

## Fashion garments produced in Albury

*Greg Ryan*

In 1943, Alan Jones and Ken McCargill began a clothing factory which they called 'Alamac.' The workrooms were located in Olive street, south of the Colonial Mutual Life (CML) building. The factory was engaged in defence production and had contracts for drill trousers, drill berets and bandoleers. In July 1945 the *Border Morning Mail* told its readers that in the first 12 months of production "a quarter of a million articles of clothing and equipment have been manufactured for the Army and 100,000 for civilian requirements."

The machinists were arranged in two lines. Each machinist sewed a single process then passed the article to the next girl who sewed their piece. In this way, the article began at one end of the line as pieces of cloth and reached the other end as the finished article. There were about thirty girls in each line, so the Olive street factory employed approximately sixty.

Around 1945, the owners of the 'Alamac' sold their business to a Melbourne based company, White Manufacturing, who changed the operating name to 'Adelyn.' The new owners purchased land on the corner of Wodonga Place and Hovell Street and built their factory. Eventually all the staff moved to the new factory and four lines of machinists were set up at Hovell street factory and the Olive street operations closed.



At its height Adelyn, formerly known as Alamac, employed around 400 staff, mostly women.

Following the end of the war, Adelyn switched to peacetime production. Women's wear was produced under a number of fashion labels. At its peak Adelyn employed 400 staff, mostly female with very few male staff.

In September 1960, an article in *The New Idea* reported that the factory was "producing dresses on Australia's only conveyor-belt system in the clothing trade at the rate of 17 in

less than nine minutes.” The article went on to record that “one of the group records is the manufacture of 1,033 belts, perfect in every detail, by seven girls in one day.”

Some staff remember the Adelyn work fondly, as social activities among the staff were many. Adelyn sponsored a queen in Albury’s annual Floral Festival and many hours were spent in fund raising and float construction. Others however, remember that they had to finish 35 dresses in one hour, “it was slave labour.”

After Adelyn closed down, the factory became a YMCA Activities Centre. In 1979 the building became home to the Flying Fruit Fly Circus. In 2009 the building was demolished and replaced by the ‘Fruit Flies’ new facility on the site.