

The Metters Company

(West Torrens and Beyond)



1936 Metters Catalogue

West Torrens Historical Society Inc.

(G. Grainger, 2022)

*Every effort has been made to provide complete and accurate information,
please advise of any errors or omissions.*

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FRED METTERS

Frederick Metters was born in Melbourne, Victoria, in May 1858, the eighth child of James Metters (c.1821-1881), a Cornish-born bricklayer, and his wife Susan nee Flux (c. 1824-1875) from the Isle of Wight.

By 1869 James was employed as a stove setter and Fred worked for him. In the mid-1880s Fred moved to Adelaide and worked as a clerk and then as an ironmonger's assistant.



1905 Fred Metters

In October 1883 Fred married Frances Fisher (c.1860-1923) at the Clayton Congregational Church, Kensington; they went on to have three sons and three daughters. The family lived in Melbourne for a couple of years in the late 1880s where Fred worked for 'Metters Bros', a stove retailing and later manufacturing business set up by his elder brothers Charles and John. In 1890 Fred and his family moved back to Adelaide.

1891 'TOP-FIRE' OVEN PATENT

In April 1891 Fred Metters patented a new 'top-fire' wood-fuelled oven. According to the patent 'the fire is in a chamber on the top [of the oven], having sliding doors in front, and in which the draught is caused to pass down the full width of the sides, under the bottom and allowed to spread all over the back of the oven' (The oven was similar to one being manufactured by his brothers in Victoria).



Metters No 2 wood-fired stove [abc.net.au]

Shortly after the patent was issued Metters established, with capital of £40, a small business in Victoria Street, Adelaide, simply known as 'Fred Metters', in which to sell various sized versions (from the smallest No. 1 to No. 6) of his 'Patent Improved Oven'. He travelled to country shows around South Australia demonstrating the oven. Business was soon thriving. By February 1892 Metters was employing sixteen men and making thirty stoves a week.

1893 NORMA AND LURLINE STREET FACTORY

Confident of the future of the business, Metters saw the need for a substantial suburban manufacturing plant. In March, May and June 1893 he bought for £166 three allotments totalling 0.62 acres (0.25 hectares) on the northern side of Norma Street, West Adelaide - from 1944 renamed as a part of Mile End - just west of Fisher Terrace/South Road.



1935 Aerial View Henley Beach Road/Norma Street, west of South Road (was Fisher Terrace) [WestMaps public]

Here Metters built a galvanised iron factory which opened in early November 1893. At the same time he opened a new showroom and office at 72 Hindley Street (corner of Blyth Street). In September 1899 Metters bought a further three allotments on the southern side of Norma Street for £185 to accommodate the factory's growth.

In 1894-95 he had bought 0.62 acres (0.25 hectares) on Lurline Street, directly behind the Norma Street site, for £945. Here, 18 Lurline Street, was the site of the impressive ten-room Metters family home until 1909. [See end for more on the Metters home].

The factory's first few months were difficult. Newspapers almost immediately noted that the factory was 'an annoyance to several families in the vicinity' because of issues relating to its noise, smoke, unpleasant fumes and drainage.

Residents were also concerned about declining property values and further, that 'the workmen do all in their power to annoy a lady whose property adjoined the building'.

Metters made changes to the factory, including moving the noisiest activities to a new shed and installing an absorption well to hold some of the foul water that had previously flowed into street drains.

For a few months residents seemed mollified, but in February 1894 there were more complaints about the factory's noise levels. This time, backed by legal advice, residents and the Thebarton council threatened to sue Metters if things did not improve.

More changes were made and the matter lapsed for a time, though occasional complaints about the factory still emerged (in 1925, 1926 and 1954).

1894 A NAME FAMILIAR TO EVERY SA HOUSEWIFE

By late 1894 Metters had sold over 5,000 ovens in South Australia and was advertising himself as '*a name familiar to every SA housewife*'. Eventually about 15,000 of the first generation top fire design ovens were sold in South Australia. At this time Metters' main rival in South Australia was Simpson's Ovens and Ranges.

Metters was ambitious and sought national expansion. In September 1894 he established a showroom in Hay Street, Perth and soon after opened a four acre (1.62 hectare) manufacturing plant in Wellington Street, Perth. From late 1896 the plant was known as the Great Western Foundry.

By 1896 the Adelaide and Perth plants were manufacturing around 625 ovens per month, including new versions of the original design, among them the '*New Improved*', '*Barossa*' and '*Royal*' ovens.

Metters' output during the middle and late 1890s expanded to include baths, bath heaters, grates, domestic irons, sinks, washing coppers, water tanks and windmills as well as copper smithing and galvanising services.



New Improved Oven

By May 1897 Metters was employing about forty-five men at his West Adelaide plant, which was managed by Charles Caire. In June 1897 Metters opened a new, larger Adelaide showroom at 142 Rundle Street.



Metters Showroom 1897-1927, 142 Rundle Street Adelaide, 1923 [SLSA B 1278]

F. METTERS AND COMPANY

The opening of the Perth business proved to be pivotal for Metters. The Perth showroom had previously been leased by an Englishman, Henry Langdon Spring (1864-1937). Langdon had come to Australia in the early 1890s after working in a variety of fields, including ten years at a London stockbroking company.



Metters Ltd factory Salvado Road, Wembley, Perth 21 Dec. 1964 [SLWA 58255PD]

Spring saw the potential of Metters' enterprise and quit his own transport business to become manager of Metters' Perth office. Metters in turn was quickly impressed by Spring's acumen and in October 1896 made him a partner in the business, now known as F. Metters and Company.

Increasingly driven by Spring, the business continued to flourish. By 1902 the Adelaide and Perth businesses employed some two hundred workers.

1902 ASSEMBLY FACTORY IN SYDNEY

In early 1902 Metters and Company opened an assembly factory in Alice Street, Newtown, Sydney and a showroom in Bathurst Street, Sydney. A year later Metters was employing around one thousand men in the three states.

In 1907 the company's Sydney manufacturing plant was moved to an eighteen acre (7.3 hectare) site at Alexandria, South Sydney; the new plant included a foundry so that parts could be manufactured there and not imported from Adelaide as previously.

In 1907 Metters' Sydney showroom was also moved to 556-558 George Street. To a large extent the state divisions of Metters operated independently, their output depending upon their respective plant capabilities and local demand.

The Perth factory often led the way, for example producing certain varieties of oven well before the eastern states. The Perth plant was also the first to begin the porcelain enamelling of some of its products.

