

WHAT'S in this issue

Freshwater p 2
Cultural Health
Index p 3



Kaitiaki hui p 4
Agrichemical
collection p 4



RMA training p 6
NEECS p 7



Youth Environment Forum grooms future environmental leaders

The Ministry for the Environment in partnership with the Sir Peter Blake Trust teamed up to produce another vibrant and inspiring Youth Environment Forum for 2006.

Forty-five students were selected from around the country to participate in the forum where they discussed environmental issues and took part in practical environmental projects.

"The forum is an excellent opportunity for the environmental leaders of tomorrow to gain experience and skills to take back to their regions. It's been great to experience the energy and passion that young people of New Zealand have for their environment," says Chandra Quarmby, Manager of Community Relations at the Ministry for the Environment.

During the forum students had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience on environmental projects including creative urban planning, testing water quality, and exploring options for electronic waste such as the recycling of cellphones.

Executive Director of the Sir Peter Blake Trust, Dr Mark Orams, was impressed with the calibre of the students and the range of solutions they presented to address key environmental issues.

"What I liked about this forum was the fact that students came from such diverse backgrounds and came together so well to work as a team. It didn't matter if they were from Auckland or the West Coast. Their ability to work together and quickly grasp difficult ideas is a credit to them all.

"By investing in the forum we are investing in the future of New Zealand's environmental leaders. Their commitment and enthusiasm once again makes me extremely proud to be involved," says Mark.

A number of students believed the forum improved their leadership skills to tackle environmental issues in their regions.

Sarah Sonal representing the Nelson region said, "I'm excited about taking what I've learnt at the forum and using it to make my home, school and community more environmentally responsible. I feel really lucky to have met so many enthusiastic young people that are as passionate about the environment as I am."

Visiting Wellington's recycling facilities was inspiring for Siddhi Ayyar, who represented the Auckland region.

"I didn't realise what can be done with so few people and such limited resources. It's inspirational to see people committed to recycling and working to improve the environment. As soon as I get back to school I'll find out if I can set up a recycling system for paper materials."

The forum concluded with students delivering a presentation to the Minister for the Environment, David Benson-Pope, on project learnings and environmental issues.

Minister Benson-Pope applauded the students' commitment to the environment and in particular their role as environmental leaders in their schools and local communities.

"The youth attending this forum are the environmental leaders of the future. Based on their work during their week in Wellington, we can only expect great things from these exceptional young students," says Minister Benson-Pope.

The next forum will held in April 2007.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Donna Gardner, phone (04) 439 7414 or
email donna.gardner@mfe.govt.nz



Youth Environment Forum delegates taking sediment samples of the Petone foreshore.





On being positive

One of the real pleasures of the year was hosting the Youth Environment Forum. This is an annual event run by the Ministry in conjunction with the Sir Peter Blake Trust, and involved 45 up-and-coming environmental leaders from 15 regions around New Zealand.

A pleasure, because it's one of those occasions when we engaged with people who are positive and who are focused on making a difference to our environment.

All too often we deal with that sector that is empowered by how darkly it can portray New Zealand. A case in point is the recent New Zealand Listener article entitled "Condition Critical". Even New Zealand's greatest success story in cleaning up our legacy of contaminated sites gets a C minus at best. The clean-up of our worst contaminated site – the former Fruitgrowers Chemical site at Mapua, near Nelson, is nearly complete. Further, the company undertaking the clean-up has developed new, smart, clean technology that could benefit much of New Zealand, and overseas. Life is returning to the site – life that has been absent for decades.

New Zealand is a lucky country. Lucky, because it was settled late, developed environmental legislation early, and had few of those industries that created major pollution and contamination in other nations. We have relatively few seriously contaminated sites, and those that we have are historical. And thanks to the Resource Management Act, we are not creating new ones.

New Zealand is also unlucky – unlucky in that we have a small domestic consumption, and are reliant on exporting so much of our produce, and unlucky that we are so far away from the rest of the world. We have to be better – at almost everything – than anyone else. And we are, according to a recent international review of the environmental performance by Yale and Columbia universities that ranked New Zealand first out of the 133 countries studied.

