

## OH MY HAT!!! AKUBRA IS DIVERSIFYING

**Akubra, for the first time in 130 years, is diversifying and venturing away from the sole production of hats and into the world of quality Akubra branded luxury leather goods.**

The company has signed a licensing agreement with another Australian owned family business, DKM Blue, to give that company global rights to produce a range of Akubra branded luxury leather products including overnight bags, hand bags, travel accessories, wallets and purses.

All these products will be handsomely presented in gift boxes or dust bags and will be available through selected retailers, online and on QANTAS international flights as a duty free purchase.

The complete range is also available at [www.akubrastore.com.au](http://www.akubrastore.com.au)

The deal with DKM Blue's two owners, brothers Dorry and Danny Kordahi, has been three years in the making and came after an approach from them to Akubra.

It is also one that Managing Director, Stephen Keir and his board agonised

over for some time.

"There was a lot of emotion attached to making a decision to break with tradition and move away from solely making hats," Stephen Keir said.

"A lot of market research was undertaken before we agreed it was the right way to move the company forward.



*HISTORIC AGREEMENT: Akubra's Managing Director, Stephen Keir, signs the historic agreement with Dorry Kordahi (left) and Danny Kordahi.*

"All the products will be designed in Australia using Australian leather.

"Let me assure everyone that Akubra hats will always be manufactured in Australia, in Kempsey and this deal will underpin that commitment.

"However there are inherent risks with remaining a one product company and we had to address that risk.

"Not everyone wears a hat and over the years many people had asked us why we did not produce other leather goods.

"We had never really taken those suggestions too seriously but when DKM Blue approached us we realised this was an opportunity to expand our market base.

"Now we can provide our customers and those who do not wear hats with a range of quality products carrying the Akubra name.

"This represents a significant step forward in our history.

"The nature of global business and manufacturing in Australia is evolving at a rapid pace and it seems now that there are more risks than ever before.

"Diversifying will enable us to protect the various stakeholders that support our business and provide a platform for growth.

"What attracted us to DKM Blue was their expertise in design, quality product development and the ability to offer us a complete supply chain management solution.

"They share our commitment not only to quality but also ethical business principles.

"Just like us, they expect the same standards from all stakeholders.

"This has provided a level of comfort both to our board of directors as well as all of the family owners of Akubra.

"This will allow us to continue to make Akubra hats in Kempsey for generations to come.

"Akubra is very good at making hats and we have forged a reputation as one of the best in the world.

"However, we are not set up to make other leather goods and an enormous amount of capital would be required to do so.

"This agreement with DKM Blue was the obvious answer."

# OUR VERY OWN HATS! THANK YOU AKUBRA

**This happy group of professional conference organisers could not wipe the smiles off their faces after each was fitted with an Akubra Cattleman, in sand, at a recent event in Alice Springs.**

The organisers, from Australia and New Zealand, were attending the Alice Springs Stampede familar which is a joint initiative between the Alice Springs Convention Centre and the Northern Territory Convention Bureau (NTCB).

It was used to showcase the best of Alice Springs as a convention venue and had an immediate impact with



*OUR OWN HATS: The joy is obvious after all 18 received their Akubra Cattleman.*

one convention already booked.

Dugal McIntyre headed north to set up the Akubra fitting station with each delegate measured and pre-

sented with their Akubra as a joint PR exercise.

Kylie Mansfield, the Sales and Marketing Manager for the Alice Springs Convention Centre, said the

18 conference organisers were overjoyed with their Akubras.

“They were like over excited kids in a lolly shop,” Kylie said.

“Once they had the hats on their heads they rarely took them off and wore them at all our outdoor activities.

“Akubra is an Australian icon and something very familiar in this part of the world.”

Those activities included a guided walk around Alice Springs Desert Park, a visit to Simpson’s Gap in the West MacDonnell Ranges and a camel ride with Pyndan Camel Tracks.

