



Welcome to the October/November edition of the SOC newsletter for 2008. In this edition we have an article on the recent Electric Car Conversion event that was supported by SOC, and information about 2 major SOC projects that are nearing completion: the waste minimisation project and the election forum. 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 called Econet, is now available from the New Zealand Association for Environmental Education <http://www.environment.org.nz/>. Given this SOC will not be duplicating information that is available through this site, except for activities that SOC is directly involved in or that relate to articles in 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 then I'd be very happy to hear from you at [ianandmarlys <at> actrix.co.nz](mailto:ianandmarlys@actrix.co.nz). Thanks to Dave Evans and Jocelyn Papprell for their contributions this time.

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

## CW DIY - Converting a Car to Battery Power

On 19 August SOC co-hosted a presentation with CPIT on converting a standard car to battery power. The presentation was aimed at DIYers and attracted to 190 people to the CPIT campus. The presenter was Jens Rekker, who came up from Dunedin. He had recently finished converting a ute and has been sharing his knowledge and experiences with people in Dunedin, Invercargill and Christchurch.

The idea is to replace the petrol engine and associated bits and pieces with an electric motor, batteries and a controller. The running costs of an electric vehicle are probably less than a quarter those of a petrol vehicle so it sounds like an attractive option.



There are also no emissions from the vehicle and it's eerily quiet. In fact pedestrians had better not rely solely on their ears before stepping off the curb! I would think that electric motors should last for a long time and maintenance is more straightforward than with a petrol engine.

However, the capital costs of converting a vehicle are substantial – in the order of \$15000 if you do it yourself. Commercial conversions are available in Australia for A\$32000 – on top of the cost of the vehicle itself. Given the high capital cost of conversion and the cost of replacing the batteries every few years, it is going to take quite a while to recover the investment.

Also with current battery technology electric vehicles are best suited to around town driving. This is because the energy density of batteries is much less than that of petrol. This means that petrol does more 'work' on a weight for weight basis than do batteries. Jens estimates that 50kg of petrol will get 5 people 500km, whereas a 500kg battery pack will only get 2 people 100km. What's more the battery pack doesn't get lighter as you travel! So you can see that for a reasonable battery weight you are not going to get all the way to Dunedin without recharging a couple of times. There are however a wide range of battery technologies and if you pay more you can get higher energy density which allows greater travel distances between recharging. .

With solar panels on the roof of your garage you could also reduce what you draw from the grid and the potential emissions of producing that power. Think also of the embodied energy in the petrol vehicle that is reused by converting the vehicle to battery power. It was also great to see a local transport initiative founded on people providing transport for themselves, rather than paying some huge car company to provide a glossy status symbol. SOC thanks Jens and his wife Adrienne for bringing the presentation, which was received with considerable enthusiasm by the attendees to Christchurch, and to CPIT for providing a venue. You can read more about Jen's conversion at <http://evute-nz.blogspot.com/>.

Dave Evans

### **W** Waste Not –Want Not, Don't Be a WALL-E

If we are to work toward sustainability we need to tackle our waste or at least that's the message of the movie 'Wall-e'. Probably more importantly we need to change how we think about waste. Rubbish, garbage, detritus, junk, trash, scrap, refuse, litter are the words that most often pass our lips. Most of us see waste as nothing more than the unfortunate by-product of life – a necessary evil. Best if it can be recycled but if not easily disposed of each fortnight in the black bag at the front gate. And, if you're in business, easily enough dealt with by bringing a skip and sending it off to landfill.



*Illustration 1: Sorting machine*

My advice – tickle the old synapses by spending some time with Richard Lloyd of Becon Drywaste. He's a man excited by waste. He's passionate and inspirational about the business he's in and aims to move commercial enterprises beyond linear thinking in their dealing with waste products toward closing the circle; toward sustainability practices and values that benefit them as well as the planet. To him waste is energy and of enormous value, not something to be buried in a landfill out of sight, out of mind.

Richard and his partners have invested heavily in state of the art machinery that enables their company to sort unibin loads of drywaste efficiently so diverting up to 90% of the products from landfill. Paper, plastics, woods, hardfill, plasterboard, untreated timber, metals etc all get sorted into their respective piles, baled then sent for reprocessing elsewhere. The aim is to find as many local uses for the sorted products as possible so closing the loop within New Zealand.

Photo 2 shows the wood chipper that pulverises demolition wood into chips, which are then used to fire two local industrial complexes. These type of synergistic partnerships are important for Becon as anything that reduces energy loss is a key driver. Presently Becon diverts from landfill about 68- 80% of the waste that comes to



*Illustration 3: Entrance to Becon*

them but the aim is to redirect more as the businesses sending waste to Becon become more familiar with the requirements for drywaste sorting. It is important that the dry material is not contaminated with wet waste or compostables.