1903 THE GREAT CENTRAL FOUNDRY

In Adelaide between August 1903 and July 1910 Metters bought sixteen allotments totalling 2.88 acres (1.17 hectares) on Henley Beach Road and in Norma Street to the south; adjacent to his factory and used to extend it, the allotments cost around £3,720.

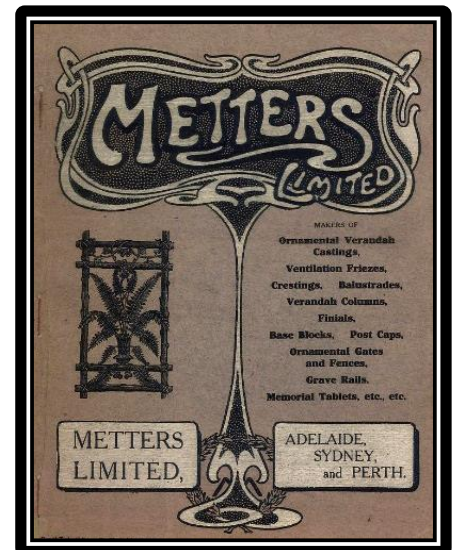


Henley Beach Road Mile End showing Metters' windmill display on their property. [WTHS]

By 1910 Metters' West Adelaide manufacturing plant covered a total of 4.02 acres (1.63 hectares). A little over half of the plant took up a block between Henley Beach Road and Norma Street, while the remainder of the factory was directly south on the southern side of Norma Street (the factory was sometimes advertised as the Great Central Foundry).

By this time the plant employed around 160 workers; the works manager was George Matthew.

(Also around this time Metters bought small amounts of land in other parts of West Adelaide but usually held them for only very brief periods).



1907 METTERS LIMITED

In 1907 Metters sold his interest in Metters and Company to Spring.

In June 1908 a new Adelaide-based company, Metters Limited, began with Spring as managing director and with authorised share capital of £100,000.



1908 Metters staff and family at picnic [SLSA B-60686]

METTERS' LIFE

Between 1912 and 1916 Metters lived in *Clovelly House*, a grand home in Rose Park (now Toorak Gardens).

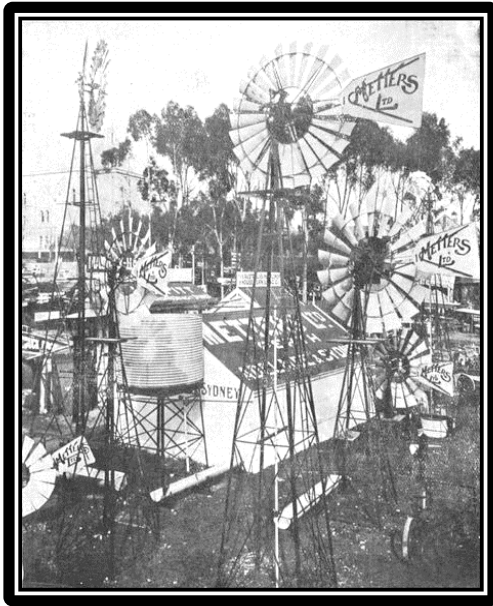
About the same time he established, with his eldest child Frederick Hubert, a substantial citrus growing property, Murray View, south of Waikerie.



Fred senior died in September 1937 and was buried in the West Terrace cemetery.

Clovelly House, 2 Prescott Terrace, circa 2017 [realestate.com.au]

1909 AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST STOVE MANUFACTURER



Metters display at Adelaide show, 1909

Company growth accelerated after the formation of Metters Ltd. By 1909 the company was Australia's largest stove manufacturer, producing around 1,100 per month, and over the next five years introduced a series of new oven brands including the Beacon Light, Bega, Drop Door, Regina, Royal, Sam Weller, Samson and Wilga.

Metters' Adelaide plant produced most of these brands and by October 1911 was making 500 stoves and ranges and 130 windmills a month; Metters dominated the windmill market in SA, producing around 80% of the state's output.

1911 FURTHER GROWTH

Growth continued in the other states. In early 1911 Metters' Perth plant moved to a larger site at Subiaco, while in 1914 the Sydney showroom was transferred to an ornate new six-storey building at 154-158 Elizabeth Street. (The Metters Building was listed on the New South Wales State Heritage Register in April 1999). In 1914 the Alexandria plant in Sydney employed 250 men.

Nationally Metters expanded its output, moving into areas such as the manufacture of ornamental castings for homes, including balustrades, castings and finials.

The company also began the production of agricultural implements including cultivators, ploughs, posthole diggers, pumps, tanks and troughs.



*Metters cast iron scale, made in Sydney circa 1920s
[exhibitcollection.com.au]*

Despite the broadening of output, ovens and stoves was Metters' most profitable line and remained so for the life of the business. In 1914-15 Metters Ltd recorded a healthy net profit of £17,878, while its nominal capital was £200,000.



1913 Old Exhibition Grounds Adelaide, Metters windmill at left [SLSA PRG-280-1-8-22]

1914-1918 WAR YEARS

During the first world war Metters' production shifted almost exclusively to the manufacture of heavy duty cooking equipment for use by the armed services. Net company profits nonetheless remained consistent at around £17-£20,000.



[thequirkandthecool.com]

The company also continued domestic manufacturing. In late 1915 another showroom was opened in Newcastle, New South Wales.

Metters also introduced new oven lines during the war, the *Canberra*, *Kookaburra*, *Pearl* and *Zenith* models all entering the market in 1916.

More importantly, in mid-1917 the company released the first version of what was to become probably its most famous product, the *Early Kooka* stove.

Usually coloured cream and green (but occasionally blue and white) the stove featured a picture on the door of a kookaburra with a worm in its mouth.



INTRODUCTION OF ENAMELLING

Like similar companies, Metters' expansion in the inter-war period was assisted by substantial tariffs on imported stoves and other home appliances. Metters had begun manufacturing gas stoves as early as 1912 but it was not until the 1920s that production soared and gas stoves were made at Metters factories in all states.

Metters Ltd had first ventured into the vitreous (or porcelain) enamelling of cast iron baths and sinks in about 1908.

After establishing an enamelling plant at the Alexandria works in 1916, from around 1920 Metters in response to public demand began the widespread enamelling of its stoves, basins, baths and sinks.

**COLOURED MOTTLED
ENAMEL FUEL STOVES**

IN GREEN, BLUE OR GREY.

