



# Planex Sustainability Report 2018

## Contents

MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT	03
PLANEX IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WIDER ENVIRONMENT	03
REPORT SCOPE	03
MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE, POLICIES AND SYSTEMS	03
Management Systems and Programs	03
ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE	06
Energy	06
Water	06
Waste Management	07
Trade Waste	08
Packaging	08
Summary of Environmental Performance	08
Future Strategies	08
Compliance Requirements	08
PRODUCT PERFORMANCE	09
Product Stewardship and Lifecycle	09
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	09
External Recognition and Activities	09-10
Employee Relationships	11
Supplier Relationships	11
Communication with Stakeholders	11

## MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

Planex has been designing and manufacturing specialised steel storage systems since 1973. The relocation of the business to purpose built infrastructure in Princes Highway, Hallam, Victoria in 2002 evidenced the embracing of environmental commitment.

The built environment of the Planex Factory and Showroom displays underpinning environmental commitment as do the factory processes, design, manufacture and delivery of product. Policies demonstrate environmental commitment to staff and interested parties. External endorsement of commitment through certification to 9001 and 14001 Management Systems has been upheld since initial certification on 28/08/1996.

On a continuum, Planex has maintained Furntech AFRDI Blue Tick product testing and Good Environmental Choice to a range of products since 2009.

Commitment was extended to 'AFRDI Green Tick' (AFRDI 150 Sustainability Standard) - conformance with GBCA Green Star Level B recognition in 2014.

## PLANEX IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WIDER ENVIRONMENT

Planex is an Australian Manufacturer of specialised powder coated sheet metal products which employs 50 people. Planex services multinational, corporate and government clients. Planex has responded to requests for responsible manufacture and is in turn promoting quality Australian products backed by sustainable processes.

Products made from steel rather than alternative materials present unique longevity and recyclability. They are manufactured to enable modularity and disassembly.

Planex is focused on smart and functional design of adaptive storage for the evolving workplace. This is complemented by environmental commitment which is measured and analysed to present continuous improvement.

## REPORT SCOPE

This is Planex version 4 of the publicly available Sustainability Report. However, data is disclosed from 2010 and annual reporting is available. The report is based on 'A Framework for Public Environmental Reporting - An Australian Approach March 2000' and the data is collected and analysed within the certified 14001 Management System.

This report relates to Planex environmental and sustainability programs, objectives and performance data.

## MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE, POLICIES AND SYSTEMS

### Management Systems and Programs

Planex has maintained certification to ISO 9001 Quality Management since 1996, to ISO 14001 Environmental Management systems since 2007, and has integrated the principles of the global safety standard 18001 within the Management System. In 2017 Planex transitioned to the new standards ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015.

Aspects related to Planex processes have been identified and programs devised to minimise the impact of the processes.

Process	Aspect	Program	Initiatives 2010-2017
Manufacture - Energy use	Energy use impacting on resources	Monitor and measure power and gas usage  Use technological solutions to ensure effective power use	Install and monitor power factor correction  LED lighting - 2015 Solar energy - initiated installation 2015; fully commissioned early 2016
Manufacture - Powder coating	Release to air	Prevent dust to atmosphere	Reverse pulsing extraction system / no venting to atmosphere  Powder reuse strategy
Manufacture - Water use in iron phosphate pre-treatment and in factory	Resource use - water	Reduce water at phosphate machine by 50%  Provide training on water conservation	Rinse water reused in process  Installation of conductivity meter and solenoid to ensure fresh water added only when required.  Ongoing maintenance Implement daily recording of water use
Manufacture - Discharge to storm water	Harm to waterways	Maintain pH, heavy metal, phosphate, and discharge limits within the Trade Waste Agreement (South East Water No 8067)	Quarterly third party monitoring End of shift monitoring Minimize / substitute hazardous substances
Manufacture - Waste from production	Degradation of land	Process waste from powder coating plant; collected and disposed as prescribed waste	Supplier evaluation and records control
Manufacture - Waste from production	Resource use	Optimise steel thickness / sheet size through design. Collect and recycle metal waste  Reduce bin size from 3 to 1.5 cubic metres  Reclaim /recycle polypropylene & ACUPANEL off cuts  Handling and disposal of waste powder	CNC machining; automated processes to reduce error / waste  Supplier contracts Staff training; audits  Maintenance of electrostatic powder coating line; offer unused powders to external powder coating facilities

