportunities and collaborations, learning new skills, sense of belonging, and having the support of passionate people.

To what extent has the WiRE Program impacted upon you starting a venture? Have you started a venture as a direct result of your participation in the WiRE Program? If it has impacted on you starting a venture, have you registered an ABN?

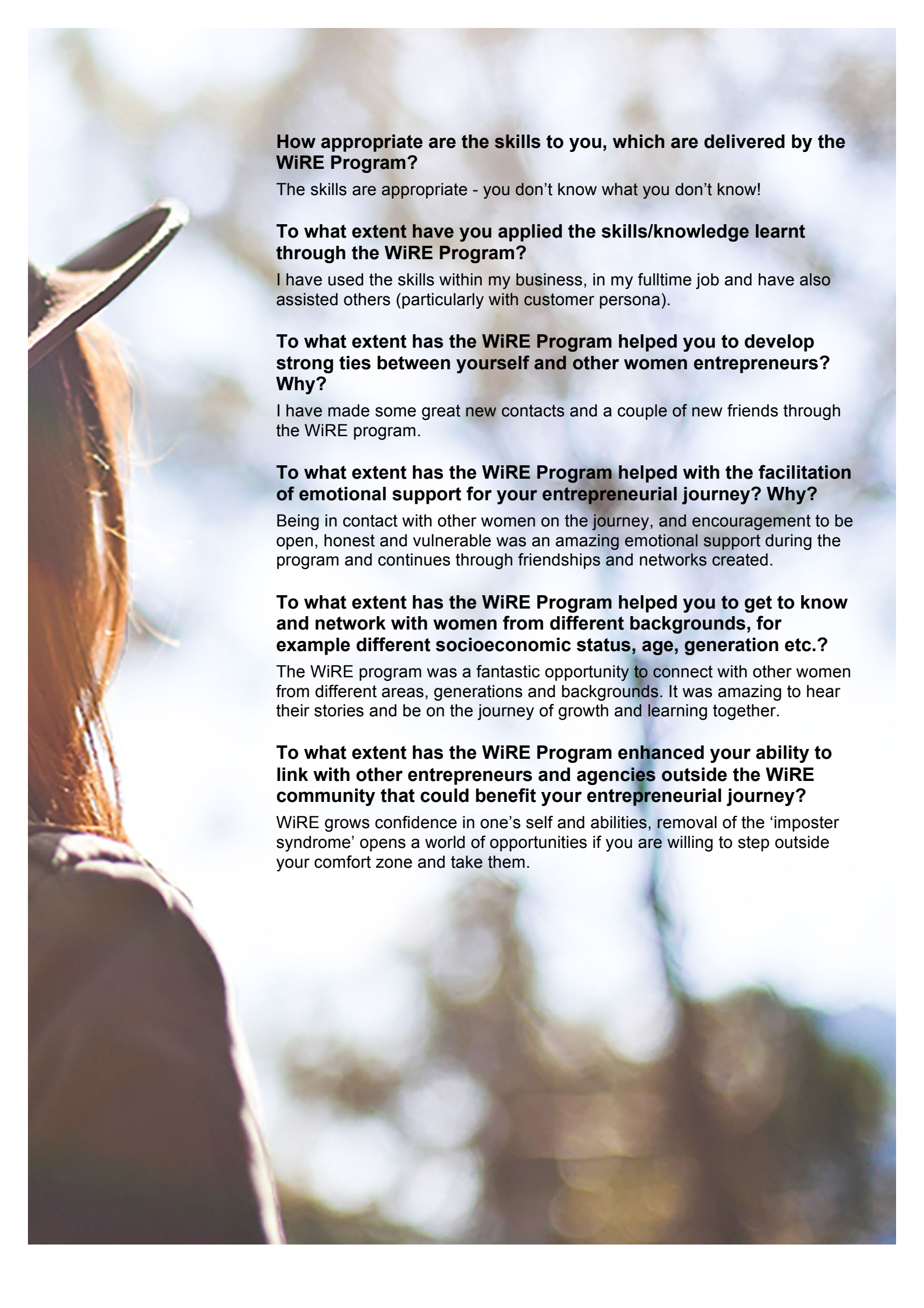
I had already started my venture, however I was able to create a goal setting program for teenage athletes throughout the WiRE. I already have an ABN.

If you had a business/venture when you started engaging in the WiRE Program, have you grown your venture or scaled it up as a result of the WiRE Program? If yes, please explain your answer (both in terms of the dollar value of the total enterprise as well as the scale-up value, or/and increase in sales or growth in customer numbers) (whichever applies)

I created a new product offering and have used it with success. I have an interest to use this goal-setting product with a flexi-school and other sporting bodies. I am currently communicating with these businesses and will roll it out soon.

If you did have a business/venture when you started engaging in the WiRE Program, what has been the impact of the WiRE Program on the sustainability of business/venture?

Gave me new ideas and ways of adding to my current offerings that are sustainable and potential passive income streams.



How appropriate are the skills to you, which are delivered by the WiRE Program?

The skills are appropriate - you don't know what you don't know!

To what extent have you applied the skills/knowledge learnt through the WiRE Program?

I have used the skills within my business, in my fulltime job and have also assisted others (particularly with customer persona).

To what extent has the WiRE Program helped you to develop strong ties between yourself and other women entrepreneurs? Why?

I have made some great new contacts and a couple of new friends through the WiRE program.

To what extent has the WiRE Program helped with the facilitation of emotional support for your entrepreneurial journey? Why?

Being in contact with other women on the journey, and encouragement to be open, honest and vulnerable was an amazing emotional support during the program and continues through friendships and networks created.

To what extent has the WiRE Program helped you to get to know and network with women from different backgrounds, for example different socioeconomic status, age, generation etc.?

The WiRE program was a fantastic opportunity to connect with other women from different areas, generations and backgrounds. It was amazing to hear their stories and be on the journey of growth and learning together.

To what extent has the WiRE Program enhanced your ability to link with other entrepreneurs and agencies outside the WiRE community that could benefit your entrepreneurial journey?

WiRE grows confidence in one's self and abilities, removal of the 'imposter syndrome' opens a world of opportunities if you are willing to step outside your comfort zone and take them.

If your venture has not been online previously, has your venture gone online as a result of the WiRE Program?

COVID took my Zoom classes online. I have a website (needs updating - getting to that!).

Name the biggest overall lesson you have learnt in your entrepreneurial journey so far that could be passed on to other women

It's OK to take a break and have a rest to recharge. You are better at everything when you are well rested, happy and healthy!

Where to find you online?

<https://www.facebook.com/shannon.townsend.140/>
www.sionna.com.au

*Shannon Townsend
Toowoomba*