

# GS1 Australia supports industry to pivot in time of crisis

There are moments in time where we are tested. For some, it is a time to lend a hand and for others to accept support. We are living in one of those times and the food and beverage industry are working together to help combat the COVID-19 crisis.

As early as March this year, Australian governments recognised mounting pressure on supply chains to meet the surge in demand for personal protective equipment (PPE). As national infection rates accelerated, the NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian

said it best when she gave a run down on what was needed to make sure Australia got through the crisis as best it could in terms of PPE gear. “The world is running short on hand sanitiser, hand wash, soap, gloves, cleaning products, protective clothing, masks, eye wear and paper

products.” It was an industry call to arms.

The food and beverage industry wasted no time. Entrepreneurs and business leaders across the country rose to the challenge.

These included the likes of former Australian cricketer Shane Warne’s gin distillery situated in Western Australia, through to stalwart Tasmanian whisky makers at Lark Distilling Co. promptly setting about pivoting their production lines to address the shortage of essential PPE products.

In early April 2020, GS1 Australia launched a program to provide Australian companies who were re-tooling to meet the national need for PPE, with supporting services at no charge.

This includes membership, identification numbers for barcodes, assistance in creating and testing new barcodes, and access to national registries to enable their quick transition into the new market. Over 30 companies registered in the first 24 hours.

One of the firms GS1 Australia has been able to assist through the program is Lark Distilling Co., manufacturers of world famous ‘Lark’ branded whisky, who took decisive action in response to the demand for PPE products in Tasmanian hospitals.

“As soon as the COVID-19 crisis hit we made a very fast decision to pivot into sanitiser production, with the express aim of alleviating the shortage for frontline medical and emergency services,” said Dan Knight, head of hospitality at Lark Distilling Co.

“However, once we began production we were overwhelmed with enquiries from people and businesses across the entire state. The world was scrambling to find

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sanitiser, but being on an island, that is cut off from the mainland, our supply shortage was even more pressing.

“After our first batch of sanitiser, we set the goal of ensuring the continuous supply of World Health Organisation-approved sanitiser to all of Tasmania, for the length of the crisis and beyond. The challenge has been to ensure the supply of raw materials and packaging, and it has taken the collective resources of an entire community to make this happen.

“I am forever grateful to our suppliers and organisations like GS1 for their support, and I am in awe of what we have been able to achieve in such a short time, by working as one in the face of a common threat.”

“We want to ensure that new suppliers to the health industry who are re-tooling to manufacture PPE products get express but comprehensive support for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis in Australia,” said Maria Palazzolo, GS1 Australia’s chief executive officer and executive director.

“Our priority right now is to support the sector that is supporting our community,” **E**



Distilleries took up the call to produce sanitisers.