Process	Aspect	Program	Initiatives 2010-2017
Manufacture - Sound deadening material	Release to air	Prevent volatile organic compounds (VOC) into atmosphere	Use of ACUPANEL which is free of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) Planex test certificates
	Resource use	Recycle plastic	Supplier contracts
Packaging	Degradation of land	Reuse or reclaim policy Training	Courier controls Install cardboard crusher
	Resource use	Electronic vs paper Recycle paper Toner cartridge / recovery of batteries & electronic components	Supplier contracts Training
Office / Admin / Sales	Noise suppression	Design of office cabinets that feature noise suppression technology	Use of ACUPANEL within cabinets to reduce unwanted noise and improve the environment of customers' workplace.
	Resource use	Optimise loads through line haul	Supplier contracts
Delivery / Transport	Harm to water ways and air	Truck size to fit order size Company vehicle policy Minimise flights through teleconferencing	Client and delivery contract liaison Vehicle selection with commitments to quality, safety, optimal fuel usage; green and recyclable materials used & maintenance services undertaken Teleconference facilities installed
	Gas use impacting on resources	Optimise gas efficiency	Awarded gas assessment and gas efficiency grant from Sustainability Victoria 2017
	Gas Efficiency		

Other programs supporting sustainability include policy review, audit program, hazard and incident reporting, emergency management, complaint handling, staff training plan and management review of environmental objectives and targets.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

### Energy

Gas and power usage is directly related to production. In the construction of the purpose built factory, Planex implemented various short and long-term strategies to be more efficient

The strategies included:

- Installation of a Power Factor Correction system that controls the amount of power drawn by a load to optimize efficiency, reduce line current losses and ensure reliable current delivery.
- Installation of automated machinery for cutting, punching, folding and spot welding that has allowed some off-peak production, as well as improved efficiency in the use of steel sheets, with reduced waste.
- Auto rinse and paint lines, drier and ovens have been installed and are subject to ongoing and preventative maintenance.
- In 2015 all warehouse 400W high bay metal halide lamps were replaced with 100 W and 150 W LED lights. All office fluorescent and quartz halogen down lights were replaced with LEDs. These measures gave 2 main benefits: significant reductions in electricity usage, lower maintenance costs because LEDs last longer, and hence less resources needed from the environment.
- The investment by Planex in 2015 in a solar power system resulted in a substantial reduction of electricity drawn from the grid. The solar power facility was fully commissioned in early 2016. Since its installation, the electricity drawn from the grid has been significantly reduced, so much so that during the sunnier 6-month period of October 2016 to March 2017 the contribution of solar was over 40% compared to that used from the grid. Over the full year of July 2016 to June 2017, including the cloudier months, the saving was almost 30%. This is equivalent to Planex not emitting 134 tonnes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere - equal to the gases released by about 30 average passenger cars driven for a year, or by one average car driven for over 500,000 km. During the set-up stages of our solar system (before October 2016 to March 2017), similar amounts of solar power were also generated and used to power machinery, meaning that even less emission of greenhouse gases were made. In the future, the combination of LEDs and the solar system will continue to reduce the reliance of Planex on electricity purchased from the grid, and hence indirectly reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the environment.

- Where switching off of machines, computers, monitors and office lighting is not automated, training and audits ensure awareness of energy consumption.
- Gas usage fluctuates year to year in relation to production output.
- Late 2017 Planex was awarded gas assessment and a gas efficiency grant by Sustainability Victoria to improve gas usage in the factory. Upgrades were made to the powder coat line Pre-Treatment Bath, Curing Oven, and Dry Off Oven.

