

AUSTRALIAN MADE

SPECIAL REPORT

There has never been a more important time to support Australia's great local producers.



Detail of artwork re-imagined from an original travel poster from the 1960s.
PICTURE: RETROPRINTMERCHANTS.COM.AU



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Local manufacturers Mumme Tools (left) and fine wool bedding products maker MiniJumbuk are among industry leaders proudly brandishing the Australian Made insignia.

Australian Made brand to the fore

The pandemic brought with it a new regard for products bearing the distinctive Aussie logo.

Among the many threads of our lives that 2020 shook into sharper focus, our purchasing habits sit front of mind as we emerge into a post-pandemic world. One thing has become blindingly clear: buying Australian-made products is no longer just “the right thing to do”, it’s simply better for you.

“[COVID-19] has really highlighted for consumers our over-reliance on imported products,” says Australian Made CEO Ben Lazzaro. “It’s important that there’s always a balance between imports and locally made, but I think this is an opportunity to shift the needle a bit back in favour of local production.”

As Lazzaro notes, we all know someone who lost their job or had their working hours reduced as the fallout from coronavirus cast a pall over the world. For many, the self-examination that accompanied the darkness of last year included a renewed conviction to buy local.

“This really did open people’s eyes to the fact that we could focus a bit more on self-sufficiency moving forward,” Lazzaro says. “When we buy Australian-made, not only do you get products made to some of the highest standards both from a quality and

safety perspective – which has never been more important than right now – but you also create jobs; not only now, but into the future.”

The pandemic also highlighted the power and reach of the ubiquitous Australian Made logo, which, since its creation in 1986, has evolved from a patriotic symbol into a mark of quality, sustainability and ethical labour and, above all, provides assurance that consumers can trust the products that carry the gold kangaroo on the green triangle.

A recent Roy Morgan study found that 99 per cent of Australians recognise the Australian Made logo, with more than nine-in-10 people trusting that products carrying the logo are genuinely Australian. Ninety-seven per cent associate the logo with safe and high-quality products, 89 per cent with ethical labour, and 78 per cent with sustainability.

“Our logo is much respected and recognised,” Lazzaro says proudly. “It’s got 34 years of market capital behind it. It wasn’t like that from day one, of course. We collectively worked hard to be able to administer a brand that is so effective and respected. It’s ingrained in people’s lives – a lot of us grew up with it.”

The logo’s clout was underscored by the record number of licensees who applied to join Australian Made in 2020 – at the height of the pandemic, monthly applications increased by an amazing 400 per cent. The logo itself is a product certification mark – an endorsement of the product, rather than the business that makes it – yet the



‘Our logo is much respected and recognised ... It’s ingrained in people’s lives – a lot of us grew up with it.’

Ben Lazzaro

partnership is one that is increasingly sought.

“We’re big believers in the values of what the logo stands for,” says Tom Woodward, chief marketing officer for Crimsafe, whose security screen solutions joined the Australian Made family in mid-2020.

Through the pandemic, Woodward saw people tested like never before, and overwhelmingly their good-natured side won out.

“What that’s meant is that people have looked to their neighbours, they’ve looked to local businesses, they’ve looked to their partners as a way of supporting local,” he says, pointing to the knock-on support for the 122 licensees Australia-wide who stock Crimsafe products.

“Being able to support those 122 businesses in addition to our own is a huge win.”

Mutual support is a common thread that has been woven by licensees throughout the pandemic. The Australian Made “community” have reached out like never before, driving a 300 per cent increase in engagement across social media platforms last year as consumers searched for Australian products, asked questions and bought local.

“We’ve always been very active in that space,” Lazzaro says of online traffic that went “through the roof”. “Consumers are extremely passionate about country of origin; they’re very parochial, which is appreciated.”

“On social media, they’re not backward in coming forward with their views, but overwhelmingly it’s positive support for the brands that manufacture in Australia.”

It may have taken a pandemic to highlight our over-reliance on foreign manufacturing, but the road ahead looks increasingly paved in green and gold.

“People want to create new employment opportunities; they want to support Aussie businesses and industry,” Lazzaro says. “It’s all about supporting their fellow Australians.”

CONSUMERS HAVE CHANGED THEIR SHOPPING HABITS AS A RESULT OF COVID-19



63%

ARE BUYING MORE ONLINE



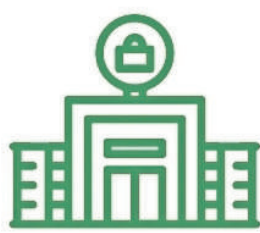
54%

ARE MAKING FEWER SHOPPING TRIPS



39%

ARE STOCKING UP ON ESSENTIAL ITEMS



29%

ARE CONCENTRATING BUYING IN FEWER SHOPS



24%

ARE BUYING MORE LOCALLY PRODUCED PRODUCTS



21%

ARE PAYING CLOSER ATTENTION TO COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Source: Roy Morgan (2020)

Tracking down the famous logo online

As COVID-19 struck, shoppers flocked online and were keen to support local businesses.

As the pandemic accelerated the global shift to online shopping, and COVID-wary consumers increasingly sought products they could trust, Eliza McGivern just happened to be looking for work.

"I had opportunities come up, and they literally disappeared overnight when COVID hit," she recalls.

When her niece Jemma Wilson lost her new job at the end of March, McGivern decided to marry her own marketing and business development skills with Wilson's interior design flair.

"We're good networkers, good people to people ... so we thought, 'OK, let's do something to support Australian products'."

Over countless hours of researching online, with scores of tabs open on hard-working laptops, a picture soon emerged.

"We were just going mad looking for Australian-made products, and the more we looked into it, there was no one place you could go to find and purchase them."

And so, Remarkable Humans was born, a curated online marketplace showcasing genuine Australian-made products, with a focus on health and beauty, food and beverage, and home and lifestyle items.

Within weeks of their August launch, a retail partnership with the Australian Made campaign was formed. For McGivern and Wilson, who personally contacted brand



Remarkable Humans, created by Eliza McGivern and Jemma Wilson (top right), provides an online marketplace for myriad Aussie goods, including home and lifestyle products.

owners individually to join the Remarkable Humans family, the union was hand-in-glove.

"People associate the Australian Made logo with quality," McGivern says. "Years of drought then horrendous bushfires were massive triggers for the local population to think about buying local, and COVID has taken that into the stratosphere. We're really excited. Australians just want to support local, and I don't think that's a one-hit-wonder sentiment that will fade overnight."

