



Election issues - a blueprint for environmental improvement

New Zealanders have a strong attachment to the land and sea. We like to think of ourselves as 100% pure, clean and green. Unfortunately, the reality is that New Zealand is not the clean green place we would like it to be.

New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions continue to grow, our oceans are being depleted of fish, our rivers, lakes and streams are becoming more polluted, and treasured native plants and animals face extinction.

ECO has developed a portfolio of policies that we consider would help the environment. We invite you to ask the parties and politicians whether they will support these. Let us know what they say!

What political parties have done to fund conservation and environment activities is one indicator of commitment. For example in the last three years the Department of Conservation has had its funding cut by \$54m while the Ministry for the Environment has also faced



Mining in places such as the Denniston Plateau is an important election issue

significant funding cuts. In contrast the minerals section of the Ministry of Economic Development has had its funding doubled.

The record of voting in parliament is another indicator of party commitment. The Marine Reserves Bill is still stalled in Parliament but we have a new Environmental Protection Agency and new gap filling law to cover activities on the EEZ and Continental Shelf has been introduced.

We have developed policies that fall under these headings:

Climate responsibility

- Increase investment in rail and other public transport options by 30% and reduce investment in new roads by 15%
- Strengthen the Emissions Trading Scheme to:
 - Remove the price cap;
 - Remove the 2:1 emissions unit rule;
 - Bring agriculture into the scheme by the end of 2012;
 - Require that New Zealand reduces our emissions below 1990 levels;

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- Remove the taxpayer subsidies from the free allocations to agriculture and others.
- Commit to developing and implementing a low-carbon action plan for NZ as agreed in late 2010.
- Adopt a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 40% by 2020 and 85% by 2050.
- Impose a 10 year moratorium on any new coal mines.
- Prohibit lignite mining and processing.
- Prohibit methane hydrate mining.

Treat conservation as an investment in our future

- Restore \$54m/pa of DoC funding and expand DoC funding to enable it to:
raise the proportion of actively managed conservation areas from:
 - 2-3% to 8% by 2014
 - From 8% to 15% by 2017
 - From 15%-25% by 2020
- Restore DoC's technical and marine capacity.

Integrated ecosystem based marine management

- Reform the Fisheries Act by January 2013 to better protect the marine environment and maintain healthy fisheries and include a genuine precautionary principle.
- Adopt measures by January 2013 to reduce by-catch of seabirds, marine mammals, invertebrates and fish and strengthen the Marine Mammals Protection Act and the Wildlife Act.
- Ensure that all planning for activities in the marine environment is open to public input and to Strategic Environmental Assessment, and that any oil and gas, marine minerals activity and other such are subject to prior public consenting processes within spatial management regimes, and are subject to bonds.
- Amend the Marine Reserves Act, largely along the lines of the Bill currently before the House, to allow marine reserves to be created in the Exclusive Economic Zone for conservation reasons.
- Amend the EEZ and Continental Shelf Bill to ensure that protection of the marine environment has priority over economic goals, and to protect existing values.

Coastal and Catchment Matters

- Cap nitrogen use by catchment and introduce a significant charge on nitrogenous fertilisers by 2012.
- Protect the McKenzie basin from dairy intensification.

- Protect the Mohikini River from hydroelectric development.
- Commit to a 10 year clean up of lakes and rivers.

Environmental Leadership & Management

- Make protection of the environment the purpose of the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Introduce regular and ministerially independent environmental reporting with adequate funding.
- Develop a national Genuine Progress Indicator and ecological footprint reporting to complement existing indicators and statistical "dashboards".
- Adopt the Precautionary Principle to protect the environment.

Open & engaged society & governance

- Release the texts of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement and require three months for public and Parliamentary scrutiny before making any decision to sign it. Do the same for all international agreements.

