



In Business

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INVESTOR READY



Ancient innovation goes bananas

Traditional papyrus paper made from sliced reeds or other plant material, is an ancient Egyptian innovation. It is also a superb alternative to wood-based paper in many applications.

Papyrus Australia founder Ramy Azer, Egyptian by birth, sold traditional papyrus in Europe when he was younger and realised the demand for his environmentally-friendly product was greater than the supply.

At the same time, he foresaw increasingly stringent environmental and regulatory situation facing the paper industry.

In this context, after completing a Mechanical Engineering degree at the University of South Australia, Ramy started investigating alternative fibre sources readily available in Australia and manufacturing processes which could make them viable.

Following a detailed research and selection process, banana trunks were identified as an ideal material. Some 1.5 billion tonnes of banana trunks go to waste every year around the world. A banana plant will produce a new trunk every six to 12 months depending upon plant type and location; it makes an abundant and easily renewed fibre source.

In 2007, after 13 years of development, Papyrus Australia Limited fielded machinery and processes to use these trunks commercially and reduce the massive quantities of methane gas the decomposing trunks emitted.

"Banana fibre is fire retardant and water repellent," says Papyrus Australia Limited Chairman, Ted Byrt.

"Papyrus involves a machine and a process enabling banana plant trunks to be converted into usable products, such as veneer, chips and fibre as an attractive, high utility, environmentally positive alternative to wood.

"At this stage, Papyrus Australia produces commercial quantities of veneers. As production levels increase, other fibre products like chipboard, particle board, MDF, cardboard and paper will be added to the range of products."

Papyrus' technology is patented in many countries around the world.

In July 2008, Papyrus secured the location for its first commercial manufacturing facility at Walkamin in Far North Queensland.

"The company has designed and built systems to harvest, transport, receive, feed-in, convert and produce products as well as all other auxiliary systems and machinery," Ted says.

"The commercial manufacturing line was completed in April 2009 and independent tests were undertaken. In November 2009, with all machinery operating to standards, Papyrus successfully started continuous production."

Europe has been identified as the best, first market for Papyrus products.

"The company has signed an export agreement with European veneer company 3W Tout Bois and has received interest from other European companies," Ted says.

To get its message out Papyrus Australia is attending international shows like the Monaco Yacht Show, is making shareholder announcements through its website and running a PR program in Australia which covers media relations, speaking engagements, events and more.

JUDGES' VERDICT

"An innovation that completely comes from left field yet is remarkably simple in concept and stunning as an answer to many environmental and social questions."

TARGET MARKET

Paper, veneer and packaging manufacturers.

SOLUTION

Process transforms banana trunks into paper, building veneer, packing and many future applications.



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Highlights in 2010 include:

February

Mood Food
 Monday 8th February 6-7:30pm
 Free/\$10, RIAus Members/Non-members
 An interactive exploration of the innovative art of flavour with delicious examples of perfect 'mood food'.

From the origin to the future of species

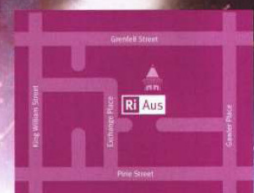
Wednesday 17th February 6-7:30pm
 Free
 Join Charles Darwin's great-great grandson, Chris Darwin, and artist, Angela Main, as they share their thoughts on biodiversity, adaptation and the future of evolution. In association with the Australian Academy of Science and the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

March

Francis Crick: hunter of life's secrets
 Thursday 4th March 6-7:30pm
 Free
 Bob Olby, scholar and official biographer and long-term friend to Francis Crick, co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, reveals the fascinating life of one of the greatest scientists of our time.

Understanding water

Tuesday 16th, 23rd and 30th March 6-7:30pm
 Free
 Throughout March the RIAus will hosts a series of events based on the new book, Adelaide: water of a city. Join experts and Adelaide personalities as they discuss the role of water in the development of the city of Adelaide.



The RIAus Science Exchange is available for venue hire and is open to the public weekdays from 10am-5pm