

ANSA McAL sells Standard Distributors to Term Finance



Standard Distributors Limited along the Eastern Main Road in Champ Fleurs, San Juan.

PHOTO BY ANISTO ALVES



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After eight decades of outfitting Caribbean homes, Standard Distributors Ltd is transitioning from a retail household name to a new chapter under Term Finance (Trinidad & Tobago) Ltd.

The sale, which includes Standard's Barbados subsidiary, follows what the parent company, ANSA McAL, described as a "careful review" of the brand's long-term role within the group. The transaction is expected to close by December 31, 2025, and will see Term Finance reshape Standard into a modern, credit-focused business.

Sources told Guardian Media that in January there were 225 employees who worked at Standard Distributors and just last month there were over 90 employees, as many took up jobs elsewhere in the ANSA McAL group and others went on to other opportunities.

In confirming the sale, ANSA McAL said the move is consistent with its strategy to optimise its portfolio, while it backs Term Finance's regional growth agenda.

The Group emphasised that the decision was not taken lightly but aligns with its 2X Strategic Agenda, which focuses on doubling scale and impact through targeted investment in high-growth sectors.

"This sale closes an extraordinary chapter in the Standard story, but its impact built on quality, dedication, and connection will endure," said Anthony N Sabga III, Group CEO of ANSA McAL Ltd.

"As ANSA McAL continues to streamline its portfolio, we remain proud of Standard's contribution to regional life and grateful to all who supported the brand throughout its journey."

Responding to Guardian Media questions, ANSA McAL explained that the divestment reflects both internal restructuring and evolving market realities. Demand for home furniture and appliances, the group noted, has moderated compared to previous years.

"This reflects broader shifts in household spending patterns regionally and globally, as consumers manage budgets more carefully and delay non-urgent replacements," said the group.

ANSA McAL said higher inflation and household expenses have prompted many customers to prioritise essential expenses and stretch the use of existing appliances. This, combined with the growing influence of online shopping and digital financing, has reshaped how consumers buy durable goods.

“More shoppers are comparing prices online or turning to digital financing options instead of traditional retail models,” ANSA McAL stated. “These trends mirror what we’ve seen globally, where purchasing behaviour has become more cautious and value-driven.”

In that context, Term Finance’s acquisition of Standard is seen as a natural evolution. The company plans to transform Standard’s operations into a dedicated credit provider and e-commerce platform, leveraging the brand’s 80-year legacy and expertise in hire-purchase services.

While Standard’s retail stores officially closed on November 1, 2025, existing hire-purchase agreements and service commitments will continue under the new ownership. Customers with active product warranties or service claims will still have access to support via Standard’s website and official social media channels.

Protecting people and legacy

ANSA McAL has underscored that employee welfare has been central throughout the transition.

While the company did not disclose the number of staff affected, it said it made every effort to treat team members “with fairness, dignity, and care.”

Where possible, some employees have been offered continued employment with Standard Distributors under Term Finance, while others have been reassigned within the wider ANSA McAL Group.

For those leaving the organisation, the company provided enhanced separation packages, ongoing access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) until the end of 2025, and financial counselling and job fairs in Trinidad and Barbados to support their next steps.

“All employees will continue to have access to wellbeing and financial-planning support,” the Group said, adding that the process was managed with transparency and respect.

The sale, while not expected to be material to the Group’s financial position, forms part of ANSA McAL’s wider plan to strengthen focus on sectors with the greatest potential for regional growth.

“This decision is about focus, not withdrawal,” the Group emphasised. “We remain deeply invested in the retail and consumer sectors through multiple subsidiaries.”

On the CNC3 Facebook thread, one user said, “Smart move to better compete with Courts and Ready Finance. These companies make the bulk of their money from selling loans and not furniture appliances.”

Another said, “I’ve been buying my appliances from Standard for years, but glad it is changing its model to keep up with the fastpaced world.”

In a news release, Term Finance noted that it inherited valuable data and underwriting expertise through the acquisition, as it acknowledged the history that Standard Distributors has in providing hire purchase financing.

“We are pivoting the traditional hire purchase portfolio towards a modern cash-lending model, building on Standard’s legacy of trust, while introducing more flexible, technology-driven credit solutions that meet today’s credit needs,” said Term Finance.