

Press release

from ASSA ABLOY Division Asia Pacific

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Lockwood Comes of Age as ASSA ABLOY's Flagship Brand

A factory tour of the Lockwood, Oakleigh manufacturing plant in the early 1990's was like entering a time warp. The vast manufacturing facility had changed little since it was first established in the '30's. Masses of metal storage boxes and excess stock towered high above a maze of bare timber walkways and the noise level was deafening.

This was in the very early days of Email's ownership of Australia's leading lock manufacturer, when Lockwood's future was mixed up with washing machines, refrigerators and other whitegoods.

The Lockwood brand was established by John Stanley Ogden, who founded family owned business Ogden Industries in 1934 manufacturing quality padlocks and other locking devices.

In 1943, the original building was destroyed by fire. Following John Ogden's death not long afterwards, Ogden Industries was purchased by Noyes, which moved production to the current facility at Oakleigh. Today ASSA ABLOY's coding department at Oakleigh still holds records of the first master keyed systems, dating back to 1949.

In the following years, the Lockwood brand was bought by the Adelaide Steamship Company and National Consolidated Limited but was sold back to Ogden Industries in 1989. In 1993, Email Limited acquired Ogden Industries, incorporating the Efco and Lockwood brands. The next milestone was the amalgamation of Whitco, Lockwood and Efco into then parent company, Lockwood Australia Limited, in 1995.

In 1999, the world's leading lock group ASSA ABLOY bought a 50% share of Lockwood Australia and formed a new entity, Lockwood Security Products Pty Limited. The winds of change swept through the lock manufacturer as it was embraced by a group of companies that shared its passion for producing quality locking solutions, and a vision to benchmark industry standards worldwide. Since that time an intense focus on R&D and the development of new generation technology has changed the face of Lockwood.

According to long-term employee, Stuart Powell, who with around fifty other employees has been with the company more than 30 years, the changes have been far-reaching and astounding to observe.

ASSA ABLOY

The World's leading Lock Group

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ASSA ABLOY is the world's leading manufacturer and supplier of locking solutions, meeting tough end-user demands for safety, security and user-friendliness. The Group has about 30,000 employees and annual sales of approximately AUD\$5 billion. In Australia ASSA ABLOY's highly distinctive and highly visible brands include Lockwood, Whitco and Interlock. Our customer base includes retail, trade, industrial, architectural, locksmiths and security dealers in the residential housing, commercial building and industrial application markets.

“When I started with the company in 1971, the factory was like most of that time, in that it was poorly lit and without air conditioning,” Powell says. “We received our wages every Thursday in little envelopes, wheeled around by the paymistress but, to me, the most amazing changes I’ve seen have been the technological advances.”

“We used to have 6 girls repetitively handfeeding a machine which milled the profile of the key,” he said. “That has been replaced by a fully automated hopper-fed machine,” Powell said.

“Many of our employees previously confined to labour intensive roles have been upskilled and several now work in customer relations and in other areas of manufacturing,” Powell says. “It’s a natural process as the workplace becomes safer and more efficient.”

ASSA ABLOY assumed full ownership of Lockwood in 2001 and the cultural change continued. Best practice was introduced, the manufacturing plants at both Sherwood in Queensland and Oakleigh, Victoria, were modernised, ground-breaking enterprise agreements were reached and an innovative new environmental waste treatment plant was installed at Oakleigh.

From the employee perspective, the fact that the company is now owned by a lock manufacturer made life easier for Powell, particularly from an equipment and infrastructure point of view.

“We get support for sourcing new machines that assist production because management thoroughly understands the process,” Powell said. “The commitment to quality equipment extends to attending trade shows overseas and acquiring and adapting machinery that will make the manufacturing process more productive.”

“There is an increased support for our R&D engineers, particularly on the experimental work” he said. “This is really leading us to the products of the future, so it’s essential if we are to maintain our position as a market leader.”

In January 2005, Lockwood Security Products formally became ASSA ABLOY Australia Pty. Limited. Lockwood is ASSA ABLOY’s flagship brand and, as such, benefits from the entire group’s vast resources and technological innovations.

On 30 August this year, a \$16 million redevelopment of the 5.4 hectare Oakleigh site is being officially opened by the Honourable John Brumby MP, Treasurer, Minister for State and Regional Development, Minister for Innovation.

According to Tom Devine, General Manager, ASSA ABLOY Commercial Division (Australia), the investment in the new site demonstrates Lockwood's commitment to promoting security and safety awareness and providing innovative solutions to all security hardware needs.

"The journey of Australia's market leading Lockwood brand has been an eventful one, from its first appearance on the humble padlock back in the '30's to its branding of ground breaking technology, like the recently launched Nexion Keyless Electronic Front Door Suite, which took residential security to a new level and set a new benchmark for the Lockwood branded residential security products," Devine said.

"Everything is in place for the iconic Lockwood logo, now manufactured by ASSA ABLOY, to become even more prominent in the production of the highest quality locking solutions in the future and to become a major player in the fortunes of Australian export."

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