



BANANA BENDER: Ramy Azer with raw materials and end-products of his firm's research work.

By MEREDITH BOOTH

ADELAIDE paper maker Papyrus Australia is on the edge of a \$48 billion market.

It needs less than \$12 million this year in private and government funding to build a plant at Tully, in far-north Queensland, to turn organic waste from banana trees into pulp for paper, packaging and building products.

"Eighty per cent of paper used around the planet is used on packaging and building," managing director Ramy Azer said yesterday.

The five-year-old start-up company from Adelaide University's business incubator at Thebarton has spent \$2 million developing its

technology, arousing interest from Australian and multinational companies in its technology.

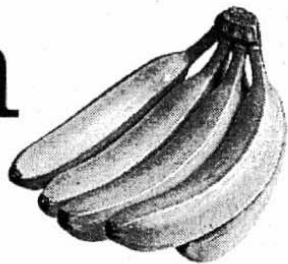
Mr Azer said the world's largest fibre technology provider, Finland's Jakkoo Poryy, was considering using Papyrus technology in 146 countries.

Meanwhile, building materials giant James Hardie Industries was interested in an exclusive supply arrangement for use of Papyrus paper in its fibro-cement and dry-wall products for sale world wide.

Packaging makers Visy Industries and Amcor were also potential buyers and contributors to Papyrus research.

Mr Azer said the benefits of

Tasting the fruits of a recycler's dream



banana-based paper, made from post-harvest tree fibre, include its strength and ability to repel water - perfect for packaging.

He said Papyrus Australia used no chemicals and produced no effluent from production.

End-products ranged from greeting card-quality paper to carton packaging, boards for building and furniture veneer.

However, the research and development company's future growth lay in the sale of its intellectual property and the development of manufacturing plants based on its technology.

"One of the best places to produce machinery is in Adelaide and

manufacturing is what we're interested in," Mr Azer said.

Future plans involve research into products from the waste of sugar cane, coconuts, oil palms and rubber trees and sale of the technology around the world.

Mr Azer said the company was conferring with the Northern Land Council in the Northern Territory over the proposed development of a manufacturing training facility for indigenous people.