Our changing retail habits are evident in another 2020 coupling - Australian Made on eBay. For managing director and vice-president of eBay Australia and New Zealand

Tim Mackinnon, the trust people automatically feel when they see the green triangle and gold kangaroo echoes the leap of faith that accompanied eBay's entry to the Australian market in 1999.

"What eBay did was create a platform where people would buy from places on the other side of the world, and pay money for a product that they couldn't see," Mackinnon says. "What Australian Made does as a logo is provide that additional level of trust."

And then there's an added dimension. "People want to support fellow Aussies," he says. "That's much more important to consumers now than it has been in the past."



'People want to support fellow Aussies. That's much more important to consumers now than it has been in the past.'

Tim Mackinnon

For Australian Made CEO Ben Lazzaro, the growth of online as a channel to market doesn't have to come at the expense of bricks and mortar retailers where consumers have traditionally congregated to shop. The key is adding value for makers of Australian goods.

Mackinnon is on the same wave length, pointing to the many retailers who took advantage of waived fees at the height of the pandemic to join eBay, which he describes as a virtual online Westfield.

"It makes sense for retailers to make sure they've got a store in the online Westfield, especially when the offline Westfield could be closed or have reduced traffic."

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Powerhouse puts the people first



An energy retailer built on the foundations of an Australian icon stands with its customers.

When Red Energy launched in Victoria in 2004, with a mission to shake up the electricity and gas industry and make its customers' lives as easy as flicking a switch, chief executive Iain Graham was given a simple piece of advice which underpins all that his company does. "Treat people decently."

This basic human commitment has been a huge comfort amid the nervous uncertainty of the global COVID-19 pandemic both for its customers and its 1200-plus employees.

More than ever, Australians have looked to local businesses which employ local people, and the only energy company certified to use the Australian Made logo has been there for them with open arms.

"In recent years we've lived through crippling drought, we've endured catastrophic bushfires, and now we are grappling with COVID," Graham says. "But we are all in this together and I think that is one of the undeniable benefits of standing shoulder-to-shoulder with our customers."

"We noticed customers were grateful through these events to talk to someone who was experiencing the same things."

In May last year, with the pandemic biting hard, researchers asked customers how COVID had altered their spending habits. A whopping 85 per cent said they were more focused on supporting local businesses and



'It's a real-life story of the little Aussie battler that I'm very proud of.'

Iain Graham

Australian Made products.

"Our customers regularly tell us that buying Australian is important to them," Graham says. "We have made a number of commercial decisions to ensure that our operations remain 100 per cent-Australian because we appreciate the flow-on effects this has on the communities we do business in, on our staff and, ultimately, on our customers."

Owned by Snowy Hydro - an iconic Australian engineering wonder with a

70-year history and a vital role to play as the nation transitions to a renewable energy future - they don't come more Aussie than Red Energy.

Graham happily admits the approach of building a business from the ground up on a platform of striving for customer excellence is an old-fashioned one, and the number of new customers who come to Red Energy on the back of glowing endorsements from friends prove that it works. Being proudly Australian is the icing on the cake.

"For over 10 years, we have partnered with the Australian Made campaign because we believe the Australian Made logo is a symbol that consumers recognise and value, and we are proud to be able to attach it to our brand," Graham says.

Red Energy's customers tell Graham and his staff they appreciate that every phone

call they make will be answered by someone in Australia. When many businesses were forced to stand staff down last year, the company redeployed more than 120 employees into customer service roles.

This commitment to its people - staff and customers alike - underpinned Red Energy's ranking in the top 10 in the Canstar Blue customer satisfaction awards, while also being rated the most successful energy company of the past decade.

By offering electricity and gas in Victoria, NSW, South Australia, Queensland and the ACT, another foundation goal has been reached - Red Energy is now one of the big four of the National Electricity Market.

Red Energy's passionate employees reflect the diversity of multicultural Australia, and are proud to support causes with national reach such as Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA), and enjoy partnerships with great Aussie brands that include Qantas.

"We partner with BCNA because they share the values we hold dear, of decency and courage particularly," Graham says.

"We were also incredibly excited when the opportunity to partner with Qantas Frequent Flyer came up. Here was an opportunity to partner two iconic Australian brands - Qantas, with 100 years of airline history, and Red Energy, owned by Snowy Hydro, one of the civil engineering wonders of the modern world."

Treating its people with decency continues to serve Red Energy well.

"We have survived despite the odds, and we have customers who stay with us and also refer their friends and family," Graham says. "It's a real-life story of the little Aussie battler that I'm very proud of."

Owned by Snowy Hydro, Red Energy powers customers in Victoria, NSW, SA and Queensland.

Australian power to power Australia.

AUSTRALIAN MADE AND OWNED

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131 806

red energy

How Australian companies pivoted

It was as much about survival as it was helping Australians in a time of need, as businesses used



Bike rack maker GripSport has built stands for hand sanitiser, while Engage Athletic owners Jenna and Paul McAlister turned their hand to mask-making.

Jon Weaving was already familiar with a career pivot, having left behind a life of writing novels and short stories to grow a backyard bike rack business into a three-factory operation called GripSport. When COVID-19 hit, his chief concern was for his staff of 11 and how they might possibly get through the inevitable economic fallout.

“Our bike racks are the industry standard for caravans; they’re very popular,” says Weaving, who with wife Marion had entered 2020 eyeing semi-retirement and a move to New Zealand.

“Five minutes before COVID hit, we were riding a fairly high wave,” he says. “Within two weeks, our revenue dropped by over 92 per cent – it was like a tap being turned off.”

The Weavings’ workers have been with them for a long time, and the couple were conscious of the weight of that responsibility. Jon called the team together and threw down the gauntlet, asking them: “Can you think of anything that we can turn all of this expertise, equipment and knowledge to making, that we can get going quickly?”

‘We had it from design to prototype and on the market in under 10 days, manufactured in our factory in Thomastown.’

Jon Weaving

Somebody suggested stands for hand sanitiser bottles, and GripSport was reborn. “It saved us,” says Weaving. “We had it from design to prototype and on the market in under 10 days, manufactured in our factory in Thomastown.”

Weaving is proud to have produced something that is attractive, simple, tough and cheaper than anything else on the market, but prouder still that within a fortnight his staff were all back working full-time making the many thousands of stands that have sold around the country. The first time he entered a supermarket, sanitising

his hands on the way in from a bottle held by a GripSport stand, was a moving experience.

