



Welcome to the August September edition of the SOC newsletter for 2008. In this edition we have interviews with local politicians Rik Tindall, and Yani Johansen, and a report on a recent visit by Dr Mathis Wackernagel the developer of the 'Ecological Footprint' concept. There is also a report on some Cantabrian winners in the Ministry for the Environment's Green Ribbon awards. As per normal there are also listings of recent

Committee activities, and of upcoming events. In regard to the latter a more frequent and comprehensive notice of events service is now available from the New Zealand Association for Environmental Education <http://www.environment.org.nz/>. Given this SOC will be reviewing whether it continues to provide this information with this newsletter. Articles are again categorised as noted below so you can find the issues that most interest you. Also if you do have any ideas for articles, notices about what groups you are involved in are up to, or any other sustainability related contributions you'd like to make (I still haven't been sent any jokes you humourless lot) then I'd be very happy to hear from you at ianandmarlys@actrix.co.nz.
Ian Burn Newsletter Editor

Personal (and domestic)

Local (neighbourhood level)

Town and Around (city and region wide)

National

Global

Consumption

Waste Production

Biodiversity

All of the above and/or anything else to do with sustainability

AB Rik Tindall, Canterbury Regional Councillor

Rik Tindall is a first term Councillor on the Canterbury Regional Council (CRC), having won one of the two seats available in Christchurch East in 2007.



In the election of that year he stood on the Save Our Water ticket and was successful on that ticket along with David Sutherland. He is one of 14 Councillors on this body. Rik sees

sustainability as 'a human term for living in the human environment on a permanent basis' and that to do this 'there needs to be room for other beings as well as humans'. He is a strong supporter of the work of SOC, particularly its involvement with the Transition Communities movement. He sees the focus of this movement on decentralisation and localisation

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A Yani Johanson Christchurch City Councillor

SOC committee member Jocelyn Papprell recently caught up with Yani Johanson, a Christchurch City councillor for the Hagley-Ferrymead ward, over a cuppa at C1 to discuss with him his perception of sustainability and how the council was engaging with the concept and process.



After attending the recent Hilary Institute symposium on World Environment Day the imperatives for sustainability were brought home for this 33 year-old councillor during the speech by the President of Kiribati where he told of the human impact of climate change. Yani says that sustainability is an imprecise concept – it can mean different things to different people - but for

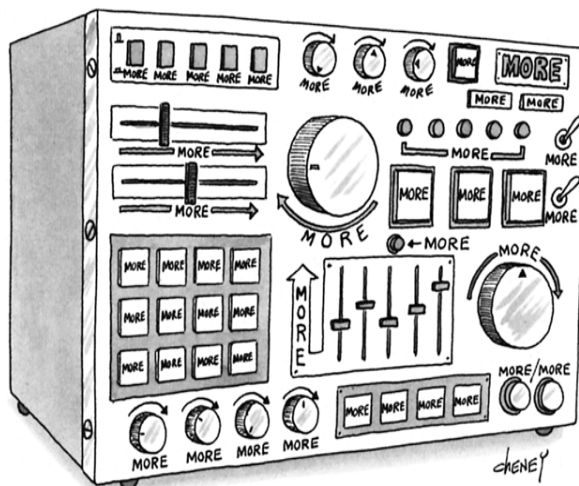
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AB Rik Tindall, Canterbury Regional Councillor continued

as being key to the achievement of a number of sustainability objectives.

He notes that the CRC has responsibility for air quality, waterways and land issues at a regional level and it works with (but is also occasionally in conflict with) the City and District Councils in the area, on these matters. Rik sees the CRC (otherwise known as Environment Canterbury or ECAN) as having lots of plans and good objectives in regard to achieving sustainability, that there is a lot of good institutional knowledge in the organisation, and that a lot of quality monitoring of the environment is completed.

He thinks however that the organisation often struggles to achieve many of its sustainability goals as a result of the so called 'real world' economic pressures it finds itself facing. This results in the organisation ending up working towards two different sets of objectives, which are often in conflict with each other. The first set of objectives being those already noted around air and water quality, biodiversity, land issues and other environmental sustainability objectives. The second set of objectives being around facilitating what is seen as economic development or what is sometimes referred to as 'sustainable economic growth'.



