

Magazine of the Ministry for the Environment

ENVIRONZ

Take Taiao Aotearoa

March // 2008



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Even little steps can leave
a greener footprint.



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

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New Zealand's environment

Information on the state of our environment enables informed conversations and decision-making. Knowledge gained from monitoring and reporting will help guide future steps. //

My first month as Acting Chief Executive and Secretary for the Environment has given me a good sense of the wide range of new demands and expectations on the Ministry and the challenges ahead.

One thing I intend to focus on is helping develop clearer understandings of the outcomes that should drive the Ministry's work over the next few years. Obviously high levels of environmental quality and sustainable development need to go hand in hand. Within this we need to explore how and where the Ministry can help make the biggest difference.

Environmental issues and perspectives now interface very strongly with many areas – economic development, farming, forests, transport, energy, urban development, Māori development, housing and local government.

A sustainable future does require the effective integration of environmental outcomes into the decisions by communities, households, farmers and businesses. To raise living standards and achieve good environmental outcomes such as better water quality, more efficient and renewable energy use, and lower carbon usage will require over the next few decades significant shifts in how things are done in businesses and in households.

World Environment Day events during June will provide exciting opportunities to focus on such changes and see first hand examples of some of the ways of the future.

The new state of the environment report, *Environment New Zealand 2007*, provides a valuable information base to enable questions to be asked and to inform future environmental policies. We need to think about what the indicators in this report will show in 10 years time as policies change and practices evolve.

I am very much looking forward to working at the Ministry in the coming months on issues that are very important to New Zealand's future. //



Howard Fancy

Acting Chief Executive and Secretary for the Environment
Ministry for the Environment



NEW ZEALAND PREPARES TO HOST WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

01 // Communities take action for the environment: local residents clean up the Waikaraka Estuary.

Planning for New Zealand's hosting of World Environment Day 2008 on 5 June is well underway, and you are encouraged to become involved.

This is the first time New Zealand has hosted the internationally celebrated event since its establishment in 1972, and it provides an opportunity for us to showcase the positive things we are doing nationally, regionally and internationally on sustainability and to reduce climate change impacts.

The theme for this year is 'Kick the carbon habit' and will focus on opportunities for countries, companies and communities to make the transition to a low carbon economy and lifestyle. As one of the first countries with a stated goal to work towards a carbon neutral future, New Zealand is a logical choice to host the event this year.

There will also be a focus on the role of forests in countering rises in greenhouse gases. World Environment Day provides the opportunity to highlight the role technologies and forestry management can play in achieving domestic and international climate goals.

A number of core events will take place in the first week of June including the Art for the Environment Exhibition with works from renowned international artists; a photographic exhibition from the International Photographic Competition on the Environment; and an international children's painting competition. These events are organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in partnership with New Zealand.

In addition, the Ministry is encouraging councils, business, communities, interest groups and

schools to organise and participate in regional and local events. Limited contestable funding is available to groups interested in organising their own activities in recognition of World Environment Day, and everyone getting involved is encouraged to register their event on the World Environment Day website (www.world.environment.govt.nz).

The UNEP website (www.unep.org/wed) also offers a list of 80 suggested ways to celebrate the event and provides some inspiring examples of how World Environment Day was celebrated in previous years by other countries around the world.

The day is intended to be a people's participation event and will include street rallies, bike parades, essay and poster competitions in schools, tree planting, recycling and clean-up campaigns.

The Ministry's annual Green Ribbon Awards will mark the start of the celebrations two days before World Environment Day. The categories for this year's Green Ribbons reflect the 'Kick the carbon habit' theme and will represent ways New Zealanders contribute to reducing climate change impacts. The categories have been extended from six to nine to include an award for innovative solutions to the environment, community action for the environment, and a lifetime commitment to the environment.

World Environment Day is an opportunity for Kiwis to demonstrate their commitment to taking better care of the environment. //



TOWARDS A LOW CARBON ECONOMY



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

For more information on World Environment Day and how you can get involved visit: www.world.environment.govt.nz/
For more information on the Green Ribbon Awards visit: www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/awards/

CARBON ANALYSIS WEB PAGES GO LIVE

01 // An inventory of New Zealand's stored carbon in the environment is almost complete. The red spots show the areas that had been recorded up until February 2008.

Accurately measuring the ability of New Zealand's plants to absorb carbon dioxide from the air and store it as carbon (carbon sinks) is part of New Zealand's international climate change obligations.

Last month, new Ministry web pages were launched to help people get a better understanding of how the Ministry has approached and is continuing to approach the task of meeting New Zealand's Kyoto Protocol reporting requirements.

To meet its Kyoto reporting requirements, the Government established a national greenhouse gas inventory which records greenhouse gas emissions and removals. The Ministry was appointed to regularly submit the inventory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Project Director Carbon Monitoring Steve Botica, from the Ministry, says the web pages will help people understand how the fluctuating amount of carbon in the New Zealand environment associated with land use and land-use change in New Zealand is measured.

