

Magazine of the Ministry for the Environment

ENVIRONZ

Take Taiao Aotearoa

November // 2008



08
It is important that we protect the health of fresh water and ensure that society gains the greatest benefit from the use of available water.



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

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A changing Ministry

This is an exciting and significant time for the Ministry. Changes in the awareness, range, complexity and importance of environmental matters and sustainability has become, and will continue to be, the compelling issue of our time. //

As we move speedily towards the end of another year, it's a good time to reflect on the progress with our work over the past 12 months. Environmental issues, such as those associated with climate change, are presenting new challenges on a scale never experienced before.

Just recently, New Zealand has taken some big steps towards meeting some of these environmental challenges.

One of these steps came with the enactment of the Climate Change Response (Emissions Trading) Amendment Act 2008 in September, which saw the entry of New Zealand into a carbon trading market.

The Ministry worked extremely hard with other government agencies to see this legislation come to fruition and the major work of implementing the emissions trading scheme is based in our head office.

September saw another legislative milestone for the Ministry with the passing of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008. The new Act sees New Zealand taking a huge step towards zero waste and greater resource efficiency.

With summer nearly upon us, much of our recreational activities will be focused around fresh water. Ensuring that we have a comprehensive policy for the management of fresh water in place is another Ministry priority that we are working hard to achieve. Submissions on the proposed National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management close in January and I would strongly encourage you to have your say. (See page 08 for more information.)

The demands and expectations of the Ministry have changed and expanded significantly. I am determined that the Ministry will take a stronger role in future, providing a depth of knowledge about the state of the environment, leading debate inside and outside government on environmental sustainability and the changes required if New Zealand is to meet high environmental standards.

On that note, I'd like to wish you all a great summer break. I know you will all make the effort to look after our beautiful environment while you're out enjoying it! //



Paul Reynolds

Chief Executive
Ministry for the Environment



EMISSIONS TRADING BECOMES LAW

Almost exactly a year after the proposed emissions trading scheme was announced, the legislation to enact it was passed into law.

On 25 September, the Governor-General gave Royal Assent to the Climate Change Response (Emissions Trading) Amendment Act 2008.

The emissions trading scheme will be phased in over the next five years, and will eventually include all six greenhouse gases covered by the Kyoto Protocol and all major greenhouse gas-emitting economic sectors.

Following its first reading in Parliament, and public hearings at the Finance and Expenditure Select Committee, three major changes were made to the Bill.

First, it deferred the entry of transport fuels to the emissions trading scheme until 2011, two years later than originally proposed. This change was made to reduce future inflation pressure and the pressure on household finances, given the large increases in fuel prices over the past two years.

Secondly, the Committee extended the start of the phase-out of freely allocated emission units by five years. Phase-out will start in 2019 and end in 2029. This change aims to help businesses maintain their competitiveness and creates greater economic certainty for business.

Thirdly, owners of forests bought before late 2002 that qualify as pre-1990 forests will be allocated more emission units than originally proposed, with an increase from approximately 39 units to an estimated 60 units per hectare. In addition, 18 units per hectare are set aside for future claimants under the Treaty of Waitangi

who receive Crown Forest Land. Both these changes better help the forest owners who face the greatest costs from the emissions trading scheme.

Another important change was that some later-entry sectors now have an 'on ramp' into the scheme. This involves voluntary reporting of emissions starting two years before the sector begins surrendering emission units, followed by mandatory reporting a year later, then full compliance and obligations to surrender units a year after that. This approach ensures sectors are well prepared for their entry to the scheme and provides incentives to reduce emissions before participants start surrendering units.

Before the Bill's second reading, discussions with supporting political parties produced other changes, including an Innovation Fund to encourage the development and uptake of technology that will significantly reduce emissions from industry.

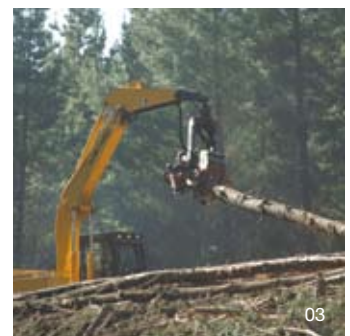
The Household Fund is also being set up to encourage household investment in energy-efficient products, such as insulation. There will be a one-off payment in 2010 to all households and a cash payment for beneficiaries, superannuitants and Working for Families recipients to help households cope with the impacts of electricity price increases as a result of emissions trading.

The next steps for the emissions trading scheme are to finalise the regulations for the various sectors joining the scheme, and to prepare plans for allocating emission units to eligible businesses. //

01 // The emissions trading scheme will cover all the major agricultural sources of methane and nitrous oxide, such as methane from ruminant animals and nitrous oxide from nitrogen fertiliser used on pasture.

