

AU MANUFACTURING

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SEELEY DEFIES THE ODDS TO PROFIT FROM APPLIANCE MANUFACTURING

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By Peter Roberts

You hear comments like this all the time: ‘but we don’t manufacture any major appliances in Australia, do we?’

Well actually we do – in fact many of Australia’s most loved appliances in areas from cooking, to air conditioning are still made locally.

A stand-out is Seeley International, which has just revealed it has made it to its 50th year as Australia’s largest air conditioning and heating manufacturer.

The company’s 500 staff manufacture evaporative air conditioning systems based on plastic moulding technology under the Breezair, Coolair and Climate Wizard brands in Adelaide, and Braemar heating products focused on metal working technologies in Albury, New South Wales.

They manufacture 80,000 appliances and 1.5 million components in Australia every year and export to more than 100 countries – from supplying air conditioners to tents set up for the Haj pilgrimage in Mecca to its latest offshoot through the purchase of a manufacturing business in Denver, Colorado.

Capturing some of his trademark optimism and enthusiasm Founder and Executive Chairman Frank Seeley said: “2022 is an exciting year for us, because it marks 50 years of Seeley International – a golden anniversary that is immensely gratifying.

“Our values have stayed true for more than five decades and continue to underpin who we are, what we do and how we do it.

“Without the loyalty and commitment of our workforce, customer networks and trusted suppliers, our many successes simply could not have been achieved.”

If Seeley’s Christian beliefs and generosity have characterised how he has run the business, it is his commitment to innovation that have set it in good stead.

Seeley first spotted the potential of replacing rust-prone steel in portable evaporative coolers with plastics, and remains at age 80 the driving force in innovation, having handed the managing director role to his son Jon.

Its latest development – a unique indirect evaporative air conditioning technology utilising a heat exchange core, allows evaporation to cool to temperatures only previously possible with reversed cycle systems.

Group Managing Director Jon Seeley said: “We have a key role to play in national and global emissions reduction, since conventional air conditioning is a major contributor to energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions.

“Our highly innovative products can reduce energy consumption by up to 80 percent, whilst also delivering increased ventilation which is so important for health and wellbeing.”

In its 50th year family-owned Seeley is poised for international growth with its foray into the US on the back of its Climate Wizard technology.

Not to be left behind its Braemar gas products are also leaders in its area.

Jon Seeley said: “We have recently announced that our gas heating products are “Hydrogen-ready”, embracing a sustainable transition away from fossil fuels and demonstrating our commitment to a zero emissions future.”

Yes we do manufacture appliances, with some deserving more prominence than they get.

Picture: Seeley International/Frank Seeley provides scholarships to promising young people, including Kieran Lobban, a third year Flinders University Engineering student

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