

GROWTH | South Australian salon now national

Proving that beauty is essential business



FAST MOVERS: Melissa Gav and Tony Maiello now have 20 franchises across Australia

Picture: DEAN MARTIN

NIGEL AUSTIN

TONY Maiello believes you can do anything in Adelaide if you only set your mind to the task.

He is proving it with wife Melissa Gav through their company, Essential Beauty, the fastest growing franchise business in Australia.

Essential Beauty has grown from a humble start as a single outlet, serving the customers of a Grenfell St gymnasium in 1990, to a \$10.6 million turnover in 2004-05 with 20 franchises around Australia.

The network serves up to 400,000 customers a year and is the nation's best known business of its type.

"We don't go about our business trying to win awards, but it happened and it was wonderful," Mr Maiello said.

"Businesses that do well in Adelaide are grassroots companies and people will support you if you're good at what you do."

Mr Maiello, who travels a lot because of the company, believes people elsewhere are starting to realise that Adelaide is a good place to

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do business and to live.

He said the growth of Essential Beauty was based on meeting the constantly growing consumer demand for beauty services, which had moved from being a luxury to an essential part of everyone's life.

"There is increasing competition in this market because people are putting more and more focus on health and beauty," he said.

Essential Beauty grew slowly from its single store in the city before opening its first franchise at Arndale in 2000, and others at Tea Tree Plaza and Marion in 2001, quickly growing to six stores before plateauing, while they started a family.

It's growth in the past two years has been explosive with the addition of other stores, and outlets in interstate capitals Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane.

Mr Maiello said that with 12 stores in Adelaide, there was plenty of potential to expand around Australia,

but any growth would be carefully managed.

He expects the growth continuing with another 15 outlets on the horizon in the next five years.

Each store employs 10 people on average, including the franchise owners.

Their main service is waxing, followed by general beauty services, including massage, tanning and facials, while artificial nails and body piercing are also offered in the businesses.

He puts the chain's success to the professionalism of its people, a diverse range of services and a clever promotional campaign.

"I take my hat off to the girls who work for us because it's hard work," Mr Maiello said.

While he focuses on administering and expanding the business, his wife is more involved with research and development.

Mr Maiello said Essential Beauty was in the throes of gaining accreditation as a registered training organisation, hopefully in the first part of this year, so it can officially train people for future growth.