

Bambi and T.C.F (S.I.P.) Grant Programme

Our company has been established in Gosford, NSW for 27 years. We began manufacturing lambs wool products at home in our garage. Over the years we have gradually grown and we now employ 30 people, supplying quality bedding products to 1000 retailers throughout Australia.

Recent growth and expansion was helped enormously by the Govt S.I.P. scheme.

In 1999 we had an old carding machine built in England in 1930 and an American frame quilter built in the 1950's. By carrying out innovative process improvements we increased the production capacity of the carding line - learning more and more carding skills. We replaced this wonderful old machine with a brand new card last year. By innovative product improvements we continue to use the old frame quilter today. On this heavy duty quilting machine we produce the thickest and most luxurious woollen underblankets in the world.

Three new frame quilters have been purchased since 2000 - these enable us to do special quilt patterns for customers in Korea and United Kingdom.

Many innovative process improvements have been carried out over the years to improve productivity.

One of the most exciting projects involved supplying overwool quilts to Japan. These are very heavy and difficult to handle and sew. In conjunction with another company we developed floatation tables with special overlockers to sew the quilts, complying with very exact specifications. This export work continues today.

The SIP scheme helped us develop a special cutting process at the end of our carding line. By cutting fibre wadding and fabric together there are big savings in production costs.

But probably the best support has been given for work on new innovative products such as:

- Development of plant fibres for quilts, pillows and mattress protectors. These fibres come from "renewable resources" such as corn and eucalyptus plantation forests. They have some big advantages over polyester and other oil based fibres. They are very very popular. We invested a lot of resources into the implementation of these new and innovative "green" products.
- Development of organically grown wool quilts.
- Development of superwash wool quilts and underblankets.
- Development of alpaca, mohair and cotton quilts.
- Development of magnetic underblankets & pillows.

The SIP scheme has enabled us to continue to manufacture in Australia and develop new products. With these new and innovative fibres we can compete on a global basis. Various types of plant fibres are now purchased from as far away as Austria and USA, processed in Gosford, and then the finished products sent to domestic customers & overseas customers in Korea and United Kingdom.

Since 2000 we have seen big changes in our industry. Most of our old competitors have gone to China - there are few of us left. The company has gone from a small very domestic type company to one that can operate on a global scene.

The future looks very good as we develop new plant fibres such as bamboo, seaweed and organic cotton.

New innovative processes are planned to produce plant fibre wadding from our carding line and export to Japan.

Innovation has been the secret of our recent success. We simply could not have done these projects without government support. When looking at our overseas competitors now we see companies hiding behind tariff walls (e.g. when sending Australian Wool Quilts to China the duty is 40%. When they send wool quilts to Australia the duty is 7½%). Other countries give all types of assistance to their manufacturers. So to operate on a global basis I think a company like ours needs some government assistance.

In Gosford we now have a modern factory with new machinery and qualified people with knowledge to develop our manufacturing capacity more and more. This is good for Bambi and good for Gosford and the Central Coast.