

AUSTRALIAN MADE

ADVERTISING FEATURE

# Embrace locally made



Four decades on, the campaign to buy Aussie goods goes from strength to strength.

Australian Made ambassador Andy Lee feels the love for locally made products.



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# 40 years of the green-and-gold kangaroo

Four decades on, Australian Made's mission is unwavering – to get Australians to buy more locally made goods, writes **Melinda Ham**.

As war in the Middle East and rising fuel prices highlight Australia's reliance on imported goods, local manufacturers and growers are encouraging consumers to buy more goods made in Australia.

"These turbulent times are turning people's minds to self-sufficiency and manufacturing sovereignty," says Ben Lazzaro, the chief executive of Australian Made. "If we can make and grow things here, then we can be quite self-sufficient."

The not-for-profit's annual Australian Made Week encourages people to celebrate and support locally made items.

This year, the iconic campaign is encouraging Aussies to "swap their shop" and replace just three items per shop with Australian Made alternatives.

If every Australian household committed to spending just \$20 extra per week on Australian-made and -grown products, Lazzaro says the ripple effect would inject \$11 billion into the national economy.

Already, Australian Made's 4500 licensees, who carry a green-and-gold kangaroo label on their products, represent about 40,000 jobs and generate a combined annual revenue of \$8.1 billion.

"We need to vote with our wallets at the cash register and online," Lazzaro says. "We need to check the label for Aussie-made products so that we champion those products and get retailers to put more of them on the shelves."

While many consumers may associate the Australian Made logo, which was launched 40 years ago, with supermarket items, the trademark is registered across all 34 classes of goods. There has been recent growth in the number of businesses in the sectors of industrial and building products and health and beauty.

One of Australian Made's long-time licensees is MiniJumbuk, which was the first company in the country to create wool-filled quilts. Based in Naracoorte, South Australia – a regional town in sheep, cattle and wheat country 350 kilometres south of Adelaide – the company began making miniature sheep for tourists in 1975.

Today, MiniJumbuk produces a variety of wool quilts, bed toppers and pillows, and a new product, pet beds, which are sold in major department stores across Australia including Myer, David Jones, Harris Scarfe, Adairs and PetBarn.



Chief executive Brett Woods of MiniJumbuk, one of Australian Made's long-time licensees.

These are products "with deep authenticity and provenance", says MiniJumbuk chief executive Brett Woods.

Grown on the backs of Australian sheep, the wool comes from across all parts of the country with a focus on sourcing directly from farmers on South Australia's Limestone Coast. After shearing, the best wool is carefully selected, processed and treated to high bedding standards at Michell's Wool in Adelaide.

The finished wool then travels to the MiniJumbuk factory in Naracoorte, where it is made into quilts, toppers and pillows. The factory employs 50 people, with a further 25 in sales, marketing and product innovation.

"The journey from paddock to your bed is not very far," Woods says. "Being Australian-made is fundamental to how we operate. We are totally accountable for our product, for its quality and workmanship at every stage. We have a strong reliance on our skilled people and a proven and

consistent manufacturing process, perfected over 50 years."

The meticulous process ensures the durability and long-term performance of all the products, Woods says. "All of our products come with significant guarantees; however, many customers enjoy using them well beyond this period."

Many of their customers also value wool's sustainability, he adds. Sheep are shorn every 12 months and many live to be more than eight years old. Wool is naturally biodegradable, meaning products made from wool can be composted at the end of their life.

Retailers value MiniJumbuk's consistency, Woods says, because the company always holds strategic levels of raw materials. "This means we can flex up and deliver to meet the demand of our key retailers," he says.

Many Australian Made products, including MiniJumbuk quilts, are exported, riding on Australia's reputation for quality and safety standards. "Our products are



Australian Made CEO Ben Lazzaro.

made in a clean and safe environment, something we often take for granted but people in other countries are willing to pay a premium for that," Lazzaro says.

The government of Labor prime minister Bob Hawke launched the Australian Made campaign in 1986 to identify and promote genuine Australian-made products. In 1999, the organisation changed to a not-for-profit, managed in co-operation with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industries and its state network.

Today, as Australian Made celebrates its 40th anniversary, it is the most trusted and widely recognised country of origin symbol.

Ninety-nine per cent of Australians recognise the logo and 93 per cent trust it, according to a recent Roy Morgan poll. Many more Australians appear to want to buy domestically produced goods.

This year, Andy Lee, one half of the comedy duo Hamish & Andy, is the 2026 Australian Made ambassador. Lazzaro says that Australian Made is rapt to have Lee on board. "Andy makes all his content here," he says. "He is a wonderful supporter of Aussie products. He's a really well-known and loved Australian, so he's a perfect fit."

Previous ambassadors have included singer and actor Jessica Mauboy, Olympian swimmer Arianne Titmus and tennis star Ash Barty.

