

AKUBRA



AKUBRA

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DIGGERS SALUTE AKUBRA



New long term slouch hat contract signed

More than half the iconic slouch hats worn by soldiers in the Australian Army will be made at Akubra's Kempsey factory for at least the next five years and hopefully for some years beyond that.

The new contract more than doubles the previous production and could lead to more jobs for Kempsey and the Macleay Valley.

In October Akubra signed a contract with the Australian Government to provide 60 percent of the slouch hats for the next five years with four single year options after that.

The contract comes after the Minister for Defence Materiel, Jason Clare and the Defence Clothing System Program Director, Colonel Haydn Kohl, inspected the Akubra factory towards the end of last year.

Minister Clare was particularly impressed with the skills of the workers and the manufacturing systems that Akubra has in place.

His visit had followed earlier discussions between Minister Clare and the CEO of the NSW Business Chamber, Stephen Cartwright.

Part of the chamber's role is to encourage manufacturing in NSW and it was keen for the slouch hat to be con-



tinued to be made by Akubra.

"Until we signed this contract Akubra was making between 3000 and 5000 slouch hats annually," Akubra's company secretary, Roy Wilkinson, said.

"This contract increases that to 12,000 each year and while we have more than enough capacity in the factory to meet that demand we may have to employ

some extra staff.

"The contract is not only a win for Akubra but it is a win for our local economy.

"Just as importantly ninety eight percent of the materials we use are from Australia and the flow on effects for the Australian economy are obvious.

"The slouch hat is a very important part of our company history and our link with the Australian Army

and Australia's history."

The company has been making the slouch hat since before the First World War and the distinctive slouch hat became a symbol of the Australian Digger in theatres of war throughout the world.

However Akubra fell off the contract loop in the 1990's until 15 years ago when it again started production on a limited basis.

AKUBRA – ON TOP DOWN UNDER

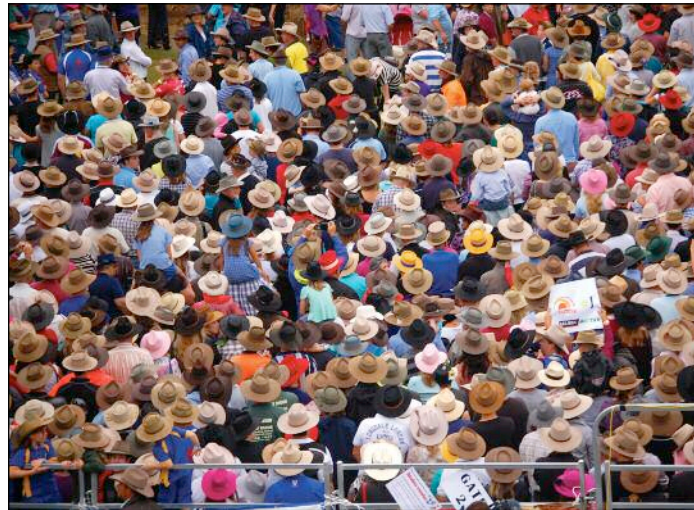
WE ARE WORLD BEATERS AND THAT'S OFFICIAL

Australia's iconic Akubra and its home town of Kempsey are world beaters – and it's in the Guinness Book of Records.

Early last month 1912 people gathered in a park on the banks of the Macleay River at Kempsey to try and set the world record for the most people assembled in the one place wearing the world famous Akubra.

Set it they did, easily exceeding the 1000 necessary to set the record.

It was the start of a big day for Kempsey with the Kempsey Cup, sponsored by Akubra, run that afternoon and attracting a huge crowd.



IT'S A RECORD: Part of the Akubra wearing crowd in Kempsey. Picture courtesy of Kempsey's Macleay Argus.

Kempsey's Macleay Argus and Kempsey Shire Council joined forces to organise the successful bid on the record.

Channel 7's Sunrise pro-

gram dispatched weatherman Grant Denyer to present live links from Riverside Park.