"Under its international obligations, New Zealand is required to report on greenhouse gas emissions and removals arising from land use and land-use change. To do this the Ministry had to establish a measuring system that is internationally accepted," said Botica.

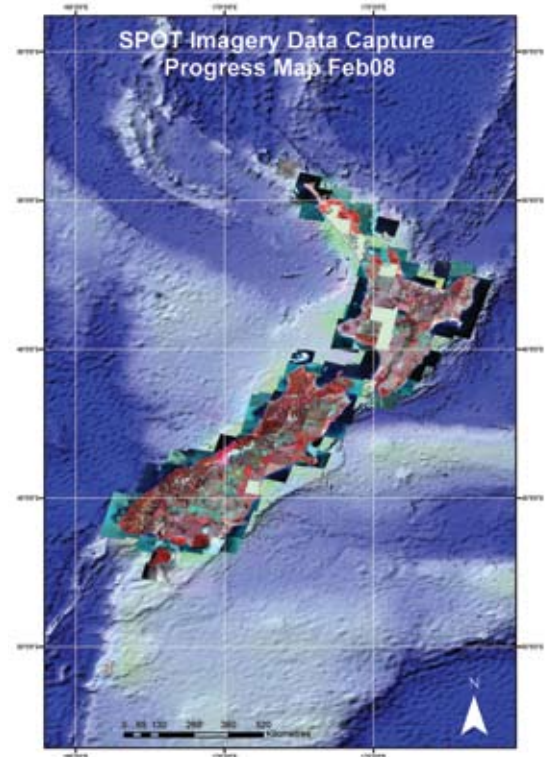
"We have designed a system known as the New Zealand Land Use and Carbon Analysis System (LUCAS), to allow New Zealand to claim credits for its carbon sinks and account for the carbon changes associated with land-use changes."

Botica says the Ministry has been collecting data and developing a database on carbon change since 2002. Information will be added into the database each year up until 2012 (the last year of the five-year first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol).

"The web pages will feature information about reporting requirements, structure of the LUCAS project, system design, land-use mapping, forest and soil carbon inventory and international reporting."

An important feature of LUCAS is that it will provide robust background information for New Zealand's future climate change policy development and international climate change agreements.

The web pages also provide a special glossary of terms to help users understand some of the scientific reporting and accounting terminology. For those who want to see what other countries or the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are doing in the field of carbon accounting there is a series of links to their progress and policies. //



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For more information see the carbon analysis web pages at: www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/climate/lucas/ or email lucas@mfe.govt.nz.

LOVE NZ – RECYCLE IN PUBLIC PLACES

01 // Recycling in public places is an easy way everyone can contribute to sustainability.



The first 'Love NZ – Recycle with care' bins can now be found in Kaikoura and there are more to come as interest from business to support recycling in public places picks up.

While New Zealanders and overseas travellers were still in holiday mode, Environment Minister Trevor Mallard launched New Zealand's first 'Love NZ – Recycle with care' recycling bins in picture perfect Kaikoura. Now, locals and visitors to Kaikoura will be able to recycle glass, paper and some plastics while they are away from home.

Kaikoura is one of four pilot areas to trial recycling in public places. Wellington, Christchurch and the Far North are the other pilot areas and will have bins in place in the next few months.

The bins are part of the *Recycling in Public Places* initiative announced in 2007. The initiative aims to establish 600 recycling bins in public places throughout New Zealand by 2010. The Government has allocated \$4.6 million to install and service these bins.

"Recycling in public places is an easy way we can all contribute to sustainability, as well as keeping our community clean and attractive to tourists," Trevor Mallard said.

Having recycling facilities in public places will also help with international perceptions of New Zealand's waste management performance.

"Overseas visitors expect to find recycling facilities in New Zealand. Recent research among this group shows that almost 80 per cent of respondents expect to recycle at tourism activities," Trevor Mallard said.

Caroline Read, Ministry Project Manager for the *Recycling in Public Places Initiative*, says the initiative is very much a partnership between local and central government.

"For this project to succeed, we rely on councils as our partners on the ground. Recycling is taking place in communities – and councils are at the forefront of improving waste management and resource recovery in New Zealand," said Read.

To suit councils' operational and design requirements, bins may vary in shape and size by location but the distinctive 'Love NZ – Recycle with care' brand will make them recognisable.

Although the initiative is the start of addressing issues around recycling in public places, 600 bins will not be enough for nationwide coverage. Read says the Ministry is keen for third parties to latch on to the initiative.

"This is a great opportunity for business and communities to show their commitment to their local environment. We are making our branding available for those who are keen to set up recycling in public places."

The Ministry is already discussing the use of the 'Love NZ – Recycle with care' brand with tourism businesses. 'Love NZ – Recycle with care' branded bins have also been used at the *In Tune with Nature* festival. The *Vodafone Homegrown* music festival in Wellington will follow suit in April. //

For more information contact **Caroline Read**, email caroline.read@mfe.govt.nz or phone (04) 439 7676.