Rik sees the aspects of the organisation's work that contribute to the environmental sustainability objectives as being expressed in the CRCs branding of itself as Environment Canterbury or ECAN. This work includes the Clean Heat Project, which for those meeting the criteria provides interest free loans for people seeking to replace open fires or solid fuel burners with clean heat appliances and home insulation. He notes also the work that the organisation does with the Christchurch City Council on matters such as stormwater run off into the Avon and Heathcote and the impacts of this particularly on the estuary. ECAN also has funding available for environmental enhancement, as well as seeking to promote good resource management through an annual awards process. It also undertakes a wide range of activity in regard to the measurement of water and air quality. ECAN's work similarly contributes to environmental sustainability through the implementation of its biodiversity strategy, as well as its involvement in pest management throughout the region.

ECAN is also involved in a range of educational and promotional initiatives in regard to environmental sustainability. For example, through supporting the 'Step Up Canterbury' event on World Environment Day, and through 'Living Here', its regular publication distributed to all households in the area.

Rik also sees however that the CRC plays a role in facilitating 'economic development' in the area. This includes the work that it is currently involved with as part of the Mayoral Forum. This body consists of the Mayors of each of the City and District Councils in Canterbury, the Chair of the CRC and the chief executives of each these organisations. This forum is currently lobbying for regional investment from central government for more roading, and for water storage to enable

more intensive farming. Rik considers that the outcomes being sought from this investment are contrary to the achievement of sustainability.

In regard to roading he is concerned that with Peak Oil on the horizon that there won't be sufficient traffic in the near future to justify such expenditure, and that this investment does little to further the development of public and human powered transport necessary to achieve sustainability outcomes. He is concerned that the benefits from more roading will flow mostly to large businesses, in terms of providing infrastructure which supports their profitability, rather than bringing about improvement in the quality of life of ordinary people.

Rik similarly has concerns about investment in water storage. Plans for this include both those being forwarded currently by the Central Plains Water scheme, and the Canterbury Strategic Water Study (for more information see: <http://www.ecan.govt.nz/Our+Environment/Water/PlansandReports/StrategicWaterStudy.htm>). This latter study focuses on up to 12 schemes similar in size to the Central Plains Water proposal, and will advance them through the new Canterbury Water Management Strategy (see: <http://www.canterburywater.org.nz>). He believes such schemes to be both environmentally hazardous in terms of the threats they pose to the quality of Canterbury drinking, aquifer and surface water, and socially inequitable in that they will mainly benefit large agribusiness rather than the average Cantabrian.

For Rik therefore, the major question is, 'Does the CRC want to focus on its ECAN role and be a promoter of true environmental sustainability, or does it want to be a promoter of economic development in the area and of so called 'sustainable economic growth?'.

A Yani Johansen Christchurch City Councillor continued

him it means understanding the human component; how we impact on the environment and conversely how it impacts on us. He believes that at all levels of consciousness we need to be aware of the impact we are having on the planetary systems and try to minimise it.

Yani is making waves. Although a relatively new City councillor he has been active politically for at least 10 years through the Christchurch Youth Council, the Hagley- Ferrymead Community Board and as chair of the Keep Christchurch Beautiful committee. Not afraid to speak out about social justice and democracy issues, Yani is challenging some of the accepted ways of doing things in council as he wants to see things through rather than just continually talk about them. In this he feels very fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from wonderful Christchurch political role models such as Christchurch Central MP, Tim Barnett and the late Greens Co-Leader, Rod Donald. He wishes to be positive and creative in his approach to action. He is the first to admit that he is still learning the ropes, still trying to understand how to get things from concept to reality. Yani would however, like to see a more radical approach to urban planning and design, an approach that is more balanced in an economic, ecological and human sense, and he is not afraid to say so publicly.

He recognises and appreciates the knowledge that is held by many council staff committed to making Christchurch a progressive city and feels that progress on sustainability issues can be made because we are a compact, well-connected city where people talk and work together. When he's out and about on recycling days he's amazed at how everybody has their crate out, they're participating in the council recycling scheme in contrast to some other places he has visited on his travels where there is often a sense of disengagement in local processes.

Yani's perception is that the city has gone from being a leader in sustainability to now being a follower, particularly when it comes to urban design. He is frustrated by the current hands off approach to urban planning and feels that there should be more prescribed mechanisms to control low quality or out of character development, citing the Ferrymead development as an example. Yani tells of an inner city charrette held about ten years ago that formulated a great

vision for the city but he fears that has been lost. He believes that there is a sense of urgency now; that the time is ripe for clear visionary consultative leadership to get things done for our future. "If people feel proud of, and good about, their environment it actually addresses many social problems. If they feel valued they are more likely to participate in society", Yani says. "If we can empower people to take action in their own lives and provide a forum for that then we're half way to a better future."

