

Eastgate Furniture braves decades of change



It's exciting times for Eastgate Furniture. The Melbourne-based manufacturer continues to expand its business and adapt to the changing landscape as it heads towards its centenary in 2019. National Sales Manager Steven Berryman puts it down to two factors: commitment and quality.

"We have remained true to Australian furniture manufacturing, creating employment opportunities for many generations of Australian workers," Steven says. "We recognised early on that if you're going to survive you've got to have a point of difference. That said, we didn't want to sacrifice the quality of the brand by taking it off shore."

Even during the 1990s recession, the "China experiment" – taking some or all manufacturing offshore – clearly wasn't an option for Eastgate. The company made the decision to focus its core business on bedroom furniture instead.

"If you have a good brand and its working then you can create more opportunities. It's a commitment to a lot of people here in the community and their families," Steven adds.

The business has 8 ranges registered to use the Australian Made logo. These are sold through major retailers, targeting consumers on their second or third furniture purchase, looking to buy better quality, Australian made furniture.

"It is important the customer is able to distinguish between Australian made and imported furniture, especially at a time when Australian designs are copied by importers making poor quality replicas," he says.

There has been a decline in the number of Australian furniture manufacturers in the last couple of years, with greater competition from cheaper imported products, changing consumer behaviour and more recently the strong Australian dollar all taking their toll on businesses. Steven is adamant, however, that Eastgate can beat the doom and gloom, with the Australian Made logo playing a key role.

"Although the company has longevity, it is crucial that we continue to promote our brand to new generations. It's about being smart with the suppliers you work with and the markets you enter. You've got take some risk to continue company growth."

To find out more about Eastgate Furniture please visit www.eastgatefurniture.com or call 03 9460 1822

ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN MADE, AUSTRALIAN GROWN LOGO

The Australian Made, Australian Grown logo is a registered certification trademark used to assist consumers identify Australian made and grown products. The logo is recognised by 94% of Australian consumers and trusted over any other country of origin identifier for Australia by 85%. It can be found on more than 10,000 locally made or grown products that are sold here and around the world.

The organisation is not-for-profit and raises awareness of genuine Australian goods by using the iconic country of origin logo. The Australian Made, Australian Grown logo was introduced in 1986 by the Australian Government.