



Great for business. Great for the environment.

Update

May 2005 Issue 2

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For more information about **ecoBiz** contact us on (07) 3225 1999, email ecobiz@epa.qld.gov.au or visit www.epa.qld.gov.au

ecoBiz is an EPA partnership program that helps Queensland businesses adopt resource-efficient practices that are good for the financial bottom line as well as for the environment.

ecoBiz helps companies find ways to improve how they do business and provides a range of tools and guides to help Queensland businesses invest, compete and profit sustainably.

Sustainable Industries

> Welcome to the May **ecoBiz** Update

ecoBiz participants are never short of new ideas on how things can be improved. Over the past couple of months we have talked with dozens of Queensland businesses about opportunities to increase profits while cutting costs and reducing environmental impacts.

The responses have been varied, and telling. Quite a few say, "This makes perfect sense. When can we start?" Some are motivated by the often-attractive returns on investment that eco-efficiency initiatives can generate. Some are relieved that 'doing the right thing' doesn't have to cost money, but can actually contribute to the bottom line. Some people – especially owners of smaller businesses – say they simply don't have the time.

The range of responses is not surprising as businesses faces the daily challenge to productively allocate scarce and finite resources. Every decision has consequences, and innovative decisions must make good business sense.

Some **ecoBiz** participants are recognising the value of improved environmental practices and the cost of missed opportunities when quality and efficiency possibilities are not realised.

In this edition, Northstate Carpets shows how to turn eco-efficiency improvements into a market advantage and PAC Foundry Maryborough reaps hidden benefits from a foundry upgrade and a new sand recycling program. Turning straw into gold? Well, for some at least, the possibilities are certainly there.

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[ecoBiz visits Mackay](#)

Local MP Tim Mulherin hosted an **ecoBiz** breakfast on the Mackay waterfront recently.

The event attracted representatives from more than 20 local businesses eager to learn about **ecoBiz** and ways the program can improve their eco-efficiency.

Mackay City Mayor, Councillor Julie Boyd, is keen to promote **ecoBiz** to local businesses in partnership with the EPA.

With Mackay and the surrounding region undergoing enormous change and investment in new developments, Mr Mulherin is keen to see local business join **ecoBiz**.

“The mining, agribusiness and tourism sectors continue to perform strongly in the Mackay district and it’s important that both new and existing businesses look at ways to manage their resource inputs and keep their competitive edge,” Mulherin said.



Pictured at the Mackay ecoBiz launch are (left to right) local MP Tim Mulherin, Tom Myers of Central Queensland Mining Services (see story on PAC Foundry), and John Cole of the EPA

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[Northstate Carpets gets a marketing edge](#)

In partial recognition of its eco-efficiency efforts over the past few years, Northstate Carpets recently won a significant contract to supply carpets to QBuild and government office buildings throughout the state.

Market entry wasn’t a driving factor for Northstate Carpets to begin its eco-efficiency program, but the company has now realised the value of environmental performance in increasing market share. The contract allows for expansion of its site and additional employment opportunities.

Northstate’s savings over the last three years include over \$18,000 in reduced waste disposal costs and 220 tonnes of yarn and packaging saved from landfill. The company is now looking at water and energy efficiencies at its Gold Coast manufacturing site.

Further details on Northstate’s eco-efficiency activities are in the next edition of *The Compass*. Please email us if you don’t already receive *The Compass* and would like to.

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[ecoBiz rebate update](#)

From 1 June, **ecoBiz** rebates will be offered in quarterly rounds each year.

The rebate program itself remains largely unchanged, with applications for pre-approval lodged at Step 4 along with the Action Plan. New rebate application forms will be available from the website before 1 June, or email us (ecoBiz@epa.qld.gov.au) for a copy.

Moving to a series of rounds creates a more competitive allocation of rebate funds and allows **ecoBiz** to focus on particular industry sectors in the future.