“It was a little bit like walking into a book shop 25 years ago and seeing your novel on the shelves,” he says. “It was very exciting.”

The GripSport story is one of ingenuity in the face of crisis, just one of the many that impressed Australian Made CEO Ben Lazzaro after the iconic green and gold logo teamed up with the Australian Manufacturing Growth Centre’s COVID-19 manufacturer response register.

With so many businesses adapting what they did to provide personal protective equipment and other products to help combat the pandemic, the faith of consumers in Australia Made has been crucial.

“It’s another element of confidence for the buyer,” Lazzaro says. “[The accreditation] says, ‘This product meets the requirements to make a made-in-Australia claim and carry the Australian Made logo. I feel very comfortable that I’m going to get a genuine Australian, high-quality product’.

“That’s so important, particularly when it relates to PPE.”

This was driven home to Jenna McAlister by the customer feedback she and husband Paul received when Engage Athletic, their technical sportswear business that makes apparel for cycling, gymnastics, speed skating and other specialist pursuits, shifted to manufacturing high-quality face masks. They’ve since made more than 25,000, kitting out Victoria’s SES volunteers and donating branded masks to every club operating under Gymnastics Victoria’s umbrella.

“We’re ambitious with what we do in our business – we make everything in Melbourne, and we’re accredited by Ethical Clothing Australia,” McAlister says of the masks that were made using high-quality fabric imported from Italy, which are lightweight, comfortable, very breathable and offer high protection.

“It was important for us to provide a product during hard times that we believed in as well. It was also a great chance for Australian-made products to shine.

“There was such an instant, incredibly high demand, and importers couldn’t deliver fast enough. It was a great chance for local

to fight the pandemic

ingenuity to combat COVID-19.



A time to buy Australian for Australia's day

The Australian Made Campaign is calling on people to celebrate Australia Day by coming together and getting behind Aussie growers and manufacturers amid tough economic times.

Whether for a BBQ in the park or a gathering with friends and family, the campaign is urging Australians to pick up products bearing the famous Australian Made logo.

"Last year was a tough one for so many Aussie businesses," says Australian Made CEO Ben Lazzaro. "With borders closed and restrictions put in place, many manufacturers had to adapt and innovate to meet the challenges of 2020."

"Now, as we look to the year ahead, Australia Day provides the perfect opportunity to celebrate all the great things we make and grow, and a time to reflect on the tremendous impact buying Australian can have."

"When you buy Australian Made products, you create jobs, now and into the future, and support thousands of Australians throughout the supply chain. It has been inspiring to see Australians come together and place a renewed importance on buying local in recent times. The Australian spirit has never been stronger."

The campaign lists locally produced options in nearly every product category and for today's national celebration that could include a pair of thongs, bathers, sunscreen or BBQs.

"By calling on Aussies to buy Australian, not only will we get products made to some of the highest quality and safety standards in the world, we can create local jobs and economic activity that will aid our nation's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, while also strengthening our local manufacturing capabilities," says Lazzaro.

Australian Made's list of Australia Day essentials includes:

- Fashion Fish Designs sand-free towels
- Stakrax fridge bottle racks
- Boss BBQ smokers
- Pluggers thongs
- Kerry Sea Designs beach bags
- 321Water reusable drink bottles and cups
- Ozeano Vision sunglasses
- The House of boobah rashies
- Pride swimwear

For a full list of authentic Australian products, visit australianmade.com

businesses to provide directly for Australians and show the downsides of relying on imports."

Engage Athletic also works with Gowns For Doctors, a Bendigo-based charity to whom they've supplied more than 1000 medical gowns that have been distributed to clinics in regional Victoria.

Trust is key for the McAlisters, and they are confident that's what consumers see in products like theirs that carry the Australia Made logo.

"We've always been strong advocates of locally made apparel," McAlister says. "This logo is just a great way for people to instantly recognise that we're Australian; it's a visual reference. We're really proud to have that brand, and the Ethical Clothing Australia accreditation, too."

The rocky landscape of 2020 is dotted with business success stories like those of Engage Athletic and GripSport, which recalibrated their model to meet a desperate need. Like the Australian arm of US-based medical supply company Stryker, which teamed with local wheel, mattress and castor manufacturers to produce the

"It was important for us to provide a product during hard times that we believed in as well. It was also a great chance for Australian-made products to shine."

Jenna McAlister

Emergency Relief Bed, a collaboration that saw 1000 beds a week arrive in hospitals here and overseas.

And Baxter Healthcare, the largest supplier of intravenous medicines to Australian hospitals, which ramped up operation to 24 hours a day, seven days a week to meet sharply increased demand.

"There's not a day goes by that we don't see an example of real Australian ingenuity,

particularly in response to the COVID crisis," Lazzaro says. "One of the great aspects of working at the Australia Made campaign is you get to see such a wide variety of impressive Australian businesses and manufacturers."

"On any given morning, our compliance team could be assessing a Mack truck that's produced in Queensland by Swedish brand Volvo and American trucks also being manufactured in the state. In the afternoon, they might be looking at some vitamins, then a food product for export after that."

Among the more than 3600 businesses whose products boast the Australian Made logo, there is a sense of community and pride. Jon Weaving feels this whenever he passes a caravan carrying bikes on a GripSport rack, and when he considers the staff who thought on their feet to come up with a product that helped in a time of need.

"To manufacture something that is ethically good, as well - made using all Australian products, using all Australian labour, in an Australian facility - it's just so pleasing to be able to do that."

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Wobble-Tee Sprinkler



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PRESSURE P.S.I	5	10	15	20	25	30	40
APPROX DIAMETER IN METRES	6.2	12	13.8	14.5	14.8	15	16
USAGE L.P.M	4.1	6	7.3	9.1	10	10.7	13

Clever Drop Sprinkler



Waters a SMALL area up to 8 metre diameter.
Average flow rate of 4 LPM.
Purpose shaped base for roof cooling.
Removable filter for dam or river water use.
Able to run multiple sprinklers from the same tap.

SIZE OF DISC USED	1.25MM DISC	1.5MM DISC	1.75MM DISC	2.0MM DISC	WITHOUT DISC
WATERING DIAMETER	1.5M TO 3.0M	2.5M TO 4.0M	3.5M TO 5.0M	4.5M TO 6.0M	EFFECTIVE UP TO 8M
APPROX. LITRES/MIN	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.5	6.5



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Pampering pets in a sustainable fashion

Snooza's environmentally friendly and locally made products are proven leaders of the pack.

