

talk sustainability readers' survey

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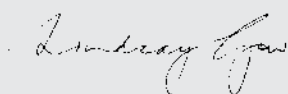
More and more New Zealanders are doing their bit for climate change, using increasingly innovative approaches.

Few could match the initiative and enthusiasm of Paul Kennett, profiled inside, who has turned his home into a model of eco-efficiency – much of it through his own effort and imagination.

Five Hawke's Bay high school students have also shown commendable initiative in setting up their own business making biodegradable supermarket bags and other food packaging.

Business is getting on board too, and not just those with an obvious stake in the issue, such as big emitters. Attendees at the recent Climate Change and Business forum in Auckland included a broad range of business people, reflecting business awareness that climate change poses risks and opportunities for them.

Kind Regards



Lindsay Gow

DEPUTY SECRETARY
MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

eDay 2008 promises bumper e-waste harvest

National eDay will be held on 4–5 October, with organisers expecting to more than double last year's haul of electronic waste (e-waste) at about 30 collection points around New Zealand.

Last year 415 tonnes of old computers, monitors, printers, mobile phones and other equipment was collected at 12 locations. Boosted by a \$200,000 grant from the Ministry for the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund, organisers predict that more than 1,000 tonnes of e-waste will be collected at this year's event.

Community organisers in 28 regions have already committed to eDay 2008. The event started life as a Wellington-only pilot in 2006, sponsored by Dell, when 54 tonnes of computer hardware were collected in one day. In 2007 it was expanded to 12 pick-up points from Auckland to Invercargill.

National organiser Laurence Zwimpfer of the Computer Access New Zealand Trust (CANZ) said the response around the country to last year's event was "phenomenal", with more than 6,900 car-loads of e-waste dropped off over two days.

"Thanks to the event, more than 26,000 computer items including monitors, CPUs and printers, were diverted from being dumped in New Zealand's landfills," he said. In landfills, e-waste poses environmental risks because it can contain toxic substances like lead, mercury and cadmium that can leach into the soil or

waterways. "The success of last year's event proved that New Zealanders have been looking for a sustainable way to dispose of e-waste for some time."

Industry support is being led by Dell, along with The Laptop Company, Toshiba and TradeMe. KiwiRail is confirmed as an eDay transport partner, freighting containers from local collection centres to regional consolidation centres. eDay's recycling partner is Computer Recycling Ltd.

All equipment collected on eDay will be sorted at the drop-off site before being transported to recycling plants within New Zealand or overseas. All equipment dropped off at an eDay site will be recycled by accredited recyclers using accepted international practices to ensure the safety of workers and maximise the recovery of materials. Recyclers have advised that over 95 percent of the materials in a computer can be recovered and re-used.

CANZ and eDay are initiatives of the 2020 Communications Trust, which has worked for more than 10 years on issues around safe and sustainable community use of electronic materials.

For more details, visit www.eday.org.nz and www.2020.org.nz



Home energy innovator wins plaudits



> Harnessing the sun: Paul Kennett with his self-made 'heliostat'.

Paul Kennett has combined environmental awareness with traditional 'number eight wire' kiwi ingenuity to turn his home into a model of energy efficiency.

He has systematically installed numerous energy-saving devices in his Lower Hutt home, turning the 1907 railway cottage into a cosy, low-cost energy haven.

A recent assessment under the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority's Home Energy Ratings scheme gave Paul's home 6.5 out of 10, described by the assessor as "exceptional considering the age of the house".

It's all been done with a careful eye on costs and benefits, and by using minimal outside help.

For example, Paul installed a commercially-made, double-glazed window alongside another window covered with an acetate sheet, then compared their performance over time, based on condensation build-up.

The verdict: little difference in the first year, but the commercial one is winning now. "It depends on the quality of the window frame – if it's old and cracked, the acetate sheet will let moisture in, but it's still much better than nothing."

He also installed his own wall insulation, filling the cavity with fire-retardant recycled polystyrene beads by blowing them in through drilled holes using a hair dryer, then repairing the holes. But he advised other homeowners to be careful before trying this – it won't work in modern homes, and it may even be unsafe.

"It only worked for us because of some happy coincidences," he said. The wall cavity in his older home has no electrical wiring, as modern homes do – and polystyrene melts electrical wiring. Also, his home had no framing cross-supports, or "dwangs", that are now standard in home construction.

