



# NEWS



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## AKUBRA MOUNTS EXTENSIVE MARKETING CAMPAIGN – THE TARGET IS CHRISTMAS SALES

**Akubra will again be looking to encourage hat sales with an extensive marketing campaign in the lead up to Christmas, incorporating both television and radio.**

The Company has signed a deal with the Southern Cross Network (including both Channel 10, GO and Imparja) which, combined, covers the regional areas of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

This campaign will incorporate more

than 1,000 individual commercials. The agreement also includes radio exposure via the sponsorship of the “Talking Back the Night” program which is aired throughout regional Australia including Western Australia and Tasmania.

Ray Hadley has also been signed for our usual Christmas Radio Promotion.

Ray is one of Australia’s most successful broadcasters and is a staunch supporter of both the Akubra brand and Australian made products.

Australian Made, Quality and Family Owned will again be the theme of the message delivered to his loyal audience

and will cover most of the Eastern Coast of Australia along with parts of Western Australia. This campaign will include more than 2,500 individual commercials.

“We believe that this campaign provides penetration encompassing more than 80% of Akubra’s domestic markets,” Akubra’s Managing Director, Stephen Keir, said.

“It is designed to both target our current loyal demographic as well as a new generation of potential Akubra customers.

“Our hope is that it will assist our retail network to increase sales in the lead up to Christmas.”

# CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR



“This has been another challenging year for the Company.

Our ongoing upgrade of technology is substantially complete with the introduction of a new finance system from July 1.

We have also had some key personnel retirements during the year and now welcome some new members to the office team.

The pleasing news is that our manufacturing system is now working well with indent orders being delivered on time if not early.

We note that retail trade has been patchy and

we hope that you all enjoy a strong Christmas trade.

The effects of drought are obviously hurting regional Australia and we are all hoping that it begins to rain soon.

It is important that we all remain optimistic, remembering what is important is the health of our family and friends.

I wish you all a merry Christmas and prosperous new year. Please keep safe if you are travelling.”

Stephen Keir,  
*Managing Director*

## VALE MICHAEL DYET

Akubra wishes to express its condolences to the family and friends of the late Michael Dyet.

Michael, who died recently, worked with Akubra for 27 years and was a most valued employee.

## KEITH'S PASSION IS HATS – AKUBRA HATS

### Keith Boucher has done it all.

A printer by trade he has worked on surveys for the Port of Brisbane, spent some years as an investigator and expert in pollution control and now sells hats and jewellery.

For the last 20 years Keith has worked in retail, first with Hats by the Hundred and now with Mekoe Accessories.

Keith manages the city store for Mekoe Accessories/Mekoe Men in the heart of Brisbane at Anzac Square and is also the company's Akubra buyer for all its three stores.

The city store specializes in both men's and women's hats and carries some jewellery although the majority of accessories are stocked at their stores at Westfield Carindale and at Direct Factory Outlets near Brisbane Airport.

“Quite a few customers, especially women, are a little surprised when they walk into the city store to find a man selling hats,” Keith said.

“Even more so when it comes to the jewellery.

“However I've been doing it for a long time and it's second nature to me.”

So how did a man with such a diverse background end up fitting and retailing hats?

“My former wife, Helen McEwin, helped Peter O'Grady when he set up Hats by the Hundreds,” Keith said.

“Helen asked me to give them a hand and I ended up managing the Carindale store.

“When that closed 12 years ago I moved into the city to manage this store for Mekoe.”

Keith has seen a lot of changes in hats and styles and the types of Akubra hats men buy.

“Our city location means a lot of the men who come in are looking for fashion hats,” Keith said.

“We sell a lot of Stylemasters, Hamptons and Bogarts and also a lot of Travellers.

“The Traveller is a great hat because it is more the traditional style of Akubra, bigger than a fashion hat but not as big as the other country styles.

“A lot of people are wearing them.”

Keith says the friendliness of Queenslanders leads to a great deal of cross promotion between rival stores.