One of the things he feels passionate about is improving transport connectivity. Yani believes that it is crazy to extend the tram without first developing a clear and consistent vision for inner city transport and how it relates to the movement of both tourists and residents. Rather than just follow history by extending the old, Yani sees it is important to also create history with new and modern forms of light transit systems. He would like to see 'green corridors' linking key local community hubs between which buses and safe designated cycle ways run. And rather than those hubs being dedicated to big box retail he would like to see more human scale activity like community centres, markets, libraries and other services accommodated around spaces for people to gather and meet. Yani feels that this would cut down on the need to travel far as well as help build community connectivity.

Another sector with which Yani has had long involvement is youth. If there is an event involving youth on in the city Yani will try to attend. Recently he went along to the Just Focus workshop 'Media Matters' to see and hear the voice of youth on the issues of importance for them today. Yani is adamant that the opinion of youth needs to be canvassed when community issues are up for discussion. And it must be done in a timely manner using processes that are inclusive, appreciative and respectful. He suggests that there is still work to be done in this area.

Yani is obviously passionate about Christchurch. His enthusiasm for the city is infectious. His desire is to continue working with and for the people of our city to ensure it remains an exciting and invigorating place to live is apparent. He appreciates people talking with him so he can understand the issues of importance to you so if you see him around, stop and have a chat. It is sure to be a rewarding experience.

To see what Yani is thinking about have a look at: <http://thelocaltruth.blogspot.com/>

W SOC's Waste Management Project

The waste management project that SOC has been grant-aided to provide for the Council is being completed later than planned but is now proceeding well. SOC member Rhys Taylor reports that the text of a booklet which outlines how and where you can recycle, re-use or otherwise donate a wide range of materials from the home, is now complete. The booklet is at design stage and should be out shortly. Similarly webpages which will include all the information in the booklet, and keep it updated will also be ready soon, operating under the name 'RecyclingPlus'. SOC members will be provided with more information when this is all ready to

A Successful SOC AGM Votes in New Executive

SOC's AGM on July 29 saw Arthur Williamson, Rhys Taylor, Katherine Peet, John Peet (Treasurer), Dave Evans (Secretary), Roger Buck, and Ian Burn (newsletter editor) being re-elected to the executive. Kate Henry and Lorraine Leonard were also welcomed onto the executive. Kate Hewson (departing chair) Komathi Kolandai and Andrew Groom were also farewelled with gratitude for the time and energy they contributed to the committee. Kate in her last act as chair gave a presentation on transition towns and put forward a presentation regarding SOC's role within this movement in the coming year. There was considerable discussion about this with a range of ways forward suggested. Raised at this meeting and confirmed at the subsequent committee meeting was a new approach to chairing the meetings in the absence of anyone volunteering for this. Chairs of SOC meetings will now change monthly with this position

being held from shortly after each committee meeting, through to the subsequent committee meeting a month later, and then to whenever the chairs tasks arising from that meeting are completed. Rhys Taylor agreed to be the chair for the month of August, followed by Ian Burn in September and Arthur Williamson in October. The AGM was attended by 32 people including representatives from Soil and Health, Project Lyttelton, Transition Initiative St Albans, Community House and Sustainable Business Network.

W Canterbury couple win Green Ribbon award.

Karen and Karl Upston trading as Envirocomp Ltd. have won the Making a Difference to Household Sustainability Category of the Ministry for the Environment's Green Ribbon Award 2008. of the Region: Hurunui, Canterbury

This award is awarded to those organisations who, through their products, services, or educational promotion are making outstanding efforts to reduce the impact that households have on the environment including practices to reduce emissions, waste and energy use, and encouraging others to adopt good practices.

In 2007 the Upston's trialled the first commercial scale disposable nappy composting service in Rangiora, North Canterbury using HotRot technology developed by Christchurch based company R5 Solutions. Based on the completed trial, the demand for this service exceeded all expectations and identified a need for a composting facility.

The trial showed that disposable nappies and incontinence products in the waste stream could be commercially composted thereby reducing pressure on landfills. The results of the five month trial from March to July 2007 have been used to develop the Huggies Envirocomp Solution which will open at the end of 2008.



