

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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PRESS RELEASE

New, innovative developments the highlights at SPAR's biggest ever trade show

SPAR Australia's biggest ever trade show, held last weekend, showcased the latest in the company's innovative developments to a record number of suppliers and delegates after another successful year for Australia's fastest growing independent retailer.

Held at Jupiters Casino on the Gold Coast, the three day event highlighted new initiatives such as the SPAR-tailored point of sale system SPARpos, the SPAR Training Academy and the new *Treehouse* concept, boasting a coffee bar, fresh juice bar and specialised deli and fresh meat department, Russell & Ryan Quality Fine Foods.

The annual event also featured SPAR Australia's Annual General Meeting at which the company announced the declaration of its second dividend to shareholders since its incorporation in 2002.

Experiencing 50 percent growth in store numbers in the last financial year, on top of the 50 percent growth achieved the previous financial year, SPAR Australia CEO Leigh Carson was pleased to record another great profit result.

"The past 12 months have been very successful for SPAR Australia, with the emergence of several new product, service and training initiatives and an average increase in sales across all of our stores of 10.3 percent," Mr Carson said.

"The attendance records for our trade show this year are indicative of our burgeoning success in the industry, with a ten percent increase in suppliers compared to last year and more than 650 delegates."

Continuing to provide unrivalled support to its retailers, SPAR Australia has established the SPAR Academy and developed training courses for new and current retailers in areas such as food safety, retail management and store management.

“We aim to provide relevant and timely training to our retailers and pay close attention to what our retailers identify that they need,” Mr Carson said.

“Following popular demand after last year’s trade show, we provided specific retailer workshops for the first time this year, with topics including Personal Development and Improving Store Performance.”

Also among the trade show highlights was the appearance of Tobias Wasmuht, Retail and Marketing Director of SPAR International, a key speaker at the event who shared with retailers his experiences and knowledge on developing the SPAR brand.

Looking forward to increasing the number of SPAR stores in Australia to close to 85 by the year’s end, SPAR is currently working on two new greenfield sites coming onboard in November and December.

The new stores, located at Deception Bay and Gladstone in Queensland, will allow the retail group to further develop its focus on providing more fresh food-to-go products, responding to increasing demand from time-poor consumers.

“We live in a fast-paced society and our consumers are demanding more quick fresh food items and convenience meals at their local SPAR,” Mr Carson said.

“Throughout our network, we’re incorporating initiatives such as noodle and pizza bars; however, these two new stores will also feature our new juice and coffee bars and provide a comfortable space for busy consumers to put their feet up and relax.

“It’s a proven format in SPAR Ireland and we’re excited about the possibilities here in Australia.”

The SPAR brand is a global success boasting around 15,160 stores in 34 countries. SPAR is an acronym that means "Save" in Europe and last year, SPAR stores, all 100 per cent locally owned, injected almost \$300 million into Australia’s retail economy.

Worldwide, the SPAR group serves 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 contact:

Lisa Peebles
Marketing and Promotions Officer
SPAR Australia Limited
(07) 3715 3138

Geoff Gale
GM Merchandise and Marketing
SPAR Australia Limited
(07) 3715 3191