

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Australian Made

Australian Made Week is about celebrating the work of local makers, writes Anders Furze.



The number of businesses using the Australian Made logo on their products has almost doubled in the past five years, as the benefits of buying locally made goods have been thrown into sharp relief by COVID-19 disruptions and ongoing supply chain issues.

“When you buy Australian-made, you know you’re getting a product made to some of the highest manufacturing standards in the world,” says Australian Made CEO Ben

Adam Liaw is the ambassador of Australian Made Week, which kicks off on Monday.

Lazzaro. “There are attributes of sustainability and ethical manufacturing. When we make things here, we’re pumping money back into the economy and creating jobs.

“There are so many positive aspects when we buy local.”

There are now more than 4200 Australian Made licensees. The strong recent growth reflects an increasing recognition by businesses that consumers are wanting to spend more money locally, a trend that has only

accelerated amid the uncertainty of the past few years, Lazzaro says.

“It clearly has resonated with people, because we all knew somebody who lost a job or was on reduced hours [through the pandemic]. The importance of buying local, and keeping people employed here, became really front of mind for many people.”

Since its creation in 1986, the Australian Made logo has evolved from a patriotic symbol into a mark that conveys attributes such as quality,

sustainability and ethical labour. The fact all applications to carry the logo are assessed against a set of criteria means that consumers place a great deal of trust in the gold kangaroo on the green triangle.

“The brand is such an amazing shortcut,” Lazzaro explains. “The logo does the heavy lifting for consumers – we all know that if we see it on a product, we can buy with confidence.”

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6–12 June

Australian Made Week

Australian Made makes Australia

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Celebrating the top-quality work of local makers, growers

FROM PAGE 1

Local makers and growers choose to license the Australian Made logo for a variety of reasons. A recent Roy Morgan study found 98 per cent of licensees chose to use the logo because of its credibility, wide recognition or because it is trusted. Ninety-six per cent agree that it reassures customers the product is genuinely Australian, and the same proportion also agree it adds value on product packaging or marketing material.

“Consumers are certainly making it known that they’re looking for the logo,” says Lazzaro. “We see that through our own consumer research and just by the feedback we get through social media and over the phone. There’s a significant marketing advantage for businesses in telling their buyers – whether they’re businesses or consumers – that they are Australian Made.”

That licensee numbers continue to grow also highlights the breadth of Australian manufacturing expertise, Lazzaro notes. Consumers can now find the distinctive green and gold logo on everything from handmade jewellery to medical equipment, pharmaceuticals to agricultural machinery and construction products.

“Interestingly, recent years have seen an increase in building products carrying the logo,” he says.

“We’ve seen an appetite for Aussie products. You’ll see manufacturers going to great lengths to demonstrate they’re manufactured to a high-quality, safe standard.”



Australian Made CEO Ben Lazzaro says buying local brings many benefits.

‘We are absolutely spoilt for choice in Australia as we have the best products in the world, manufactured to the highest standards right here in our own backyard.’

Adam Liaw

The second annual Australian Made Week kicks off next week, with celebrity chef Adam Liaw serving as the official Australian Made Week ambassador.

“We are absolutely spoilt for choice in Australia as we have the best products in the world, manufactured to the highest standards right here in our own backyard,” Liaw says.

“My view is it’s a no-brainer to choose Australian Made when you can. When you do, everyone wins – be it through job creation, consistent supply of consumer goods or just getting a top-quality product.”

For Lazzaro, Australian Made Week offers the chance to shine a light on local makers and growers and celebrate their work.

“Of course, our job is to do that every day of the year. But it’s great to have a week to bring into sharp focus the benefits of buying Australian Made.”

Aussie businesses embracing the green and gold



98% of Australian Made licensees decided to use the logo because of its credibility, wide recognition or because the logo is trusted

96% agree the logo reassures customers that the product is genuinely Australian

96% believe the logo is effective and adds value on product packaging or marketing material

94% agree Australian consumers and businesses widely recognise the logo

94% agree Australian consumers and businesses trust the logo

3 in 5 licensees have noticed customers actively seeking, requesting or buying more Australian made and grown products, or inquiring about products’ country of origin, as an impact of COVID on their business.

Source: Roy Morgan research, 2021.



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THE VILLAGE MARKET

Handcrafting the 'real deal' for decades

This family-run Queensland business fashions cosy boots that are a cut above.

Although it first appeared in the Bible, the story of David and Goliath has since become a secular shorthand for a battle between an underdog and a much larger opponent. It's often presented as an inspiring tale and the classic Australian film *The Castle* is a good example, where Aussie battler Darryl Kerrigan takes his fight to save his house all the way to the High Court and wins.

However, in the real world, a 'David' doesn't always win, which is what happened to the iconic Australian UGG boot when an American Goliath trademarked the name. In Australia, we see the term UGG as being a generic word describing a cosy sheepskin boot. It's a type of footwear, just like a thong or gumboot, and so could never be trademarked here.

What the American trademark means for home-grown manufacturers is that they cannot sell their products outside of Australia. That is, if they want to accurately describe them as UGG boots. However, literally anyone can sell UGG boots here.

"It is just really confusing for people to understand that in Australia, UGG is not a brand, it's a product. We're always up against it because 96 per cent of the world's UGG boots are made in China or the Philippines, whether that's through the big American company, or whether that's smaller distribution companies," explains Todd Watts.

Channelling that determined 'David' spirit, Todd and Hannah Watts of UGG Since 1974 continue to stand strong in the face of all that confusion and competition, and craft authentic, handmade Australian UGGs from their custom-built workshop in south-east Queensland.

"Believe it or not, if you have a pair of UGG boots at home, chances are they weren't made in Australia," Todd says. As the name UGG Since 1974 indicates, this third-generation family-run business has been making the real deal for decades.