For Peter Sitch and Luis Albornoz, being at the helm of Snooza Pet Products represents a coming together of their passions – for animals, for the planet, and for manufacturing locally and ethically for the betterment of all.

Veterans of the “rag trade”, who knew each other through two decades working in retail, they were impressed by Snooza's environmental credentials long before such a focus became “trendy”, as it grew into the dominant brand in pet comfort after entering the market in the late 1980s. Sitch bought the business in 2018, and Albornoz joined him as a director soon after.

“We get asked often, ‘What was it about Snooza that appealed?’” Albornoz says. “We love its commitment to the planet – we saw it as a business that could be the Patagonia of pets, and that rang true for us.

“To see a business that had such clear principles, such an established manufacturing operation, such a wonderful reputation, had huge appeal for us – to be able to do something that made us feel good, and to build a business where you get up in the morning knowing that you're doing something positive.”

Customers who refer to themselves as “pet parents” hold Snooza to high standards, which sits comfortably with committed dog people; Albornoz's love of dogs started with a pet German shepherd when he was a boy in Chile, while Sitch's mother bred Irish setters.



Staff numbers have surged at Snooza, as the pandemic inspires a new appreciation for pets.

That the place our animals occupy in our world has expanded was underscored last year, as shelters were emptied of dogs and cats, breeders' waiting lists grew, and pets became veritable comfort blankets through the isolation.

By the end of 2020, Snooza's staff numbers had tripled in two years, and included many new employees who had lost their jobs due to the pandemic.

“To employ people who had suffered, that's been a really wonderful thing for us to reflect on,” Albornoz says.

The Snooza range includes beds for pets that suffer anxiety, and designs that combat

the aches of ageing and conditions such as arthritis and hip dysplasia.

“People don't buy Snooza beds as a grudge purchase – they trade up to Snooza because they want to buy something special for their pets, who are part of the family,” he adds. “The passion from pet parents comes through.”

The company's philosophy is underpinned by sustainability – bed covers that can be rotated, filling made from recycled plastic bottles and the highest-quality Australian foam, beds that can be repaired if damaged by playful paws or jaws.

For a workplace that years ago boasted a worm farm where staff would recycle paper,



‘Gone are the days where businesses encourage people to buy and throw away. We're proud to be part of that change.’

Luis Albornoz

this is a hand-in-glove fit. Since COVID-19 struck, the level of inquiry about where and how their products are made has proven a stunning endorsement of an ethos of buying fewer yet buying better.

“It's not just parochialism; there are valid reasons for using locally made,” Albornoz says. “Our steel for bed frames is Australian, our foams are Australian and renowned for their quality and safety, our woollen futon is an iconic heritage product, even our packaging on the whole is produced locally.

“Gone are the days where businesses encourage people to buy and throw away. We're proud to be part of that change.”



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Getting out, while staying home

Holidaying in Australia is a boon for local producers and businesses.



With overseas travel ruled out, local manufacturer New Age Caravans is set for a surge in domestic tourism.

New Age Caravans' experience of the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic was typical of businesses the world over – when the enormity of the global crisis dawned, everything simply stopped.

“April was our worst month in a very, very long time,” marketing co-ordinator Joe Lucas reflects. “We were thinking, ‘What can we even do?’”

Yet, almost in the blink of an eye, the reality of how restricted our movement would be for a considerable length of time sparked a welcome trend. With overseas trips off the agenda, it was clear people would be taking up Tourism Australia’s invitation to ‘Holiday Here This Year’ – and many of them would be looking for a quality Australian caravan to make their local sojourn as comfortable and memorable as could be.

“People began to understand that international travel was not going to happen for the foreseeable future,” Lucas says. “Even with a vaccine, it will be a long process to have the systems in place to allow people to travel overseas. The next best option is caravanning.”

New Age Caravans is a striking example of the evolution of a phenomenon that started out decades ago with laid-back, yet adventurous, folk setting out with their mobile homes to explore the great outdoors. But gone is the 1960s look of galvanised steel roof, plaid curtains and beige interiors. In their stead are mobile living spaces that ooze style and class, in a range built to tackle any speed hump that Australia might throw in a traveller’s path.

“What made us stand out when we entered the market was bringing that really modern, almost apartment-style aesthetic



to caravans – the whites, the clean lines, using modern furniture,” Lucas says of New Age Caravans’ shift from design and frames to complete caravans in 2008, which kicked off with its Big Red model.

Styles including the Desert Rose, Manta Ray, Gecko and XU – with space for trail bikes, jet skis and other toys that are a must for the serious outdoor adventurer – have been tailored to the needs of every holidaymaker.

For Australian Made marketing manager Anthony Collier, the company is a great example of a licensee whose product intrinsically supports fellow Australians.

“When we go to more remote parts of Australia, or anywhere a caravan might take us, we find local manufacturers at gift shops, restaurants, places selling local produce,” Collier says. “You think about your journey: you’re pretty much supporting Aussie

manufacturers and growers every step of the way, and that’s very encouraging.”

Collier points to REDARC electronics as another manufacturer proudly sporting the Australian Made logo, which produces the high-tech braking systems and essential electronic equipment that ensure such pursuits can be enjoyed safely. It is an example of the many proudly Australian businesses that sit under the caravan and outdoor adventure umbrella.

New Age Caravans’ beginnings were in framing and design. In 2018, the company was acquired by Walkinshaw Performance, manufacturers and owners of Holden Special Vehicles, which Lucas says provides the perfect foundation for the most important part of a caravan – it’s backbone.

“Coming into our caravans now, we have a heritage of engineering experience going back to the 1970s from an industry that was quintessentially Australian. We’ve got a plethora of people who have come from the Walkinshaw side of the business to New Age Caravans, bringing with them their engineering knowledge.”

Such a union exemplifies the New Age Caravans understanding that working with and supporting local businesses is more important now than ever.

“Businesses that are Australian – everything is made here for Australian conditions, by Australians – that’s so vital in the climate we’re in,” Lucas says.

“The green and gold logo is so iconic, no matter where you see it. As a kid, I remember it, and you just know. It’s a very important signifier to customers that this product is going to be quality. You can’t just slap an Australian Made sticker on anything.”

