

Media Release
Franchise Council of Australia
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OPPORTUNITY RIDES HIGH IN TIMES OF CRISIS

As Australian unemployment figures skyrocket and tales of job loss and economic despair are the order of the day, stories of hope and inspiration are to be found in the franchising sector.

One of the most inspirational stories is that of Deb Shugg, winner of Franchise Woman of the Year and one of BRW Magazine's top 50 female entrepreneurs. A survivor of domestic violence and assault, Deb's journey to recovery led to the creation of a solid and sustainable franchise business.

Ten years ago Deb was suffering from post traumatic stress disorder. She was agoraphobic and afraid to leave her home. The debilitating panic attacks that she suffered meant that she had no choice but to confront the abuse that she suffered as a child and as a teenager.

In addition, the pressing demands of parenthood and the need to generate an income meant that Deb was forced to create meaningful employment for herself. Battling her inner demons Deb, a former bookkeeper, gathered the courage to place a \$36 ad in the local paper and eventually found one client. Before she knew it she had over 100 clients and was now earning a living from the comfort and security of her own home.

As her personal recovery began to take shape, Deb started to look at the business she had created for herself and assess the growth opportunities. She turned to a franchising model which not only allowed her to expand her business exponentially, but also fulfilled her ambition of providing other vulnerable members of the workforce the building blocks to create their own solid future.

Today Award Bookkeeping Company has over 50 franchisees and a gross annual turnover of over \$3m.

Deb's attitude to adversity is the perfect antidote to the economic gloom that surrounds us on a daily basis "It will all be okay in the end" she says, "and if it's not okay, it's not the end"

With high unemployment figures and the need to cement job security, franchising continues to grow as a real and meaningful alternative to regular paid work. "The beauty of franchising is that it allows you to be in business for yourself, not by yourself" says Steve Wright, Executive Director of the Franchise Council of Australia. "With the growth in the home services market there are lots of niches and people can certainly run their businesses from home and, like Deb, step up without even stepping out of the front door".

During April, Deb Shugg will be taking her emotionally compelling and inspirational story on the road in a series of breakfast seminars staged by Women in Franchising and sponsored by Wetspac as part of Women in Franchising month.

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For more information or to arrange an interview with Deb Shugg please call Lana Hirschowitz on 0416 011 134 or email media@franchise.org.au