

Carin Pickworth

PRESENCE of mind and oodles of noodles was Wok Me Noodle Bar owner Luke McGrath's recipe for success.

The "late eater" came up with the idea to open a healthy fast-food outlet when he moved to Brisbane in 2004 and found he could not buy a quick, healthy meal after 8pm on a weeknight.

"More often than not people will drop past their local takeaway to pick something up on their way home, but generally the only options available without having to wait extensively for an order

# An 'insane' idea that really woks

were burgers and chips," Mr McGrath says.

"Our (Fortitude) Valley store is open until 10pm every night of the week and initially people thought we were insane because it was something no one was doing here.

"Now I have people who come by three and four times a week because they know they can rely on us to be open and offer a healthy

solution every time."

Mr McGrath comes from Melbourne and had previously worked in the property and hospitality industries.

But it took him just 12 weeks of living in Brisbane to open his first Wok Me Noodle Bar.

The self-starter has developed a franchise system and now has bases in the Valley, North Lakes,

25km north of Brisbane, and the Direct Factory Outlet precinct near Brisbane Airport. Five more stores expected by the end of the year.

This year Mr McGrath hopes to identify even further market opportunities and is seeking franchisees.

"We are determined to grow the value of our food by employing a nutritionist to make further improvements to existing recipes and develop new ones," he said.

"I am personally determined to be able to offer people a fast takeaway option that is still beneficial to the consumer's health."



USING his noodle . . . Wok Me Noodle Bar owner Luke McGrath in his Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, eatery. Five more noodle bars are expected to open this year. Picture: John

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Noodle Bar