“The green and gold logo is so iconic, no matter where you see it. As a kid, I remember it, and you just know. It’s a very important signifier to customers that this product is going to be quality.”

Joe Lucas



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Shining a light on local manufacturing

A beacon of the solar power industry, hopes to inspire other home-grown enterprises.

Selectronic's very Australian story begins in 1964, with electronics engineer Brian Scott and his wife Lois building television and radio components in their backyard bungalow in Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs. Their sons, Ken and Rod, would later claim that fibro shack as their bedroom.

Fifty-seven years on, the Scott brothers are at the helm of a company that transitioned to manufacturing inverters in the early 1980s, and can chart its success by the impact of its products – in generating renewable energy for anything from households to whole islands – and the growth and loyalty of Selectronic's customers.

"We're really proud that we've been able to outlast a lot of the competition," chief executive Rod Scott says. "The reason is that we make decisions which are not for the short term; they're decisions to build a loyal customer base for the long term."

"We've proven that many times, not just the fact that the products are lasting, but the customers are lasting too."

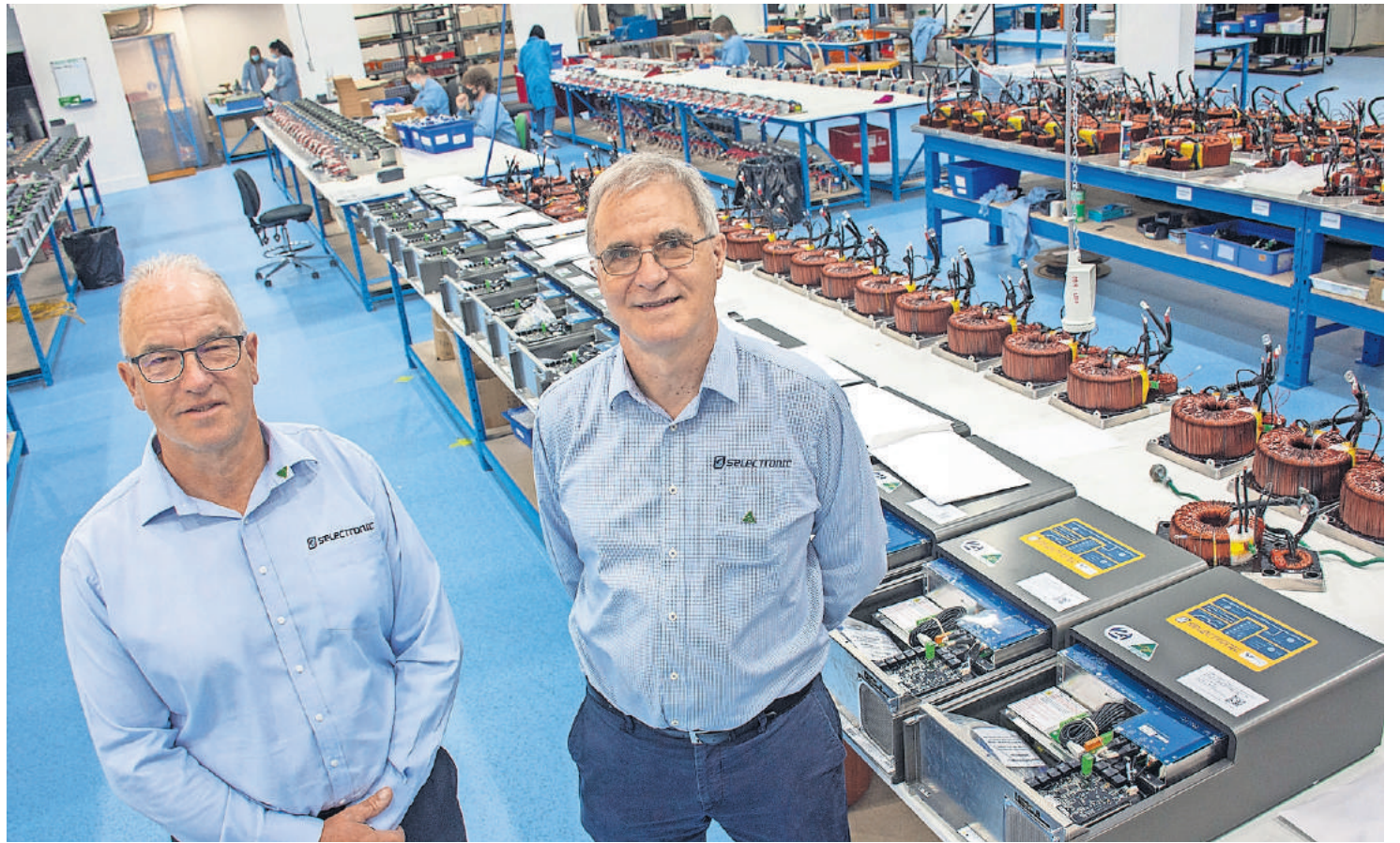
This is driven home when customers phone the Selectronic call centre wondering if their decades-old inverter might be due for replacement, or at least a service. Most often, they're told to simply dust the unit off and let it keep doing its job.

A technology innovator and leader, and one of the first companies in the world to develop a sine wave inverter, Selectronic launched its flagship offering, the SP PRO, in 2008. Now in its third incarnation, the multi-mode inverter can be added to an existing or new solar system, on or off-grid, to manage whether energy goes into the house as needed, to battery storage, or back into the grid.

"It's essentially a very, very smart device that talks to the system and makes the most of the solar that is generated," head of production Ken Scott says. "It can power everything from a small houseboat, or be stacked together to run entire islands, such as Badarra Island off the Great Barrier Reef."

Amid global turmoil, 2020 was Selectronic's most successful year to date as consumer focus zeroed in on supporting not only the Australian economy, but products that bear the Australian Made logo. Selectronic regards this partnership as cause for celebration.

"We're going to wear it as a badge of honour on our products, on the front of the SP PRO, on all of our packaging," Ken Scott says. "We want to tell everybody that we are



Rod and Ken Scott, who head up manufacturer Selectronic: from suburban backyard fibro to leading lights of Australia's solar industry.



Inside Selectronic's extensive manufacturing operation in Melbourne's south-east.



Australian Made, that when you buy a Selectronic product you're investing in Australia, helping Australian industry, helping Australian workers, and helping to grow the Australian economy."

Selectronic's 40-plus staff recently moved to a new, state-of-the-art facility in

"We are Australian Made... when you buy a Selectronic product you're investing in Australia."


