

In this issue we shift focus from central government to local-level activities. We want *talk sustainability* to cover a good selection of the many and varied things New Zealanders are doing to make their lives more sustainable.

Please let us know of any interesting sustainability projects taking place in your community, as we'd like to share them with a wider audience. Please email your tips to susan.bisset@mfe.govt.nz

Don't forget to pass on talk sustainability to other interested readers – to subscribe electronically, please email jane.tier@mfe.govt.nz

Kind regards



Lindsay Gow

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Talk Environment Roadshows

The Talk Environment Roadshow is coming to a town near you.

The Ministry for the Environment's annual roadshow is underway, with 33 meetings scheduled in 19 cities and towns from 17 October to 2 November.

The roadshow enables the public to have a say on the Ministry's work programmes and policy development. The two-hour meetings will cover four topics: adapting to climate change; national guidance under the Resource Management Act; sustainable business; and encouraging household sustainability.

About 1600 people attended last year's roadshow. To view this year's schedule of local government and public meetings, visit <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/talkenvironment/index.html#public>

Creating Eden in Auckland

Gardens in the Auckland region are 'going greener', thanks to the *Create your own Eden* project – and the project may soon be taken nationwide.

Create your own Eden shows people how to reduce the organic waste they send to landfills by encouraging them to compost. Workshops and seminars teach how to make the most of garden and kitchen rubbish by composting and worm farming.

Tony Hart, of North Shore City Council, said the project's success in Auckland may be replicated throughout New Zealand. "It has progressed sufficiently that we are very keen to establish a national programme," he said.

Create your own Eden was started in 2001 by North Shore City Council, and it now involves Manukau and Auckland City Councils and Rodney, Papakura and Franklin District Councils. The Auckland Regional Council, Napier District and Hastings District also have some involvement.

Each council works with local retailers to provide \$20 discount vouchers for composting, bokashi and worm farming equipment. Councils also provide incentives for course participants, such as desk top bins and free course material. North Shore City residents also receive a free composting system.

Mr Hart said the courses were popular, with about 1000 people a year attending *Create your own Eden* workshops and demonstrations throughout Auckland.

"Bookings for workshops are essential, as places fill up quickly," he said. "All of North Shore City's courses are fully subscribed for the rest of the year, as are Auckland and Manukau Cities'."

A *Create your own Eden* website is currently under construction and is due to go live in November, at www.createyourowndeden.org.nz



> Worm tucker: Papakura South schoolchildren with food for the school's large worm farm. The kids are waste monitors trained by *Create your own Eden* tutors.

↘ eDay diverts e-junk from landfills

Nearly 300 tonnes of old computer equipment and mobile phones will be recycled or re-used thanks to New Zealand's first national eDay.

More than 26,000 computer items were dropped off at 12 locations around the country on 29 and 30 September. Most of this would otherwise have ended up in landfills.

National eDay organiser Laurence Zwimpfer, of Computer Access New Zealand (CANZ), said the response was "phenomenal," adding: "I think we've helped raise New Zealand's awareness of the dangers of dumping electronic waste in landfills."

E-waste contains toxic materials such as lead and mercury, and world-wide it is the fastest-growing form of waste being sent to landfills. This poses a potential toxic hazard for people, animals and the environment.

The old computers and mobile phones will either be refurbished and re-used or disassembled and the recyclable materials (such as copper, some plastics, and steel) extracted.

eDay 2007 was supported nationally by CANZ, the Ministry for the Environment, the Ministry of Education, 2020 Communications Trust, Divers Group, Remarkit, TES-AMM, and Dell. It followed a successful Wellington-only pilot supported by Dell in 2006.

Mr Zwimpfer said the organisers were keen to support additional communities who want to get involved next year, and a number of regions had already expressed interest.



> Environment Ministry CEO Hugh Logan, Information Technology Minister David Cunliffe and Computer Access New Zealand Chair Laurence Zwimpfer with some of the electronic waste collected on eDay

↘ New insulation standards begin

The phasing-in of new 'H1' nationwide insulation requirements begins on 31 October, affecting homes in and around the North Island Central Plateau and all of the South Island.

Virtually all new homes in these areas will need double-glazing and better ceiling, wall and floor insulation than is currently required. In a further roll-out, the changes will take effect in the lower North Island from 30 June next year, and in Auckland and further north from 30 September 2008.

The changes are designed to reduce energy use for heating by 30% in new homes. Extensions to existing houses will also require better insulation.

The Department of Building and Housing's Deputy Chief Executive Building Quality, David Kelly, says the changes are part of the biggest improvement to energy efficiency in buildings in 30 years.

"In 1977, it became mandatory to put minimum insulation into new buildings to offset increasing demand for energy and to help make New Zealanders warmer and healthier. Those reasons are still valid. We are reinforcing them by requiring increased levels of insulation.

"There is now also the added impetus of climate change. A third of electricity is currently produced by burning gas, coal and oil, creating greenhouse gases. Improved household energy efficiency helps achieve a more sustainable nation," he said.

↘ UK climate change expert foresees global business change

Market opportunities of at least \$800 billion globally would open up by 2015 if the world responds to climate change on the scale required, according to UK Chief Scientific Adviser Sir David King.

During his Wellington visit on 1 October, at the invitation of the government, Sir David said addressing climate change and ensuring sustainability would require a step-change in the way the world did business.

“Our complex societies have caused significant deterioration of the environment. We need to focus on sustainability in its various guises so that we manage our resources and manage our lifestyle.

“We need to re-gear science, technology, engineering and medicine; we also need to re-gear our institutions and our political systems to help us address these problems,” he said.

