

CIBI CAFÉ & THE UDDER WAY



Switching from single-use to bulk reusable packaging

A case study for using procurement practices to transition to a circular economy.

The transition

Melbourne-based CIBI Cafe sought a sustainable, environmentally friendly alternative to 2-litre single-use plastic milk bottles. The option they chose in August 2022 was The Udder Way's 18-litre reusable milk kegs (Udder Way Keg system), which offers a practical and circular solution for milk deliveries.

Benefits and outcomes

Each use of an Udder Way Keg saves approximately 450g of plastic from being produced. This is equivalent to the weight of approximately 9 crushed 2-litre plastic bottles.

In the first 18 months since introducing the system, CIBI Cafe substantially reduced its waste generation and environmental footprint. It has:

- avoided the production of approximately 80 single-use plastic milk bottles per day, and a total of around 4,300 bottles (~215 kilograms of plastic)
- reduced waste collection costs.

With a certified minimum lifespan of 8 to 10 years or 800 to 1,000 uses, the Udder Way Kegs have the potential to save significant amounts of plastic while in use. They are also completely recyclable at the end of their life.

Transition considerations

To transition to the Udder Way Keg system, the café needed to adapt its workspace, including providing:

- a milk dispensing unit (see photo below)
- a compatible nearby fridge for keg storage.

The café purchased The Udder Way's Café/Deli Kit¹, however, third-party dispensers may also be used. To save money the café adapted an existing fridge to accommodate the Udder Way Kegs². Staff were then trained on how to use the new system.



¹ Currently \$1,890 excl. GST, including installation at the time of case study preparation, prices subject to change.

² For customers that need to purchase a refrigeration unit, prices start at \$350 excl. GST.

The new system enabled the café to:

- optimise the layout of the café workspace, reducing the space needed to store full and empty 2-litre plastic milk containers.
- empower employees with a sense of pride, knowing that when using Udder Way Kegs they were reducing waste.

Transition cost/savings

The price for milk delivery using the Udder Way Keg system is set by dairies. The main factor influencing the costs of the new system is the cleaning inputs required at the dairy. For many Udder Way customers where the dairy has installed automated reusable keg cleaning equipment, the cost is on par with milk delivery in 2-litre containers, or cheaper. For CIBI café, its selected dairy currently needs to manually clean the kegs, adding 15c per litre to purchase costs. However, the benefits of the new system justified this cost for the café.

Working with suppliers

The Udder Way has developed an app in collaboration with dairy partners to assist customers and dairies make the transition to the Udder Way Keg system. The app keeps the kegs in rotation and provides valuable data on the number of bottles saved by each customer and dairy.



Conclusion

Transitioning to a reusable keg system allowed CIBI Café to operate in line with its environmental values. It set them apart in the market, attracted environmentally conscious customers, and is contributing to a greener future. While the initial investment and employee training were important considerations, they showcased the café's commitment to sustainability. It has enabled the café to take a leading role in the circular economy, reduce plastic waste, and make a positive impact on the environment.

Next steps for the Udder Way

The Udder Way's reusable keg system is currently available in Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and New Zealand. The company is planning to expand its operations globally. It is working with dairies in South Australia to introduce the service and is looking for cafés, restaurants, and other large milk-consuming organisations to partner with.



About this case study

This case study was prepared by Rawtec for Green Industries SA. It is part of a series of case studies aimed at empowering businesses and organisations to make changes to their procurement practices to transition to a circular economy.

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