

# The Nutshell Possum Initiative

## Rationale

For over 15 years Nutshell has used the Internet to deliver thousands of high quality locally made tuff-as-nuts leather belt cases from New Zealand to customers around the world. These products are available in a range of sizes and styles and protect Smartphones, personal insulin pumps, handheld industrial equipment, medical devices and other sophisticated portable electronics in everyday use.

As part of our ongoing product development, we have experimented with the use of unique, locally sourced, hollow stemmed anti-static possum pelt as an inner layer for our cases, providing a plush lining to hold an electronic device, while protecting it from any undesirable external electrical interference.

We now wish to develop a new range of ultra-strong, lightweight, natural, ecofriendly product, using carbon fibres as a mid layer between an inner lining of possum pelt and an outer skin of high quality leather. We also wish to use modern manufacturing processes, including laser engraving to emboss product information on individual products, including the addition of corporate brands and personalised data.

The resulting products will better enable us to address and meet the personal transportation demands of the next generations of increasingly sophisticated smart electronics; handhelds, tablets and an ever increasing number of even more discreet personal devices, enabling them to better withstand severe accidental electronic trauma and/or physical damage.

## The Advantage

We have an enviable and very real marketing advantage. As NUTCC we are the *only* Australasian vendor to Amazon.com's wireless accessory division. We are an Amazon Associate and we deliver our products into distribution centers throughout the United States.

Amazon serves a membership of more than 150 million consumers through an extensive and growing global network of distribution centers throughout North America, the United Kingdom, Europe, Japan and China. It is estimated that at any one time more than 50 million Amazon shoppers are online. Nutshell is also an authorized International Merchant to PayPal.

## **The Challenge**

Although nobody knows for sure, the New Zealand wilderness is today home to over 40 million feral Australian Brush Tailed possum. Introduced more than 150 years ago, these imported marsupial pests have no natural enemies and pose a severe and very real threat to our native flora and fauna. They also carry and spread the livestock disease bovine tuberculosis. Government agencies annually spend millions of dollars to kill possums and protect New Zealand's vital beef and dairy export industries.

It is estimated that in the year 2011-2012 New Zealand commercially harvested approximately two million possum for their fur. The fibre was woven into a possum/merino wool blend to create clothing and accessories like scarves, socks, gloves and hats. An estimated additional 50,000 hides and pelts were processed and tanned for use in products like rugs, coats and throws.

Our challenge is to harvest and process sufficient possum to satisfy the requirements of millions of tech savvy and increasingly environmentally aware consumers.

## **The Opportunity**

In order to meet the Amazon potential we shall likely have to oversee the development of new processes to harvest the number of pelts we will require.

This process may involve assisting the development of schemes to train a growing base of professional possum trappers and cullers as well as engaging with local community resources. Through the involvement of local authorities it is possible to use local communities to harvest possums within urban areas to augment the pelt count generated by professional trapping services.

In addition to the involvement of local and regional government resources, corporate sponsorship could provide a platform to enable communities to raise their environmental awareness and provide ongoing employment opportunities throughout New Zealand's rural sector. A network of couriers could distribute traps to individual households; the couriers could collect privately acquired pelts for processing prior to their conversion into eco friendly products. Households could 'log' their catch online and request a pickup.

## The Plan

We intend using the Internet to appeal to environmentally aware individuals.

- Social Networking
- Consumer Marketing
- Sponsume.com

We want to raise funds to formulate the strategies needed to develop the next generation of protective cases;

- Develop - a materials supply chain.
- Design - a range of ecofriendly cases.
- Document - a manufacturing technique.
- Create - packaging and other collateral.
- Identify – market opportunities.
- Promote – the product.

## In Conclusion

We believe an opportunity exists to create a substantial export market and at the same time assist with the eradication of one of New Zealand's most pressing environmental problems.

This project is also an opportunity to create employment in New Zealand; to sustainably grow a nation-wide labour force to continually meet the enthusiasm of an environmentally aware, product-hungry, global consumer base.

## About Nutshell

Since 1997 the Nutshell Corporation Limited has been using the Internet to market high quality, New Zealand made product to mobile users worldwide.

[www.tuff-as-nuts.com](http://www.tuff-as-nuts.com)