01

State of the environment report

SHOWS CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS

New Zealand has an enviable environment, compared to many countries internationally. But our everyday activities and choices – both past and present – have put pressures on our soil, water, air and other natural resources, and some trends are going in the wrong direction.

This is in a nutshell the most important message from the Ministry for the Environment's second state of the environment report *Environment New Zealand 2007*, which was released in January.

Environment New Zealand 2007 paints a picture of the health of New Zealand's land, water, air, plants and animals. It describes trends and measures the impact of selected pressures on the environment such as transport, waste, energy and household consumption.

"The report highlights the need to continue to protect and reinforce New Zealand's environmental standing and our clean green reputation," Hugh Logan, then Secretary for the Environment, said at the launch of the report.

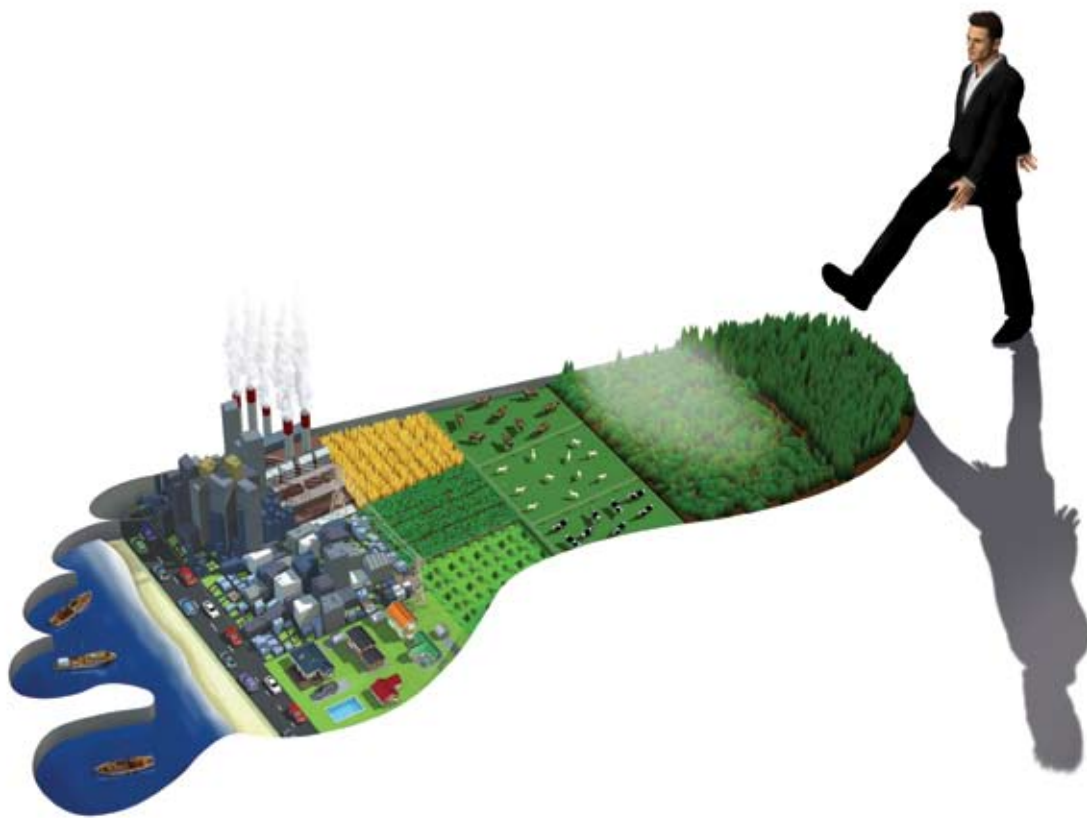
"This piece of work is an important basis for improving those areas which the report shows need attention."

Key findings

So what does the report tell us?

At the highest level, *Environment New Zealand 2007* shows us the uniqueness of our environment – a high proportion of our species are unique to New Zealand.

It also shows that our environment is not just about our iconic landscapes – it's also about the urban areas where most of us now live.



It reflects the increased intensity of urban and rural land use and its consequences for water quality and soil health.

The report illustrates the impact and significant improvements achieved since resource management legislation came into force 16 years ago. For example, aspects of our air and water quality have improved due to controls on point source discharges.

The report highlights the need to conserve our environment to protect our economic well-being, social systems and cultural wealth for today as well as for future generations. It confirms that our land and sea-based primary production and our tourism sectors all rely on New Zealand's 'clean and green' reputation.

More specific findings are the ongoing growth of our population which has contributed to more consumption of goods and services, increasing greenhouse gas emissions, and the rising use of transport and energy. All this has an impact on the environment.

At the same time, other pressures seem to be reducing. The amount of waste sent to landfill has gone down and recycling rates are growing, we have more land under management for pest weeds and animals, and we are now protecting more land for conservation than ever before.