02 // Emissions from New Zealand's industrial process sector represented six per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions in 2006. These emissions increased by 40.9 per cent from 1990 to 2007.

03 // Forestry is New Zealand's largest potential carbon 'sink'. For this reason, it has been selected as the first sector to enter the emissions trading scheme.



For more information about the emissions trading scheme, including the legislation, visit www.climatechange.govt.nz or call 0800 CLIMATE (254 683).



01

NEW LEGISLATION
A BIG PUSH FOR

waste minimisation

September saw a huge environmental milestone with the passing of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008. This means we now have new legislation, solely dedicated to waste minimisation – a first for New Zealand. The next step will be putting the different elements of the legislation, such as a waste levy and product stewardship, in place.

Work to reduce waste in New Zealand has, for some time now, been driven by the New Zealand Waste Strategy 2002. This strategy sets out how we can minimise and manage waste in New Zealand.

Jeffrey Seadon, Manager Waste Minimisation Policy at the Ministry for the Environment, says that until now, initiatives to address waste have largely been voluntary.

“Although the work to date has been reasonably successful, dealing with waste needs a smarter, more concerted effort if we want to prepare ourselves for a growing population which will consume more and more.”

The new Waste Minimisation Act does just that. It encourages a reduction in the amount of waste we generate and dispose of in New Zealand and aims to lessen the environmental harm of waste.

A major shift in the Act is moving the focus from waste disposal to waste minimisation – reducing waste through activities such as resource recovery, recycling and avoiding waste in the first place.

“New Zealanders continue to throw away large quantities of potentially valuable materials. Many of these could be recovered and reused or recycled. The Act is putting instruments in place to make it easier for New Zealanders to do so,” Seadon says.

The two main tools in the Act to do this are a levy on all waste sent to landfill and the ability for the government to support businesses in different sectors to set up product stewardship schemes to minimise the environmental impact of products when they come to the end of their lives.

Levy on waste to landfill

Seadon says the main purpose of the levy, which won't come into force until 1 July 2009, is to generate extra funding to set up new initiatives that will help local government, communities and businesses reduce waste.

So what will the impact of such a levy be on New Zealanders?

“The levy is based on the idea that the polluter pays, so people who dispose of waste to landfill can expect to pay for this. This would probably happen through a small rise in the price of rubbish bags. With the levy initially set at \$10 per tonne, this would mean that individual households will pay around 20c extra per rubbish bag,” Seadon says.

Half of the monies raised through the levy collection will be distributed to councils to be used for waste minimisation projects. The other half will go into a contestable fund which will be open to businesses and communities to apply for funding, also for waste minimisation purposes.

“We will consult in early 2009 with the New Zealand public on what the criteria will be to grant funding through the contestable fund. We would like to know what people would like to see the money used for,” Seadon says.

Product stewardship

The other significant tool the Act introduces is product stewardship legislation to reduce waste from products that can be harmful to people or the environment, or a waste of valuable resources.

Product stewardship means that producers, brand owners, importers, retailers, consumers and other parties take responsibility for the environmental effects of their products at end-of-life – from ‘cradle-to-grave’.

Seadon says that in New Zealand, many businesses involved in products such as packaging, used oil, whiteware, refrigerants, cell phones and paint already have product stewardship schemes in place to reduce waste from these products on a voluntary basis.

Under the Act, businesses (or others) are asked to design and implement their own schemes. The Act does not say what a product stewardship scheme would have to look like. It is up to businesses and other stakeholders to decide, and implement, what would work for them.

“The preferred way under the Act is still for business to set up product stewardship schemes off their own bat first. Designing and producing lower waste, easily recoverable and recyclable products will become the most profitable way to do business in the years to come. And the sooner businesses embrace that reality, the more successful they will be,” Seadon says.

Although voluntary initiatives are still the preferred way forward, the Act also gives the government the tools to make it mandatory for businesses to set up product stewardship schemes.

“The Act sets out a process to determine whether there are products for which product stewardship schemes should be mandatory. This could be the case for products which generate waste that causes significant harm or when there are significant benefits from reducing, reusing or recycling the product. These products are called ‘priority products’,” Seadon says.

The Act does not list priority products but Seadon explains that the government will further consult on what products should be priority products. He says that it is not very likely that we will see any confirmed priority products in the next two years however, as the Ministry needs to allow time to complete the public consultation, research the options, and negotiate with industry to develop a robust product stewardship scheme for priority products.

“Although changes won't happen overnight, New Zealanders will in the long term have more opportunities to recycle household appliances and other products that are currently difficult to dispose of in a responsible way.”

Dealing with waste needs a smarter, more concerted effort if we want to prepare ourselves for a growing population which will consume more and more.