Karen and Karl Upston own a business selling both disposable and cloth nappies and are very aware of the environmental impacts of both nappy streams. They decided to trial composting disposable nappies on a commercial scale and contacted R5 Solutions who manufacture the HotRot range of in-vessel composting systems. R5 Solutions were able to provide advice and guidance as well as a prototype composting unit that the Upston's were offered for use in their trial.

R5 Solutions have designed a custom built composting facility. This is a modular in-vessel system which can compost up to ten tonnes per day. With the addition of bulking agent (wood chip/ kitchen waste/ construction and demolition waste), disposable nappies and incontinence products will be composted through R5 Solutions commercial plant. After a specialised screening process to remove plastic contaminants, the final product will be sold to commercial gardening/ landscaping businesses, and also made available to community based projects for fundraising.

The five month trial involved over 200 families; six pre-schools the local maternity hospital, elderly residents and a Christchurch branch of the IHC. Over the five months approximately 450,000 nappies were composted, which equated to 56 tonnes of household waste.

By introducing the Envirocomp Solution in Canterbury it will divert up to 3000 tonnes of disposable nappies from landfills each year. Nappies will be collected from childcare facilities in 'wheelie bins' and households will be offered a weekly domestic collection using a bio-degradable bag at a subscription fee

Source <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/awards/green-ribbon.html>

A The 'Ecological Footprint': Navigating Tough Decisions in a Resource-Constrained World

On July 21 Dr Mathis Wackernagel addressed an audience on this topic at the Law School, University of Canterbury, this event having been organised by: the University of Canterbury School of Law & National Centre for Research on Europe, the NZ Institute of International Affairs, Engineers for Social Responsibility, and Sustainable Otago Christchurch. Dr Wackernagel is Executive Director, Global Footprint Network, Oakland, California.

The Ecological Footprint (EF) measures humanity's demand on nature's biocapacity (for more details visit www.footprintnetwork.org/faq). It is a management and communications tool that measures how much nature we have, how much we use, and who uses what. It represents the area of biologically productive land and water a population (individual, city, country, or all of humanity) requires to provide the resources it consumes and absorb its waste, using prevailing technology.



There are three components to the measured EF of a country, according to the relative amounts of land used for them: built-up land (the smallest component); food, fibre and timber production; and carbon dioxide absorption (to correct for fossil fuel burning)(the fastest-growing component).

The global average available biocapacity is currently (2003 data) 1.8 hectares per person (with no allowance made for the needs of wild species). Staying within this figure would in principle be globally sustainable. In reality, the global EF is running about 2.2 hectares and rising, meaning humanity as a whole is currently living as if another planet's biocapacity were available. The result is a (rising) ecological debt to Planet Earth, which will have to be paid - and the sooner, the better.

A given country's sustainability depends upon its population and land area. Highly-populated countries with a small land area are mostly unsustainable, as are less-populated countries with high resource demands. Currently, almost half the countries in the world - the wealthy ones basically - significantly exceed sustainability limits, as measured by the EF. New Zealand's footprint is very high, at close to 6 hectares per person, although our small population relative to the land area means the country as a whole (by this measure) is sustainable.

Dr Wackernagel addressed several policy issues in his talk. He pointed out that although climate change took most media and political attention, the greater reality facing humanity was that of resource depletion - categorised as "Peak Everything", meaning not just oil, but also coal, water, soils, uranium and so on.

He felt EF should be considered as a policy indicator, alongside the better-known ones of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Human Development Index (HDI). All countries need good, strong tools to achieve sustainable development goals. The economic measures (eg GDP) were relevant 50 years ago, when financial capital was the principal limitation on human development (eg HDI), but nowadays it is natural capital (biocapacity - eg EF) that is the limiting factor. Governments around the world are still "resolutely gluing their eyes shut", however, and not

clearly seeing what is really happening to national capital assets. The aim of the Global Footprint Network is to get them to learn to sweat as much about the state of resources as about the state of finances.

While it is natural for humanity to want a good life, using up stocks of resources at a rate greater than that which is actually available as income means building up ecological debt. How can we reduce or pay back that debt? How many planets do we “need”? These issues raise major philosophical questions. Sustainability, in Wackernagel’s opinion, is basically a matter of collective self-interest, not only of morality.

The overall message to be taken from his address (to around 150 people attending), and the extensive Q&A session following, was that humanity faces the need for transformative change, not palliative incrementalism, and that the EF is a very useful motivating tool in that direction.