Ken Scott

Wantirna South, not far – and yet, a million miles – from its humble beginnings in Brian and Lois Scott's backyard. It will include a centre of excellence open to industry and public alike, reflecting a determination to boost local manufacturing from a critically low 6 per cent of GDP.

"We have to reverse that flow," Rod Scott says. "We're really excited that we can be part of that reversal, that whole recovery, especially after COVID-19."

"We have to look at ways of actually building our economy into the future – jobs for our kids. We're really proud to be a part of that."

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 **SELECTRONIC**



Singapore first up for digital campaign

Fifty companies licensed to use the Australian Made brand are behind a new marketing push.

Among the many things that please Kerry de Pagter about Lemon Myrtle Fragrances being a part of Australian Made's Singapore campaign is the impact that taking their products to the world will have on the people and places where the entrepreneur's journey started out.

When Singaporeans are alerted to the wares of the 53 brands carrying the Australian Made logo that have joined the campaign – perhaps through advertising on YouTube or via other social media channels, or through the prompting of local influencers – they are directed to the landing page of the Australian Made Singapore website. When a purchase is made, it reverberates back through all the people involved in the Lemon Myrtle Fragrances journey.

"My husband is from a small country town, Coonamble [NSW]," Kerry says of partner Peter de Pagter, who, with their children Cassi and Ben, complete the family business. "Our contract manufacturers are mostly based in rural or regional Australian communities. A lot of our retailers are in small country towns.

"This means we're able to support all of those communities with a product that people love. People know it's Australian, and that gives it some real gravitas."

When the Australian Made campaign received a federal government grant to raise



Kerry de Pagter, of Lemon Myrtle Fragrances.

the profile of the famous green and gold kangaroo logo in export markets, Singapore was an obvious first choice – for its geographical proximity, and the fact that it is already a strong importer of Australian products. The campaign is purely digital, with a focus on beauty and skincare, food and beverages, health, homewares and fashion.

This is where the influencers come in, such



'We make sure we keep the messaging the same: you need to look for the logo if you want to buy something that's genuinely Australian.'

Jess Beard

as actress and host Jerilyn Moon, whose blogs about life as a young single mother have gained huge traction among Singaporeans. The campaign also links with lifestyle editorial platform The Smart Local, which pushed out additional video content with a gift-giving message in the lead up to Christmas.

"Everyone's constantly on their phones, now more than ever," says Australian Made

export manager Jess Beard. "Especially Gen Z or millennials – they get their information there; that's where they find trusted sources.

"All the content produced by the influencers is focused on Australian Made products that carry the logo, but in their own style. So, we're not trying to force our messaging on anyone. We want it to be relatable to their audience as well."

The de Pagters' relationship with Singapore began soon after an off-hand comment at a market alerted them that Lemon Myrtle Fragrances was about to be put up for sale, with Kerry declaring, "Right, that's mine!" To now be sending products that she's loved using for decades into a growing overseas market, championing Australian produce along the way, brings sheer joy.

The pandemic has sharpened the Australian Made focus on digital marketing, with the push into Asia set to ramp up in coming years. The UK and United Arab Emirates are two markets that recently received trademark registration, an ongoing process aimed at protecting the integrity of the Australian Made brand.

"We're exploring collaborations with e-Commerce platforms across different markets, enticing digital media to really raise the profile of Australian Made, to make it exciting, something new and different," Beard says.

"We make sure we keep the messaging the same: you need to look for the logo if you want to buy something that's genuinely Australian. Through this grant, we're also undertaking some enforcement activities, so we can be sure the logo is being used only on compliant products.

"If it's not, we can make sure that it is removed. That's a powerful thing as well."

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Local company does the heavy lifting

Built from the ground up, Liftronic has become a world beater in the Australian market.

When founder and managing director Milan Debelak sees the striking results of Liftronic's work - whether the lifts and escalators on a Brisbane train platform, car and truck lifts in Melbourne or glass lifts at Circular Quay and the Harbour Bridge or those at the Cahill Expressway and Wynyard Walks - he feels great pride. That Liftronic carries both the Australian Owned and Australian Made logos on its Unitrone (SC) range of lifts is testament to his family's remarkable journey.

"In the 1970s, a lot of product was manufactured in Australia for lifts and escalators, but that died out through the '80s and '90s and through deregulation of the industry in 2000," Debelak says. "So, to have the Australian Owned and Made logos next to our name and products is something we're very proud of."

The story begins in Egypt where his great uncle and grandfather started a modest lift business, which his father Vladimir took over at a young age. In the early 1960s, the family arrived in Australia with only a few Egyptian pounds, but with the skills, dedication and dreams to make a difference in their newly adopted country.

"As much as we came from overseas, Australia is our home," says Debelak. "It's given us everything we have and, as much as we are running a business, we also want to give back to this great country."

In 1985, Debelak and Kevin Addison started Liftronic - initially focused on maintenance, but soon building a reputation that had customers requesting installation as well.

"We started on our own, working long hours installing and maintaining during the day, admin and sales at night and being



Evidence of Liftronic's custom-made range of lifts, escalators and moving walkways abounds in cities across Australia.

available to attend to lifts 24 hours a day. Thanks to the quality and dedication of our loyal staff and contractors over the past 35 years, which now number in the hundreds, we have built the business into the largest Australian-owned lift company."

A large portion of their work is commercial, including escalators and moving walks in public buildings and within transport infrastructure up and down the eastern seaboard. Commercial, office and residential lifts, goods and service lifts, car and truck lifts, and capabilities to repair and maintain lifts and escalators of any make all feature in the level of quality, finish, reliability and safety people expect in modern vertical transportation solutions.

Today, Liftronic is a leading lift engineering company of choice committed to delivering value through its core business units and manufacturing partners, providing integrated project solutions. Their diverse scope of capabilities and proven experience allows them to deliver design, engineering, installation and ongoing service to a wide range of market sectors.

From high-rise office to high-end home lifts, and everything in between, Debelak says the company can offer the right custom solution to meet clients' needs, whether public infrastructure, offices, residential or private developments for new lifts and escalators, or modernisation and maintenance of OEM and third-party lifts.

"When customers aren't happy with their provider, we can help them," Debelak says.

While they can provide any type of



"We just can't talk it up as an Australian company; we have to provide the highest quality and value for money - and I believe we do."