## AKUBRA MOUNTS NATIONAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

**Akubra is in the midst of a national television and radio advertising campaign in the lead up to Christmas.**

**The company’s television campaign with the Southern Cross Network started on November 24 and continues until December 21 with Southern Cross including in that deal the 40 stations in its truck radio network.**

The radio campaign is with the Ray Hadley Morning Show, which is networked into four states and will be used to promote the

new range of Akubra branded leather goods that have just come on the market (see front page story).

This combined campaign will reach the bulk of Australia’s major markets with the television component taking the message from Tasmania north to Melville Island and all points in between.

It also uses the Alice Springs based Imparja network, designed specifically

for country people living and working away from the coast.

The Ray Hadley Morning Show, which emanates from the Sydney based 2GB, covers that city and most of New South Wales through 10 regional stations, most of Queensland through another 11 regional stations and country Victoria and South Australia.

“The lead up to Christmas is always the

busiest time for retailers and we have mounted this campaign to help get the message across that an Akubra product would make the ideal gift,” Managing Director, Stephen Keir, said.

“It will also make people aware that our range has been expanded to include Akubra branded overnight bags, handbags, travel accessories, wallets and purses.”



## We are taking a break



**As usual, the Akubra factory is closing over the Christmas-New Year period to give our hard working staff a well-deserved break and to allow for the factory to undergo its annual maintenance.**

The factory closes on Friday, December 20 and re-opens on Tuesday, January 14.

Despatch services will cease on December 20 and orders must be received by

Thursday, December 19 to allow for despatch the next day.

Limited despatch for small orders will be available from January 6 while normal deliveries will

resume on January 13.

The office will be open for enquiries up to and including Monday, December 23 and will return on Thursday, January 2.

# AKUBRA WINS NATIONAL AWARD



**WINNERS:** The chairman of the Family Business Australia Andy Kennard presents the award to Nikki McLeod and Stacey McIntyre.

**Akubra's contribution to the economic and social fabric of Australia has been recognised with the company winning the blue riband award at the Family Business Australia conference in Tasmania.**

The Distinguished Family Business Of The Year award for 2013 was presented to Akubra for its achievement of successfully blending family and business interests.

The CEO of Family Business Australia, Philippa Taylor, said Akubra was an outstanding company and its practices were something that all family businesses could learn from.

"Family businesses account for 70 percent of all Australian businesses and employ 50 percent of the population each year," she said.

"There are a myriad of family business stories to celebrate and Akubra is joining an impressive list of national award winners as we continue to recognise their contribution to Australia's future.

"The Akubra name is synonymous with the landscape of outback Australia and their unique hats form an important part of the

Australian national uniform.

"The Keir's family business, now in its fourth generation, has survived recessions, depressions and World Wars.

"Through this the family has maintained their passion for their product and employees."

Stephen Keir, Nikki McLeod and Stacey McIntyre issued a joint statement to staff, employees, customers and supporters after the award was announced.

"This is a huge honour for our families and one that we are very pleased to share with each and every one as our broader family," they said.

"Family Business Australia is the peak body committed to contributing to

Australia's future through a dynamic and sustainable family business community.

"The strength and success of the family business sector is vital to the future of Australia's economy, community and culture.

"We would like to take this opportunity to thank you so much for your loyalty, service and support to our great company."

"We would not be receiving an award like this without the great team we have working with us every day at Akubra.

"We would also like to thank our retail customers who support and promote our hats, our suppliers and our many advisors who have been with us along the journey."

## HOW TO SURVIVE IN RETAIL IN THE OUTBACK

**Any small business, particularly when in a remote town in the Northern Territory, faces more than the usual challenges of surviving, let alone growing.**

There was only one obvious answer for the Top Saddlery and Bush Boutique in Katherine. Develop a website and sell online.

The move has been so successful and the website so professional that its developer, Julie Newton, was nominated for the 2013 Telstra Northern Territory Business Women's Award.

Julie, who is also a member of the Northern Territory Government's Business Advisory Council, finished second to Darwin optometrist, Helen

Summers, who went on to win the National award in that category.

Julie and her husband Geoff opened their business in 1991, primarily making and repairing saddles and horse gear.

