

THE MANY ADVANTAGES OF A MOST ENERGY-EFFICIENT PACKAGING MATERIAL.

consumption and the cost of distributing products.

■ **Performance:** provides insulation and protection from contamination and impact.

■ **Economy:** usually less expensive than alternative materials resulting in savings to the consumer.

■ **Energy Savings:** polystyrene manufacture requires less energy than alternatives resulting in lower "greenhouse" emissions. As insulation, polystyrene foam enables enormous energy savings in commercial installations such as cool stores.

SAFE, HYGIENIC POLYSTYRENE, THE ENEMY OF BACTERIA.

Q *Is Polystyrene safe to use in contact with food?*

A Yes. For more than 40 years, polystyrene has been in widespread use as a hygienic material for protecting and preserving food. In fact, one reason polystyrene single use food containers are so widely used in hospitals and other sensitive environments is that they are significantly more hygienic than the alternatives. Polystyrene does not harbour bacteria which is a major concern among health specialists.

A recent American study* shows that 1 in 7 reusable dishes harbour a level of bacteria which exceeds US health standards. In contrast, no disposable food service items exceeded the standard.

FREE FROM CFC'S.

Q *Does foam Polystyrene contain CFC's?*

A No. Extruded foam polystyrene produced in Australia for meat, chicken



and vegetable trays and takeaway food containers, does not use CFC blowing agents. Producers converted away from CFC's in 1989 ahead of the Australian Government target and now operate on recycled carbon dioxide or hydrocarbon gases. Expandable or bead polystyrene (EPS) such as in produce boxes has always used a hydrocarbon blowing agent.

Q *Is Polystyrene degradable?*

A Only very slowly. This is an



advantage in landfills because non-biodegradable plastics neither pollute ground water nor yield methane gas which is flammable and a contributor to the greenhouse effect. It is possible to incorporate additives to promote breakdown in sunlight but this in turn inhibits recycling.

Q *Is Polystyrene recyclable?*

A Yes. This is the current position in Australia:

■ **Polystyrene producers** recycle almost all of the waste polymer, which is mainly produced during transition from one grade to another during manufacture. More than 99.9% is reprocessed or recycled and the remainder is safely disposed of in approved landfill.

*Charles W. Felix, Chet Parrow and Tanya Parrow. "Utensil Sanitation: A Microbiological Study of Disposables & Reuseables", Journal of Environmental Health, Vol.53, NO.2, pp.13-15, Sept-Oct, 1990.