



NEWS



Akubra PO Box 287 Kempsey NSW 2440 • Phone 02 6562 6177 • Fax 02 6562 8726 • akubra.com.au • WINTER 2021

WINTER ADDRESS FROM MANAGING DIRECTOR STEPHEN KEIR

Since our last newsletter the production landscape continues to be challenging to navigate, despite our best efforts. Whilst the COVID pandemic is largely under control in Australia, it is clear that the rest of the world continues to struggle to control the virus. During the height of the pandemic in Australia we were well stocked with raw materials but we now face significant supply chain delays.

Even with strong domestic demand initially we were well placed with materials, with plenty of replenishment stock on order, but international (and domestic) suppliers are facing their own struggles and consequently deliveries are now significantly delayed. Whilst we often relied on sea shipments, on occasions we have been forced to obtain deliveries by air at exorbitant prices. This has delayed the manufacture of some popular styles whilst we await relevant materials.

The Suez Canal crisis had a dramatic impact on deliveries, and whilst our plant was not impacted by the recent floods, our staff were and we consequently lost a week of production. Whilst we remain in constant contact with our supply chain, we are finding that they are also simply not in a position to define lead times. This has forced us to invest in greater quantities with our suppliers to minimise the impact of shortages in the future. I will say that this is by no means an easy task. I acknowledge that we are behind in production and again ask for your patience during this unprecedented time in our history.

Further to the general constraints around raw materials is the issue of labour resources. During the pandemic we made the decision to maintain our workforce at levels current at the time. It made no sense to continue to recruit as we had been prior to the pandemic given customers were cancelling orders and returning stock. When circumstances changed, we frantically pushed back into the job market, targeting both recruitment agencies as well as all the local schools. We would happily add another ten employees to our workforce tomorrow. However, this has simply not eventuated. We cannot find staff and this has had a direct impact on our ability to



Managing Director Stephen Keir

increase production. We thought that perhaps this problem was unique to us, but we are now discovering that many employers are facing the same difficulties. With unemployment now reaching very low levels and no foreign workers entering the country, unfortunately production capacity will be constrained for some time to come.

On a more positive note, Akubra has been recognised as part of this year's Great Aussie Coin Hunt at Australia Post. My family are extremely proud to be recognised, and you may have seen me interviewed on Sunrise as part of this launch. This success would not have been possible without the support of our extensive retail network of customers that support the Akubra brand. It is nice to celebrate some good news when most of what we see and hear is rather depressing.

AKUBRA JOINS THE GREAT AUSSIE COIN HUNT 2

Akubra is proud to be a part of this year's Great Aussie Coin Hunt 2 at Australia Post.

It is the first time in our company's history that Akubra has appeared on Australian Legal Tender!

Australia Post has teamed up with the Royal Australian Mint to celebrate Aussie icons by releasing 26 new collectable \$1 coins in the Great Aussie Coin Hunt 2 Challenge.

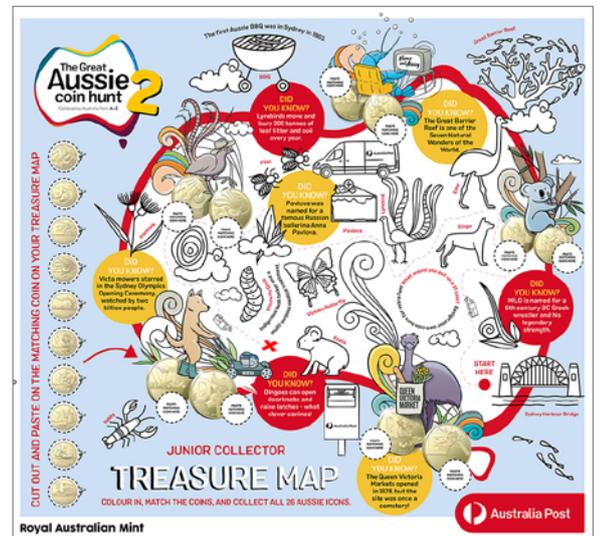
Coin enthusiasts can collect them all and display them in a special collector's folder, or you can spell out a friend's name and give it as a gift in a special floating frame!

The NEW Akubra \$1 Coin is now available in-store or online at Australia Post.

Find out more at auspost.com.au/great-aussie-coin-hunt

A is for Akubra.

For over a century, Akubra hats have adorned and protected generations of Aussies. Akubra has become a vital part of Australia's identity, worn by soldiers, Olympians, politicians, famous personalities and everyday people.



Collect the A to Z of new \$1 coins through Australia Post

BUMPER YEAR FOR ROYAL EASTER SHOW

The Sydney Royal Easter Show successfully welcomed 800,000 people to the event over the 12-days of the Show from 1 to 12 April.

