

EXPANDED POLYSTYRENE AND ASSOCIATED PACKAGING MATERIAL RECYCLING PROGRAM



June 2009

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

An Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) reuse and recycling facility was developed in partnership with Geelong Disabled Peoples Industries.

Utilising a trader stewardship approach to resource recovery local businesses were encouraged to divert their EPS and associated packaging material from landfill.

Local markets were found for the reuse of EPS in blended cement products.

Per annum over 100 tonnes of EPS is being recovered and reused to light-weight cement products.

KEY PROJECT LEARNINGS

Whilst whitegoods and electronics retailers are large producers of EPS waste, businesses that have significant IT infrastructure produce bulk quantities of EPS waste when they upgrade- the realisation of this lead us to expand our target businesses to included local tertiary institutions, schools and large office based businesses.

To be competitive with commercial landfill fees the pricing structure of the project had to be re-assessed. The strong end-market allowed for the introduction of a free drop off service.

GREENHOUSE SAVINGS

The recovery of Expanded Polystyrene through this project represents an estimated CO2 saving of 176 tonne- the equivalent of planting 258 trees.

KEY PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Purchase of EPS processing machinery, including a crumbling machine and a heated compactor.

Securing local markets for the end-product- the crumbled EPS is blended with cement to make light-weighted products- primarily pavers and mouldings (see picture below).

Development of a trader stewardship model for trader engagement including a Memorandum of Understanding.

Development of a priority trader list, targeting whitegoods and electronics suppliers/retailers, and working with these traders individually to set up systems to recover their EPS and packaging waste.

Promotion of the EPS recovery service including media articles, radio promotions and presentations to the Geelong Waste Wise Network (a local business network).

Development and implementation of a data collection spreadsheet.

KEY PROJECT OUTCOMES

The development of a strong local end-market for the reprocessed EPS material.

35 businesses signed up to participate in the EPS recycling program.

106tonnes of EPS recovered per annum, reprocessed and on-sold to local markets for reuse.

Through the EPS project traders have been encouraged to source separate other recyclable packaging and have been linked into local recycling services.

In partnership with other service providers over 600 tonnes of associated packaging (timber, cardboard, packing tape and shrink wrap) is also being recovered.



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