



**“I feel privileged and lucky to have been part of The Warehouse success. I’ve had the time of my life.”**

## **farewell, neil plummer**

Merchandise director Neil Plummer is used to setting goals; he’s been doing it throughout his retail career since he started - aged seventeen - as a cadet trainee at Woolworths. Now, as he comes to the end of another career phase, he’s setting a new and quite different goal: to run the New York marathon in 2003, just after his 50th birthday. It’ll take a bit of training but given his track record it’s a very achievable goal.

Neil has been The Warehouse merchandise director, and a board member, since the company went public in 1994. He started on 2 April 1990 - “I remember it well,” he says - after nearly twenty years moving through the L. D. Nathan retail businesses ending as marketing manager for the AWL division. His extensive retail knowledge, especially of sourcing and buying product, made him the perfect choice when The Warehouse was expanding its buying team.

Now, as Neil is about to step down from his role as an executive director, he looks back with pleasure

and pride at the company’s growth over the last few years.

“When I started we had just reached sales of sixty million dollars,” he says. “We had fewer than twenty stores. Now The Warehouse has seventy-five stores and we’re in Australia planning to open twenty new stores a year.”

Neil can take a lot of credit for the company’s Australian success. He recalls that he and Stephen Tindall made the first trip there in April 1999. By 2000 he was there ‘a couple of times a month’. Now he’s in Australia Monday to Thursday every week.

Now that chapter is ending. But at only forty-eight this is not ‘retirement time’ for Neil. He still enjoys travelling, buying and trading, and will continue going to the United States - his model for retailing - and to China which he considers the ideal source for successful merchandisers.

The key to Neil’s buying and merchandising success

is probably his easy, relaxed manner - he’s just ‘one of the team’ - and this typically Warehouse attitude comes through when he reminisces.

“One of the real highlights for me has been the development and growth of our people,” he says. “I’ve taken a lot of pleasure from that. It’s helped make this the best job in New Zealand.”

And of the company’s success: “I feel privileged and lucky to have been part of The Warehouse success,” he says. “I’ve had the time of my life.”

Now, as he moves into a new time in his life, he’ll have more time to spend with his wife, Judith, who, he says, has been ‘an inspiration’, and his four children. He wants to fish more. To get involved with rugby coaching and management. And he wants to get his golf handicap (18) down.

“But, above all,” he says. “I have to train for that marathon.”