Report by John Peet, 22 July, 2008

A Sustainability Election Forum

SOC is involved with a number of Non-government organisations in running a pre-election forum to which all the political parties currently in parliament will be invited. The topic will be sustainability and the politicians will be asked to present their perspective on this (to guide this this will be pre-defined as ‘strong sustainability’ see [www](http://www.soc.org.nz).). They will then be asked questions provided in advance by the organising group, and these will be followed by questions taken from the floor. The organisations involved are: Living Streets, Sustainable Business Network, The Natural Step, Forest and Bird, New Zealand Association of Environmental Education, Environmental Institute of Australia and New Zealand, St Albans Community Centre, Council of Social Services and SOC. The date for this is tentatively 14 October (partly dependent on when the election will be), and a venue is yet to be confirmed. We are looking for assistance with help on the night setting up, ushering, tea/coffee etc. and for people prepared to do liaison with the media. If you can help or you have any suggestions on how to make this event go as well as possible, please contact Ian Burn on ianandmarlys@actrix.co.nz 374-3255.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Free for a month: Bike trailer. Contact: Steven Muir thepope@cyclingchurch.org.nz 3658238

The Cycle Advocacy Network is running a petition to improve road safety in regard to cycling. Visit <http://www.can.org.nz> for more information about the campaign. Contact CAN, 04-972 2552, or see campaigns@can.org.nz for more information.

Individuals, groups or community organisations can apply for a share of the City Council’s Community Waste Minimisation Fund The maximum amount per application will be \$10,000 from the total available annual fund of \$50,000. The purpose of the fund is to encourage and assist the Christchurch community to contribute to the goals in the Council’s Waste Management Plan. Projects might include ways of increasing participation in reducing, recycling, reusing and recovering material from the waste; research; sponsorships and awards; and feasibility studies or set-up costs for new non-commercial initiative. For more information see [http://www.ccc.govt.nz/sustainablechristchurch/Community Waste Minimisation Fund](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/sustainablechristchurch/Community%20Waste%20Minimisation%20Fund)

Full-time university students undertaking postgraduate studies in New Zealand can apply to the Christchurch City Council for a maximum scholarship of \$5,000 per year per applicant. The purpose of the scholarship is to encourage thinking and to support research into waste minimisation applicable to Christchurch City. In particular, to assist the Christchurch community advance on the goals and targets contained in the Council’s Waste Management Plan.

The Canterbury Water Management Strategy Locality-based Stakeholder Meetings on the Uses and Benefits of Water (30 July – 13 August 2008) 5.30pm – 8pm Coffee, tea, orange juice and finger food supplied at 5.30pm Wednesday 30 July Akaroa; Thursday 31 July Rangiora/Waimate; Tuesday 5 August Methven-Rakaia; Wednesday 6 August HURUNUI/TIMARU; Thursday 7 August Ashburton-Hinds/Omarama; Tuesday 12 August Darfield Fairlie; Wednesday 13 August Christchurch; all attendees must register Details of the venue for the meeting will be supplied on registration. Go to <http://www.canterburywater.org.nz/getting-involved/>

Free workshops on home composting kitchen & garden waste. 12.00 - 1:30 pm, **2nd and 4th Saturday each month, 2nd and 4th Wednesday.** Okeover Community Gardens, University of Canterbury. More info: Annmarie Banchy 021 190 4559, or 942 7190 (evening), abanchy@paradise.net.nz. Sponsored by CCC.

ECAN Transport Planning Community Representatives Wanted

Environment Canterbury is looking for six people for its Regional Transport Committee, one to represent each of the following interests in relation to transport: Cultural, Economic development, Access and mobility, Safety and personal security, Public health, Environmental sustainability. The community representatives will work alongside elected representatives, meeting at least four times a year, generally in Christchurch until September 2010. If you are interested and would like to know more, please email: robert.woods@ecan.govt.nz or write to: Programme Manager Transport, Environment Canterbury, PO Box 345, Christchurch 8140. Nominations and supporting information must be received by 5pm, Monday, **August 11 2008**.

Knox Church's Faith and a Sustainable Future Series

12 August 'Climate change: the big picture. Perspectives from Aotearoa and the Old Testament' Dr. Jim Salinger – Principal Scientist – Climate, NIWA

19 August 'Life on Hinewai Reserve – Simple Restoration'

Hugh Wilson, Botanist, Author, Conservationist and Manager of Hienwai Reserve

26 August 'Kaitiakitangi – an ethic for stewardship in a modern context'

Prof. Hirini Matunga, Professor in Maori and Indigenous Planning, Lincoln University.