In this issue we launch *Gentle Footprints – Boots 'N' All*. This is not a "State of the Environment" report or a dry and dusty technical report. It is the beginning of our re-exploration of how we might report on the state of the environment in a way that is useful at the national level, forward-looking, and doesn't cost the earth. It is mostly a good story – but it's not spin. It is unequivocal about where we are not doing well.

Our work is about changing peoples' behaviour – changing how we interact with the environment. As any educationalist worthy of the title, and 45 teenagers at our recent forum will tell you, you don't change behaviour by constantly pointing out what is wrong – you do it by rewarding the good, and telling stories about the good. That's not to say you don't have to have some bottom lines to curb the worst. But you don't make progress by constantly pointing out that not only is the glass half empty, but it's also got a hole in the top.

Cabinet agrees on new way forward for freshwater management

The government has agreed on a significant new strategy to protect and improve our freshwater resources into the future.

"The Sustainable Water Programme of Action will develop, for the first time, a strategic and nationally consistent approach to managing our valuable freshwater resources," says Martyn Pinckard, Acting General Manager of the Ministry's Working with Local Government group.

"The days of taking the unlimited use of water for granted are over. We need to ensure our freshwater is used efficiently; and that it is protected from contamination from bugs, sediment, nutrients, stormwater and subdivision run-off."

Central government will take a greater role in freshwater management including setting national priorities and direction, while working closely with all parties with a significant interest.

Primary responsibility for water management will remain at the regional level, but the strategy will develop new adaptable solutions and tools that councils and communities may apply to different regional circumstances.

Martyn says the programme is about water management, not water ownership. "Water will remain in public ownership. Government wants to ensure that every New Zealander has fair and equal access to water. We also want to ensure that economic growth occurs in a sustainable way, with our environment protected."

Actions agreed include the establishment of a leadership group within two months that will work with Government on the development and implementation of a number of actions; and the creation of policy on how we manage freshwater and protect nationally outstanding rivers, lakes and streams.

More information on the Sustainable Water Programme of Action is available at www.mfe.govt.nz and www.maf.govt.nz/

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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



Clean and ample freshwater is key to our nation's social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing.

Delivering quality urban design – do we have the right skills?

The importance of local government capacity in delivering good quality urban design is key to the success of the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol.

Against this background, the Ministry is conducting a survey of local government professionals to get a much clearer picture of their urban design skills, experience and knowledge. It will focus on determining the skills and experience currently existing, as well as the critical skills required to deal with future challenges.

Research New Zealand, an independent research firm, will be carrying out this research

in May. Councils are being contacted to participate in the survey.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Sherilyn Gray, phone (04) 439 7651 or email sherilyn.gray@mfe.govt.nz

Māori receive a new tool for measuring the health of streams and rivers

An important tool to measure the health of freshwater resources was launched by the Ministry for the Environment in Dunedin on 15 March.

The Cultural Health Index can be used by Māori to determine the status of stream sites, mahinga kai (food and other resources) values and overall stream health.

"The index provides a means by which iwi can communicate with water managers in a way that is understood and integrated into the resource management process," Reporting and Review Adviser Kati Thompson says.

"What's so unique about the Cultural Health Index is that it brings together traditional Māori concepts and values with western scientific methods. This produces a quantitative assessment tool that satisfies both perspectives."

The Ministry handed over the Cultural Health Index user guide to Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, as part of the Crown's Deed of Settlement process. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Kaiwhakahaere, Mark Solomon believes the index will be an invaluable tool for iwi.

"Now we have a tool that will allow us to start gathering information about our natural resources and importantly have defensible and quantifiable information about the state of our takiwā (area)," Mark says.

"Everyone benefits," Lindsay Gow, Deputy Chief Executive of the Ministry for the Environment added. "Tangata whenua and councils now have a common means to work together and incorporate cultural health assessments into planning. It also provides Māori with a means of being more closely involved in decisions about the management of waterways."

"With this index we can offer a hands-on, practical way of making a significant environmental difference at the flax-roots level," says Lindsay.