There are some encouraging trends. Air quality in most areas is getting better. Ozone levels in the atmosphere have stabilised. Discharges in our fresh water from single-point sources (such as wastewater treatment plants, meat works and farm effluent ponds) have gone down, and some endangered species are recovering.

However, other trends are worrying and need improvement. Nutrient levels in our fresh waters have risen, soil quality from some land uses has become worse, the range of some native species has decreased, and some fish stocks have been over-exploited.

Hugh Logan said the findings of the report will be used by government agencies to identify whether environmental policies and programmes need strengthening or updating. The Ministry for the Environment will be leading this exercise in 2008.

Useful resource

Apart from the findings attracting a lot of public and media interest, various organisations have welcomed the report as a useful resource for decision-making on environmental issues.

The New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development says the report helps define the priority issues the country needs to address.

"Most of the report's findings are not a surprise. It's a welcome stocktake because so much of our economy and quality of life is underpinned by our environment," Business Council Chief Executive Peter Neilson said.

Local Government New Zealand President Basil Morrison said the report includes information to enable better decision-making and provides a call to action for everyone to tackle the issue of sustainability with greater urgency.

Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment Dr Jan Wright commented on the data in the report as "an invaluable addition to our knowledge of the environment".

01 // Our environment is not just about our iconic landscapes – it's also about the urban areas where most of us now live.

02 // As our production and consumption of natural resources increases so does pressure on the environment.

*Environment
New Zealand 2007*
paints a picture
of the health of
New Zealand's land,
water, air, plants
and animals.



03

03 // Monitoring by organisations around New Zealand provides information for reports such as *Environment New Zealand 2007*.

Latest reporting methods

Environment New Zealand 2007 capitalises on huge improvements in environmental reporting tools since the publication of its predecessor in 1997, *The State of New Zealand's Environment 1997*.

While the 1997 report was mostly a narrative analysis, the 2007 report uses hard data to benchmark the health of our environment. To do so, it reports on 19 indicators and over 80 specific aspects of the natural world around us. This will help build a clear picture of trends and pressures on our environment in the years to come.

State-of-the-art mapping technology has been used to capture and present complex information in easy-to-follow maps. The value of the maps in the report has already been recognised: they won a national geospatial mapping award before the report itself was even launched.

Environmental reporting is here to stay

The next report is planned for 2012. It is part of the Ministry's mandate to conduct state of the environment reporting under a new reporting framework, which was agreed by the Government in 2006.

"We are committed to releasing a nationwide state of the environment report every five years, in addition to regular trend and snapshot updates – some on an annual basis," said Todd Kriebel, General Manager Reporting and Communications at the Ministry. //

A selection of key findings:

- // We are driving bigger and older cars, further than we did in the past but many more of us are using public transport.
- // New Zealand's economic growth has exceeded the growth of energy demand, but we are still consuming more energy – especially from fossil fuels.
- // The intensification of agricultural land is resulting in increasing use of water and fertiliser, and more greenhouse gas emissions.
- // The intensification of urban land leads to higher levels of hard surfacing, increased stormwater runoff and land compaction.
- // Fishing activity under the Quota Management System has reduced in recent years to allow stocks to recover but a growing percentage of our fish stock has been overfished.
- // Forest cover has increased – which offsets greenhouse gas emissions.
- // Bacterial levels at beaches appear to be improving.
- // Hill country erosion is improving in some areas.

For more information contact **Justine Daw**, email justine.daw@mfe.govt.nz or phone (04) 439 7594.

To order a copy of *Environment New Zealand 2007* email publications@mfe.govt.nz.

OFF THE MAINS – TREATING HOME SEWAGE

Is there a bad smell lingering in your backyard? One patch of grass looking particularly green? Sceptical of your septic tank?

If not operated or maintained properly, septic tanks and other on-site systems used to treat domestic wastewater can leak and pose a health and environmental risk.

“Poorly maintained or badly designed septic tanks can leach nutrients and bacteria into groundwater or through into streams or lakes,” says civil engineer, Ian Gunn. “Of particular concern are the strips of developments along lakes where you have a whole lot of sections lining a lake shore or coastline. Often it’s the oldest properties using the oldest systems that line the lake shore.”

Septic tanks are just one type of on-site system that can treat domestic wastewater and return it to the environment within the boundaries of the property of origin. There are estimated to be around 270,000 domestic on-site systems in New Zealand. However, the performance of those systems is quite variable.

Many studies and surveys carried out in recent years reveal that a large number of on-site wastewater systems in New Zealand are not performing in a way that provides acceptable levels of treatment. Untreated or partially treated sewage from these systems is causing public health risks and negative environmental effects.

The ‘sniff and look’ test is one way to find out if a wastewater system isn’t working. You know there is a problem if you can see patches of wet or smell a soggy silage odour, says Gunn. Without proper maintenance such as regular pump-outs, the tank or the trenches receiving the wastewater can overflow. Also, septic tanks in baches are a common problem in the holiday season when the systems get a ‘shock load’. With the sudden influx of people, bacteria can’t cope with the waste entering the system.