Good global citizen

- Agree to work for a large marine protected area over the Ross Sea area to protect biodiversity and ecosystem functions.
- Implement by 2012 a ban on the import of any product from illegally logged forests.
- Ban the import of palm kernel.
- Taking a leadership role at UN climate meetings by promoting an ambitious, fair legally binding global climate agreement and support special funding mechanisms that protect tropical forests and assist developing countries to lower emissions.
- Support measures to protect tuna stocks in the Pacific including large protected areas on the high seas.

Social Justice – cross cutting

- Support vulnerable households, people and communities to adapt while the economy re-gears to a low carbon future.

Economic Management for wellbeing

- Require that GDP be accompanied by a companion index adjusted for losses of natural capital.
- Re-gear the economy to a high native biodiversity, low carbon path, with economic and regulatory instruments and other measures to achieve this.
- Foster environmentally sound innovation and investment, and ensure that environmentally unsound production does not crowd out the former.

Annual Conference 2011

ECO's annual conference was held in Auckland this year, with the theme of 'Resilient Environment: Resilient Communities - Mutual Support for the Future'.

This conference provided opportunity for thoughtful analysis of the meaning of resilience and sustainability. Participants reported the conference as useful, educative and exciting – a great opportunity for networking and learning – despite the Chilean ash cloud and the economic crisis.

On the Friday, 1 July, the conference delegates gathered in Jubilee Hall, Parnell Centre. The days speakers included Professor Martin Manning on managing the risks posed by climate change followed by Dr Simon Thrush presenting on ecology and resilience, and Dr Bronwyn Hayward (by video) discussing a social science perspective. Urban Resilience in Auckland and Christchurch included presentations from, Penny Hulse, Auckland City's Deputy Mayor (planning and resilience), Carl Chenery (viewpoints from the community), James Lundy (lessons and opportunities from Christchurch and Claire Mortimer (frameworks for resilience).

These excellent addresses explored definitions of resilience including:

- The potential for recovery from disturbance, sometimes called engineering resilience;
- A variable that represents the movement of an ecosystem within and between different states, also called ecological resilience;
- The capacity of an ecosystem to adapt or transform, useful from a resource management perspective;
- The ability of an ecosystem to maintain its identity in the face of both internal and external forces, which represents an insurance against potentially adverse changes in the delivery of ecosystem goods and services.

The afternoon session concluded with some of ECO's member groups including Thames Coast Protection Society, Gecko, Baywatch Hawkes Bay Environment Centre, Friends of the Earth, National Council of Women and Lincoln Environment Organisation, all updating us on their latest events and happenings over the year.

On Friday evening politicians from the main political parties were put on the 'Green' spot. Russel Norman from the Green Party, Nikki Kaye from the National Party, and David Parker from the Labour Party took questions from the audience on different issues of concern.

Saturday's presentations included Jeanette Fitzsimons' address on resilient energy and climate policy with regards to the serious issues and economic dangers of fossil fuel extraction, in particular lignite. Dayle Takitimu from Te Whanau a Apanui explained how plans for oil and gas exploration off the East Coast will affect the communities there. Deborah Harding and Mikaera Miru from Te Uri o Hau shared how wave power generation planned for the Kaipara Harbour would affect the environment and communities in the area. Clive Monds of ECO, Scott Macindoe from Hokianga Accord, and Wane Waharau gave an interesting presentation on the Hokianga Accord for Marine Management, a good model for anyone to use.

While ECO's member group representatives attended the AGM on Saturday afternoon, other conference attendees were able to take a walk in the beautiful Waitakere bush next to the Carey Park Camp venue. Later in the evening, Members and some local groups gave their presentations on local community actions. We had Steffan Browning from Soil & Health, Tarsh Turner talked on behalf of the local Climate Action Network Aotearoa branch, Estella Lee gave a talk about the Friends of Regional Parks in Auckland, and Peter Goldsbury gave a presentation about his group, the Kaitiakitanga Network, which is based in Whirinaki near Rotorua.

Sunday was mainly dedicated to exploring on how we might support each other including Vote for the Environment discussions and considerations from the presentations of the previous days. Elise Smith gave a very informative talk about online environmental data mapping software and also on the newly updated ECO website.

