

Environmental Policy

Just one replacement low-energy bulb can save up to 250kg of CO₂ a year.

IMO is committed to creating timeless, versatile and affordable furniture that endures changes in tastes and trends. We also strive to reduce the negative impact of everyday living on the environment.

We acknowledge that the building and furniture industries play a part in causing many of these problems. Hence, we are continuously looking to improve our design solutions, policies and practices to become more environmentally aware and achieve a higher standard of sustainability.

We aim to create awareness and empower our Staff, Suppliers and Clients to take responsibility for environmental issues both at home and in the workplace. Everything we do has an impact on the environment, and being aware of this is the first step in the right direction.

Cigarette butts make up 50% of litter items in Australia, making them the single most common litter item. Approximately 7.2 billion cigarettes are discarded in Australia each year. If placed end to end they would extend 144,000 kilometres and circle the planet 3.6 times. Or if they went to landfill this would be amount to 13,000 cubic metres of solid waste.

Against Throwawayism

At the heart of the environmental crisis is our consumer society. In today's global culture of disposable mass-consumerism, the value of long lasting design is essential - consume less and live more. We make every effort to educate our Clients so they are able to make better, more informed decisions when choosing products and encourage people to think about the life cycle of the products they choose. For us the proof of good design is to stand the test of everyday use. In order to do that, our objects must withstand daily wear and tear. But they must also survive changes in tastes and trends to remain relevant and cherished so they can be passed from generation to generation.

Buy Local

Buying a product that has been produced closest to the place you buy it, requires the least amount of transportation to market. In this way we reduce the consumption of energy in transporting products around the world, and we support our local economy. We pride ourselves on being 100% designed and manufactured in New Zealand. This also gives us the flexibility to customise products easily and work to shorter lead times.

Eighty-four percent of a typical household's waste can be recycled.

Aluminium

Aluminium extrusions are supplied pre-cut to a standard size with minimal post-processing. Off-cuts are stored for re-use or sold to aluminium recyclers. Aluminium can be recycled using less than 5% of the energy used to make the original product.

Food and green waste accounts for around 23% of our total landfill waste composition, with disposable nappies making up around 1.9%.

Edge Tape

We use ABS Edge Tape which does not contain chlorine, heavy metals or formaldehyde and can be disposed of with general waste. It has a higher heat resistance, is lighter and provides a cleaner edge than PVC, is more durable and less prone to scratching.

Foam

We use Dunlop Enduro Foam which is manufactured in Australia with air emissions below EPA approved levels and with no CFC emissions. Pieces are cut to size in our factory to eliminate waste. We also use Bonded Chip Foam to utilise the off cuts from the factory floor.

Recycling one aluminium can saves enough energy to run a 100 watt light bulb for 20 hours, a computer for 3 hours or a TV for 2 hours.

Linoleum

Our Linoleum tops are made of paper (made from unbleached sulphate pulp) vegetable oils; resin and filling materials such as ground wood and limestone. The ground layer is made of paper. Linoleum products can be disposed of by burning or composting.

MDF Substrate

We use Laminex Lakepine Zero MDF substrate for all tops and panels, which comes from privately owned managed plantation forests. It is a low formaldehyde emitting MDF panel (E0) specifically developed for situations where lower formaldehyde emission levels are preferred. A significant proportion of pre-consumer recycled and reclaimed wood fibre is used in the production of Lakepine MDF, giving it a high 'eco-preferred' content. Decorative papers used to decorate Laminex LPL are sourced from suppliers who use wood pulp from managed timber plantations and heavy metals are not present in the inks.

The energy saved from recycling one glass bottle will operate a 100 watt light bulb for 4 hours.

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Paint Finishes

We use water based two pack polyurethane and wax finishes on our solid timber and veneer products. We are currently working with an Environmental Choice accredited supplier to develop an eco friendly waterborne acrylic enamel coating.

Powder Coating

Our powder coated surfaces are manufactured from 100% solid powder coating material - no solvents or water are used in the paint material or powder coating process. This means that they contain zero or negligible Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's). Any waste of the powder paint material during the coating process is minimized through a cyclonic recycling system and up to 95% of raw powder paint material is re useable during production.

All MDF substrate is manufactured using 100% plantation grown pine chip and wood waste and is sourced only from plantation grown radiata pine forests in New Zealand.

The environmental impact of powder coating is less than a solvent based coating, with powder coating scoring significantly less with respect to global warming, acidification, eutrophication and carcinogens. In addition cumulative energy demand, water use and solid waste are less than half of other coating systems.

Powder coatings contain up to 5% recycled material and within the factory, a significant amount (15 to 20%) of powder is recovered from the spray booths to be blended with virgin powder or used as recycled powder for the painting of less critical surfaces such as inside panels.

Steel

Up to 30% of the Steel used in the manufacture of Kase is recycled. Steel is supplied pre-cut to specified sizes which eliminates wastage for most of the components. Any scrap metal from this process is sold for recycling or returned to steel merchants for reuse (re-smelted). The reduction of steel material is achieved by using thinner sheets where strength will not be compromised.

