

BACKAustralia It's good for all of us

AUSSIE BUSINESS PAVING THE WAY



Cara Jenkin

When the Sydney Harbour Bridge was built almost 100 years ago, Australian gran-

ite was used to create its strong pylons.

So, when it came to building the Sydney Harbour Bridge Cycleway ramp, that opened on January 6, it was natural to source local stone again to support the 400 cyclists who use it

every day. But the project went a step further, becoming a wholly Australian-made initiative, from design to the laying of the cobblestones.

The artwork was created by Indigenous designers from ASPECT Studios, which

worked closely with Sam the Paving Man workers on site as they laid the 180 metres of stone. "The paving artwork, comprising more than 130,000 individual Australian natural stone cobblestones, was entirely hand laid by our special-

ist crews, without the use of typical modular templates, patterns or set-out grids," says Alex Harb, manager at Sam the Paving Man.

"Instead, the Indigenous artwork was realised through the skill and intuition of our crafts-

people on site, who worked stone by stone, developing a rhythm as the mural gradually emerged across the surface.

Each cobblestone was placed by eye to preserve the flow of the artwork and remarkably the entire install-

Homemade is the best, but take the time to check for proof



Just because a product says it is Australian, it doesn't mean it is actually Australian-made. That's the message that Mark Jensen, chief executive of AgBoss, wants customers as well as retailers to realise.

Founded in 1990, AgBoss employs 35 staff at its Albury factory, where it manufactures 70 per cent of its vast product range in-house. It includes equine, animal husbandry and pet products, and irrigation and farm supplies.

Jensen says AgBoss does receive a lot of support from farmers, who understand they will purchase a quality product when buying Australian-made. However, looking beyond

the company or product name, and checking for the Australian-made symbol is something he hopes more customers will take the time to do if they truly value buying Australian.

"The companies who are importing have become very clever in making it look like a product is made in Australia, but it's not," he says.

"Unless it has the Australian-made logo, or states 'Made in Australia', it's not.

"The general Aussie and the general customer that we talk to want to use an Australian-made product but it's not always super-obvious."

Jensen says customers are willing to spend more to get an

Australian-made product, although some do opt to overlook quality if they can buy more cheaply.

However, he advises the price difference with products sourced from China, for example, is not what it used to be.

To help it compete with imports, AgBoss has invested in technology, and is now one of the few Australian companies capable of manufacturing with injection, blow and rotational moulding. It also uses CNC and fibre laser tube cutting in manufacturing processes.

"That allows us to manufacture products like one of the newer products – a flat-pack dog kennel," Jensen says.

"Without doing so, we would not be able to compete with the other kennels that are going on to Aussie farms, that are packed in a container straight out of China ready-made, get here, get distributed, and fall apart in 18 months when they get on farm.

"But we still have got to try and compete, that's where the market sits before someone with the technology and what-not that we have is able to compete with them."

Thankfully, he says, customers are catching on and is buoyed by those who get quotes from importers, then come to their business and find they can beat it.

PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY



A message from Australian Made Week 2026 Ambassador ANDY LEE

I'm a huge advocate for Aussie businesses, innovators and entrepreneurs, so I'm super-proud to be drawing attention to the tangible as well as 'feel good' benefits of buying local as Australian Made Week Ambassador.

When we choose to buy products bearing the iconic green-and-gold kangaroo logo it makes a huge impact on supporting local jobs and communities and boosting local economies.

New stats from Roy Morgan research also paint a promising picture of what's possible if Aussies make a few small 'swaps' when they shop – if every household spent an additional \$20 per week on Australian Made products, it would inject an extra \$11 billion into the economy each year and creates almost 20,000 new jobs. My own research supports these numbers and given I got 53% for Marco Economics at university, that holds weight.

That's why in 2026, Australian Made Week is pushing the \$20 'swap your shop' challenge, which is as easy as taking a few seconds to seek

out the certified Australian Made options when buying everyday items like groceries, household goods and clothing.

There are so many high-quality Australian products – in nearly every product category there's an Aussie option – so why wouldn't you want to buy local? We have an international reputation for having the highest standards in craftsmanship, safety and sustainability.

We also have such an immense pool of talented and hard-working people on home soil who we need to support and celebrate.

