

As this issue shows, New Zealand is leading the world in aspects of the sustainability challenge.

Christchurch couple, Karen and Karl Upston, are set to start the world's first composting plant that will deal with the vexed problem of nappy disposal.

Landcare Research's carboNZero greenhouse gas emissions measurement programme has been picked up by a major UK management supply services company, after being rated among the two best schemes in the world by Oxford University.

Many other innovative Kiwi business approaches to sustainability were discussed at the well-attended 'Living Here' Sustainable Partnerships Forum in Christchurch last month.

Kind Regards



Lindsay Gow

DEPUTY SECRETARY
MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



> **Rubbish to riches:** Karen Upston with compost from the nappy composting plant.

Envirocomp is owned by Karen and her husband Karl Upston. The Rangiora couple are setting up the service following a successful trial last year.

The nappy composting process uses HotRot technology developed by R5 Solutions in Christchurch. Green waste is added to the nappies as a bulking agent. The plastic components of the nappies (about 11–13 per cent) are screened out, with the remaining components, comprising mostly of Super-Absorbent Polymer (SAP), turned into a rich compost.

"It's a fantastic moisture and nutrient-rich compost. We will put it back into the community, to use on public gardens and for non-profit organisations to sell for fund-raising," she said. "We are looking at ways of recycling the plastic components as well."

Envirocomp will pick up used nappies from Christchurch and North Canterbury customers in biodegradable bags, or in wheelie bins from rest homes and pre-schools.

Karen says the idea of the trial arose after running a cloth and disposable nappy sales business from her home. "I got into constant debates about what's better or worse for the environment. The Council's cloth nappy subsidy scheme only affects 4 per cent of our population. As 96 per cent of nappy changes in New Zealand are with disposable nappies, I thought – what about something that will reduce the quantity of nappies going to landfill?"

For more information on the service, check:

> www.envirocomp.co.nz

Nappy composter a world first

The world's first nappy composting plant will start up near Christchurch later this year – and its owners are already thinking about going nationwide and beyond.

"This is a world first as far as we know – we know of a nappy processing plant in Europe, but not nappy composting," says Envirocomp Ltd co-owner Karen Upston.

"After the first plant is up and running, we want to roll this out nationally. We have had enquiries about it worldwide, from places like the UK, Japan, Ireland, the United States, Canada and Australia."

Envirocomp's plant will initially process 2.5 tonnes of nappies, sanitary and incontinence products daily – that's about 15,000 nappies. The plant will have the capacity to quadruple processing to 10 tonnes daily.

↳ 'Living Here' Sustainable Partnerships Forum a success

A sustainability "meeting of minds" held in Christchurch recently helped public and private sector organisations learn from each other.

The Ministry for the Environment-sponsored 'Living Here' forum on 2 April was organised by Environment Canterbury with support from the Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce, Christchurch City Council and the Sustainable Business Network. Around 165 representatives attended from local businesses, education institutes and community organisations.

Event Manager Michaela Rees said the forum was "for people on the edge of the sustainability circle looking for a way in, and to showcase those who are already doing great things".

The forum featured guest speakers from Project Lyttelton, ecostore, local schools and Melissa Clarke-Reynolds, spokesperson for Al Gore. It also included workshops from individual businesses, such as Cyclops Yoghurt and Tait Electronics, on sustainability within their organisations.

One session was run by New Zealand-based Kingswood Skis, the world's first certified carbon neutral ski manufacturer. Based in Lyttelton, the company has pioneered the use of sustainable bamboo for ski cores. Last year it won the 2007 Southern Get Sustainable Challenge Emerging Business Award.

Kingswood Skis has located its factory within walking distance of the owner's home, and supports local energy initiatives and material suppliers. It also sponsors a ride-sharing website snowpool.org.nz which is aimed to help people organise car pooling to ski fields around New Zealand.

Another workshop was run by Energy Mad, a company formed in 2004 when two Cantabrians threw in their jobs as engineers to "save the world one eco-bulb at a time." Chris Mardon and Tom Mackenzie's company has grown to 19 employees and has carried out 32 'Ecobulb projects'. They also piloted in 2007 the 'EcoSmartHome' energy assessment project in North Canterbury.

Sessions were also held by organisations that help other businesses become more sustainable, such as carbonZero, The Natural Step, and Target Sustainability. One such business service is GreenFleet, a programme developed by the Sustainable Business Network to help reduce vehicle fleet impacts. It helps companies reduce their carbon footprint in three practical steps: becoming transport-efficient; supporting alternative fuels and vehicles; and offsetting vehicle fleet impacts.



> Forum participants discuss sustainable partnerships.

↘ The carboNZero certification scheme goes global

Landcare Research's carboNZero greenhouse gas certification scheme is making waves overseas, with a major partnership signed and possibly more in the pipeline.

The Crown Research Institute recently announced a deal with British-based Achilles Information Ltd, a leading provider of supplier management services for major buyer groups like utilities and the rail sector. Landcare Business Manager Mike Tournier said Achilles had engaged Oxford University to research the strengths and weaknesses of greenhouse gas measurement schemes world-wide. The carboNZero programme emerged as one of the top two, he said.

"The deal would make the carboNZero scheme the preferred emissions measurement and reduction scheme for Achilles' 30,000 clients in 23 countries. It gives us international recognition as a leading provider of a greenhouse gas certification scheme," Mr Tournier said. "It vastly expands our current client base, and we are trying to secure two or three more of those opportunities over the next year."