Textiles

We offer a range of fabrics and leathers from manufacturers with environmental certification. Leathers are recommended from tanning facilities that only use organic compounds and dyes, without the use of chromium, solvents, pentachlorophenol (PCP) or formaldehyde.

Timber

We use solid timber in parts of our range for its durability and longevity. It is a renewable resource, recyclable and biodegradable. Our local and imported timber products are sourced from well managed, sustainable forests. We do not use timber from intact natural forests or those with high conservation value.

Veneer

Using natural wood veneer is a highly efficient way of conserving valuable timber. One block of 50mm solid timber can be sliced into 70 leaves of veneer, offering an excellent resource advantage compared to solid timber and helping preserve natural forest resources. We recommend the use of Bestwood Reconstituted Veneer which has been sourced from sustainable managed forest environments.

Repair and Reuse

Almost all of the environmental impact of furniture is caused during the manufacture and disposal stages. It has been suggested that the sustainability of an item of furniture depends as much on the environmental impacts of its production as it does on the length of its service life. The service life depends on many factors including planning, product design, choice of materials, quality and use.

Our products are designed to be functional and generally remained unchanged so that old items of furniture can be fitted with replacement parts. If we do make changes to one of our products, we ensure that replacement parts are kept for older versions. Many of our products are also retailed as second-hand goods due to their design value.

Our Kase Work System helps create environments that are flexible and can adapt to the constant change in the modern Office. The System can be easily rearranged, or quickly disassembled and flat-packed for efficient transportation. We store all cardboard packaging for reuse as we or our Clients require.

The time it takes to biodegrade:
Paper - 2.5 months
Orange Peel - 6 months
Milk Carton - 5 years
Cigarette Butt - 10-12 years
Plastic bag - 10-20 years
Disposable nappy - 75 years
Tin can - 100 years
Beer can - 200-500 years
Styrofoam - Never

More than one third of all energy is used by people at home. One third of all water is used to flush the toilet.

Each year, 1 million sea birds, 100,000 marine mammals and 50,000 fur seals are killed as the result of eating or being strangled in plastic.

Approximately 1.2 billion plastic shopping bags are used every year by our 4 million New Zealanders.

During 2000-2002 almost 1 million tonnes of waste was disposed in the Auckland region landfills.

If all the cars on US roads had properly inflated tyres, it would save nearly 7.5 billion litres of petrol a year.

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Recycling

The use of non-permanent fittings in the majority of our products enables the complete dissociation of the product into its basic components with no dissimilar components being permanently joined together.

Powder coated material is pyrolysed in the steel smelting process and aids in the heating process. Fillers and clays contained in the powder coat material are extracted during the smelting process. Aluminium can be re-melted into billets and used as feedstock for new aluminium products. Up to 85% can be incorporated into new extrusions.

All cardboard packaging material is bailed and recycled.

Small Steps

We believe that most of our environmental problems are not global in origin, but stem from daily decisions made in our homes and work places. The future of our planet lies with the choices we make everyday and protecting and preserving the environment starts with small steps.

At home and at work we:

- › Use ecological detergents and cleaning products and biodegradable toilet tissue made from 100% recycled office paper
- › Wash clothes in cold water and line dry washing when possible
- › Don't wash chemicals, paints or oils down drains
- › Use reusable shopping bags and biodegradable plastic rubbish bags
- › Recycle or re-use glass, paper, cardboard and plastic
- › Buy wholegrain, unrefined, seasonal and organic produce from local suppliers using local ingredients wherever possible
- › Compost our food and garden waste and use biodegradable plastic bags
- › Use reusable food and water containers
- › Do not use genetically engineered or modified products
- › Turn lights, printers, faxes and computers off when not in use
- › Have replaced the majority of light bulbs with energy-saving bulbs
- › Ensure all new appliances are rated as energy efficient
- › Recycle printer cartridges, mobile phones and other electronic equipment
- › Use letterhead and envelopes made from recycled paper
- › Collect our packaging after installation for re-use or recycling

Work In Progress

Many of these initiatives are new for IMO and we still have a long way to go. We believe in taking small but genuine steps to achieve our goal of becoming more sustainable.

Part of our role is to educate our Clients on the long term benefits of using environmentally sound materials. We hope that in the near future, as the New Zealand public becomes more aware of these issues and demand for environmentally sustainable materials increases, that all of our Suppliers will be forced to provide cost effective alternatives.

References and Links

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stuff.co.nz/thePress
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worldwise.com
zerowaste.co.nz

Recycling one ton of paper saves:
- 17 trees
- 26350 litres of water
- 1750 litres of oil
- 266 kgs of air pollution
- 2.8 cubic metres of landfill space
- 4077.45 KWhr of energy

New Zealanders burn up to \$100 million worth of electricity every year by leaving appliances on standby.

The amount of wood and paper we throw away each year is enough to heat 50 million homes for 20 years.

Americans throw away 25 billion Styrofoam coffee cups every year, and 2.5 million plastic beverage bottles every hour.

Driving an average of 1600 kilometres a month produces about 120 tons of carbon dioxide a year.

A single polystyrene cup contains one billion billion molecules of CFC's - that's 1,000,000,000,000,000,000.