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Australia's Best Manufacturing
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AUSTRALIAN MADE, AUSTRALIAN GROWN
IS HELPING CONSUMERS, SUPPORTING
LOCAL PRODUCERS, AND SUSTAINING OUR
NATION'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR BOTH
DOMESTICALLY AND OVERSEAS.

Supporting Local Industry

It's an internationally recognised symbol, an icon that connotes quality and instils trust for shoppers everywhere. The Australian Made logo celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary this year, and the campaign is stronger than ever with a membership of over 1,700 businesses selling over 10,000 products that are proudly Australian Made.

Chief Executive for Australian Made, Australian Grown Ian Harrison explains: "Our licensees get access to a symbol that's recognised by 94 per cent of Australians. More importantly, it's trusted over other country-of-origin symbols, such as maps or flags or pictures of animals, by 85 per cent of Australians. It's a very powerful symbol in the marketplace." Local manufacturing has not been receiving the support it needs of late, either from government or consumers. People fail to recognise the importance of supporting the industry. As Ian highlights, "Manufacturing is an absolutely essential part of

the Australian economy and the Australian community. Apart from the million or so jobs it provides, it is a major source of training opportunities and skill formation for Australians, particularly young Australians. It's a very trade-exposed sector, so it is up against significant import competition and, of course, the competition of the markets. But manufacturing generates an enormous number of jobs, and it is strategically important. A country that doesn't manufacture would be a vulnerable country in terms of world position."

The Australian Made, Australian Grown logo is a well-recognised symbol that provides consumers with peace of mind. Ian says, "What it gives the consumer is products that are made here to our very high standards, be that in food or manufacturing. The specs are set up to actually accommodate Australia's particular environment – a rugged environment with extremes in heat, dryness, or rainfall. I think, from a consumer perspective, the option of buying Australian Made offers genuine benefits and value for money.

"From a community viewpoint, think of what we would look like without a manufacturing sector. We would become dependent

on the services sector, a lot of which, in turn, is reliant on manufacturing. Or we become reliant on mining, which is very strong at the moment and will be for a while yet by all accounts – but it does not generate many jobs. We could, then, look to the tourism sector, which is not enough. Besides, tourism as an export industry has been hit very hard by the high cost of the Australian dollar."

It has not been easy for local manufacturers, particularly owing to the current exchange rate. Ian points out, "There's been a huge impact from the strength of the Australian dollar, and the real issue with that is yet to properly emerge. It surfaces quickly when you go shopping and see the price of imported products going down. But for our exporters, they often have long-terms contracts, or contracts with a fixed exchange rate – companies that have hedged their currency movement. But when those contracts run out and they re-negotiate, the price of their product in the foreign market can be 20 to 40 per cent higher. So the impact of this hasn't been fully felt yet by any stretch, but it's certainly moving through the economy."

As an advocate for supporting local manufacturing and produce, Australian Made, Australian Grown is greatly concerned about how the carbon tax will impact its members. Ian notes, "It will place Australian manufacturers and our producers at a disadvantage compared to their international competitors, whose countries aren't imposing a similar cost increase for manufacturing goods. That's the issue for us. We don't involve ourselves in the debate about whether or not it's an appropriate policy