## What Aussie consumers say

**99%** Recognise the Australian Made logo

**85%** Are more likely to purchase products that carry the logo

**89%** Feel it's important to purchase Australian goods

**85%** Would pay a premium for Australian-made goods

**78%** Have looked to buy more Australian goods in last 12 months

Source: Roy Morgan

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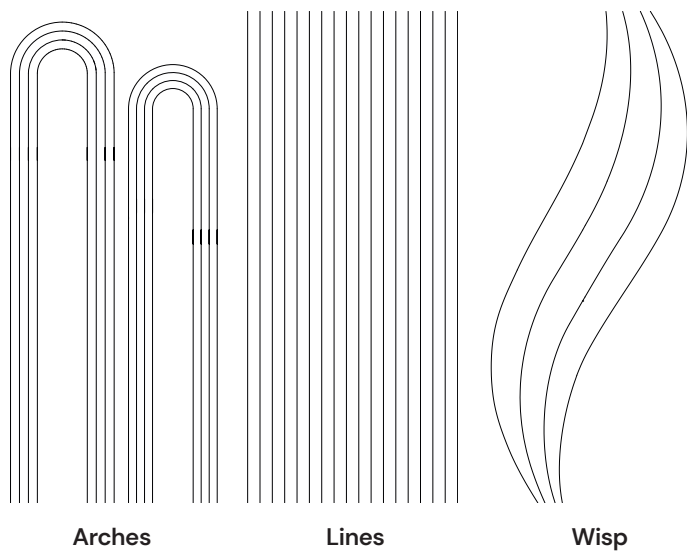
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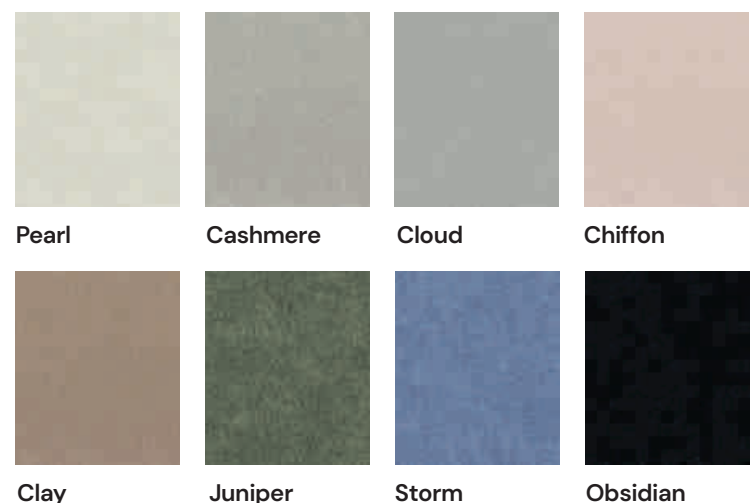
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# Serving up sustainability with style

By Melinda Ham

The lightbulb moment that led Cara and Dan Frank to start a new business came at a school picnic in a park at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cara Frank says she was embarrassed by “ugly” stained plastic containers in which she had brought food to share with her son’s school mates, and resolved to source attractive ones made of recycled plastic.

“I thought to myself, ‘I need something bigger; it needs to have a lid and look good on a table,’” Frank says. “I also didn’t want to contribute to the plastic pollution problem.”

After speaking to friends and family, the Franks realised they’d identified a clear gap in the market and decided to start a business to solve the issue.

“Our criteria from the beginning was that the product had to have a beautiful design, be made of recycled material and manufactured in Australia,” Frank says.

She found a Sydney-based manufacturer who could make injection-moulded plastic containers out of food-grade recycled polypropylene.

“The design was key,” she says. “We wanted them to look like the ceramic serving bowls that we were given for our wedding – ones that are meant to sit on the table and be made for sharing.”

After six months of product development and 3D-printing their designs, the Franks started Put a Lid on It in 2022.

Their offer is simple: a choice of two sizes of serving bowls and one platter made from recycled plastic, available in 11 vivid Pantone colours, all with lids that keep the contents fresh or which double as a serving plate or charcuterie board. The lids are engineered



Cara and Dan Frank create Australian-made food containers from recycled plastic.

to snap on securely without silicone rims and are spill-proof and airtight. They also have a matching serving spoon and fork set.

From launch, Frank says the Australian Made logo was a big point of difference.

“This stamp of approval verifies that our products are in fact made in Australia and our quality is top-notch,” she says. “There’s an automatic trust – the logo gives our brand a lot of credibility.”

Frank regularly visits the factory. “I have met most of the workers on the factory floor,” she says. “And they are all treated fairly according to Australian workplace standards.”

While some companies attempt to “greenwash” consumers, making unsubstantiated and misleading claims about the sustainability of their products, The Franks are careful to be as transparent as possible.

Having a closed manufacturing loop is an important part of the sustainability of their business. Customers can return their products at the end of their lifespan.

“We chop up and re-dye the plastic, feed it into the injection moulder to use it to create new bowls and platters in our liquorice range,” Frank says.

All packaging they use is recyclable and even their packing tape is compostable. The company is also a member of the Australian Micro Recyclers Association.

Despite a higher price point associated with local manufacturing compared to cheaper imported plastic products, Put a Lid on It is experiencing surging demand from more environmentally conscious consumers nationally, Frank says.

It exports to the United States and hopes to expand into other markets soon.



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# Brisbane-built to handle local conditions

The Volvo brand is decidedly Swedish but when it comes to trucks, it's all about meeting the demands of the distinct Aussie challenges.

Australia's truckies face some of the toughest challenges of any transport providers in the world, from the longer distances they cover and heavier payloads to the temperature extremes experienced across the nation.

Ensuring they conquer these unique demands is why Volvo and Mack trucks are designed, engineered, tested and built in Australia.

Volvo Group Australia has been building trucks in Brisbane since 1972, believing trucks for Australia should be built in Australia.

President and chief executive Martin Merrick says it works closely with customers to understand how their trucks are actually used to ensure their new Volvo or Mack meets their needs.

"That helps us deliver vehicles that are not only robust but also fit for purpose in the specific environments they work in every day," he says.

"Our customers work in very different environments, from WA salt flats to linehaul freight, construction, distribution and triple road train applications, so flexibility matters.