Using the Cultural Health Index Te whakamahi i te Kuputohu Hauora Ahurea is available in hardcopy or on our website at www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/water/



From left: Colin Townsend from the University of Otago Stream Team and writers Laurel Teirney and Gail Tipa look at the finished Cultural Health Index. Ministry Deputy Chief Executive Lindsay Gow and Mark Solomon and Edward Ellison of Ngāi Tahu look on.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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New CEO for Ministry for the Environment

Hugh Logan has been appointed as the Ministry for the Environment's new Chief Executive and Secretary for the Environment. He will take up his appointment at the end of May, bringing with him nine years experience as a chief executive at the Department of Conservation and 26 years experience in the Public Service.

His earlier career included roles at the Ministry of Civil Defence, the DSIR and the Prime Minister's Department.

State Services Commissioner Mark Prebble says Hugh Logan has an excellent track record. "He assumed leadership of the Department of Conservation in the aftermath of the Cave Creek tragedy and has managed the rebuilding of capability at the department. Hugh Logan also has substantial experience in managing relationships with stakeholders in business and the wider community. He has won respect for managing complex conservation issues which at times have been contentious."

"The shift from the Department of Conservation to the Ministry for the Environment is significant. It involves a move from a role advocating conservation values to a role leading policy development that is critical to New Zealand's economic and social wellbeing."

"I am confident that Hugh Logan has a comprehensive understanding of the issues facing the

Ministry for the Environment and the skills to adapt and succeed in a more policy focused role.

"He has the ability to make the transition from conservation management to wider environmental policy leadership both in New Zealand and internationally, as shown by his past career changes."

Mark Prebble also acknowledged the work of Sue Powell, who has been the Acting Chief Executive at the Ministry since March.



Support for action on product stewardship

The Product Stewardship and Water Efficiency Labelling discussion document covered issues involving product stewardship and a proposed water efficiency labelling standard (WELS) for whiteware and plumbing fittings. Following its release in August 2005, there were 130 submissions, of which 117 dealt with product stewardship and 48 with WELS.

The submissions revealed a strong preference for voluntary schemes where these led to effective action. There was also support for regulation that supports industry-led schemes and for back-stop regulation for situations where there are problems and no effective action. The submissions on water efficiency labelling (WELS) also supported the proposed scheme.

Product Stewardship was one of the mechanisms identified in the 2002 New Zealand Waste Strategy. It involves producers, importers, brand owners, retailers and other parties accepting the responsibility for the environmental impacts of products from manufacture through to disposal.

Involving manufacturers in managing problems at the end of a product's useful life will help break the strong link between economic development and waste generation. Several useful industry-led product stewardship schemes already exist in New Zealand and the paper outlined options as to how the Government could improve the coverage and effectiveness of these.

Further work is being done to develop policy options for Government. These will be ready for consideration in the second half of this year.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Owen Cox, phone (04) 439 7647 or email owen.cox@mfe.govt.nz



Continuing the clean-up of agricultural chemicals

The Government will fund the clean-up of unwanted and dangerous agricultural chemicals for another three years, Environment Minister David Benson-Pope announced last month in Blenheim.

The Ministry for the Environment and 13 regional councils have been working together since 2003 to collect agricultural chemicals, mainly from rural properties. New Zealand will have safely disposed of 225 tonnes of old, unwanted and potentially dangerous agricultural chemicals by June this year.

“The material we have removed is really the nasty stuff that councils do not collect through their regular waste disposal facilities,” said Mr Benson-Pope while in Blenheim viewing first-hand the collection of unwanted agri-chemicals.

“A large amount of these chemicals are ‘persistent organic pollutants’ – so named because they do not break down in the environment. They include pesticides like DDT, dieldrin, PCBs and dioxins.

“These were banned in New Zealand some time ago but there are still some left, sitting mainly in sheds and garages. The Ministry for the Environment estimates that 175 tonnes of this material still remains to be collected after June of this year. It won’t go away if we don’t clean it up,” said Mr Benson-Pope.

To date, the Ministry for the Environment has contributed \$2.5 million through its Sustainable Management Fund to finance the clean-up project.

The further funding will focus on clearing regions of the legacy of persistent organic pollutants. At the same time work is underway to develop low level collection programmes to ensure that such a build up of chemicals does not occur again in future.

