

THE FLIGHT TO QUALITY

The motorisation category continues to evolve at warp speed, with technological innovations including apps and more driving a growing focus on well-positioned, energy efficient and future focused products. Belinda Smart reports

Australian Window Furnishings

According to Jenny Brown, Australian Window Furnishings National Marketing Manager, the company continues to focus on energy-efficient and motorised products to meet growing demand.

“Australian Window Furnishings understands that the ‘automated’ home is increasingly becoming a necessity in new homes, where homeowners want to push a button or program a system to do the work for them. With this in mind, Australian Window Furnishings is committed to continually providing the latest innovative products in the window furnishing market.” Brown says the future of the category is all about technology, adding that although window fashions with motorisation are not new, continual improvements on existing technologies are critical.

“We have seen huge demand for products such as the market leading Luxaflex PowerView Motorisation which allows individuals to easily and conveniently control their window coverings from anywhere in the world.”

An intelligent operating system, PowerView allows homeowners to control their blinds throughout the day with the simple press of



Photon One Solar Powered Motor.

a button, tap of a mobile device or by scheduling personalised settings (called ‘Scenes’) that will activate automatically.

“The ergonomically designed PowerView Pebble Remote is the perfect fusion of form and function for consumers and is available in seven colours.”

Another major push that Australian Window Furnishings has noted in the motorisation space is the desire for energy efficient solutions.

“Our Photon One Solar Powered Motor for external awnings is the ideal product to meet this need as it utilises the power of the sun for operation. This has been so popular it’s been hard to keep up with demand,” says Brown. Suitable for use with straight drop awnings, the solar-powered motor is ideally used with the entire Luxaflex Evo Awnings Range, as well as Luxaflex System 2000. The motor is powered by a 24v DC battery, which is charged by the sunlight, and operated via remote control or wireless wall switch.



PowerView Pebble Remote



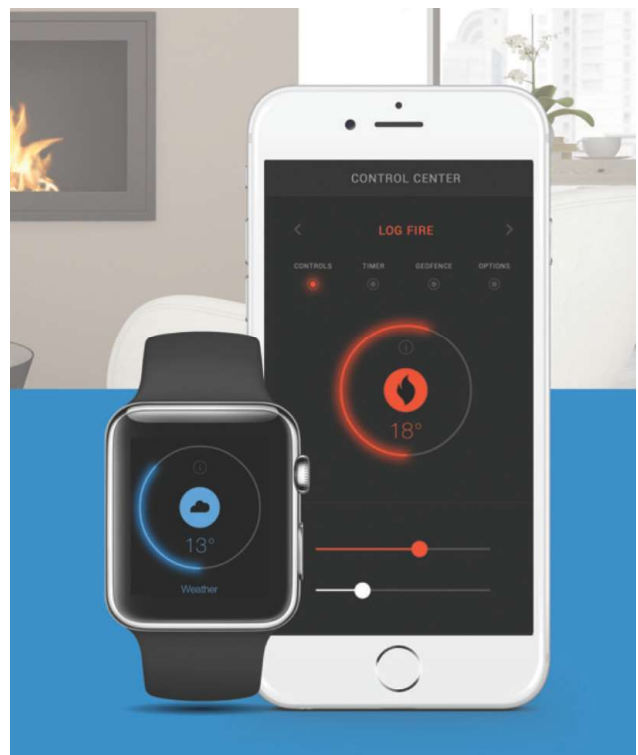
Blindware

Blindware’s Grant Norton describes technology, in the form of apps, as the hot trend right now.

“App control of blinds, curtains, awnings or any other window covering is fast becoming a common request from retailers and consumers. The ability to control devices from your mobile phone, iPad or other smart devices is mission critical for success in modern day motorisation.”

