

Message from the Chair, Tracey Raso

Front and centre for our industry is the positive impact we have on people's lives

In last year's annual report, I stressed the critical importance of good governance and how this is embedded into the culture and performance of Accord and its member businesses. Reflecting on the challenging times we currently face, it is always helpful to pose that most fundamental question, "what is our purpose?".

Hard-nosed, pragmatically inclined business leaders amongst us would likely answer promptly, "to deliver value via profits for our shareholders". And in this regard, Accord's related purpose would be to deliver value by fostering an enhanced industry reputation for its members.

But, is this the sum total of our purpose? I believe not.

Decades spent managing a business along with my five years chairing Accord have convinced me that, at the end of the day, everything ultimately boils down to having a positive impact on people. And that this is the purpose to which we should all aspire, as it holds the key to success.

Fortunately, having a positive impact on people's lives is deeply embedded in the DNA of the many fabulous products our industry makes. Illustrating the multitudes of products our industry is responsible for is a helpful table in our most recent Accord-EY Economic State of the Industry Report, which lists over 150 individual product types. Each and every one has an essential function.

Let's start with hygiene products in general. Hygiene is two-thirds of health, says the old adage, and industry hygiene products are used in all facets of life.

Our long-running Hygiene for Health website profiles the role good hygiene plays in public and personal health protection. Launched in 2010, the site receives visits from across the globe, with top countries (following Australia) including the USA, India, UK and Philippines.

And while everyday use of personal hygiene products like toothpaste and deodorant is so common that it is barely given thought, a multitude of hygiene products are used daily to keep the wheels of commerce turning and our institutions and public spaces clean and hygienic.

Australia's largest manufacturing sector is food and beverage production and, combined with food and hospitality services, this economic powerhouse relies on safe and effective hygiene products for safe food preparation.

But did you realise that good hygiene is needed more broadly across all manufacturing sectors? There is a myriad of industries where hygiene is essential for product quality and process efficiency. Take solar panels for example, where good hygiene via regular cleaning is important for optimising electricity production.

In institutional settings, there are obvious examples where good hygiene is paramount. Aged care facilities and childcare centres both need to protect their vulnerable populations from the spread of infection and rely on hygiene products like disinfectants and hand washes as part of their hygiene controls.

Hospitals and medical clinics similarly must have the highest level of hygiene protection. And some specialty industry products, like household pest control products, further the hygiene equation by eliminating and controlling disease-carrying pests and vermin.

In all these examples, our industry's hygiene products impactfully safeguard public health.

Health and wellbeing are further advanced by our industry's innovative personal care and beauty products, especially sunscreens and skin care products.

Few products are as significant as sunscreens, given the risks to health posed by sun damage in Australia. Accord members in this market are committed to ongoing innovation for effective and easy-to-apply products that suit families and people with busy lifestyles.



Message from the Chair

Unjustifiably, beauty products are trivialised by some, despite growing evidence about their positive role in personal wellbeing, arising in part from the simple mental boost we obtain from self-expression and feeling our best. Who can forget the height of the pandemic lockdowns, when visits to the hairdresser were prohibited?

While anecdotally this had a large negative impact on wellbeing, an academic study via Accord's German sister association IKW interviewed 1000 people to find that individuals "...perceive hair care products and their hair style as cultivating, socially relevant, expressing values, individualising, structuring in everyday life, and rejuvenating." In all likelihood, other beauty and grooming products play a similar beneficial role for personal and community wellbeing as that measured for hair products in this extensive German study.

Demonstrated in all these examples is the fact that a positive impact on people's lives is front and centre for our industry products. Mirroring this is the work that Accord does to advance sustainability and social responsibility across the industry.

Since the formation of Accord in 2005, the association has steadily created new initiatives and programs that have left lasting impacts. Ten successful programs later and Accord is still actively looking for opportunities to add value, whether it be a revamp of our environmentally preferential labelling scheme for commercial B2B cleaning products, **Recognised**®, the retirement of the 'P' logo for household laundry detergents, or ongoing support for Look Good Feel Better (LGFB).

Look Good Feel Better is all about making a positive impact on people's lives. Not just the thousands undergoing cancer treatment but also the families, friends and loved ones of all who participate in the program's workshops. The figures speak for themselves. Since the first workshop in Sydney in May 1990, more than 190,000 Australian women, men, young adults and teens undergoing cancer treatment across Australia have benefitted from participating in the program. Most pleasingly, LGFB scores an excellent satisfaction rating with the people it is supporting, with over 98 per cent of participants satisfied and willing to recommend LGFB to others.

I urge you to keep an eye out for new initiatives into the future as Accord seeks to broaden its charity support work and continues to advance sustainability across the industry.

As highlighted in my message this year, our purpose is to place people at the front and centre of what we do and so I conclude by thanking the people who make this possible.

To all staff in valued Accord member companies, the Accord Board and I thank you for your ongoing support and for standing united as we continue to advocate on behalf of our innovative industry.

I thank the Accord Secretariat, Bronwyn, Craig, Catherine, Jen, Eryl, Stephanie, Rianna, Paul and Ella, for their dedicated and expert work over the last year. And additionally thank you to my fellow Board Directors for their ongoing commitment and sound governance of the association.

And a final nod of thanks to our industry's many valued partners across other industries and in government. We look forward to continuing positive engagement with you in the coming years.

Tracey Raso

Chair
July 2024

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