

New research commissioned by the Ministry for the Environment shows that the majority of New Zealanders are taking steps to protect the environment.

Three-quarters of the 1000 respondents said they are personally doing 'a lot' (9 per cent) or 'a reasonable amount' (63 per cent) to help the environment. Of the actions the survey asked about, some of the most common were recycling, using eco-bulbs, and turning off the lights when they are not being used. Almost all respondents (95 per cent) rated the environment as a reason for the choices they make – and for a quarter, it's the most important factor in their choices.

That concern extends beyond ordinary citizens – our businesses are also taking sustainable steps. A recent study by Waikato University suggests that business people are motivated by values, not dollars, when they go green.

A major environmental stocktake released recently, *Environment New Zealand 2007*, found that New Zealanders' lifestyles are having a greater impact on the environment now than they did a decade ago. While good progress is being made in some areas like waste management and air quality, we need to make better progress in transport, water quality, and protection of our native species.

Kind Regards



Lindsay Gow  
DEPUTY SECRETARY  
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## NZ firms go green for morals, not money

Businesses do things for business reasons. The market drives corporate decision-making – other imperatives don't matter.

Such statements are 'no-brainers' – or are they?

When it comes to sustainability, it seems New Zealand businesses are making decisions based on morality rather than the market.

The latest round of a major multi-year research project found that our firms tended to adopt environmentally sustainable practices because of the personal values and beliefs of managers, rather than commercial pressures.

The Waikato University Management School report's co-author, Dr Eva Collins, describes the finding as surprising and counter-intuitive – and she wants to know what's behind it.

"Our intuition was that companies would adopt sustainability because of demands from customers or shareholders. In fact, they haven't felt that pressure. Instead, it's their own values and beliefs that drive it.

"That's the piece of the research that I'm really interested in exploring further in the follow-up interviews we're doing this year," Dr Collins says.

The report, *Sustainability Practices of New Zealand Businesses in 2006*, found that 10 per cent more businesses adopted sustainable practices in 2006 than in 2003. Recycling was the most common new practice adopted, although there was also an increase in more fundamental process changes such as improving energy efficiency.

Dr Collins says New Zealanders had an ingrained "tidy Kiwi" ethic, but could be complacent about turning this into action – though the recent high profile of environmental sustainability had woken people up.

"As the general awareness level has risen, people have started asking themselves 'what are we doing?'"

The survey showed that larger businesses tended to make more efforts to be sustainable, because they had the resources to make changes more easily. Even so, small businesses had the biggest increase in sustainability uptake over the period.

To view the full report, visit  
> [www.management.ac.nz/sustainabilityreport](http://www.management.ac.nz/sustainabilityreport)

## Six months' rubbish – in one bag

Last July, Ralph and Ali Hogan decided to cut down the rubbish they send to landfill. Six months on, they still haven't filled a single council rubbish bag.

Ralph (pictured) says that through careful shopping and lots of recycling and composting, they have virtually eliminated their landfill rubbish.

So how did they do it? "It all starts at the grocery store," says Ralph. "We try to choose items that come in paper, glass, tin, or number 1 or 2 plastic.

"We buy products in bulk when possible to avoid temporary packaging. Whenever we do not find a product in a recyclable container, we ask customer service for assistance. Sometimes we just go without."

Non-recyclable plastic containers are used for refrigerator storage or organising bins, Ralph says. They shop with re-usable grocery bags – "if we find ourselves buying something when we don't have our bags, we decline plastic bags if we can manage to get our purchases without."

Each week Ralph and Ali collect 10 litres of vegetable scraps in their compost pail, deposited along with grass clippings at a community garden compost pile in Porirua. "Done properly, there is not a problem with smell or critters. Layering is the key...turn from time to time for air. It is an aerobic process."



Poly Palace in Porirua also recycles Styrofoam packaging from electronics and whitewear, grinding it up and turning it into floor insulation and other products. Soon they hope to be able to take polystyrene food trays from meats, chicken, fish and takeaways.

"As difficult as it is, we try not to buy rubbish. If it costs twice as much but lasts 10 times longer, we come out way ahead and so does the environment," says Ralph.

## New Zealanders 'deeply concerned' about environment – survey

Most New Zealanders think we are not all doing enough to protect the environment, according to a major new survey released this month.

The Research New Zealand survey shows 53 per cent of New Zealanders were deeply concerned that not enough was being done, while only 6 per cent felt that looking after the environment was not a high priority.

The survey, commissioned by the Ministry for the Environment, asked 1000 New Zealanders what sustainable actions they were taking on a regular basis. It looked primarily at the areas of heating and general energy use, rubbish and waste, water use, purchasing of groceries and other items, and transportation.

Recycling was the most popular action, with 92 per cent of respondents saying they recycled regularly out of habit. Other common actions included shopping for eco-friendly goods (66 per cent), using eco-bulbs (67 per cent), and composting (54 per cent).

Of the five main areas examined, New Zealanders said they were doing the most to be sustainable in the area of heating and general energy use, and the least in the area of transportation.

Three-quarters of respondents claimed they personally did 'a lot' or 'a reasonable amount' to help the environment and that the environment was 'one of a number of reasons' for the choices and actions they made.

While the majority of respondents claimed to be 'somewhat informed' about the things they could do to help the environment (70 per cent), most respondents (63 per cent) wanted more information about what they could do, with another 28 per cent 'actively looking for more information'.