Thanks to all of you who attended - especially those who joined us for the Saturday night 40 year celebrations. We hope everyone can put the valuable knowledge of resilience into practice and that we can move forward with this in our communities.

ECO policy analysis on the New Zealand Coastal Policy

by Shane Orchard

The ECO Catchment & Coastal Issues working group is pleased to announce that our policy advisory paper on the NZCPS 2010 is now available. This paper provides a draft for discussion on issues and options important to the implementation of the Coastal Policy Statement, which will be happening at regional and local levels in the near future.

The paper may also be downloaded for free at any time on the ECO website:

www.eco.org.nz

Marine Environment Bill - submissions called

The Government has introduced legislation to fill some of the major gaps in the management of the oceans outside our territorial sea – 12 nautical miles offshore.

The current **Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Bill** proposes to set up a new environmental management regime for the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (12 to 200 nautical miles offshore) and the continental shelf extending beyond that, where New Zealand has obligations and sovereign rights under the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Activities covered by the Bill include seabed mining, some aspects of petroleum activities, energy generation, carbon capture and storage, and marine farming, which currently are mainly unregulated or in some cases only voluntary arrangements have applied. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be the decision maker under the Act.

This legislation has been in discussion for nearly 10 years. ECO raised concerns in 1998 at the absence of regulations applying to mining and other activities in the EEZ.

One Achilles heel in the Bill is the Government's return to the archaic concept of balance between protection of the environment and economic development (purpose – clause 10). Unlike UNCLOS there is no requirement to "protect and preserve" the marine environment (article 192). It requires decision makers to act consistently with the UNCLOS (clause 11) but not other international environmental obligations.

There is no explicit precautionary approach although there is a requirement in clause 10 to be cautious but it is unclear if that is cautious with information on devel-

opment or on protection of the environment. However clause 13(2) does make it clear that where "the information available is uncertain or inadequate, the person must favour caution and environmental protection."

<http://forum.eco.org.nz/>

We hope that the paper and ongoing discussions will be a useful resource for people interested in these topics and might help people consider what they might like to see happen in their areas, and how to get involved.

Clause 10 includes a general duty for adverse effects to be "avoided, remedied, or mitigated". Clause 12 is a key provision which has a grab bag of contradictory obligations from "the economic well-being" to "the protection of rare and vulnerable ecosystems and habitats of threatened species." Unlike the Resource Management Act (RMA) there are no matters of environmental national importance which have "to be recognised and provided for."

There isn't a general obligation on the Treaty of Waitangi as there is under the RMA rather the clause relates to specific action (clause 14).

The Bill has a structure similar to that of the RMA. It would establish a consent regime to regulate activities but this does not apply to activities which have mineral consents prior to 1 July 2011 (clause 16). Activities are to be classified as permitted, discretionary, or prohibited by regulations. For discretionary activities, all operators will need to apply for a marine consent and there is an ability to object and make submissions. An impact assessment will form the basis of an application. Clause 40 sets out the requirements for EIAs.

While the Bill binds the Crown it exempts NZ and foreign warships. It is proposed that all provisions of the Bill would come into force by 1 July 2013.

Submissions close on Thursday, 20 October 2011 with the Local Government and Environment Select Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington. Phone: +64 4 817 9485 or Fax: +64 4 499 0486.

The Taharua Upper Mohaka Catchment: a Hawke's Bay Case Study

by Jenny Baker

Land use changes need policy and rule structure to manage cumulative impacts on freshwater.

The Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC) last month released a discussion paper for future management: Taharua and Upper Mohaka Draft Strategy. Comments will assist Council to prepare a plan change to the Regional Resource Management Plan later in the year.

The story is simple, the same as around the country: intensive farming and inappropriate land use degrade water quality.

Although Hawke's Bay does not have the intensive land use that other regions do, the Mohaka Taharua catchment shows the very serious effects of intensive dairying in an upper catchment of the region's wild and scenic river, the Mohaka.