There were the familiar brown stockmen's Akubras,

military ones, purple ones, red ones, sombrero-brimmed ones and even a dapper black top hat.

Akubra's Managing Director, Steve Keir, wore a smile as broad as the brim of his hat.

"It's a proud day for the family and for the town," he said.

"I'm so grateful to the people who've come out so early to get behind this world record.

"There's a fair few styles I don't even remember us making."

Grant Denyer was happy with his visit. "Thank God the rain came," he said.

"There's nothing a weatherman likes better than the rain after a dry spell."



HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO EVERYONE



2012 has been a mixed year both in business and personally. My father passed away in May after a long illness. He will be sorely missed by all of my family and of course now I don't have the opportunity to talk to him about all aspects of the Akubra business. He was very much my mentor.

Increasingly business is becoming more

complex. We are always accessible with smart technology, we have the growth of internet sales putting direct pressure on retail and manufacturing overall is becoming more difficult. We just seem to be getting busier and busier.

Whilst our trade has been steady we have recognised that some retailers are doing it tough. The two speed economy is a reality and

I believe that consumers are tightening their belts and building savings, which is not good for both retailers and manufacturers. However it is not all doom and gloom.

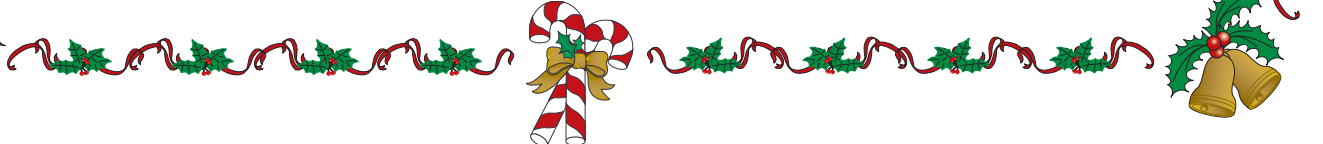
We were a successful tenderer with the Department of Defence and have secured a larger proportion of the Slouch hat contract. This is great news for our business, our

employees and our suppliers.

Finally Government is starting to recognise the importance of supporting Australian Manufacturing.

I hope you all enjoy a profitable Christmas period and hope that economic conditions improve in 2013. Please be safe during your travels.

Stephen Keir IV



HOLIDAY CLOSING TIMES

Production will cease on Thursday, December 20, at 4.30pm.

The cut off period for stock orders will be Thursday, December 20, at 10.30 am. The office and stock room will close on Friday, December 21 and will re-open on Wednesday, January 2, 2013

FOR SMALL ORDERS ONLY.

The factory will return to production on Tuesday, January 15, 2013.

EVERY GIRL WANTS A PINK AKUBRA

Every girl loves pink, whether she spends her life in the hurly burly of the rodeo circuit or getting her head shaved. In both these cases they are pink Akubras.

Remember our ute girl, Amanda Polonski?

Unfortunately Amanda is battling breast cancer and she had to put that beast of a ute in the shed while she undergoes chemotherapy. While her best friend, Kylie Bradley, could not fix Amanda she could do something to help find a cure.

The chemotherapy has

robbed Amanda of her hair so Kylie decided to raise funds by having her head shaved, to match her friend, prior to the recent B and S Ball at Aria Park in southern New South Wales. Amanda was there to support Kylie, wearing a pink wig while both girls were sporting their pink Akubras. The hair came off, the pink Akubras went back on and so far Kylie has raised more than \$12,000.