"Every boot is made from start to finish under our own noses, which is pretty unusual in this day and age for a retail or a fashion apparel company to actually run their own manufacturing.



Hannah Watts, along with partner Todd, runs UGG Since 1974, producing Australian UGGs.

"There's no conveyor belts or mass production," Todd says of the way each pair of boots is made to order and handcrafted using the highest quality materials, as they have always done.

Todd's grandfather, who started the business and is in his 80s, continues to frequent the workshop, and among the 30-strong staff are some sewing machinists who have worked for the company since the early days. Each boot takes about six hours to make.

"We only use genuine Australian and New Zealand merino A-grade sheepskin. A lot of the cheaper ones are just faux or a synthetic skin, so they completely undermine the purpose of an UGG boot, which is to keep your feet warm, but the properties of the sheepskin allow your feet to breathe, so you shouldn't be sweating in your boots," says Hannah.

The composition of an UGG Since 1974 boot also differs from offshore imitations.

"We use a really high-quality, non-

'It is just really confusing for people to understand that in Australia, UGG is not a brand, it's a product.'

Todd Watts

slip sole and we have a reinforced heel," she says. "You'll see a lot of boots where the back of the boot has collapsed and the person is almost walking on the back of their heel, so that's another clear indication that the boot hasn't been made to a high-quality, lasting standard."

While the classic UGG – a mid-calf boot style in neutral, earthy hues – is a perennial bestseller, UGG Since 1974 has no shortage of other options. "We have the largest range of boot styles and colours available in Australia, if

not the world. At any given time, we have at least 20 sheepskin colours," Todd says.

Styles range from the original '70s design, to more modern and seasonal styles, which can also be personalised with everything from leather embossed initials to Swarovski crystal buttons, panels, zips and even pictures of your pets. The brand also offers bridal and medical options.

"We encourage people wanting the genuine Australian UGG boots to look for UGG Since 1974, and not just to Google UGG, because almost all of the websites that come up under that search aren't made here in Australia" he says.

Whatever style you choose from UGG Since 1974, Todd says you can trust you're getting a premium, authentic product. "The best thing about them is you're buying a genuinely Australian-made pair, so they'll last you for upwards of 10 years."



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Medtech pioneers eye global expansion

Innovative Australian products are on the international radar of the medtech industry.

Biomedical engineers are rapidly speeding up the treatment and recovery process for patients suffering jaw deformities and jaw cancer, thanks to 3D-printing capabilities here on Australian shores.

Lyka Smith produces 3D-printed technologies for surgeons who conduct oral and maxillofacial surgery, with its team of biomedical engineers based in Victoria and Queensland.

Engineers work closely with surgeons at every step of the process to develop bespoke solutions for patients. Onshore design and production means surgeries can be scheduled quickly, while patient-specific engineering helps provide a high degree of accuracy, supporting the best patient outcomes.

Founder Ben Baxter says Australian surgeons typically have sourced products such as implants from overseas, as strict regulations, high costs and declining reimbursement have made it very restrictive for medical technology (medtech) companies to innovate in Australia.

Saving time is just one of the significant benefits of producing and sourcing products that are Australian made.

"We could do local, patient-specific manufacturing in five working days, when the average timeframe is six weeks (to source from overseas), not to mention the extra costs incurred," Baxter says.

"When you can make something (here) it's substantially faster than our overseas competitors. Unfortunately there's very few Australian made options for Aussie surgeons."

Device Technologies, a pioneer in the Australian medtech industry for 30 years, has partnered with Lyka Smith, and CEO Mick Trevaskis says having biomedical engineers work side-by-side with surgeons also provides benefits to patients.

The engineers are highly regarded by surgeons, as they have the skills to read and articulate results of MRIs, CT scans and X-rays. This enables them to partner with surgeons on planning and product design before operations, which further benefits patient outcomes.



Partners Device Technologies and Lyka Smith are producing 3D-printed medtech products for surgeons.



"Using 3D-printed technology allows the surgeon to do a lot more pre-planning. Being able to plan to the patient's specific anatomy results in a greater degree of accuracy when performing the surgery," Trevaskis says.

"When we're talking about anatomies like the jaw, around the mouth and up towards the eyes, accuracy is critical, not just from the disease-state point of view, but also the aesthetic point of view."

The medtech sector is an emerging part of Australia's manufacturing industry.

Lyka Smith employs 18 biomedical engineers and predicts that workforce



will double in the next two years as they expand throughout Australia and internationally.

"What Lyka Smith has done around creating really high-value employment for biomedical engineers in the medtech sector is very important, because we're limited with opportunities in Australia for these highly skilled and trained people," Trevaskis says.

"There's not a lot of companies that are actually truly innovating or manufacturing in the medtech space in Australia."

He says oral and maxillofacial surgery may just be the start for the company, with the ability to adapt the

'We want to ensure newly trained surgeons are equipped to lead the way into the new digital health era.'

Simon Norris

skills and technology to other specialties.

Trevaskis says that will enable even more Australian medtech dollars to stay in Australia and allow our highly respected surgeons and healthcare professionals to be more involved in real innovation.

"I know it's a small number of employees today, but with 26 staff in Australia, there's 26 staff who may not have a job working for an Australian company otherwise."

Lyka Smith national sales manager Simon Norris says its services go beyond production, with product specialists involved from pre-planning to post-surgical follow-up.

"We will go in on the day of the surgery to support the surgeon, to make sure everything is working effectively, and the nursing staff and theatre staff are comfortable with the set-up for that specific patient," Norris says. "This leads to greater efficiencies in the operating room."

"We also plan to invest heavily in education and registrar training programs," he adds. "We want to ensure newly trained surgeons are equipped to lead the way into the new digital health era."

Serving Australia is just the start for Lyka Smith, which is also planning to begin exporting overseas, creating even more local jobs and putting Australian Made on the international radar in the medtech industry.

