

LATEST STAR MART

aimed at improving the convenience shopping experience

profile

By Warren Beaumont

Caltex's first Star Mart '21CC' convenience store that opened at Heathcote, south of Sydney in late August is designed as a more customer-centric store that should assist Caltex to continue its leadership in the convenience store market.

Major features include circular merchandisers and 'lamp shade' focus lighting, timber-look/colour and white laminate facia merchandising around the walls, and extra space.

The store includes sections aimed at time-poor, health-conscious consumers, and immediate consumption and indulgence categories. It is the result of 18 months international and local research and development by Caltex and included consumer insights into shopping habits.

Caltex had not changed the Star Mart concept since the mid-1990s and plans to roll out the new '21CC' concept at five locations in Sydney over 12 months and trial the stores for one year.

National merchandise manager for Caltex Australia, Karim Sumar, said the 140sqm store had the same footprint as the Northmead co-branded concept store but had more lines (approximately 1800 lines).

"If key objectives are met then elements of the offer could be rolled out to all Caltex Star Marts – the offer, not the branding part," Mr Sumar said.

"Everything about the store revolves around the customer and we looked at things such as customer queuing between the entrance and service desk."

One of the major focal points of the store are two large, well-designed, circular-chilled merchandisers supplied by Aven. Here products displayed include: fresh fruit and vegetables; carbonated and energy drinks; juices; meals to go; organic foods; healthy food alternatives; sandwiches; and yoghurts.

Mr Sumar said the circular merchandisers incorporate the 'Healthier Options' range, developed by Caltex with an accredited practising dietician that includes nutritionally approved foods.

Three smaller merchandisers or 'pods' are closer to the aisles and stock indulgence items such as confectionery, premium chocolates and gifting/boxed chocolates, and gluten-free and organic snack bars.

There are three aisle displays that are shorter than a full-size Star Mart store and in confectionery Darrell Lea chocolates are ranged for last minute gift purchases. Displayed at other aisles/facings are confectionery and snacking; health and beauty; snack foods; take-home beverages; and car care.

Beverages take up seven doors in the chilled beverages category. The Pantry contains traditional grocery lines and bread and is promoted with attractive fascia or pelmet-style laminates and graphics. Beneath the signage are messages on white laminate such as 'forgotten something', 'running low' and 'no time to cook tonight'.

"The Pantry is aimed at last minute, top-up shopping and addresses need states with its messages," Mr Sumar said.

Ice cream was moved from floor merchandisers to a rear fridge display next to



The new Star Mart logo has an orange strip that illuminates at night.

The Pantry and now incorporates a range of gelato and sorbet.

A merchandising area is dedicated to magazines and newspapers, and DVD and entertainment products. This caters for customers who indicated in research they needed to be able to browse in such an area.

Also introduced were: updated bathroom amenities; the latest ANZ ATM machine; new uniforms; in-store plasma screens supplied by Directv/POS; new automated tank gauging/dipping equipment; and a trial of Vortex Diesel for passenger vehicles.

Mr Sumar described the customer response to the new store as exceptional. "Shop sales have exceeded expectations in the second week of opening, the convenience offer is proving to be a drawcard, and fuel sales are coming back," he said. **CW**



Circular merchandisers and more space create a better shopping experience.



Karim Sumar ... customer response exceptional.