"The Mohaka River and wider catchment is a regional 'flagship' in terms of natural character and recreation value. The river's quality is important to regional identity and recognised nationally and internationally" (1).

Dairy conversion and intensification (1 dairy farm in 1989; 3 dairy farms in 1999) and the corresponding increasing nitrogen and phosphorus load has resulted in steady and steep decline in the water quality of the upper Mohaka and Taharua Rivers.

The headwater Taharua sub catchment (accessed from SH 5 on the NW boundary of Hawke's Bay, 30 km from Taupo) rises as a spring in the middle of a farm on the pumice flatlands, and is the smallest stream of the large Mohaka catchment and its associated tributaries. The soils have low fertility and are fast draining to ground water. Surrounded by steep lands of Greywacke with a volcanic ash cover, the Mohaka and tributaries are of high ecological, cultural, recreational and scenic significance with outstanding values recognised by a Water Conservation Order (WCO) 2004.

The Taharua catchment was cleared of indigenous forest and scrub for sheep and beef farming in the 1980s with dairy expansion beginning in 1999. It now has a population of 9,000 cows on three dairy farms covering 35% of the catchment area and representing 20%



Upper Mohaka

of the Hawkes Bay cow population. As well as dairying there is some forestry and a luxury hunting and fishing lodge.

HBRC commenced monitoring water quality in 2001 and the trends have shown a steep decline. Fish and Game alerted the council to the decline in both size and numbers of trout and increase in sediment and algae in the upper reaches of the Mohaka. A Taharua Stakeholders group has been formed through the Regional Council and some on-farm improvements have been made with the cooperation of the landowners, including fencing of waterways and the construction of effluent storage tanks. The only on-farm controlled activity at present is the application of dairy effluent to paddocks (FDE) and the storage tanks are for holding effluent to prevent application during times of wet weather. Such measures are clearly not sufficient to halt the river's degradation.

What is alarming and (hopefully) unusual about this case is that the degradation and toxicity levels are more like those that might occur lower down a catchment and in lowland waterways. This is occurring in an upper, once pristine, sub-catchment

"Dissolved inorganic nitrogen concentrations are discernibly higher than the national median at most sites, the worst being Taharua at Twin Culverts (just below 2 of the 3 dairy farms) with a median concentration 28 times higher than the national median." (2)

It is clear that the runoff from paddocks and the continuous leaching of cow urine from paddocks into the shallow groundwater and then into the surface waters of the Taharua is the reason for this degradation.

What tools do Councils and the public have to stem this agricultural non-point source pollution and to develop integrated catchment management?

Water Conservation Orders:

Under Part 9 of the RMA, Water Conservation Orders can be used to recognise and protect the outstanding amenity or intrinsic values that a water body provides.

The Mohaka Conservation Order states; “The special features of the river include an outstanding trout fishery upstream of SH 5 and in the tributaries, scenic character in the Mokonui Gorge and the Te Hoe Gorge and water based recreation from SH5 Bridge to Willow Flat.” Mohaka WCO 2004.

The river is also home to the endangered long-finned eel and other native aquatic species as well as to whio. The river has huge significance for local iwi especially for Ngati Pahauwera who are in a co-management relationship with the local councils.

However, the focus of the Mohaka WCO was intended to prevent damming for hydro-electricity, but gives no clear limits as to what is required in terms of water quality.

“The Order does not necessarily require the Regional Council to make discharge rules for river protection, but water quality is a key element to maintenance and enhancement of this nationally recognised waterway.”(3)

National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management 2010 (NPS)

The Government’s dilution of the recommendations of the Board of Enquiry into this NPS has certainly reduced its effectiveness in preventing the contamination of such water ways. This applies especially to the rejection of the recommended objective to not subordinate the intrinsic values of freshwater to other competing values.

