

Celebrating 25 Years

The Wool Product [REDACTED] Story

It's hard to believe that it's been a quarter of a century since [REDACTED] came into being.

But here we are today, celebrating our 25th anniversary.

Way back in April 1996 I leased a small 200sq metre industrial warehouse at Ingleburn and decked it out with [REDACTED] donated quilting machine and [REDACTED] industrial sewing machine to make woollen quilts from Australian wool. Small operation with big plans.

To get by at the time a great friend of the company, [REDACTED] supplied us with the necessary fabric, on extended terms. We would not have survived without the generosity of business friends like John, and I am very grateful of his support throughout.

The world of wool was high profile back in 1996. Coincidentally, that's when Dolly the sheep hit the headlines. For the younger members of the audience, Dolly was the first mammal to be successfully cloned by science.

No connection there with us. [REDACTED] was not a clone.

In fact, we were unique. Throughout the 80's and 90's much of Australia's manufacturers were moving their operations to China, but [REDACTED] was determined to keep its operations in Australia and to locally manufacture quality goods, with quality production using quality Australian product.

From the very beginning [REDACTED] sourced, quilted, sewed, packed and delivered its products. The Hi-Ace Van we purchased 25 years ago to deliver our products is still in operation now. We only deal with things that last.

To this day, our [REDACTED] brand successfully produces a superior range of products at a competitive price.

Early demand was strong, and we soon outgrew our small warehouse. In 1998 we built a larger factory to house the new machinery and increased production levels. This was a major event. The setup drained all our resources as we worked 7 days a week, 12 hours a day to install and commission the new machinery.

Our initial marketing strategy was to target the Duty-Free stores in Australia whose main customer was the Asian visitor. We knew the Asian market had an appreciation of Australian wool as the best in the world. So, our quilt products made from Australian wool were highly sought after by this target market.

Over time this contributed to our expanding export market and our newly built industrial premises had to be expanded again. There have now been three major extensions to date!

While it seemed everyone around us were importing from Asia, our self-sufficient brand [REDACTED] was instead exporting to Asia. To be in control of the entire supply chain is an incredible commercial advantage. It also allows us to ensure our tracing integrity as we can authenticate the supply from sheep to shelf.

[REDACTED] kept waving the Australian manufacturing flag at every opportunity and as a result of this we landed our first significant contract. At one of the major trade shows we attended, Heimtextil, a visitor to our stand asked if we could fill 15 x 40ft shipping containers with pink woollen quilts. The mental maths told me that was a \$1.2million sale. I said we could, and we did.

Our factory was entirely pink for months. It was good to deliver on the contract and it was just as good to use the left-over fabric to make products to donate to the Magrath Foundation.

In business, there are not too many companies that last the distance, as we have. I feel that we have not only survived, but we have thrived. I know that we have done this by developing strong relationships. Through these relationships we have received incredible support.

- Thanks to [REDACTED] our distributor.
- I've already thanked [REDACTED] for his support right from the beginning, but it means so much to me, I'm wanting to say thank you again.
- Thanks to [REDACTED].
- Thanks to [REDACTED] who runs the warehousing and distribution.
- To [REDACTED] for sourcing and supplying us with the right fabric.
- To [REDACTED] who markets our Woolstar product to major retailers.
- Thanks to our wool processor [REDACTED].
- [REDACTED] - generating better products using their technical expertise. Thanks to them.
- Thank you to our customers, [REDACTED] for their support over the years, and to [REDACTED] for their loyalty.
- Thanks to our Korean customer for their support.
- Our Japanese representative who has successfully introduced our [REDACTED] products to the Japanese market.
- Our Shanghai representative who has opened the on-line channel with great success.
- I'd especially like to thank [REDACTED] for their contribution in making this a huge thank you day.

I value our relationship with you all.

The good news from us is that there is so much more to look forward to in our relationships.

Our product range is ever expanding. Market demands are taking us into baby products, Government-approved wool filters and much more. I cannot see a time when demand on our products will diminish and to know that we have such an opportunity to penetrate new markets with new products is exciting.

We have proven that our farm to shelf supply chain works. We now have an obligation to ensure that it works sustainably.

We are working with a sustainable product. Now we also need to work on reducing our impact on the environment at every part of that supply chain – the sourcing, the manufacturing, the packaging, and the transport. It is the right thing to do, and it is what the market is demanding. There is an expectation that all businesses be ethical members of the world community and ensure that our impact on the planet is a positive one, not just a neutral one.

We have a genuine opportunity to achieve this because we are in control of all parts of that supply chain.

It is a challenge that myself and [REDACTED] are determined to tackle.

Responding to challenges is the essence of a thriving business. Creating opportunities is the core of driving business.

I am as excited about the future as I was on that very first day in that small shed in April 1996.

Please raise your glasses to another 25 years of excitement and success.