All events 7:30, corner Bealey and Victoria, parking available. minister@knoxchurch.co.nz

Talk: Sustainability and climate change. Speaker: Tony Moore, Principle Advisor on Sustainability, CCC. 7.30 pm Wednesday, **13 August**. WEA, 59 Gloucester Street. Organised by Forest & Bird Society.

SOC is supporting a presentation 'So you want to make an electric car?' Hear from people who have made the conversion from petrol to electric for around-town driving. This talk is a practical guide to electric car conversion and will cover choosing the donor car, parts supplies and the essential features of an Electric Car. Saturday **16th August**, 1pm, D Lecture Theatre, DL Block, CPIT Madras St. Free entry, but due to limited seats email christchurchbev@gmail.com to book a seat.

Public meeting: Eels. Speakers: MP Metiria Turei, Clem Smith, Lake Fisherman, Don Jellyman, NIWA Scientist. Also showing: the short film "Longfin". 7.30 pm Monday, **18 August**. Prebbleton Hall, 617 Springs Rd. Sponsor: Waihora Ellesmere Trust.

Zero Waste & Zero Carbon Conference 20-22 August 2008, Hotel Ashburton, Racecourse Road, Ashburton \$200 per day, Event Coordinators, Diane & Tony Dawson Tel. 03 3026 791, mobile 0211 748 578
email: a.dawson@xtra.co.nz

Reminder: Otamahua/Quail Island Ecological Restoration Trust Tree Planting: **each weekend of August**. New volunteers welcome but need to book in well ahead. To register: Bev or Ian MacDonald at ihmacd@paradise.net.nz or ph 3325322. Further info: www.quailisland.org.nz.

Biofuels forum: Biofuels: the future or folly? (NZ Inst. of Ag & Hort. Science, Canterbury Section). 8.30 - 12.30 Wednesday, **27 August**. Lincoln University.

Green Drinks (socializing with 'green' interested individuals) dates into your diary now: Thursday **28 August**, Thursday **2 October**, Dux de Lux

Otautahi Critical Mass returns Last Friday of the month, next event the **29th August**. Meet at 5.30pm. Meet at Cathedral Square to cycle round town and reclaim the streets for bikes

ECan tree planting, fencing, biodiversity fund Landowners or groups working to protect and enhance native biodiversity in Canterbury have until the **end of August** to apply for contestable grants of up to \$5,000 through Environment Canterbury's Environment Enhancement Fund: <http://www.ecan.govt.nz/About+Us/DisplayMediaRelease.html?id=1086>

A Rocha initiative group (Christian environmental group) meeting **31 August** Mark Gibson is speaking on "The Ecology of Death: a spiritual exploration of endings 7pm at St Marks church cnr Barrington and Somerfield st. Supper at 14 Bletsoe Ave after for a catchup around 8.30pm.

Dr Craig Gillies, Predator Ecologist, DoC, Hamilton speaks on, Controlling Stoats and Rats for Conservation in New Zealand, Community Hall, Jetty Road, Governors Bay. Tuesday, **9 September** at 7.30 pm.

National Council of Women NZ 2008 National Conference: Towards a Sustainable Future: 2 - 5 Oct Masterton www.ncwnz.co.nz

SOC has received the following email from Alexander Reeder: 'I am an American student interested in volunteering in NZ next January (2009). I am looking at organizations in other countries to get some idea of how various nations are implementing sustainable practices. I would be interested in learning what your organization has to offer in the way of internships or volunteer opportunities. Thank you. Alex' Please contact Alex at alaw@dartmouth.edu if this is of interest.

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

Completed

- **A** Election of New Committee (see item above)
- **A** Submission to ECAN Proposed Change Number 1 processes
- **A** Support for St Albans Community Association in launching as Transition Town
- **A** Support for Christchurch Community House Tenants Trust re sustainability issues
- **AWC** Support for Electric car conversion presentation (see notice above)

In Process

- **A** Consideration of relationship between sustainable and Treaty based development
- **AC** Development of Transition Communities Energy Decline Plans
- **W** Waste minimisation project (see item above)
- **AB** Preparation of DVD of Transition Communities Bus tour
- **A** Election Forum (see item above)