THE NEW ATTRACTIVE FINISH.

This new MOTTLED ENAMEL Finish has a pleasing appearance, which always looks cool and at the same time will tone with any colour scheme. It has a highly glazed surface that in ordinary domestic use may be termed ever-lasting, and will not chip or craze.

It is easily kept clean: an occasional rub with a damp cloth is all that is necessary.

This finish effectively seals the metal from moisture, thus preventing the formation of rust.



1936 Metters Catalogue [nla.obj-52820482]

Enamelling spread to Metters plants in all states in the 1930s.

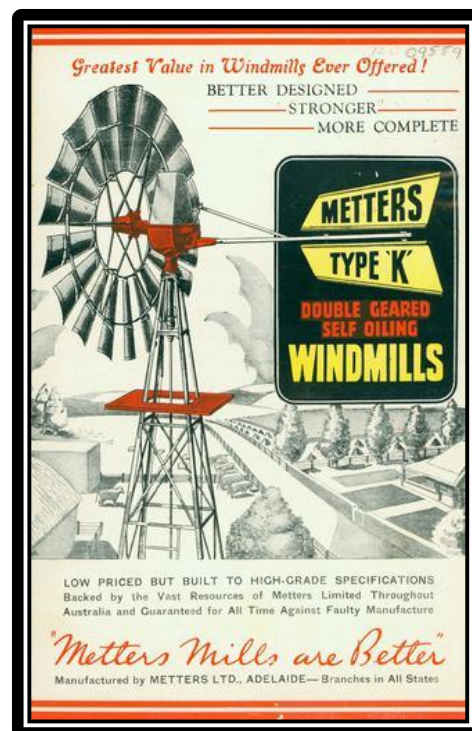
1920s FURTHER EXPANSIONS

Extensions continued with a Brisbane showroom opening in mid-1921 and the Alexandria plant being extended to cover 14.5 acres (5.87 hectares) in 1922. In 1922 Metters' nominal share capital was £1,000,000.

By April 1926 Metters employed 250 workers at its Mile End plant, where it specialised in stoves, windmills and spray pumps. William Correll had taken over from Lewis H. Parker as works manager in 1925 and held the position for the next twenty years. Metters Ltd employed around 1550 workers nationwide.

National net profits during the early 1920s were strong, generally rising consistently from £48,030 in 1920-21 to £58,602 in 1923-24 and to £76,325 in 1926-27.

In 1926 Metters Ltd also took over a New Zealand bath manufacturer in order to create Metters (New Zealand) Pty Ltd. The company had a showroom and a 17.5 acre/7.08 hectares plant in Wellington.



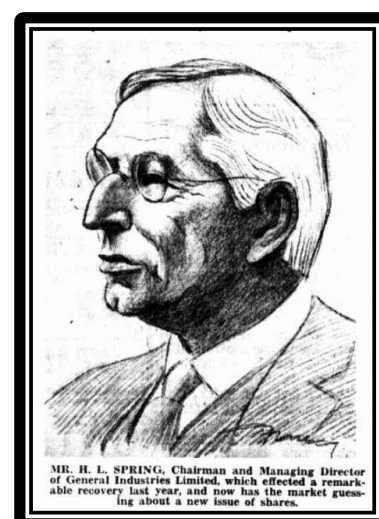
In July 1927 Metters Ltd merged with a Sydney rival, KFB Ltd - which had been formed in 1911 by three former Metters employees – though the Metters name was retained for business purposes.

GENERAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED (GIL)

An Adelaide-based holding company, General Industries Limited (GIL), was formed with Spring as chairman of directors and managing director and with authorised capital of £2,000,000.

The new company first employed about 3,000 workers nationally and advertised itself as '*the largest manufacturer of its class in the southern hemisphere*'.

Metters was the dominant partner in the relationship, consistently earning around three-quarters or more of the company's net profits.



1935 Henry Langdon Spring [wikitree.com]

REQUISITION FOR METTERS' OUTFIT.

If you are requiring a Wind Mill Outfit please fill in the particulars as hereunder set out or write us in the form of our Letter of enquiry published on page 40.

PARTICULARS TO GIVE AS FOLLOWS:

<i>The width of well.</i>	
<i>The depth of well from surface to bottom.</i>	
<i>The depth of water in the well and does this depth vary in seasons.</i>	
<i>Do you require Storage Tanks? What Capacity?</i>	
<i>Do you require Tank Stand? What Height?</i>	
<i>What distance from the Mill will the tank be established?</i>	
<i>Do you want Troughing? What size and quantity?</i>	
<i>How far from the Tank do you propose establishing the Trough?</i>	
<i>The height of Tower required to raise the wind wheel 10 ft. above obstructions?</i>	
<i>The quantity of Water required per day?</i>	
<i>How would the Goods be forwarded?</i>	

Name

Address

In August 1927 Metters moved its Adelaide showroom from Rundle Street to an impressive new building at 98-100 North Terrace, directly across from the railway station.



Metters Showroom, 1927-1933, 98-100 North Terrace 1928 [SLSA B4786]

Designed by Adelaide architects Woods, Bagot, Jory and Laybourne Smith and constructed by James King and Son of Hindmarsh, the three-level art deco-influenced building cost around £11,000.

No Fear of a Drought with a METTERS about



Metters Fuel Stoves and Washing Coppers
Use less fuel and retain heat longer

METTERS LIMITED
98-99-100 NORTH TERRACE, ADELAIDE

NEXT H. V. MCKAY'S

METTERS WINDMILLS ARE AT PRESENT RAISING WATER FOR SHEEP AND CATTLE THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE OF AUSTRALIA

PASTORALISTS, GRAZERS, AND FARMERS protect their Stock against drought by equipping their Wells, Boreas and Dams with a METTERS windmill. The most reliable, efficient, and easy running windmill obtainable, designed specifically for your requirements.

METTERS "NUOH" and "SELF-OIL" Windmills are equipped with a perfect automatic springless oiling system and a most reliable spring governor that controls the wind wheel in heavy wind storms.

METTERS 5 ft. "MINOR" WINDMILLS most efficient for pumping water from shallow depths. 3HP only, £9 15/-; on 15 ft. G.I. Tower, £15; on 20 ft. G.I. Tower, £17.

Write for descriptive literature.

