

Thanks to everyone who took the time to complete our readers' survey last month. It has given us useful insights into how we can fine-tune the publication to better meet your needs.

The responses show that readers are generally happy with *talk sustainability* and its mix of articles. Readers were particularly interested in articles on Ministry for the Environment initiatives, local government initiatives, international trends and community projects, so we'll do our best to reflect this in our editorial selection.

Most of you receive *talk sustainability* electronically, and the responses suggest that those who receive hard copies would not mind substituting with an electronic version. Because of this – and in the interests of saving paper – we plan to dispense with print copies and go fully electronic. We'll let you know when and how that will happen soon.

Kind Regards



Lindsay Gow
 DEPUTY SECRETARY
 MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Love NZ attracts private firms

The success of *Love NZ* recycling bins with local councils is prompting private organisations to join the scheme – at their own expense.



> *Love NZ* bins in action: Raglan and Kaikoura bins.

The Ministry for the Environment programme funds local authorities until 2010 to put 600 bins in place throughout New Zealand.

The government funding is not available to non-government organisations, though many private bodies are asking to join the programme.

"Local councils are the core of the project, but the business interest is a welcome bonus," says senior advisor to the recycling project Polleke Peeters. "They want to get involved because people are starting to recognise the brand, and the bins make recycling areas look tidy and professional."

Polleke says the Holiday Parks Association has signed up to install bins in at least 63 of its parks around the country. The Youth Hostels Association has installed bins in several hostels, and Tourism Holdings Ltd has set up the bins at drop off points for its Maui and Britz campervans.

"Private users have to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with us that they will recycle everything they collect, and use the *Love NZ* brand correctly.

"Seven local councils have installed around 210 bins since the project began a year ago. Another 12 projects are underway covering areas like the Auckland Region, Tauranga City, Queenstown Airport and the West Coast.

"That will take us to over 400 bins. If we keep going at this rate, we should reach our target of 600 bins with no trouble," Polleke says.

The project pays councils the cost of installing, branding and promoting the bins. Councils are being subsidised for the recycling costs.

Polleke says that nationwide marketing this summer through the Automobile Association publications and elsewhere would raise awareness further.

Buy Kiwi, buy green

New Zealanders tend to link Kiwi-made products with environmental friendliness, according to research commissioned by the *Buy Kiwi Made* campaign organisers.

Project Manager Jude Ulrich says the Research International survey showed that a strong sense of loyalty and perceptions of quality drove New Zealand consumers towards buying local product.

“While we didn’t set out to establish or promote a positive environmental attribute as part of the NZ made brand, our surveying clearly shows that people spontaneously and increasingly hold this view,” she says.

In June 2007, 58 per cent of respondents aged 16–74 agreed that “New Zealand-made products are better for the environment as they have not been transported as far as imported products.” Even more agreed with the statement when the survey was repeated a year later.



> Keeping it Kiwi: The Ministry of Economic Development campaign is changing the way we shop.

“Despite the *Buy Kiwi Made* media campaign containing no message around the environmental benefits of buying New Zealand-made goods, the percentage agreeing with the statement increased to two-thirds of all consumers (66 per cent) by June 2008,” Jude says.

The campaign, run by the Ministry of Economic Development (MED), has successfully encouraged more New Zealanders to think about buying Kiwi made. Two recent MED-commissioned surveys showed that almost two thirds of us (59 per cent) make a point of trying to buy New Zealand-made goods.

Home energy efficiency subsidies increased

Additional government funding is now available to help more homeowners invest in warmer, drier, more energy efficient homes.

The Government recently announced improvements to the ENERGYWISE home programmes run by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA). The programmes fund home insulation, clean heating and other energy efficiency measures.

Under the upgraded programmes, all houses built before 1 January 2000 are now eligible for funding – previously, only pre-1978 homes were eligible.

Middle income homeowners can now apply for a bigger home energy efficiency grant covering one third of improvement costs for costs over \$1000, capped at \$1125 (including GST). The grant was

previously 10 per cent of the cost of improvements, up to a maximum of \$560 (including GST).

Alternatively, homeowners can get grants to pay the interest on a loan up to a maximum of \$1400 (including GST).

The ENERGYWISE programme also offers funding for low-income homeowners and landlords with low-income tenants. Low-income applicants still need to be eligible for a Community Services Card to apply for ENERGYWISE funding, although some exceptions now apply.

Improvements to the programmes are separate to the \$1 billion Household Fund for warmer and drier homes announced as part of the Emissions Trading Scheme.

Full information about EECA’s ENERGYWISE funding is at www.energywise.govt.nz



Organics? They're only natural



> Organic delights: Robert Glensor with samples of his bakehouse wares.

For Robert Glensor, organic food production isn't a new 'fad' – it's just a return to the way things always were.

"Our grandfathers didn't use artificial fertilisers, chemical pesticides and herbicides – that's mainly happened in our lifetimes. But quite a few farmers are now converting to organics, and they're discovering that their vet and fertiliser bills are much lower. It's really neat that it's happening for reasons of financial common sense," Robert says.