"Because we build locally, we can offer a very high degree of customisation and ensure the truck is configured for the job it needs to do.

"That gives customers a vehicle that is better matched to their operation, their productivity requirements and the conditions they face."

Last year, SRH Milk Haulage founder Scott Harvey purchased a new Volvo FH16 XXL with the most powerful truck engine currently available in Australia, the D17 780.

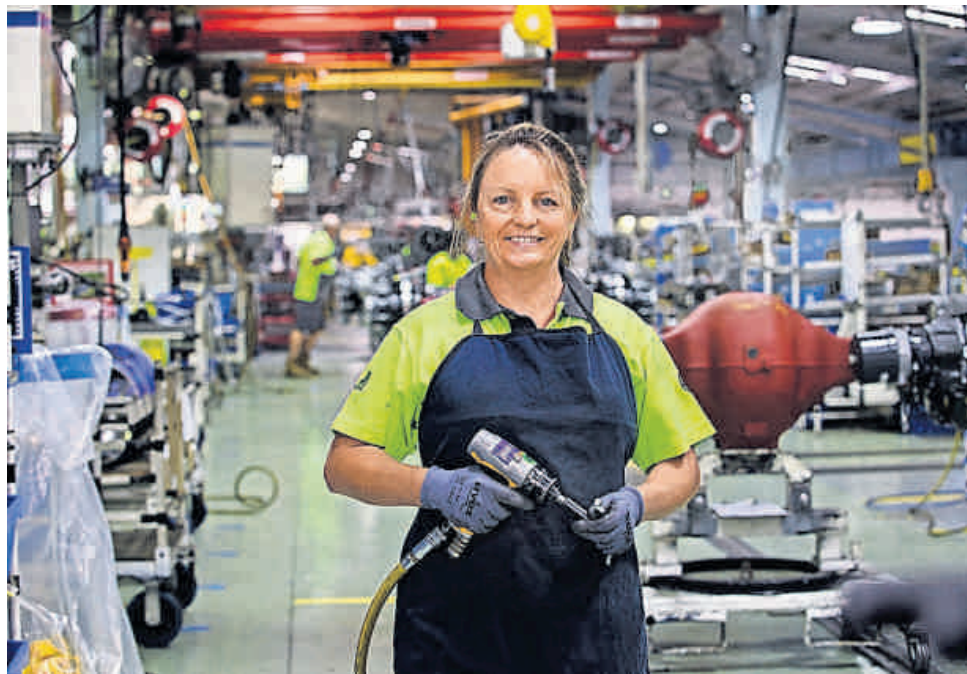
It will ensure it can efficiently pull an A-Double tanker combination between sites on the NSW Central and North coasts.

"Our company has had a long history with Volvo trucks," he says.

"Knowing these trucks have been engineered and built locally for Australian conditions really makes a difference to us."

Hill's Tankers owner Andrew Hill says safety and reliability are among the many reasons it has more than 40 Australian-made Volvos in its fleet, delivering fuels and oils across multiple states.

"Volvos are made here in Australia and that's important to me," he says. "I'll always prefer a locally built truck over an import."



Volvo's facility at Wacol has produced more than 80,000 heavy vehicles since 1972.

In the past 54 years, Volvo Group Australia's facility at Wacol has produced more than 80,000 heavy vehicles.

They have been equipped with Australian innovations such as larger fuel capacities for long-haul work, filtration systems designed to handle dusty environments, and durable components that can stand up to rough roads and demanding applications.

It currently builds Volvo FH, FM, FMX and FE model trucks, as well as Mack Titan, Super-Liner, Trident and Anthem trucks, and each carries Australian Made certification.

Merrick says many people are still



surprised to learn that Volvo trucks have been built in Australia since 1972, and Mack trucks since 1963.

"For those of us close to the business, it is a point of real pride, because local manufacturing has been part of our story for more than five decades," he says.

"Truck manufacturing is not always highly visible to the broader public, even though it supports jobs, skills, supply chains, and essential freight across the country.

"We are very proud of the role our employees, suppliers and dealers have played in building that legacy."

Volvo Group Australia's local



Volvo Group Australia CEO Martin Merrick.

manufacturing operations are full circle, starting with engineering the heavy vehicles before they are manufactured at its Wacol facility, and ending with distribution through an extensive national dealer network.

Aside from employing manufacturing operators and technicians and engineers, supply chain, purchasing specialists and service teams are among its more than 700 staff.

"That depth of capability is a real strength because it allows us to design, build, support and continuously improve trucks for Australian conditions," he says.

"That local manufacturing base is supported by more than 120 local suppliers.

"They provide a broad range of components and services, from major parts such as fuel tanks and bonnets through to specialist manufacturing and supply chain support.

"It is an important ecosystem that helps us maintain quality, flexibility and responsiveness for our customers."

Volvo Group Australia also works with customers to meet wider industry needs and changes, such as vehicle electrification.

This year, it is building 10 electric trucks in a trial to develop the process, skills and production readiness required to manufacture these vehicles at scale locally.

It is also preparing the Wacol facility to support mixed-model assembly, so electric vehicles can be built alongside conventional products, future-proofing local manufacturing and building new capability.

"Building electric trucks in Australia is an important next step for our manufacturing operations, and it requires investment in both people, production capability and support network," Merrick says.

"A big part of that work has been upskilling our workforce so our teams can safely and confidently work with new electric driveline technology.

"These electric trucks will play an important role in expanding Australia's heavy vehicle manufacturing capability while supporting the transition to lower-emission transport."