With the monitoring techniques that were introduced since 2006, confidence is placed in on-going review of strategies to reduce energy consumption.

### Water

Process water used is related to quantity of steel processed for powder coating.

A target to reduce pre-treatment water by 50% was met in 2009 through installation of a conductivity meter to ensure fresh water is used on demand. Pumps are kept in good condition to ensure efficient use of water. A managed contractor relationship provides confidence that reduction of water use will continue to be an achievable environmental initiative of Planex.



### Waste Management

In accordance with our commitment to prevention of pollution, Planex management selects material inputs to ensure that reclamation, reuse or recycling of waste occurs. To this end polypropylene is used in preference to PVC; iron phosphate is used as pre-treatment and electrostatic powder coating is used in preference to solvent based painting techniques. Design considerations ensure optimum use of materials with disassembly being a key intent of designers.

The range of waste reclamation extends from steel and aluminium, to polymer, cardboard, paper and pallets. Steel is sourced from suppliers that have a recycled steel content of 15-20%. Optimum recycling has been achieved through using all ACUPANEL offcuts internally in the assembly area, on trollies and as acoustic screens in sections of the plant

In 2013 a major success was the halving of the landfill bin size. Through contract management the cost of disposal was minimized and there was heightened awareness of waste segregation and overall reduction in landfill volume.

Correct disposal of office waste such as batteries, phones, and toner cartridges is something of paramount importance and all employees contribute to management of such waste. Moreover, employees are encouraged to bring phones, small batteries and toner cartridges from home for Planex to recycle through its waste management channels.

Delivery contractors return protective packaging and cardboard for reuse / recycling by Planex.

Planex accepts products returned at their end of life and may either rework the product or dispose of through its partnership with steel recycler Future Metals Pty Ltd.



### Trade Waste

A contract with an external supplier ensures statistics are generated for water quality in accordance with the Trade Waste Agreement. Request for a new agreement was made in 2010 when Planex began using more than the per hour water use, while remaining within the daily limit. Employees on the product rinse line are involved in trade waste and water monitoring through recording statistics on water use, temperature and pH at the change of shifts. This practise has been in place since 2005.

Quarterly third party checks are also made with results graphed and reported to management.

### Packaging

Choice of packaging ensures use of recycled cardboard, low density polyethylene bags and protective film. Measurement of good practice is maintained for cardboard packaging and boxes are returned and reused. Plastic recycling and cardboard crushing is undertaken to ensure efficient baling of recycled materials for which data from waste receipts is collated.

### Summary of Environmental Performance

The sum of Planex initiatives in energy efficiency, waste management, water minimisation, trade waste management, dematerialisation, design for disassembly, and take back for reuse/recycling is aimed at minimising the company's carbon footprint and reducing pollution.

The performance of initiatives is shared with employees through noticeboard displays, training and meeting communication.

Planex underpinning philosophy of design and manufacture of a quality product supports its environmental performance as the product is durable, is designed to last many years and is made from materials that are readily recycled.

### Future Strategies

Following the installation of the solar panels, further savings on the use of electricity are planned. For example, exhaust fan usage in the powder coat area will be reduced by installing partitions to enclose the powder coating plant, which will reduce convection currents. This quarantining of the powder coating plant is estimated to result in 3 out of the 5 exhaust fans no longer being required, reducing the venting of hot air, the amount of natural gas required to heat the powder coating process will be reduced.

A long-term option to reduce mains water usage is to harvest storm water from the roof to tanks.

In 2017 Planex intends to investigate how the Victorian Government's initiatives, through Sustainability Victoria, could help the company use gas, electricity, and other resources more efficiently.