“Owners must also use their systems sensibly. Many councils have a user’s guide about what to do and what not to do. Owners should really be reminded regularly to check their systems. Some councils send out a reminder with the rates notice,” says Gunn.

According to Gunn, people should ideally be looking at the system ahead of a problem occurring. He says some councils already encourage proactive performance monitoring, and in some areas it is recognised that regular inspections are needed to get ahead of potential problems. For example, Environment Bay of Plenty has implemented a scheme in problem areas where they check every system and pump it every three years.

The Ministry is currently scoping the feasibility of a national environmental standard that would apply to the operation and maintenance of domestic on-site wastewater systems.

If you do suspect there is a problem with your system, we recommend you contact your regional council. //



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01 // A septic tank is opened for inspection.

For more information contact **Barry Johnson**, email barry.johnson@mfe.govt.nz or phone (04) 439 7769.



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Every step counts

Every step towards sustainable living we make at home, with travel and work, has far reaching impacts across the globe. As this awareness dawns, more information is becoming available about ways we can improve our environment.

“We sleep in pyjamas made in China, wake to clocks made in India, and sip tea blended in England. In other words, the products and services on which we depend and desire come courtesy of highly complex supply chains that encircle the Earth, tapping various veins for natural resources for manufacturing, distribution, consumption and disposal,” says Lindsay Gow, Deputy Secretary for the Environment.

Consumption by households affects the environment and has increased in New Zealand during recent years. The pressure household consumption places on the environment can be measured approximately through household purchasing of goods and services. Between 1997 and 2006, real per household consumption expenditure (adjusted for inflation) increased by just over \$8,700 (20 per cent).

Rising consumption in New Zealand is likely to be related partly to population growth and to the growing number of households. However, increased household consumption expenditure can also be attributed to increasing consumption over time; that is, more people buying more things, not just more people buying the same things. Increased consumption can mean greater use of natural resources and generation of waste, both of which have implications for the environment.

But, Kiwis care about their environment. A recent survey, prepared for the Ministry, showed that 53 per cent of 1,000 people asked were deeply concerned that we aren't all doing enough to protect our environment for future generations. This same survey also found that 63 per cent would like to learn more about how to care for the environment, and a further 28 per cent actively look for information.

“Part of the answer lies at home. In our homes we make many of the decisions that determine our ecological footprint,” says Gow.

“By focusing on the consumption end of the supply chain – the household – we drive sustainability through our everyday actions. We all make decisions at home in using energy, transport and water, and dealing with waste.”

Sustainability website

In December, a new website (www.sustainability.govt.nz) went live and with it, a 'What's your next step?' sustainability challenge. The website aims to inform and encourage householders to tackle their impact on the environment.

The sustainability.govt.nz website includes practical advice to improve the way we use water and energy in our homes. It also includes films, competitions, a discussion forum, case studies and blogs. The site has local and central government information on support and grants to help households become more sustainable, and features the 'What's your next step?' challenge.

The principle of the challenge is that every small, medium or large step we make contributes to a larger pool of change, and a good place to start is at home. The place to sign up is on www.sustainability.govt.nz/

Outrageous Fortune actress Robyn Malcolm has signed up to the challenge. She has committed to keeping her car tyres inflated to the correct level. Author Kate de Goldi has signed up to catch the bus into the city more often, and Broadcaster Chris Laidlaw says he is composting his kitchen scraps. Environment Minister Trevor Mallard registered a sustainable step of buying products with less packaging, or with packaging that is able to be recycled.

Lindsay Gow explained: "The 'What's your next step?' sustainability challenge is about encouraging Kiwis to use resources more efficiently. Many people acting together can make a significant impact. For example, if every New Zealand household replaced their four most used light bulbs with energy saving eco-bulbs we would save \$113 million every year."

The sustainability.govt.nz website features films and other interactive material. Young film makers, Blaine Western and Hannah Salmon, raise questions about our present consumption patterns in their short movie *Post no bills*. To a back drop of stark music, they say, "We can make a change," and ask about consumption, "Well, hold on. Let's think about this for a minute... Is this long term?... What's going to happen?... Can this be continued?... What are the consequences?" The film was one of several finalists of *The Outlook for Someday* sustainability film challenge, part funded by the Ministry.

sustainability.govt.nz

Videoed interviews of Yolande Cumming, Odile Balas and other members of the public can be seen on the sustainability.govt.nz website. Yolande, from Raglan, talks about starting a car pooling car club, and Odile, from Hawkes Bay, explains her vision for suburbs without fences and how she would like to see cities as, "really pleasant places to live so that people can do their living close to home instead of having to travel out of the city to find what they are looking for".

Community involvement

The community is recognised as having an important role in sustainable living. The Ministry is providing funding to schemes that will further community knowledge on sustainability and encourage action. It has contributed \$100,000 to the Sustainability Trust's Ecokiwi scheme which will train and support local community groups to engage members of their community in sustainable living. The scheme will tap into community organisations including Lions groups, Rotary, health clinics, marae, churches, community centres, childcare centres and schools.

