

SUSTAINABLE PRINT



I Lilian Bernhardt

You likely won't have to look further than your inbox folder to witness an array of companies and businesses urging consumers to 'go paperless' in the name of environmentalism and sustainability.

However, paper production in Australia and New Zealand contributed to just 0.8% of Australian emissions in 2019–2020. Pulp is biodegradable and paper products can be reused and recycled up to seven times unless prematurely discarded.

The importation and processing of illegally logged timber is a criminal offence in Australia, with the enactment of the Illegal Logging Prohibition Bill in 2012. This removes the harmful impact illegally harvested timber has on forest ecosystems, communities and economies, and it means that a large portion of virgin fibre produced in Australia is FSC & PEFC certified.¹

New Zealand is following suit and recently presented similar legislation (The Forests Legal Harvest Assurance Amendment Bill) to parliament, likely to be enacted in the first half of 2023.²

We now know the environmental credentials of paper production, but what about printers?

In recent years, manufacturers have made notable efforts to reduce their environmental impact. This is evident in examples such as reduction in waste and chemical use, switches to renewable energy like solar farms, and high paper recovery and recycling rates.

Advance Press, Complete Colour, and The Lamson Group are three print manufacturers putting in the hard yards to be green.

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Ian Smith, Advance Press CEO

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Industry trade partner The Lamson Group, has been a leader in the industry incorporation of solar, installing 767 panels on the roof of its Sefton factory in NSW since 2018.

The panels receive a little below 305KW per hour and have managed to save the company 235 tonnes of CO₂ a year.

Advance Press began their sustainability journey in 2014 and have since committed to being carbon neutral by 2023. By identifying their four main waste streams: electricity, water, hard waste and liquid waste, Advance introduced a range of initiatives to reduce their overall impact and carbon footprint. They installed a range of solar panelling and LED lighting, in addition to waterless printing plate technology, reducing their annual water consumption by 31,000 litres. Additionally, Advance uses chemical-free printing plate processing which reduces chemical and solvent usage and replaced their solvent containers with sealed lid containers.

“The printing industry as a whole, needs to be aware of its impact on the environment and each and every one of us is responsible for our own situation,” Advance Press CEO Ian Smith said.

Complete Colour, has been in operation for almost thirty years and extends its eco-consciousness to the ink, paper, and energy they use.

Utilising renewable energy, the company source more than 35% of their power through a 200kW LGC Solar Power station located on site. By opting for vegetable-based soy ink, their printing avoids the harsh impact petroleum inks can create on the environment, with the added advantage of vivid colour creation. They were awarded a ‘Wastewise Gold Certification’ in 2007 due to 92% of the product entering their site being judged as recycled, reused, or delivered to clients.

“We as business owners are continually looking for more sustainable actions to introduce in our business,” said Complete Colour CEO Tim Michaelidis.

Sustainability is an important value to up to 85% of global consumers who indicated that it has guided their purchasing behaviour in the past five years.³ Consumers and marketers can rest easy knowing that the paper and print industry is doing its part.



Sources:

¹ AFPA ‘National Pulp and Paper Sustainability Report’, 2018

² New Zealand Forest Service, ‘Legal Harvest Assurance System’, 2022

³ Simon Kucher & Consultants, ‘Global Sustainability Study’, 2021