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# Ferguson Plarre: rising dough and lowering emissions

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Lyndsie Mewett

EcoGeneration — January/February 2008

**Solar heating, hot water generation, energy monitoring systems...the 106 year old family business, Ferguson Plarre Bakehouses, has embraced innovative technologies to open an environmentally sustainable bakery in Melbourne.**

The bakehouse was officially opened by Premier John Brumby on 16 November 2007. The new facility at Translink Business Park in Keilor Park is expected to produce more than 15,000 pastries, cakes and pies each day for delivery to Ferguson Plarre's 35 shops around Melbourne.

Ferguson Plarre Bakehouses co-director Ralph Plarre said the bakehouse is the result of ten years of research conducted both here in Australia and overseas, to build the most efficient, environmentally and people friendly bakery. The company worked closely with Sustainability Victoria's ResourceSmart team to help develop business strategies to address energy, water and materials efficiencies across its operations.



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Basket is empty.



Mr Plarre said the goal was to maximise the environmental technology in the bakery while still ensuring the quality of the products.

“Our two families have weathered and grown five generations of baking in Melbourne, and we want to play our part in helping future generations to continue to be able to grow by minimising our environmental footprint,” he said.

*Article continues below...*

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The company is endeavouring to establish a showcase of efficient, environmentally sensible ideas that can be measured and monitored for both the baking industry and the food industry in general.

The bakehouse is installed with a fully integrated SCADA energy monitoring system that allows ‘real time’ monitoring of all energy consumption, both individually and collectively. The system monitors electricity and gas as well as the resulting CO2 pollution.

Deliveries to bakeries have been reduced from two to three times a day, to one early delivery per day. The earlier deliveries will avoid peak hour traffic and the heat of the sun and in this way achieve fuel and CO2 emissions savings.

Ferguson Plarre is also testing Victoria's first Diesel Hybrid truck. Fuel usage will be monitored and bench marked against the rest of the Ferguson Plarre fleet to assess the effectiveness of this technology and the likely payback period. In addition, specialised insulation was sourced for the truck cabin to reduce weight and the associated emissions from carrying such weight.

The bakehouse has also been installed with the latest bulk raw material handling equipment to eliminate approximately 450 bags per week from the system and halve Ferguson Plarre's packaging waste and therefore land fill requirements.

The use of water is reduced throughout the facility by the use of rain water toilet flushing for office and staff facilities, as well as over 100,000 litres of rainwater tanks plumbed for irrigation and truck washing.

Other environmentally sustainable initiatives used in the new facility are solar heated hot water for staff and office; high efficiency air conditioning for office, staff amenities and climate controlled production areas involving ‘outside air optimisation’ to reduce power consumption; hot water generation for cake production, generated by heat exchangers utilising a special heat-recovery system from a refrigeration plant; the use of heat recovered from freshly baked

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products to heat the main production area in winter; and the installation of a power correction factor relay unit to even out power usage and therefore reduce electric power consumption.

While Ferguson Plarre is eventually aiming for zero emissions at their Keilor Park bakehouse, the company has instigated Greenfleet, a carbon offset program that involves planting trees for the time it takes to reach the zero emissions goal. Mr Plarre announced that 7,315 are to be planted in May 2008 as part of the program.

At the bakehouse's opening Mr Brumby said: "It is heartening to see a Victorian business that has been operating for more than 100 years continue to innovate."

"This is a great example of how Victorian businesses can be resource smart; demonstrating how even a traditional industry like baking can pioneer a more environmentally sustainable future."

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