The Ministry is contributing a further \$100,000 to Marlborough District Council for the Sustainable Living Programme which they run on behalf of 21 councils. The programme includes seminars and night classes on topics such as energy efficiency, waste reduction, water use, building and renovation, travel and shopping wisely.

Marlborough District Council's education officer, Annie McDonald, says interest in the programme has grown significantly, and the extra funding will make a difference to its development and the number of people it can reach.

According to McDonald, the Sustainable Living Programme is successful because it provides opportunities for participants to take action in an informative and fun way. She says, "We have seen many people change the way they have done things for the benefit of the environment and their families."

01 // An Otari School student signs up to 'walk to school'.

What's your next step?

"I'll catch the bus into the city more often."

Kate De Goldi, Author

"I'll keep my car tyres inflated to the correct level."

Robyn Malcolm,
Actress, *Outrageous Fortune*

"I'm composting my kitchen scraps."

Chris Laidlaw,
Broadcaster and Greater
Wellington Regional Councillor

Every small, medium or large step we make contributes to a larger pool of change, and a good place to start is at home.

International efforts

“We are all connected through the environment and can all change our impact on the whole. The kind of products we buy and the way we use them makes a difference,” says Gow.

While the effort to protect our environment starts at home, New Zealand householders and communities are not alone. The environment movement is spreading internationally. In the United Kingdom this year the Church of England has suggested people give up carbon instead of chocolate for lent. Ideas they have given for carbon fasting include avoiding plastic bags and insulating hot water cylinders.

World Environment Day, which is observed annually in 100 countries, focuses 2008 celebrations on solutions and opportunities to ‘Kick the carbon habit’ and de-carbonise our economies and lifestyles.

In the upcoming months, there will be opportunities to ask questions about household sustainability and to meet the Ministry’s household sustainability team. Members of the team will be staffing stands at events around the country. //

Look out for a household sustainability stand at the following events:

Vodafone Homegrown concert

Wellington, 26 April

Fieldays

Mystery Creek Events Centre, Hamilton
11–14 June

Auckland Home Show

10–14 September

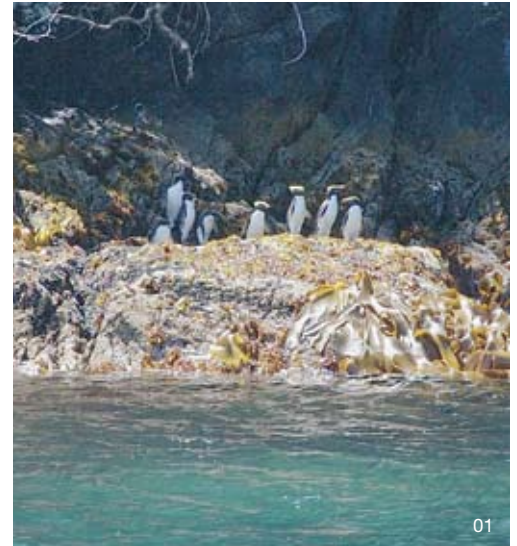
Wellington Home & Garden Show

26–28 September

Canterbury Home Show

10–12 October

For more information see www.sustainability.govt.nz, email martyn.pinckard@mfe.govt.nz or phone (04) 439 7444.



GUARDIANS’ GIFTS ARE FIORDLAND’S GAIN

The ‘gifts and gains’ concept initiated by the Fiordland Guardians, and the sustainable management of the Fiordland marine environment are in full flow.

The famous marine landscape appears infinite and is clearly stunning and full of life. It stretches about 400 kilometres up the western side of the South Island. It is home to thousands of unique marine plants and animals, and receives many visitors.

The Fiordland Marine Guardians have made great progress in influencing the management of this area by practising the theory that in order to gain something, people need to cooperate and give something too, that is, gifts for gains. This approach is how negotiations for a plan to retain this rich and precious environment were achieved.

One of the founders of the Guardians, John Steffens (who has just finished his term) says the aim for the area was for it not to be dominated by one group or another to the detriment of all, but for it to be sensibly shared.

“A few years ago the evidence of overfishing, particularly of lobster in the area, and the increase in recreational fishing boats was becoming a concern to many locals. Rather than continuing to mutter and grumble about this, we got people together and said: ‘What are we going to do about making this marine area work properly for everyone forever, rather than it not working at all for anyone soon?’” said Steffens.



“Locals who use the area daily were noticing negative changes in catch sizes and the environment so we started collecting data, particularly from Milford Sound and Doubtful Sound, so we could suss out a strategy to reverse any declines and a roadmap for the other sounds to secure a sustainable future.”

