

SPAR Australia

Fox Road
Locked Bag 30
Acacia Ridge Q 4110
TEL: +61 7 3715 3000
FAX: +61 7 3715 3001

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MEDIA RELEASE

SPAR honours its founding four

In a slight break with tradition, the 2010 SPAR Gala Awards Dinner featured an additional ceremony this year to honour the achievement and contribution of four of its founding retailers and shareholders, Bob Little, John Stone, Geoff Ashton and Jean Vallianos.

All four were members of the retailer group that broke away from David's Holding in 1996 with the dream of being supplied by a warehouse that was owned by independent retailers, and that operated in the best interests of the retailers.

After operating as various entities, the group eventually became United Star Supermarkets Limited (USSL) which is today the major shareholder of SPAR Australia. All four of the founding members remain Directors of USSL.

In his speech to more than 350 SPAR retailers and suppliers, SPAR Chief Executive Officer, Leigh Carson said that without the dedication, guidance and commitment of the four founders, no one in the room would be there today.

"While some of those founding retailers have retired or moved on, four individuals stayed at the forefront, dedicated to the achievement of a dream. It was never easy for you and you have remained committed to the task.

"You have always had the best interests of SPAR and 5 Star independent retailers at heart and, at this time in our history, it is only fitting we honour your achievements," Mr Carson said.

Speaking after the event, Geoff Ashton said he and his three co-founders were deeply moved and honoured by the tribute and were very proud of the way their efforts had evolved into the SPAR we know today.

"As a group of independents, we did dream of a warehouse that was owned by the retailers and wasn't dependent on outside influences. It seemed the best way to ensure everything operated in the interests of the retailers and not other stakeholders.

“The original group of retailers was very committed and very loyal and with SPAR entering a new era with additional equity investment, the future looks very bright. All four of us are very proud to be a part of it.”

SPAR is a global success, operating in 31 countries around the world. SPAR stores are all 100 percent locally owned. SPAR injected almost \$400 million in sales into Australia’s retail economy last year. Worldwide, the SPAR group serves more than 10 million customers every day and supports local communities all over the world by sponsoring local sporting clubs, charities and community events

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For further information, please contact:

Lisa Peebles, Marketing & Promotions Officer – SPAR Australia on (07) 3715 3138

Geoff Gale, GM Merchandise and Marketing - SPAR Australia on (07) 3715 3191