



## PRESS RELEASE

**EMBARGOED UNTIL THURSDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019 - 4PM**

### **Drakes Supermarkets Launch New Distribution Centre, marking Official Independence from the Metcash Group.**

Drakes Supermarkets officially open their \$125 million, state of the art Distribution Centre in Edinburgh North, signifying the official beginning of the South Australian family business' independence from The Metcash/Foodland Group.

The Distribution Centre, which was fully funded by Drakes Supermarkets, is equivalent to 3 times the size of the MCG or 40 Olympic sized swimming pools, utilises \$15 million worth of robotics and houses 23,000 separate lines of products, making it the most advanced independent distribution and logistics centre of its kind.

The official opening, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September, will be made by the Honourable Simon Birmingham, Federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment and City of Playford Mayor, Glenn Docherty at the 130,000m<sup>2</sup> site.

The new Distribution Centre joins their fresh fruit and vegetable distribution centre in Pooraka and their meat distribution centre in Beverley and is all part of their self-supply model.

*"Our aim is to save the average South Australian family around \$20 per week at the check-out which equates to over \$1,000 per year, by just having direct relationships with our suppliers and cutting out the middle-man." Roger Drake, Managing Director said. "We are a South Australian, family owned and operated business who has taken the leap to go out on our own, take on the big corporations and provide our customers the biggest range of products for the best possible prices."*

*"It's the little things that count and it's the effects they have on the families that we can really have an impact on." John-Paul Drake, Director of Drakes Supermarkets said, "We like to support local, to support things that are going on in our own local community."*

The Distribution Centre will also be employing a further 140 full-time staff and will provide advanced training to all employees, adding to their over 6,000 current staffing levels.

*"It is really important to us to continue to innovate as a business and provide opportunities and training for our existing staff and future local employees. We want to stimulate the SA economy by keeping it local and looking out for the interest of everyday families and customers in our state, something we don't think is really being done currently." Bob Soang, General Manager of Drakes Supermarkets explained.*

The robotic system used in the Distribution Centre is the first of its type in production and will be used to individually pick inventory items for store replenishment using a "goods-to-person" configuration, ensuring accuracy of store orders and leading to superior deliveries and lower cost.

Within the advanced robotic system, the robotic arm picks 1,000 individual products per hour and the shuttles pick 650 per hour. Implementing robotic piece picking will automate the repetitive pick and pack processes that are labour intensive, difficult for staff and will benefit Drakes employees by reducing physical demands of their jobs and the risk of injury.

Drakes Supermarkets management team travelled around Europe, visiting five different countries to obtain greater insight first hand into the advanced robotics, distribution and logistics systems within the industry.

The team worked with Two Elk, Browne Falconer Architects, Lucid Engineering and WT Engineering in the design and functionality of the building as well as the City of Playford to include landscaping, improve local amenities as well as ensure little to no local traffic impact during the extensive build process.

The design, planning and approvals of the state-of-the-art facility took approximately six months, with the build, fit out and testing taking a further 11 months for completion and employed approximately 300 local tradesmen and women during this process.

The facility will also include a fully equipped gym for all employees to use and all meals will be catered for in the onsite kitchen, including free lunches.

The first trucks will leave the Distribution Centre next week to supply all stores in South Australia with the capacity to load 50 semi-trailers per day.

Drakes Supermarkets was Metcash's largest wholesale supermarket in South Australia and until now, accounted for approx. 3.5% of its food and grocery sales. The loss of Drakes from the Metcash/Foodland Group was reportedly expected to cost the group around \$270 million in sales and \$16 million in earnings. <sup>1</sup>

Drakes Supermarkets is a family owned and operated grocery retailer of 38 stores across South Australia. Over the last 45 years, they have become Australia's largest independent grocery group with stores also in Queensland. Drakes employ over 6,000 people and remains committed to supporting local suppliers, farmers and the local community.

**Available for interviews at the launch are –**

- Roger Drake – Managing Director
- Bob Soang – General Manager
- John-Paul Drake – Director

**For more information about the official launch please contact –  
Drakes Supermarkets Agency Contact**

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Financial Review, June 2019