My business partners and I have made a conscious decision to support Australian product and produce because we know it leads the world in quality as well as safety standards.

I encourage all Aussies to join with me this Australian Made Week – as well as the other 51 weeks of the year – in showing and sharing their love for local makers and growers. Take up the 'swap your swap' challenge!

Every Aussie wins when we buy local.



ites used in the cycleway ramp. They include Austral Black, a 487-million-year-old stone.

Moruya, the same stone as the original Bridge pylon stone, was also sourced.

"Quarried, processed and installed in Australia, the project demonstrates a fully Australian stone supply chain – from quarrying to processing



The paving artwork, comprising more than 130,000 individual Australian natural stone cobbles, was entirely hand laid by our specialist crews...

through to installation – working in close collaboration with designers and engineers to deliver complex outcomes on site," Harb says.

"One of the few companies still quarrying and processing Australian natural stone locally, we see ourselves not only as contractors but as custodians of an industry that has helped shape many of Australia's most important public spaces."

Sam Harb hopes when people travel across the cycleway, they take a moment to look down on it.

"What they're seeing is the passion, craftsmanship, and years of work that went into bringing it to life," he says.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge Cycleway was funded and delivered by the New South Wales Government and designed by ASPECT Studios with Collins and Turner, Eckersley O'Callaghan and Design 5 Architects.

ation was completed without a single stone being cut."

Sam the Paving Man was founded by Sam Harb and his wife Annette in 1985 as a small, home-based paving business in Sydney. It now specialises in complex civic paving and public

domain works, employing more than 150 stonemasons, quarry workers, machine operators, engineers, project managers, specialist paving crews and office staff across NSW, ACT and SA. As the business grew through its

reputation for quality and reliability, it acquired local quarries to have greater control over stone quality and supply.

It included Melocco, established in 1908, that quarries and processes Australian natural stone, including gran-



Manufacturing that goes with the grain

Cara Jenkin

When entrepreneur Ross Doonan discovered a new aluminium finishing technology that transforms products to appear as timber, he knew Australians needed it.

He started DECO Australia in 2004 to offer the timber alternative to customers. It now has nine product lines from cladding to decking made and sold by a 120-strong workforce.

The business's longevity largely comes from product quality, as it is made to withstand the humid, tropical weather of northern Australia as much as the harsh, coastal

conditions experienced in the south. But being a family business, it also prides itself on treating customers like family, ensuring they are not just another number as they may be if purchasing from an overseas supplier.

Customers likewise know who they are buying from, that the organisation meets ethical and quality standards, and can trust their business.

Ross's daughters Meika and Clare are key leaders in the business, which was named Family Business of the Year at the 2025 Family Business Association's Excellence Awards.

"We've had numerous examples where we've had our

products on display at home shows around the country and people say how much they wish they knew about our products sooner," Meika says.

"Buying Australian might come with the slightly higher price tag, but equally, you get longevity, and you can have the confidence Australian products are made to suit the Australian climate."

Value, however, is something DECO Australia strives to provide to its customers.

For example, it is installing new advanced manufacturing equipment at its Minto factory that will increase capacity and reduce lead times.

DECO Australia also bends

over backwards to provide good service, including investigating new products based on customer inquiries.

"Being the first in the market with the timber alternative product, we consider ourselves market leaders and do a lot to maintain (that status)," Meika says. "As Australians, we all want a vibrant Australian-made or manufacturing environment providing jobs and opportunities and we're very innovative as a nation

"But to enable that to happen, buying Australian Made and having that as one of the choices is critical to making Australian manufacturing successful."



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AUSSIE RULES IN MAKING QUALITY GOODS



Cara Jenkin

Every time a goal is scored in Australia, whether it is AFL, netball or soccer, or from professional to schoolyard

level, it's likely to be through Australian-made goal posts.

Abel Sports has been manufacturing aluminium poles from its Sunshine West factory for more than 30 years.

It started out making flag poles before adding goal posts

to its product range that is made to suit AFL, rugby, soccer, netball and hockey.

It also manufactures any required netting, as well as the footings and base plates tailored to each pole's use and location.

