

Clean energy



A closer look at glass through a sustainability lens

Glass packaging is made of predominantly natural ingredients: silica sand, soda ash and limestone combined with recycled glass (called cullet).

Increasing the amount of cullet used – the recycled content of glass – has a significant impact on sustainability credentials. First, with more cullet comes less reliance on valuable raw ingredients. Second, the more used bottles and jars are collected to recycle and remanufacture, the more waste is kept out of landfill. Third, every increase in recycled glass used in production equates to reduced carbon emissions and reduced energy use throughout the remanufacture process.

Glass is recyclable again and again. The glass remanufacturing loop can be repeated over and over, right here in Australia.

"It's clear that companies importing virgin glass into the country from overseas are putting at risk local jobs and sustainability targets, and increasing supply chain risks," says Mark De Wit, chief operating officer at Visy.

"This choice will become more relevant as consumers increasingly understand they have the option of buying packaging that is more environmentally friendly, strengthens the economy, provides more jobs for locals and keeps waste out of landfill."

Glass is a strong addition to Visy's closed loop packaging and recycling solutions model and the company plans further investment in Visy Glass, aimed at increasing the average recycled content used by Visy's glass plants from 30 per cent to 70 per cent. Visy executive chairman Anthony Pratt has publicly committed to investing \$500 million into the Visy Glass business to reach the company's recycled glass content goals.

Circular economy's benefits are clear

Investing for a better world

Recent high-profile investments highlight the opportunities in keeping sustainability at the heart of decision-making, with recognition growing that local remanufacturing can boost jobs, increase the reliability of supply chains and create a more sustainable future.

Sustainability and innovation have always been key drivers for packaging, paper and resource recovery company Visy, with the past 12 months being no exception.

"Over the past year Visy invested in operations to improve our sustainable product offering, invested in processes to improve sustainability, invested in equipment to stay on the cutting edge of technology, and invested in the region to create more jobs," says Mark De Wit, chief operating officer at Visy.

In July 2020, the company made headlines when it acquired the Australian and New Zealand operations of one of the world's largest glass bottle and jar manufacturers, creating Visy Glass. The investment is one of the biggest manufacturing acquisitions by an Australian-owned business in Australian business history.

Visy reinforced its commitment to the region in February this year, with executive chairman Anthony Pratt pledging to invest a further \$2 billion in manufacturing over the next 10 years.

Committed to a sustainable circular economy

The addition of glass allows Visy to offer a full array of sustainable packaging options to its customers, with primary packaging options now including glass, beverage cans, food cans and recycled plastics, and more fibre options for outer packaging and point of sale displays. Visy's offering also extends beyond packaging to provide a full range of services, including automation and logistics.

The company's commitment to a true circular economy comes full circle with their kerbside and commercial recycling business, which collects more than 2 million tonnes of paper, cardboard, glass, plastics and metal every year, for potential remanufacture back into sustainable packaging.

Since 2001, Visy has invested more than \$150 million in clean energy and more than 50 per cent of the company's total energy needs are generated from renewable sources. In 2020 Visy commenced a long-term agreement with Lal Lal wind farm to effectively supply 100 per cent of the



More than 50 per cent of Visy's energy needs are generated from renewables; above, glass is now one of its sustainable packaging options.

"Beyond being a good citizen, keeping sustainability at the heart of decision-making can increase market opportunities, cut unnecessary costs and encourage a culture of local innovation."

Mark De Wit

company's electrical needs in Victoria from a renewable source. Visy also completed a 1920kW rooftop solar installation at the Gepps Cross site in South Australia (pictured above), which will generate 40 per cent of the site's electricity needs.

Remanufactured right here...

Visy sees a future where there is a greater reliance on local supply chains within Australia versus overseas.

"In 2020 we were all given a glimpse of the greater reliability that can come from keeping industries local and reducing the reliance on complex overseas supply chains that are subject to volatility and higher carbon footprints," De Wit says. "Further encouraging that local focus will be a priority area for governments and business alike in the months and years ahead."

Visy has plants, facilities and partners across Australia. De Wit notes having a large but local footprint such as this puts the company close to local customers, suppliers and markets. "It also provides contingency options in the face of unforeseen events such as COVID-19, meaning Visy can really help customers keep their supply chains local, rather than relying on overseas imports."

... keeping jobs here, too

With the acquisition of Visy Glass in July 2020, Visy now provides well-paying green collar manufacturing jobs for about 7200 people across the region.

Understanding the importance of a sustainable business

Any responsible industry needs to demonstrate a

serious and long-term commitment to sustainability. Increasingly, De Wit notes, consumers, investors and governments are demanding this commitment, and voting with their feet and their wallets if they don't like what they see.

"Using Visy packaging, locally recycled and remanufactured, sends a clear signal to consumers that the industry cares about their footprint. Most consumers would prefer to be using, drinking or eating from packaging made right here, supporting Australian remanufacturing and providing jobs for locals.

"Beyond being a good citizen, keeping sustainability at the heart of decision-making can increase market opportunities, cut unnecessary costs and encourage a culture of local innovation."