02



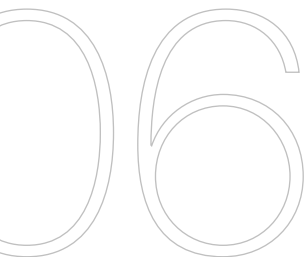
03

01 // Resene Paintwise is a product stewardship scheme that involves the take back of end-of-life paint and packaging.

Photo // Simon Edwards, Hutt News

02 // The Agrichemicals Collection Programme is responsible for collecting and safely disposing banned and unwanted agrichemicals that have accumulated on farms and rural properties.

03 // From 1 July 2009, landfill operators will have to pay a levy based on the weight of waste material disposed at landfill.



In a nutshell, the Act:

- // puts a levy on all waste disposed of in landfills to generate funding to help local government, communities and businesses reduce the amount of waste
- // helps and, when necessary makes, producers, brand owners, importers, retailers, consumers and other parties take responsibility for the environmental effects from their products at end-of-life – from ‘cradle-to-grave’
- // allows for regulations to be made making it mandatory for territorial authorities and others (for example, landfill operators) to report on waste to improve information on waste minimisation
- // clarifies the roles and responsibilities of territorial authorities with respect to waste minimisation
- // introduces a new Board to give independent advice to the Minister for the Environment on waste minimisation issues.



04

04 // In New Zealand, landfill is the prevalent destination for plastic products, with 18 per cent of plastic packaging now being diverted through private and public recycling operations.

For more information, please email waste@mfe.govt.nz or contact Jeffrey Seadon 04 439 7630.

How does the waste levy work?

- // The waste levy will come into force on 1 July 2009.
- // The levy is initially set at \$10 per tonne (plus GST). This is estimated to generate \$31 million per year to improve waste minimisation.
- // Landfill operators will have to pay based on the weight of material disposed at landfill, but they may pass this cost on to households and businesses.
- // Households and businesses can pay less by reducing, reusing and recycling as much waste as possible to keep the amount of waste to a minimum.
- // Half of the money generated by the levy will go to territorial authorities, on a population basis, so they can improve waste minimisation in their area.
- // The remaining 50 per cent (minus administration costs) of the money will be put into a fund. Organisations can apply for money from this fund for waste minimisation activities. The government will further consult with the public on what type of organisations and which initiatives should get funding from the waste levy fund.
- // The Minister for the Environment will review the levy in 2011 and then every three years to see whether it is effective and adequate.

Examples of types of product stewardship:

- // ‘Take back’ schemes where manufacturers, brand-owners, importers and/or retailers accept a product back for recovery or disposal at the end of its useful life.
- // Deposit/refund schemes where a consumer receives a refund of a deposit when they return the product and/or its packaging for recycling or disposal at the end of its useful life.
- // Labelling to inform consumers about the environmental harm caused by the product during its life cycle, how to avoid or reduce that harm, how to recycle, or how to dispose safely of the product at the end of its useful life.
- // Product design requirements to reduce the waste produced and encourage recycling.



01

ELECTRIC VEHICLES FOR THE KIWI MOTORIST?

The transport sector is one of the biggest users of energy in New Zealand, and one of the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases. The introduction of the first electric vehicle trials in New Zealand next year, however, could signal a change in the way we think about personal transport and the potential for carbon neutral mobility.

Early next year Meridian Energy, in collaboration with Mitsubishi Motors, will commence the first electric vehicle trials in New Zealand. The trials will focus on testing the vehicles in New Zealand conditions and gauging consumer appetite for them. Research will also be conducted on the steps necessary to prepare New Zealand's electricity system for the wider deployment of electric vehicles.

"Meridian Energy has been overwhelmed by public interest and enthusiasm in electric vehicles. We receive regular queries from the public asking when they will be able to drive and purchase an electric vehicle," Meridian's Electric Vehicle Programme Project Coordinator, Tara Miller says.

In the past few years we have seen advances in motor and control technology with hybrid cars and plug-in hybrids now on the market. It would seem all-electric cars are not far behind.

So, why will New Zealand be one of the leading countries to trial the new electric vehicle? Well, we're a pretty small market, so it's easy to test new offerings, and we're also a country of early adopters – given half a chance.

But more importantly, with a large proportion of our electricity produced from renewable sources, the electric vehicle trials will be able to demonstrate how renewable, zero-emission, certified carbon neutral mobility could work here in the future.

Better air quality for our cities and towns; a reduction of our dependence on imported hydrocarbons; lower transport costs; as well as reduced greenhouse gas emissions are all huge benefits.

But is it likely that a large number of New Zealanders will soon be driving electric vehicles charged up with our plentiful wind and water resources, or is this more a pipedream? After all, at this stage, the actual consumer purchase price for the electric vehicle being trialled next year is not known.

"It is envisaged that the first production vehicles will be at a premium due to being new technology and that once these vehicles are in mass production the cost will reduce accordingly," Miller says.

