



Quinoa festival while recently visiting quinoa growers and processors in Peru & Bolivia. Inset: Roger Pitt, Director, Kadac Pty Ltd.

» By Jaime Newborn

# KADAC: Introducing 'Every-day Organics' to Australia

**I**n the words of Roger Pitt, Director of KADAC Pty Ltd – the company today recognised as one of Australia's organic and health food pioneers - he 'took a punt' on organic fifteen years ago when most people had never heard the word.

"I remember being shocked if I saw a mention of organic in the press even five years ago," says the man who 18 years ago bought into what is today a multi-brand business.

"Now, everyone from supermarkets and the food industry, to media, to government are recognising organic food is not just an 'alternative', but has the potential to be very big business."

KADAC began selling dried fruit and nuts into conventional health stores in 1973, and first took an interest in organic in the early 90's.

"My wife found a natural foods trade show on a trip to the US. We became aware of the organic movement, and we began to think about weaving organic into our offer," says Roger.

"The organic position struck a chord

with me personally and I thought it might make sense to us as a business down the track. We started selling organic dried fruit a year or so later."

Today, organic contributes 'significantly' to KADAC's expanding portfolio, and Roger says the risk has paid off.

"We now have about 1,000 certified products in our organics range, and service hundreds of major and independent retail outlets Australia wide – this is from selling no organic 18 years ago!

"We have introduced renowned organic brands such as Green & Black's organic chocolate to the Australian consumer, and have watched large retailers gradually adopt more organic into their offering - Green & Black's has since gone on to become the first organic brand to be mass marketed in Australia."

KADAC distributes a wide range of imported and Australian product for over 200 manufacturers, including goods packaged under their own well-known brands - Lotus, Lotus Organic, Nature First, Nature First Organic and Global

Organic, – and package and process over 150 of their own grains, cereals, flours, liquids, dried fruit, nuts and muesli on-site in Cheltenham, Victoria.

The company also supplies 'benchmark' organic and natural brands to retail outlets including Bellamy's Organic, Clipper organic tea, Amy's organic soup and canned beans, Lakewood organic juices, Nature's Path organic breakfast cereals, Muir Glen organic pasta sauce, Ecover household cleaning products, Global Organics beans and tomatoes, and Larabar raw food bars.

With an ear so close to the ground, they are well equipped to recognise emerging trends in the health, wellness and organic categories.

Roger says what is evident, is shoppers' desire to extend an initial interest in health, further.

"Consumers are becoming more conscious as items like organic become more widely accessible. People are moving from worrying about the nutrition levels of their food, to what they put on their skin,



Organic store in La Paz, Bolivia.

to what they feed their pets, to what they clean their houses with. They also expect to be able to purchase these products wherever they shop; no longer just in specialist stores.

"We've embraced natural and organic personal care for that reason, and in 1999 launched the Avalon beauty label, which

uses certified organic ingredients – it's now one of our best performing brands."

Roger says he believes there will be room in the future for Australian organic manufacturing to localise.

"Australia is still growing – I think we'll see more organic product manufactured on-shore as the market expands to a more

economic manufacturing size and consumer demand directs a greater percentage of locally sourced product."

He says the expansion of the organic industry overall is positive.

"I can sympathise with the position of many of the initial organic pioneers – who set out to change the way people eat and farm but were not always comfortable when big business embraced that.

"However, big businesses can also deliver organic, and its associated benefits, to as many people as possible."

He says the heart of the organic sector - founded on a philosophy of 'doing it differently to make a difference' – will always remain strong.

"For example, I've just come back from visiting quinoa growers and processors in Peru and Bolivia. I got stuck at a quinoa festival in Peru and the only way I could get to Bolivia was to take an intrepid ride on a backpacker's bus with European students who looked like they were having the time of their lives.

"These are the things you do in pursuit of bulk organic ingredients!"

**For more information on KADAC visit [www.kadac.com.au](http://www.kadac.com.au)**



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