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# This family business is raising the bar for Australian soaps

A “farm to skin” dream has become a reality for this entrepreneurial NSW farming family.

A NSW family business is carving out a place in the competitive personal care market with products made using ingredients grown on its own farm.

Freshwater Farm now supplies major supermarkets with soaps, body washes, hand creams and dish soaps.

Freshwater Farm’s factory at Cromer on Sydney’s Northern Beaches uses essential oils from flowering plants, including lemon myrtle, lemon-scented tea tree, kunzea, eucalyptus and saltbush, grown on its property on the NSW Mid North Coast.

For co-founder Sam Hutcherson, the Australian Made green and gold kangaroo logo represents more than just local manufacturing. Many of the ingredients used in Freshwater Farm’s products are native Australian botanicals grown on the family farm.

“What’s unique about our story is that we grow Australian natives like lemon myrtle on our farm and then take it a step further by incorporating those botanical oils into our products,” he says. “By planting native species, we’re also helping support biodiversity across the property.”

Before Hutcherson co-founded Freshwater Farm with his family eight years ago, his father Al had spent more than 20 years manufacturing soap for other businesses. However, the family had a long-held dream to have their own brand.

The opportunity came in 2018, when Al and his wife Jane bought a farm in Mayers Flat, about 80 kilometres north-east of Newcastle. Originally a dairy farm, it had become a tea tree plantation but had been neglected after the market for tea tree oil crashed in the 1990s.

The Hutcherson family began regenerating the farm, planting additional native botanicals and harvesting manuka honey from bees that pollinated the lemon-scented tea trees. They harvest and distil the plants to create essential oils, which Al transports to their Cromer factory.

Today, Freshwater Farm manufactures more than 30 different products including soap bars, liquid soap in pump bottles, body wash, shampoo and conditioner, dish soap, essential oils and hand cream, many of them using ingredients grown on the farm.

The Hutchersons also involve their entire family in running the farm and the factory.



TOP: The Hutcherson family of Freshwater Farm. ABOVE: Al Hutcherson.

Al and Jane work at the farm and in the company’s head office, also in Cromer, while Sam runs sales, his wife Annie heads human resources for their 70 employees, his sister Amy runs online sales and her husband Grant, originally a plumber and gas fitter, manages the factory and operations.

“We didn’t set out for it to be a family business, but that’s what it’s evolved into,” Sam says. “We all have different roles [and] different skills that we bring to the table. We get on well too. It’s very important to us that, above all, the family relationship wins.”

Another distinction of Freshwater Farm lies in the technical expertise honed by Al over three decades. Unlike many of its

competitors, Freshwater Farm is a vertically integrated business, which means the family controls how each product is made, blending traditional craft and modern science.

To create their best-selling body bars, the process begins with a soap “noodle”, which is then mixed with olive oil sourced from Victoria, organic shea butter and natural vitamin E. This mixture is triple-milled through traditional roller mills.

“What this does is create a paste,” Sam says. “It crushes all the soap crystals in the soap and homogenises the product. That means you get a beautiful, creamy lather right away and the scent is evenly



Freshwater Farm’s best-selling Lemon Myrtle Oil + Manuka Honey Body Bar.

distributed right through the bar from the first time you use it to the last sliver.”

The family’s focus on quality is what Sam believes has driven strong customer loyalty and repeat purchases, helping Freshwater Farm continue to grow year-on-year within major retailers.

Sustainability is an important aspect of the business. At Freshwater Farm, the family uses regenerative agriculture practices such as low-tillage, reducing water where possible and leaving parts of the farm fallow to sequester carbon.

They also focus on sustainable packaging. By wrapping soap bars in recyclable paper, instead of plastic, they have diverted over four million pieces of plastic from landfill in the last year.

Their liquid soap and body wash is sold in clear PET bottles – the best plastic to recycle – and they also make hand-wash refill pouches which, when used with their refillable glass bottles, can reduce consumers’ plastic use by 80 per cent.

While Freshwater Farm’s products already sell throughout Australia, the Australian Made logo, synonymous with being “fresh, clean and high quality”, has also resonated with consumers internationally, Sam says, with sales in Singapore, Taiwan, Canada and, more recently, the US.

“We’re not looking for someone to buy our products only once,” Sam says. “We want them to buy them again and again, because of the quality.”

With a farm full of native botanicals and a factory with 35 years of research and production experience behind them, the Hutchersons have turned their “farm to skin” dream into reality.

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# Doing its thing for rain delays

By Peter Hanlon

More than 50 years after Gordon Withnall hit his golf ball into a fairway puddle and turned his active mind to finding a better way to enjoy his golf, Super Sopper continues to mop up water around the globe.

As sales and marketing manager Paul Hawke says, "The simple things are the best, and Super Sopper is a great example of that."

The device, a drum with perforated holes, a sponge and a roller that drains into a water tank within the drum, is now used in more than 15 countries to soak up water on surfaces from real grass to synthetic to clay to concrete, allowing outdoor activities from social to professional level to carry on when they would otherwise have been washed out.

It's an Australian icon, hailed by Powerhouse Museum as one of the top 100 Australian innovations of the 20th century.

Shortly after its 1974 birth, Super Sopper made its television debut on the ABC's *The Inventors* and won machine of the night. One judge asked if it came in other colours, a cheeky nod to the engineering simplicity of a problem-solver that has barely changed in appearance.

"More than 50 years later we're still building the machines that Gordon invented," Hawke says. "There have been some changes, but the overall principle is the same. It's such a simple idea, yet no-one else thought of it."

