



## THE MARKET

The Australian attitude toward hardware has undergone a remarkable change since the mid nineties. The word hardware no longer simply invokes images of DIY fix-it jobs and "must get to" projects around the home. Consumer perception has now expanded to one which sees the hardware store as holding the key to living standard and lifestyle improvement.

The hardware market in Australia is estimated at \$18 billion a year and is experiencing rapid growth annually, due in part, to the explosion of interest in do-it-yourself home projects by both male and female consumers.



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## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Competition in the marketplace is proving more and more fierce, with the introduction to the industry of barn-style hardware super stores. Why? Industry research indicates home owners, rather than "selling up", are choosing to remain in their home's longer, opting instead for "improving" their lifestyle by "do-



it-yourself" renovation and taking on increasingly impressive home projects. The serious renovator wants everything required to finish their job under the one roof. However, these consumers are unwilling to sacrifice their need for personalised service and expert knowledge simply for a large product range.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

In both Australia and New Zealand, Mitre 10's success has been enviable, with its members fostering and enjoying a close knit sense of unity and membership - the "spirit of Mitre 10". However, there is more to Mitre 10 than simply belonging to a successful legacy. The company has also made a significant contribution to Australia's state-based economies and communities by becoming one of the country's largest small business employers.

Mitre 10 in Australia is serviced by two regional offices (Mitre 10 Northern and Mitre 10 South West) and one National Office. The two regions control a total of six major Distribution Centres throughout the country. The Mitre 10 Group is also one of Australia's largest enterprises supporting privately owned retailers and is regularly included in various "Top 100 Company" listings, compiled by state and national business media.

## HISTORY

The move to set up a Co-Operative Group of hardware stores, originated from a meeting held in Victoria, June 1959, with five men who would become Mitre 10's founding fathers- Tom Molomby, Tom Danaher, Reg Buchanan, Jack Womersley and Ian Nisbet. This move occurred specifically to maximise funds and energy with regards to advertising and promotions and to demonstrate that independent operators offered service, advice and competitive prices. Even from its inception, Mitre 10 held predominance for and was firmly grounded in, family owned and run businesses and the group quickly grew in membership

to the point where it required a full time management team.

After its electrifying start, the innovative new company expanded operations, with fifteen New South Wales members joining the group by February 1961. Queensland soon followed with seven retailers, under the chairmanship of Arthur Scurr, joining the co-operative in January 1962, followed by a further sixteen members from Newcastle in October the same year. With the company successfully operational in the three Eastern states by the end of 1962 and South Australia and Western Australia soon running their own state based co-operatives, attentions turned to crossing the Tasman. After initial early discussions in Auckland, Mitre 10 New Zealand was established on June 20, 1974.

Mitre 10 is now represented in all metropolitan and most rural communities throughout the country. In order to further broaden the business and marketplace parameters of the Mitre 10 Group, the company officially launched the True Value Hardware brand in 1990, followed by the launch of the Mitre 10 Home & Trade brand in 1995 after its prior introduction in New Zealand. Today, the Mitre 10 Hardware Group has over 900 stores throughout Australia and New Zealand.

## THE PRODUCT

The name Mitre 10 is synonymous with hardware, building products, expert advice, knowledge and service and has be-

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To answer the consumer's need for both personalised service and an extensive product selection, Mitre 10 developed the Mitre 10 Home & Trade brand during the mid nineties. These larger stores offer the serious DIY consumers not only an extensive "heavy hardware" product range, but also that highly prized and sought after level of advice. As most stores are still owned and operated by "hardware families", business people who have worked within the industry for years, Mitre 10 store management and staff have accumulated a depth of knowledge unsurpassed by its competitors.

Mitre 10's on-going quest for providing quality customer service focussed on individual consumer needs, has led to the development of a number of "specialty" departments. The first to





frame and in 1986, the livery and logo were completely redesigned to that which is still in use today.

