

External Zipscreen Rollease Acmeda



# EXTERNAL BLINDS UPDATE

**With changing home designs and the recent heatwave turning consumers' focus more strongly than ever onto external shading solutions, suppliers are reporting continuing innovation and a sense of buoyancy in the market. Belinda Smart reports.**

"The latest developments in outdoor shading for Rollease Acmeda came with the launch of our new Veue Drop Awnings suite and an upgrade to our premium side fastening system, Zipscreen," says General Manager Adam Licciardi. "In the new release of Zipscreen, we

have taken the original concept, improving ease of installation, producing a more robust system that houses a stronger weight bar and tube that enables a full 12 metres square fabric area."

The new Veue Suite offers Straight Drop, Wire Guide, Channel Guide and Pivot Arm, providing a solution that suits any application ensuring similar look and feel. The interchangeability of the Veue and Zipscreen components also provides more solutions with less inventory for fabricators, he says. Meanwhile a new aluminium headbox design for Zipscreen and Veue means consumers can choose between

two variations of an enclosed headbox, two variations of a partial fascia or a completely open bracket system. "Not only can retailers offer outdoor shading at varying price points to suit a range of budgets but they can also provide a variety of configurations to suit the end users' needs."

"On a component level, the heroes of our outdoor shade range are the Ultra-Lock and Automate FT (Fabric Tension) motor. When our revolutionary and patented Ultra-Lock is coupled with our proprietary Automate FT motor, one simple touch is all that is required to

automatically close, lock, and tension the Zipscreen. When the blind is lowered to its closed position, it will be locked in place therefore eliminating the need to manually lock and subsequently un-lock at both sides of the shade."

"Over the last few years, the housing industry has been offering home designs with built in alfresco areas. In many cases, these external rooms are the main focal point of the architecture, bringing the great Australian tradition of outdoor entertaining and garden culture within the home. In truth, as land allotments get smaller and houses get bigger, municipal codes for land to building ratio come into play and therefore the

humble patio that was generally an afterthought, became a built-in sales feature. As homes are increasingly featuring more prominent alfresco areas, the effects from sun, heat, wind and insects become apparent and there is a need to create a more comfortable outdoor entertaining area. There is also an increased awareness amongst consumers that minimising energy consumption can be achieved through installing high-quality external shades."

"The best option to maximise the enjoyment and versatility of an alfresco area is Zipscreen. The system allows pleasant airflow while protecting from the elements, making it the most dynamic and comfortable

shading solution on the market. On the sustainability and energy-saving front, it is a more affordable option than replacing windows and by installing Veue Drop Awnings customers can minimise solar gain through sliding and outward opening windows and doors, along with the more traditional benefit of enclosing outdoor areas."

"The housing market shows no signs of changing its current design path, therefore a growing housing stock needs ever furnishing with drop awnings. Zipscreen is enjoying dramatic market appeal with more and more manufacturers and retailers switching for an easier installation, flexible design and reliable business partner."

Australian Window Furnishings Jenny Brown, National Marketing Manager, Australian Window Furnishings, confirms the Photon One Solar Powered Motor for Luxaflex Evo Awnings and Luxaflex System 2000 Awnings is one of the latest additions to the external blinds market. Photon One Solar Powered Motor is the perfect energy efficient solution for homeowners wanting to reduce a home's heat gain, as this innovative system harnesses the power of the sun for operation without compromising on technology or features. Homeowners typically spend 41% of household energy expenditure managing the temperature of their homes. "Traditional motorised awnings



Photon One Solar Powered Motor for Luxaflex Evo Awnings



Luxaflex Everscreen Fabric range

require hard wiring which can be difficult, expensive or just not practical for the homeowner. By utilising solar power, it is now possible to install an awning to shade any window, providing the home with the best possible solar protection in addition to no load on the home's electrical bill."

Another major addition to Australian Window Fashions external blinds is the refreshed colour palette available in the Everscreen Awnings fabric range. "There are now 13 colours in the 5% openness range, eleven of which are new, from neutral to clear and have been designed to co-ordinate with top selling Dulux and Colorbond colours so that homeowners can easily find a colour that matches their current colour scheme. There are also five colours available in the 1% openness range which account for 23% of volume since their launch."

