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AIR BAG | Car maker to use banana byproduct

Papyrus green deal for Jaguar

BANANA-WASTE products maker Papyrus Australia has reached an understanding with UK-based luxury car manufacturer Jaguar for its products to be used in a new "green" car.

Jaguar, now owned by Tata Motors India, has tested Papyrus's veneer for use as part of the air bag safety unit of the car, and will be using other products as well.

There is no fixed date when the green car will be manufactured, but industry sources estimate it will be around 2012.

For the publicly-listed entity, which is also a finalist in the CleverGreen Innovators to Watch product awards, Jaguar's commitment is a "big tick of approval", managing director Ramy Azer said.

"Car components are difficult to manufacture, and if an automotive company like Jaguar is willing to use our products, it's a big technical win for us, even if it's not our most lucrative deal," Mr Azer.

"It also opens up other markets and users for our technology," he said.

Papyrus products, which are fully biodegradable and do not use water during production, will be licensed to a number of customers in 2010.

The company is using banana waste to make paper and its Beleaf brand of

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fibreboards and veneer at its Walkamin factory in Queensland.

Though the company will focus on selling its production technology, a number of banana ply materials will be manufactured at Walkamin for use in the automotive, building, furniture and leisure markets.

Mr Azer said he was looking forward to working with the paper industry for greater sustainability, saying: "World annual paper consumption is more than 600 million tonnes, consuming significant timber with large chemical and water inputs.

"More than 1.5 billion tonnes of banana trunks are produced annually, which can be transformed at a lower cost. Our technology is likely to have a significant impact on the environment in the years to come."

The two winners of the CleverGreen Innovators to Watch awards, supported by *The Advertiser*, will be announced at the CleverGreen conference in Adelaide in February.