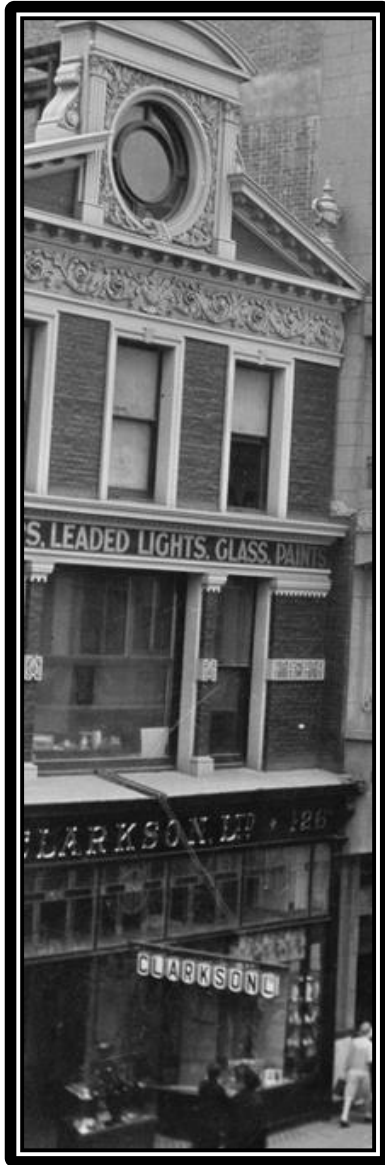
[\[flickr.com/photos/94854784@N06/11976078166/\]](https://www.flickr.com/photos/94854784@N06/11976078166/)

In another important development, in mid-1928 Metters opened its first factory in Victoria on a thirteen acre (c.5.3 hectare) site in Footscray, Melbourne.

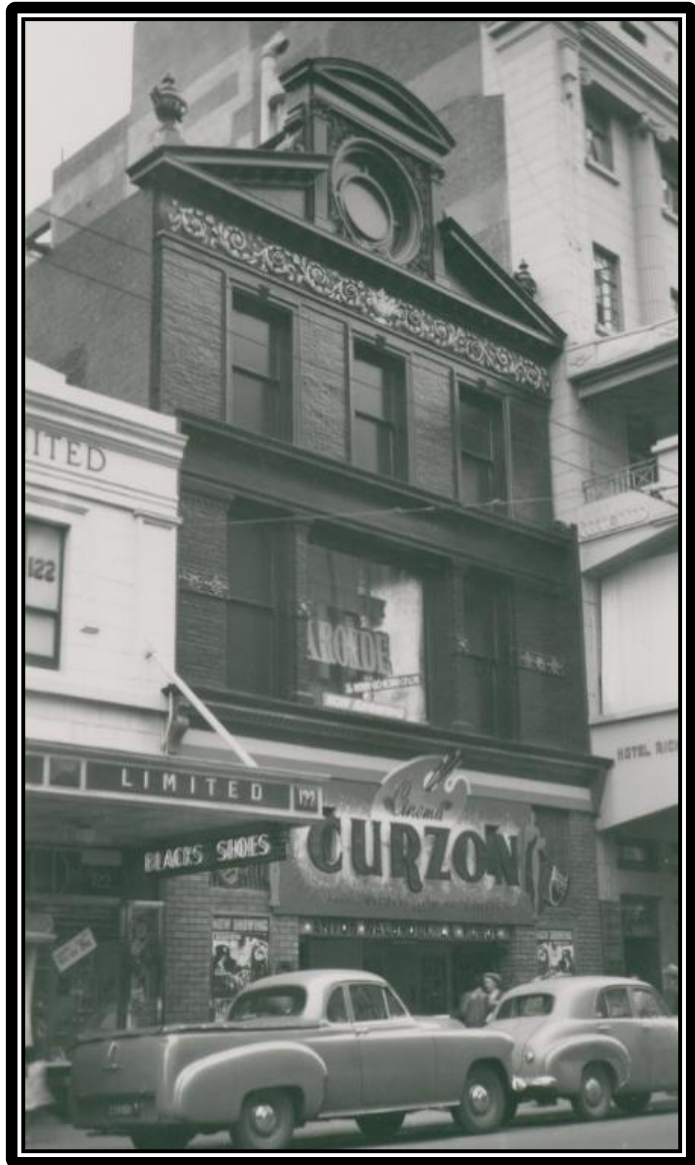
DEPRESSION YEARS AND RECOVERY

Like most businesses Metters struggled during the depression, recording three losses from 1930-31 to 1932-33.

Nonetheless Metters remained confident of its future, in August 1933 moving to a more prominent Adelaide showroom site at 124-126 Rundle Street.



1929 [SLSA B5149]



1952 [SLSA B12328]

124-126 Rundle Street (left) had been used by Clarksons, selling wallpaper and leadlight, in 1923-24, and was converted to a theatre in 1943. This was originally called The Liberty Theatre and then the Cinema Curzon. Used as Metters showroom 1933-1943

The former Metters Building on North Terrace was then tenanted by a range of businesses. A non-heritage listed building, in 2020 there were fears that the building might be demolished. Developers stated at the time that the original façade would be incorporated into a new seventeen-storey apartment building.

In January 1934 Metters was, with paid up capital of £622,170, the eighth largest company in South Australia (behind Elder Smith and Co with paid up capital of £2.399 million).

An oddity of Metters' Adelaide operations in the 1930s was that its workers did not receive their wages through conventional means, for example by cheque or in a pay packet - their wages were paid to them by coins placed in metal cups. Why this was done remains a mystery.

One of Metters' most significant developments came in 1937 when it released the gas-fuelled version of its enamel *Early Kooka* oven. Its standard sized version retailing for around £11, the model became phenomenally popular and remained in production until the late 1940s.



Metters Pigmy
[collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/245243]



Metters Early Kooka stove.
[collection.maas.museum/object/67299]

Other Metters models released in the 1920s and 1930s included the *Pigmy* (1921), *Capitol* (1928), *Empress*, *Shearer* (both 1934) and *Dover* (1935).

In the 1930s Metters also released the *Thermatt*, its first thermostatically-controlled oven.

Another sign of Metters' post-Depression resurgence came in 1937 when its Alexandria, Sydney plant was extended by ten acres (4.04 hectares), making it the largest Metters plant in Australia; by the early 1940s the plant employed around 2,000. (By then Alexandria was the largest industrial district in Australia and housed around 550 factories).

Metters' profits rebounded sharply over the 1930s, rising from £81,354 in 1934-35 to £130,867 in 1936-37 to £169,004 in 1938-39.