Asia is one region in which there is limited access to these technologies, where countries currently importing products from Europe or America can access a faster, Australian option.

"Now is the right time for Australia to be thinking about innovating," Trevaskis says. "Device Technologies has a 30-year history of innovating across Australian healthcare and medtech and we're excited to expand into 3D printing and Australian-made technologies, starting with craniomaxillofacial surgery. We know it can be done and we're proud to be a part of it."

DEVICE TECHNOLOGIES

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Podiatry range making great strides

An entrepreneur has gone from *Shark Tank* protege to CEO of a unique company.

As Australians become increasingly aware of our health, we're more conscious than ever of what we're putting into our bodies. When it comes to superfoods – those ingredients packed with multiple nutritional benefits – turmeric has received plenty of positive press.

As a spice, it was used for millennia in curries and other Asian dishes long before it started appearing in turmeric lattes in inner-city cafes as a wellness trend. However, it's not turmeric but the active compound within it, curcumin, that has beneficial antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

What this means is that it can help manage inflammation and pain, which is why SynxBody use it as a major ingredient in their new line of Synxeaze Pain Relief Cream and Capsules.

Award-winning entrepreneur Rachael Ferguson, CEO of SynxBody, has long had an interest in chronic musculoskeletal pain. As a podiatrist, she has always understood how fundamental our feet are to our overall health and wellbeing.

"Our focus at SynxBody is full body health, feet first," she says. "Everything is connected within the body and it's important we look at it holistically."

Ferguson co-founded Australian footwear company SynxBody in 2011 with the aim of helping people – whether elite athlete, daily dog walker or social golfer – remain free from pain. She launched the business with a patented super-slim insole Synxsole, designed to fit modern shoes while providing optimal arch support.

Ferguson, who lives in Western Australia, will be familiar to viewers of Network 10's *Shark Tank*, having first appeared on the television show in 2015 and then returning in the second season. The reality show had entrepreneurs vying for investment dollars from the 'sharks' and Synxsole wound up in a three-way bidding war, with millionaire businessman Andrew Banks ultimately backing the idea of podiatry-designed orthotics at an affordable price.

To this day, Banks remains a major shareholder. "There's been a whole lot



Podiatrist Rachael Ferguson is CEO of SynxBody, whose products include creams for pain relief.

of growth that has happened," Ferguson says, crediting his mentorship for that. "It is really important to have more experienced entrepreneurs on your side."

She was named the 2020 First Amongst Equals winner, the highest honour at the 40under40 Awards, and won the Ausmumpreneur 2021 Silver Award for Product and Innovation for Synxeaze. She is also a proud Perth ambassador of Women's Entrepreneurship Day Organisation.

Since *Shark Tank*, the SynxBody range has expanded to include "products for all types of podiatry conditions like bunions, corns, calluses, including knee, ankle and foot pain," which are stocked nationally in Chemist Warehouse, selected pharmacies and sold through the SynxBody website.

"All of our products are designed to keep people on their feet, pain-free and active," Ferguson explains.

When developing the Synxeaze Pain

Relief Cream and Capsules, Ferguson wanted to "bring some manufacturing back to Australia" and spent three years formulating these 90 per cent organic, vegan and cruelty-free products for market.

"After extensive research, I selected only premium ingredients. I wanted our formula to be unique [compared with] other products on the market," she says of her commitment to quality and efficacy. "I spoke to lots of different growers in Australia, and found the best technology or way of extraction, to ensure the highest concentration of the herbs are in the cream."

The Synxeaze products use HydroCurc and Levagen+, both scientifically proven more soluble forms of curcumin and PEA that are more easily absorbed by the body. The herbs are grown and harvested in Victoria, the cream is manufactured in Western Australia and the capsules manufactured in NSW.

"All of our ingredients for the cream,



'All of our products are designed to keep people on their feet, pain-free and active.'

Rachael Ferguson

where possible, are organic," she notes, with the only exception being if they use something that is wild harvested, which means "it's grown in the wild, and it's got better efficacy on that particular ingredient".

The Synxeaze cream works well to reduce aches and pains and promote healing while the capsules are great to use short-term for pain or injuries and both complement each other when used together.

Later in the year, SynxBody will be releasing a magnesium spray and a unique heel balm formula, which will also be made locally. "Our priority is always about producing something that is high quality in Australia," she says.

Despite this meaning higher manufacturing costs, Ferguson says they have focused on making a unique, premium product that is not priced prohibitively high.

"What's really important to me is making healthcare affordable for all Australians," she says.

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synxBody.com

10 locally made products to help you go green

Many of the 4200-plus companies bearing the green-and-gold Australian Made logo are joining the fight against climate change. From recycled supermarket trolleys to body-surfing handplanes, here are 10 environmentally friendly products that are also proudly certified Australian Made.



WAW Handplanes

"More waves, less plastic" is the mantra behind WAW Handplanes, the Sydney-based creator of recycled products designed to enhance the body-surfing experience. WAW's BadFish handplane claims to help bodysurfers of all ages and abilities catch waves for faster and longer, thanks to a concave hull and fishtail cutout board that velcro-straps to your hand. Even better, it's made out of recycled plastic collected from the Great Barrier Reef.



RePlated mealbox

The best thing about ordering takeaway is that you don't have to do any cooking; the worst thing is that most takeaway comes in flimsy, single-use containers that wind up in landfill. Designed and manufactured in Sydney, RePlated's stylish reusable takeaway containers are made from recycled plastic bottles and glass fibres. They're also microwave and dishwasher-safe, and approved for use by a range of food vendors across Australia.



Supercart Australia

The ban on plastic shopping bags isn't the only way supermarkets can reduce their impact on the environment. Supercart Australia's hybrid shopping trolleys are made in Australia from recycled plastic. There's more than 150 two-litre milk bottles in its mid-sized trolley. For every 1000 mid-sized trolleys, about seven tonnes of plastic is diverted from landfill. So far, the Campbellfield-based company has repurposed nearly 3 million milk bottles.