“For example, R M Williams carry only a limited range of hats so they often send people over to us,” Keith said.

“The reverse also occurs if we don't stock something we think they might have.

“And that extends to other companies and other products.

“It's all about helping the customer find what they want and this sort of thing works both ways.”



**SURROUNDED BY AKUBRAS:** Keith Boucher with just a portion of the Akubra range at Mekoe Accessories.

# EAGLE-EYED COLIN

**He makes sure every Akubra is perfect**

Colin Mayhew, the man whose eagle eye ensures that every Akubra hat comes without imperfections, has achieved 40 years' service with the company.

And he plans to continue in his role as the company's self-appointed Quality Control Inspector for another five and a half years.

"I decided that if I have been here that long I should have the right to give myself a title," he said with his tongue planted firmly in his cheek.

Colin's role, one he has had for the last 14 years, is to check the hats in the early stages of the process for faults such as holes or marks.

"The hats are still very soft when they get to me and this is the last chance to correct any faults before they go to the next process to be hardened and set," he said.

"A few times I have missed a fault and I am asked what is going on.

"We had a problem a little while ago where

hats started to consistently show a mark and because of my experience I was able to pin point where it was occurring in the early part of the process."

Colin joined Akubra even before the Kempsey factory went into production.

"I was just out of high school and someone told me a hat company was opening so I went over and checked it out and was about the third in line to be interviewed," Colin said.

"The next week I received a telegram to start at 7.15am on Monday."

Colin still has that telegram.

His first job was to help unpack boxes and machines so the factory could be set up and put into production.

He spent many years in what is called the wet section, where the hats are shaped, before moving to his present role.

Colin said that while minor changes had been introduced the fundamentals of making a hat remained the same.

"The same machines are still in place today," he said.

Away from Akubra Colin puts his energies into the Salvation Army, umpiring cricket and singing on stage.



**QUALITY CONTROL: Colin Mayhew with his 40th anniversary plate and the original telegram.**

Colin never married. "I couldn't be bothered."

He has been a cricket umpire for more than 30 years and is a life member of the local umpires association.

Colin boasts a great voice and helps lead the singing at the Salvation Army while he has also starred on stage many times with the Kempsey Singers.

In July next year he heads to London for the 150th anniversary celebrations for the Salvation Army before heading to Wales and Ireland.

"The company doesn't know about it yet," Colin said.

Colin, they do now.

## DIGGERS ECHUCA STORE THE RIGHT MOVE

When Jane and Glenn Mildren learned that John Carter Clothing was closing in Echuca they faced a dilemma.

The couple, trading at Diggers Clothing, could see an opportunity but they already had stores in Bendigo and Deniliquin.

"I kept asking myself, did we want another store," Jane said.

"John carried a little bit of what we stock and I knew the opportunity was there but I kept putting the idea of Echuca on the back burner.

"Eventually I decided that if we didn't do it someone else would then we would regret not doing it.

"We opened our Echuca Diggers store 12 months ago and it has worked brilliantly.

**UTE MUSTER: The Diggers Clothing marque at the famous Deniliquin Ute Muster, one of eight field days they attend each year.**



"Glenn and I spend most of our time at the Bendigo store and we get to Echuca and Deniliquin every couple of weeks.

"We can run three stores like this because we have brilliant girls working for us."

Diggers prides itself on stocking the very best Australian made clothing and that, of course, includes Akubra.

Friendly, personal service is their benchmark and as their web site says: *We know our products intimately so we can look after you in the best possible way.*

*In each of our three shops, in Bendigo, Echuca and Deniliquin the girls in those locations know their customers personally, everyone has a name. If we don't know you, it's not long before we do. It's a bit like coming into your friend's kitchen, comfortable and welcoming.*

The couple, who have two adult children not involved in the business, are obviously workaholics.

Apart from three stores they also travel to eight field days each year.

