



NEWS



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SHINING A LIGHT ON SUSTAINABILITY

Akubra has taken some serious steps to reduce its environmental footprint by significantly cutting greenhouse gas emissions generated by its manufacturing facility in Kempsey.

Akubra recently invested in the installation of a large, state-of-the-art solar plant on the factory roof.

The solar plant provides a sustainable energy source for the hat manufacturing process and head-office operations, while also reducing the impact of ever-increasing electricity prices on the business.

Excess energy is being fed back into the grid during weekends and late afternoons when the factory isn't in use, providing additional environmental and economic benefits for the company.

The 200kW large scale solar installation includes 528 high-efficiency solar panels, which are each capable of generating 380 Watts.

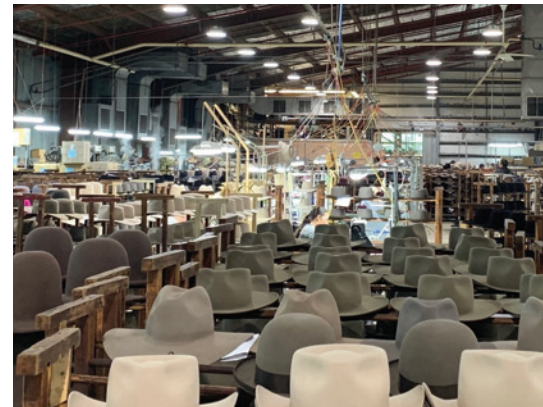
During summer it is expected that the panels will act as insulation and reduce the temperature in the factory area under the panels by a further 3C to 5C.

Energy efficient lighting has also been installed across the factory where the famous hats are made.

The new LED Hi Bay light fittings use 85% less energy, providing a significant environmental and cost saving.

More than 70 Mercury Vapour Hi Bay fittings, 160 fluorescent fittings containing over 320 tubes and 20 incandescent bulbs and fittings were replaced.

The modern fittings have also resulted in a brighter working environment for the production team, having increased the available light in the factory by 15% according to light meters.



Top: Akubra's new solar plant delivering energy and cost savings

Energy efficient lighting making a difference on the factory floor

GROWTH BRINGS NEXT GENERATION OF HAT MAKERS

Akubra is proud to have achieved considerable growth over recent years, bucking the trend for throw-away fashion and proving that Australians still want high quality, handmade hats.

This growth has provided an opportunity for the company to take on around 25 new employees over the past 4 years, taking our team to a total of 115.

To meet this need for dedicated workers, Akubra has teamed up with the Clontarf Foundation, a charitable organisation that works to

improve the education, discipline, life skills, self-esteem and employment prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.

Since 2000, Clontarf has helped more than 3,000 young men complete Year 12 and find employment. Many have gone on to have successful careers, purchase houses, start their own young families and maintain healthy and fulfilling lives.

Akubra is pleased to support the Clontarf Foundation on the Mid North Coast of NSW where the manufacturing facility is located and

is already seeing positive results from the partnership.

Akubra has also established strong relationships with a number of local high schools, working closely with careers advisers and teachers to support students as they prepare to leave school and look for employment.

In an area that has one of the highest levels of youth unemployment in the state, Akubra is proud to offer valuable career opportunities for young local men and women.

MEET THE AKUBRA BOARD

Akubra Board members include Stephen Keir, Stacey McIntyre, Nikki McLeod, Roy Wilkinson, Rosie Simpson and Geoff Thiel.

Stephen, Stacey and Nikki are the three family owners of Akubra – all committed to keeping the Akubra manufacturing operation based in Kempsey. Roy Wilkinson is the current Chief Financial Officer and Rosie Simpson and Geoff Thiel are independent directors, offering a wide range of commercial skills to assist the company in charting its future direction. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce both Rosie and Geoff.



Rosie with her special occasion Akubra

Rosie Simpson has been a director of Akubra since 2011. She is currently the CEO of the Children's Hospital Foundation QLD and has over 30 years' experience in Australia and internationally.

She was an economist with the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, a lobbyist and research and policy director with the National Farmers Federation and an economist with the International Wool Secretariat in London.

