



CASE STUDY

Showerline Industries

The development of a lightweight shower base requiring 80% less materials and 15% less energy to manufacture is just one of the rewards a Geelong business uncovered on its path towards greater sustainability.

Business snapshot

Showerline is a family business that has been located in Geelong for more than 30 years. It manufactures bathroom furniture for the national market including manufacturing approximately 70% of Australia's shower bases. Showerline has a stated commitment to sustainability and has been working for a number of years to understand and improve its sustainability across the business. It has improved its product range to incorporate recyclability and light weighting, converted its vehicle fleet to gas, and encouraging continuous learning and implementing environmental best practices from its entire staff.

Understanding its materials intensity

In 2013/14 Showerline participated in GreenLight, a 12 month resource efficiency program delivered by ECO2Sys in partnership with Geelong Manufacturing Council and funded by Sustainability Victoria. GreenLight guided participating businesses through best practice strategies to avoid and reduce their operational waste.

Following its GreenLight involvement, Showerline successfully applied for a \$50,000 capital grant from Sustainability Victoria to initiate process improvements and purchase new equipment to allow it to manufacture a lightweight polylite shower base.

Later in 2014, Showerline undertook a feasibility study to better understand the optimal capacity and configuration of their proposed production line to facilitate more efficient, sustainable production of their new light-weight

shower bases and related products. The study was partly funded by a \$15,000 grant from Sustainability Victoria.

An innovative, lightweight shower base

Prior to completing the Greenlight program, Showerline's business model was unsustainable and the business was under threat due to competition from cheap, lesser quality imports from China. Facing this pressure and encouraged by learnings from the GreenLight program, Showerline recognised the crucial need to radically innovate its production and business model. This realisation led directly to a step-change design innovation in the development of its polylite shower bases.

The innovative new shower base, which weighs less than 10 kilograms compared to the usual 50 kilograms of the current polymarble product, has already opened up new domestic and international markets.

\$300,000 return on investment

One recommendation from the feasibility study was to redesign existing production lines so that they mesh with the new polylite shower base production line, thus further improving materials efficiency. The design was completed by a specialist engineering firm, and by mid-2015 Showerline had begun implementing the changes.

By taking steps to improve the business's resource efficiency, Showerline not only reduced its environmental impact and added to the business's bottom line with an expected return on investment of \$300,000, but also strengthened its brand, making it more competitive in the international market

Showerline has committed to becoming zero waste and expects to save more than \$20,000 annually in waste charges as it continues to implement resource efficiency recommendations.



“Participation in these resource efficiency projects has enabled Showerline to produce some revolutionary new products that will put us all ahead of anything that currently exists in this country. I would encourage more SMEs to get involved in programs like these. Resource efficiency is not a pipe-dream but can be a reality, and everyone wins.”

**Phillip Royce, CEO,
Showerline Industries**