"Motorisation in the external blind market is continually growing in interest. With customers continually seeking to incorporate smart living into their homes, Luxaflex PowerView Motorisation is proving popular. We see that the key progression in external blinds lies in operation rather than the product itself and PowerView Motorisation is the way of the future. Being able to combine Luxaflex Evo Awnings, a range that represents the latest in design, styling and energy efficiency, with an intelligent and intuitive motorisation option is a very exciting advancement in this

category."

Brown concludes by saying that sales continue to be strong for external blinds, "particularly given this season's heatwave which has affected almost all of Australia."

"In particular, Luxaflex Evo Awnings appeal to consumers for its temperature control features that result in real cost savings. Luxaflex Evo Awnings prevent the heat of the sun entering the home and this product has been proven to save up to 60% off cooling costs for a typical year in an Australian household."

"We are confident with the combination of our quality products, that have been engineered and designed to suit the harsh Australian climate - such as our Evo Awnings range, along with our innovative advances in the operation of these external blinds, this category will continue to grow and have a steady demand."

## Turnils

Released in late 2016, the Turnils FA22 Piccolo folding arm awning is the most compact member of the Sirocco range, confirms Vera Meharg, Bricos and Hunter Douglas Components Marketing Manager. "Although this awning is designed and positioned as an entry level awning, it has all the features and benefits of a fully engineered and designed European awning."

"The Piccolo is tiny but mighty - its compact open style makes

it perfectly designed for smaller spaces, like courtyards or townhouses however it still can cover a width of five metres and a projection of three metres, making it very versatile."

"Style and function are not limited to the larger size offerings either, with Piccolo available in three colour options, with all features and options of that of its larger counterparts from Turnils. The Piccolo can be easily operated with a manual crank or a motorised option. If motorised with a Merger motor, an optional sun and wind sensor can be used to retract the awning in windy conditions and to open the awning when the sun reaches a specific level. With an optional premium finished hood to protect the awning from sun and rain, the Piccolo offers a full suite of features."

"Like the rest of the Turnils folding arm awnings range, the Piccolo is designed and manufactured in Sweden to suit Australian conditions. Using Dyneema tape, instead of metal chains in the arms, gives the awning increased strength and durability - this is standard across all Turnils folding arm awnings and makes the new Piccolo an affordable awning that doesn't compromise on quality."

"Within the outdoor category consumers want more choice to suit their lifestyle, space and design aesthetic as consumers and businesses alike want a more indoor/outdoor living

fluidity. This has meant, among many changes, the folding arm awning category become more popular with both domestic and commercial applications due to its brilliant functionality in providing sun protection. "

"In high density compact-style living, the introduction of the Piccolo opens up the awning category to consumers who otherwise didn't have a high quality compact solution available to them."

## ICLSA

ICLSA Managing Director Peter Monkhouse confirms the business is currently upgrading both its Dtrack side retained and EZE Wire Guide blind systems. "The Dtrack will be getting new two part bottom rail endcaps for improved and easier installation as well as small changes in the side channel top stop caps and the EZE Wire Guide will have a new bottom bush, giving lower to the ground positioning for the bottom bar and we will also have available pre-swaged 3.2mm 7x7 stainless wire."

"While there is no doubt that side retained blinds across all brands are very popular both in windows of the newer style homes, without eaves and as awnings to enclose entertainment areas, there is definite evidence of an increase in wire guide blinds and still a strong demand for the traditional 'Auto-Awning'," says Monkhouse.





"Speaking with other members of both the BMAA and the STA, there is an overall positive feeling and attitude about business," says Monkhouse. "Our own sales indicate a return to the levels of several years ago. There has been an increase in TV and media advertising by some fabricators and this is having a beneficial effect for all within the industry. The continuing theme of energy efficiency, reducing power cost and doing it in a smart architectural way has also influenced both the home owner and commercial building designer/occupier."

He also notes that an ongoing challenge for the industry is skill related. "It is not uncommon to have sales people with limited product knowledge or understanding, selling the easiest, best margin product possible, which may not necessarily be what the customer really wanted, so that a shrinking group of skilled installers struggle with fitting either the incorrect product for the application or they do not fully understand the correct operation of the blind/awning, resulting in return visits to rectify the job."

“

Our own sales indicate a return to the levels of several years ago. There has been an increase in TV and media advertising by some fabricators and this is having a beneficial effect for all within the industry. The continuing theme of energy efficiency, reducing power cost and doing it in a smart architectural way has also influenced both the home owner and commercial building designer/occupier.

---

Peter Monkhouse  
**ICLSA Managing  
Director**

Courtesy Lukris Trading

ICLSA Lukris