Eco Hair Ties

The very first Eco Hair Tie was made when founder Jessie Alice, who lives on the Surf Coast of Victoria with her partner, Adam Hough, needed to tie up her hair before a dip in the ocean. Adam fashioned one on the spot from a bicycle inner tube he found in their van, and Eco Hair Ties was born. Today, Jessie and Adam's snag-free, sustainable hair ties are made from discarded rubber inner tubes (which contribute to 2.6 tonnes of landfill in Australia every day).



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ADVERTISING FEATURE
AUSTRALIAN MADE



Felton Industries

Australian-owned family business Felton Industries is the country's leading manufacturer of and supplier of outdoor furniture; think park benches, bike racks and grandstands. Being a local manufacturer means they know exactly what it takes for outdoor furniture to last in Australia's harsh climate. Their sustainable range is made from 100 per cent recycled plastic and timber composite, with a natural, rustic finish that won't fade or warp in strong sunlight.



Delizia Naturally

Inspired by her Italian grandmothers, who made soap from leftover animal fat, olive oil and sodium carbonate, Delizia started her homemade soap company during the pandemic. Based in Canberra, Delizia Naturally sells soap, moisturiser and toothpaste made from natural Australian ingredients. She doesn't use any plastic packaging and sources leftover tallow and other cooking fats from local businesses. Delizia was "Highly Commended" by the Tidy Towns Awards Program.



harry & pop

Melbourne mother of two Lauren founded harry & pop swimwear after she struggled to find children's bathers that were sun-resistant, stylish and sustainable. Harry & pop cossies and hats have an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of 50+, which means your kids can play safely in the sun. Their products are handmade at a factory in Melbourne from regenerated fibre from post-consumer waste including plastic bottles.



Pippa Owen

Port Macquarie graphic designer Pippa Owen, who describes herself as a "die-hard beach baby", creates beach goods that celebrate Australia's natural environment and surf culture. Her Eco Towels are manufactured in Australia from a recycled yarn called RPET, made from water bottles and fabric off-cuts. Each Eco Towel keeps about 20 waste water bottles out of landfill and the ocean. Plus, 1 per cent of her towel sales go to Take 3 for the Sea, a global movement to stop plastic pollution.



Recycled Mats

Recycled Mats' range of Australian Made products aren't just made locally - they're adorned with quintessentially Australian designs celebrating the country's culture and natural beauty. The company sells outdoor mats, camping mats, children's play mats and more, created in collaboration with Indigenous designers. Their recycled floor mats are UV-treated, long-lasting and made using repurposed materials, including car tyres, plastic food containers and fabric off-cuts.



Boxhead Plastics

In 2020, certified polymer technician Bec Healy found an unexpected use for automotive plastic waste, only 1.9 per cent of which is currently recycled in Australia. She found a way to turn plastic car bumper bars into golf tees, which are durable, unbreakable and designed for high performance. Healy's social enterprise, Boxhead Plastics, collects car bumper bars from smash repair shops around Sydney and turns them into the recyclable Naiteev golf tee at their factory in Hornsby, NSW.

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Springing into action against waste

Australia's first fully recyclable range of mattresses has been launched by heritage brand A.H. Beard.

You don't have to venture too far before you'll come across an abandoned mattress. Surreptitiously ditched in back lanes, in front of op shops or by the side of a road, illegally dumped mattresses litter our landscape.

Where do they end up? Landfill, and it's a major environmental problem globally. In Australia alone, 1.8 million end-of-life mattresses are discarded each year. The Australian Bedding Stewardship Council (ABSC) points out that if they were placed end to end, they would stretch from Darwin to the tip of Tasmania.

Even though recycling practices are under way for 60 per cent of those unwanted mattresses, at best only about half the materials (the ABSC estimates it is between 44 and 64 per cent) can be recovered, which leaves the rest still heading to landfill.

Leaders in this space, A.H. Beard have launched Australia's first truly sustainable and fully recyclable sleep range. "Our business is 123 years old and what we don't want to be doing is perpetuating a problem, we actually want to be part of the solution," says Tony Pearson, chief executive of A.H. Beard.

That solution is the A.H. Beard Origins range of mattresses. "The range has long been a goal for the company to provide a high-quality, handcrafted, healthy and sustainable solution to this problem," he says.

The Origins collection consists of three ranges – Prosperity, Populace and Planet – and within each of those are three unique models, which are all available in eight different sizes. Each mattress is handmade by a team of skilled craftspeople and every component has been chosen for the sustainability of its source and ability to be recycled at the end.

"Everything in the product has been built from an environmental standpoint," says Pearson.

Tencel, a super-soft fibre made from the pulp of sustainably grown eucalypts, and natural organic cotton fabric plus locally sourced wools are used, while the mattresses are constructed without glue or staples,



Tony Pearson, chief executive of A.H. Beard, says the company wants to be part of the solution to environmental problems.

making them easier to disassemble when recycling. Inside, the support system is the world's first 100 per cent recyclable pocket spring.

"The highest quality componentry that helps with spinal alignment in the course of the night is the pocket spring system and it's actually one of the most problematic components when it comes to recycling," explains Pearson. "It took about two years working with our supply chain to invent a brand new, fully recyclable spring system that continues to perform in a high-quality way but allows for that recyclability at end of life."

As a result, A.H. Beard is the first mattress manufacturer globally to achieve Platinum Health Rate certification from Global Green Tag, the world's most rigorous sustainability certification body.

"The Origins series of products is a great exemplar for what we're trying to achieve across the entire organisation. So when we say we've built the first truly sustainable product range, what we mean is sustainability in three aspects: socially, environmentally and economically," he says.

