



THE MARKET

Home ownership remains the great Australian dream and over the past 50 years no product has come to symbolise that dream more than the Hills Rotary Hoist clothes line.

Since its invention in a suburban Adelaide wash shed in 1946, the Hills Hoist has become almost an obligatory addition to the Australian backyard. Such is the market recognition of this brand that in 1994 when Hills sold its five millionth Hills Hoist, it was a national event.

Strong residential growth over the past 50 years has ensured a ready market for Hills' expanded range of home and garden products, which, in addition to its large choice of outdoor clothes dryers, now includes indoor laundry equipment, such as drying racks and ironing boards, garden sprayers, ladders, wheelbarrows, screen and security doors, children's swings and slides, trampolines, hand trucks and trolleys.



ACHIEVEMENTS

In just 50 years Hills has achieved what the majority of companies never will. The Hills Rotary Hoist has become an emblem of Australian enterprise and an icon of Australian culture. It is considered as Australian as a Vegemite sandwich, a quality which has been a powerful selling point for generations of young Australians setting up their own home.

The immense size of this achievement is reflected in the fact that hardly a day goes by when Australians do not encounter a Hills product in their daily lives.

That, in itself, is credit to Hills' high degree of innovation and its ability to adapt to changing times.

In 1946 Hills revolutionised wash days with the Hills Rotary Hoist, and today it is continuing to make laundry chores easier with

products like the pride of its outdoor clothes dryer range, the Foldaline Compact Plus.

But these days Hills' products are not confined to Australian homes. Consumers around the world have embraced Hills' dedication to quality and product development. The Hills Hoist, for example, which is found in almost every backyard in Australia, can also be found outside homes in Italy, Slovenia, Canada, Malaysia, Argentina, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Not only does Hills export to the world but it also has quality accredited manufacturing plants in the United Kingdom, where outdoor drying and laundry products are produced, and in New Zealand, where it manufactures outdoor drying products and TV antennas, and distributes the full range of Hills products.

Hills holds a large share of many markets in which it operates. In the case of its outdoor clothes dryers it

has set world standards, leaving others to follow. It remains the brand of clothes line most often recalled by Australian consumers.

Meanwhile, Hills has also developed into Australia's leading manufacturer and supplier of television reception antennas and teledistribution equipment. The recent introduction of pay television in Australia has provided Hills with further expansion.

The company is also a part-owner of Radio Frequency Systems Pty Ltd (RFS), which produces telecommunications equipment for domestic and international sale.

Hills operates its own large tubing division and owns Woodroffe Industries, a major manufacturer of metal products for the building industry and of precision metal products for a variety of uses.

HISTORY

The history of the Hills company is one of Australia's greatest - and most inspirational - success stories.

It all began in the suburban Adelaide backyard of Lance Hill, who came up with an idea in 1945 to stop his wife's washing getting tangled in their orange trees. Using water pipe and wire, he built the first Hills rotary hoist in his wash shed, a weird contraption that had his neighbours and family talking - and ordering their own.

With his brother-in-law Harold Ling, Lance started a business which was to grow from a humble backyard operation into a multi-national company distributing a diverse range of products throughout the world. The Hills Rotary Hoist was officially launched onto the market in 1946 with the men progressively purchasing a galvanising plant, tube mill and plating plant.

By 1948 the new Hills factory could scarcely



keep up with demand. During that year it also launched an expanded range of laundry products to supplement the hoist. Harold Ling's enthusiasm for further growth led to branches being established in the eastern states. Agencies were also set up in London and New Zealand.

By the end of 1955, the company had consolidated its activities into new premises in Adelaide and was ready for mass production.

But true to its reputation for innovation, Hills also saw immediate possibilities for its expertise in tube manufacturing design in the advent of television. In 1955, it set up a research and development program to produce a range of television antennas.

Diversification became the name of the game and continues to be one of the company's strengths. While Hills has continued to expand and improve its consumer product range, it has also ventured into industrial products and electronics.

THE PRODUCT

Outdoor clothes dryers remain at the hub of the Hills' product range. While a galvanised version of the original model is still produced, a whole new range of clothes lines has evolved to suit the lifestyles of a new generation of consumers.