The sight of a Super Sopper doing its thing after rain had stopped play was as much a part of international cricket watching back in the day as Tony Greig

sinking his car keys into the turf during his pitch report.

It soon became a must-have for curators everywhere; visiting the MCG in the late 1970s, the curator from The Oval in London saw a Super Sopper mopping up the damp outfield and ordered one on the spot.

Underground drainage and turf management at elite sporting venues has evolved considerably since, but Super Sopper remains a vital tool in removing low-lying water and getting the game going again fast.

"Talk to most of the international cricket ovals and they still have a Super Sopper," Hawke says. "And the more you get away from the main ovals, they just have to have the Super Sopper as part of their arsenal."

Its use continues to expand at pace with the growth of recreational sport. Countries like Malaysia and Singapore, which are susceptible to monsoonal rains, put the Super Sopper to work on courts used for padel and pickleball. Machines were recently sent to Taiwan for use at athletics venues, where they can mop up both the synthetic running track and grass infield.

"We're finding a lot of our customer profile is just everyday sporting clubs – obviously cricket, but tennis, lawn bowls and football," Hawke says. "It's not just the elite who are using the big machines now; you're getting schools buying them. Ipswich Cricket Club have multiple ovals and they have multiple Super Soppers."

With models from the push-pull Minnow that can soak up 20 litres to the 300-litre-capacity Walrus, there is a Super Sopper for



The Super Sopper range now soaks up water in more than 15 countries.

every job. Echoing Withnall's constant search for improvement, advances being explored include autonomous operation, battery power and other opportunities that open up as technology advances.

"Oil and fuel spills in the ocean, for example – anything that can potentially be mopped up could become part of the Super Sopper range," Hawke says. "It's a pretty blank canvas."

"The challenge we have [is to] stay true to it's original values – this is about sopping stuff up, and it always will be about sopping stuff up. It's just the stuff that's changing."

Super Sopper has needed little promotion over its half-century journey, with word of mouth a powerful driver of sales for a product that is proud to display the Australian Made logo. Originally made in Sydney, for the past two decades the machines have been built near Taree, NSW, by local people.

"We've sold into the subcontinent, the UK, the US, New Zealand, West Indies, Asia, and we build in regional Australia employing regional people – it's a double tick," Hawke says. "It's amazing how many times I'll be speaking to customers and they'll ask, 'Are you still making all of this in Australia?' I'll say yes and they say, 'Great, that's awesome.'"

"We love having the Aussie logo there, it means something – not just to our international clients; it means just as much to our Australian customers."

Withnall's story is that of an "off to the back shed and knock something up" bloke who was always looking for solutions, and Hawke says Super Sopper will forever stand as testament to Australian ingenuity.

"I suspect the concept will remain the same, regardless of what you do around adding new features and technologies to the product. It's almost timeless."

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# Tankers made to meet Aussie challenges

The success of ATE Tankers underscores the value of specialist local manufacturing and engineering expertise.

ATE Tankers was founded on a belief that Australian operators deserve equipment which has been engineered specifically for Australian conditions.

Nearly three decades later, that philosophy continues to define the business.

From its production plant in the western Melbourne suburb of Sunshine, ATE Tankers has grown from a two-person operation into one of Australia's leading road tanker manufacturers, employing more than 100 people across manufacturing, engineering, service and repair.

Managing director Dan Mejak says the company has never lost sight of what matters most: the long-term relationships built with customers.

"We've had customers start with a single second-hand tanker and over time build entire fleets with us," Mejak says. "You watch their business evolve, and in many ways you grow together. That journey is one of the most rewarding parts of what we do."

ATE initially identified an opportunity within the small rigid tanker sector, quickly establishing a reputation for delivering solutions tailored to Australian operating conditions and individual customer requirements – a point of difference that continues to underpin the business today.

Since then, ATE has expanded across a



ATE's Melbourne-manufactured tankers are all made to suit customers' requirements.

broad range of road-tanker solutions ranging from tri-axle semis through to heavy offroad multi-combination units, bitumen tankers and vacuum tankers servicing critical infrastructure and waste management industries.

ATE's clients range from independent owner-drivers through to major commercial operators, corporate clientele and government agencies, including the Department of Defence.

What separates ATE from other manufacturers is its collaborative approach to design. Rather than working from rigid

standard templates, each tanker is engineered around its use in the field.

"It's a genuinely collaborative process," says general manager David Gurrie. "We spend time understanding the customer, the operational environment and what the tanker needs to do. The result is a product designed for the specific application – with no compromises."

That approach has become increasingly important as transport operators face tougher operating environments, higher compliance expectations and greater pressure on uptime.

Customers regularly visit ATE's plant facility during production to see their tanker take shape – from raw materials through to a finished product engineered for Australian roads, distances and industries. The company controls the process end-to-end, from engineering and fabrication through to final fitout and after-sales support.

For Mejak, the company's commitment to local manufacturing goes beyond carrying the Australian Made logo. It is about preserving sovereign capability, supporting skilled local employment and building products designed for the realities of Australian industry.

"Australia presents a uniquely complex operating environment," he says. "Distance, climate, infrastructure and compliance expectations all shape the way transport equipment must perform in this country. Designing and manufacturing locally ensures our products are developed with a genuine understanding of those demands from the outset."

That philosophy is increasingly resonating with operators seeking reliability, responsiveness and long-term support rather than off-the-shelf imports. ATE's continued growth into new markets reflects a broader shift occurring across Australian industry – a renewed appreciation of specialist local manufacturing and engineering expertise.

For ATE, the focus remains unchanged.