Its posts are installed at Australia's major sporting stadiums, including the MCG and AAMI Park in Victoria, Adelaide Oval in SA, The Gabba in Queensland, the Sydney Cricket Ground in NSW, and Perth Stadium in

WA, as well as at local council sporting grounds and schools. It employs 15 staff at its factory and still makes flag poles that are installed at many of the same grounds as its goal posts.

General manager John Cann says Abel Sports is cho-

sen as a preferred sporting ground supplier because of its high-quality product and service.

"Our strength is we're local and the reason these stadiums use our product is because they know they're well made,



From patient care to skincare

When registered nurse Joanne Auld could not find quality skincare products to supply to patients at her non-surgical cosmetic practice in Geelong, she decided to make them.

Seventeen years after founding The Skincare Company, the business today offers patients more than an Australian-made quality product, as it also responds to real patient needs.

While many overseas skincare manufacturers may respond to mass-market trends, The Skincare Company focuses on potency, formulation integrity and effective skincare that complements in-clinic treatments.

"After a decade in the phar-

maceutical industry, my interest naturally gravitated toward pharmacokinetics and product formulation and I developed a deep understanding of how ingredients behave in the body and the critical importance of both safety and efficacy," Auld says. "That foundation has been instrumental in shaping my approach to skincare."

"While my experience began with pharmaceutical drug compositions, it now translates into the development of cosmetic formulations, where every ingredient is selected with intention, and every product is designed to deliver results without compromising skin integrity."

Auld partners with Australian manufacturers to ensure consistency, quality and care in every product The Skincare Company creates. She admits scaling the business while maintaining these standards has been a key challenge but has resisted the pressure of what can be a fast-moving industry to focus on sustainability.

It currently employs 14 staff and supplies more than 200 stockists across Australia.

"There is a level of care, accountability, and integrity that comes with being proudly Australian-made, and that is something we deeply value," she says. "Choosing Australian-made is about more than the

product. It is about supporting local jobs, ethical manufacturing and economic growth."

She says the business's Australian Made certification requires strict compliance and verification, so customers who purchase a product with the well-known label can be confident it is genuinely made in Australia.

"For those who want to support local, it removes the guesswork," she says. "It is a mark of trust, and one we are incredibly proud to uphold."

"We are a family-owned business that has grown steadily with a strong ethos of quality, integrity, and enjoyment in what we do."

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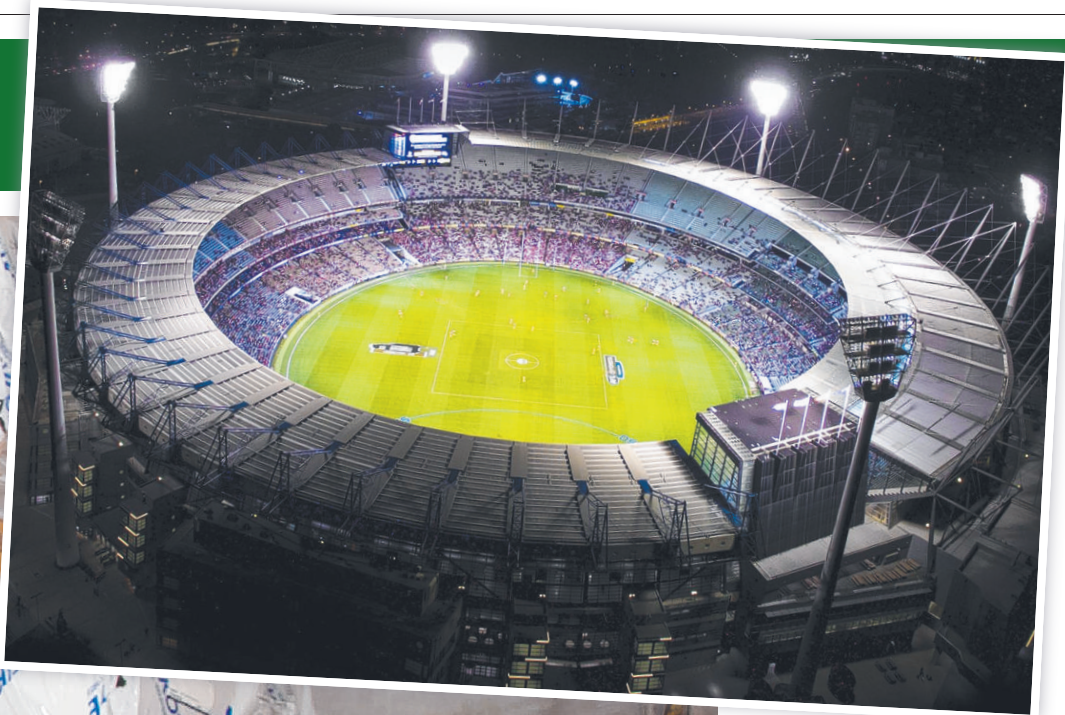
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“Our strength is we're local and the reason these stadiums use our product is because they know they're well made, they're engineered, they're made for purpose and they go up and down easily”

