

50 Years Since The First Scan of the Barcode

On this day in 1974, a packet of JUICY FRUIT® chewing gum was the first barcode ever scanned



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UNDER EMBARGO

00:01 Wednesday 26 June 2024

On **June 26 1974**, the very first barcode was scanned on a packet of Wrigley's Juicy Fruit gum and set into motion a vital, global system that would revolutionise how we live, shop and work.

From its earliest known beginnings as lines drawn in the sand on a beach in 1948, the universal barcode came to be over 50 years ago when industry leaders in the grocery sector agreed on a single universal standard for product identification.

Fast forward to 2024, and barcodes now appear on over one billion products worldwide. Barcodes are scanned more than 10 billion times a day and the BBC even heralded the barcode as **one of the 50 things that made the modern economy**¹.

Beyond the retail check-out, barcodes are vital to pharmacies, hospitals, transport & logistics, and multiple other sectors like the building and construction industry, to deliver operational efficiencies and patient safety throughout entire supply chains.

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04k0066>



Australia's barcode standards body [GS1 Australia](#) is celebrating the 50 year “scan-iversary” of the barcode by honouring its beginnings and looking brightly towards the future with the roll out of 2D “Next Generation” barcodes.

The Next Generation Barcode

To keep pace with the modern world and support the growing needs of the consumer, the supplier and the retailer, Next Generation 2D barcodes have started rolling out across Australia, predominantly in the fresh food departments of major supermarkets.

One simple scan at a register and from a smartphone will open up a wealth of product and supply chain information. Consumers will be able to see where their product has come from and how best to recycle its packaging, while retailers can better manage waste and markdowns, inventory and the customer experience.

GS1 Australia CEO Maria Palazzolo says: *“Exactly 50 years ago today, the shopping experience changed forever with a simple scan at the checkout, making it possible for product information to be shared throughout the supply chain.*

Without accurate and scannable barcodes, retailers cannot stock or sell their products and consumers cannot buy them. Now fast forward to 2024 and the barcode experience is being transformed once again.

New, multi-purpose “Next Generation” 2D barcodes are being rolled out across supermarkets now, making it possible for businesses and consumers to have instant and accurate information right at their fingertips.”

Mars Wrigley Australia Gum and Mints Portfolio Director Fran Birsa says: *“Juicy Fruit chewing gum has been loved the world over for more than 100 years, and we’re proud to hold this place in history as the very first product with a barcode to be scanned.*

Barcodes are what make all of our products accessible and trackable and are an important part of the FMCG industry. It’s an exciting time with the Next Generation iteration rolling out and we look forward to continuing to work with GS1 on this initiative.”

**For media enquiries and interview opportunities, please contact Alice Dodge at The Comms Suite
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NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT GS1 AUSTRALIA

GS1 Australia is the leading provider of standards for over 25 industry sectors. We introduced barcoding to Australia in 1979 and today we enable more than 22,000 member companies, of all sizes, to become more efficient by implementing the GS1 system.

We bring businesses, associations and industries together. This blended community comes to GS1 Australia for advice, networking and solutions to their supply chain challenges. We partner with, and help showcase, members, solution providers and industry leaders to demonstrate and encourage supply chain best practice.

GS1 is part of a worldwide network of GS1 organisations in over 118 countries and a global office based in Brussels, Belgium. As a member-based, not-for-profit organisation, our charter is to supply and manage barcode numbers, operate and manage supply chain standards in accordance with our global GS1 system and to provide related solutions and services to our members.

ABOUT MARS WRIGLEY AUSTRALIA

Mars Wrigley Australia is a proud part of Mars, Incorporated – a global family-owned business. We produce some of Australia's best-loved treat and snack brands, including: EXTRA®, M&M'S®, MARS®, SKITTLES®, MALTESERS®, ECLIPSE®, MILKY WAY®, PODS® and JUICY FRUIT®.

Our oldest brand, JUICY FRUIT®, has a heritage of over 100 years in Australia. We've manufactured our refreshing gum and mint products in Asquith, New South Wales for over 60 years and our chocolate products have been manufactured in Ballarat, Victoria for over 40 years. The Mars Five Principles – Quality, Responsibility, Mutuality, Efficiency and Freedom – guide us in everything we do and inspire our Associates to create value for all of our partners and deliver growth we are proud of every day.