But, various governmental consumer incentive schemes have been used in overseas markets to encourage consumer uptake of electric vehicles, including financial incentives such as tax and purchase price rebates as well as non-financial incentives such as access to free parking and recharging points. Similar measures could be used in New Zealand.

"The electric vehicle is definitely a reality for New Zealanders, the key question is going to be when," Miller says. "Currently global demand for electric vehicles is exceeding the available supply. New Zealand needs to make its case for why we should be amongst the first to receive electric vehicles." //

01 // The 'i-MiEV' is an electric vehicle based on the 660cc petrol-driven Mitsubishi 'i' minicar. It employs a highly energy efficient electric motor powered by recyclable lithium-ion batteries and produces no emissions, making it one of the most sustainable transportation options available for individuals.

For further technical information on the 'i-MiEV' go to the Mitsubishi Motors New Zealand website www.imiev.co.nz



01

Our waterways are valued by New Zealanders for recreation, for business, for their ecology, beauty and as taonga. It is important that we protect the health of fresh water and ensure society gains the greatest benefit from the use of available water.

To improve freshwater management a proposed national policy statement has been developed and New Zealanders have a chance to have their say on how this precious resource should be looked after.

Water quality and managing demand are issues New Zealand will continue to face in the future. Over the past two decades, levels of nutrients have increased in our rivers, reflecting the impact of pollution from effluent, agricultural run-off and urban stormwater.

The proposed National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management identifies water quality and managing increasing demands for water as nationally significant matters. It would require local government to actively plan for and manage water quality and demands for fresh water according to national objectives and community aspirations.

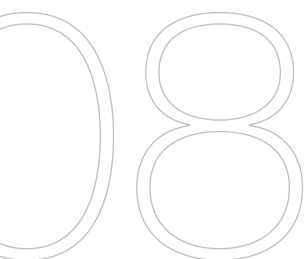
“To ensure sufficient quantity and quality of fresh water for our future, we need sound management practices. Degradation must be limited and water quality restored in lakes, rivers and other bodies of water,” says Sue Powell, General Manager of the Local Government Group at the Ministry for the Environment.

National policy statements are instruments under the Resource Management Act. They set objectives and policies that guide and direct councils on how to manage resources – such as fresh water – within their regional policy statements and regional and district plans, and through their resource consent decisions. Councils remain responsible for setting rules and standards, guided by the national policy statement.

“The national policy statement is still a proposal and we do want people’s views to be heard before it is finalised. An independent Board of Inquiry, chaired by former Environment Judge David Sheppard, is managing the consultation. I really encourage people to make submissions to the Board as the more views they hear, the more robust they can make the statement,” Powell says.

Fresh water

FOR OUR FUTURE



Standardising aspects of water management

The proposed national policy statement is complemented by a set of national environmental standards that will ensure a more consistent approach to particular aspects of water management.

A standard is being drafted that will ensure the amount of water taken from rivers, lakes and aquifers is accurately measured. This standard, the National Environmental Standard for Measurement of Water Takes, will make it easier for regional councils to plan for water allocation. It will do this by requiring those taking water under resource consent to install meters and report on water use. It is scheduled to take effect by mid-2009.

To ensure that there is sufficient water remaining in water bodies for freshwater plants and animals, a proposed National Environmental Standard on Ecological Flows and Water Levels is being developed (submissions closed in August). If the levels of rivers, groundwater systems, lakes and wetlands run too low it can put animal and plant life at risk and impact on water users.

A national environmental standard is already in effect that will reduce the risk of contaminating drinking water sources such as rivers and groundwater, and a standard for on-site wastewater systems (or septic tanks) is being developed that would require owners to hold a warrant of fitness.

Powell says these national environmental standards complement the proposed national policy statement by providing minimum standards on particular aspects of water management. The proposed national policy statement provides the bigger picture by setting national direction on freshwater management.

The future of fresh water

To deal with issues of water quality and demand we need to keep improving management practices. The standards and policies being developed go some way towards this. There are also some funding projects such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's Sustainable Farming Fund.



“But we must also keep on generating new ideas and solutions. At the moment we are building on earlier work done on water allocation to help make sure water is allocated in a sustainable way in terms of culture, economy, society and environment,” says Powell.

“We are also working with Māori advisers on a joint work programme to better recognise and incorporate Māori interests and values into water resource management.”

Many regional councils are successful in water allocation and management which are sometimes captured in regional plans. Horizons Regional Council, for example, uses an integrated management approach.

Other councils will be directed by the national policy statement to use an integrated approach to managing both water quantity and quality issues. This approach, says Powell, is holistic, concentrating not just on a single river, but all the streams that run into it and the surrounding land.