Abel Concepts general manager John Cann in the manufacturing plant, responsible for making the AFL goal posts at the MCG as well as soccer nets and flagpoles around Australia's sporting fields and grounds. Picture Rebecca Michael



The design ensures it is easy for grounds staff to switch the posts from those suitable for one sport to another, or set up for concerts and other uses.

“Because we're building information from supplying these major stadiums, our knowledge and expertise then goes into the councils and the schools that are buying our goal posts,” he says.

Cann says if anything does go wrong and footings or poles require repair, it is able to quickly respond because it is an Australian-based company.

“We do compete with imports from overseas, particularly England and China and Europe, and particularly with soccer goals,” he says.

“But what we offer is locally made, so if anything goes wrong – like a tractor or something runs into the goal post when they're cutting the grass before a big game – we can replace it or fix it within 24 hours.

“If you've bought something from overseas, you've got an imported product and you can't fix it quickly.

“Because it's made locally, we've got our staff and our service teams who are local.”

Abel Sports also uses Australian aluminium, sourcing most of it from Capral Aluminium, and other local material suppliers, further supporting Australian companies and workers.

they're engineered, they're made for purpose and they go up and down easily,” he says.

“Because they're Australian-made, (clients) have got local support and a local back-up if they need anything.”

For stadiums, Abel Sports

engineers the posts to ensure they suit local conditions, including obtaining geotechnical reports and analysing wind patterns.

Once Abel Sports manufactures the poles, it contracts state-based installers to create

the footings and insert the posts.

Its goal posts are designed to be removed, without compromising their integrity, providing flexibility for sporting grounds to host multiple sports.



It's about being the REAL deal

Being Australian-made means being real for vertical bike rack manufacturer Shingleback Off Road.

It is both in terms of being made to suit real Australian conditions and having real Aussie users advocate for their products.

Its first rack, the Shingleback Classic, was launched in 2016 after innovator and founder Andrew Taylor found existing options for transporting multiple bikes were not meeting expectations. He and wife Kimberley co-founded the business to change that.

“They were clunky, slow to load, didn't live up to their claims and often caused dam-

age to the bikes themselves,” Kimberley Taylor says. “Rather than work around those limitations, Andrew set out to rethink the design entirely.”

He created a rack that can carry up to six bikes, hold them securely by the wheels, and is quick and easy to load.

“As the original innovators of vertical bike racks in Australia, we were first to bring this style of rack to market locally.

“That experience means we understand exactly why each design detail matters to performance – and that level of detail is difficult to replicate.”

However, a significant business challenge is protecting their intellectual property from

those who do try to copy their designs, that include five vertical bike racks, a trailer and various accessories.

Taylor encourages customers to research any product they are purchasing and analyse customer feedback.

“There's a growing number of brands relying heavily on paid influencer marketing rather than genuine, long-term user feedback,” she says.

“Unfortunately, that can mean quality and safety are sometimes secondary to profit.

“We choose to be Australian-made, and to use Australian-made materials, so we can stand behind a product that is high quality, reliable, and safe

to put on the back of your vehicle.

“We've now been trusted by thousands of customers across Australia, and that trust comes from consistently delivering a product that does what it's designed to do.”

Shingleback Off Road directly employs a small team in Beechworth, Victoria, then partners with local manufacturing and supply businesses that are predominantly located in Wangaratta.

Taylor says it enables them to stay closely connected to the production process, maintain a high standard of quality and contribute to the strength of the local industry.