“However, just having an app is no longer enough. Today’s successful apps have highly sophisticated features that allow totally automated control; features that operate without the need to even pick-up your phone or smart device. Also, control must extend

beyond just window coverings. Air-conditioning, heating, lighting, fireplaces and other appliances are being integrated to create a single integrated experience. Automation today means that your environment is controlled by a combination of scenes, gestures and passive movements. Walk 50 metres from your house, or drive through an imaginary circle 10km around your office and your blinds close, heater / aircon turn off and security lights come on if dark. Travel back through the same virtual ‘fence’ and everything reverts to its original state, as if you never left. This is now very intelligent automation, available now for much less than consumers might imagine.” Blindware has now integrated the iGloo system into its entire



Motolux motor range, including tubular motors, motorised curtain tracks, roman tracks and all other minor automated blind systems. "The beauty of iGloo is in its simplicity. We wanted to control a wide range of products, but the issue was how to do it economically for the end consumer. At its most basic level, iGloo automates by taking control of the remote control, utilising a patented chipping process that allows your smart device to talk to and control the remote. In this way, there are no expensive boxes sitting in the middle. The cost for the upgrade to the remote is quite low and the App is free.

"Of course, it does not just stop at chipping a remote. Integration of a simple, low cost hub can provide control on your phone from anywhere in the world. Integration is easy and in general is completed by the consumer by following a simply instruction set."

The overall trend in motorisation appears to be a flight to quality, which signals good things for the industry, Norton says.

"Companies are keen to work with quality systems and suppliers and are sick of unreliable products. Low noise and reliable operation are expected and suppliers must deliver. Also 'smart motors' are moving quickly into the market. Smart motors can communicate bi-directionally with a controller and send / receive real time information, such as position information, motor diagnostics and much more."

In terms of how the category is performing, he says while motorisation has been around for a long time now, app based automation is just starting to take off.

"This technology is a game changer for sure. Previously, customers needed to buy very expensive systems to achieve integrated automation. These



systems could cost between \$20,000 and maybe \$100,000 for a large home or office building. Now, the cost is measured in the \$100s, certainly not more than \$1,000 to \$2,000 for a very large and fully integrated site." While it is still early days, sales are quickly accelerating, albeit off a very small base. Norton says. "We have never sold as many motors as we do today. the market has recognised the inbuilt quality of our Motolux motors and sales continue to grow strongly. However, only a small percentage so far includes full automation using iGloo, but interest is growing quickly. One reason for the delay in

