and games

Rubbery figures, writes Stephen Lacey.

something special," Solomon says. As a measure of its success, Moose Enterprises is being approached by other companies wanting to license the brand to apply to everything from pyjamas and activity books to a Nintendo DS Trash Pack game.

Not surprisingly, the Trash Pack has picked up a swag of awards, including the 2011 TOTY (Toy of the Year) – considered the Oscars of the industry. Solomon says one of his key goals is to be an employer of choice. “We have a young, dynamic culture and, of course, it’s a fun place to work,” he says. “I mean, we’re making toys. I look forward to coming to the office. It’s terrific to be around such creative people.”

Some of those people are coming through the training program Moose Enterprise has put in place to encourage industrial designers to work in the toy industry. Students from the University of Technology, Sydney, and Swinburne take part in a program to design toys and are then invited to do work experience at Moose.

“In the US, toy design is a big industry, but it’s not so heavily promoted here,” Solomon says. “Most industrial designers in Australia go into car manufacturing and other areas – not many think about making toys.”

Solomon looks at the range of trashies spread across his desk and picks up one called Putrid Pizza. “Every one of these little felias was born in Melbourne,” he says. “I’m really proud of that.”

Fast facts
The Australian Toy Association, an industry body, has about 300 members. The toy industry in Australia is worth more than $1.5 billion a year in retail sales.