

Chemical warfare?: new company to cut costs

A company aiming to cut down the cost of consumables supplied to photolab operators has left the launch pad - with rumours a major industry supplier has increased the cost of their chemicals as a result.

Independent Photographic Supplies, trading as iPHOTO, was established by Stuart Holmes with the aim of providing consumables at a much cheaper price.

With his company based in Sydney, Holmes said they were determined to maintain independence and support independent photo retailers. "Personalised service is our watchword," he said. "Lab owners and operators who become our customers can be



Independent Photographic Supplies director Stuart Holmes is using his industry experience to offer retailers consumables for less.

confident of dealing with a supplier who understands their needs and is aware of the

technical and quality issues involved in premium quality photofinishing."

"It's unusual in the market as it offers full independent photo stores a minilab supply product, as opposed to Kodak, Agfa, etc. choosing what prices they'll put on consumables," said Holmes.

"Up till now it's been a closed shop. People make their choice and go to whatever brands Kodak Express are offering. This sort of thing has been available in the U.K. and Europe for some time but it's never happened in Australia before. Since we started, one of the four majors [Kodak, Hanimex, Agfa or Konica] has seen a large price increase on chemicals. Competition is good for everybody."

iPHOTO will supply a range of CPAC C-41 and RA-4 photographic processing chemicals compatible with all brands of processing equipment. It includes new single-part chemical technology and odourless chemistry, and all developers are sealed under nitrogen to prevent bottle deformation and oxidation. There are also plans to introduce a range of professional quality RA-4 colour roll papers for professional and minilab use.

Holmes admits that, unlike the digital camera, chemicals aren't glamorous but, having been in the photo industry 27 years he is "well aware of the market conditions" and believes there is room for what he offers.