SECOND WORLD WAR PRODUCTION AND PROFITS

Although still manufacturing a limited range of appliances for the domestic market, during the second world war Metters moved into the production of military requirements including cooking utensils, food containers and components for land mines and pontoon bridges.

The company's wartime profits, though still reasonable, fell from £132,110 in 1940-41 to £87,556 in 1942-43 to £86,431 in 1944-45.

In July 1943 Metters moved its Adelaide head office and showroom to 66 Grenfell Street (eastern corner of Gawler Place), formerly the A. Simpson and Sons factory.



66 Grenfell Street, 1899 [SLSA PRG 631/2/46]

[flickr.com/photos/94854784@N06/11976078476]

POST-WAR DOMESTIC APPLIANCE DEMAND

After the war there was a huge and growing demand in Australia for domestic appliances and companies like Metters (and Kelvinator Australia Ltd, another West Torrens-based company) benefited significantly.

The increasing use of electric stoves from the late 1940s also helped the company.

For the financial years ending 31 December Metters' net profits rose from £119,775 in 1947 to £162,669 in 1949 to £236,722 in 1951. Reflecting its optimism for the future Metters increased its Adelaide factory space.

POST-WAR ADVERTISING

**Conserve Water
Guard Against Drought**



METTERS

- * Steel Squatters Tanks
- * Galvanised Troughing
- * Tank Stands
- * Pumps
- * Pumping Gears
- * Windmills, etc.

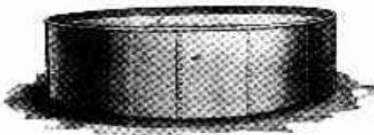
Available for Prompt Delivery

METTERS LTD.
66 Grenfell St.—Corner Gawler Place
ADELAIDE . . . PHONE C6300

Chronicle, 31 January 1946

METTERS' Steel Squatters' Tanks

FOR CONCRETE OR CLAY BOTTOM
GALVANISED OR BLACK



5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 30,000
GALLON CAPACITY

Available for Prompt Delivery

MANUFACTURED BY
METTERS LIMITED
66, GRENFELL STREET, ADELAIDE
Phone LU6241

THE CHRONICLE, October 11, 1951—411

Advertiser 2 Feb 1949, page 13

METTERS STAINLESS STEEL SINKS

With or without steel cabinet . . .
Cabinets

Beauty, Everlasting Qualities
and Hygienic Conditions
(Available in either mirror or polished satin finish)

S The bevelled edge and corners permit of easy cleaning. Joints of bowl and drain are of all welded construction. All sinks supported with timber backing to ensure rigidity, and simplify installation.



Cabinets are available in Chrome or Green Enamel finish. All cabinets are fitted with 1000 lb. wt. motor and for long life. Three stainless steel sinks of 24 in. and 30 in. of capacity.


Overall Dimensions—		
Length	Height	Depth
44 in.	24 in.	18 in.
58 in.	30 in.	18 in.

NOTE.—We specialise in the manufacture of any size and design of stainless steel sink to specification. Cleanable from the inside.

METTERS LTD.
66 GRENFELL ST., ADELAIDE
and from all Storekeepers and Hardware Merchants.

Chronicle, 9 September 1948, page 41

IRRIGATION EQUIPMENT



PUMPING BEAMS, GEARS, PUMPS, etc.

SQUATTERS' TANKS, TANK STANDS, WINDMILLS, etc.
Available for Early Delivery

Manufactured By—
METTERS LIMITED
66 GRENFELL STREET, ADELAIDE Phone C6300

Chronicle, 1 May 1947, page 14

"METTERS" INTERIOR FIRE GRATES

Available in 3 Finishes 12 Designs



- 1—All Porcelain Mottled Enamel in red, walnut, or green.
- 2—Fine cast frame, with copper oxidised canopy, life-off rail and knobs.
- 3—All fine cast block.

These Grates are supplied with fire bricks, movable, cast iron, life-off rail, feet and adjusters, and lift-out bottom grate.

(Illustrating No. 11 Design)

No. 11 Design has Square-Tips Canopy and Feet
Size: 29½ in. High; 21½ in. Wide; 17 in. Fire

Obtainable from the Manufacturers:
METTERS LTD.
66 GRENFELL STREET :: ADELAIDE
and from All Hardware Merchants and Storekeepers

News, 15 September 1948, page 6

INVOICE DEPARTMENT. INVOICE TYPIST.

Also
INVOICE CLERK. Female Junior or Senior.
Assistance given enable further studies.

METTERS LIMITED.
66 GRENFELL STREET.
ADELAIDE.

Advertiser 2 Feb 1949, page 13

A USTRALIA WIDE MANUFACTURING ORGANISATION require

SMART LAD FOR OFFICE.
Excellent opportunity for advancement.

Apply,
METTERS LIMITED,
66 GRENFELL STREET.
ADELAIDE.

News, 17 September 1949, page 10

1950 MANCHESTER STREET MILE END SOUTH



WestMaps Public 1959

In May 1950 the company began building a £100,000, 2.06 acre (0.83 hectare) plant at Manchester Street, Mile End South. Metters had shown significant foresight on the issue by buying land in Mile End South as early as April 1918. The site was close to the Mile End goods yards, the city and Port Road (and thereby the shipping facilities of Outer Harbor).

In 1918 Metters had bought 18.57 acres (7.51 hectares) between London Road and Manchester Street, Mile End South from the South Australian Company for £4,030.

The company supplemented the purchase by buying 1.53 acres (0.62 hectares) on the northern side of Manchester Street during the 1940s for a total of £1,812.10s.

After very profitably selling portions of the land over the years – such as 4.33 acres (1.75 hectares) to the Shell Company of Australia in December 1928 for £7,160 – by 1950 Metters owned 4.67 acres (1.89 hectares) at Mile End South.

The Perfect Cooking Combination

METTERS COOKERS

Four fast heating hot-plates, separate grill and hot food compartment. Lift-out oven door, automatic clock and hot food server. Yes! The Debonair has all of the features women want most.

Fiesta features that make cooking fun. Set the controls and the remainder left. Set the oven door, automatic clock and hot food server. Yes! The Debonair has all of the features women want most.

METTERS LD2 DEBONAIR LD2

METTERS LP26 FIESTA LP26

and sapphire

STAINLESS STEEL TRI-PLY COOKWARE

4 PINT, 4 PINT, 3 PINT, SKILLET, 2 PINT

4 pint Boiler & 4 pint Steamer available.