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waste to Becon become more familiar with the requirements for drywaste sorting. It is important that the dry material is not contaminated with wet waste or compostables.

If you are in business then it makes good sense to send your drywaste to Becon. As they state on their website, "Becon Canterbury is the way of the future. Recovery and recycling of waste material from business enterprise is not only an environmentally responsible choice - Becon ensure it is also a commercially viable business proposition". To find out more about this innovative plant and their plans for the future visit <http://www.drywaste.co.nz/>.

Jocelyn Pappil

## **B** City Council adopts Biodiversity Strategy

On 25 July Christchurch City Council meeting adopted the Ōtautahi/Christchurch and Te Pātaka o Rākauhautū/Banks Peninsula Biodiversity Strategy, providing a local response to the Government's New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy. In this they note that:

"The last 700 years have seen a significant loss of biodiversity in the region. Across almost all the Canterbury Plains, much less than 10% of the indigenous plant cover remains, and most of the Banks Peninsula has less than 20% indigenous plant cover.

While several species have seen significant increases in numbers during the past two decades, and the area of native bush on Banks Peninsula has increased significantly since early last century, ... there is still much work to be done to bring about successful outcomes for protecting the region's biodiversity. ...



*Illustration 2: Wood chipper*



Myosotis Australis Var Lytteltonensis, a type of forget-me-not that only naturally occurs on the Port Hills and Banks Peninsular.

This strategy gives us a framework upon which community partnerships and initiatives can be built. It emphasises that Christchurch and the Banks Peninsula contain some outstanding biodiversity sites and values, and they deserve our protection.” For more information see <http://www.ccc.govt.nz/parks/theenvironment/biodiversity.asp>

### **A** Transition Towns: Lampeter

The BBC has recently made this interesting documentary (in four parts (via You Tube), ca. 30 min) about Lampeter, a Transition Town in Wales. It showcases aspects of local farming and markets and the battle with supermarket chains to change their ways. See <http://www.treehugger.com/files/2008/05/food-farming-peak-oil.php>

### **CW** Simple car sharing

Caroline Hearst and I are two SOC members living at opposite ends of Opawa. We have been sharing a car for nearly two years and are very happy with the way it has worked out. We met after Caroline advertised the idea of a car sharing scheme in an early SOC newsletter. We not only wanted to reduce our carbon emissions but also to prototype a car sharing arrangement that could be scaled up to more people and more cars. Not only have we reduced our fuel use by sharing a small, fuel-efficient car, but also the discipline of having to think about it before getting behind the wheel means that we use a car much less often than we did before the scheme started.

The car is booked on a shared internet calendar that is free and required no software development. We pay a regular monthly fee by automatic payment into a car account and at the end of the month transfer another amount depending on how many kilometers we drove the car that month. The costs of running the car, including petrol, are covered by these fees. The worst part of the process is keeping track of the km in a little book in the glove box!

There's no fancy hardware for accessing the car, as there would be in a bigger scheme, as each of us has a key to the car. Generally the car remains with the person who used it last and there is a dedicated car-share bike (second-hand) in the other person's garage. All the standing costs of owning a car are shared between two and being in a scheme like this ensures that we know how much it really costs to own a car (lost interest on capital, depreciation etc.).

Using a shared car for regular commuting is not really an option so we get to work by bike or bus. It may be necessary to hire a car for holidays, but actually there are a lot of places you can get to by bus. Once you change from the personal car mind-set other alternatives open up. In fact the car is idle often enough now that we are looking for new members. If you are interested in joining the scheme please email [transportmatters@paradise.net.nz](mailto:transportmatters@paradise.net.nz) or phone Caroline 980 9113 or Dave Evans 366 0628 for further information.

### **W** City Council's Community Waste Minimisation Fund

The City Council's Waste Management Fund has been set up to encourage and assist the Christchurch community to contribute to the goals in the Council's Waste Management Plan. Individuals, groups or community organisations can apply for a share of the fund. The maximum amount per application will be \$10,000 from the total available annual fund of \$50,000.

