Why this Melbourne supermarket is the cleanest, greenest Woolies you’ve ever seen

The green credentials of this brand new Melbourne Woolies go way beyond its fruit and veg section — and anything other supermarket you’ve ever seen. What makes it so special?

John Dagge, Retail, Herald Sun

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Single-use plastic bags are long gone but you can charge your Tesla for free and there is more space than ever to park your bicycle.

Welcome to what Woolworths is billing as its most environmentally-friendly supermarket.

The grocery heavyweight says the new store at Heidelberg, in Melbourne’s northeast, uses almost one-third less electricity than a store built just 10 years ago.

Its operations also emit 25 per cent less greenhouse gas than regular stores.

“That is the equivalent of taking 147 cars off the road each year,” store manager Brenton Boadle tells Business Daily.

The savings have been made possible through more efficient refrigeration, airconditioning and lighting systems and practices — key drivers of any power bill at a supermarket.

Initiatives include using waste heat from refrigeration units to warm the store.

“These investments not only reduce the store’s environmental footprint, but also help us keep costs low so we can offer the best possible prices,” Mr Boadle said.

The store has used sustainably-sourced timber and cladding and also offers...
timber cladding and also offers 16 electric vehicle charging bays, which customers can use for free. Adding to its green credentials are 33 bicycle parks.

Woolworths format development director Rob McCartney said supermarkets were energy intensive.

“In recent years we’ve been working to operate our stores more sustainably, investing in more efficient refrigeration and lighting systems, and incorporating sustainability into more aspects of our developments and store renewals,” he said.
Installing LED lighting across 800 stores had offset the equivalent power consumption of 50 stores, he said.

Mr McCartney said the new Heidelberg store was part of a “multi-million” investment by the retailer that provided ongoing savings through cheaper energy bills.

“It’s one we’re pleased to make to drive a more efficient, sustainable operation,” he said.

“We will continue to trial new initiatives to become more sustainable in our stores. As with every new store renewal, we learn a lot and the intent is to take the best bits forward.”

Earlier this year Woolworths became the nation’s first retailer to issue “green bonds”, raising $400 million from investors to pay for solar panels and LED lighting.

Green bonds are a form of fixed-income investment where the money raised is used to fund environmental projects.

Woolworths has cut its carbon emissions by 13 per cent on its 2015 levels. Its original goal was to cut its emissions by 20 per cent on those levels by 2020.

Australia’s climate change target is to reduce emissions to 26 per cent to 28 per cent on 2005 levels by 2030.

The Heidelberg store opened this...
month, on World Environment Day. It is targeting a five-star green star rating from the Green Building Council of Australia.

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Council chief executive Jonathan Cartledge said store employees would enjoy the many benefits that sustainable buildings were proven to provide.

“Green-star buildings consistently outperform non-green buildings in terms of comfort and productivity,” he said.

“Research shows this can also translate into better team and customer experiences as well as ongoing operational savings.”

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