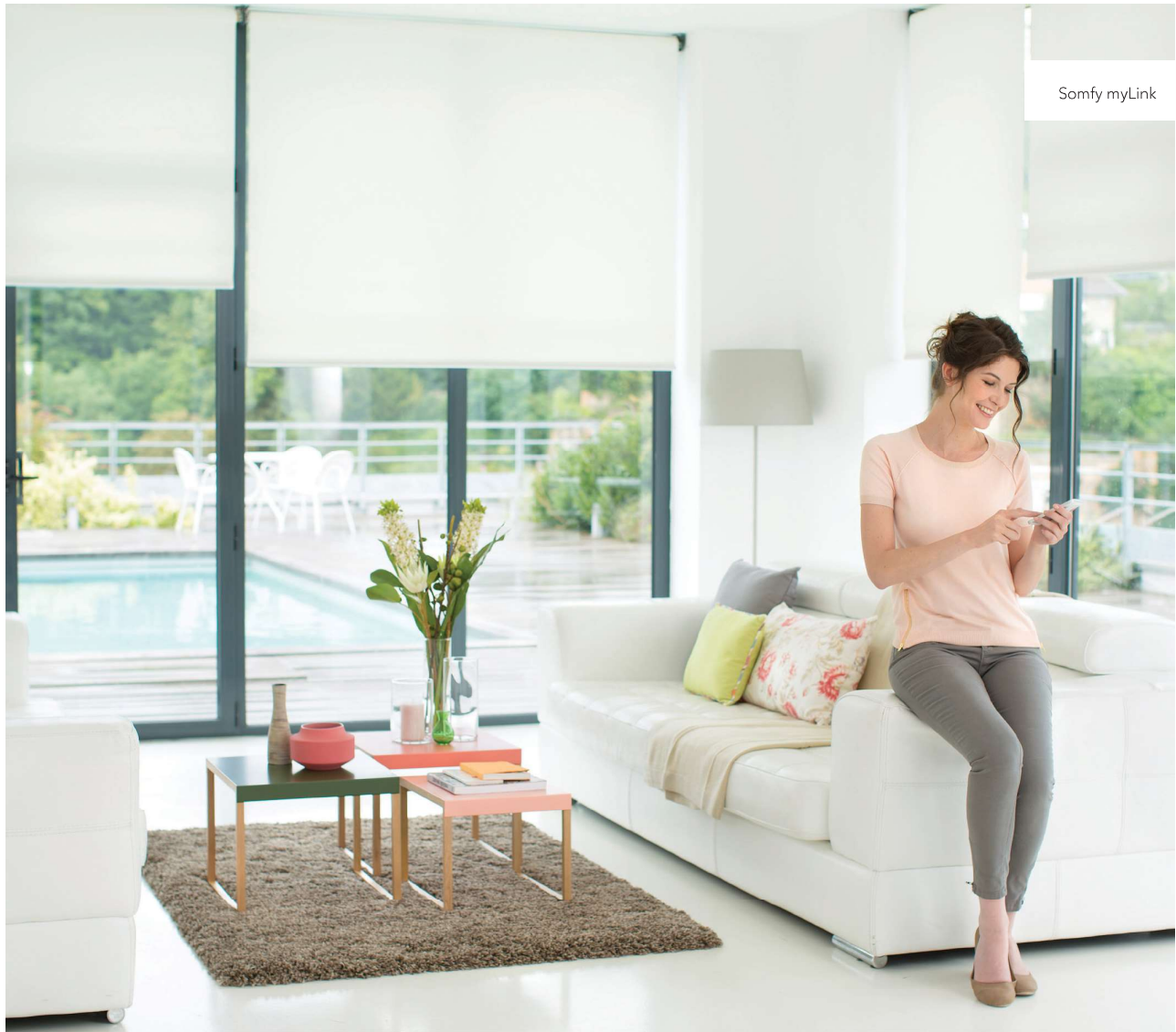
sales acceleration has been the need for iGloo to complete development of some critical parts of their apps, which is now complete, and we are about to launch into the market. This category has a huge future and Blindware will be a key player in providing app based control of window covering products.

Somfy

Somfy is promoting the multiple benefits of its myLink system. "Somfy myLink enables users to control motorised applications from home or away, with one plug, and no wires," says Somfy Oceania Marketing Manager Jade Coote. "Somfy myLink

puts your customer in control, so that they can operate up to 20 products or groups of products including motorised blinds, curtains, awnings, screens, shutters and RTS enabled lighting with their favourite mobile device whether at home or away."

App Control harnesses the power of mobile technology including smart phones and tablets and upgrade to a convenient and relevant control option for Somfy motorised solutions, while remote access allows activation of Somfy motorised applications even away from home with a single tap, to maximise the many lifestyle benefits they provide



Somfy myLink

such as energy savings, UV protection and privacy.” The system also enables control of timed events, “scheduling scenes to automate motorised applications on a seven day schedule so your customers can effortlessly enjoy their many benefits.” Meanwhile an on-screen Setup Wizard allows intuitive installation and setup. “The system plugs directly into a wall socket and then you simply follow the on-screen set-up wizard. It’s so easy!” “It’s also flexible, with Somfy myLink allowing your customers to choose the best way to control their motorised applications

with options such as individual control, group control, and more.” And it’s compatible. It controls all Radio Technology Somfy RTS products including blinds, curtains, awnings, screens, and roller shutters as well as RTS enabled lighting devices. The system can be used with remote control (3G/4G), meaning commands are sent from smartphone/tablet via the 3G/4G Internet network. It can also be controlled from home, with commands sent from smartphone/tablet via the home’s WiFi.

