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Warning: with J curves ahead, the bust is yet to come

Melissa Kent
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AUSTRALIAN women's cups are running over as lingerie manufacturers respond to a boom in busts.

Over the past decade the average woman's bust has increased from a 12B to 14C or 14D, say medical experts and lingerie stores.

While the British chain Marks and Spencer launched its first J cup bra range this week, bras in Australia are also creeping up the alphabet as shops stretch to cover the big-size bra market.

Several lingerie labels, including Berlei, Bendon and Simone Perele, are now available up to a G cup, while Fayreform, Goddess and Le Mystere go all the way up to a J cup. Elle Macpherson Intimates this year launched an E cup in selected styles.

Myer too has joined the boom in bust trend, recently launching a premium plus-size range to cater for the growing demand.

"It's becoming the standard for bras to come in a G cup, and it's definitely something that has been a growing business for us over the past few years," Myer lingerie buyer Jordana Morrison said.

"We now go up to a J cup in a couple of styles each season, and all stores carry a G cup. I guess it's due to the way bodies are changing and also perhaps because when you get fitted properly you tend to have a bigger cup size than you realised."

While pneumatic stars such as Jordan, Anna Nicole Smith and Pamela Anderson could be behind the eye-popping trend, the real reason is likely to be less glamorous.

Susan Sawyer, director of the Centre for Adolescent Health at the Royal Children's Hospital, said the nation's growing bustline was simply the result of women becoming heavier.

"We have seen an exponential growth in women's weight in all age groups over the past decade, so it's no surprise that the clothing industry is playing catch-up," Dr Sawyer said.

"Young women, in particular, do really need appropriate support because they have a lifetime ahead of them."

One corsetiere, Chrissie Carlyle-Taylor, who works at the Dickory Dock lingerie shop in Camberwell, said she had noticed an increase in the number of slim women with large busts.

"It's a worldwide trend that is certainly being reflected here in Australia — not necessarily that women are getting

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bigger all over, but their bust size is increasing dramatically," she said. "The trend is for a fuller bust but not necessarily a plus-size, so there's a lot more demand for sizes like a 10G and a 12G."

Ms Morrison said the increased demand meant fuller-figured women were no longer restricted to boring, functional underwear in dull fabrics and colours.

"Even just two years ago, it was all beige, black or white in those sizes, but now they come in imported lace, beautiful fabrics and fashionable product," she said. "Some

of the designer brands have really exquisite styles available all the way up to a G."

With surveys revealing that up to 80% of Australian women are wearing the wrong-size bra, Alicia Neale, store manager at Bendon Lingerie, South Yarra, said it was important that big-busted women were measured and fitted correctly.

Health risks associated with ill-fitting bras that do not offer proper support can include muscle strain, constricted breathing and back, neck and shoulder pain.

"There's nothing worse than wearing the wrong bra at that size, and it can be really uncomfortable and painful if you're not getting the correct support," Ms Neale said.

Measuring up

What bra sizes mean (around-the-bust measurement)

- **10A** 81-83 centimetres
- **12B** 88-90cm
- **14C** 95-97cm
- **16D** 102-104cm
- **18DD** 109-111cm
- **20F** 120-122cm
- **22GG** 127-129cm
- **24J** 137-139cm

Selling their (inflated) assets

PAMELA ANDERSON (36EE)

First came to attention as a pneumatic lifeguard whose inflatable equipment made for spectacular slow-motion jogging scenes. Underwent further enhancements following a career slump when she temporarily reduced her assets.

DOLLY PARTON (40E)

For years claimed her gigantic bosom was natural, but now admits she was telling porkies: "Yep, they are mine — bought and paid for."

ANNA NICOLE SMITH (38E)

A lowly 36B lapdancer when she met future husband J. Howard Marshall in 1991. Supposedly underwent five breast operations during her ensuing career as model and celebrity gold-digger before her death this year.

JORDAN (30GG)

Plain old Katie Price before emerging as a glamour model, reality TV star, singer, author and celebrity mother. Recently launched a lingerie range aimed at big-busted women.

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2007/11/17/1194767024546.html>