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PAC Foundry Maryborough

Maryborough has a long association with heavy engineering. Its foundries and workshops provide much of the infrastructure that has long supported Queensland's sugar, mining and transport industries. And while Maryborough is now known as much for its heritage architecture and as a stepping-off point for Fraser Island and whale watching as it is for its industrial output, it remains a key manufacturing centre and a cornerstone of the state's economy.

PAC Foundry has been a part of Maryborough for well over a century. Now it is wholly owned by Mackay-based Central Queensland Mining Services. With 70 employees, PAC Foundry manufactures castings for clients around the country. It has Australia's largest steel single pour capacity – up to 55 tonnes poured weight. A new 15-tonne Tagliaferri Electric Arc Furnace and a 20-tonne Molten Metal Capacity Holding Ladle now enable PAC to produce cleaner steel that can be held within tighter chemical composition tolerances.

As General Manager Max Voigt explains: "The furnace upgrade has highlighted for us how environmental costs are dispersed throughout the business and how they are systematically under-appreciated.

"The furnace upgrade made good business sense, but other previously unforeseen benefits are continuing to emerge. We knew of the improved product quality, but we didn't fully see all of the benefits at the outset.

"We didn't see the improvements in occupational safety and the elimination of the need for investment in air pollutant control technology and the headache of worrying how regulations may change in coming years.

"Market entry has been another driving factor that we didn't fully realise at the beginning. The ISO 14000 series of standards is becoming the entry ticket to many lucrative markets. At PAC, we tried to value the cost avoidance strategy that sacrifices market entry, and quickly realised that ISO 14000 accreditation was something we needed to do.

"**ecoBiz** is a critical part of our ISO 14000 work. It establishes all of the baseline data we need and provides the framework for eco-efficiency improvements and reporting. Increasing our market share is not a bad side-effect of practices that reduce costs and expand operating margins."

PAC Foundry is using the **ecoBiz** tools to implement two further capital upgrade projects that will add to operational efficiency and the bottom line.

Voigt explains: "We've identified that replacement of the reclaim sand cooler-classifier – including modernisation of the sand conveying system – and a transformer upgrade of the six-tonne electric arc furnace will deliver substantial financial benefit as well as improved environmental ones.

"The transformer upgrade will reduce energy consumption by 50KwH per tonne of cast metal. This is a 10 percent reduction in energy consumption, which is a significant step forward for the foundry industry. The upgrade also reduces heat times by 20 percent, improves cast quality and cuts labour cost.

"And this time around all the multipliers are clearer to us – and we can fully cost the benefits of regulatory immunisation, improved employee safety, motivation and productivity, and greater market access.

“ecoBiz helps us understand our waste streams and gives us the mechanism to identify continuous improvement opportunities and measure the financial and environmental benefits. And this is really all that our staff and customers are looking for.”

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> Eco-efficiency tip: limescale

Does your water bill just not add up?

An interesting discovery was made at ecoBiz participant Australiana Village in Hervey Bay recently, when CEO Glenn Thorpe observed a discrepancy between his metered and actual water use.

A follow-up investigation by Wide Bay Water revealed that the council's water delivery pipe had formed limescale in a pipe bend just upstream of the Australiana Village's water meter. The limescale build-up delivered the water to the meter at a greatly increased speed, turning the water meter wheel faster than it otherwise should have. Instead of registering 35,000 litres a day, the meter was recording an erroneous 100,000 litres as the water accelerated through the scaled pipe. Mr Thorpe describes the effect as being similar to holding a finger partially over a water hose: significantly multiplying the speed of the water but actually delivering less.

The story has a happy ending though, with Wide Bay Water happy to calculate the over-charging and reimburse Australiana Village.

Limescale build-up in pipes can cause massive losses in energy as well, making pumps work harder to deliver product within the pipeline due to increases in friction and reduced pipe diameter.

Limescale is most common in areas with “hard” water. Hard water is high in dissolved minerals, specifically calcium and magnesium. It causes mineral build-up on fixtures as well as poor soap and detergent performance.