The carboNZero programme was launched in 2001 and provides tools enabling organisations to accurately measure their carbon emissions, as well as reduction planning and tracking performance improvement. Its list of certified



companies includes big names like Christchurch International Airport Limited, Contact Energy, Meridian Energy, the InterCity Group, and TradeMe. Around 100 New Zealand companies are currently seeking carboNZero certification.

Mr Tournier said the scheme's measurement step complied with the two world-leading standards, the GHG Protocol and the ISO 14064-1 standard, as well as meeting and exceeding international best practices. "Irrespective of where you are, these will stand up. There is a real need for government and organisations to be able to demonstrate their carbon credentials. It won't be too long before claims about carbon neutrality start to be seriously scrutinised.

"carboNZero certification is a strategic business tool, and it's here to support 'New Zealand Inc'. It's an example of New Zealand punching above its weight."

↘ New eco advice booklet proving popular

A new booklet offering practical information on sustainable steps in the home is proving popular.

The Ministry for the Environment-produced booklet, *25 Easy Steps Towards Sustainability* had over 600 visitors to its webpage in the first week on sustainability.govt.nz.

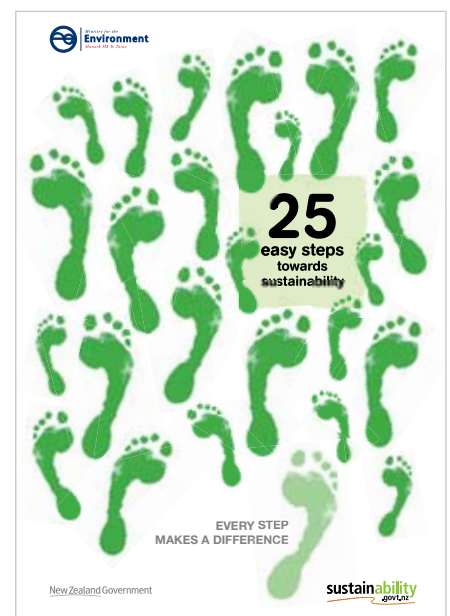
Launching the booklet, Environment Minister Trevor Mallard said it would help the 91 per cent of New Zealanders who said they wanted to know more about how they could protect the environment.

"We know the majority of New Zealanders say they would like to do more to help the environment, but don't know where to go for practical information on the things they could do," Trevor Mallard said.

The booklet makes it easier for New Zealanders to create 'Next Step' Plans as part of the Sustainability Challenge on sustainability.govt.nz. It provides information in an accessible and engaging way, and gives them ideas for their action plans.

It complements existing information provided on sustainability.govt.nz, covering five topics – rubbish, water, energy, building, and transport. It also features case studies of Kiwis who have already benefited by taking some of these steps.

To use as little paper as possible, the booklet is available electronically to download, read onscreen, and share with friends. It can be downloaded free from www.sustainability.govt.nz/takeastep



↳ Sustaina-briefs

Event Recycling

Nelson City's Recycling at Events programme has proved popular at the city's many summer outdoor activities. The council provides event organisers with equipment they can use to encourage patrons to recycle, including an easy to use bin system (which requires less supervision to avoid contamination), signs, high-visibility jackets and a recycling manual. The council also subsidises the cost of taking the waste off to be recycled. Events that used the programme included The Cusp, the Festival of Opportunities, the Salmonella Dub concert, the Beer Fest, the Relay for Life, and the Sealord Opera in the Park. Nelson City's Environmental Coordinator, Karen Lee, says any event organiser can pick up a recycling package. "Many event-goers have commented on how great it is to see recycling in action – it all contributes towards a positive event for all concerned."



> **Rainy-day recycling:** Relay for Life organiser Jenni Chambers gets into the recycling spirit, kitted out in a day-glo "Recycling Team" vest.

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Energy Advice

Wellington consumers can now get free expert advice through a new 0800 phone line on making their homes warmer, drier and more energy-efficient. More than 100 people have used the energy advice line, run by the Wellington community-based Sustainability Trust, since it started on 31 March. Energy advisor Sarah Free said calls had come in from around the country, and had led to four home visits and distribution of several information packs. "Generally, people are calling because they feel their house is cold. We can explain how much insulation they need and the best heating options for them," she said. Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority Chief Executive Mike Underhill welcomed the service, which can be called 10am–4pm Monday to Thursday on 0800 388 588.

Fuel economy labelling

A new labelling scheme has been launched to help car buyers choose fuel-efficient vehicles. From 7 April, the new fuel economy labels have been on display on cars for sale in car yards or on the internet. The label shows a star rating similar to fridges and other appliances, and it estimates annual fuel costs based on average fuel prices and distance travelled. The scheme will give New Zealand car buyers the power to make smarter choices, by helping them identify suitable vehicles that use less fuel. The scheme is operated by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority.

New standards for hot water systems

All new domestic hot water systems will need to meet more stringent energy efficiency standards from December 2008 under new Building Code requirements. Most homeowners with average-sized homes will be able to comply by installing water efficient showerheads. Other options include solar water heating; instantaneous gas hot water and shower drain heat recovery units. Homeowners will be able to choose from a variety of options, as no single option will be compulsory.

Correction

The April issue of *talk sustainability* incorrectly named the Dean of Christchurch as The Very Revd Peter Buck. This should have been The Very Revd Peter Beck. We apologise for the mistake.

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