Rosie holds a Masters in Economic Development and has held senior executive roles in Telstra and The Smith Family, with a focus on Marketing, Strategy and Fundraising as well as managing large teams.

"My management experience and affinity with our largest and most important customers in the bush helps me keep the customer at the centre of our sound business decisions as a Board," Rosie said.

Rosie grew up on a wheat and cattle property near Premer in central west NSW and sees an Akubra hat as an essential part of everyday in Australia.

"An Akubra is a reliable work mate that doesn't complain when you run it over, drop it in a cattle trough or expose it to the sun for hours. You can also have your beautiful special-occasion Akubra for the races or other events that doesn't look so beaten up!"

Rosie has known the Keir family since she was a teenager and has seen the strong values of the family owned business pass down the generations, including its high regard for customers and employees.

"My vision for Akubra is to continue to invest in high-quality craftsmanship while meeting the volume of demand; managing the balance to ensure we make a high-quality product for a reasonable price, while also ensuring returns are sufficient to continue to train a skilled workforce in the art of hat-making in Australia."

Rosie lives in Brisbane with her husband and daughter, loves to travel and is a keen skier. She surprises people with her ability to juggle almost anything. "Except chainsaws. I haven't mastered them yet," she said.



Geoff at home in the outdoors

Geoff Thiel brings a wealth of governance and operational experience in the manufacturing and retail sectors to the Akubra Board, combined with a passion for handcrafted quality Australian products.

Geoff was the former Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer

of RM Williams for 21 years and former Director of RM Williams Outback Publishing Company for 17 years.

He joined the Akubra Board in November 2018, having known the Keir family for over 20 years.

"During my time at RM Williams, I came to know Stephen Keir Senior very well. The values of the two brands fit well together and there has always been a great deal of mutual respect for each operation," Geoff said.

"Akubra is quite unique as a family-owned business, with an iconic Australian product. Brands are a reflection of the trust people have in the product – that's what makes the Akubra brand so strong."

A qualified CPA Accountant by trade, Geoff started his career with Deloitte then ran his own accounting consultancy for several years before joining RM Williams.

Geoff was integral to the growth of RM Williams, at a time when many Australian Made manufacturers were moving offshore.

"We fought the trend and survived in an industry in decline. We grew from 250 to 750 staff and increased our retail outlets from 10 to 50," Geoff said.

Geoff understands first-hand how to integrate modern manufacturing processes into a handcrafted business and sees an exciting future ahead for Akubra.

"The Keir family are committed to the long-term success of the company. We're on track to solidify the strong foundations that have been built and ensure a viable and sustainable future for the business."

An Adelaide boy who loves camping, fishing and being outdoors, Geoff and his wife spent two months in the Kimberley in 2017 roughing it in a rooftop tent. Geoff's two adult children have followed in his footsteps and have established careers as successful accountants.

AUSTRALIAN BISHOPS PRESENT POPE WITH AN AKUBRA



An Australian hat, the Argentine Pope but with an Australian hat.

Pope Francis received an Akubra hat in June this year, gifted by 38 visiting Australian bishops. Watch the video [here](#)

WINDOW SHOPPING AT CITY HATTERS



Founded in 1910, City Hatters is a renowned Melbourne institution and proud Akubra stockist.

Thanks to Maarty Stroot for sending us this photo of this window display combining Akubra's rich history with contemporary style.

VALE TIM FISCHER



Mr Fischer in his famed Akubra

Akubra pays tribute to former Nationals leader and Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer, who passed away in August at age 73.

The 'Boy from Boree Creek' was just as famous for his trademark Akubra hats as he was for his 30-year career in state and federal politics.

At the time of his passing, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said, "Tim Fischer was a big Australian in every sense of the word. Big in stature, big in his belief, big in his passion, big in his vision for what Australians could achieve."

We offer our condolences to Mr Fischer's wife Judy and sons Harrison and Dominic.

SURFING WORLD CHAMPION MICK FANNING DROPS IN



Three-times World Champion Surfer, Mick Fanning, took some time out of the water recently to tour the Akubra factory.

Mick said it was a cool experience to see how the Australian icon is created.

"I love the passion and work ethic of the brand and the people involved," Mick said.

Mick Fanning takes a tour of the Akubra factory @trent_mitchell_

AKUBRA