

# Alexandra Wardle from Qubies

**Alexandra Wardle thought introducing solids to her baby would be a simple task. After trying a number of different methods to freeze her home-cooked baby food, she found none of the containers on the market were suitable. With a lot of hard work and the support of her husband, Pj, and her two children, four-year-old Tyler and two-year-old Flynn, Alexandra created a new way to store food and liquids, and her brand was born. Qubies are designed specifically to store and freeze baby puree into a convenient, meal-sized cube. Instead of dividers inside, like a normal ice cube tray, Qubies feature their dividing segments on the lid, so that the cubes are easily removed.**



## **Tell us about your family life**

Since having a family, my husband Pj and I have become real homebodies. It's not unusual for us to close the gates on a Friday night and lock out the world. We love to spend the weekend playing in the garden with the kids, tending our vegie patch or just kicking the ball with our boys.

## **How would your friends describe you?**

They think I'm super confident and extremely organised, which sometimes can't be further from the truth.

## **What is your favourite childhood memory?**

We grew up in a very quiet street where there were lots of kids. I remember spending every spare minute outside in the street, riding our skateboards, playing football or chasing the other kids. It was total freedom.

## **How did you come up with the idea for your business?**

While introducing solids to Tyler, my first son, I made lots and lots of different foods for him. I pureed fruits and vegies and froze them in different containers or ice cube trays. My biggest problem was trying to get the food out of these containers as they all split or cracked. I had a light bulb moment and thought, I can't be the only parent having this problem with cheap containers. How hard can it be to make an ice cube tray designed specifically for baby food? The concept for Qubies was born. I emailed my hubby, who was away in Iraq with the Navy, and he just laughed and told me to do it – I don't think he really took me all that seriously at the time.



### **Was it difficult to get your business off the ground?**

Knowledge was my biggest obstacle as I had no idea how to make something out of plastic. One hazy Sunday morning I watched a program which showcased successful mums' businesses. One of the mums owned a business that made clear plastic shoeboxes. I rang her and she kindly gave me an overview of what was involved and set me on my path. Thanks, Sascha! It was then a matter of researching everything I needed to learn.

### **What is the hardest decision you've had to make since starting your business?**

The biggest was whether to seriously go ahead and begin this journey. Creating Qubies from scratch was an extremely long and expensive process. I had to be sure that I was going to create a product I was proud of, one that would make parents' lives easier and one that was going to be marketable.

### **What type of environment best stimulates your creativity?**

I often go for long walks on my own, just taking in the world, and then something will pop into my head – yes, it's a strange process.

### **What issues arise when juggling business and motherhood?**

On one hand I want my business to succeed and I do my best to continue expanding and growing. On the other hand, I have two little boys and a home that all require a lot of my attention. There are always meals to be cooked and washing that piles up. My biggest issue is juggling these pressures while remaining calm and serene. Okay, who I am kidding! There are days and sometimes weeks where I am just unable to focus on Qubies. It's a fact of life and one that I can't do much about. It can happen for any number of reasons, but mainly it's caused by sick children. In the past, I would become stressed and I worried that everything would fall in a heap, but you know what? It doesn't. I have a great family and a husband who helps out when he can. I have fantastic customers who understand my position as a businesswoman and a mum, especially as quite a number are in a similar situation.

### **What advice do you have for women wanting to start a business?**

Be thorough with your research and budgeting. I did a great business plan - or so I thought! My expenses totally blew out as there were so many things I hadn't considered, such as barcodes, trademarks, patents and insurance. Speak to the right people in the area that interests you, and find out what their biggest challenges were and what they would have done differently. If it's your dream, don't let anyone tell you it can't be done. In the beginning I visited a number of factories with Tyler in his pram and asked lots of questions. They all said I couldn't make Qubies as I wasn't part of a big, multinational baby company! Well, guess what? I did!

**Describe your life outside your job**

My family is my life. I think once you have children, the centre of your world shifts to them.

**Who inspires you?**

I recently heard a number of women speak who had, out of tragedy, created businesses that were giving back to their community, charities and medical research. These women were just amazing. They made me reassess what I was doing and caused me to consider whether I was giving back as much as I should be.

**What is a little known fact about you that would surprise people?**

I learned to tap dance as an adult, and I was quite good too. Tap, tap, tap and jiggle, jiggle, jiggle goes the body!

Find the Qubies range at [qubies.com.au](http://qubies.com.au).