"We load the van with a range of clothing including a large range of Akubras and set up under a marquee and we are busy all day," Jane said.

Working at that pace requires a rest and every year the couple head off for four weeks in the tiny French village of St-Flour where they own a house.

Jane's long term wish is to live in France for a time to soak up the culture. "But that's a long way down the track," she said.

# THE HAT STORE THE FILM AND MEDIA STARS LOVE

Queensland's Gold Coast is a mecca for stars from television, film and in some cases the media who so often make a beeline for Australia's holiday playground when looking to take a break.

These VIP's, however, still require the essentials for everyday living and when on the Gold Coast a hat is essential.

They might be stars but melanoma knows no boundaries and does not distinguish VIP's from ordinary folk.

Hats though are such a personal thing and need a proper fitting.

But it's such a bother, often times impossible, for these stars to have a fitting and find the right Akubra without being mobbed by fans and being asked for a selfie, an autograph or gasp, horror, a chat from inquisitive shoppers.

An enterprising Gold Coast couple have found the solution and in the process hosted a veritable smorgasbord of stars that would have gossip magazine editors dizzy with delight.

Andrew and Cheryl Lygo bought Hats by the Hundred almost five years ago from Peter O'Grady who we featured in the Spring magazine.

They have taken huge strides in developing the Southport based business, which we will get to shortly. But first the VIP's.

"We have such an influx of these stars to the Gold Coast that we introduced VIP fittings," Andrew said.

"Either we close the store or do the fittings before or after hours to preserve their privacy.

"Setting up these fittings is always done by 'their people.'

"It is an idea that has proved very popular and in the first two weeks of November we had Margo Robbie (Wolf Of Wall Street, ex Neighbours), Natalie Gruzlewski (Getaway) and Hugh Jackman in the shop.

"All left with Akubras that fitted perfectly."

In the time the couple has owned Hats by the Hundred they have moved twice, from a warehouse shop of 220 square metres in a shopping complex at Southport then into larger shop, of 380 square metres, in the same complex.

"We are dedicated to hats and committed to Australian products with Akubra at the head of the range," Andrew said.



**STAND OUT:** The store the stars make a beeline for.

"To maintain that theme our shop front has been designed with a real industrial, Australian look.

"The secret to our success, if there is a secret, is enthusiasm.

"Our staff has grown to six (I am the only male), we are committed to what we do and we love what we do.

"We are a family business and offer a very personal experience while our shop is very convenient.

"Customers can park at the front door and there is room inside for people using motorised scooters or wheel chairs.

"Every customer is important to us."

Even the couple's two school age sons, Cooper and Hunter, are pressed into service packing and cleaning when they have spare time.

Andrew spent 20 years working in sweat shops in Hong Kong and gained an incredible amount of knowledge.

Armed with that he and Cheryl have developed a hat repair and maintenance station which is a real hit with tourists.

"Tourists come here looking to buy Australian hats yet cannot quite believe they are not imported," Andrew said.

"We are able to explain and demonstrate the basics of making hats and they are equally amazed that the Akubras are made at Kempsey, only five hours down the highway.

"They cannot believe there are 12 different sizes in each range."

Apart from the on-site retail, the company's on line shopping ordering is growing quickly with the staff priding themselves on being able to find the right fit.

"Less than five percent of the hats ordered on line are returned to be exchanged for a different size," Andrew said.

## CHRISTMAS SHUTDOWN

**The Factory will conduct its annual shut down for maintenance.**

Production will cease on Tuesday, December 23, 2014 at 4.30 pm.

The cut off time for stock orders will be Monday December 22 at 4.30 pm.

We will endeavour to send orders

received after this time but unfortunately will not be able to guarantee despatch due to the likely volume of orders that will be received.

The office and stock room will also close on Tuesday, December 23 at 4.30 pm and will open on Monday, January 5, 2015

FOR SMALL ORDERS ONLY.

**The factory will return to production on Monday, January 19, 2015.**