It's modern... it's METTERS

Australia's largest manufacturer of home appliances

7 Manchester Street, Mile End 5031 — Phone 57 6241

[flickr.com/photos/94854784@N06/11

METTERS AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST RANGE OF ORCHARD SPRAYERS...

SEE PAGES 297, 298 AND 516 FOR OUR COMPLETE RANGE!

'AIRMIST MAJOR' NEW AUTOMATIC HEAVY DUTY MODEL

1—Engine driven, high capacity. 2—500 gal. direct treated steel tank. 3—Delivers 40/45,000 cu. ft. of air per minute. 4—Double ended spray outlet. 5—Remotes control of spray and spray outlet. 6—Automatic ROSS ROYAL Controls. 7—Powered by special FORD Diesel 5 cylinder industrial engine.

POWERFUL NEW 'TWIN AIRMIST'

1—Dilute or Concentrate spray application. 2—Stainless Steel tank. 3—8-12 cu. ft. engine drive. 4—Counterbalancing Twin Blowers—easily adjustable to spray at any angle. 5—Can be set to spray both blowers to right or left side. 6—Then 11.5 g.p.m. high-pressure pump total capacity 23 g.p.m. for Full Dilute Spraying. 7—Quick changeover from Dilute to Concentrate Spraying.

NEW 3-POINT LINKAGE AIRMIST MODEL 'T M'

1—Fits compactly on tractor. 2—Stainless steel tank. 3—8-12 cu. ft. engine drive. 4—Adjustable spray outlet delivery to right or left side. 5—10 g.p.m. 600 lb. pressure pump. 6—Will spray efficiently anywhere the tractor can be operated in an orchard.

METTERS

IN DIVISION OF GENERAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED

OFFICES & SHOWROOMS—7-25 MANCHESTER ST. MILE END SOUTH (HILTON), SOUTH AUSTR.

Branches in All States.

1967 [misterbookman.com.au]

The plant eventually opened there by Metters in May 1952 specialised in manufacturing porcelain enamel baths and basins for the South Australian and Western Australian markets. The Mile End plant, with around 470 workers, continued to operate.

Beauty!

**BOTH DURABLE
and PRACTICAL**

DURABLE . . . Because the glass-hard surface of METTERS' Stainless and Acid-resisting Porcelain Enamel resists the action of the many destructive agents to which it is constantly subjected in household use. Rust from the water pipes—sulphates from the water—caustics in soap—impurities in the water itself—and the many acids in fruit and vegetable juices. These agents discolour and disfigure ordinary Porcelain enamel, but Metters' Stainless and Acid-resisting Porcelain Enamel withstands them all.

PRACTICAL . . . Because METTERS' Bathroom Fixtures are designed for utility—luxuriously dimensioned for comfort and relaxation. Their correctly proportioned contours and smooth lines tend to ease of cleaning and the general design of fixtures emphasise their inherent beauty. You can say good-bye to hard work and worry once you install a Metters' Stainless and Acid-resisting Bath and Basin in your bathroom and a Metters' Stainless Combination Sink in your kitchen.




QUALITY BATHROOM FIXTURES ARE AN INVESTMENT

METTERS' STAINLESS and ACID-RESISTING PORCELAIN ENAMEL

"For Lifetime Service"

Planning

WILL GIVE YOU A CHARMING BATHROOM

PROBABLY no room in the home offers a greater opportunity for the exercise of ingenuity in planning than the bathroom. Here is a room that, first of all, should be convenient and practical, but at the same time the chance to make it charming and inviting, too, must not be overlooked. Plan for colour contrasts—they are much more interesting than the monotonous matching of fixtures, walls, floor, and furnishings. What could be more inviting—more refreshing—than bathing in such pleasant surroundings as provided by the bathrooms illustrated in this brochure!

11 FADELESS COLOURS
METTERS' Stainless and Acid-resisting Porcelain Enamelled Fixtures are all made in the following attractive, fadeless colours: WHITE, IVORY, CREAM, PRIMROSE, AMBER, BEIGE, CORAL PINK, AQUA GREEN, MING GREEN, JUBILEE BLUE, BLACK. This wide selection of fixture colours offers untold possibilities for the planning of interesting and charming colour combinations. The slight additional cost of introducing colour in the bathroom and kitchen is well warranted when such pleasing results as the examples illustrated herein can be obtained.

Metters Sydney trade catalogue circa 1940 [sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/exhibitions/modern-bathroom]

**Factory Dust
Drives Out
14 Families**

Fourteen families had been driven from their homes in Manchester street and South road, Mile End, by black dust from Metters Ltd. factory. Councillor A L. Geddie told West Torrens City Council last night

One family had lived in a house in Manchester street for 35 years, but could no longer put up with the dust which filtered into the living rooms.

He successfully moved that Metters Ltd. be given 21 days to abate the nuisance before the council seeks legal opinion.

Advertiser 24 November

Not all were happy with the opening of the plant. In late 1954 press reports noted that several local families were upset by the 'black dust' emanating from the plant and that *'fourteen families had been driven from their homes ... one family had lived ... in Manchester Street for 35 years'*. Metters made changes and the problem eased.

Metters' profits grew strongly during the early and mid-1950s, encouraging further expansion in Adelaide. Metters bought additional land near the Mile End South plant during these years and by May 1954 had accumulated another 1.07 acres/0.43 hectares at a cost of £18,900.

In November 1954 Metters announced that a second plant of 1.14 acres (0.46 hectares) would be built on Manchester Street. Designed by architect Gordon C. Brown of Pirie Street, built by J.Grove and Son of Mitcham and costing around £150,000, the factory opened in early 1956 to house the electric and solid fuel cooker assembly plant then in use at the Mile End factory.

Metters' main Adelaide production activities and head office were now situated at 7-25 Manchester Street, Mile End South (virtually the western one-third of the area between London Road and Manchester Street).

Metters' peak Adelaide employment level came in the late 1950s when its Mile End and Mile End South plants employed around 550 workers in total.

1950s /1960s BUSINESS CHANGES

In 1961 Metters, not unexpectedly, closed its Mile End factory. (The Mile End allotments were sold by the company in 1962-64 and fetched a very healthy average of around £4,500 per 0.18 acre (0.7 hectare) allotment).

The location of Metters' Adelaide showroom also changed in the mid-1950s.

In 1955 the showroom was moved to 58-60 Pulteney Street, just north of Hindmarsh Square.