"We've always believed that how you do business matters just as much as what you build," Mejak says. "If you operate with integrity and deliver consistently, people remember that."

"You can invest in equipment and facilities, but it's the people behind the business who make the difference. That's something we've never lost sight of."

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# Choosing the right window shading could cut energy use by up to 25%



Working from the outside in, awnings, blind and shutters can deflect heat and save money.



The benefits of curtains should not be overlooked when it comes to cutting energy bills.

## Opting for Australian-made window shading supports local jobs – and can slash energy costs.

Australians' preference for buying Australian-made products has a big impact in the window shading industry, which supports more than 15,000 full-time-equivalent jobs.

Window Shading Association of Australia chief executive Wesley Fawaz says choosing locally made blinds, awnings, shutters and window coverings contributes \$2.3 billion in gross value added (GVA) to the Australian economy.

"Choosing Australian-made window coverings supports more than just a product – it supports local jobs, local skills and a \$6.1 billion Australian industry," Fawaz says.

Aside from the economic benefits, Australian-made window shading products are also designed for Australian homes, Australian standards and Australian conditions.

Most Australians rely on air conditioning and heating to stay comfortable but with energy prices rising, that approach is becoming increasingly expensive.

Many homeowners also do not realise that up to 40 per cent of a home's temperature loss or gain occurs through its windows.

That makes window shading – whether it is blinds, shutters, awnings or curtains – one of the most effective and often overlooked ways to improve comfort and reduce energy bills.

Research by the Illinois Institute of

Technology finds these measures can reduce energy consumption by 25 per cent, providing an average payback time of three to five years.

Window shading can also provide residents with other benefits, such as increased privacy and security, and sun-damage prevention for furniture.

Automated window shadings can adapt to changing weather conditions, further ensuring effectiveness.

Fawaz says controlling temperature does not have to occur after the fact.

"Most Australians are trying to fix comfort by turning on the air-conditioning or heating, but the real opportunity is stopping the heat or cold at the window in the first place."

He says not all window shading products are created equal, and like most industries, local manufacturers are increasingly competing with imported products entering Australia.

Aside from supporting Australian businesses and thousands of local jobs, those who do buy Australian get improved service, including supply times, Fawaz says.

"Australian-made products are custom-made. When customers get products imported, they're not measured specifically for your windows," he says.

"There can be faster lead times as well if you get something made locally and the business often can come up with more solutions for you.

"The best result rarely comes from a single product – it's about combining the right solutions across the home, based on how each window is exposed.

"A WSAA member professional can assess

the whole home and recommend the right combination, not just a single product."

Fawaz says if customers do encounter a problem with the product or installation, it can also be quickly resolved when purchasing from an Australian company.

"Certainly it's getting tougher for a lot of businesses and a lot of industries," he says.

"There are a lot more government conditions, taxes etc., that impact businesses and there's no doubt that

overseas products can be manufactured in a cheaper way.

"The advantage of using a local member or a local business outweighs some of those savings that you may get."

The Window Shading Association of Australia is an industry association

that represents Australian manufacturers, fabric and component suppliers, retailers and importers of blinds, awnings, shutters, curtains and other window shading and solar products.

It reveals another advantage of purchasing products through its members is that Australian-made products are manufactured specifically for the Australian market, ensuring they meet local conditions.

"With meeting Australian standards and legislation, you'd be more confident again of knowing that the product sold by Australian retailers is definitely meeting all of those conditions, for example safety to reduce the

potential of death and injury of young children," Fawaz says.

"Australian-made products are designed with local conditions in mind, from harsh UV exposure to different climate zones across the country."

Generic imports also do not take regional differences into consideration, Fawaz explains.

For example, the warmer climate in Brisbane requires shading to have greater heat rejection qualities than those in Melbourne, where more insulated window shading will help provide the warmth needed in winter.

WSAA is launching WincoverER, a free tool for its members to further enhance the help they can give customers to make the right choices for their homes.

WincoverER is an easy-to-use energy rating simulator that uses home, climate and window information to estimate potential energy savings from different window shading options to help guide purchasing decisions.

"The idea of the simulator is to inform customers on how much they can save on their energy bills, based on their specific location in Australia and the products they want to choose," Fawaz says.

"The tool will be available through WSAA member retailers, helping consumers make more informed choices based on their home, climate and product selection.

"Different climate zones will need different window coverings to maximise the energy efficiency of the home as well as a schedule of when they should open and close their blinds."

Customers can find a list of WSAA members located in their state at [wsaa.au](http://wsaa.au).



Wesley Fawaz

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# Celebrating long-time backers of Australian Made

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Australian Made logo – a symbol of the innovation, creativity, craftsmanship and grit that define local makers and growers. The iconic green-and-gold logo is becoming increasingly visible across the products and services Australians consume and, for many businesses, it is a source of pride. But some have championed Australian-made longer than others, carrying the logo as part of their identity as well as their label. These companies are among the oldest licensees of Australian Made, writes **Shae Wiedermann**.



**ENFORCER**  
Designed to replicate a live scrum without damaging the playing surface, Enforcer scrum machines are lightweight, durable and easy to manoeuvre. It began with a simple idea: a sled machine with wheels and a spot for the coach to sit. Enforcer has since grown into a trusted supplier for rugby teams both in Australia and internationally, including the Wallabies. Made in the NSW country town of Boorowa, it wears the green-and-gold logo proudly.