It was a bumper year for Akubra at the Show too.

RAS General Manager Agriculture and the Show, Murray Wilton, said following an incredibly tough year for all Australians, the Show has been an incredible success.

"The Show has provided an opportunity for our farmers and Sydneysiders to come together safely and celebrate everything we know and love about rural Australia: farmers, food and family fun," said Mr Wilton.

Akubra was once again proud to support The Land Showgirl Competition and the RAS Rural Achiever Award – a state-wide leadership program run by the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW to recognise future young leaders



2021 RAS Rural Achiever Award recipients

(20-29 years of age) who are working hard to make a significant contribution to their community and to rural Australia.

First held in 1823, the Sydney Royal Easter Show is Australia's largest annual ticketed event.

This year the Show involved:

- 41,908 scones baked by the Country Women's Association
- 29,000 tonnes of potatoes for Chip on a Stick
- 9,000 sticks of Fairy Floss

INAUGURAL AUSTRALIAN MADE WEEK 24 – 30 MAY

The Australian Made Campaign held the first ever Australian Made Week in May this year – a time to celebrate and support Australia's local makers and growers.

From 24 to 30 May 2021, Australian Made Week encouraged shoppers to actively focus their buying activities on genuine Aussie products while celebrating and supporting local makers and growers around the country.

Akubra Hats are still proudly Australian made in Kempsey NSW.

We were proud to be a part of the inaugural initiative and help spread the message of the importance of supporting Australian Made.



TIM FISCHER STATUE UNVEILED IN BOREE



Andrew Whitehead at the official unveiling of his Tim Fischer AC sculpture complete with Akubra hat, Boree NSW

Congratulations to Andrew Whitehead Sculptures on the unveiling of his Tim Fischer statue. So much work went into this commission.

Sculptor Andrew tells us that the hat he is wearing in this photo was a prize for a photo and short story he submitted to RM Williams Outback Magazine.

"It is my best and favourite hat and, the same style as the steel one I made for Tim Fischer's sculpture on the train, and my father used to wear one as well," Andrew said.

HATS OFF TO THESE LONG SERVING EMPLOYEES



We recently acknowledged some of our dedicated workers who have contributed to Akubra for decades.

Shane Cooper has worked with Akubra for 30 years, most recently in the Finishing Section.

Donna Halliday from our Trimming Department has marked 30 years with the company.

Janice Neilson, who also works in the Trimming Department, has been part of the Akubra family for 20 years.

Congratulations!

FAREWELL TRUDY DANIELS



Trudy Daniels at her farewell celebration

Long serving employee Trudy Daniels recently resigned to take on a full-time carer's role for a family friend. Trudy started with Akubra in 1986 in the trimming department after moving from Kyogle and soon demonstrated a high level of aptitude in the tasks she performed. Soon Trudy became an invaluable employee, working for three generations of the Keir family.

Her work colleagues and now close friends enjoyed Trudy's fun-loving sense of humour, noting her love of Elvis Presley and the Melbourne Storm (in particular Billy Slater) along with a passion for posting Karaoke videos on Facebook. Trudy will be missed by everyone at Akubra. We wish her every success for the future.

VALE ROBERT COOPER

It is with great sadness that we reflect on the sudden passing of a long serving employee Robert David Cooper, aged just 51. Robert, affectionately known as "Sooty" joined Akubra Hats in January 1986, progressing to become a valued tradesman in our finishing department. He was a larger than life character with a strong sense of humour. Robert's partner Trudy, his 3 boys Todd, Dan and Jesse along with all of the Akubra family will miss "Sooty".

VALE JOHN HENRY REED

It is with deep regret that we inform you of the passing of former Akubra director, John Henry Reed. John joined our Board on 9 October 1987 and was instrumental in guiding the family business through periods of extraordinary growth, as well as being the calm voice during tougher times.

John offered a strong background in finance and corporate governance, ensuring that, as an independent director, the family business was conducted with the utmost of professionalism and integrity. Such was his regard by the Keir family, John remained on the Board for more than thirty years. John's utmost belief in quality and Australian manufacturing aligned perfectly with the Akubra Brand. John passed away quietly with family by his side on 29 March 2021. He will be sorely missed by the Akubra community.

DUST COVER SUPPLY CEASES



The plastic dust covers normally provided with deliveries will, unfortunately, cease. The supplier of these dust covers can no longer manufacture the item. We apologise for the inconvenience and are currently investigating alternatives.

REMINDER

Reminder, that there will be no indent orders for January 2022. Please contact your sales agent for more information.

AKUBRA