Many councils have made commitments to deal with water pollution in their areas, including local and central government who are working with local iwi to protect Lake Taupo. And in Rotorua, the Rotorua Lakes Strategy Group is assisting in the restoration of the Rotorua lakes. It is doing this by treating or diverting nutrient-rich streams flowing into the lakes, and through other programmes such as sewerage works.

“Fresh water has been called ‘blue gold’ by some. It is extremely valuable and we must keep on working together to look after this resource. This involves central and local government, but also individual farms, businesses and households,” Powell says. //



01 // New Zealand's coastal and inland fresh waters are widely used for recreational activities, so maintaining and protecting the quality of this recreational water is an important public health and resource management issue.

02 // The RMA allows councils to plan how they will manage fresh water. These plans can control how much fresh water can be taken for specific uses such as irrigation.

03 // New Zealand has a freshwater fishery that is one of the best in the world.

For more information see www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/water/prog-action/ or contact the water team on waterprogramme@mfe.govt.nz

Submissions on the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management are being accepted until 5.00pm on 23 January 2008.



Sustainable Management Fund

HELPING MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE

Since its establishment in 1996, the Sustainable Management Fund has supported a number of valuable projects that have built on communities' enthusiasm for environmental issues.

With more and more New Zealanders becoming environmentally aware, an increasing number of groups are joining together to undertake projects that help make a positive difference to the environment. Obtaining funding support for these projects is sometimes difficult, which is where the Ministry for the Environment can help.

The Sustainable Management Fund (SMF) provides funding support to community groups, iwi, businesses and local government to take practical actions that produce long-term environmental benefits.

The annual \$3.84 million fund is administered by the Ministry on a contestable basis and is aimed at encouraging proactive partnerships and promoting community action. Applicants are able to apply for a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$200,000 each year.

Encouraging sustainable households, sustainable land and water management, supporting sustainable business practices, and meeting the challenges of climate change are the focus of the 2009/10 SMF funding round which opened in October this year.

Since its establishment in 1996, the fund has supported a number of valuable projects that have built on communities' enthusiasm for environmental issues, and continues to receive a large number of applications each year.

Many of these ambitious and beneficial projects are beginning to leave their mark on the communities involved.

Meeting the challenges of climate change

One such community-wide initiative is the Dune Restoration Trust of New Zealand's Empowering Coastal Communities to Adapt to Climate Change project, which was granted funding this year under the *Meeting the Challenges of Climate Change* category.

The Trust's mission statement is "to see the majority of New Zealand dunes restored and sustainably managed using indigenous species by 2050". In collaboration with management agencies, the project provides four local coastal communities with an adaptive approach to help mitigate the effects of sea level rise and increased storm activity resulting from climate change. The four regions targeted are Northland, New Plymouth, Wellington and Canterbury.

“The emphasis is on working with these communities to provide them with the skills to assess the state of their beach and dune systems, to understand the implications of climate change, and to restore natural dune form and function – therefore helping build resilient and sustainable coastal communities,” Project Leader Dr David Bergin says.

Encouraging sustainable households

Under the SMF category of *Encouraging Sustainable Households*, EcoMatters Environment Trust has set up its new Sustainable Homes Programme. Funding for the project began this year and will continue for the next two years.

The Sustainable Homes Programme is a community-based initiative to support and encourage householders to reduce their ecological footprint, one step at a time. The programme focuses on providing householders with the practical skills and tools they need to reduce their energy use, minimise waste, conserve water and increase walking, cycling and public transport use.

An intensive street-by-street approach will also be trialed in several communities to encourage neighbours to work alongside each other to ‘green their street’.

The programme also aims to find out what barriers people have to changing specific behaviours and what it takes to overcome those barriers.

“We’re very excited about this,” says Programme Manager Tejopala Rawls. “We’re able to really find out what it takes to get people to change, instead of simply assuming we know what will work. This is new territory for us.”

Supporting sustainable business practices

Venture Southland’s Promoting the Development of Sustainable Business in Southland project was granted funding for this year and the next under the *Supporting Sustainable Business Practices* category.

This regional project sees Venture Southland actively working with groups and organisations to develop a regional plan to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the promotion of sustainable business practices in Southland.

Regional Sustainable Business Co-ordinator Karyn Owen is in charge of co-ordinating this process and providing a central contact point

for businesses to access relevant information on resources and programmes to best fit their needs.

Owen says the funding received from the SMF has enabled Southland to take a more synchronised approach to encouraging sustainable business practices.

“The work done so far in identifying business needs has been very positive showing the majority of Southland businesses are keen to do more to address sustainability. Supporting businesses to continue on their sustainability journey will have positive flow-on effects to the economy, environment and community,” Owen says.

Sustainable land and water management

The SMF has funded some impressive sustainable land and water projects too. The Genesis Reforestation Project’s Trees for Hawke’s Bay in Schools programme, for example, was granted three years’ funding in the 2007/08 funding round.

