

# Marquis: Greener production now a permanent fixture

## Sustainability Advantage Case Study

### Marquis

Marquis Bathroom Products Pty Ltd (Marquis) manufactures high-quality bathroom furniture for the Australian market. Established in 1979, Marquis is a family-owned and operated business located north of Newcastle, at Taylors Beach, Port Stephens. The company employs around 40 staff, 30 of whom work directly in manufacturing. The manufacturing processes are highly automated and at the leading edge in the joinery industry.

### Industry

Manufacturer of bathroom furniture.



Marquis managed to keep control of costs through efficient processes and utilisation of resources whilst increasing production.

### Sustainability drivers

As a regional business, Marquis was finding it difficult to access reliable, up-to-date information on complying with environmental legislation and regulations. As the company could not afford to engage consultants to provide this type of advice, Marquis saw Sustainability Advantage as an excellent way to access government, council and other specialists for support and advice. Sustainability Advantage also offered the company a chance to learn from, and connect with, other businesses in the region facing similar issues.

### Achievements and savings

<b>Energy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 per cent reduction in electricity for 2008/09 financial year</li><li>• 15 per cent reduction in LPG use</li></ul>
<b>Waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 34 per cent reduction in waste to landfill</li><li>• 24 per cent reduction in use of paint materials</li></ul>
<b>Productivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 14 per cent increase in productivity</li><li>• 35 per cent reduction in paint labour</li></ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff ownership of efficiency initiatives</li></ul>
<b>Savings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4 per cent reduction in vehicle running costs</li><li>• \$90,000 in overall savings for 2008/2009 financial year</li></ul>

### Steps

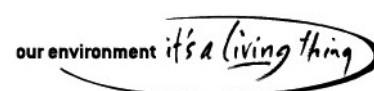
#### Commitment, Partnership and Planning

Business owners Paul and Jennifer Gray have always wanted to be good corporate citizens and are willing to invest in a good idea if it makes smart business sense.

Since 2006, Marquis has been working with the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW (DECCW) and Newcastle City Council to improve the resource efficiency of the business. The company is a member of the Hunter cluster of Sustainability Advantage Program. They have undertaken projects in three program modules: Vision, Commitment and Planning, Resource Efficiency and Staff Engagement.



Environment,  
Climate Change  
& Water



Vision, Commitment and Planning laid out the steps for integrating efficient systems into the company. It provided a template for writing an environmental management plan and helped to establish environmental Key Performance Indicators. The Resource Efficiency module helped Marquis measure its resource use, costs and identify savings. The figures, data and expertise from the DECCW-appointed consultant helped Marquis prioritise its efforts for improving efficiency by focusing on power and raw materials usage. Together these initiatives have helped Marquis to embed sustainability into company planning and operations.

### Giving staff a voice

Marquis found the Staff Engagement module the most rewarding part of the Sustainability Advantage Program. It implemented a monthly ideas competition, complete with prizes and a staff barbeque. Marquis has collected over 300 ideas in the last two years and implemented around 200 of them. These have included initiatives such as new factory layouts, new construction methods and an incentive program to deter unnecessary sick leave and late starts. Systems Analyst Phillip Gray says management learnt a great deal from the program about how best to connect with its staff on sustainability issues. 'The Staff Engagement module taught us to simply listen to our staff's ideas and involve them more,' he says. 'Our guys on the floor said, "You told me when I came here this is the way to do it and so I did." But now I've said to the guys, "How would you do it?" And they've come up with all these great ideas.'

### Outcomes

Marquis has kept costs manageable through more efficient processes while significantly increasing production. Benefits to the company of implementing more sustainable practices include:

- reducing waste to landfill by 34 per cent, particularly through recycling cardboard packaging. Despite this reduction in waste, costs have risen by 30 per cent, highlighting the risk of inaction
- the company appreciates that having good environmental credentials is helping attract and retain the best staff
- significant marketing opportunities through media
- coverage in press, radio and television and recognition as finalists in the 2007 Hunter Business Chamber Awards and 2007 Port Stephens Small Business Awards.

'One of the biggest things we've got out of Sustainability Advantage was a mind-shift for management. We could see it was going to save us in paint, time, power and dollars. Once we started to measure things and look at the numbers ... well, we were hooked.'

Andrew Wythes, Operations Manager

### Next steps

Marquis wants to keep the momentum going so that employees remain motivated and engaged. The company will continue to investigate and put into practice a number of good ideas generated by staff. As part of its ongoing engagement in Sustainability Advantage, Marquis plans to undertake another Sustainability Advantage module. It will build on the relationships already established with DECCW, other agencies, experts working in the environmental sustainability area and regional businesses. It will also continue to look for further workplace efficiencies in the production process and transportation areas.

### More information

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**Visit:** [www.marquis.com.au](http://www.marquis.com.au)

### Register for the Sustainability Advantage Program

For more information and to register, contact Business Partnerships, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW (DECCW)

**Call** 02 8837 6000

**Email** [sustainbus@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sustainbus@environment.nsw.gov.au)

**Visit** [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)

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**Achieve a Sustainability Advantage.** Sustainability Advantage is a business support service from the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW (DECCW). It is designed to help your organisation understand sustainability, successfully manage for a better environment and add business value.

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