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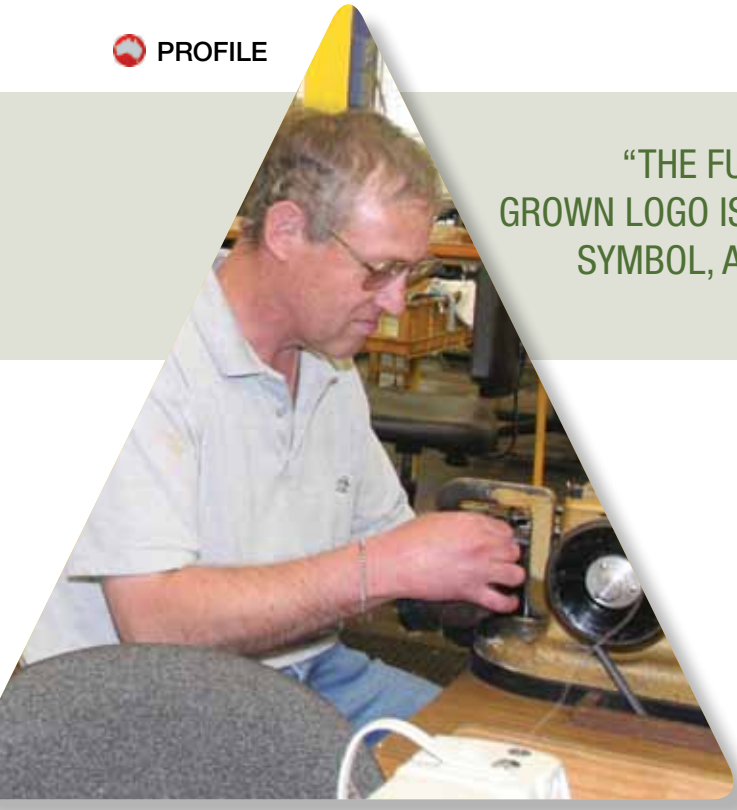
measure; we are rather far more concerned with the timing of the introduction in Australia. It seems to be way out of step, firstly with Australia's contribution to any global problems, and secondly, with the fact that other major countries that generate a significant proportion of the carbon being emitted are not equally placing a similar burden on their industries. We don't believe this government should have moved before some general international agreement, particularly among our trading partners – because it will reduce the competitiveness of Australian business, and that's bad for anyone making products or growing produce in this country.

"Consumers," Ian remarks, "particularly in the area of food, have a natural concern about what's in the products and produce that they purchase. We have a view that the labelling in respect to the 'made in' definitions in the *Australian Consumer Law*, previously the *Trade Practices Act*, could be tightened up quite a bit in the area of the description that's used for 'Made in Australia'. We've just gone through a process with our own rules and have tightened those up, so that we've effectively said that some of the products that once could be described as 'Made in Australia' can no longer meet the standards we use for our logo."

Australian Made, Australian Grown has made it the company's mission to ensure manufacturers are not misleading consumers or misusing the Australian Made logo. Ian elaborates on recent action taken by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) regarding misuse of the Australian Made logo by ugg-boot trader Marksun: "Our logo is a certification trademark; and that is



very important, because that means it has a set of rules approved by the ACCC that govern its use. The Marksun case recently was a Federal Court hearing in Perth, where the company was fined a total of \$434,000 for claiming their product was made in Australia when in fact it wasn't, and for using the Australian Made logo without approval. We were part and parcel of that process; we submitted affidavits, and we actually got onto Marksun early in the process. We're very pleased with that court case because the judge, when handing down the penalty, allocated \$340,000 for false advertising and misleading conduct. And he added ▶



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a \$100,000 penalty for misuse of the Australian Made, Australian Grown logo, because the judge recognised it's such a strong and important logo, and its credibility and integrity needed to be protected.”

“The future of the Australian Made, Australian Grown logo is very strong,” Ian concludes. “It is a powerful marketing symbol, and it

is recognised as such by business. The campaign is funded entirely by the licence fees that companies pay to use that symbol, and the number of companies involved in our campaign over the last six years has doubled. Six years ago was when we brought the office out of Canberra, set it up in Melbourne, and gave the campaign a kick along to get it going again. It's a collective program; the more companies that use it, the more products it sells, the more people will see it – and bear in mind the trust and recognition figures are extremely high already. It is truly Australia's global product symbol – our global country-of-origin symbol for its products and produce. In that context, the future is very bright for the campaign.”

Australian Made, Australian Grown is bringing Australian manufacturers to the forefront of local and international markets, creating a network of trusted brands and products that are recognised and respected across the globe. The future of our national manufacturing sector may seem uncertain, but Australian Made, Australian Grown is reinforcing the importance of supporting local industry. 🇦🇺

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