**Applications are required by Thursday 30 October 2008.** They will be assessed and awarded in November. There are strict guidelines for applications. To find out what should be included and how applications will be assessed contact the Council on 941 8999 or visit [www.ccc.govt.nz/waste](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/waste). Successful applicants last year included:

- Project Port Lyttelton Waste Management Project

For the second consecutive year Project Port Lyttelton's Waste Management Project was awarded \$10,000 for their whole of community solution to organic waste. The project includes the collection and composting of putrescent kitchen waste from local restaurants and the development of composting zones and community gardens. The new funding has been used to develop household kitchen waste collection, raise awareness of waste minimisation by working closely with schools and having a profile at the Farmers Market, and documenting the processes learned so far to provide guidance to other communities. For more information visit <http://www.lyttelton.net.nz/>

- The Hungry Tiger worm farm

Earthly Delights received \$10,000 to help roll out the Hungry Tiger worm farm to pre-schools and schools. Worm farms reduce waste by turning food scraps into a rich fertiliser. The funding was used to pay for half the cost of setting up Hungry Tiger worm farms in approximately 100 pre-schools, and more funding for larger systems for 20 schools. Schools and preschools make an excellent educational platform for kids and their parents to learn how worms can recycle organic waste. For more information visit <http://www.earthlydelight.co.nz/>

- SOC's Waste Minimisation project – Recycling Plus, see article below

- Creative Junk

The Early Childhood Resource Centre Inc, trading as Creative Junk, is a non-profit organisation that collects recyclable products from all over the city and makes these available for children's discovery and creative play. Creative Junk have been awarded \$10,000 to promote its activities, develop a website, and run a series of workshops in schools around Christchurch.

Source: Christchurch City Council:

[www.ccc.govt.nz/waste/wasteminimisation/CommunityFund.asp](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/waste/wasteminimisation/CommunityFund.asp)

### **A Government Directory launched to improve information availability about Ecolabels and Sustainability Claims**

A directory has been developed by the Ministry of Economic Development to improve the availability of information about ecolabels and other sustainability indicators relevant to consumers, suppliers and other organisations. It provides summary information about each label, and users are encouraged to access further detail from ecolabel owner websites using the links provided.

[http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/ContentTopicSummary\\_37890.aspx](http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/ContentTopicSummary_37890.aspx)

### **B ECAN launches a new Canterbury biodiversity website**

"for Cantabrians who appreciate our region's unique and varied wildlife and ecosystems".

<http://www.canterburybiodiversity.org.nz/>

## A Parliamentary Commission for the Environment – State of the Nation's Environment

Jan Wright, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, presented Lincoln University's – State of the Nation's Environment address on 28 August. Dr. Wright used the opportunity to stress the need for environmental decisionmakers to assess the priority of environmental problems before committing scarce resources to solving these. She saw such prioritization needing to take into account 5 criteria.

- Is the problem cumulative?
- Is the problem reversible?
- Is the size of the problem significant?
- Is the size of the problem accelerating?
- Is the problem approaching a physical limit or tipping point?

<http://www.lincoln.ac.nz/story27772.html>

## W RecyclingPlus: SOC's Waste Management Project

RecyclingPlus is a major initiative that has involved a considerable amount of SOC member Rhys Taylor's time over the past year. This project, which SOC has been



Waste reduction pioneers Waveney and Matthew [www.rubbishfreeyear.co.nz/](http://www.rubbishfreeyear.co.nz/)



grant-aided to provide for the Council, should now be complete by the end of October. Rhys 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 complete. The booklet will shortly be available from Council service centres and from SOC. Similarly webpages, which will include all the information in the booklet, and keep it

updated will also be ready soon. The website can be found at [www.recyclingplus.org.nz](http://www.recyclingplus.org.nz) and [www.reuseit.org.nz](http://www.reuseit.org.nz). While the final text is still to be included on the website you can get a feel for how it will look by visiting the sites now. Once these go live they will provide a valuable easily accessible source of information for the people of Canterbury about how they can reduce their production and consumption of waste. It also acts as a professional gateway for people to the SOC website that showcases effectively the kind of work we get involved in.

## A A Sustainable Future: Politicians' Perspectives

Political parties' plans for sustainability policy will be under the microscope at a public election forum in Christchurch on October 14. Organised by Sustainable Otago Christchurch (SOC), and chaired by Al Gore's Climate Change Ambassador Melissa Clark-Reynolds; the forum will be held at Knox Church starting at 7pm. Politicians will answer a series of questions supplied in advance by the organizing committee, and from the public at the beginning of the evening.

Representatives from all parties currently in parliament have confirmed their attendance including Leanne Dalziel for Labour, Nicky Wagner for National, Jim Anderton for the Progressive Party and Green Party co-leader Dr Russel Norman. Representatives from the New Zealand First, ACT, United Future and Maori Parties will also be present. Each representative has been asked to outline how their policies contribute to achieving 'strong sustainability' as defined by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, which is a model that recognises that the economy is a sub set of society and the environment.