A part-time farmer himself, Robert has understood the appeal of organics longer than most. His Kapiti Coast bakery has been producing organic breads and related products since 1996.

"Nobody else was doing it then – now we have lots of competition.

"The retailers probably thought I was a bit crazy, but they gave me a chance, and we've grown pretty fast," he says.

Robert's 12-year commitment to sustainable practice has won his Paraoa Bakehouse the supreme award in this year's NZI National Sustainable Business Network (SBN) awards.

SBN Chief Executive Rachel Brown says that Robert is a visionary entrepreneur and sustainability role model: "These products have a positive impact on the health of the consumer and the health of the environment."

Paraoa employs 18 staff and produces 4000 kg of food a week, yet its weekly waste output is only the size of a netball. Unsold food is given to food banks, turned into by-products like breadcrumbs and stuffings, or taken back to Robert's farm and fed to his pigs and hens.

About 90 per cent of his packaging is recyclable, and he's exploring innovative uses for the non-recyclable items such as muesli bags, including planting trees in them.

The bakehouse recently bought an energy-efficient van, and has begun measuring gas and electricity use in order to manage it better. The children of staff are welcome in the workplace – and staff enjoy the 'perk' of free bread.

Paraoa's expanding range of breads, biscuits, baking mixes, mueslis, cakes and other products are made with fresh natural ingredients – "we use potatoes rather than potato flour, and eggs instead of egg powder."

Organics make up about 90 per cent of Paraoa's product range, and Robert is committed to making that 100 per cent. The business is certified and audited each year by organic certification agency BioGro New Zealand.

While the business growth of around 20 per cent annually has been based mainly on organic products, the firm's gluten-free product range is growing even faster.

"There's much higher awareness out there of gluten intolerance. Wheat has had a lot of bad press in the last few years – it's at the very top of the 'dirty dozen' when it comes to pesticide residues. You can't tell me that some people aren't reacting to the pesticides, rather than the wheat," he says.

While he faces more competition now, Robert welcomes new organic producers to the market. "Organics are probably still less than one per cent of the market – it's tiny, but there's plenty of room for growth out there."

↳ Sustaina-briefs

Bike Wise wins

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) is wearing the yellow jersey after succeeding in this year's Gemini Cycle Friendly Awards. The NZTA won the ViaStrada Award for Cycle-Friendly Commitment for its Bike Wise Week in late February. The prize was awarded last month at a ceremony in Christchurch. Now in their sixth year, the Cycle-Friendly Awards recognise efforts to promote cycling in New Zealand. Bike Wise is an NZTA and Ministry of Health initiative. For information on the awards, and on Bike Wise Week – which becomes Bike Wise Month next year – visit www.bikewise.org.nz



Grow Green girls win award

Five Hawke's Bay high school students have taken out top honours at the regional Young Enterprise awards for their biodegradable food packaging business. The five final year Iona College Students (profiled in *talk sustainability* issue 12, September 2008) formed Grow Green after talking with the Hawke's Bay Environment Centre. Their products, including shopping bags made from corn starch, are sold mainly to cafes and schools. They won the Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme Hawke's Bay regional award last month.

Computer crimes

For some Department of Conservation (DOC) workers, leaving your computer or monitor switched on overnight too often means having to shout morning tea. DOC's Waikato Area Office runs a "Power Crime Shout System" that requires anyone who leaves their computer on four times or more within a month to put on morning tea. The scheme was one of several nominated at DOC's inaugural "Caught Being Sustainable" awards in Wellington last month. After reading the 29 nominations from offices around the country, DOC Director-General Al Morrison said he was "amazed" at the Department's efforts to incorporate sustainability into its business practice. Winners included Rory Renwick of the Warkworth Area Office, who installed solar panels on Little Barrier and Tiritiri Matangi Islands, and Kate Squire of the South Westland Area Office, who initiated video conferencing using webcams for recruitment interviews, saving travel and accommodation costs.

Top lodgings

Five accommodation providers have become the first in New Zealand to achieve Qualmark's new Enviro-Gold status, the highest award offered under the accreditation system. The recipients were Wellington's Bolton and Novotel Capital hotels, The Langham Auckland, The Hermitage Mt Cook, and Birds Ferry Lodge on the West Coast. Qualmark Chief Executive Geoff Penrose says the five showed commitment to the highest level in environmental practice. From August this year, all tourism businesses with a Qualmark are being assessed for environmental performance – if they score well, operators are encouraged to apply for Enviro-Gold, Silver or Bronze.



Council saves power

The Christchurch City Council office is saving about \$25,000 a year in power costs through smart use of its own generator. Council energy analyst Yvonne Gilmore says that during peak periods, such as cold winter mornings, electricity distribution network Orion tells them when the city's power load is becoming too high. The council then switches on its Control Peak Demand generator on the roof of the Civic Building. The Council's energy team swings into action by moving around the office tagging equipment and putting up notices advising against non-essential lighting or excessive equipment use.

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