Milan Debelak

standard lift, the most rewarding projects, he says, are those that provide a level of challenge that Liftronic's competitors are unable or unwilling to find a solution for.

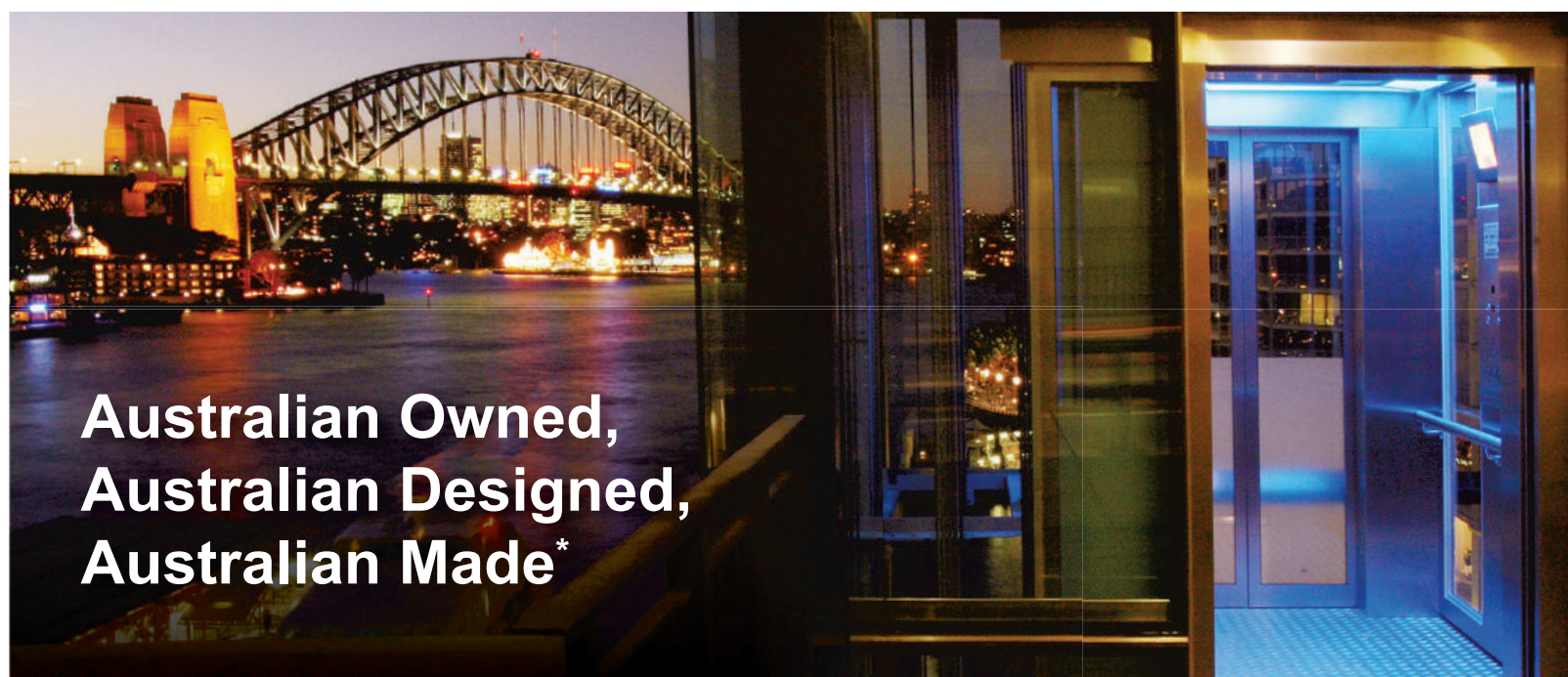
"If a customer wants a custom infrastructure solution or a round high-rise observation lift with curved doors, all glass, gold and marble finishes, we can design, install and maintain it for them."

Crucially, a large in-house engineering department provides an edge over competitors, bringing an ability to develop products specifically for the Australian market. Just as all profits are invested back into Australia, all management decisions are made here, resulting in bespoke solutions for the client.

"That gives us a lot of strength," says Debelak, whose father Vladimir, now 86, is still involved in a business that continues to reflect its familial roots.

The challenges of 2020 drove home the need for an increasingly self-sustainable Australian industry, which is robust enough to fend off competition and challenges from overseas. Debelak's philosophy is rooted in safety - for Liftronic's staff, its clients and the people who use its products - and the quality and integrity of its products and service.

"Many of our clients and even some of our competitors say we've got the best product, the best service. But to be an Australian company competing against the international heavy-hitters in this market, we need to deliver. We just can't talk it up as an Australian company; we have to provide the highest quality and value for money - and I believe we do."



**Australian Owned,
Australian Designed,
Australian Made***



liftronic.com.au

*Unitrone (SC) range of lifts

10 locally made products for back to school

Nearly 3000 companies now proudly display the Australian Made logo on tens of thousands of products, and the gold kangaroo in the green triangle is never more at home than in the schoolbags of young Aussie learners. As children head back to school, the power and authenticity of buying locally is a lesson for all Australians.

Here are 10 school-themed products that proudly carry the stamp of Australian Made.



BOSTIK CLAG PASTE

If you've never heard of Clag you can't have been to school. The white bottle with the red lid housing its own brush is a staple of any pre- or primary-school arts and crafts program, and has been used to create all manner of paper masterpieces for more than 120 years. Its creator, Joseph Angus, hailed from England. Clag, in all its starch-based glory, is proudly Australian. And the makers are also responsible for another "must have" - Blu Tack.



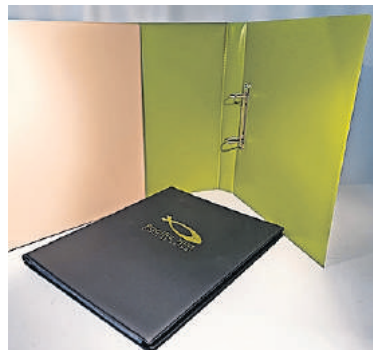
NOTE PAD MANUFACTURERS AUSTRALIA

From students to scribblers to diarists and serious artists, there's no shortage of choice when it comes to notebooks. Since its beginnings in 1993, The Note Group has become a leading player in the educational and office stationery supplies market, building a reputation for quality and customer service befitting a proud, family-owned-and-operated Australian company.