Since then it has expanded to not only retain the workshop but also develop a retail operation that has a close relationship, not only with the pastoral industry, but also with remote aboriginal communities.

However the remoteness of their business posed restrictions in expansion and that is when Julie decided they had better join the digital age.

"It was the only way we could survive in retail, let alone grow," Julie said.

"The response has been

nothing short of amazing.

"It has been a steep learning curve and we made plenty of mistakes but we are really proud of our web site and it has been a fantastic learning curve.

"We make sure we keep the site updated and fresh to keep our regular customers checking the site and hopefully attract new ones.

"We also regularly survey our customers and listen to their feedback."

While selling online is now so popular how do they sell Akubra hats that fit?

"There is a little trick to this," Julie said.

"We ask the customer to get someone to measure their head then we add just a little more and so far only one hat has been returned to us.



**SUCCESSFUL:** Julie Newton and part of the Akubra display at their Katherine (Northern Territory) store.

"Measuring boots and shoes and getting that right is so much harder.

"Akubra hats are so popular out here but nearly every hat we sell is either a Rough Rider or a Bronco.

"I must say, that as a supplier Akubra is very professional and up there with the very best."

# FINALLY IT'S OFFICIAL. WE ARE WORLD BEATERS

In last year's December edition of Akubra News we boasted that our home town of Kempsey (NSW) was officially in the Guinness Book of Records for the most people gathered in the one place at the one time wearing Akubra hats.

We were a tiny bit premature in making the boast. Twelve months premature, actually.

In November last year 1912 people gathered at Riverside Park, on the banks of the Macleay River, to try and set the world record.

Unofficially, we were told the record was ours.

Last month, after a nervous year long wait by the organisers, the London Office of Guinness World Records made it official.



*A SEA OF HATS: Part of the crowd that helped Akubra and Kempsey to a world record.*

The early morning event coincided with the Kempsey Cup, which was sponsored by Akubra and was broadcast live across Australia by the popular Sunrise breakfast television program.

The event was coordinated by Kempsey Shire

Council's Economic Sustainability Unit with support from the Macleay Argus newspaper and many local business and community organisations.

"The aim of the event was to make history for the Macleay and show we are proud to be associated with

such an iconic Australian legend as the Akubra hat," unit manager, Susannah Smith, said.

"Guinness guidelines for creating an official world record are extremely rigorous, with evidence required for all aspects of the event and the official count.

"As far as we were concerned, the event was a huge success because we far exceeded our target of 1000 people, but once the event was over we still had the huge task of bundling together all our evidence and shipping it to London.

"We have been a little nervous that it's taken Guinness this long to declare us official world record breakers, but they've come through with the official news now, so we're really relieved and delighted."

## AKUBRA. THE PERFECT ACCESSORY WITH A BIKINI



*A NEW FASHION TREND: You have to admit, the Akubra adds something to the bikini..*

**Never, as our picture shows, has there been such a stunning way to show off an Akubra and perhaps now it will become a fashion statement on the beach, teamed with the bikini.**

If it does it will be because of a 24 year old lawyer from Burleigh Heads in Queensland who decided to follow her dream.

Twelve months ago Becky Jack turned her back on a career in law to create her own company, Peony and design swimwear with an emphasis on uncomplicated, natural styles.

She has been so successful and her swimwear

has been accepted so readily around the world that Becky was recently invited to show her range at the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Festival in Brisbane.

She also wanted to make a statement to support Australian business so decided to team Akubra hats with her swimwear.

"I am passionate about Australian manufacturing and proud that my swimwear is designed and made on the Gold Coast and selling internationally," Becky said.

"I am proud that Peony is 100 percent Australian and something that sets me apart from other swimwear brands.

"All garments are hand made in limited quantities, rather than mass produced overseas, so my customers know they are getting something truly special.

"I chose to include Akubra hats in my show for two reasons.

"Akubra is a wholly owned Australian icon which emphasised the Australian roots of my company and aesthetically they brought a bit of toughness to a very feminine and floral collection.

"The response we got was amazing and I am so happy how the show turned out."

**AKUBRA – ON TOP DOWN UNDER**