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CLIMATE LEADERS COALITION
ON A MISSION TO REDUCE EMISSIONS IN NEW ZEALAND



Climate Leaders Coalition Case Study: Asaleo Care

Chewing through your carbon emissions

December 2019

How do you cut the carbon footprint of your products after they have left the factory? Asaleo Care discovered that consumer behaviour could make the biggest difference – with some assistance from a bucket of worms.

Caring for our trees from start to finish

Jane Mansfield is the Quality, Environment & Sustainability Manager Australasia, Asaleo Care:

“We want to support a more sustainable society through our products and business operations, and we have heard the growing concern from our customers about climate change. As a business that deals with paper products, derived from natural resources, we are very conscious of our impact on the environment.

Giving our customers more information about how our products break down after use can help them to make more sustainable choices.”

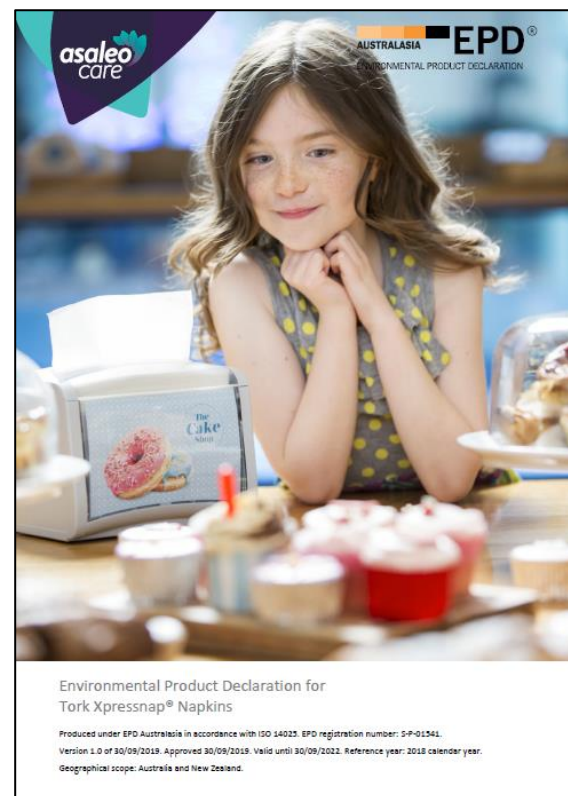
What did you set out to do?

“Back in 2016, we set out to understand the whole-of-life environmental impact of our products and work out how we could improve them further. We had already replaced a large amount of the natural gas used at our site with locally sourced geothermal steam, which reduced our manufacturing carbon emissions by 46%. We thought our next biggest carbon

reduction opportunity would be at the manufacturing stage.”

How did you go about it?

“We commissioned Environmental Product Declarations from thinkstep-anz to run the numbers on what impact some of our most popular products were having, and to identify environmental hotspots across their lifecycle. In 2016, we published two EPDs, one each for our toilet tissue and paper towels. This year we added a napkin EPD to our collection.

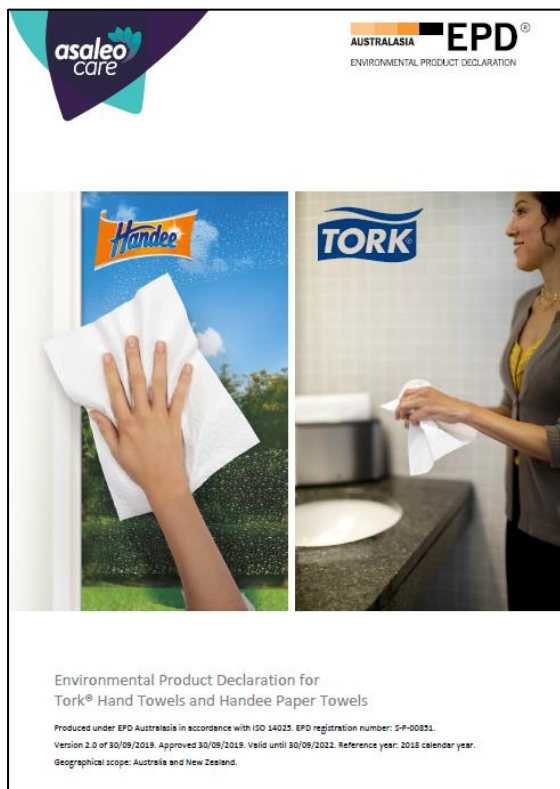


“EPDs are a lot like nutritional panels for food available in supermarkets. They

helped us unlock areas where we are doing well, and areas where we can improve. The EPD process is independently verified so we knew we were using a credible approach.

Being the first tissue manufacturer in the region to have an EPD also put us in a leading position to be able to talk with integrity and real insight about the environmental impact of our products.

The EPDs uncover all energy, raw materials, process chemicals and emissions from our supply chain and manufacturing operations, as well as downstream operations like logistics and waste treatment – in short, all inputs from the environment and all outputs to the environment over the full life of our products, from ‘cradle to grave’ or, as we have started to say internally, from ‘forest to flush’.



What did you find?

The EPDs found that the main environmental impact comes from what happens to a paper towel or napkin after it is used.