The Ministry for the Environment has published a report that estimates the amounts of old and unwanted agricultural chemicals left in each region. This report is available on the Ministry for the Environment website at www.mfe.govt.nz/

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Tracey Morgan, phone (04) 439 7422 or email tracey.morgan@mfe.govt.nz

Minister visits warmer homes

Environment Minister David Benson-Pope visited Timaru to see the results of the second Warm Homes trial – 30 well insulated homes heated with heat pumps or wood pellet burners.

“This Warm Homes trial in Timaru is a perfect example of central and regional government working together to make things better. These families now have a warm, clean and healthy home,” said the Minister.

More than 50 percent of Timaru houses are currently heated with open fires or old wood burners. These release fine particles into the air which cause air pollution and health problems, particularly during winter. With new heaters, residents will not only save energy but will also enjoy a clean, warm and healthy home.

The Ministry teamed up with Environment Canterbury and the Timaru District Council to set up the Warm Homes trial in Timaru. The Ministry has contributed \$50,000 for the new heaters.

The trial has removed old polluting heaters, like open fires and old wood burners, and installed new, modern, clean heating devices, such as heat pumps and wood pellet burners.

“These Timaru residents are now both warm and healthy inside their homes, together with cleaner outdoor air – so everyone can breathe easier,” says Matt Hickman, project manager of the Warm Homes project.

The Timaru homes had already received insulation and energy efficiency improvements through the South Canterbury Healthy Homes scheme.

Science behind the standards for air quality

A consortium led by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research will assist local councils with research on how to achieve the levels set by the national environmental standards for air quality. The Foundation for Research, Science & Technology has provided a four-year grant of \$1 million a year for this work. Meanwhile, the Ministry has taken a lead role in chairing a research advisory group that will bring together researchers and people in local government.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Matt Hickman, phone (04) 439 7409 or email matt.hickman@mfe.govt.nz

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Louise Wickham, phone (04) 439 7475 or email louise.wickham@mfe.govt.nz

Embracing indigenous knowledge

More than 100 kaitiaki (iwi and hapu environmental practitioners) from around New Zealand gathered at Waikato-Tainui’s Endowed College at Hopuhopu recently to network, share tools and to plan for their ongoing development.

With the guidance of a small group of leading practitioners, kaitiaki considered presentations on how traditional knowledge (matauranga Māori) is evolving to meet the needs of kaitiaki engaging with local and central government in environmental management under the Resource Management Act.

Many shared their stories and perspective of Kaitiakitanga. Importantly, people also talked about Kaitiakitanga in practical and meaningful ways.

Following a whakatau from Waikato-Tainui elders, Associate Minister for the Environment and Tainui MP Nanaia Mahuta delivered the opening address to the hui.

Associate Minister Mahuta acknowledged the important work of kaitiaki in protecting the environment, and improving the sustainable development of New Zealand in the long term.

Ministry Maruwhenua Manager, Riki Ellison said the hui was a success and he would like to see it become a regular event. He said it provided an opportunity for the Ministry to introduce to the kaitiaki present the research and policy work being done towards

Clean Streams Accord flows smoothly in second year

After a successful first year, the *Dairying and Clean Streams Accord* has again shown positive progress in the 2004–2005 dairying season.

The accord – an agreement between Fonterra, regional councils and the Ministers for the Environment and of Agriculture and Forestry – shows an increased awareness of environmental issues amongst dairy farmers.

The targets set in the accord – excluding cattle from waterways, bridging regular stream crossings, complying with resource consents for effluent disposal, managing nutrients and fencing regionally significant wetlands – show good progress and results continue to increase.

However, work still needs to be done on nutrient management, with only a small increase in farmers using nutrient management systems.

In response to this, Fonterra, along with Dexcel and Dairy Insight,

are placing a much greater emphasis on nutrient management for the next season.

To quantify the effects of all actions taken through the *Dairying and Clean Streams Accord*, the Ministry for the Environment has commissioned a monitoring and reporting strategy. The first report is scheduled to be published in June 2007.

The Ministry will shortly publish the annual *Dairying and Clean Streams Accord Snapshot of Progress 2004/2005*.

