

Penrith Companies put Cleaner Production on the Radar.

A quiet revolution has been underway over the last 18 months as five Penrith companies have taken part in a program aimed at helping business to make significant savings by improving their environmental performance.

The Advanced Manufacturing Centre (AMC) joined forces with Penrith City Council, Penrith Valley Economic Development Corporation and Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce to introduce the concept of Cleaner Production to local business.

With funding from The NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) under its Industry Partnership Program, the AMC worked with the Penrith companies to first measure and then improve their environmental performance.

The Cleaner Production program aimed to show companies that they could achieve more than just an altruistic rosy glow by adopting sustainable business practices. Indeed the program was designed to demonstrate that Cleaner Production made smart business sense and could be used to not only to save money but make it too. Thus the bottom line priority that most companies embrace was kept intact, whilst meeting the equally important features of environmental and community best practice.

Over the 18 months, the AMC ran a series of workshops to assist companies to identify opportunities for improvement. A **'Sustainability Radar Diagram'** was initially used by companies to measure performance against a set of 'Best Practice' attributes. This gave the companies the focus and the confidence with which to implement projects that would yield significant return on investment with minimum effort.

Expert speakers and industry peers also shared their knowledge with the group, adding further to the education, training and implementation focus.

Projects ranged from straight forward energy savings to increased land value via site remediation to major capital investments with a positive spin-off for resource utilisation such as gas, oil and water.

One such project involved Waffle Pod setting up a Supply Chain to source and recycle raw material. By using the synergy and resources of the group, Waffle Pod were able to identify a network of companies such as Hawker de Havilland Boeing, Coca Cola, Collex, Just Foam and Thermal Insulation to provide a steady supply of their waste expanded polystyrene. The 'waste' expanded polystyrene could then be used in the production process to manufacture Pods for the laying of concrete slabs. A saving of \$100,000 per year has been achieved by this initiative alone and some 4,200 cubic metres of waste has been diverted from landfill.

The companies involved were Fort Dodge Australia, (a division of Wyeth Pharmaceutical) Homeforce Pty Ltd, New Age International, Robertson's Paints, Waffle Pod Pty Ltd and by extension, Penrith City Council, who led by example.

An Industry Forum, located within the Penrith Valley area, is planned for the New Year, so that the results can be spread and the principles adopted by many more local companies.

A summary of the results shows that quantified savings are in the order of **\$750,000** per annum spread across the group. Not a bad return on an initial **\$2,500** investment per company. Added to this financial result are savings in greenhouse gas emissions of **2,342 Tonnes of CO2**, nearly **13 million litres of water**, **2,313,371 kilo watt hours of electricity** and **60 tonnes of waste** diverted from landfill. This is a truly inspirational outcome and proves once and for all that it is not just big companies that can prosper from this sort of approach.

Case Studies featuring **Fort Dodge** and **Waffle Pod** can be found on the AMC website by clicking on the Hyperlink.