Paul began in 2004 by putting a double layer of batts in the ceiling, covering the rafters, followed by installing polystyrene floor insulation covered with aluminium foil, or "sisilation".

"Everything you read says to do the roof and ceiling first," he said. "A lot of the reading I did concluded that standard insulation values for New Zealand houses were too low."

Since then, Paul has installed LED lights, rainwater tanks, solar water heating, and a heat pump, with professional help only when necessary. His current project is a "heliostat" – a big foil-covered reflective sheet, mounted on his garage wall, to reflect sunlight back into his lounge.

"The challenge is to do it without glare," he said. "If you get it positioned right on a tracking mount, it will reflect into the top half of the room."

So why has he done all this? "I'm aware of the implications of climate change, though it makes sense for other reasons to reduce your energy consumption," he said. "It makes sense from a financial perspective, a comfort perspective and a health perspective.

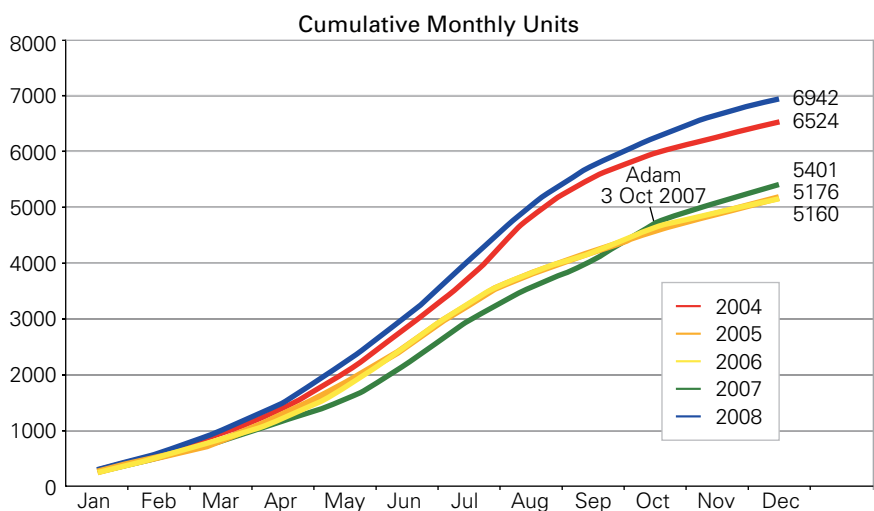
"I'm a skinny guy, I get cold very easily – the first thing I wanted to do was to make the house as warm as I could."

Readily admitting that aspects of his sustainability drive are "slightly obsessive", Paul has collected data over the years in the hope of using it to further improve performance. He has charts showing indoor and outdoor temperature, humidity, wind speed and other variables – now he would like help working out what it all means.

"I've gathered the data in the hope that I can find someone to show me how to utilise it. It has the potential to show me what is going on," he said.

Based on his track record, there's every prospect that Paul will figure out the answers himself.

For more information, visit Paul's website at <http://myonlinediary.com/>



> This graph uses Paul's data to show his home's annual energy use since 2004. Note the steady downward trend until last year, when Paul and wife Michelle's baby son arrived – "Adam came along and ruined all my data," said Paul.

↘ Business opportunities from climate change

Firms wanting to exploit the potential of carbon markets to develop their business may soon have easier access to the support they need.

The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) is to begin a project aimed at compiling information on ways the government might help providers of industrial clean technologies to become involved in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

The CDM is an arrangement under the Kyoto Protocol allowing industrialised countries with a greenhouse gas reduction commitment to invest in projects that reduce emissions in developing countries, as an alternative to more expensive emission reductions in their own countries.

The MfE project aims to help small businesses, in particular, overcome some of the challenges from complex rules and the fast-changing regulatory environment. It will reflect CDM work already beginning in pastoral agricultural technologies, led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

MfE Climate Change Implementation Manager Philip Millichamp said the project sought to help New Zealand businesses gain an advantage in Kyoto Protocol-compliant overseas markets.

The project responds to growing business interest in sustainable technologies, as reflected at the recent Australia-New Zealand Climate Change and Business conference in Auckland.

Philip said there was a much bigger New Zealand business attendance this year than at previous conferences. In the past, participants tended to be those most directly affected by climate change policies, such as big emitters, or people offering carbon market services to business, such as lawyers or traders. "This year there were many more businesses attending who are going to use the services of those people," he said.