The annual report of the accord is available at www.mfe.govt.nz/

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Nigel Ironside,
phone (04) 439 7446 or email
nigel.ironside@mfe.govt.nz

Ministry seeks comment on plan to get rid of persistent organic pollutants

The Ministry for the Environment works hard to protect people and the environment from persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

This work is undertaken because New Zealand, along with 150 other countries, has signed up to the Stockholm Convention. The Stockholm Convention commits governments to reduce, or where possible eliminate, the production and environmental releases of POPs.

POPs are chemicals such as dieldrin, DDT and dioxins that remain intact in the environment for very long periods of time. They build up through the food chain and pose a risk to people and the environment. In wildlife, they can cause birth defects, various cancers, immune system dysfunction, and reproductive problems.

The Ministry for the Environment has prepared a draft plan that demonstrates how the Stockholm Convention will be implemented in New Zealand. The plan outlines that the Government will:

- improve air quality nationwide, including reducing dioxin releases by implementing national environmental standards
- promote best practice in managing risks from contaminated land and in reducing releases of dioxins from industry and domestic sources
- dispose of redundant agri-chemicals
- complete the phase out and disposal of PCBs.

The Ministry will be seeking input from interested parties over the next few months. Comments received will be taken into account in finalising the plan.

Submissions should be sent to the Ministry for the Environment, Standards Team, PO Box 10362, Wellington, or by email to howard.ellis@mfe.govt.nz

New Zealand's Draft National Implementation Plan under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants will be available shortly at www.mfe.govt.nz/

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Howard Ellis, phone
(04) 439 7437 or email
howard.ellis@mfe.govt.nz



a key to a sustainable environment

forming national environmental standards and national policy statements.

"In short, the move towards national standards, national policy statements and even national priorities should ensure that the perspective of Māori is an important part in agenda setting for the Government," Riki says.

Follow-up to this hui will include the Ministry running a programme to increase the effectiveness of Māori engagement in the RMA at a very practical level. A two-day RMA training course for iwi/hapu kaitiaki is being provided to show how to work with resource management plans and have effective input into plan changes to protect waihi tapu, waterways and wāhi tupuna.

The Ministry is also supporting increased opportunities for Māori to be part of RMA decisions – to become accredited hearing commissioners through the *Making Good Decisions* programme. The course material has recently been updated including greater emphasis on iwi/hapu issues in decision-making.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Riki Ellison, phone (04) 439 7560
or email riki.ellison@mfe.govt.nz



A special carving, by Nelson artist Ra Vincent, was recently unveiled at the Ministry's Wellington office. The pou serves to remind us of our role as kaitiaki or caretakers of the land. In the photo, Ministry staff touch the pou – a traditional Māori way of giving life to the carving.



Offshore petroleum industry explores good environmental practice

Companies exploring our seabeds for oil and gas can now do their work according to best practice environmental guidelines.

The Ministry for the Environment and Maritime New Zealand, together with the Petroleum Exploration and Production Association of New Zealand (PEPANZ), have completed best practice environmental guidelines for offshore petroleum activities in New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This is the area from 12 to 200 nautical miles offshore.

At the moment, companies do not have to assess environmental effects as fully as they do within the "rohe" of the Resource Management Act, before they undertake development activities in the EEZ. The Government is currently working on an Oceans Policy that will address this. Until then, the voluntary guidelines give advice to offshore petroleum companies on environmental best practice for their operations.

The guidelines were developed on the back of work that had already been undertaken by OMV New Zealand Limited (OMV). While completing oil exploration and appraisal activities in offshore Taranaki, they found that there are gaps in the environmental consenting regulations for oil field developments in the EEZ.

OMV voluntarily undertook a full assessment of environmental effects (AEE) related to the Maari oil field development. This included looking at the effects of activities such as construction and operation and involved comprehensive consultation with members of the public, environmental organisations and local and regional government.

Feedback on the AEE was sought from representatives of key government bodies.

The *Environmental Practices Guidelines for the Offshore Petroleum Industry* provide guidance on identifying, assessing and managing environmental impacts associated with petroleum exploration, development and production activities.