### Compliance Requirements

Planex subscribes to an Environmental legal requirements updating service (Environment Essentials) and accordingly updates its procedures and training program. The company measures and monitors processes in accordance with the National Pollutant Inventory and Australian Packaging Covenant. No breaches or penalties have been applied by the EPA or WorkSafe.

The primary compliance requirement is Planex Trade Waste Agreement with the water authority - South East Water.



## PRODUCT PERFORMANCE

### Product Stewardship and Lifecycle

Planex product longevity is supported by the eminently recyclable nature of steel. Each product has been assessed for its component parts and eco-preferred content by mass. Through design, bonding is minimised and disassembly promoted. A Stewardship Policy supports return of products for disassembly or recycling beyond the 10-year warranty period. Polymer components have identifying marks that assist segregation of polymer class and recycling. Replacement parts are available for a wide range of components in excess of 10 years from the date of delivery.

Planex's design and manufacturing philosophy supports its environmental credentials by ensuring that our products must not only be versatile, elegant and original; they must also be durable. They are designed to last many years and be made from materials that can be readily recycled. We apply a test we call built-out obsolescence to all our products. It means that we want them to have longevity, to be repurposed as required, and not end up as landfill. This is in contrast to products that are made using principles of product obsolescence or inbuilt obsolescence where manufacturers intentionally make things that do not last a long time, or are designed to fail: products that either break or stop functioning earlier than consumers would expect. Product obsolescence is an avoidable manufacturing practice that contributes to wasting resources. The Environment Protection Authority discusses the topic of inbuilt obsolescence. For example, the EPA says "Product obsolescence may be good for business, but there is a down side - the dramatic growth in waste and rubbish created by our throwaway society. (See pages 12 and 13 in [http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/AGC/r\\_cc\\_responding.html#product-obsolescence/](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/AGC/r_cc_responding.html#product-obsolescence/)!).

The longevity of Planex products helps address the problem of product and in-built obsolescence.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### External Recognition and Activities

In late 2017 Planex applied for and was awarded 2 grants from Sustainability Victoria. The first grant (\$13,000 on a dollar by dollar basis) funded an independent Energy Assessment to take a snapshot of the current situation and identify potential energy efficiency improvements.

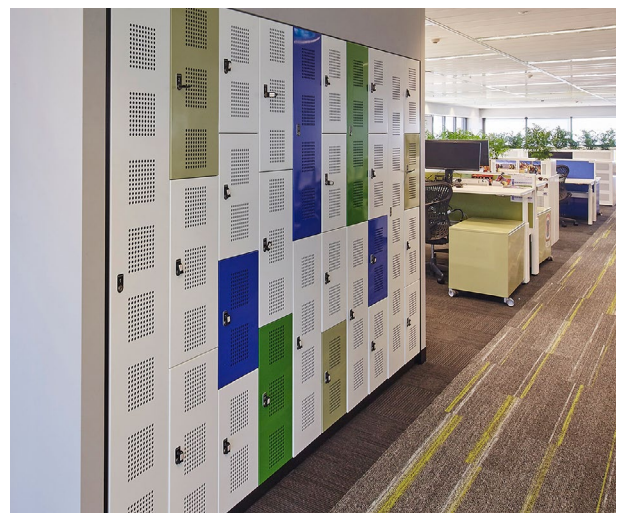
The second grant (\$35,360 on a dollar by dollar basis) enabled potential improvements uncovered by the energy audit to be acted on. This consisted of installing equipment specifically tailored to minimise heat loss in our process ovens, increase oven efficiency and overall reduce gas use and costs while still maintaining current production levels.



Planex minimises the environmental impact of our manufacturing through design excellence, design for disassembly, quality finish and material selection that promises our products that will stand the test of time.