"There is a clear understanding out there that New Zealand business needs to be aware of the big risks and opportunities as we head towards a low-carbon economy.

"The first thing to do is to get businesses talking to each other about these things. There are quite a few things government agencies are doing to facilitate this. It is also an area of keen interest to the Climate Change Leadership Forum, led by Stephen Tindall."

Immediately before the conference, the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development ran a very informative clean technology symposium, Philip said. "People shared experiences of how their business development has progressed, how they gained venture capital, and how 'New Zealand Inc' can benefit from the technological ideas that New Zealand is good at. It set the tone for a very positive conference," he said.

MfE's project will involve direct discussions with businesses wanting to becoming involved in the CDM. For more information contact philip.millichamp@mfe.govt.nz



Students Grow Green

Five Hawke's Bay high school students are turning their environmental passion into business success. The Iona College students run Grow Green, which makes fully biodegradable shopping bags and other food packaging products. Spurred into action by Leonardo DiCaprio's film *The 11th Hour*, the Year 13 (final year) students identified a market gap for biodegradable packaging after talking to the Hawke's Bay Environment Centre. Their products are aimed at cafes and schools, and include PLA shopping bags, which look like plastic but are made of corn starch.

> Healthy eating: Grow Green founders (left to right) Olivia Clark, Sarah Findlay, Katie Sinton, Megan Dever and Kate Robertson with some of their biodegradable food packaging products.

↳ Sustaina-briefs

NZ eco-label a winner

The Environmental Choice New Zealand planet-and-tick label (pictured) has been chosen as an international best practice model by Britain's Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The label, familiar to New Zealanders on many consumer products, was chosen from among 207 worldwide standards and measures of sustainability. It was cited as a best practice example alongside other top labels such as Fair Trade, Forest Stewardship Council, and Energy Star. Environmental Choice New Zealand is run by the New Zealand Eco-labelling Trust, and the label is owned by the Ministry for the Environment.



Eco-label guide

A new online directory hosted by the Ministry of Economic Development aims to help users evaluate the usefulness of eco-labels and other sustainability indicators. Launching the guide last month, Environment Minister Trevor Mallard said: "In recent years, the rush by companies to be seen as environmentally friendly has seen a confusing array of standards, certificates and labels in the marketplace...the launch of this directory is therefore timely. It will help consumers and businesses sort out how credible different eco-labels are, as well as self-claims such as 'biodegradable' and 'eco-friendly'." The directory at www.med.govt.nz/ecolabels provides summary information about each label and links to owner websites.

Homeowners wanted

Homeowners wanting expert advice on sustainability improvements are being encouraged to join the 'HomeSmart Renovation Project' run by research consortium Beacon Pathway. The project aims to renovate 1,000 New Zealand homes to meet Beacon's sustainability performance benchmarks – these standards apply to the whole house, and include energy efficiency, water, waste, and indoor environment quality. Beacon is looking for homeowners who are able to fund the renovations themselves or with support from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority's interest-free loans and grants for energy efficiency. The work would be done over spring and summer 2008 and early 2009. To find out more, visit www.beaconpathway.co.nz

Energy advice extended

Coverage of the Home Energy Advice Centre's free advice line has been expanded from Wellington alone to include surrounding regions Horowhenua, Manawatu and Wairarapa. The pilot service is funded by the Ministry for the Environment and the Wellington City Council. It will be extended into other regions over the coming year. The number is 0800 388 588, and the service is available Monday to Thursday, 10am–4pm.

Kiwis ditch cars

Rising petrol costs are driving more New Zealanders out of their cars and onto the footpath, recent Research New Zealand polling shows. The July survey of 500 people found that 59 percent of New Zealanders were using their cars less, often because of higher fuel costs. A survey earlier this year found that only 32 percent of New Zealanders were using their cars less. Walking was cited as the most common alternative to driving.

Saving towels together

A recent experiment suggests that people tend to take "green" actions when they believe that others are doing so as well. The study tested the impact of cards placed in hotel rooms encouraging guests to re-use their bath towels. Cards that said "Help save the environment" prompted 35 percent of guests to re-use their towels, while messages like "Join your fellow guests in helping to save the environment" persuaded 44 percent to hang onto them. Rooms with a card stating that 75 percent of guests re-used their towels kept them at an even higher rate. The study will be published in the October issue of the *US Journal of Consumer Research*.

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