

Sweet success has factory working around the clock

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GLYNDE chocolate maker Robern Menz is working through the night – for the first time in its 170-year history – to keep up with demand for Violet Crumbles.

The company has had to put on a 24-hour production shift five days a week to keep up with the growing popularity of its chocolate honeycomb treat.

It means more than 30 of the 105 staff employed by the fourth-generation family-owned business, which also makes FruChocs and Choc Honeycomb, are dedicated to making the iconic Aussie bars.

Robern Menz bought the Violet Crumble brand from global giant Nestle in early 2018, subsequently investing \$4 million on a factory refit and extension and new warehousing facilities. It was supported by a \$750,000 state grant and a \$900,000 Investment Attraction Agency loan.

Violet Crumble was first made in Melbourne in the 1920s and is still sold in its original, striking purple and yellow packaging.

Robern Menz's newly appointed innovations manager Naureen Ahmed, who has worked with Nestle and Proctor & Gamble overseas, said the Violet Crumble brand was a national move for the SA-focused family business.

"We are taking the brand into new international markets, including Hong Kong and the Philippines, and opening up new channels through duty-free shops at airports for instance," Ms Ahmed said. Chief executive Phil Sims said expanding the business meant it could create more jobs, "which means a lot to us as a proudly South Australian business".

UK migrant Abel Hoadley, who set up A. Hoadley & Company in the 1890s, is credited with inventing the chocolate. The distinctive packaging is said to be a tribute to his wife's favourite flower and colour.



PURPLE PATCH: Robern Menz's new innovations manager, Naureen Ahmed, is excited about Violet Crumble's success.

Picture: TRICIA WATKINSON