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'PERSONAL CARE A POWERHOUSE OF INNOVATION AND GROWTH'

The Personal Care sector is driving growth and innovation in the aerosol industry according to Philip Fleming, Executive Director of the Aerosol Association of Australia.

Local personal care aerosol fillings have increased 34 percent over the past two years according to Association statistics, outstripping the average growth rate of 5.8 percent.

In particular, aerosols continue to dominate the deodorant sector, especially the booming male grooming market.

Key features of the sector, according to Fleming, are its status as the largest growing category (it now accounts for a third of all local fillings); the predominance of aluminium packs; and the domination of global brands.

Fleming points out that with the strong desire by marketers to differentiate their product, the sector is a powerhouse for innovation in design and technology.

"Schwarzkopf 'Fa' really raised the bar in terms of showing how product design could re-invigorate the category," Fleming notes.

With its distinctive matt finish, the product also highlighted the new finishes now available on aluminium cans.

Subsequent developments at the Taree-based aluminium plant of Amcor Aerosols have seen textured finishes (eg. 'Fa' for Men) and the 'flitter' metallic effect used on Unilever's Lux Skin Sense range.

More recently, Unilever's revised "Rexona" range has introduced a shaped (Amcor) can and a radical new actuator.

Developed locally by Precision Valve Australia and D^3 Design, the actuator is unique to Australia and features a two-material moulding of polypropylene and TPE.

Other local developments noted by Fleming include the introduction of a capability to fill bag-in-can aerosols at Ingleburn-based contract packer Pax Australia.

The spirit of innovation – he is quick to point out - is not restricted to multi-nationals.

Local success story Cosmex International, for example, worked with New Zealand based companies Impact Manufacturing and Whurl Plastics for its distinctive "Brazen" range (pictured).