

Novo Shoes Group snaps up Spendless

August 16, 2019

[Dean Blake](#)



Spendless founder John Charlton.

The company that manages Naturalizer and other shoe brands in Australia has bought South Australia-based footwear chain Spendless Shoes, making it one of the biggest footwear retailers in the country.

Novo Shoes Group operates more than 100 stores stocking the Novo, Naturalizer, Ipanema, Grendha and Rider brands in Australia and New Zealand. The acquisition of Spendless Shoes gives it an additional 214 locations across Australia.

“As the largest family footwear retailer in the country, this purchase will make Spendless more competitive in the future, where no customer will be offended by price,” John Charlton, Spendless Shoes founder and managing director told *Inside Retail*, speaking about the acquisition.

“[The deal] is a good example of the renaissance of good retail that is taking place in the Australian market.”

Founded more than 30 years ago by Charlton, a retail veteran who got his start in David Jones’ shoe department, Spendless Shoes is modelled on the US chain Payless Shoes, where customers can self-select styles by size.

[In an interview earlier this year with *Inside Retail*](#), Charlton spoke about the challenging Christmas 2018 season, when foot traffic to shopping centres dropped by double digits from the previous year, and the need for Spendless to invest in IT and e-commerce.

“We want to be able to sell on every platform available, but you wouldn’t believe the changes you need to make – and the time and money you need to spend – to be able to sell on other people’s platforms. It’s not easy,” he said.

Spendless execs to stay on

Novo Shoes Group chairman Ian Unwin told *Inside Retail* the group plans to strengthen Spendless Shoes’ position in the market, rather than integrate the brand into Novo Shoes.

“We’re still going to offer the two businesses separately... Spendless has a very successful model, and we’ve got no intention of trying to move it in a different direction,” Unwin said.

“We intend to retain it. We’re keeping the team, and we’re keeping the profile the business has.”

Former general manager of Spendless Shoes David Evans will take the reins as its new chief executive, while former general manager of finance Tina Taddeo will step up as chief financial officer.

According to Unwin, Novo Shoes and Spendless are different models, operating at different price points, to different customers, at a different segment of the market.

Access exclusive analysis, locked news and reports with Inside Retail Weekly. [Subscribe today](#) and get our premium print publication delivered to your door every week.