So far, 10 schools from the Hawke’s Bay region are involved in the programme which sees pupils, teachers and parents learning how to propagate, grow and maintain native plants in a nursery environment. The majority of the plants grown in the schools’ nurseries are then planted at the Pekapeka wetland (situated 12km southwest of Hastings) with the long-term goal to improve the water quality, biodiversity and beauty of the wetland.

It is hoped the project will also impart a sense of ownership and ability to make a sustainable difference with Hawke’s Bay youth and all those involved.

Pukehou School is one of the schools involved in the project. With the help of Hastings Forest and Bird, the school transformed an old bike shed into a shade house. “The project has made a world of difference to our school,” Acting Principal Jenny Prebble says. “It has given the students pride in making a difference to the environment and it has taught them some incredible skills.”

The Ministry has been overwhelmed by the number of groups and communities like these wanting to get involved in helping to care for our environment. The SMF offers us a way to work with these enthusiastic and committed people.

Genesis Reforestation Trust and the Ministry for the Environment would like to acknowledge project co-ordinator Donna Miller’s passing. Miller worked tirelessly to raise people’s awareness and inspired so many of them to care about the environment. //



02



03

01 // The Onemana Coast Care Group – members of the Dune Restoration Trust – work to restore the sand dunes on the Coromandel Peninsula.

Photo // Jonathan Barran

02 // Checking out an old hot water cylinder as part of EcoMatters Environment Trust’s Sustainable Homes Programme.

Photo // EcoMatters Environment Trust

03 // Pupils get to learn all about growing and maintaining native plants as part of the Trees for Hawke’s Bay in Schools programme.

For more information on the Sustainable Management Fund visit www.smf.govt.nz or email funds@mfe.govt.nz

SOIL CONSERVATION GROUP LEADS THE WAY IN GOOD FARMING PRACTICES



01 // The Starborough Flaxbourne
Soil Conservation Group with Chairman
Doug Avery second from right.

1 2

The word sustainability has worked its way into New Zealanders' consciousness over the past few years. As a country reliant on our land and water based industries, good farming practices are crucial in our drive towards sustainability.

This is certainly a view that Marlborough farmer Doug Avery shares. As Chairman of the Starborough Flaxbourne Soil Conservation Group, he is passionate about working with other farmers to establish sustainable farming practices.

"The key aspect of good farming practice is the preservation of our natural capital, and to ensure that processes of production can be repeated over and over again," Avery says. He views sustainability as a three-leg stool – one leg financial, one leg environmental and one leg social.

The Starborough-Flaxbourne district is one of the driest in the country. Westerly winds plus grazing on hilly country can result in bare land and erosion. In the early 2000s farmers were becoming increasingly concerned about continual drought and soil loss, and the impact on profitability, farm families and the community.

"When the drought hit, one leg broke," Avery says. "This increased the pressure on the other legs and our business which had sat so soundly on our stool began to crumble. Soon the other legs were breaking as well."

In 2004, following a public meeting in Seddon, the Starborough Flaxbourne Soil Conservation Group was formed to co-ordinate farm-based trials accessing expertise and ideas on how farmers could affordably and effectively manage their way through drought.

The Group undertook research and developed an understanding in six key areas, namely: farming

systems, soils, dryland plants, human dimension, landscape options, and climate.

With the New Zealand Landcare Trust's help, the Group obtained funding from the Sustainable Farming Fund and secured the involvement of the Marlborough Regional Council and the Marlborough District Council, plus specialists in farm business modelling, pasture plants for dryland farming, soil science, climate change, landscape and social issues.

Over the past three years much has been learnt, and the project wound up with a national field day in May this year on Doug Avery's property.

The Group identified 'soil loss and erosion' as an issue for dryland farmers facing a drier future through climate change and has been proactive in finding a solution that is transferable for others with similar land and climate type.

Avery hopes that much of the information from the Group's research will go on to be used by farmers around the country. "When 420 people, mostly farmers, turned up at our farm on the field day, I knew that many farmers feel hugely challenged by the circumstances which surround them."

The Starborough Flaxbourne Soil Conservation Group received a Green Ribbon Award from the Minister for the Environment this year for its members' efforts to sustainably manage the use of the land they farm.

And Avery seems determined to continue the valuable work of the group. "As farmers we will not buy into the production race again, but rather manage things with 50 and 100 year outcomes kept in mind." //



01

SUSTAINABLE KIDS BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Children from Rhode Street Primary School in Hamilton are teaching the community lessons on sustainability from outside the classroom.

The Rhode Street School mission statement says the school “aims to provide for the needs of all our children by giving them opportunities to develop their potential in a caring environment”. But the school goes one step further by encouraging its pupils to also care for the environment as part of its after school Sustainable Kids programme.