Despite the challenges, Sir David said climate change would bring business opportunities. The global market for environmental goods and service was projected to grow from \$548 billion in 2004 to \$800 billion by 2015, he said.



> Sir David King speaking at Te Papa, Wellington

↘ Warm homes trial to be expanded

The Ministry for the Environment’s warm homes retrofits will be expanded into a nationwide programme following three successful local trials.

In the latest trial, run by the Ruapehu District Council, open fires and other solid-fuel burners in 16 low-income Taumaranui homes were replaced with clean-burning alternatives such as pellet and gas burners.

The participants enthused about their improved quality of life with the new heating. They said their new appliances worked more quickly, warmed and dried rooms throughout their homes, improved their families’ health, and saved them money.

The Taumaranui Warm Homes Air Quality Pilot was funded by the Ministry and supported by local heating appliance dealers and manufacturers through the LPG Association. This meant the appliances were provided free to the participants.

The trial followed earlier trials in Tokoroa and Timaru – the three communities are ‘airshed’ areas where high air pollution levels are recorded more often than elsewhere.

Following these trials, a nationwide programme supporting heating retrofits in low-income homes will be run through the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority’s EnergyWise home grants programme. It also involves local government, energy efficiency trusts and sustainability trusts. Details will be announced in due course.

↘ Youth film challenge attracts support

Entries to *The Outlook for Someday*, the sustainability film challenge for young New Zealanders, closed on 21 September. Film-makers aged 9 to 20 entered documentaries, music videos, dramas and animations.

All eligible entries will be viewable shortly on *The Outlook for Someday* website at www.theoutlookforsomeday.net and the Just Focus youth website at www.justfocus.org.nz

Winners will be announced in November, when voting for the overall winning film will also begin. The winning films will be screened on TVNZ 6, the digital channel launched recently by TVNZ on Freeview. They will also be available from December as streaming video from the government’s household sustainability web portal at www.sustainability.govt.nz



↳ Sustaina-briefs

Energy Strategy launched

The government's Energy Strategy, focused on encouraging clean, renewable, sustainable energy generation, was launched on 11 October. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy was also launched at the same time. This will provide government funding for up to 180,000 household insulation, clean heat or solar hot water upgrades over the next eight years. The strategy also includes energy efficiency measures for business and transport, including an objective of halving per-capita transport emissions by 2040 through using renewable fuels, increasing vehicle efficiency, more public transport, and promotion of walking and cycling.

Sustainable businesses square off

Twenty-eight diverse businesses and not-for-profit organisations from around New Zealand will seek top honours at the NZI National Sustainable Business Awards in Auckland on 25 October. The national finalists won awards in regional events involving about 150 entrants. Rachel Brown, Chief Executive of the Sustainable Business Network, said the awards celebrated organisations that had made outstanding progress towards sustainability and were examples for others to follow. This year's finalists include: Design Mobel, Dulux, Opus International Consultants, Urgent Couriers, Beesonline, AgriSea NZ, Catalyst R&D, Squiz, The Mussel Inn, YHA Wellington City, James St School, Waimarie Community House, Waitakere Enterprise, Contact Energy, Intalok Solid Timber Homes, John Walker Printers, Sinclair Knight Merz, Starfish, Aotea Breweries, Kingswood Skis, State of Grace, Fumes TV, 3r, Advanced Traffic Systems, Fulton Hogan, Greenspace, Russel Devlin Architects and Windflow Technology Ltd.

Manukau a liveable city finalist

Manukau City has made the finals of the 2007 International Liveable Community Awards taking place in Westminster, London in November. Manukau is a finalist in the Whole City (population 200,000 to 750,000) section, as well as the Environmentally Sustainable Project awards, with its entry *Flat Bush New Town*. The awards recognise environmental management and the creation of liveable communities. Manukau City is in great company – the other five finalists in its population category are Lyon, France; Malmö, Sweden; Toledo, USA; Niagara, Canada; and Edogawa, Japan.



Kaikoura trials solar street lights

A solar-powered street light is being trialled in Kaikoura, with another trial light to be installed soon. Kaikoura District Council Environmental Officer Nicole Sherriff said the year-long trial would test operating features like battery capacity and light intensity. She said the lights, provided by Solar Bright, offered potential for greater sustainability, given that street lighting made up 38% of emissions associated with the council's activities. Other benefits included being able to install lighting without digging cabling trenches, or having to connect remote areas to existing networks.

Conference on transport CO₂ emissions

Leading international and New Zealand commentators will take part in the 'Transport in a Carbon Constrained World' conference in Wellington on 14 November. Conference topics include transport's contribution to New Zealand's emissions profile and options for behavioural change. Participants include Dr Lee Schipper of The World Resources Institute for Sustainable Transport; and Professor Phil Goodwin, Professor of Transport Policy at the University of West England (both by video link). To register, please contact barbara.gillespie@vuw.ac.nz

IRD wins again in Govt³ awards

For the second year running, the Inland Revenue Department was a big winner in the Govt³ awards, which recognise good sustainable practice in government. The IRD won the recycling/waste minimisation award for reducing by 76,000 kg the amount of waste it sent to landfill over the past year. It also won the large agency award for engaging staff in Govt³. ACC and the Ministry for Research, Science and Technology each won two award categories as well – MORST won the leadership of Govt³ award for its 'Govt³ Ninjas' work on starting a recycling system and a new energy policy. Housing New Zealand and the Department of Corrections won the remaining categories. Fifty agencies are now Govt³ programme members.

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