Planex has achieved the following design awards:

- Inaugural IDEA Award 2003 “Furniture” category for Planex Fatfile Range
- Design Institute of Australia [Qld] 2004 Award of Merit “Furniture” category for Planex Fatfile Range
- Design Institute of Australia [Qld] 2004 Award of Merit “Design is Good for Business” category for Planex Fatfile Range
- Design Institute of Australia [Qld] 2004 Award of Merit “Ecologically Sustainable Design” category for Planex Fatfile Range
- Australian Design Award 2004 “Furniture category” for Planex Fatfile Range
- Australian Design Award 2004 DIA Furniture award category for Planex Fatfile Range
- RAA Victorian Chapter Architecture 2004 award, Australian Interior Design Award “High Commendation and Architectural Excellence in SouthEast sector “ in the category of “Best Commercial and Industrial building”
- DRIVENxDESIGN product design 2017 silver award “Office” category for xLocker2 System  
'Acknowledging creative and innovative design within commercial office applications'



Planex Website (awards won by web developer Evolution7):

- Create Awards ‘Best Website’ Finalist 2015
- Melbourne Design Awards 2015: Silver Award

### Employee Relationships

Planex has approximately 50 employees with diverse cultural backgrounds. These groups are catered for in a variety of ways including leave requests, dietary needs and respect of cultural and religious beliefs.

The employee guide issued at induction describes special leave arrangements. Planex is open to negotiation on working hours and special needs for family related matters.

### Supplier Relationships

Supplier relationships and contracts are used to foster environmental compliance and pollution prevention. Long standing relationships with delivery companies sees the optimum load size being met. Where small numbers of cabinets comprise an order clients are quoted an extended lead time to accommodate linehaul delivery. Planex delivery companies are contracted to return packaging to Planex or provide evidence of responsible disposal.

Planex Purchasing department partners with component suppliers to guarantee supply of MSDS for all material inputs where appropriate. Planex undertakes to check the MSDS CAS numbers against listed substances on the IARC website (Group 1 and Group 2A) and against toxic substances referred to on the Rotterdam Convention, Annex III.

Water reduction strategies were partnered with a service contractor who has assisted with problem solving as well as ongoing monitoring.

Investment in production and robotics equipment has followed from advice sought on world's best practise in quality manufacture.

### Communication with Stakeholders

Key interested parties of Planex environmental initiatives are its clients. Through tender applications clients request evidence of quality, safety and environmental certification. Increasing recognition of Furntech AFRDI product testing, Good Environmental Choice Certification and Green Star have encouraged Planex to commit to these third party endorsements of its sustainability initiatives.

Communication to stakeholders is via tender response, the website, expositions and the sales office.

Customer issues are promptly addressed through Planex Customer Issues Register. Client satisfaction is identified and reported on at management level.

This Sustainability Report and web site are key areas where stakeholders may be kept abreast of Planex product and environmental initiatives.

Report Authorised by Jean-Pierre Jardel



Managing Director Planex Sales Pty Ltd

Date: 30.04.2018

Copyright Planex 2018  
Information in this document may be  
subject to change without notification

**Head Office / Manufacturing**

191 Princes Highway, Hallam  
VIC Australia 3803  
PO Box 125 Hallam 3803  
Tel: +61 3 8795 1100  
Fax: +61 3 8795 1122  
Email Head Office: info@planex.com.au

**Sydney Showroom**

(Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm by appointment only)  
Studio 4, Level 2  
18-20 Victoria Street, Erskineville  
NSW 2043  
Tel: +61 2 9517 2411  
Fax: +61 2 9517 2544  
Email Sydney: info@planex.com.au

**Adelaide Showroom**

(Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm by appointment only)  
238 Grenfell Street, Adelaide  
SA 5000  
Tel: +61 3 8795 1100  
Email Adelaide: info@planex.com.au

**Perth**

Tel: +61 3 8795 1100  
Email Perth: info@planex.com.au

**Brisbane**

Tel: +61 3 8795 1100  
Email Brisbane: info@planex.com.au

**Tasmania**

Tel: +61 3 8795 1100  
Email Tasmania: info@planex.com.au

**ACT**

Tel: +61 3 8795 1100  
Email ACT: info@planex.com.au