REPLATED LUNCHBOXES

Styled as "the future of takeaway", Replated was born of a conviction to reduce the waste from single-use containers that comes from Australians eating a staggering 4.5 million takeaway meals every day. The stylish, reusable containers are made from recycled plastic bottles and glass fibres, and lay claim to being better for the environment than combustibles after just 15 washes.



RUPERT COLLINS PLASTICS RING BINDERS

Billing itself as "your partner in presentation", Rupert Collins adds flair and panache to a traditionally bland member of the stationery family - the humble ring binder. Screen printed, digitally printed, basically printed to whatever design you wish, Rupert Collins' ring binders can be tailored to suit the needs of any client. Eighty years of continuous manufacturing underpin another avowedly Aussie manufacturer.



QUEENSLAND HOSIERY MILL SCHOOL SOCKS

Queensland Hosiery Mill's beginnings were humble: in Ern and Marj Smith's garage in 1968 using two knitting machines, operated by Ern and Marj themselves. Today, their son is at the helm of this proud family business that sells personalised socks to schools, clubs and businesses, with minimum orders as low as 10 pairs. Their product proves that socks don't have to be boring, and they're even better when they're Australian.



REFLEX PAPER

The advertising slogan tells us that more copying paper is a reflex, but for the people of Victoria's Latrobe Valley - where Reflex copy paper is manufactured at Maryvale Mill - it's also a way of life. Established in 1937, the mill has around 850 full-time employees, and supports more than 2000 jobs while contributing close to \$500 million to the region's economy.



LUMBI PENCIL CASES

The humble pencil case gets a patriotic makeover from Lumbi, with kookaburras and lorikeets, trams and street maps, bathing boxes, Vegemite and even fairy bread taking centre stage on these snazzy school staples. Designed, printed and manufactured in Australia from 100-per cent cotton, every Lumbi pencil case is a school ground conversation starter.



SCHOOL BAG TAGS

The brainchild of a mum of three children under four, My Name Label has gone global since its inception in 1998. Providing labels for school bags, clothes, shoes, luggage, and even to warn of allergies - in fact, for pretty much anything - My Name Label are as personalised in service as the vital tags they produce. The company's philosophy says it all: making life simpler.



THINK SQUARE MATHEMATICS

Andrew Lorimer-Derham had so many ideas whirring around his head they would keep him up half the night, so he took his passion for education and invention and created Think Square, a suite of hands-on mathematics games that cover over 50 per cent of the Australian maths curriculum from years 1-10. Versatile, adaptable and compatible with common school resources, Think Square is a proud Australian Made licensee.



KINDY AND SPORTING EQUIPMENT

Durable Products began life in 1946 manufacturing and supplying steel-framed sports, camping and kindergarten equipment. The company expanded into the trampoline and gymnastics markets, and their principle of high durability continues to drive all they do, and dovetails nicely with the ethos of Australian Made.

International Women's Day Special Report

Inspiring Tomorrow's Female Leaders

Grab your copy in Saturday's *The Age* on March 6th



Haircare leader still making headlines

For decades, one Aussie brand has been the standout in the hair products industry.

In the early 1930s, brothers Anton and Vincent de Lorenzo left school and started working in a Redfern barber's shop. Initially sweeping floors and trimming hair, the pair saw an opportunity in the world of women's hairdressing, going on to open their own salon in 1945 – the first step in what would become a family business spanning 75 years.

The salon was housed in Sydney's prestigious CBD Trust Building, where it became a revolving door of A-listers who were after the latest in cuts, perms and dyes. The de Lorenzo brothers eventually began researching and assembling new formulations to launch their first haircare range, Delva, in 1957.

Pioneers of the salon-only product model, the brand was a dynamic force in the haircare industry.

"We're proud of that," says Chris de Lorenzo, Vincent's son. "The products were made for and on behalf of the hairdressers."

Although a multinational corporation bought out Delva in the late 1970s, it paved the way for a new brand named De Lorenzo involving five family members – the two brothers, Vincent's sons Chris and Vinnie, and Anton's son Anthony – in 1987.

"My brother, cousin and I were going to go into the building game," says Chris de Lorenzo. "I think because we spent our holidays during the Delva days, packing products, it grew on us and got in our veins."

De Lorenzo is proudly dedicated to being Australian-made and owned, and remains committed to supporting the local economy.

Chris says the family spirit is alive and well at the group's Sydney head office in Silverwater, which is home to an expert team of hundreds, many of whom are loyal, long-term employees.

De Lorenzo is also one of only a few Australian-made professional haircare brands whose products are all conceived, researched, developed, tested, manufactured and dispatched under the one roof.

"At times, we wonder if it's all too hard," he laughs. "But we have stuck to it, and it has meant longer lead times for launches and emotional production and marketing meetings, but it has put us in good stead."

For decades, De Lorenzo has set an example of environmental leadership. In the 1980s, when chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in hairspray cans became a major concern, the company was the first to manufacture a non-aerosol hairspray pump. Today, De Lorenzo



The De Lorenzo story spans decades; (left) cousins Anthony and Chris de Lorenzo.

'When we design a product, we say it has to match the best on the market or be better, so the product doesn't come out unless it meets that criteria.'

Chris de Lorenzo

continues to practice responsible manufacturing through several sustainable initiatives; for example, by using packaging that includes recycled components. They've significantly reduced paper usage with a digital scanning system, replaced foam

packing fillers with recyclable air-filled bags, use solar panels throughout the plant, and harvest rainwater for use in the manufacturing process.

Their most sought-after products? The Essential Treatments line targeting hair

health, the Tricho series for scalp concerns, argan oil for dry hair, a detangling spray, and, of course, their extensive colour range.

"We have more than 300 items in the line, so it is dizzying at times," Chris says. "When we design a product, we say it has to match the best on the market or be better, so the product doesn't come out unless it meets that criteria."

De Lorenzo's ethical approach has always centred on using natural, plant-based and certified organic ingredients that are sustainably farmed and wild-harvested wherever possible.

"It was never a gimmick. My father always believed in healthy food and eating. Processed things are not as good as the natural thing, and even though it takes more work, time, money and understanding to achieve that, it's worth it."

The company does not test its products on animals, is vegan-certified, and contains no harmful petrochemicals, instead opting for aromatic botanical oils and infusions of native plants such as wattle seed, Kakadu plum and protein complexes that are better suited to the Australian climate.

"Nature was there long before humans came along, so we are just trying to turn back the clock as best as we can by being as sustainable and as environmentally friendly as possible."

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