The result of this foresight and determination was that in 2003 the Guardians presented the Government with their working strategy for the conservation and protection of Fiordland’s marine environment. This was gratefully accepted and endorsed by the then Minister of Fisheries, Pete Hodgson and Environment Minister, Marion Hobbs who together guided it through parliament and created the Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Management Act 2005. This gave the Guardians the authority and mandate to be involved in decisions affecting the area.

They started to advise central and local government agencies, and likewise the agencies were required to keep them in the loop. Nga Tahu’s interests and perspectives were cemented in as members of the Guardians. The Act also required that five of the eight Guardians must be people living in the area.

The Guardians’ Chairman Malcolm Lawson feels this new approach to environmental management is proving a powerful way to ensure decisions by authorities work on the ground.

“The Guardians’ heart and soul resides in the area and they breathe it everyday,” Lawson explains.

The Guardians now believe all issues, such as depleted fishes, are manageable and can be turned around without shutting the place down to visitors, which was a possibility not so long ago.

The Guardians’ approach is opening new doors.

One of the Guardians’ main roles is to advise government agencies of any threats facing Fiordland’s marine environment.

An example of the Guardians’ advice to central government last year was that more direct action needed to be taken to stop undaria (invasive seaweed) reaching Fiordland. As a result, a control programme is underway to prevent this and other marine pests from becoming established in Fiordland.

“We recognised that if no action was taken it was only a matter of time until undaria became established in Fiordland and this would have had an irreversible effect on the marine environment,” Lawson said.

Over the past two years, the Guardians have given advice on applications from the energy sector and helped develop a biological monitoring programme for Fiordland amongst other work.

“More recently we have been involved with the Department of Conservation in the development of their management plan for the southern most population of bottlenose dolphin in Doubtful Sound whose numbers are low,” Lawson said.

Their first meeting of the year had a busy agenda and welcomed new Guardian Jerry Excell. The Ministry for the Environment provides secretariat services for the Guardians. //

01 // Fiordland’s marine landscape is home to thousands of unique marine plants and animals.

Photo // Department of Conservation.

02 // The Fiordland Marine Guardians are: (Back row left to right) Alan Mark, Malcolm Lawson (Chairman), John Steffens (retired), Alan Key, Ken Grange, and Stewart Bull. (Front row left to right) Anne McDermott, Mark Peychers, Alison O’Sullivan (Secretary to the Guardians). Absent: Jerry Excell.

For more information contact Maree Kleinlangevelsloo email maree.kleinlangevelsloo@mfe.govt.nz or phone (04) 439 7481.

The Guardians’ Annual Report can be read online at www.fmg.org.nz/



LETTER FROM HUGH LOGAN

In his own words, Hugh Logan reflects on the environment sector during his time as Secretary for the Environment.

“During my time at the Ministry we have seen an unprecedented change in public and business attention to environmental sustainability. There is now, thankfully, much stronger recognition of the central role of the environment in the future of this country. I have always been convinced of New Zealanders’ attachment to the natural environment but a big change has occurred around recognition of environmental quality. New Zealand’s economy has a biophysical base and any economy that has that base must have protecting quality at its heart – otherwise we are mining the environment – and that is unsustainable.

Because of the international climate change debate, New Zealand’s companies now think about the environment’s role in everyday business. They have recognised that moving to a sustainable future saves them time and money and gives them a competitive advantage in positioning and cost structure.

Reflecting on successes for the environment in the past couple of years I would start with the introduction of an emissions trading system, and infrastructure related policies including New Zealand’s Energy Strategy for New Zealand’s response to climate change.

The second big success, in my opinion, has been the general agreement on the need for a revised

framework for waste management through the Waste Minimisation Bill.

Another positive turn for this country is the acceptance of the importance of good urban and environmental planning, and more sustainable and better quality building and housing. For the sake of social cohesion and the health of its citizens, New Zealand cannot afford to go back to the type of developments of the late 80s and 90s. Cheap, quick developments providing minimum insulation and poor indoor quality environments will simply impose costs on our children.

Other important moves in the last year include the development of new important national environmental standards and national policy statements under the Resource Management Act. Also, there has been better environmental reporting. I am proud of the Ministry’s production of *Environment New Zealand 2007*. We now have a good published suite of environmental indicators provided in an easy to use form. Good reporting and measurement are a cornerstone of sound environmental management.

I am pleased that environmental sustainability is finally being recognised as essential to the future of this country. It is as a consequence of this recognition that the Ministry for the Environment, as the national environment agency, has moved from being on the periphery of government in the 80s and 90s to the centre, and I don’t think this will change in the future.” //

MEASURING WATER TAKES REQUIRED FOR IMPROVED MANAGEMENT

A National Environmental Standard for Measuring Water Takes was approved by Cabinet last month and will now be drafted into regulation.

“The standard is one of a staged package of actions to improve the sustainable management of New Zealand’s freshwater resources under the Sustainable Water Programme of Action. This standard will help better water management by ensuring accurate measuring of the amount of water taken from rivers, lakes and aquifers,” Environment Minister Trevor Mallard said.