In terms of socially, the Australian-owned, fifth-generation family business "employ an enormous amount of people across Australia, within our

'When we say we've built the first truly sustainable product range, what we mean is sustainability in three aspects: socially, environmentally and economically.'

Tony Pearson

business and up, down and across our supply chain and distribution channel as well," says Pearson.

With A.H. Beard opening almost 50 stores across South-East Asia over the next five years, employment opportunities within local manufacturing will only continue to grow. Since the Origins mattresses are handmade, the process can never be automated, which retains and upskills local staff.

A.H. Beard have been manufacturing premium mattresses since they were first stuffed with straw and tufted horsehair in the late 1800s, although their range of sleep solutions has since evolved to include bed bases,

bed heads, pillows and – something founder Enoch William Beard could never have foreseen – high-tech sleep tracking devices.

What hasn't changed in that time, says Pearson, "is that our core purpose is to improve lives through better sleep." To that end, he says A.H. Beard is actually a wellness brand, given how vital sleep is to our health.

Poor sleep quality is as much of a problem for public health as non-recyclable mattresses are for the environment, with 7.4 million Australians suffering inadequate sleep, said to cost the economy \$66 billion a year, which is why A.H. Beard created the Sleep Wellness Centre (ahbeard.com/sleep-wellness).

With Australia's leading expert in sleep science, Dr Carmel Harrington, the company has created an in-depth library of content to educate about sleep issues and how to achieve a rejuvenating night's slumber.

"We are proud to lead the way in developing Australia's first truly sustainable sleep range," says Pearson. "A.H. Beard Origins and Sleep Wellness Centre provides innovative solutions for Australians who want to contribute to a better future for the planet while enjoying the best sleep of their lives."

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A.H. BEARD
Improving Lives Through Better Sleep.

A historic craft built on tradition, innovation

This bat-making giant is still challenging the status quo, writes Peter Hanlon.

Cricket lends itself to historical reflection arguably more than any sport. When it comes to bat-making history, it's hard to go past Gray Nicolls, who first put handcrafted willow in cricketers' hands in the English village of Robertsbridge 167 years ago.

The Australian chapter of the Gray Nicolls story turns 50 this year, and is underpinned by innovation, colour and a willingness to challenge the status quo that sets it apart from its forebear. And makes those who work for the bat-making giant prouder still to feature the Australian Made logo on their willow.

"We're partly responsible for the bat gauge that players are restricted to, a certain thickness," says GN's brand manager Justin Lampard, pointing to the 'Kaboom' model that was used by Australian opener David Warner before the International Cricket Council stepped in five years ago.

"You've got to be innovative and try new things, whether it's the way you

present your bats aesthetically or the way you construct them. We've been able to bring in new styles, some that have resulted in legislation changes, but in a sense that's been really positive for us."

Bats were a relatively staid tool before Gray Nicolls opened its first Australian factory in Mordialloc. Distinctive red stickers helped catapult the game into the colour TV era, and Robert 'Swan' Richards was soon churning out the revolutionary 'Scoop' model – with a swath of wood scooped out of the back of the blade – and putting them in the hands of the biggest names, led by Australia's Chappell brothers, Ian and Greg.

"The Scoop is very important in our history," Lampard says of a bat that by the late 1970s was being used by a third of English county players and half of Australia's first-class cricketers. "It really put us on the map."

Gray Nicolls will next summer release a 50th birthday remake of the 5 Star model that predated the Scoop, with another retro-inspired Scoop planned for the following season. Lampard stresses that craftsmanship remains at the heart of all they do, praising a team led by Stuart Kranzbuhler for constantly trying something different while paying respect to the past.

Having the likes of New Zealand



'We prioritise good people and good cricketers, no one more than the other.'

Justin Lampard

"We're really grateful we've been able to have that longevity in an industry that can sometimes be a bit fickle, but that leverages back to our craftsmanship, the quality of product that we do, and the type of personnel that underpins our business from staff through to athletes. We prioritise good people and good cricketers, no one more than the other."

As for the future, Lampard knows only that innovation will continue, and tradition will remain bat-making's bedrock.

"The current market wants full, they want big and they want light," he says. "The game has become very much about sexy cricket of hitting the ball into the stands, but as a traditional brand we still love Test cricket and the traditions that come with it, because they underpin the things that have made us so great over such a long period of time."

captain Kane Williamson and current Australians Aaron Finch, Beth Mooney, Cameron Green and Travis Head wielding their willow on the international stage keeps that red sticker in the spotlight.

Gray Nicolls' handcrafted willow remains the first choice for many top cricketers.



"CAN I JOIN YOUR ROAD TRIP?
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ERGO SERIES



The new eco-friendly way to shampoo

An Australian duo has created a convenient way to bypass the plastic packaging.

Outside of the pandemic, the greatest problem we all share globally is climate change. The need to live in a more sustainable and environmentally friendly way is clear, but although that is widely understood, there is a lingering perception that it can be more expensive to do so.

The BBC One program *Shop Well for the Planet* set out to dispel that myth, showing how it was possible for a family of four in Britain to easily save the equivalent of \$7000 a year while also drastically reducing their carbon footprint.

Given this was a topic close to her heart, Elizabeth Valek watched the show from her home in Penrith with great interest. "In the very first episode, they said you should swap from using shampoo bottles to a shampoo bar, and we were the first people in Australia to develop this product," says Elizabeth.

With daughter Geneva, Elizabeth runs Shampoo With A Purpose and makes natural, eco-friendly shampoo-and-conditioner bars, which are vegan and free from plastic packaging.

"Our whole platform is about not contributing extra plastic into the environment, while also providing a better quality product, which is better value for money than even the most inexpensive shampoo at the supermarket, so it ticks every box - and it's an Australian product, made by a family-owned small business," she says.

