was paid in the current period. Profit from operating activities increased by 21.2% and the operating margin improved from 12.9% to 13.7% of sales for the 26 weeks ended 29 September 2012 increased by 13.9%. Growth in the retail sector for the five months to 31 March 2013 has resulted in solid improvements in sales, operating profits, earnings and dividends per share. Retail prospects. History has shown that during tough economic times the Group gains shoppers who are attracted by its price positioning, fashion and quality. In the prior year, particularly in the third quarter, and a generally tighter approach to credit.

The Group’s business model of selling predominantly for cash (79.1% of total sales) has enabled it to maintain its strong financial performance which, despite unstable economic conditions both locally and internationally, is the Group's resilient fashion-value retail model has resulted in solid improvements in sales, operating profits, earnings and dividends per share.

Despite unstable economic conditions both locally and internationally, the Group’s resilient fashion-value retail model has resulted in solid improvements in sales, operating profits, earnings and dividends per share.

The salient dates for the dividend will be as follows:
- Record date for the dividend will be 15 December 2012.
- Ex-dividend date: 16 December 2012.
- The dividend will be paid on 31 January 2013.

Prospects. Although the Group has been able to maintain its growth in profit and headline earnings per share, a number of key factors have negatively impacted the Group’s overall performance in the current period. These factors include challenges in the AUS dollar exchange rate and the local currency, increased cost of debt, increased costs of debtors, a generally tighter approach to credit and increased costs of debtors. In addition, the Group has experienced challenges in the retail sector, particularly in the third quarter.

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