



Baker saves dough

Hino's hybrid will save money and fuel, writes
GRAHAM SMITH

MELBOURNE's Ferguson Plarre Bakehouse has a long, proud past and plans for a similar future.

That's the driving force behind the company's commitment to a clean, green future, part of which is the purchase of a Hino Hybrid for its delivery fleet.

"We've been around for 106 years and want to be around for another 106," Ralph Plarre says. "Looking after the environment is a crucial part of that plan and we want to do everything possible to minimise our carbon usage."

Two years ago, while planning a new environmentally friendly bakery, Plarre joined an environment thinktank to look at the effect of the company's activities.

"We looked at such things as the fuel use of our delivery fleet and from there we started to look at hybrid vehicles," Plarre says.

The plan grew legs when Sustainability Victoria, the Vic-

torian Government's office for climate change, offered to support the project by helping Ferguson Plarre buy the green Hino, the first diesel-electric hybrid to hit the road in Victoria.

"It forms a very important part of our business plan for our new bakery," Plarre says.

When he first considered an environmentally friendly future for his company he was afraid of the cost, but he's now a convert.

"I thought it was going to cost a fortune, but as I became more involved I realised that though it is a little more expensive, it's not that difficult. You have to think about where you're going to be in five or 10 years.

"There's no real immediate payback, but you have to think about the future if you want to be around in the future."

The new bakery employs many innovative measures to reduce its water use. It reclaims the heat generated in baking to heat water and the factory.

The Hino Hybrid will join the mostly Isuzu fleet of 11 trucks on the company's distribution run.

Plarre expects the Hino Hybrid

will be ideally suited to the stop-start nature of the delivery run, and predicts a fuel saving of more than 25 per cent over a conventional diesel-powered truck.

"This is a test bed," he says. "We will put it through its paces in the next few months to measure its fuel consumption, and from that we'll develop a strategy as to where we go with it."

Plarre says his company is likely to continue with hybrid vehicles, but it depends on being able to build a business case for the trucks, which cost about \$15,000 more than regular trucks.

By the time it hit the road with an insulated refrigerated body, tailgate loader and signage, the Hybrid Hino cost about \$110,000, \$35,000 of which was provided by Sustainability Victoria.

"It's looking good, but I can't commit to buying more of them at this point," Plarre says.

The Ferguson-Plarre hybrid is one of 15 Hino has delivered. The company is taking particular care to ensure the trucks will be used for purposes that suit them.



Efficient: the long-term benefits of a hybrid truck should outweigh its cost, says baker Ralph Plarre