There are many commercial ways of treating hard water including water filters, water softeners, electromagnetic water conditioners and reverse osmosis. Firstly though, if you suspect that you may be paying for water you're not receiving, you should check your water meters with your utility supplier.

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> ENERGEX Sustainable Building Awards



Enter the ENERGEX Sustainable Building Awards and you could win a \$25,000 solar energy system.

On 28 April, Energy Minister John Mickel MP launched the ENERGEX Sustainable Building Awards at Parliament House.

Mr Mickel said the Awards were designed to recognise property developers and commercial building owners whose developments actively contributed to a sustainable future.

Mr Mickel urged eco-friendly developers, landlords and businesses to enter the ENERGEX Sustainable Building Awards for the opportunity to win a \$25,000 solar energy system supplied and installed by ENERGEX.

Solar energy systems convert sunlight to electricity with highly efficient solar panels, thereby reducing

greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

So, if you're a property developer, commercial building owner or tenant, show the world you're eco-friendly by entering the ENERGEX Sustainable Building Awards. You can enter if your development company or building actively contributes to a sustainable future through:

- reducing energy use
- water management
- waste management
- other sustainability initiatives such as environmental community programs.

There are two categories in which to enter. In each category, there are up to three prizes of ENERGEX solar energy systems, with the top prize valued at over \$25,000, fully installed.

Category 1: Property Developer's Award - projects must be current or have been under construction for less than a year.

Category 2: Building Owner's/Tenant's Award - entries must be for buildings in South-East Queensland that are at least a year old.

Entries close 15 July.

The Awards are supported by the EPA and Kyocera Solar.

To enter or for further information visit www.energex.com.au/environment.

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Web feature: QMI Solutions

QMI Solutions, previously known as the Queensland Manufacturing Institute, is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to helping business on the journey to manufacturing excellence through research, education, and the implementation of world-class practices and technologies.

Located at the Technology Park on Brisbane's south side, QMI Solutions offers a range of services in Lean Manufacturing, Product Development and Digital Manufacturing.

Lean Manufacturing

Lean Manufacturing continues to gather momentum in Australia with more businesses transforming themselves into lean, fighting machines. Manager at QMI Solutions, Glenn Seaby, describes Lean Manufacturing as analysing processes within a business to eliminate all non value-adding activities.

"Lean Manufacturing analyses both internal and external supply chains, identifying and addressing issues that delay or impede the process," he said.

"Businesses going Lean make an immediate 25 percent gain in efficiency and that gain continues for many years. It drives me mad that business owners won't or are afraid to embrace this concept – particularly when it's been proven across so many industries.

"We need to train, we need to learn new techniques, we need to use modern technology and we need to embrace proven concepts such as Lean Manufacturing."

The QMI Solutions website give you access to a regular newsletter, information on the latest round of Lean Manufacturing and other seminars and a full account of their programs to assist your business improve its productivity.

QMI Solutions: www.qmisolutions.com.au or call Glenn Seaby at QMI Solutions on 3364 0700.

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Upcoming events

18 May

Eco-efficiency Networking for Facility Engineers

Cairns Tourism Industry Cluster. Venue TBA. For further information call 3224 7060.

19 May

How to Save Energy, Reduce Costs and Help the Environment

Being held at the Queensland Rugby Club, Herston and supported by Commerce Queensland, Ergon Energy, Australian Greenhouse Office and Brisbane City Council. For information call 3842 2211.

31 May

How to Save Energy, Reduce Costs and Help the Environment

Being held at Southbank Convention Centre, Townsville and supported by Commerce Queensland, Ergon Energy, Australian Greenhouse Office, Townsville City Council and Thuringowa City Council. For bookings and further information, call 3842 2211.

22-24 June

Australian Institute of Hotel Engineers Conference at the Gold Coast. For bookings call 5592 9783.

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We'd like to hear from you

Write and tell us about how your business is progressing with **ecoBiz**. You can send articles, views and opinions, feedback, and story ideas to **ecoBiz Update** at ecobiz@epa.qld.gov.au



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