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SPAR grows on the Sunshine Coast

By Ben Hagemann on [May 11, 2017](#) in [Business matters](#), [Events](#), [General/grocery](#), [News](#), [Other FMCG Retailers](#), [People / Services](#), [Retailer news](#), [Supplier news](#)



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Two new stores have joined the SPAR family in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland, launching over the weekend to the communities of Woombye and Palmwoods with a huge public event.

The community-focussed event in Woombye brought a host of suppliers with giveaways for the public, ribbon and cake-cutting ceremony, face-painting and other activities, as well as goodie bags for the first 200 customers.

SPAR Australia managing director Lou Jardin said he was excited about the new store openings, and what they represented for SPAR's presence in Australia.



“Expanding our footprint into the Sunshine Coast Hinterland is exciting for SPAR as these stores and the region provide great opportunities for us,” he said.

“The potential for both stores is huge, and our team is excited to develop these stores from their original state into stores that SPAR can be proud of.”

A spokesperson for SPAR said the new stores would undergo further improvements with regards to ranging, and ensuring the offer met the needs of the local community.

“Relationships are being built with local suppliers to further enhance the range with products that are local and provide positive returns to the community,” she said.

“In addition to this, new staff will bring innovation to the stores and work will be undertaken to improve the physical building at Palmwoods.”



SPAR Australia managing director Lou Jardin attended the Woombye store opening ceremony to welcome old and new customers to the improved store. *Image: Supplied*

Back office changes were flagged as a requirement for converting from the IGA warehouse to suit SPAR’s systems, while changes to branding, signage, promotional activity, culture and community engagement were also of significant importance.

“Finding the balance between tailoring the stores to the local areas and implementing the characteristics SPAR stores are known for internationally is important,” the spokesperson said.

“It’s imperative that international standards are met in stores that

convert when it comes to customer experience, range and value, while staying true to local community ideals.

“Converting programs such as loyalty, SPAR Australia’s EDLP program Payless Everyday and introducing SPAR’s private label products are all key to becoming part of the network.”

In terms of its strategy for expansion in Australia, SPAR indicated that momentum was definitely building, and growth had been strong.

“We have been working with branded stores, who may not have been quite the right fit for the SPAR brand, to assist them in either developing their businesses to better fit the SPAR model or rebanner to other brands in our family,” a spokesperson said.

“This has meant our store numbers have been quite steady over recent times but the overall quality of stores within the banner has improved.

“This strategy is ongoing and we believe our numbers will remain stable while we continue to work with existing stores and also bring on new retailers.”



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