The standard will set minimum requirements for the installation and operation of water measuring and recording devices. It will require consent holders to install and operate water measuring devices and to inform regional authorities about their water use.

The standard does not apply to individual households or businesses using water from reticulated supplies, or to small abstractions for an individual’s drinking or stock-drinking needs. //

For more information contact Mercedes Lentz, email mercedes.lentz@mfe.govt.nz or phone (04) 439 7541.

GIVING YOUTH A VOICE – THE NZ YOUTH ENVIRONMENT FORUM



01

Youth have both special concerns and responsibilities in relation to the environment. A number of environmental risks and hazards disproportionately affect young people as they have to live for an extended period with the environment bequeathed to them by earlier generations.

Because they have a strong awareness of the issues and a greater stake in long term sustainability, it is understandable that many young people feel compelled to engage in new forms of action and activism that will generate effective responses to environmental challenges.

The New Zealand Youth Environment Forum was established to develop and provide an opportunity for young Kiwis to be involved in environmental issues, to learn about management and decision-making, and to provide fresh ideas.

The forum is hosted by the Ministry in partnership with the Sir Peter Blake Trust, and nominations for delegates are put forward by the local community to regional councils.

As the forum kicks off for the fifth time, around 45 young Kiwis aged 15 to 18 years will spend a week in Wellington from 27 April. They will participate in community projects, as well as voicing their opinion on environmental issues and learning first hand about environmental management.

Joseph Roberts, a southland delegate at both the 2006 and 2007 forums has helped organise this year's Youth Environment Forum. He says the forum is important because it, "allows the youth in attendance to voice their opinions to an adult audience who genuinely care about and take on board what youth are suggesting".

He says one of the greatest obstacles for youth is that they are not being involved in decisions that affect their future.

Over the past four years, the forum has seen some special people, with enthusiasm and a desire to work on a range of environmental issues. Previous delegates have been involved in environmental projects within their communities, and some have even been Green Ribbon Award winners. These outstanding young individuals have shown that one person can make a difference.

The Youth Environment Forum provides the chance to discover young people in New Zealand who want to make that personal commitment to improving our environment. Nominations are made through regional councils and this year they close on 26 March.

The success of previous forums is highlighted by Roberts' statement about his experiences with them: "In attending the last two forums I have met many great people and made amazing friends. I have learnt more about the environment, and my understanding of why it is so important to each and every one of us. Along with the lessons on the environment, I also learnt many great communication skills and team work skills as well as being more motivated to find successes in everything I do". //



02

01 // Participants of the forum take part in community projects that address waste management, water quality and climate change.

02 // Many young people feel compelled to engage in new forms of action to address environmental challenges.

For more information contact Nadine Koszler, email nadine.koszler@mfe.govt.nz or phone (04) 439 7559.

IN BRIEF

Urban design protocol – now at 150 signatories

Following the Hutt City's new commitment to urban design, there are now 150 members from the private and public sector signed up to New Zealand's Urban Design Protocol. The signatories are committed to making our cities healthy, safe and attractive places where business, social and cultural life can flourish. The Protocol's successful and innovative approach to urban design outcomes is now being recognised internationally. For more information visit www.mfe.govt/urban/, email yvonne.weber@mfe.govt.nz or phone (04) 439 7564.

New and updated Quality Planning guidance notes

The Ministry, along with its partners, has prepared new Resource Management Act guidance notes and is updating existing ones for the Quality Planning website. The new Esplanade Reserves and updated Land Transport guidance notes are now available on www.qp.org.nz/

The updated Monitoring and Reporting One-Stop-Shop, made up of ten monitoring guidance notes, is due up shortly, as are new guidance notes on structuring and organising regional and district plans, writing provisions for regional and district plans, and council engagement with tangata whenua. For more information email natasha.tod@mfe.govt.nz or phone (04) 439 7716.

Dairying and Clean Streams Accord – year 4 report

The fourth progress report on the Dairying and Clean Streams Accord was released on 26 February. The report shows steady progress is being made towards the Accord's targets in most areas, but work is still needed in managing nutrient inputs and outputs and to ensure farmers comply with effluent discharge regulations. For more information email nelson.gapare@mfe.govt.nz or phone (04) 439 7411.

New Zealand expert to chair international climate change group

Helen Plume, a senior operator at the Ministry, has been elected to chair an important scientific group under the United Nation's Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Plume will chair the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice for the next two years. Climate Change Minister David Parker said it was an honour that recognised Plume's exceptional ability and dedication to climate change issues.

Emissions trading scheme update

The Climate Change (Emissions Trading and Renewable Preference) Bill has been referred to the Finance and Expenditure Committee for consideration. Draft regulations for liquid fossil fuels and forestry have been released to provide more information about participants' obligations. The final regulations are dependent on the provisions of the Bill once passed into law. To view the draft regulations and provide feedback visit www.climatechange.govt.nz/

FOR YOUR DIARY...

Keep an eye on the Ministry's website (www.mfe.govt.nz) for consultation coming up in the next few months.