The guidelines are available at www.mfe.govt.nz, www.maritimenz.govt.nz and www.pepanz.org/

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Alison Handley, phone (04) 439 7485 or email alison.handley@mfe.govt.nz

RMA training in hot demand

Making good decisions

Demand for the Ministry's RMA decision-makers training and certification scheme, *Making Good Decisions*, has exceeded expectations. Extra courses of the award-winning programme have been held to satisfy demand.

The programme's provider, the University of Auckland's Centre for Continuing Education, has run three additional training courses in April and May.

The latest training round used new, improved and revised course material in response to feedback from previous participants. The centre is also running update seminars for current certificate holders from May to August, on the practical application of the 2005 RMA amendments relating to local hearings and decisions.

We are also building on the programme, by developing specific training for hearing chairs and administrators. Certification of the new Hearings and Administrators Programme will meet the accreditation requirements for hearings committee members under the RMA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Mark Leggett, phone (09) 985 4811 or email mark.leggett@mfe.govt.nz

Training for RMA practitioners

The Ministry is rolling out a nationwide series of workshops in June on RMA enforcement in association with the Resource Management Law Association. This training is aimed to assist RMA enforcement officers in fulfilling their role, and ensure that they are up to speed with current best practice.

The Ministry and the New Zealand Planning Institute have also just completed two successful nationwide training workshops on RMA monitoring and reporting and structure planning. More training is planned for the remainder of 2006.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Gina Sweetman, phone (04) 439 7535 or email gina.sweetman@mfe.govt.nz



Winning awards

Several Ministry programmes were acknowledged at the recent New Zealand Planning Institute Awards.

Joint recipients, the Ministry's *Quality Planning RMA Enforcement Manual* and *Year of the Built Environment 2005* programme, were both awarded the Nancy Northcroft Planning Practice Award.

The *Making Good Decisions* programme and the *Urban Design Continued Professional Development Programme* were also joint recipients of the New Zealand Planning Institute Award of Merit.

The Lance Leikis Graduate Award was awarded to Anna Wood, Ministry Urban Group Adviser, for her involvement in the *Year of the Built Environment 2005* programme.

In late March the Ministry's *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* programme was the recipient of the New Zealand Institute of Architects Gold Award for Communication and Promotion in Landscape Planning.

The teams involved in these award winning projects would like to thank all the partner organisations involved in the development and implementation of these successful programmes.

New Zealand champions Cartagena Biosafety Protocol

Recent negotiations in Brazil reached a milestone in the development of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. In March, the third meeting of the Parties to the Protocol resolved the long-standing and complex issue of detailed documentation requirements for LMOs intended for use for food, feed or for processing.

The Protocol, under the United Nations Convention on Biological Biodiversity, is a treaty governing the export and import of genetically modified organisms known as 'living modified organisms' (LMOs).

New Zealand has long-supported clear and accurate documentation to accompany trans-boundary movements of LMOs, so that all countries are fully informed when making decisions about whether or not to allow such imports.

However, some countries had sought to broaden the scope of the Protocol beyond intentional LMO shipments, meaning that all agricultural commodities would need to be labelled as containing LMOs as guarantees could not be given that no LMOs were present in shipments.

"This would have resulted in even New Zealand's organically-grown commodities being labelled as possibly containing LMOs making the documentation meaningless as it wouldn't provide any differentiation," says Sarah Adams-Linton, Ministry Senior Adviser.

"If this had proceeded, the Protocol objective, that countries should be able to make informed decisions about imports, would not have been met.

"We wanted to ensure the Protocol set the highest possible standards of

environmental protection. But we also wanted a simple, workable documentation system that countries could comply with," Sarah says.

There is now a clear understanding that the Protocol does not regulate conventional commodities, while providing for meaningful and practical documentation requirements for intentional LMO shipments.

New Zealand negotiated constructively and played a key role in facilitating the final compromise that accommodated the concerns of all countries.

The next Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol will take place in 2008.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Sarah Adams-Linton, phone (04) 439 7650 or email sarah.adams-linton@mfe.govt.nz

New energy efficiency strategy to be formed

Government is to replace the 2001 National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (NEECS). While the original strategy provided a solid base to build on and did deliver some energy efficiency gains, they were not at a sufficient rate to meet New Zealand's current and future needs.

