

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**1 February 2009**

### **Banana-fibre technology: the solution to the global need for sustainable fibre resources**

The Papyrus technology, which uses the waste trunk of the banana palm to produce paper and timber products, was developed in response to the increasing global demand for fibre resources with environmentally-responsible manufacturing processes.

According to the UN FAO, it is estimated that the world's forest-derived fibre consumption has grown by 12 per cent between 1998 and 2008, with the world's consumption of paper alone exceeding 400 million tonnes per annum. In 2008, approximately 1200 million cubic metres of natural and plantation-based forests were destroyed to manufacture fibre products.

Papyrus Australia Limited was founded in 1994 by Egyptian-born Ramy Azer and is well placed to provide both the timber and paper industries with a new, innovative, low cost and environmentally sustainable solution.

“Producing fibre from trees is an inefficient process and has adverse affects on the environment,” said Azer.

“The Papyrus process is the result of 15 years of detailed research and selection which identified the banana plant as an ideal supply of fibre. There was previously no economically viable use for the 2.5 billion tonnes of banana trunks that go to waste every year around the world. This decomposing raw material emits more than 232 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent into the atmosphere every year.

“Unlike timber which has a long growth cycle, a banana plant will produce a new trunk every six to 12 months, depending on the plant type and location and this makes it an abundant and easily renewed fibre source.

“As well as addressing the global need for fibre resources, the Papyrus technology is a more environmentally-responsive solution,” added Azer.

Unlike traditional timber-based fibre production, the Papyrus manufacturing process does not consume any water or chemicals, requires less energy and produces no chemical effluent. In addition, it does not contribute to the destruction of natural or purpose-planted forests, potentially saving about 12 million hectares every year from destruction.

Papyrus estimates total carbon dioxide emissions to be less than 10 kilograms per tonne of raw paper produced. This represents a potential saving of more than 1.5

tonnes of carbon dioxide per tonne of raw paper produced, when compared with traditional methods.

Based on detailed calculations and assuming 10 per cent market share of the timber industry, Papyrus Australia forecasts its segment of the industry to be potentially worth over US\$23 billion annually by 2020.

The Papyrus technology is able to produce a range of fibre products including veneer, paper, cardboard, chipboard and fibreboard. Papyrus Australia started producing commercial quantities of fibreboard and veneer products from its factory in Walkamin, Far North Queensland, in November 2009. The products, branded Beleaf™, are currently exported to Europe under a distribution agreement with European veneer company 3W Tout Bois.

“Our Beleaf™ products have unique characteristics. They are water-repellent, fire-retardant and are stronger and lighter than most conventional timber-based fibre products. They do not transmit moisture, grease or solvents and have a distinct look and feel,” added Azer.

Papyrus Australia Limited was founded in 1994 and began trading on the ASX in 2004. The Papyrus patent was granted in Australia in 2007 and the technology is patent-protected in many countries.

For more information on Papyrus Australia visit [www.papyrusaustralia.com.au](http://www.papyrusaustralia.com.au).

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