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Allied out to lick the cream



by Nick Nichols
business editor

ALLIED Brands is about to leap on to the international stage after winning an exclusive deal to serve up coffee, cookies and ice-cream at next year's World Expo in Shanghai.

The agreement will see the listed Gold Coast franchisor supply the Australian pavilion at the event, which is expected to attract 70 million visitors over six months from April.

The Australian pavilion is targeting seven million of those visitors, which Allied Brands said positioned the company for major expansion opportunities.

"This is a significant win for the company," said Allied Brands chief executive Shane Radbone.

He said the agreement would shore up Allied Brands' targeted pre-tax profit of between \$6.6 million and \$7.2 million this financial year, as well as contribute to the 2011 bottom line.

Allied Brands will set up shop at the Expo with two of its biggest brands, Cookie Man and Baskin-Robbins.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade expects to cater for more than 12,000 VIP guests at the pavilion, who will top off sampling some of Australia's prime produce with cookies and cream courtesy of Allied Brands.

Next year's Expo will be the largest held, with 1800 exhibitors confirmed.

Allied Brands is estimating over the six months between April and October that it will draw through 10 tonnes of

and New Zealand, but its global ambitions rest with Cookie Man.

The business already has a broad international presence, particularly in India where it has 48 stores.

It also has operations in China, Greece and Singapore, while Allied Brands is poised to open in Cyprus and Kuwait.

Mr Radbone told shareholders at last month's annual general meeting that the Cookie Man expansion would underpin its forecast rise in profit this financial year of up to 33 per cent.

Yesterday, he was confident Expo would further the company's global plans for Cookie Man, particularly in Southeast Asia.

"Southeast Asia offers the greatest opportunity for us in the short term," he said.

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The Expo deal was brokered for the company by events organiser IMG, which approached Allied Brands with the opportunity.

Apart from Cookie Man and Baskin Robbins, Allied Brands operates the Australia franchise chains of Kenny's Cardiology Villa and Hut Awesome