

## CASE STUDY

# Chill and freeze Smartlockers are revolutionising retail in Australia

With online shopping on the rise, the introduction of Panasonic chilled and frozen automated Smartlockers at Australian retail outlets has improved choice for consumers and boosted margins for businesses.

**Client: Australian supermarket retailers**

Location: Australia

Product(s) supplied: **Smartlocker**

## Challenge

To handle continuous online orders pre and post pandemic efficiently and to offer convenient shopping to customers

## Solution

Panasonic Smartlockers outside of supermarkets and petrol stations improve customer experience and reduce the number of home deliveries made by stores

"The Smartlockers are a game-changer for these supermarkets. They offer a convenient, cost effective and more eco-friendly solution to the online shopping boom."

Yasuhiro Oda, General Manager, Panasonic Connect Europe GmbH

With online orders continuing to grow pre and post pandemic, Australian supermarket retailers have deployed Panasonic Smartlockers outside their stores and petrol stations for customer order collections, improving customer convenience and reducing the number of home deliveries the stores must make.

The retailers were initially attracted by the complete Smartlocker solution on offer from Panasonic, including its comprehensive nationwide Aftersales partner service. Many competitors only offered individual hardware or software integration elements of the Smartlocker solution and Aftersales support across the country was patchy.

After an initial pilot project in 2019 with Smartlockers, one popular supermarket chain recognised that customers preferred the speed and convenience of collecting their purchases from lockers rather than instore. After switching the grocery delivery to Panasonic Smartlockers, online orders each week for collection increased four-fold. Following a successful 6-month pilot project, the retailer has increased its order for indoor and outdoor Smartlocker units by 500% and they are currently being rolled out nationwide.



### **New generation Smartlocker**

Panasonic Smartlocker is a modular designed system, offering a range of four different temperature lockers – ambient, chilled, freezer and heated. With the long, hot Australian summers reaching extreme temperatures of up to 50°C, the chiller and freezer options were the ideal choice for the retailers. The indoor and outdoor versions are available in 6, 8, 10 or 12 door units managed by an inbuilt system using a central control screen. The system can be used standalone or connected to ecommerce and order management systems via the cloud.

### **Customer convenience**

For the users it means a fast, secure and contactless delivery solution, allowing goods to be collected and returned easily, efficiently and flexibly. With 24/7 access, the Panasonic Smartlocker allows customers to collect items at a time and location that suits them. Using Panasonic Vacuum Insulated Panel (VIP) technology, which maintains the ideal temperature in the locker using less energy and CO2 emissions, customers can also be certain that foods will be kept safely in a temperature-controlled area. They simply unlock the Smartlocker, hang their own collection bags on the hook on the door and pack their goods.



### Operator insight and savings

For the operator, the Smartlockers save time, resources and operational expense. It means orders can be quickly loaded for collection without taking up valuable storage space in the stores. Smartlocker automation also cuts the risk of human error. With monitoring capabilities and data encryption, operators can verify access to lockers, including pick-up and drop-off times.

In addition, home delivery requirements are reduced, as some shoppers prefer to collect orders as they pass by. This can lower overall delivery costs with fewer stops, logistics vehicles and routes required, while at the same time decreasing traffic congestion and carbon emissions. It also automates time-consuming tasks such as manually logging signatures, organising redeliveries and reporting.

The ability to track and analyse usage data from the Smartlockers has enabled the business to optimise staffing and usage based on customer behaviour. One retailer reported that on average, customer orders are ready to collect within 90 minutes. The goods remain in the lockers for 70 minutes before collection and customers take just 2 minutes to collect their goods and leave. They are also able to track important data, such as the size of orders, peak times for collection and then plan for effective staff resourcing.

Lastly, the Smartlockers, with their modular design, are built for extended periods of long use with remote technology management and seamless software upgrades over the Cloud.

Following the initial successful proof of concept, one retailer has now rolled out different Smartlocker units across its stores and petrol stations with convenience stores.

Yasuhiro Oda, General Manager, at Panasonic Connect, said: “The Smartlockers are a game-changer for these supermarkets. They offer a convenient, cost effective and more eco-friendly solution to the online shopping boom. Customers can order and collect at their convenience. Stores can resource efficiently based on demand and reduce local delivery costs and their carbon emissions.”

“Retailers tell us that the temperature controlled capabilities of the Panasonic Smartlockers and their reliability make them stand out in the market. In addition, their ease of use for customers and the ability to customise the exteriors is attractive. The Smartlockers still look great even after a long summer in the Australian sun!”

Looking to the future, uses for the Panasonic Smartlockers look set to expand. The heated Smartlockers are ideal for takeaway collection and with the growth of daily meal ingredient delivery services, chilled local community Smartlockers are perfect for collecting evening meal ingredients on the way home from work. Further into the future, Smartlockers are an option for order collection from automated supermarket warehouses – where products are picked and placed automatically and then stored in a Smartlocker for customer collection.