When *Shop Well for the Planet* crunched the numbers they found \$130 could be saved annually by swapping out products in single-use plastic bottles. Elizabeth and Geneva have run their own tests and know that one of their bars will replace six bottles of regular haircare products.

Elizabeth has long been a pioneer of eco-conscious products. As the owner of Cloverfields, Australia's oldest family-owned soap mill, "we were the first Australian company to make non-tallow soap, and the first to encourage the packaging-free display of naked soap bars, so we've been a minimal-waste brand since 1983," she explains.

Six years ago, Geneva discovered a shampoo bar product in the northern hemisphere but as it was \$30 a shot and



'It's a great product. It's easy to use for all ages, and it just saves you a lot of money, while really helping the environment.'

Elizabeth Valek

Purpose was ready for market. "So initially, we saw the infancy of the product developing overseas, and decided to do one better and fully develop it," says Elizabeth, adding they are the first and only company to process shampoo/conditioner bars on triple-milling, commercial machinery.

The result is naturally lathering bars that do not contain any soap "so they will not dry and tangle your hair the same way a bar of soap or shampoo on its own will," explains Elizabeth. There are no harsh chemicals, artificial colours, nor added palm oil products, sulphates or animal byproducts.

The bars are all fragranced with essential oil blends (except the Unscented option and The OG, which is perfumed) and being pH balanced makes them child-friendly, as they won't sting little eyes, and are also mild enough for people with skin conditions such as psoriasis or eczema.

A shampoo and conditioner bar is not a one-size-fits-all product, either. Shampoo With A Purpose have bars for normal, dry, damaged or colour treated hair plus for volume. They're also available in travel sizes, and you can purchase aluminium tins to store them in or gift packs to give others.

Their range also includes other bathroom essentials, such as razors, loofahs, sponges and back scrubbers, plus scented natural soaps. For the kitchen and laundry, there are cleaning liquids and scrubbing brushes, and our four-legged friends haven't been forgotten either, with pet products available.

Elizabeth says they have designed the bars to hold their integrity in the shower ("so they don't turn to mush!") and can also be used on the whole body. While they sell online through their website, they are also happy to take orders over the phone.

"It's a great product," says Elizabeth. "It's easy to use for all ages, and it just saves you a lot of money, while really helping the environment."



Elizabeth and Geneva Valek of Shampoo With A Purpose.

"basically a glorified soap" she wasn't interested in purchasing one. Instead, the entrepreneurial twenty-something asked a question that would change both their lives. "My very, very clever daughter said, 'Mum, could you make me a lab sample?'"

For Elizabeth, with her lifetime of experience, that part was easy. A regular bar of soap is alkaline, however for shampoo it would need to be pH balanced, "but we can't do that on a commercial scale," she lamented, as that type of base wasn't compatible with their existing machinery. Geneva was having none of it. Elizabeth recalls her saying, "No, Mum, you will make this and you will sell it. This is brilliant."

Two years of research and development later, Shampoo With A

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A solid performer supporting local jobs

This company thrives by keeping jobs and supply chains as local as possible.

Recent supply chain turbulence has highlighted the benefits of an Australian-made approach to construction, which is building Australia's 21st-century homes and infrastructure while also supporting local jobs and innovation.

"As a manufacturer, CSR plays an important role in supporting local jobs through its factories and distribution sites located across metro and regional locations in Australia, employing over 2500 people," says Julie Coates, CEO and managing director of CSR Limited.

By keeping key elements of its supply chain local, the company has also been well placed to navigate the disruptions of COVID-19.

"CSR has performed well during the last two years of the pandemic, as the company owns many of its key raw materials. This reduced its reliance on international supply chains and ensured our ability to deliver for 18,000 customers," Coates says.

Founded in 1855, CSR has a rich history and has long been a local manufacturing success story, producing a range of products in Australia. Today, it is a leading building products company in Australia and New Zealand, and the producer behind some of the market's most trusted and recognised brand names.

CSR operates more than 40 manufacturing sites around the country, which the company has spent many years investing in, to deliver operational excellence.

The company also runs an extensive distribution network of more than 100 CSR-branded outlets across Australia.

CSR's Australian-made products include Gyprock plasterboard, Bradford insulation, Monier roof tiles, PGH bricks, Cemintel fibre cement, Hebel Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (ACC) panels, AFS permanent formwork and Martini acoustic insulation products.

The company has developed a reputation for being trusted by professionals, and its products are used throughout the nation, in Australian homes, schools and hospitals, as well as the wider community.



Partnerships are important to the company, and CSR has been working closely for decades with well-known local partners including Metricon, Carlisle, Rawson Homes and retailers Bunnings and Mitre 10. CSR also regularly engages with customers through its experienced team, as well as third-party distribution partners.

"CSR is building solutions for a better future for our customers by investing in new building systems to reduce construction time and deliver better energy efficiency, comfort and design. We're also delivering for our people and the environment by creating a safe, diverse and sustainable place to work and grow."

CSR is the name behind many well-known products used throughout the construction industry.

CSR Hebel, for example, is Australia's only manufacturer of

Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (AAC) panels and blocks for facades, internal walls and floors. The product provides excellent acoustic and insulation benefits and can be used in everything from houses to apartments and utilities infrastructure.

Hebel is a versatile building product used in a range of applications and is known for its ease and speed of installation. It is also valued for marrying superior insulation qualities with high sustainability values.

In a major milestone for CSR, in 2019 the company completed work on a new \$75 million Hebel manufacturing plant at Somersby, on the NSW central coast.

"This is a huge step forward for Hebel, doubling its production capacity," Coates says.

"The new plant brings world-class engineering built through key partners in Australia and internationally, which



'CSR is building solutions for a better future for our customers by investing in new building systems to reduce construction time and deliver better energy efficiency, comfort and design.'

