

Lactalis to shut down dairy plant in Australia

15 April 2024 | News

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Lactalis Australia, a dairy company, has announced its decision to shut down its Echuca factory located on the border of Victoria and New South Wales in northern Victoria. This step will result in the loss of up to 70 jobs this year. However, the company has stated that it will expand its operations in the larger regional centre of Bendigo, which may create new job opportunities at this site.

Lactalis has revealed its plans to invest \$85 million over three years to enhance its manufacturing and supply chain at other Victorian locations. As per the company's CEO, Mal Carseldine, the decision to close the Echuca factory was made after a "detailed review" of its yoghurt and desserts division. He further added that the company has decided to have one regional hub in Victoria that is fully utilised, and the selection of the remaining milk factory was based on milk processing capability, operating costs, and site layouts.

Carseldine said that the Bendigo site was the most appropriate option for the company to invest in to meet its future needs in Victoria. The company is currently consulting with its Echuca team about the decision and how best to support workers during the transition. The closure may affect approximately 74 employees and contractors, and the company is doing everything possible to ensure that the impacted employees get opportunities for redeployment to other Lactalis sites.

Carseldine emphasised that the company was not taking this decision lightly and that its investment, primarily focused on Bendigo, would create more jobs, a new production line, and establish more yoghurt and custard capacity at the Bendigo site.