The Sustainable Kids programme began thanks to funding from the Ministry of Social Development with the aim of giving more to children in after school care. The school built a commercial kitchen over the Christmas break last year with help from the fund and converted the old school pool into a full blown hydroponic nursery.

Vegetables and flowers are plentiful in and around the school making it both a colourful and important learning environment. The children are now learning how to make healthy meals and preserves from their own fresh produce during after school care.

“All the children throughout the school are involved in planting gardens, garden maintenance, recycling, reusing and being sustainable,” says the school’s extended services co-ordinator Delwyn Rouse.

The benefits are proving to be big. Despite so many parents working full time the school children aren’t missing out, learning to grow and cook food they may never have otherwise tasted. The rest of the community gets to appreciate the children’s fun and environmentally friendly activities too because they are now selling their school-made produce.

“We have had lots of publicity and we have had lots of visitors. The support and encouragement has been great,” says Rouse.

So what’s in store for the future of the Sustainable Kids programme? At the moment the children are working towards incorporating more sustainable initiatives into the programme and are hoping to develop a supply of healthy lunches to go into local schools. The school council even wants to build a 200 seat café for the children to sit in.

Rhode Street School is just one of the 608 Enviroschools scattered around New Zealand. The Enviroschools programme was developed in the Waikato in the early 1990s and has been successful in educating more than 195,000 children each year about developing eco-habits for a sustainable future.

“Kids learn by doing. And if they’re excited by what they’re doing, they’re going to remember what they’ve learnt,” says Rhode Street School principal Shane Ngata.

By helping to create a tangible learning environment for children, schools like Rhode Street Primary are demonstrating that the challenge of environmental sustainability can be met by the right people who have the right will. Our young people play a crucial role in protecting and caring for our environment now and for generations to come, so it is important that we foster their interest, their learning and their appreciation of the balance people and the environment have with each other. //

01 // Rhode Street Primary School’s new commercial kitchen where the children make healthy meals from their own fresh produce.

02 // The old school pool has been converted into a hydroponic nursery.

03 // Students take pride in making a difference to the environment and learning new skills.

Photos // Rhode Street Primary School



02



03

For more information on Enviroschools visit www.enviroschools.org.nz



01 // Sport has been recognised as a powerful tool to raise awareness about environmental issues.

RUGBY WORLD CUP 2011

When the All Blacks set out in search of Rugby World Cup redemption on home pitches in 2011, beyond the sidelines will be the culmination of an ambitious project to make New Zealand's hosting as environmentally sustainable as possible.

More than 70,000 visitors are expected to watch the 20 teams competing in 48 matches during the tournament, creating a potentially large environmental footprint. The government has agreed that for Rugby World Cup 2011 to be successful it must be environmentally sustainable.

When it sought the right to host the event, the New Zealand Rugby Union built its bid around a theme of a stadium of four million people, reflecting the place rugby has in New Zealand culture.

With an anticipated cumulative television audience of more than four billion, New Zealand will receive unprecedented international exposure as it hosts one of the most important global sporting events behind the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup – and the largest event ever hosted in this country. New Zealand has the opportunity to leverage off this international exposure to showcase its leadership in environmental sustainability while also creating lasting benefits for New Zealanders.

With the increasing public awareness about environmental issues, there is a growing demand and expectation for major sporting events to demonstrate environmental sustainability. The summer and winter Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup, and the Commonwealth Games have or are currently addressing the environmental impacts of their respective events.

Rugby World Cup 2011 presents an opportunity for New Zealand to build on our 'clean and green' reputation by incorporating sustainability into rugby's biggest event. It also provides opportunities

for New Zealand's sustainable businesses to capitalise on the increased media interest and visitor numbers to demonstrate their environmental sustainability credentials to a wider market. There will also be opportunities for community organisations to be involved.

The Ministry for the Environment is working closely with the Rugby World Cup 2011 Government Coordination Office within the Ministry of Economic Development, and Rugby New Zealand 2011 (the tournament organiser) to develop an environmental sustainability strategy for Rugby World Cup 2011. Work has already been done on developing environmental sustainability criteria for regions wanting to host matches.

While specific actions will be needed to address the environmental impacts of Rugby World Cup 2011, a number of initiatives already exist that will not only help reduce the environmental impact of the tournament, but will also contribute to wider environmental sustainability outcomes.

An example is *LOVE NZ – Recycling in Public Places*, which involves spending \$4.6 million over three years to establish a network of street recycling bins. The Rugby World Cup 2011 Government Coordination Office will encourage all regions involved in the Tournament to apply to participate in the programme. The *LOVE NZ* brand will help ensure consistency in the messages visitors see as they travel around the country – as well as encouraging them to do the right thing. //

URBAN LIFE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

Many of us now live in towns and cities and as more people are moving to our larger centres, the strain on our infrastructure and environment is noticeable. The demographic of our cities is also changing and this means what we need in the future is not necessarily what we need now.

