

Lion Mint Australia

Program History

This program was established at the 1976 Melbourne Multiple District Convention, with the idea being brought forward by the then International Representative, the late Lion Jim McLardie. At the Convention, delegates voted to have Council conduct a Multiple District Project around a special Lion Mint, a peppermint candy to be made by Life Savers Australia Limited.

District Governor Maurie Minervini of then District 201J introduced the project on behalf of Council to the tune of "The Candyman Can". He urged the appointment of a Candyman in every club in every District. It was believed, however, that our Multiple District clubs needed a year round fund raiser rather than a once a year project. This project was seen as ideal and would allow Lions more time to work on local community projects, rather than numerous fund raising activities.

Over the years that original vision has NEVER changed. *"To provide Lions Clubs with a year round fund raising opportunity in the form of a Multiple District managed program."*

Initially, the program started slowly with some hesitation by Lions. John Powell, the then Council Secretary, was quick to see the opportunities and benefits to clubs and, as a consequence, made the Council offices available for administration and banking facilities. About 12 months after the program commenced, Lion Neil Williams introduced the virtues of plastic for the display dispenser, the likes of which are still in use today.

New Zealand Lions launched a similar program with Life Savers sending the first container of Lion Mints from Australia in 1981. Life Savers also commenced manufacturing in South Africa for a similar program there. In 1986 the first Lion Mints were exported from Australia to the USA. At about this time, a similar project in the UK failed probably because it did not follow the successful format of the Australian program. In 1987 the Canadian Lions established a similar program, and likewise with Scandinavia and Japan in 1988 and 1989 respectively.

In the past, Lions conventions in Australia regularly featured Lion Mint promotions with Lion Neil Williams and the dancing girls often performing.

In 1991, Life Savers, after a number of take overs, were eventually acquired by Nestlé Australia Limited. In 1992, John Douglas, the past General Manager Industrial for Life Savers, who has since become a Lion, decided to leave the new company and established a private company, International Mints Pty Ltd which then took over the warehousing and distribution of Lion Mints manufactured by Nestlé Australia Limited. All orders were being processed by the Multiple District Office for which they received a handling charge. Promotion was co-ordinated by the Multiple District Lion Mint Committee.

In accordance with acceptable and good business practice, in 1996 it was decided to test the market and as a result Cadbury were awarded a Supply Agreement for a re-badged Lion Mint Australia program. (Contrary to the opinion of others, Multiple District 201 has been "in the mint business" since the beginning of the Lion Mint program). International Mints Pty Ltd declined to tender for the Supply Agreement choosing instead to offer their products directly to Lions Clubs in Australia as they had been doing for overseas clubs and as they continue to do so.

Unfortunately, the taste and packaging of the Cadbury product was apparently not to the liking of the Lions of Australia. Also, the distributor for Cadbury, Mandy Martin, was wound up and this then allowed the legal termination of the contract with Cadbury. Hence, Nestlé Australia Ltd was approached in late 1998 to once again produce the Lion Mint to the original 1976 recipe which is still held by Nestlé to this day by virtue of their acquisition of Life Savers in the early 1980s. The only change has been in the range of

confectionery offered to Lions Clubs with the addition of Fizzers and Musk and an assorted product.

Lions Clubs International (LCI) requires that all products sold using the Lions logo must be done so under licence to LCI. This is recognised by the inclusion, on the wrapping of all Lion Mint Australia products, of the Lions "fund raising" logo as depicted in the footer to this page below. The registered trade marks "Lions Mints" and "Lion Mints" are held by Lions Clubs International. Nestlé are a licensed supplier and the Multiple District, as such, does not need its own separate licence. This is a similar situation to that with the Lions Christmas Cake program. The distinctive Lion Mint Australia logo depicted in this Guide and on all Lion Mint Australia products and advertising was created in 1996 and the copyright to this logo assigned to Multiple District 201 at that time.

In October 2002, Nestlé moved their confectionery manufacturing to New Zealand in order to rationalise this side of their business and aimed at keeping costs down.

The current packaging of a 24 roll inner has also assisted in keeping costs down without significantly compromising the amenity of the display dispenser.

In late April 2006, John Douglas sold the business, International Mints Pty Ltd, to Dollar Sweets Company Pty Ltd of Victoria which has no known affiliation to the Lions of Australia.

Any reference, by other parties, to the Lion Mint Australia program "continuing to make record losses" is simply not true. However, it must be clarified that the decision to go with Cadbury in 1996 and then terminate that arrangement in 1998 did incur significant one-off establishment costs which the program has been recovering from over several years. These costs aside, the program, over and above the approximate \$800,000 in funds raised annually by clubs and after administration costs are recovered, generally makes between \$15,000 and \$35,000 per year for MD201 (depending on stock levels at the time of reporting the financial position and performance of the Multiple District). It has been these funds which have pulled back our position on the establishment costs thus allowing the program to once again accumulate funds from mid 2006 and will do so even faster if more clubs become involved. At the time of awarding the Supply Agreement to Cadbury, most of the existing accumulated funds from the program went to making significant contributions to worthy causes at the direction of Convention which left very little to cover these establishment costs as a result of the contract termination.

The funds available from the sale of Lion Mints over the years have been a great financial boost to clubs for Community work. Australia's Paralympic athletes, the Australian Lions Childrens' Mobility Foundation (the Hart Walker) and the Lions Cord Blood and Childhood Cancer Research Foundations have been some of the worthy recipients of significant funds raised by the program.

Multiple District 201 Lion Mint Chairmen who have made a major contribution to the development and management of this programme are:

PDG Neil Willams OAM (dec.) PDG Neville Elphick
PDG Doug Somerville (res.) PDG Ian Seymour OAM
Ralph Farran-Price Tony Jimmieson
Sam Lochhead

Information on the Manufacturer

September 1st 2008 was a great day for the Lion Mint Australia project. That was the day when we changed to one supplier of our mint products, Dollar Sweets Company Pty.Ltd.

All Lion Mint Australia products are now "Made in Australia"

We have increased the range available. We now have Peppermints, Fizzers, Musk, Spearmint, Sugar Free Spearmint and individual Peppermint Drops.

New header boards have been produced and these reflect the new branding of Lions

Australia, as do the various mint flavours.

Dollar Sweets Company Pty.Ltd handle all orders, deliveries and complaints.

Dollar Sweets Company Pty.Ltd is a manufacturer of cake decorations and confectionery, located in Pakenham, country Victoria.

Dollar Sweets is a proudly Australian family owned company. They have been manufacturing confectionery products in Australia for more than fifty years, using only the highest quality ingredients. They currently employ approximately fifty staff and supply products to the retail, food service and industrial markets across the country.

Dollar Sweets operates a fully documented Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points system including Food Safety and Quality. They have a total commitment to quality and safety in all areas of product processing. Their recording systems document the quality of products and their packaging, metal checks and cleaning.

Dollar Sweets recognizes the important role that the Lions Clubs of Australia plays in their local communities. They agree manufacturing on behalf of the Multiple District is not only a financial perspective from MD's part but also from a community perspective.

Dollar Sweets are committed to working with the Multiple District to ensure the long term growth of Lion Mint Australia program.

(Source: Lions Australia Website 2012)