**GRANT AUSTIN DISPLAY PACKAGING**  
You may have admired the box housing a piece of jewellery, and probably have a few of them stacked in a drawer, too elegant to throw away. Grant Austin Display Packaging started out by producing injection-moulded boxes for Australia's opal industry before expanding into presentation boxes, cases and trays for gemstones and jewellery. Established in 1973, The company has been a proud member of the Australian Made program for more than 15 years.



**COLES**  
Coles is one of the most visible champions of Australian-made products, with its shelves stocked with locally made goods across almost every aisle. From health and beauty products to household cleaning solutions and pet food, Australian-made brands feature prominently throughout its stores. Wherever possible, Coles also prioritises sourcing fresh food locally, taking its 2026 slogan, "Value the Australian Way", seriously.



**FX AUSTRALIA**  
Arriving in Australia from Italy in 1991, Alberto Sanvito understood how to transform surfaces through paint, but lacked the quality products to apply this knowledge. In response, he developed a range of premium special-effects paints and coatings, and today, FX Australia serves local and international brands and design teams. The products are used for decorative, commercial and industrial purposes and are engineered to withstand Australia's harsh climate. Proudly committed to local production and manufacturing, FX Australia is now celebrating its 27th year of Australian Made.



**TRISHAVE** (Australian Cosmeceuticals)  
Born from the philosophy that effective skincare doesn't require a multitude of products, but rather one high-quality all-in-one solution, TriShave is Australian Cosmeceuticals' answer to streamlined grooming. The 3-in-1 anti-rash cream combines a pre-shave cleanser, shaving cream and post-shave moisturiser. Designed to help protect the skin from cancer and premature ageing, it works best when paired with the triple-blade sensitive disposable razor, followed by an SPF-40 moisturising lotion applied directly after shaving.



**OZABORIGINAL**  
OzAboriginal has been Australian-made since it began in 1992. While showcasing Aboriginal artworks, the organisation also supports First Nations communities through creative engagement and promotion. Its range of paintings, artefacts, homewares and jewellery is ethically sourced and reflects Aboriginal culture and values. In addition to carrying the green-and-gold kangaroo logo, OzAboriginal is a member of the Aboriginal Art Association of Australia and the Indigenous Art Code.



**WOOLWORTHS**  
Woolworths has long been a supporter of Australian Made, with many of its pantry staples and household essentials carrying the green-and-gold logo. Its own-brand range also highlights locally made favourites, including the Woolworths Australian Rolled Oats and Extra Virgin Olive Oil. The "Fresh Food People" source much of its fresh meats, dairy, eggs, fruit and vegetables from Australian growers and producers, too.



**KEVREK AUSTRALIA**  
Australia has always had a bustling trades industry, and since 1989, Kevrek has serviced that industry with its light-vehicle-mounted hydraulic cranes. The company is now the largest manufacturer of these cranes and, over the years, has improved them through attachment updates, including the Pole Grab, Post Hole Borer, Drill Rod Handler and Water Truck. The family business started with Terry and Gary O'Neill, who have grown and shaped it to what it is today: a long-standing holder of the Australian Made logo.



**BUCKAROO LEATHERWORKS**  
Think of toolbelts, and stylish isn't the word that comes to mind – not until Ken Van Der Water created the Buckaroo Signature Belt. Before its debut, he was crafting bespoke leather goods, from whips and boot straps to hats, shoes and dog collars. Then he designed a toolbelt to do more than carry tools – it improves how tradies move, work and perform. Embraced nationwide, it brings a sense of style to an industry that had rarely considered it. Buckaroo Leatherworks are the 27th licensee of Australian Made – an achievement it wears with stylish pride.

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# Family legacy fuels manufacturers' growth and keeps profits local

Innovative immigrants saw a need and opportunity to build a business with a truly Australian focus, writes **Melinda Ham.**

Amid volatile global markets, the choice to manufacture locally is becoming a strategic advantage for companies such as MATElec Australia and RESILIFT. Their Australian Made certification is a seal of approval after a long journey of innovative engineering, continuing family legacy and local engagement.

The stories of both companies began with identifying a local problem and engineering a solution. RESILIFT was the invention of Peter van Emmerik, a Dutch migrant who'd spent his career with Tasmania's Hydro Electric Commission in Tasmania. In his retirement, van Emmerik designed a unique shaftless, electric home elevator to help people stay at home as they age.

"Dad's vision was to help people remain in their own homes by making elevators as affordable as possible," says van Emmerik's daughter, Margery Jensen, who co-leads the company with her sister Erica Collins. "Unlike traditional elevators, RESILIFT isn't hydraulic and noisy, can be retrofitted into an existing home and plugged into a standard powerpoint, without the need for 3-phase power."

Similarly, MATElec Australia grew out of a migrant's fresh perspective. In 1999, South African businessman Richard Büchner arrived in Australia with a background in a family electronics business. A condition of Büchner's visa was to live in a regional area, and so he settled in Shepparton, Victoria. He quickly recognised his expertise could contribute to Australia's water challenges, particularly given the droughts in Eastern Australia through the early 2000s.

He established MATElec Australia to develop grey water reuse systems for home irrigation, but quickly grew to developing advanced control and automation systems for numerous applications including clean water supply, fire systems, stormwater and sewage treatment.

The MATElec Australia factory in



MATElec Australia's product manager Dale Jones with the HydroWHIZ control panel.

Shepparton now employs 120 people, including engineers, electricians and assembly line workers who design and build over 2500 control panels a month for infrastructure such as water and sewage systems in commercial, industrial and residential buildings nationally.

Sporting the green and gold kangaroo Australian Made logo gives their product a distinct advantage, says Dale Jones, MATElec Australia's product manager. "Being Australian Made means we can show everyone in the water industry that we are the experts and are here to support them," he says.