Over the next couple of decades, New Zealanders will need to cope with an increase in population (Statistics New Zealand predicts that our population will peak at 5 million by 2051), a greater proportion of people over 65, smaller households, greater expense for energy as well as a requirement to cut down on use of fossil fuels, and more technology advances.

The way urban areas function affects how our society works, how our economy performs, and how our environment fares under the increasing pressure being put on our natural resources.

New tools and approaches are needed to meet the needs of successful living in our changing urban environment.

To help with this, the government has set up a multi-agency unit hosted by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA). The unit is responsible for leading discussions and identifying ways to create sustainable urban communities. It will work with other Ministries and agencies such as Housing New Zealand, local government, service and utility providers and with private sector investors, builders and developers.

A discussion document, entitled *Building sustainable urban communities – Exploring place-based approaches to sustainable urban development in New Zealand*, is available on DIA's website for comment and input. It offers ideas to support existing urban development authorities with the powers and tools they need to address current barriers, and to plan for place-based sustainable development.

DIA programme leader Fiona Illingsworth says the discussion document puts forward the proposition that many of these emerging urban development issues could be addressed by improving the ways Ministries and agencies work together.

“We can bring support by increasing the availability of urban development skills in New Zealand, up-skilling urban development practitioners, and better monitoring of sustainable urban development progress and issues,” she says.

Ministry for the Environment lead for this project Lindsay Gow suggests that new powers could be used by an urban development organisation, such as a council-controlled organisation, a Crown entity, or a joint venture company with public sector involvement, to implement sustainable development.

A possible approach would be to create legislation to allow ministers to declare that special tools or powers could be applied in busy or complex areas, Gow says.

Overseas examples of this type of approach to comprehensive, future-focused urban developments are often a more intensive form of mixed residential and commercial development, with better quality public spaces and amenities; stronger local economic activity; an emphasis on social success; and less reliance on car travel.

“This new approach to sustainable urban development aims to improve the delivery of the right kind of development, in the right areas, at the right time. To bring together these elements, a new enabling ‘place-based’ approach to sustainable urban development is proposed,” says Gow. //



01 // Wellington's Civic Square where understanding patterns of pedestrian access and use were used to create a space which is a stage for public life. Photo // Wellington City Council

The Ministry for the Environment is currently working on the scope of a national policy statement which will also guide the direction of urban development in New Zealand. To view the document visit www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/central/nps/urban-design/index.html

To look at the *Building sustainable urban communities – Exploring place-based approaches to sustainable urban development in New Zealand* discussion document go to www.dia.govt.nz/sudu

The closing date for submissions is 28 November 2008.

IN BRIEF

Standards for telecommunications facilities now in effect

The national environmental standards for telecommunications facilities came into force on 9 October 2008. These cover radio-frequency fields, noise, installation of telecommunications equipment cabinets and installation of masts and antennas on existing structures subject to specified limitations.

For more information see www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/telecommunication-standards.html

Exclusive Economic Zone Bill

The Ministry has been developing legislation to improve the environmental management of activities in New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone. The heavy workload of the Parliamentary Counsel Office meant it was not possible to finish drafting of a Bill before the Election. This project remains a high priority on the Ministry's work programme.

Further information is available at www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/oceans

Amendments for aquaculture legislation

The Aquaculture Legislation Amendment Bill passed in September clarified the policy intent of the aquaculture reforms. Now applications for the occupation of the coastal marine area for aquaculture activities cannot be made unless they relate to aquaculture management areas in operative regional coastal plans.

For more information email aquaculture@mfe.govt.nz

Beneath the Reflections

Beneath the Reflections, A User's Guide to the Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Area was launched in Invercargill last month. The guide provides an overall introduction to the Fiordland marine environment, including the physical and biological character of Fiordland and how it is managed. Practical user information about the activities permitted, including the relevant regulations, and a fiord-by-fiord guide for the Fiordland Marine Area is also included in the guide. *Beneath the Reflections* is \$15.00 a copy and can be purchased through the Department of Conservation.

Order forms are available on www.fmg.org.nz

FOR YOUR DIARY...

Topic	Date	Input	Contact
Proposed National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management	Submissions close 23 January 2009	Submissions	Administration Officer – Board of Inquiry-Water Freepost Board of Inquiry – Water c/o Ministry for the Environment PO Box 10362 Wellington 6143 freshwaternps@mfe.govt.nz 0800 000 035
Proposed National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation	Initial submissions closed 5.00pm 31 October 2008 Further submissions close 5.00pm 19 December 2008	Submissions	Melissa Keys Executive Officer for Board of Inquiry renewable.electricity@mfe.govt.nz 04 439 7488