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## Commitment to community unquestionable

In reference to the story "Respect community culture" (*Shepparton News*, May 6, 2011), I would like the opportunity to remind your readers and our Goulburn Valley community about Coca-Cola Amatil's commitment to SPC Ardmona and our growers.

Since CCA acquired SPC Ardmona in 2005, tens of millions of dollars have been invested into the company which has greatly benefited the farmers, tradespeople and businesses in the local community.

Also:

■ During the recent crippling drought we provided \$10 million worth of interest-free loans, water purchases and subsidies to help many growers stay viable.

■ We built a brand new distribution centre and installed new technology into our facilities to bring our operations into the 21st Century.

■ SPC Ardmona has continued its long history of looking after our communities. Our Share-A-Can days have delivered more than \$10 million worth of our food to the needy through Foodbank Victoria over the past decade, and we are a strong supporter of Goulburn Valley Community Fund, donating almost \$100 000 since the acquisition.

■ Almost all the fruit and vegetables which goes into our iconic brands is locally grown, and the only time we ever use other produce from outside the valley

is when we can't get enough locally (for example, berries or tropical fruit) or if local supply has been affected by drought, flood or frost.

Finally, as you know, the business is undergoing a review, and we will report back on our progress in August.

This review is being conducted because we need to acknowledge the realities of today's trading conditions, marked by the unprecedented strength of the Australian dollar which has negatively affected our competitiveness against imported produce.

SPC Ardmona intends to keep broadening its product base, so that all our brands remain relevant to consumers and help build a sustainable future for the company.

Being financially viable is the best way SPC Ardmona can continue to play a key role in supporting the local community and economy.

It is now up to Australian consumers to choose – either to support domestically produced brands or to understand that if they support cheap imported private label products, it could come at the expense of Australia's fruit and vegetable growers, and in turn, Australian food manufacturers.

*Vince Pinneri  
managing director  
SPC Ardmona*