Julie Coates

Julie Coates
(centre), CEO and
managing
director of CSR.

can now drive efficiency in manufacturing systems and be even more responsive to customers, developing new products and solutions."

Gyprock plasterboard is another key CSR product. Gyprock pioneered plasterboard in 1947 and transformed the building industry in Australia with the introduction of paper-faced plasterboard.

Today, Gyprock continues to innovate, influencing trends for walls and ceilings in the home design, commercial and architecture sectors. Gyprock produces hundreds of products each year at its state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities across Australia.

Meanwhile, Bradford is Australia's leading supplier of insulation and includes acoustic control and energy-saving products for homes and commercial buildings. Its products are designed for comfort and energy efficiency.

Ultimately, CSR's leading range of building products and systems serve a broad range of construction segments, and Coates says the company is driving innovation across the sector.

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'Red' by name, true blue by nature

This energy company produces electricity in Australia and employs local people.

Nearly two decades after launching in Victoria with a mission to shake up the electricity and gas industry, Red Energy's reason for being hasn't wavered.

Having been the first energy company licensed to display the Australian Made logo is only part of Red's truly Australian story. Employing local people to serve local people remains its bedrock.

"We are proud to be Australian Made and owned," chief executive Iain Graham says. "And at our core we at Red Energy strive to help Australian families live their best lifestyle. We do this with simple, quality and reliable energy solutions provided by Australians for Australians."

The latter distinction shines like a lighthouse beacon. Graham describes energy as an incredible yet intangible phenomenon that plays a vital role in our day-to-day lives, something that facilitates all that we do as a modern society. You might not be able to reach out and touch it, yet Red Energy's Richmond head office hums with the energy of more than 1200 employees.

When you contact Red Energy, you won't find yourself speaking to someone offshore with no connection to your needs. Red Energy's 1 million-plus customers in four states are served by Australian workers who are passionate about what they do, who put people first, and who reflect the multicultural roots of the company's Snowy Hydro owner.

By not outsourcing overseas, Red Energy's profits stay in Australia, a source of great pride for the fourth-largest energy retailer in the country.

"We've attracted people who really love our customers," Graham says. "Our customers regularly tell us that buying Australian is important to them. And they tell us how they like their service – personal, simple and easy."

"When we launched Red Energy (in 2004), we wanted to make things simpler for our customers. Part of what makes that possible is the fact that we're an Australian energy provider, providing families across the country with Australian energy."

Snowy Hydro is an Australian



Red Energy offers clean hydroelectricity generated by the Snowy Hydro scheme.

engineering wonder, more than 70 years old and boasting nine power stations, 80 kilometres of aqueducts, 145 kilometres of tunnels and 16 dams that generate clean, hydroelectricity.

It will be a leading player as Australia transitions to a renewable energy future by supporting Snowy 2.0, the next chapter in Snowy Hydro's story that promises to provide on-demand energy and large-scale storage for many generations to come.

Its hand-in-glove fit with Red Energy, a business built on a platform of old-fashioned customer service, is a marriage made in heaven.

Befitting its fundamental customer focus, Red Energy regularly reaches out to its customers and listens to what they have to say. Midway through the COVID-19 pandemic, Red Energy surveyed those who matter most to ask them about how the change in our lives had impacted their spending. A staggering 85 per cent reported being more focused on supporting local businesses and buying Australian Made products.

"Our customers regularly tell us that buying Australian is important to them," Graham says. "For more than a decade, we've partnered with the Australian Made campaign because we believe the Australian Made logo is a symbol that consumers recognise and



'By supporting Australian products and the businesses that make them, we can all do a little bit to ensure the future health of our economy and the community.'

Iain Graham

value, and we're proud to be able to attach it to our brand.

"I think the Australian Made certification is exactly that – it's a very

high bar to meet. The Australian Made and grown logo stands above all else in establishing the credentials of those who display it."

Red Energy is also proud of its long-standing relationship with Breast Cancer Network Australia, with the Red BCNA Saver plan donating up to \$120 per household each year to help raise awareness of breast cancer in the community.

By offering electricity in Victoria, NSW, South Australia, Queensland and the ACT, as well as gas in Victoria, NSW and SA, Red Energy has surged into the big four of the National Electricity Market. That its power stems from its people is evident in the number of new customers who turn to Red Energy after hearing glowing endorsements from friends and family.

Once on board, they stay; Red Energy is the only energy retailer to have won the Canstar Blue Award for Most Satisfied Customers for 12 years in a row.

"Our philosophy is business should be good for everybody," Graham says. "We're part of a community and wanted to put something back in. By supporting Australian products and the businesses that make them, we can all do a little bit to ensure the future health of our economy and the community."

Australian power to power Australia.

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Business blooms for 'Block' regulars

A savvy Melbourne design company has become an online shopping destination.

When *The Block* returned to television in 2010, it was widely blamed for inciting a home renovation frenzy across Australia.

In 2022, Damian Corney is happy to take that back-handed compliment to the world.

"It's very surprising how many people beyond Australia watch *The Block*," says Corney of the Nine Network show, which drafts some of the nation's best designers – including Corney's team at Grafico – to make magic in wrecks and ruins.

"We've had inquiries from block fans in South Africa, Netherlands, the UK and NZ who said, 'I love *The Block* and I want the wallpaper from *The Block*,'" Corney says.

"Literally, people are ordering online from all over the world now. It's very exciting watching our brand grow."

It has been a striking turnaround for Grafico, a Melbourne maker of custom-print wallpapers, tiles and displays, a sponsor of *The Block* since 2019 and an Australian Made partner since 2020. Born in Corney's home in 2004 while he was studying graphic design at Monash University, the firm had made its name creating stylish corporate signage and vehicle wraps.

COVID-19 killed much of that corporate work. But with all the bums it placed on sofas, it started something grander.

