



Sustainable Business of the Year 2008

Paraoa Bakehouse



Left to right - Jeanette Sarney, Philip Lane, Kathleen Brough, Robert Glensor, Angie Turner, Alex White, Jocelyn Sarney

Background: “A truly sustainable, restorative business model.”

Paraoa Bakehouse, located on the Kapiti Coast, have 100 percent commitment to sustainability. This has been the company’s founding objective since its inception 12 years ago under the guiding hand of founder and managing director, Robert Glensor. The company now employs 18 staff and produces a range of organic, wheat and gluten free breads including the popular “Purebread” which is sold nationwide.

The Paraoa promise to their customers is: “You’ll smell the difference and taste the difference, and your body (and our planet) will appreciate the difference!”

Rachel Brown, Chief Executive of the Sustainable Business Network is impressed with the company’s efforts to minimise and mitigate the impact of their business activities.

“Paraoa Bakehouse provides us with a restorative sustainable business model – and its owner, Robert Glensor, is a visionary entrepreneur and a sustainability role model for the rest of us.

“These products have a positive impact on the health of the consumer and the health of the environment - the bulk of the waste from their operations becomes nutrient for animals or for the soil, which means the more the business grows, the healthier we, collectively, become.”

Challenge:

Minimise and mitigate the impact of their business activities.

Some responses:

Paraoa Bakehouse sources grain and other elements that have been grown using sustainable organic farming practices and baked with traditional baking methods. Paraoa Bakehouse has been





BioGro certified since 1996 and has an unwavering commitment to providing sustainable food choices for consumers. New staff are given an induction manual that includes a section on sustainability to ensure they are appropriately trained and understand the company's values.

Along with their commitment to tasty, healthy food, Paraoa Bakehouse has made remarkable waste reduction efforts. Although they produce some 4,000 kilograms of food products weekly their waste reduction efforts have reduced the amount of rubbish going to landfill each week to less than the size of a netball (less than 1kg of waste).

Paraoa Bakehouse is constantly reviewing packaging around their breads; sourcing biodegradable and recyclable packaging where possible; and is looking to source energy from renewable sources.

Robert Glensor is proud of Paraoa Bakehouse's low environmental footprint and has removed the preservative from the cakes made by 4EverFree, a gluten-free food manufacturer the company recently purchased, replacing it with brandy instead.

Paraoa Bakehouse is interested in creating a reproducible business model. The company believes they can benefit the economy, their own workers, their suppliers and agricultural units while knowing that every loaf sold adds to the health of their customer.

Judges comments from the National awards:

- This business has a strong vision towards sustainability that has encouraged employees within the business to continuously look at the ways they can be involved in the overall process
- The Bakehouse has adopted cradle-to-cradle (soil-to-soil) practices to further increase their commitment to the life cycle of the product, with the waste becoming the ingredient for new product lines or nutrients for animals or the soil
- They have strong local community relationships, e.g they donate bread to local food banks and contribute financially to a local music club and other charities
- They are aware of the local and global risks and challenges (including world grain shortages, transportation and energy use) within their industry and are looking at renewable energy options such as building a new premise closer to their markets to diversify their products
- This business is well set up for future growth and they will become leaders of the sustainable business space here in New Zealand.

Judges comments from the SBN Central regional awards:

- Paraoa Bakehouse employs a totally sustainable production process to produce organic bread
- It's great to see a hobby turned into a successful business
- Paraoa Bakehouse operates in a totally controlled organic supply chain
- The company has taken waste minimisation to a new level (e.g. reducing weekly waster to landfill to the size of a netball, returning all scraps to the farm as feed)
- The company is constantly looking to improve and is currently investigating their transport methods (food miles) and are considering setting up a new factory near Hamilton to supply that market directly rather than transport from Paraparaumu.