Dave Brash, General Manager Working the Central Government explained that we need to respond more effectively to the challenges and risks associated with energy security and climate change and environmental sustainability.

"If we want to take significant steps towards a truly sustainable energy system that fosters economic growth and promotes a healthy society, we need to develop a new strategy that delivers more," Dave says.

The growth in total energy demand meant that the overall percentage of renewable energy use was decreasing, and this issue will be addressed in the new strategy.

The new strategy will pursue energy efficiency and renewable energy more aggressively and will aim to put New Zealand on a faster course to a sustainable energy system.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) will lead development of a new strategy that better enables the whole of New Zealand to realise those benefits.

The new NEECS will be brought under the umbrella of the National Energy Strategy – for which terms of reference are currently being drafted. Together with climate change policy, these pieces of work will form a whole of government approach providing direction and leadership for the energy sector.

The new NEECS is expected to be finalised by March 2007.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Brigit Stephenson, phone (04) 439 7517 or email brigit.stephenson@mfe.govt.nz or visit www.eeca.govt.nz

CONSULTATION what's coming up

The wider community will be asked to provide input into the following consultations on environmental issues over the next few months. The plans and dates are intended as a guide only and may be subject to change.

TOPIC	APPROX DATE	INPUT	CONTACT
New Zealand's National Implementation Plan on the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants	To be advised	Submissions process to be advised	Howard Ellis, phone (04) 439 7437 or email howard.ellis@mfe.govt.nz

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Panel beaters turn green

Panel beaters are the latest example of industry acknowledging the environment as they go about their business.

As part of a software package brought to New Zealand by IAG NZ, the Ministry for the Environment has developed a series of fact sheets that provide environmental, sustainability and safety advice and incentives to the New Zealand Panel Beating Industry.

The fact sheets accompany the *Risk Radar* software that provides step-by-step guidance to businesses, allowing them to assess all aspects of their activities associated with health, safety and the environment.

The supplementary fact sheets cover a range of topics including:

- spill preparedness
- energy, water and materials efficiency
- trade waste and stormwater management
- hazardous substance handling and storage
- air and noise pollution control.

Feedback from the industry has been very positive, so positive in fact that the Ministry has been asked to look at extending the series to cover all aspects of the vehicle repair industry, including, auto wrecking, garages and service stations, glass repairs, auto-electricians, tyre, brake and shock repairers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Michael LeRoy-Dyson,
phone (09) 985 4808 or email
michael.leroy-dyson@mfe.govt.nz

Green Ribbon Awards

The Ministry has received a good range of nominations for this year's Green Ribbon Awards. The awards recognise outstanding contributions towards sustaining, protecting and enhancing the New Zealand environment.

Environment Minister David Benson-Pope says, "the Green Ribbon Awards are about thanking people for their determination and efforts towards improving the environment we live in. They're about celebrating positive action and inspiring others to get involved."

Winners will be announced by the Minister on 6 June, followed by a presentation ceremony at the Grand Hall in Parliament.

For more information: Donna Gardner, phone (04) 439 7414 or email donna.gardner@mfe.govt.nz or visit www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/awards/green-ribbon.html



Whānau ki Te Taiti Hou Whānau

Gentle Footprints – Boots 'N' All is now available

Gentle Footprints – Boots 'N' All is a new book presenting a refreshing view of the environment. It provides a starting point for New Zealanders to have challenging and meaningful discussions about our environment.

If you would like a copy, phone (04) 439 7400 or email publications@mfe.govt.nz

New funding round for contaminated sites remediation fund

Regional councils can now submit applications for funding to clean-up contaminated sites. To qualify for funding, sites must pose a high risk to people or the environment.

The Ministry for the Environment sets aside up to \$1 million each year in the Contaminated Sites Remediation Fund. The fund can cover some the costs of investigating and cleaning up sites. To date, the Ministry has approved funding for 28 projects across New Zealand for regional councils working in partnership with landowners and district and city councils.

Applications close 23 June 2006.

For more information: Rosalind Groves, phone (04) 439 7722 or email rosalind.groves@mfe.govt.nz or visit www.mfe.govt.nz

in brief