



March 2008 Newsletter (archived copy) www.sustainableliving.org.nz

Ministry funds further development of Sustainable Living Programme

The Sustainable Living Programme and the Sustainability Trust's Ecokiwi scheme (see link below) are the two community-based national initiatives that tendered successfully for Ministry for the Environment funding in 2007-8 to help people at home take their next steps to be more sustainable.

This funding will help both initiatives to improve working methods, increase exposure and expand their reach.

Marlborough District Council's education officer Annie McDonald, manager of the Sustainable Living Programme since its start-up in 2001 says interest in the programme has grown significantly and that the extra funding will really make a difference to its development and the extra number of people it can reach. We are producing promotional materials, updating course content and facilitator guides, and investigating our impact on participants.

The Sustainable Living Programme has grown by reputation, because it provides opportunities for participants to take action in an informative and fun way. "We have seen many people change the way they have done things, for the better of the environment and their families", says Annie.

Eco Kiwi's networking experiment

The Sustainability Trust's new Ecokiwi scheme will train and support local community groups to engage members of their community in sustainable living. This experimental scheme aims to tap into community organisations such as Lions groups, Rotary, health clinics, marae, churches, community centres, childcare centres etc, to engage as many people as possible to take small steps for a more sustainable lifestyle. We expect that some Sustainable Living course participants may want to follow up by becoming EcoKiwi facilitators in their local community, and some EcoKiwi participants, having taken a first step, may become interested in attending the Sustainable Living course - we hope that these two approaches can be complementary and the organisers have agreed to share experiences towards achieving this.

What's your next step? Both the Ecokiwi scheme and the Sustainable Living Programme complement the Ministry for the environment's new sustainability website, www.sustainability.govt.nz and its Sustainability Challenge which invites New Zealanders to commit to their next steps to being more sustainable. The website

has links to information to help you select – and complete – your next steps, including using our resources or courses.

Case study: The latest edition of *'Talk Sustainability'* newsletter from Ministry for the Environment includes this case study featuring a Sustainable Living course participant, from Hawkes Bay:

Keryn kicks the water waste habit



Water-smart Keryn Duff re-uses even the water from her hotties!

Busy mother-of-three Keryn Duff never thought much about her family's water use. But thanks to a Sustainable Living course, she now understands the easy steps she can take to use water well.

"For example, I now know that my top-loading washing machine uses more than 150 litres per load, whereas some front loaders only use about 60," she says. "I am looking at replacing mine this year and have already started investigating different brands.

"I'm always telling the kids to 'turn that tap off!' when they're cleaning their teeth or washing their hands, and they're starting to get into the new habit. I am careful about filling up the kettle only as much as I need, which saves power too."

Keryn's one-term evening course in Havelock North was run by Environment Centre Hawke's Bay, with support from Hawke's Bay Regional Council. Similar courses, coordinated by Sustainable Living New Zealand and supported by the Ministry for the Environment, are run in 20 other centres. As well as water use, they cover energy efficiency, waste reduction, shopping tips, travel, vegetable gardening and eco-building.

Keryn has introduced shorter showers for the family, and she collects cold water from the shower in a bucket, before it runs hot, for later re-use in the garden.

"I was surprised how much water is collected that would otherwise be wasted. It's nearly a whole bucket each time. We also wash the car on the grass instead of the

driveway, with a bucket and sponge instead of a hose. That way we protect the storm-drains and streams from detergent.

"I am also more careful about the products we use. I use lemon juice to soak the cloths instead of bleach, I buy eco-friendly cleaning products, and unbleached toilet paper. I'm sure this will help keep my septic tank in better order.

"For the future I am looking at recycling systems for grey water – I was not aware of them before, but they seem such a great idea – and also at getting a tank installed to collect rainwater off our new shed roof."

Course details are available at www.sustainableliving.org.nz

(Reproduced from MFE *Talk Sustainability* newsletter Jan 2008, page 3)

'Eco-My-Flat' Competition announced for students

The inaugural Eco-My-Flat competition has 34 University of Canterbury student flats vying to be recognised as the most eco-friendly.

The Eco-My-Flat competition will run throughout March 2008 and each week focus on a different theme - energy, waste, transport and shopping. Members of the participating flats will submit blog entries detailing their progress in each category. Each week's results will be combined with the findings of two audit visits to determine the winning flat.

Twenty of the 34 flats have been selected to receive extra help, including weekly workshops using Sustainable Living materials, and an Eco-My-Flat pack including eco-friendly soap and laundry powder, socks and beanies, vegetable and herb seeds - to see if and how the extra support makes a difference.

At the end of the four week period, prizes will be awarded for each of the four competition themes, as well as the most creative and innovative solutions, the most improved flat and the most 'eco' flat.

The Eco-My-Flat competition is part of a wider programme promoting sustainability at the University of Canterbury. UC Sustainability Advocate Dr Kate Hewson says such initiatives are a great way of engaging with students. "I hope that the students involved in the competition will see how this big issue called sustainability relates to them personally and how they can pretty easily start to do something about it."

UCSA President Michael Goldstein is enthusiastic about the competition. "I think Eco-My-Flat is a great idea and I see potential for this competition to go nationwide. This is a way for the student community to learn about sustainability, whilst having fun and winning prizes at the same time," he says.

Environment New Zealand Report - NZ's footprint is still growing

"Achieving a sustainable New Zealand is the responsibility of all New Zealanders," Local Government New Zealand President Basil Morrison said on 31 January after the release of the Ministry for the Environment's 2007 Environment New Zealand Report.

"This report includes information to enable better decision-making and provides a call to action for everyone to tackle the issue of sustainability with greater urgency.

"A key finding of the report is that the rate of consumption of goods and services by New Zealand households continues to grow, as our population increases and our economy grows.

"The report shows households make a bigger impact on our ecological footprint than people realise. As individuals we can turn this around by making wise choices about what we consume, paying attention to the sustainability of these products and services, and in the case of tangible waste, how we dispose of it.

"Local Government New Zealand and councils have been working with industry to address household waste and consumption through initiatives like recycling and the Packaging Accord, which aims to reduce the proportion of packaging in our total waste. Councils also work with their communities on issues like climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and with landowners on protecting biodiversity on private land."

Mr Morrison said that councils will continue existing sustainability programmes and will work closely with central government, industry and communities to respond to the report's findings.

23 councils are already using the Sustainable Living Programme as part of their 'tool kit' on sustainability, and more are getting involved for 2008-9.

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