“Hand towels are a highly popular product in large offices, but with growing consumer awareness of environmental issues, staff can be concerned about what happens to them after use. We identified composting as a better solution than landfill. But we discovered that not many people know that it is possible to compost paper towels, or how to go about it. There is also a lack of services for customers who want to compost products, such as paper towels and napkins, on a large scale.

So, we identified a network of composting facilities and collection options throughout Australia and New Zealand. As part of this, we have teamed up with local company Low Impact, who manufacture and supply Hungry Bins, to provide a solution for our large corporate customers using thousands of paper towels a day.”

Hungry Bins are a high efficiency worm compost system which can break down food waste and paper towels on-site with no smell, into a much smaller quantity of waste that can be reused in local gardens. This reduces emissions from the waste as well as greatly reducing the transport costs associated with removing waste. Typically, the bins produce 1 litre of leftover liquid per week, and 8 litres of end waste (vermicast) per month.

According to Ben Bell, Founder of Low Impact, compost worms eat their weight in food every day.

“Nature has designed a way of dealing with waste which recaptures the nutrients and naturally reduces emissions.



"We've noticed more appetite for reducing the impact of food and organic waste to meet the challenge of reducing emissions. Companies started with their emissions from transport, energy use, and buildings, and electric vehicles and remote working are now becoming more mainstream. Now it is becoming harder to identify ways to reduce emissions, so worm farms are a logical next step.

Hungry Bins are designed to make the use of compost worms simple, easy and convenient. Worm farms particularly like hand towels, because the soft paper fibre absorbs moisture, suppresses insects and provides fibre that the composting process needs. This actually makes for higher quality compost.

We find that keen gardeners among our clients are happy to take the waste home with them. Alternatively, Hungry Bins can remove the waste, or your facilities management company or landlords can arrange disposal.

We hold education sessions on site when the service is introduced to explain how it works for staff. Engagement and visibility are the two most important things in this journey we're on to reduce impact on the environment – if we have a visible reminder of the waste we are creating, it can encourage different behaviour."

Hungry Bins have been in place at Westpac New Zealand for a year. In the Britomart headquarters, the team are growing food on the balconies, and using the output from the worm farms directly on the gardens.



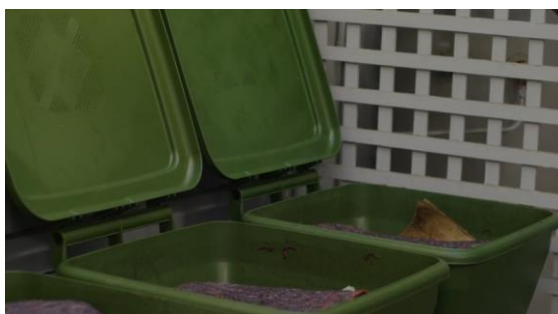
Kate van Praagh, Sustainability Lead at Westpac New Zealand, says "Westpac's operations are moving from a linear 'take, make, waste' model to a circular 'borrow, use, reuse, return' approach. In our headquarters in Auckland's Britomart we have created our own circular system. We use Hungry Bins to convert food waste into fertiliser for our vegetable, herb and flower gardens on the balconies which are in turn used by our staff café in salads, and by our bees in our building. Other benefits of the Hungry Bins are reducing the cost and carbon emissions of our waste going to landfill."



Asaleo Care provides bins for hand towels and napkins, and signage to use on site to help inform staff of the new system. It has also launched an information campaign for consumers and business customers to

promote the benefits of composting paper towels and napkins.

Jane Mansfield said: "We continue to look for ways to reduce our environmental impact at all stages, and are currently looking at the manufacturing stage to identify improvements."



What's next?

The EPDs were the basis for several comparative Life Cycle Analysis studies to help Asaleo Care to understand the climate-related impact of their procurement policies. For example, modelling the greenhouse gas impact of

products allowed them to predict what would happen if they switched their hardwood fibre to cheaper sources from drained tropical peatlands in Indonesia.

Across Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, tissue paper products made from pulpwood sourced from drained Indonesian tropical peatlands are typically cheaper and commonplace in supermarkets and workplace bathrooms. But tropical peatlands are one of the most efficient forms of land-based carbon sequestration on our planet. Draining them for pulpwood plantations and other purposes releases large amounts of greenhouse gases.

With this analysis, Asaleo Care is the first and only paper brand owner to announce and implement a Tropical Peatland Free commitment across all its products, protecting customers from contributing to this issue through their use of toilet paper, paper towels and napkins.

About Asaleo Care

Asaleo Care is a leader in Personal Care and Hygiene across Australasia. In New Zealand, our popular products are recognised household brands like Tork, Tena, Purex, Handee, Sorbent, Treasures and Libra.

We have been manufacturing in New Zealand for more than 60 years, where we operate two manufacturing facilities and four distribution centres. We make our tissue products, such as toilet paper and paper towels at Kawerau and our nappies at Te Rapa.

The Company employs more than 200 people in New Zealand who work together to offer products and services which provide care, comfort and confidence every day. For more information, visit www.asaleocare.com

About the Climate Leaders Coalition

The Climate Leaders Coalition was launched in July 2018 with 60 original signatories to create a movement of business action on climate change. Signatories account for 60% of New Zealand's gross emissions, employ more than 170,000 people, and represent nearly one third of private sector GDP. For more information, visit www.climateleaderscoalition.org.nz