58-60 Pulteney Street 1939 [SLSA B 8203]



The following year the showroom was moved to Murray House, 79 Grenfell Street, between Chesser Street and Coromandel Place.



Sydney Morning Herald, 8 November 1958, page 7

Metters' interstate growth in the early to mid-1950s was strong. In Sydney in 1954 the company launched a subsidiary, Sovereign Appliances Ltd, to manufacture refrigerators.

Two years later Metters opened a factory at Bankstown to accommodate increasing production. In later years Sovereign Appliances expanded into the manufacture of air conditioners, dishwashers and room heaters (by 1961 the Bankstown factory had doubled in size). In 1955 Metters bought out Grimwood Electrical Products, a NSW-based manufacturer of electric tubular heating elements (for heaters and jugs for example) and moved into that area of production.

In 1958 Metters bought another NSW-based company, Ferro Precision Pty Ltd, and began the manufacture of cast iron pipes and fittings.

The Australian domestic appliance market tightened considerably from the mid-1950s – the number of whitegoods firms operating in Australia fell from forty in 1954 to twenty in 1971.

After generally reasonable profits in the mid to late 1950s, apart from a one-off loss in 1955-56, the 1960s brought mixed fortunes for Metters.

In 1966 the company bought an Adelaide business, Iplex Plastics International, and expanded strongly into the production of plastics for the plumbing and motor industries.



The company reinforced the move the following year by acquiring J. Walker (Holdings), an Australian leader in making polypropylene traps and fittings.

In 1967 Metters still held 30% of the Australian market for stoves – the company's major sellers in the 1960s included the *Debonair*, *Duplex*, *Etna* and *Fiesta* models – and remained a major manufacturer of baths and sinks. Metters also remained a large employer, with more than 4000 workers Australia-wide.

[collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/1739267]

1960s MARKET COMPETITION

In the 1960s Metters' stove business was increasingly under threat from brands including *Frigidaire*, *Fisher and Paykel* and *Kenwood*.

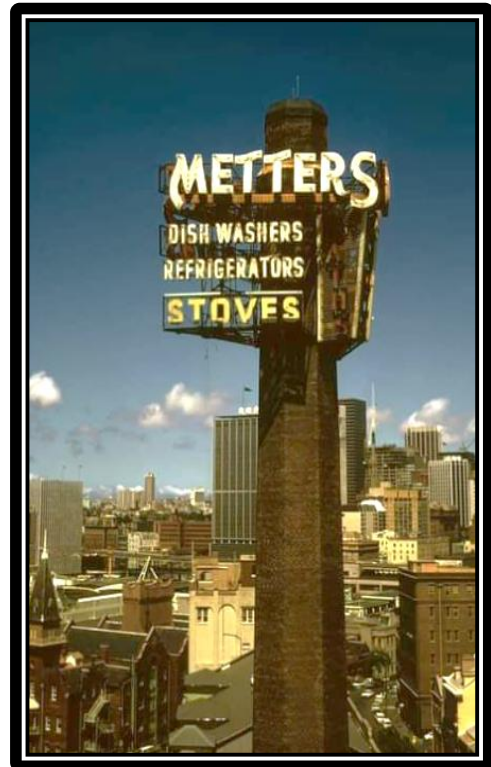
In 1969-70 Metters' net profit was virtually the same as in 1964-65. In the three years from 1966-67 Metters' net profit averaged just over \$882,000: in the same period Kelvinator Australia's average profit was over \$1 million while Email Australia's was a little under \$2 million.

In Adelaide, activity at the Mile End South site was considerably reduced from 1965 when bath manufacture was transferred to Sydney (Metters had closed its Grenfell Street showroom in 1962). In the late 1960s Metters had a low rate of return on its substantial \$17.2 million worth of assets.

The share market came to the view that Metters was underperforming. The company was the subject of takeover rumours in late 1967 and mid-1969.

After three takeover bids in early 1972, in March Metters accepted a \$12.9 million offer from Walloo Pty Ltd of New South Wales.

*The Rocks, Sydney, circa 1973
[facebook.com Old Sydney Album]*



1974 SOLD TO EMAIL LIMITED

After the sale the Metters group was split up. Iplex Plastics was sold quickly, leaving Metters and Grimwood as the major remaining components of the group. These were sold to Email Limited of Australia in April 1974 for \$6.75 million and \$1.55 million respectively.

After being acquired by Email Ltd the former Metters properties were fairly quickly sold off.



In Sydney the Alexandria plant closed in 1974 but is remembered by today's Metters, Pearl and Zenith Streets, Erskineville (which suburb now includes part of Alexandria).



The Elizabeth Street showroom was also closed at about the same time. The Subiaco plant shut and was eventually demolished in 1986. Metters Lane runs along part of the former site of the factory.

In Adelaide the former Metters site at Mile End South was disposed of in sales of November 1975 and November 1976 to private companies for a total of \$583,000. Today the site is home to several mainly light industrial businesses.

Elizabeth Street, Sydney[wikipedia.org/wiki/Metters_Building]

2000 ELECTROLUX TAKE OVER

In the wake of the introduction by the federal government of deep tariff cuts and other trade liberalization policies in the domestic white goods industry, from the mid-1970s Email Ltd was itself weakened. It was eventually taken over by Sweden's Electrolux AB in November 2000.



The still-respected Metters brand name was used by Email Ltd until the mid-1980s (and many Metters windmills remain in use in rural Australia).