While big rotating hoists that take a full family wash in the suburban backyard are still popular, these days there is an extensive range of compact folding and retractable clothes lines to suit balconies, flats and apartments where space is limited.

The company has even extended its laundry range indoors, producing folding ironing boards, mobile clothes stands and space-saving folding clothes airers.

Hills also offers Australia's largest range of ladders and wheelbarrows, built to withstand the rigours of tradespeople and do-it-yourself enthusiasts alike. These are sold under sub-brand names renowned for their reliability: Mote Kennett, Bailey, Ladderweld and Kelso. Hills also produces a variety of garden sprayers, hand carts and trolleys.

For the home protection market, Hills produces a range of top quality security and screen doors under the HomeGuard brand while for the leisure market, it produces a range of garden swing sets, slides and trampolines under the Playtime brand.

Through its shareholding in Radio Frequency Systems (RFS), Hills produces telecommunications equipment such as microwave distribution systems and antenna panels for cellular telephone systems.

RFS has supplied antenna structures for Australia's Over-the-Horizon Radar project, which monitors the country's northern coastline.

The Hills subsidiary Woodroffe Industries services a broad cross-section of customers in the construction, telecommunications, defence, electronics and leisure industries. Products range from roofing and walling, gutters, metal fascia, windows and skylights, fencing, downpipes, carports and verandah materials through to cabinets for sophisticated electronic equipment and dispensing units for soft drinks.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In recent years Hills has diversified into electronics, security alarm systems and industrial products for the building industry.

The recent introduction of pay television to Australia has provided the ideal vehicle for Hills' expertise in the telecommunications area. Through strategic alliances Hills has emerged as the industry leader in the supply of



retail customers to provide tactical campaigns aimed at helping the product to sell from the retailers' shelves. This strategy has seen Hills build strong links with major retailers throughout

Australia. By working closely with these organisations on their own promotional efforts, Hills is ensuring that its products achieve the greatest possible consumer reach through a selection of high-profile retail outlets.

Additionally, the company has continually used every opportunity to maintain brand awareness in the community at large.

BRAND VALUES

With its range of products for the home and garden, Hills has come to represent quality and durability by manufacturing products which are proudly Australian.

Research findings have shown these attributes are valued highly by consumers when making purchase decisions. Many respondents say they have "grown up with Hills".

From outdoor clothes dryers to play equipment for children, Hills prides itself on the quality and technical superiority of its products. In an increasingly competi-

itive marketplace, that commitment has become especially important.

The sheer endurance of the original Hills Rotary Hoist - which still survives in suburban backyards across Australia today - is a reflection of the commitment to quality and durability which has remained a hallmark of the company over the past 50 years.



multi channel microwave distribution antennae, as well as satellite antennae and associated components, with strong sales to pay TV operators in Australia.

In 1996 Hills also made a rapid entry into probably the fastest growing segment of the security market through the acquisition of the Vicam Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) business. The extensive product range consists of closed circuit video cameras, lenses and monitors, as well as switching and multiplexing equipment for on and off-site monitoring.

PROMOTION

As one of Australia's icon brands, Hills has enjoyed an extremely high profile during the past 50 years.

Research conducted by the company shows an extremely high recognition factor, with the unprompted recognition of the Hills brand at 82% and total recognition at almost 100% of those surveyed. Bailey and Kelso also had high recognition as brands, and recognition of other products sub-branded under the Hills umbrella is growing.

The company has a solid market built on its history and its reputation as a manufacturer of quality products.

The company's key focus for promotional activity is to align with its



Things you didn't know about Hills Industries

- In 1996, during the company's 50th year, the Adelaide Festival of Arts chose the Hills Hoist as a symbol to promote and market its program of cultural events to the world.
- Hills Industries is the largest antenna producer in Australia.
- When orders for the first Hills Rotary Hoist came rolling in, salvaged army trucks were purchased to keep up with deliveries.
- In 1948 the hoist was selling for £11 - twice the average weekly wage.