This new design also saw the introduction of Mitre 10's now unmistakable colours- gold and orange emblem on blue background. Various presenters and animation characters throughout the states, have also been used to promote Mitre 10, including former "Sullivan's" star Paul Cronin, a small "rubberman" called Mighty Man and an animated "weekend warrior" called Mr Nails. The first National campaign was launched in 1990, with the theme "Ask Mitre 10, they've got the lot". Today's national slogan is "Mitre 10, 10 / 10" referring to the company's ability to answer hardware questions and provide customers with support

national community sponsorships, most notably The Young Australian of the Year Awards, as a means of contributing back to the community.

The company logo can also be found emblazoned around various sporting grounds throughout the country and has had past sponsorship involvement with the 1989 Lions Rugby Union tour of Australia, the 1994 Commonwealth Games and the AFL Brisbane Bears, Adelaide Crows and West Coast Eagles teams. These days, the Mitre 10 logo can be seen across the bonnet of the Mitre 10 Ford V8 Supercar.

The basis of Mitre 10's marketing strategy consists of direct marketing campaigns, printed flyers and catalogues, communications and public relations strategies, television and radio campaigns and naturally, with the growing popularity of the Internet, any computer user is now free to browse Mitre 10's home page.

#### BRAND VALUES

In many ways Mitre 10 encapsulates the real meaning of its "10/10" slogan and has become the most recognised hardware chain in the country. The company has provided literally millions of home owners with solutions to their home project aspirations. The values enshrined in the Mitre 10 brand involve a commitment to customers that they will pay no more for unsurpassed service by know-

ledgeable staff, along with advice and a comprehensive range of products and related services. This will ensure their satisfaction, as well as providing a deep sense of community.

The Mitre 10 brand will continue to evolve with

time, supported by a thorough understanding of the fast-changing face of the home improvement industry. Mitre 10 has development plans in place to sustain its dominant and respected position in the Australian retail landscape.

be launched was the Mitre 10 Gardener concept in 1990, followed by the Mitre 10 Paint Shop in 1993 and the Mitre 10 Safe & Secure department in 1994.

The latest specialty department, Mitre 10 Tool Shop, was launched in 1998. All have been established in order to better service and assist consumers with specific needs and have been designed with features that clearly distinguish the departments from the remainder of the store. Specialty knowledge is required from staff who regularly work in these areas.

The quality customer service objectives set by the company are also reflected in Mitre 10's pursuit of technological improvement. Many stores installed the then revolutionary barcode and scan data systems of the late seventies and the regional offices soon made a point of adopting the technology of the age, including the first satellite-linked training sessions of store personnel throughout Queensland in the early nineties. Today, the company is constantly looking to pass on industry advancements to those who matter most — the hardware consumer.

#### PROMOTION

The original Mitre 10 logo featured two pieces of timber joined by a Mitre joint, a much used join in carpentry, and the number referring to the original members. This logo later evolved to show the Mitre joint within a "television screen" shaped



to achieve a perfect 10/10 result. True Value Hardware (Mitre 10's other brand) also features high profile actor, singer and celebrity Angry Anderson in all of their national advertising campaigns, both print and electronic.

How does Mitre 10 maintain such a high consumer recall percentage? While both the print and television media have been utilised extensively to promote the group since its inception, ties between Mitre 10 stores and local communities have always proved invaluable. Mitre 10 has often lent its support to various state based and



#### THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT MITRE 10

- Mitre 10 is the largest independently owned hardware chain in Australasia, with a local store within reach throughout the country.
- All stores are privately owned and operated businesses.
- Originally there were only eight members of the fledgling company, although the group was confident the number would be increased to ten before long. "Mitre 10" simply sounded more lyrical than "Mitre 8" or "Mitre 11"!
- Ruth Guy created Mitre 10 history when she became the first woman to be elected to a Mitre 10 board in 1988.

[www.mitre10.com.au](http://www.mitre10.com.au)