You can go to www.everydayhero.com.au/kylie_bradley to boost that total further. Meanwhile Bobbie-Jo Geisler, 26, has

been in Canada to represent the Australian Professional Rodeo Association (APRA) before going to Las Vegas in the same role for the American rodeo finals. One of the talking points on the tour has been her pink Akubra. "Everyone loves the hat and wants to know more about Akubra," Bobbie-Jo said. Bobbie-Jo, from The Rock, a small town near Wagga Wagga in southern NSW, has been involved with horses nearly all her life. "As Miss Rodeo Australia I assist the APRA by getting out and

about with public appearances to get the word out that the rodeo is in town," Bobbie-Jo said. "I also spend time with sponsors and VIPs, mingle with the crowd and carry the Australian flag during the grand entry and while the national anthem is played." While in Canada Bobbie-Jo did appearances with Miss Rodeo Canada 2012 Arleta Bowhay and their current rodeo queen Gillian Shields. "They both just fell in love with the pink Akubra," she said.



IN THE PINK: (Top) Kylie Bradley (left) just before she lost her hair and Amanda Polonski who wore a pink wig to the shave while (right) Bobbie-Jo Geisler wearing her pink Akubra with Miss Rodeo Canada 2012 Arleta Bowhay.

AN AKUBRA FIT FOR A PRINCE



AN AUSSIE CROWN: Prince Charles in his Akubra greeting part of the crowd in Longreach. Picture courtesy of The Longreach Leader.

Prince Charles and his wife Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall, started the Queensland leg of their recent Australian tour in Longreach and the first thing presented to the

Prince when he stepped off the plane was an Akubra.

The hat immediately went on his head and stayed there throughout the couple's stay in the famous outback town. It was

supposed to be a two hour visit but so many people wanted to meet the royal couple, shake their hands and offer up the famous outback welcome that it was extended by an hour according to the local paper, the

Longreach Leader.

One of the first ports of call for Charles and Camilla was the famous Stockman's Hall of Fame and hundreds of people lined the route from there to the nearby Cattleman's Bar and Grill for a royal barbecue.

Prince Charles recounted some of his time in Australia when a student here.

"I can't remember much of what I learned but I remember long treks through the searing heat battling bull ants, leeches and snakes and the kangaroos that over took us on long distance runs," the Prince said.

"It's 15,500 kilometres from London to the Stockman's Hall of Fame and jet lag means I'm a few sausages short of a barbecue." The State Governor of Queensland, Penelope Wensley said the royal couple had made a good choice to start their tour in Longreach. "It exemplifies the spirit that defines Queensland," she said.

LITTLE BOY WITH A BIG HEART

The annual Outback Trek for the Royal Flying Doctor Service has raised more than \$20 million in its 23 year history with this year's trek expected to raise more than \$1.5 million.

That's the big picture.

But it was a tiny chapter in this year's trek that exemplifies the spirit of the trekkers and underlines the importance that residents of the outback, even young ones, place in the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

The trekkers had covered more than 3500kms along bush roads from Yarrowonga to Bourke then up through central Queensland for their penultimate night camping on the outskirts of Twin Hills, a remote spot several hundred kilometres inland from Mackay.

Locals joined the 340 trekkers for a campdraft and during the celebrations it was discovered that one of the young



PLEASED AS PUNCH: Ben Wilkinson shows off his new Akubra with his dog Eli.

horse riders, 10 year old Ben Wilkinson, had lost his treasured Akubra.

The trekkers did a quick whip around and raised enough money to buy Ben a new hat.

The shy young boy and his mother Tegan approached the microphone.

"Ben feels bad that he lost his hat and he's really grateful that you've given him the money to

buy a new one but he wants to donate that money to the Flying Doctor," Tegan said.

"Ben reckons the work they do matters more than his hat." The trekkers were so impressed that they contacted Akubra, a sponsor for the CX Team, and had a new hat sent to Ben.

When the new Akubra arrived Ben wrote to thank the trekkers and his letter and his story were published in the South Eastern Flyer Newsletter, an official publication for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

"I absolutely love my new hat," Ben wrote. "It will be my good hat

"I gave the money back because I thought it was wrong to take it.

"Seeing as the car rally is a fund raiser I thought the Flying Doctor needed it more than I did."

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