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“We also provide a level of compliance and ongoing technical support that importers simply cannot match,” says Jones.

“We build a complete solution for every customer. They tell us their requirements and we design and build them. Then they just have to go to their site, plug in the



Margery Jensen (left) and Erica Collins (right) with their mother, Rosemary van Emmerik.

power, connect their pumps and turn it on.”

For RESiLIFT, manufacturing remains rooted in Tasmania, where four strategic suppliers and manufacturers construct the key components of the lifts. The local distributor completes the manufacturing and then assembles the lift on-site at the customer’s home.

“Dad wanted to boost local manufacturers and distributors,” says co-CEO Collins. “He was proud of the fact that he hadn’t built one big company but was supporting multiple businesses on a local level.”

While lower priced international products provide steep competition to RESiLIFT, they lack the agility of a local workshop. “One of the issues with elevators manufactured overseas is that spare parts aren’t always readily available,” Collins

says. “This can leave customers without a functioning lift or in some cases needing a complete replacement. Our local distributors can fix most issues on-site.”

Beyond logistics is the social impact of keeping business in Australia, says Jones from MATElec Australia. “If people buy from us, a local manufacturer, then they’re boosting us up, and our employees are happy, our customer is happy and we are all in that embrace. And the profits stay in the local community and don’t go offshore.”

At MATElec Australia, the Australian Made logo is the final seal of approval on the product’s assembly line. After a panel is designed, engineered, wired, tested, vacuumed, and polished, it receives the sticker. “It’s not until the very last step, when we’re signed off and happy it’s a

*“If people buy from us, a local manufacturer, then they’re boosting us up, and our employees are happy, our customer is happy and we are all in that embrace.”*

Dale Jones

perfect product that we put the Australian Made logo on it,” says Jones.

RESiLIFT applied for the official certification two years ago and immediately saw the benefit. “It has made a big difference,” says Collins. “Having that certification has helped customers who value Australian Made products to identify with us.”

As Collins and Jensen look to the future, their focus is on continuing their father’s legacy of innovation, ensuring the business is family-owned and the lifts continue to be produced from high quality components.

At MATElec, family legacy is also important: four of Büchner’s sons are involved in running the business. At the same time, Jones says the company must be continually agile and innovative to stay ahead of consumer demand, as well as changes in building standards federally and at state level, sustainability requirements and also adapt to new technologies.

“The next phase for us is expanding into the Internet of Things,” Jones says. “We are investing heavily in IoT, and in areas such as SMS communications. So, if a customer has a problem with a device on-site, it’ll send them a notification. We want to make remote monitoring easier and easier.”



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# How farming goats became a natural fit

A thriving business creating goat-milk soap was no overnight success, writes **Melissa Iaria**.

Sarah Mostyn always wanted the farm life, but she probably never imagined she'd make a living selling goat-milk soap made from her own herd.

After turning 30, the accountant and her husband, Shayne, uprooted from the Gold Coast to the small Victorian town of Cohuna with dreams of starting a farm.

The couple established Windella Farm, a 5.4-hectare property, in 2014, and began breeding dairy goats to sell.

"We were really fascinated with dairy goats, and the goat dairy industry was growing with lots of opportunities," she says.

"We could see a gap in the market to breed young milking stock to sell."

Goats required less land and machinery, and were easier to manage solo. Beyond the benefits of goat's milk for sensitive skin, Sarah was also drawn to their playful nature.

"They've got really interesting personalities, and they're incredibly inquisitive, friendly and social. They're much more interactive with you than dairy cows, for instance."

At first, not everyone in the Murray River town was sold on a boutique goat dairy.

"Very quickly people heard about the goat farmers and the crazy goat lady. People laughed at us at first. They were like, 'No, no, that's not what we do here. We do cows'."



Sarah Mostyn milks the "playful" goats at her farm in Cohuna to make natural skin products.

But when a local dance teacher asked if she made goat's milk soap, Sarah decided to try, and it quickly became an addictive hobby.

Soon, she was paying for dance classes with bars of soap and gifting them to family and friends. The eco-skincare business then expanded into face and body oils, natural deodorants, balms, face masks and healing salves.

"It took about five years for me to just slowly and organically grow the business to the point where it could sustain me full time," she says.

"For a while I just milked cows for a year, so I had some wage income coming in and slowly eased off outside paid work as the business grew."

All Windella Farm products are natural,

suitable for sensitive skin, certified Australian-made, and packaged using eco-friendly processes.

Products are mainly sold online and at farmers' markets and events nationwide. The artisan also runs the Cohuna Farmers and Makers Market, which she founded eight years ago, and mentors fellow stallholders looking to grow their businesses.

"Because I've ventured a bit further afield and gone to the bigger markets and events, I really want to help my stall holders who want to take that same path," she says.

Three of her oil-based products were recognised in the Clean and Conscious Awards 2024.

Sarah remains committed to making products herself rather than outsourcing manufacturing, saying she only creates products she would personally use.

"There's a freedom in keeping things small and homemade, and being able to do things on my own terms," she says.

"If it's something I wouldn't use personally, it doesn't make the cut."

Her products are also licensed to carry the Australian Made, Australian Grown logo, something not all Australian-made businesses pursue.

As well as offering brand credibility, consumers are reassured that the products comply with Australian standards, expectations and values, she says.

"There's a lot of online businesses that pose as Australian businesses and Australian-made products, and they're not - they're drop-shipped from overseas, and the quality is horrendous. From that perspective, it's really valuable being known as an Australian-made brand."

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