

DB Breweries: The path to a carbon neutral future



When it comes to reducing carbon footprints, DB Breweries have notched up some pretty impressive achievements, and they aren't done yet.

Brewing a Better New Zealand is their business purpose, and the drive to be a positive force for change comes straight from the top.

"We are committed to leading in sustainability, growing our people, creating products that delight consumers, and bringing Kiwis together to enjoy life" says Managing Director Matthew Wilson.

And that is a commitment that filters through to each of their employees and every function of their business.

"Our Brewing a Better New Zealand programme integrates sustainability into everything we do, as we believe everyone has a role to play in our sustainability journey."

That means also working extensively with their 607 suppliers to ensure they too are part of that journey and share in DB's bold ambition.

The Carbon Neutral Aim

Leading out in climate action in Aotearoa New Zealand, DB Breweries has set the bar high. Their current targets include:

- sourcing 100% of energy from renewable sources
- balancing 100% of consumed water volume used in production
- ensuring no waste gets sent to landfill.

And all of this by 2030.

As a company they want to not only lead the way, but to collaborate along that journey with their suppliers to show that having a net zero environmental impact in production is possible.

“We are focused on doing things right and are actively finding ways to reduce carbon emissions that don’t involve the use of offsets,” says Wilson.

That means not just aiming for net zero carbon emissions in production by 2030, but also aiming to be carbon neutral in their full supply chain by 2040. Right now, detailed Scope 3 footprint calculation work is underway to help achieve that.

“We want to be even more ambitious, particularly around water and energy. We have set ourselves ambitious targets that we believe put us at the leading edge amongst large manufacturing businesses in Aotearoa New Zealand.”

The Timaru Switch

The results of the hard work so far speak for themselves.

In a work programme lead by the DB team, as of October 2021 their Timaru brewery now has steam requirements met from 100% biomass through their local steam supplier, Pioneer, which was a significant milestone for the team.

The team hope the switch will help them achieve a 32% reduction in their carbon footprint by the end of 2022 (measured from their 2018 baseline and combined with other carbon reducing initiatives already implemented).



The introduction of EVs

2021 also saw another major milestone for DB's footprint reduction. In August, after almost two years of ideation and collaboration between DB staff and their forklift supplier ITS, all of their LPG-powered forklifts were replaced with electric forklifts.

This will reduce carbon emissions from DB Breweries by 184 tonnes annually, a reduction equating to the equivalent to 12,400 gas bottles.

Their transport focus continues as the team begins the process of transitioning its vehicle fleet away from ICEs, by switching out petrol vehicles with hybrids. While it is a switch that can't happen all at once due to supply issues, the staged approach is aiming for a full hybrid fleet by 2023 and a full EV fleet by 2030 (EV availability and supply depending).



The Challenge ahead

For DB, there is no slowing down, with one of the biggest hurdles on their horizon switching their largest brewery at Waitematā away from natural gas to 100% renewables.

And while they admit that is no small challenge, their team is up for it. DB has so far undertaken studies with the help of EECA and engineering consultancies to determine what feasible technologies it can slowly implement. Between now and 2030 decarbonizing the site will be a phased approach, as they continue to look for other viable alternatives. Working alongside experts in the renewable energy industry is a critical part of tackling that challenge in order to develop a carbon reduction pathway which is specifically focused on the renewable energy switch.



As DB continues to make strides in reducing its carbon footprint, the team recognizes and values the fact that a more sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand cannot be attained alone.

“Partnerships and collaboration to finding sustainable solutions are crucial,” says Wilson.

“As a country we still have some way to go in our journey. If we are to collectively achieve our ambitions it will take a joint effort between Government, business and individuals to make the change. We all play a key part in making Aotearoa New Zealand sustainable in the long term.”

And while there is no denying the challenge ahead is huge, DB and their team remain committed to tackling that challenge head on.

About DB Breweries

DB Breweries Limited (DB) is one of New Zealand's most recognised companies and one of its leading brewers and cidermakers. Under HEINEKEN's purpose of brewing the joy of true togetherness to inspire a better world, DB is committed to operating sustainably and supporting its local communities to prosper. This is done through its Brewing a Better New Zealand programme; made up of six pillars which focus on brewing with less water, carbon, and waste, and producing a safe and healthy workforce, prosperous communities, and a safe and social drinking culture. DB is committed to leading in sustainability, growing its people, enabling success and enjoyment of life, and brewing products that delight consumers, leading the way to a better New Zealand and a better world.

About SBC

SBC is a member organisation that connects businesses, partners, and sectors to create impact that no single business could achieve alone. We work with executives and sustainability professionals to maximise their positive impact for shareholders, communities and the environment. We hold our members to account by asking them to fulfil member commitments. We deliver impact by championing our members to be at the leading-edge of sustainability and inspire other businesses to take action.