



## Austwinds International Pty Ltd

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**Media release**

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### **Two top Australian cut flower exporters unite**

Austwinds International and The Australian Flower Company, two of Australia's best known flower exporters joined forces in a merger on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2007.

Between them the companies account for approximately 30% of Australian flower exports, largely focused on Australian native flowers and exotic Proteacea, but also including some exotics.

This is a significant development that will strengthen the industry in Australia by creating a stronger, united company, and benefit both suppliers and customers by increasing operational efficiency, consolidating resources, and increasing economies of scale. From the perspective of customers in North America, Europe, Japan, and other parts of Asia it will reduce duplication and provide the opportunity to source a greater quantity and variety of the best Australian flowers from one source.

Until now both companies had strong market share in different but overlapping markets and crops. The consolidation of the two customer bases opens up new opportunities for the companies, their customers and their growers. Austwinds brings its management, logistical strength and Dutch connections to the partnership. It exports to North America, Japan and other Asian countries, and to Europe through its sister company Cosmoflor, and partners in the Oudendijk group in Holland. Waxflowers, Steel Grass and Thryptomene are its major Australian native flower exports, and exotics include Calla Lilies, Hydrangeas and Cymbidiums sourced from New Zealand.

The Australian Flower Company (AFC) has been exporting for 20 years and has a well-established consignment based market in Japan, with strong sales in Christmas Bush, Kangaroo Paws, Backhousia and Flannel Flower. Its North American customer base compliments the Austwinds market, and is especially strong in Canada. AFC's Cockatoo Brand of Waxflower, consisting of the best tinted, long-lasting hybrid varieties, is well-known in the North American market.

Fred van Wijk, Director of Austwinds said: "We are very excited about this merger that will enable us to offer a wider range of flowers more effectively to our customers". Most operations, including product buying and administration, will be handled by Austwinds from their Melbourne headquarters. Jamie Creer of the Australian Flower Company will continue to be based in Sydney in an advisory role focusing on sales and product development. He says "this merger will make us a formidable player in the world market and I look forward to the success of the new venture, starting in the upcoming export season."

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