The company's online business has increased substantially in two years, with a surge in the number of decorators seeking wallpapers and mosaics.

In 2021 came Grafico's biggest commercial project yet – Louis Vuitton's art installation honouring its late creative director, Virgil Abloh. In LV's Sydney residency, ombre wallpapers, prismatic rainbow and stained-glass effects and a nine-metre statue of Abloh made for a spectacular farewell to a worldwide design icon.

"It was definitely the most challenging job I've ever worked on, but one of the most rewarding," Corney says.

"I was literally on Zoom late at night, working with Paris and Hong Kong. Then our team printed 1.1 kilometres of graphics, which had to be freighted to



Grafico founder and CEO Damian Corney (above) says the pandemic brought a jump in demand for the company's wallpapers.

Sydney just as Omicron came along bringing general chaos. Still, it was absolutely awesome to come out of COVID and be asked to do such a significant project."

Another Zoom-led project was that for French leather goods company Faure Le Page, whose brief for Grafico included the vinyl-wrap of a Lamborghini.

Life certainly didn't look so thrilling in March 2020.

"We lost three to six months' work in two weeks," Corney recalls.

"I went from 'oh my god', head in palm, crying at my desk to, within a

week, saying, 'Right, we have to change and come up with new things'. We had never worked harder than we did in that period. Out of adversity came creativity, and we really diversified our business.

"One new product was a kids' colouring-in whiteboard print that can be wiped off and reused. My daughter was four at the time, and it was designed for her. Other parents asked for it and it became a hit. It's a small product, but it came out of COVID and succeeded."

Meanwhile, the Grafico team joined *The Block 2020*, perched amid the building site designing beautiful wallpapers on their laptops.

Once *The Block* went to air in August, Grafico was ready with its online store.

"People were looking at their blank walls and saying, 'I really should do something new'," Corney says.

What's trending right now? "Interesting tropical prints and designs that celebrate Australian flora and fauna. Customers also ask for mosaics, and about six years ago we became the exclusive Australian distributor for an Italian factory that makes lightweight resin tiles.

"We're doing really interesting work, especially up north where we do a lot of swimming pool walls and shopping centre bathrooms. We've even done various AFL clubs to showcase football history. It is all

'People were looking at their blank walls and saying, 'I really should do something new.'

Damian Corney

custom-printed; we literally design anything your heart desires."

Being fixed to a Mac screen is Corney's natural state. "As a child, I was happy to sit in a corner and draw for half the day," he says.

Though Grafico now has support staff in several Australian cities, Melbourne is home for this family business; Corney's wife, Adele, is office manager and the couple's two young daughters like to "assess" the products when not actually inspiring them.

"The COVID lockdowns were sad in terms of people leaving the city, and I won't lie – I think we've all fallen a bit out of love with Melbourne in the past two years," Corney says.

"But we're determined to watch Melbourne come back to its former glory, and North Melbourne is the base for our journey. There have been hard times, good times, challenging times, but we always look ahead and 'Grafico' lots of things along the way."

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A success story to give you the warm fuzzies

A product of humble origins has proved to have global appeal, writes Kate Stanton.

In 1992, when drought and plummeting wool prices threatened the survival of the tiny outback Queensland town of Tambo, three local women at a community brainstorming session came up with an unexpected solution: teddy bears.

Mary Sutherland, Charm Ryrrie and Helen Sargood thought a cuddly, premium product made from high-quality local sheepswool would aid the wool industry and appeal to international tourists and Australians happy to support a struggling outback community. They were right.

When the first Tambo Teddies launched the following year, they became an instant hit with people in the region and beyond.

"The response was fabulous and overwhelming," says Tambo Teddies co-owner Alison Shaw, a Tambo local who took over the business with friend Tammy Johnson in 2014.

"It was a cottage industry business that people just latched onto and loved straightaway," she says. "They used to travel around to all the regional shows and markets — to the egg show and to the Ekka — and it went really well."

When the original Tambo Teddies trio eventually retired, Shaw and her co-owner took the helm with plans to



When Tambo Teddies launched in 1993, they became an instant hit with locals and tourists alike.

modernise and expand the company. "The product had a great name, and there was already a lot of emotional attachment to the teddy bears," says Shaw. "We bought Tambo Teddies to grow it, and to share our beautiful product with the world."

But they also knew that moving production overseas wouldn't be an option for a business so dependent on its reputation as a regional Australian product.

"It is absolutely critical for us to be certified Australian Made," says Shaw. "It's just one of those incredible trust symbols. People want to know that their products are made in Australia,

and they want to support Australian businesses. By buying Australian Made, they also know they're supporting jobs in our small town and our regional communities."

Overwhelmed by production needs, Shaw and Johnson decided to explore alternative opportunities for growth. After implementing a new digital strategy, they participated in a Mentoring for Growth program through the Queensland government, and worked with Multicultural Development Australia to set up a production hub in nearby Toowoomba.

The Regional Sewing Hub, which opened in 2019, is staffed by five

'By buying Australian Made, they also know they're supporting jobs in our small town and our regional communities.'

Alison Shaw

sewers, including four migrant refugees, who sew the teddy bears. The rest of the team live in Tambo.

"We love employing new migrant Australians, and it's a beautiful part of our business," says Shaw.

Today, Tambo Teddies are still crafted from 100 per cent Australian and New Zealand wool and sheepskin. They come in a range of styles, including Mr Stockman, Digger the Dog and Little Aussie Ringer Teddy.

Shaw says they are working hard to grow their Australian stockists and to develop their overseas customer base. They have created a website for New Zealand buyers and have secured a distributor in the United States.

"There's always more we can do to grow our product internationally, but we'll always be Australian at heart," says Shaw.

"It's always going to be a special purchase for people," she adds. "Our main market is grandparents buying a bear for their grandchildren, and they want it to last forever."



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