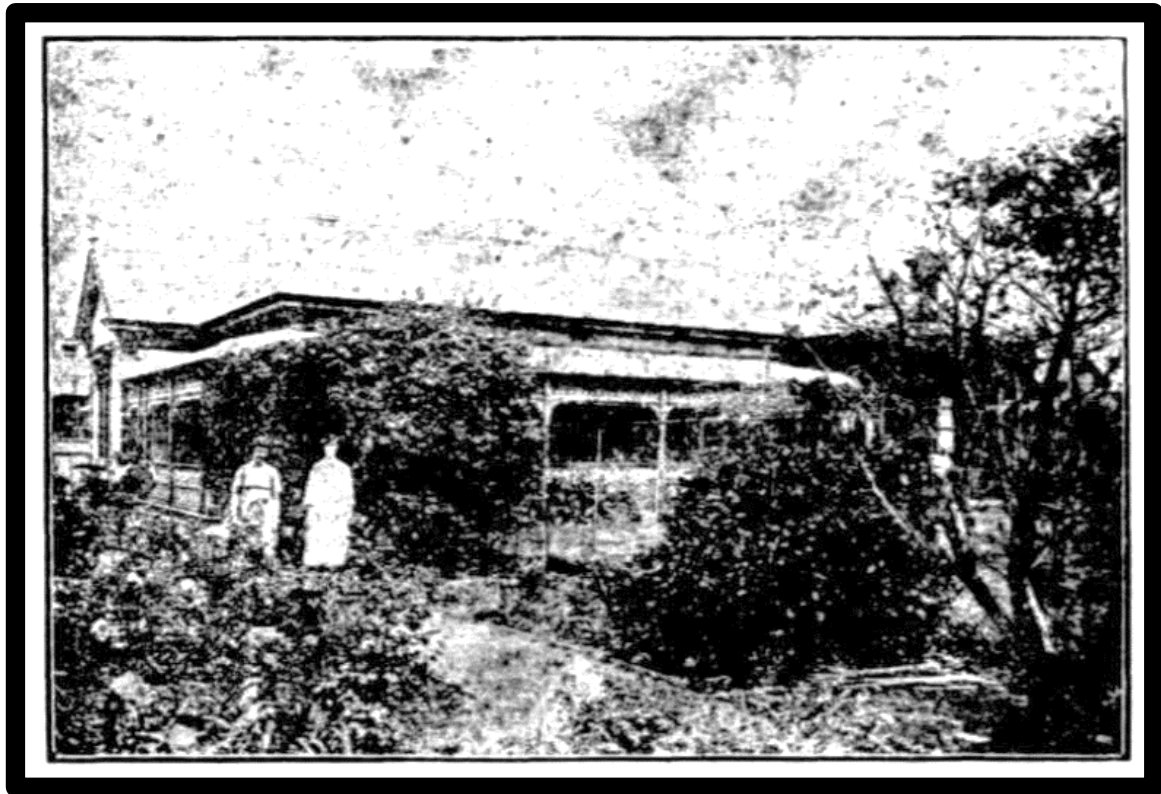
Although today few of the whitegoods sold in Australia are made here, Electrolux-owned stoves are an exception.

The Electrolux plant at Dudley Park, Adelaide currently employs around 350 workers and manufactures a range of AEG, Chef, Electrolux and Westinghouse cooking products.



Electrolux Dudley Park assembly line [/adelaideaz.com/articles/electrolux]

LURLINE STREET HOME

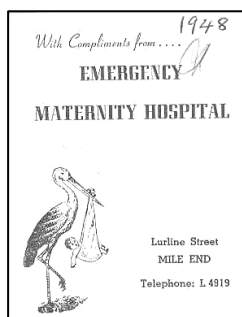


The commodious and room Home is most solidly built and comprises 10 large Rooms, with Kitchen and underground Room, and is situated in No.18 Lurline street, Mile End, very convenient to the city. Stands on a large block of land measuring 140ft. by 150ft., which is laid out in Garden, as can be seen in the photograph. The House has a wide Verandah running all around, and has a large Cellar, Motor Shed, and very large G.I. and Brick Workshop. On account of its accommodation, its magnificent Lawns and its situation, it is eminently suited for a Nursing Home, Private Hospital, Guest Home, &c.

May Sale of 18 Lurline Street Mile End 1922, in Register Adelaide, Real Property

After its sale by the Metters family in 1909 their former Lurline Street home and its surrounding land have been used mainly as a hospital site.

In early 1923 Sister Violet M. Penny established a maternity hospital, the Te Whare Private Hospital, in the home. (Te Whare is a Maori expression for 'the house'). The hospital was renamed as the Warraweena Private Hospital in mid-1927. Warraweena is apparently an Indigenous word meaning 'deep water'.



Sister Minna Siebert took over the running of the hospital in 1928 and bought it in August 1937; she married in 1945 and became Sister Watt.

From July 1946 Watt leased the house, via the state government, to Mrs Esther Lipman who established the sixteen-bed Mile End Emergency Maternity Hospital there from 1 August; Matron Jean W. Paterson was in charge.



News, 7 Jun 1954, page 11

The hospital was sold to the Mile End Maternity Hospital Limited in February 1955 and became the Mile End Hospital; D.M. Stewart was the first matron. Australian Cricketer David Hookes was born in the hospital on 3 May 1955.

In June 1958 the hospital was bought was by a coalition of Thebarton community interests and renamed as the Thebarton Community Hospital; Matron W.E. Reid was in charge.

It appears that the original Metters home was demolished in the 1970s and replaced by the current building.

The hospital became the South-West Community Hospital in December 1986. Burdened by increasing debt, the now 27-bed hospital was from March 1991 leased to the Ashford Community Hospital as a facility for convalescing and longer stay patients.

In 1995 Ashford developed a Newborn Support Centre at the hospital to give personal and telephone advice to parents who had recently given birth at Ashford.

In February 1996 Ashford bought the South-West Community Hospital outright and renamed it as the Ashford South-West Annexe.

In March 1995-March 1996 the Annexe also housed the Ashford Cancer Centre, the first private oncology facility in South Australia providing an integrated diagnosis, treatment and support centre and both in and outpatient facilities. After three months of operation the centre had already treated over 6,000 patients. In later years the Annexe continued to serve as a newborn and rehabilitation centre.

Ashford used the Annexe until December 2003.

The Annexe was then sold to the state government which, after a \$3.85 million refit funded by federal and state governments, reopened the facility in June 2007 as Elpida House, a Community Rehabilitation Centre for people with mental health issues. *Elpida* is an Ancient Greek word meaning 'hope'.



Plan your kitchen in

COLOUR CONTRASTS

IT will be much more interesting than if every fixture is monotonously matched.

METTERS Equipment in colour suggests many delightful colour combinations. Illustrated is a Kitchen in which the Aqua Green Combination Sink and OLYMPIC Gas Cooker in Green and Cream provide the basic colour for a pleasing combination. The Terra-cotta tiles introduce that note of contrast that lifts the whole decorative scheme from the commonplace to one of personal expression and distinction.

Metters Kitchen Sinks, Baths, Basins, etc., are available in twelve attractive, fadeless colours and in long wearing Acid-resisting Porcelain Enamel. Metters Cookers, the last word in convenience and efficiency, can be obtained in various colour combinations to suit individual tastes.

METTERS LIMITED
154 ELIZABETH STREET, SYDNEY

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Updated 15/9/2022

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