in brief

TARGET'S NEW WOODEN RANGE

Fisher-Price has launched a traditional range of wooden toys to be sold exclusively in Target.

The new wooden puzzles and blocks range will help children recognise shapes, numbers and animals and teach hand-eye coordination while they play.

Key pieces in the range are My First Stacking Nest Puzzle – a six-piece puzzle that helps children learn to count; My First Animal Friends Wooden Puzzle – which lets children match the five shaped animals to cut-out shapes and animal names; and My First Rainbow Puzzle – a bright four-piece puzzle that allows children to create their own wooden rainbow.

The new collection of eight toys is suitable for children aged six to 36 months and will be available exclusively through Target, in stores and online from September.

AUSSIE TEEN NEW RUBIK'S CHAMP

17 year-old Melburnian Feliks Zemdeg won the 2013 Rubik's Cube World Championship in Las Vegas recently.

Zemdeg won three titles at the event, including solving the 3x3 Rubik's Cube in 8.18 seconds, the 4x4 Rubik's Cube and the 3x3 Rubik's Cube one-handed solution event.

Zemdeg's prize haul includes a $5000 purse, a championship trophy and other Rubik's Cube-related goodies. He beat current world record holder for the fastest solve (5.55 seconds), the Netherlands' Mats Velk, and Germany's Sebastian Weyer.

More than 575 competitors from 37 countries put their speed-cubing skills to the test over three days.

Colorific acquires Jolly Kidz

COLORIFIC has acquired Protoys' nursery brand, Jolly Kidz. The sale was announced on 17 July by Peter Levi (pictured above left), managing director of Colorific, and Bryan Sher (above right), joint managing director of Protoys.

Protoys purchased Jolly Kidz in 2009, and extensively redeveloped the brand into a respected children's furniture and nursery equipment line with a strong focus on practicality, innovation and quality.

Bryan Sher said that the sale of Jolly Kidz will allow the business to focus on existing wholesale and corporate divisions, and develop several exciting new strategies.

"It was an opportune time for us to capitalise on the brand value we've developed over the past four years and we are delighted to have achieved this. After interest from several parties, we are very happy the brand and products are going to Colorific. We have no doubt they will continue to develop the range and service our customers at the highest level," said Sher.

The new Jolly Kidz range will include tables and chairs, safety gates, playpens, easels, play accessories and more.

Colorific MD, Peter Levi, described the acquisition to *Toy & Hobby Retailer* as "very significant" and " a real win-win opportunity for both companies".

"We've long been been perceived as a company that is mostly focused on arts and crafts. We've been working in other areas for a number of years, and we particularly wanted to increase our presence in the preschool area," said Levi.

"We see that sector as the biggest area in the toy industry and one of the fastest growing. Jolly Kids already sells in a number of countries around the world, and of course, Colorific is an international company too; sold in about 50 countries as well. So the acquisition gives us great synergy, and allows us to be able to add preschool products not only domestically, but also internationally," he said.

"The other thing is that we're known for having a very strong design and development team and we're going to apply their skills to this range as well, to come up with some innovative preschool furniture and other preschool products."

"We think an investment in product development will come up with some, perhaps, left field ideas to make it a bit more exciting. There's no reason products like the playpens can't be attractive and the sort of place kids would want to be. We develop a very broad range of products every year, and we want to apply that expertise to this range."

The Jolly Kidz purchase is the company's fifth acquisition over 23 years, a roster that includes Educraft – wooden craft products; S & D Elly – dough and blackboards; Glow Zone – glow in the dark products, and Fun 'n' Fashion – crystal girls accessories and cosmetics.

"It's steady growth, and we think that's a good way to do it in addition to the organic growth that we work to achieve every year," said Levi.

"We've had a great first half this year – very significant growth in the past six months – particularly in our domestic business. Our two new TV-promoted brands, Suteki and Roomies, have been really well accepted. Roomies has been ranged by Toys R Us international, as well as achieving great domestic distribution. Suteki will be distributed in a major international market by one of their top four distributors."

While Levi would not be drawn out on further details about the identity of the distributor, he did say it was one of the highest profile names, and that Suteki will be heavily TV-promoted in 2014.

"Colorific products are all based on our company's values of innovation and quality, and the Jolly Kidz brand has been renowned for both these attributes for many years. We look forward to building on the success of this fantastic brand." ❊