



Media Release

The Smith Family's Commercial Innovation Generating Funds for Charitable Activities

Tuesday October 14, 2008. Last year The Smith Family's Commercial Enterprise (TSF) located in the Sydney suburb of Villawood recognised a significant business milestone when its manufacturing nonwoven textile operation celebrated its twentieth year.

A manufacturing facility was established in 1987, as a means of utilising textile industry waste and the tonnes of surplus clothing that weren't suitable for either sale through TSF's retail outlets or for export.

The first of three specialised lines went into operation to produce nonwoven fabrics from regenerated fibres. Carpet underlay, furniture removal felt, weed suppression and water retention felts are just some of the examples of products produced by the manufacturing line.

"Through the creative and innovative commercial utilisation of what would otherwise be waste product destined for landfill, we are able to convert hundreds of tonnes of waste clothing and material into manufactured non woven textile felts and fabrics," said Cathy Bray, CEO TSF-Commercial Enterprise.

In 1992, a significant investment was made and the second manufacturing line became operational enabling the Commercial Enterprise to significantly expand its capabilities and manufacture a more extensive range of felt and fabric products.

In 2004, as the result of a strategic business review and the support of the Federal Government's Strategic Investment Program (SIP), TSF invested in the growth potential of its nonwoven textile operation and committed to an additional manufacturing line that would increase the output capacity by 6,000 tonnes annually to over 10,000 tonnes annually from the Villawood operational centre.

Commenting on the importance of SIP, Cathy Bray said it provided the catalyst and funding for investing in technology and processes that markedly expanded commercial and marketing opportunities.

The new third 'airlay' line came on stream this year and is now fully operational. Its unique technological capabilities have enabled the Commercial Enterprise to significantly expand the product portfolio and capitalise on technological advantages and innovation.

"Another noteworthy benefit of the third line is its suitability to utilise renewable source natural fibres as well as raw materials from recyclable sources. This capability together with our recycling activities, enables the Commercial Enterprise to decrease our environmental footprint," continued Cathy Bray.

With the addition of the now fully operational third line, TSF's Commercial Enterprise is positioned to further enhance product development and export and local marketing capabilities.

"It's our goal to use technology and innovation to efficiently and responsibly transform materials and resources many regarded as waste, into marketable products that benefit the Australian economy and environment. The long term societal benefit is also important because it means the Commercial Enterprise can contribute funds to enable TSF's Social Enterprise to support more Australian disadvantaged children and help them reach their potential through education," concluded Cathy Bray.

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Notes to the Editor:

The Smith Family Nonwoven Manufacturing Plant is located in the Sydney suburb of Villawood and has been producing nonwoven fabrics since 1987.

The plant combines a variation of processes such as carding, needle-punching and thermal bonding to manufacture a wide range of fabrics and felt.

In production TSF uses both imported virgin fibres such as polyester, polypropylene and viscose and regenerated (recycled) fibres such as acrylic, wool and polyester cotton.

These regenerated fibres are recycled back to fibre form from textile industry fabric clippings, clothing and post industrial carpet waste.

TSF Commercial Enterprise produces a variety of products to service the specific needs of key customers and markets. It manufactures products for sale under customers' brands such as the 'Jif' cloth for Unilever and 'Airstep' carpet underlay for Bridgestone.

TSF Commercial Enterprise has also developed a unique brand of commercial and industrial wipes in the Vistex and Econo cloth range.

Examples of TSF Commercial Enterprise market segments include:

- Agricultural and horticultural (soil/water erosion prevention and ground covers)
- Automotive industry (acoustic felts)
- Artificial sporting surface underlays.
- Filtration (dust, air and liquid)
- Commercial and Industrial sound and thermal insulation (ie: under floor, wall and ceiling).