The full research can be seen at

> [www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/sus-dev/household-sustainability-benchmark-survey-feb08/index.html](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/sus-dev/household-sustainability-benchmark-survey-feb08/index.html)

## Environment reporting gears up

Nationwide environmental reporting is to become more frequent, aiding planners and policy-makers around the country.

The recent release of *Environment New Zealand 2007* (ENZ07) attracted much attention, perhaps because of its novelty – the last major stocktake was done 10 years ago. But the next full report will be much sooner, in five years' time, and there will be annual updates of some key indicators including air and water quality, energy, and transport.

The Ministry for the Environment's environmental reporting manager, Justine Daw, says high-quality, frequent national-level reports were essential to good environmental policy-making.

"Regional councils and other government agencies measure, and we compile and interpret at the national level," she says. "That's important so we can see the big trends emerging."

"For example, it's well known that the east coast experiences water shortages because it's relatively dry, but it's not as well known that some other regions are coming under similar pressures as demand for water increases. The report shows that demand has increased in almost every region of the country in recent years, and those increases are biggest in areas that are already under pressure."

Ongoing annual reporting of 80 environmental indicators will help build a clearer picture of emerging trends, based on a body of hard facts, Justine says.

"We want to work more closely with the people who do the measuring, such as regional councils. We want to get a forum going so we can better sequence and target our reporting."

ENZ07 also revealed that households were the biggest energy users in New Zealand, emphasising the importance of household-level steps towards sustainability.



"People ask 'what can I do,' but there is plenty they can do – everyone's small steps and actions can add up to big savings," Justine says.

To view the report visit  
> [www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/ser/enz07-dec07/index.html](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/ser/enz07-dec07/index.html)

To order a copy of the report, or *Environment New Zealand 2007 – Summary*, email  
> [publications@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:publications@mfe.govt.nz)

## ENZ07 – main findings:

- > We are consuming more goods and services, and our 'ecological footprint' has grown with this.
- > We own more cars, they are getting older and larger, and we drive them further. We are also using more public transport.
- > We are using more energy, with proportionately more coming from fossil fuels. But our energy needs are not rising as fast as the economy is growing.
- > Our waste management has improved – less waste now goes to landfill, though we could reduce this more.
- > Air quality is improving or has stabilised in most locations.
- > Greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase, and rates of forest replanting or new planting have fallen.
- > Ozone levels over New Zealand have stabilised.
- > Agricultural land use has intensified, leading to increased fertiliser and water use and higher greenhouse gas emissions.
- > Soils used for agriculture and horticulture are generally in poorer condition than other land uses.
- > Freshwater is clean and plentiful, though demand is increasing.
- > Water quality is generally poorest in urban areas, followed by farming areas. Nutrient levels in rivers have risen on average.
- > There is less fishing under the Quota Management System as allowable catches have reduced for some species.
- > Bacterial levels at monitored beaches appear to be improving.
- > By international standards, a high proportion of our land and sea is under conservation protection.
- > Seven monitored native bird and plant species have decreased in range. Some native species have improved their threat status, while others have worsened.

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### Community clean-up

Housing New Zealand's New Plymouth team recently pulled off a successful clean-up day in the suburb of Marfell.

Tenancy manager Raewyn Vooght said stacks of rubbish were collected by residents, councillors and staff. "Keeping in with the national Keep New Zealand Beautiful campaign, we decided to get the community involved in cleaning up the streets, parks, council reserves and Housing New Zealand properties," says Raewyn.

Housing New Zealand staff members joined with members of the Marfell Cultural Centre, the New Plymouth District Council and local children and adults to clean up the community.

Everyone was given a rubbish bag and gloves and asked to collect as much rubbish as they could. Large skip bins were provided for all the rubbish, and recycling bins for all the plastic, cardboard and tins.

"The main message we wanted to get out to the community was to recycle every week to reduce the amount of rubbish they have."



> **Mucking in:** Housing manager Wayne Manning sifts through the pile



### World Environment Day

Planning for New Zealand's hosting of World Environment Day 2008 on 5 June is well underway. UN Environment Programme Executive Director Achim Steiner is a confirmed attendee, and other international VIPs and journalists are expected. The Ministry for the Environment is making limited and contestable funding available for councils, business, communities, sports teams and schools to organise and participate in regional and local events. This year is the first time that New Zealand will host World Environment Day since its establishment in 1972. More information on the event and how to become involved can be found at

> [www.world.environment.govt.nz](http://www.world.environment.govt.nz)

### Energy efficiency campaign launched

A new information programme aiming to help New Zealanders choose how to become more energy-efficient was launched by Environment Minister Trevor Mallard on 29 January, at a screening of 'The 11th Hour' movie in Wellington. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority's ENERGYWISE™ information campaign will include television, press and web-based advertising, information sheets offering practical advice, and support for the latest 'Mitre 10 Dream Home' television series. The series features two young families renovating old homes to include sustainable features like insulation, energy efficient heating and water efficiency.

### Christchurch Airport carbon neutral

Christchurch International Airport has gone carbon neutral, making it only the second airport company in the world to do so after Stockholm's LVF. Chief Executive Rene Bakx said the airport had received a carboNZero certificate from Landcare Research after measuring its emissions and developing a plan to reduce them and offset any remainder. He said the plan included energy efficiency, recycling, planting different grasses, using ground water to cool the terminal, and converting heating systems from diesel to LPG.

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