

Agility and innovation key to business success for Brownes Dairy

Established in 1886, Brownes Dairy is Australia's oldest dairy company, purchasing milk from more than 50 dairy farmers in the state's southwest and employing nearly 300 Australians to produce and deliver fresh and quality products to consumers.

Despite the pressures and market challenges experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, Brownes Dairy were able to pivot their business endeavours and drive growth initiatives amid an otherwise plunging food services sector.

They were quick to adapt their business model, reintroducing the traditional milk delivery service to help maintain supply to consumers and job security to their team in the midst of uncertainty.

Brownes Dairy CEO, Natalie Sarich-Dayton, said that when panic buying spilled over from long life to the fresh category, the shelves quickly emptied and retail orders more than doubled.

"When we saw and heard that there was a strong demand from the public, we immediately wanted to step up and help keep our communities stay safe by bringing milk direct to their homes," she said.

"This is where Brownes Dairy 'Milko' was reborn.



"Within seven days we had built an online platform to allow the community to shop for their milk directly from the dairy and have it delivered to people's homes.

"In fact, we were one of the first companies to launch home delivery service during the lockdown and the response was so significant that it has now become a core and profitable part of our business."

Though labour shortages quickly become a key area of concern across all sectors of agriculture and many Australian dairy processing businesses, Brownes Dairy were able to maintain staff through their rapid and adaptive business evolution.

"Witnessing the stark impacts of COVID-19 on employment across the sector, it became a top priority for our business to ensure that all our employees, from farmers to drivers, were able to keep their jobs, and Milko was critical in achieving that," Ms Sarich-Dayton said.

The Australian Dairy Products Federation (ADPF) commissioned Deloitte Access Economics to produce the report, *'Economic and broader contribution of the Australian dairy processing industry,'* to provide an analysis of the industry's contribution to the economy and regional communities.

The Report found that Australia's dairy processing industry contributes a total of 70,158 Full Time Equivalent jobs to Australian employment and supports a further 49,764 FTE employees in other parts of the Australian economy from raw milk and other ingredients, to transport and utilities.

Brownes Dairy continue to find themselves at the forefront of growth and development, being internationally recognised for launching Australia's first plant-based carton and making proactive strides to improve sustainability credentials.

“We started using sugarcane instead of plastics to line our cartons to reduce our carbon footprint. This has enabled us to continue with a recyclable product, and we are now looking at how to launch an even further reduced weight carton that will build on this and minimise environmental impacts.

“Listening to our consumers and making sure we’re aligned with their expectations and key priorities has and will continue to allow us to deliver great products and sustainably grow our business for years to come,” Ms Sarich-Dayton said.

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