A series of yes/no questions have been put forward by the following groups:

- Living Streets Aotearoa members want to know whether more money will be spent on walking and cycling initiatives.
- Forest and Bird want a more conservative approach to water allocation and a better building code to make new homes more energy efficient.
- The Sustainable Business Network is interested in policy concerning triple bottom line accounting standards.
- SOC wants to know if current party policy addresses declining fuel affordability.

Forum organisers include Sustainable Otago Christchurch, Sustainable Business Network, Forest & Bird, Living Streets Aotearoa, The Natural Step, New Zealand Association on Environmental Education, Environmental Institute of Australia and New Zealand, Council of Social Services and St Albans Community Centre with support from the Christchurch City Council, Knox Presbyterian Church, Plains FM and Trade Aid.

### **CW Petrol Engine Memorial Park**

is an exhibition which is part of the art in public spaces festival SCAPE. See <http://www.bethere.co.nz/arts/2008/1052-scape-tea-makipaa> or visit it in the Arts Centre between now and 2 November.

### **A UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

On 13 September 2007, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration provides minimum standards of protection for the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples around the world. Its adoption by the General Assembly was described by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights as "a triumph for justice and human dignity", and by the General Assembly President as a "major step forward towards the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all".

One hundred and forty three UN member states voted in favour of the Declaration - the NZ government was one of only four that voted against it. It is now one of only three governments that continue to oppose it - extraordinary behaviour by a government that describes itself as "a firm and principled defender of human rights", and is currently portraying itself as a "credible and committed" candidate for election to the UN Human Rights Council.

See [www.converge.org.nz/pma/decl0908.htm#act](http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/decl0908.htm#act) for more information and to sign an online petition to the NZ government, or to download a copy of this for distribution.

Source: Peace Movement Aotearoa

## CW Christchurch Travel to Work Times

Released recently was this interesting map of Christchurch showing what proportions of the population travel to work by car:

[www.sustainablechristchurch.org.nz/resources/percentagewhotraveltoworkbycar2006](http://www.sustainablechristchurch.org.nz/resources/percentagewhotraveltoworkbycar2006). An implication from this being that these are the areas likely to be hit hardest by rising fuel prices unless residents of these areas both decide to and are able to change this behaviour. Of note are the disproportionately mostly lower socio-economic areas in the North East and the new suburbs being established in the South West.

Source: NZ Stats and Green Party.

## A Inaugural Asset Based Community Development New Zealand Conference

The Inaugural Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) New Zealand Conference(s) are being planned to occur in June 2009. The South Island one will be held in Oamaru. ABCD centred community engagement themes will be explored in relation to;

- Application
- Practical Tools
- Evaluation

Key focus areas include;

- Growing youth participation in community development
- Fostering investment in rural economic leadership
- Developing positive 'can do' self reliant attitudes for positive community change
- Community economic development
- Transition Towns
- Utilizing local heritage assets to create vibrant and enterprising communities.
- Building sustainable community enterprise
- Small town revitalisation
- Fostering regional community collaboration

Anyone interested in assisting the organising team please forward a brief overview of your background to David A. Wilson, Coordinator, ABCD Aotearoa New Zealand Network 439-5333, 027 4395331, [heritage.futures@xtra.co.nz](mailto:heritage.futures@xtra.co.nz)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

As a more frequent and comprehensive notice of events service called Econet, is now available from the New Zealand Association for Environmental Education <http://www.environment.org.nz/>, the content of this section of the newsletter will now be much more concise and focus on events which SOC is involved with or which the committee feels have particular relevance to SOC's purposes. Do visit Econet if you want more information about sustainability events coming up in the Canterbury area, it is very comprehensive.

- A Sustainable Future: Politicians' Perspectives, an election forum with representatives from 7 political parties, come listen and ask questions, (see article above for more information), **14 October**, Knox Presbyterian Church, cnr Bealy and Victoria, 7:00 – 9:00 gold coin donation.

- Canterbury Transition Communities Forum **21st October** 12 – 2pm. St Albans Community Centre, 1047 Columbo St,

- Lincoln Efford memorial lecture, WEA, 59 Gloucester St, Tuesday **11 November**, 7.30 – 9 pm 'A Welfare State Fit for the 21st century' Dr Susan St John, Senior Lecturer in Economics,

Business school, University of Auckland and a founding member of the Child Poverty Action Group.

### **COMMITTEE ACTIONS**

#### *Completed*

- **AWC** Electric car conversion presentation (see notice above)
- **A** Participation in the initial Canterbury Transition Communities forum

#### *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)