

# SYNERGIES UNLOCKED

HAVING GROWN ON THE BACK OF ITS REPUTATION FOR BREATHABLE WET WEATHER GEAR AND A WIDE RANGE OF SPECIALISED INDUSTRIAL APPAREL, MELBOURNE COMPANY GLANDA INTERNATIONAL HAS MOVED TO LARGER PREMISES AND IS ANTICIPATING FURTHER EXPANSION. **BELINDA SMART REPORTS.**



## IT'S

mid-February when I meet with Glanda International operations manager David Baglieri and sales & marketing manager Gary Robbins at the company's headquarters in Melbourne's Heidelberg West, and I'm struck by a sense of newness; freshly kitted out offices await their occupants and boxes lie in various stages of unpacking, while the white walls and polished concrete floor of the manufacturing area are partially visible through doors leading to the back of the building.

I'm visiting little more than a month since

Glanda International made the move on 21 January from its previous location in Northern Road, Heidelberg West, to a much larger facility, measuring some 1200 square metres, in nearby Bamfield Road. The new site may be a mere stone's throw away from the previous one, but it's clear that Glanda's business has advanced a very long way in recent times.

Perhaps most significantly, having partially built its reputation on supplying specialised clothing using Gore-Tex fabric, Glanda has spent recent times manoeuvring its way through the withdrawal of Gore-Tex from the Asia Pacific market. Baglieri, who

founded the company with his father George in 1987, confirms the company's relationship with Gore-Tex goes back a long way. Originally established to produce disposable protective overalls, by the early '90s Glanda was feeling the negative effects of Chinese imports, leading, in 1992, to its acquisition of the license to produce Gore-Tex garments in Australia. Since then, the company had built a strong relationship with US based parent company W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc ('Gore').

Glanda went on to specialise in customised industrial apparel with a strong focus on specialised protection from cold and wet environments, with

Gore-Tex a strong part of its offering.

**GIVEN THE LONGEVITY AND STRENGTH OF THIS RELATIONSHIP, IT WOULD BE SAFE TO ASSUME THAT GORE'S WITHDRAWAL FROM AUSTRALIA WOULD BE VIEWED AS A PROBLEM FOR THE COMPANY, BUT AS BAGLIERI CONFIRMS, THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE.**

"Gore-Tex confirmed some time ago that they were exiting the Asia Pacific market by 31 December 2012. They didn't give detailed reasons, but the inference was that the revenues in this market didn't really justify their presence here. We've always had a good relationship with them and they did give us a

lot of notice. But it was at that point that we realised we needed a brand of our own."

The result is Torant, a proprietary outerwear fabric with the same properties as Gore-Tex, which gives Glanda a clear point of difference in the local market. "As well as the fabric, we also offer Torant branded garments.

We're confident that this will be a strong product for us; these days tender documents for government jobs contain general specifications as opposed to particular fabric brands, which will allow us to gain traction with the product." Gary Robbins, who joined the company in February 2010, says Torant has received solid

uptake from the market. Robbins has spent his tenure proactively promoting Glanda and building commercial relationships.

"Traditionally Glanda used to win work either through tenders or word

of mouth; we didn't do much promotion, but recently the focus has been to drive the company's profile more proactively, targeting the Australian Defence Force, the Fire Service, the Police Force, Australian Antarctic

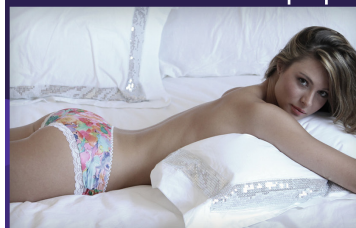
Division and so on," says Robbins. "We've been working to engage the corporate decision makers face to face and build closer relationship with safety houses, apparel management houses and end users."

**"THE COLD AND WET WEATHER GEAR SETS US APART FROM THE COMPETITION BUT WE CAN ALSO PIGGYBACK ON THOSE COLD/ WET WEATHER GEAR ORDERS, AND WE'RE ABLE TO SUPPLY A COMPLETE PACKAGE FOR CUSTOMERS."**

Around 90 per cent of Glanda's product is designed and made in Australia while a small amount requires manufacturing offshore, Robbins explains.

"For example a utility company approached us

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last year wanting FR garments with branding to signal the company's name change on a thousand shirts and waterproof jackets. Being an order of that size the product got manufactured in Fiji."

By contrast, Glanda's onshore facility has the ability to design and manufacture very small runs, as little as a single figure in some cases. Significantly, the company's face to face relationships with customers and flexible production capability mean it can customise orders to almost any specifications. An in house embroidering machine, along with a Lectra cutting machine and sewing and seam sealing technology, means it's able to offer customers 'the whole package'.

Robbins shows me a two-in-one jacket designed by Glanda for the Tasmanian Police search and rescue helicopter team.

**"IT'S AN ANTI-STATIC BREATHABLE FLEECE, COLD- AND WET- PROOF, WITH THE TEAM'S LOGO, HIGH-VIS FUNCTIONALITY AND A STAND OUT FINISH. YOU JUST WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO GET COLD OR WET IN THAT JACKET."**

With two in house designers on site, one hailing from Country

Road, and state of the art CAD drawing facilities, design is a clear point of difference for the company, as is speed of turnaround; a concept can be drawn up in 24 hours.

"Here's another example, patrol jackets for Ambulance Victoria," says Robbins. "We can create a concept, submit it for comment and approval and turn it around from start to finish within four to six weeks, depending on the availability of the fabric."

This turnaround relies on efficiencies, and while the relationship with Gore is now over, Robbins notes its legacy still remains. "The regime that had been put in place in order to meet Gore's strict quality assurance standards, meant there were very good disciplines in place in terms of efficiency and quality."

The skills of 15 able employees are also key to the company's success, with this number soon set to expand. "We're in a good position regarding designers, and we have good hands-on sewers, seam sealers and production specialists. Attracting good workers can be a challenge, but it usually works through word of mouth. We strive to offer employees the best working conditions



**GARY ROBBINS** SALES & MARKETING MANAGER  
& **DAVID BAGLIERI** GLANDA INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS MANAGER

possible, and once they get here, they tend to stay with us for a long time."

Baglieri points out that the company was already receiving a growing number of enquiries before moving premises. Now ensconced at its new HQ, "we have the potential to quadruple our output."

"We get enquiries every day; not all of them eventuate but most of them do. We've built ourselves a good name on little promotion, primarily due to our reputation for quality, attention to detail and service."

Also crucial for the company and central to its ethos, is a

sense of transparency and willingness to collaborate, he says.

**"OUR FOCUS IS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS AND WITH OUR COMPETITORS TOO. THIS IS A VERY SMALL INDUSTRY, BUT ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO MAKE IT VIABLE GOING FORWARD IS TO KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS OPEN. THAT'S WHERE THE REAL SYNERGIES LIE."**



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