The Board also recommended that a transitional policy be included in the NPS for direct insertion into regional plans. The Policy would require that any change or increase in the intensity of a land use or activity involving a discharge of contaminants would require resource consent. It would also set assessment criteria for deciding consent applications. (4)

However this too was modified as summarised by the Environmental Defence Society:

“The Minister has instead inserted transitional provisions specifying criteria for deciding applications for certain discharges and for taking, using damming or diverting freshwater. The criteria are those recommended by the Board. However, the effect of omitting the requirement for consent recommended by the Board means the contamination resulting from land use for which regional resource consent is not required will continue to be free from testing or imposition of conditions to meet sustainable management purpose. This will allow continued indirect contamination of freshwater, for example, from overstocked pasture, for many years.

The opportunity of the NPS for action, rather than lip service, to more fully protect the freshwater environment and its intrinsic values from one of the major threats has been lost.”(5).

However, there are provisions in the NPS which may make it easier to control diffuse discharge in the future.



Taharua Catchment in Hawkes Bay

Incorporated Societies law reform

by Cath Wallace

Policy A4 recognises diffuse animal discharge as a contaminant for new consents;

“2. This policy applies to the following discharges (including diffuse discharge by any person or animal):

- a. a new discharge or
- b. a change or increase in any discharge of that contaminant into fresh water or into land that may result in that contaminant (or, as a result of any natural process from the discharge of that contaminant, any other contaminant) entering fresh water.”

This case study demonstrates how councils and the public will need to use a mix of national instruments and legislative tools as well as collaborative governance, voluntary actions and education in order to begin to improve freshwater quality in our waterways.

Changes to the Regional Policy Statements, such as this proposed by the Hawkes Bay Regional Council, will need to have clear objectives for freshwater management, with standards, timeframes, methods, anticipated environmental results and a monitoring programme.

Regional Plans need to include more detailed objectives, policies and rules, and in terms of addressing diffuse discharge from agriculture, the actions required include reduction at source and the interception of the discharge on the land.

Footnotes:

- (1) Hawkes Bay Regional Council Regional Water Symposium 2010; Workshop Document.
- (2) Esk and Mohaka Catchments Surface Water and Ecology. State of the Environment Report 2009. HBRC Environmental Management Group Technical Report. p.iii
- (3) Taharua and Upper Mohaka Draft Strategy. A Discussion for Future Management. July 2011. HBRC.
- (4) Report and Recommendation of the Board of Inquiry into the Proposed NPS for Freshwater Management. 2010 p.36 Topic 211.
- (5) Environmental Defence Society News. June 2011

Baywatch Hawke's Bay Environment Group, a member group of ECO, contributed comments to the Draft Strategy and will make a formal submission when the Plan Change to the HBRC Regional Resource Management Plan is publically notified later this year.

The Law Commission proposes changes to the Incorporated Societies Act 1908 and has released a discussion paper. Proposals relate mostly to incorporated societies but some would apply to unincorporated societies and trusts. The paper and details of how to make submissions are at the website: www.lawcom.govt.nz.

Suggestions include that there be a standard constitution comprising a generic code of rules as a default mechanism applicable to all societies, unless individual organisations choose to develop and adopt their own variants. It is proposed that there be basic requirements for any organisation's constitution, including: mechanisms for resolving conflicts; provision for a neutral person to mediate in matters of disciplining members; clear rules for natural justice in matters of discipline, for the availability of records to members, for the avoidance and declaration of conflicts of interest and possibly a requirement for the appointment of a keeper of the rules and legal obligations. The paper asks whether there should be different rules where the society is designed to benefit members compared with public benefit organisations.

People with experience of running societies are encouraged to submit and to discuss options proffered. Some of the ideas are borrowed from various Australian states and other jurisdictions. One suggestion is that organisations could be incorporated with only 5 people rather than the current minimum of 15 people.

The paper does not canvass the issue of organisations of organisations, such as ECO, but the suggestions would affect ECO and our member organisations.

Others questions are how existing organisations are treated in any transition to a new law; whether there should be a regulator for incorporated societies and whether just one law is needed for all societies including trusts.

Generally the suggestions are helpful, but it is unclear to ECO that there is any need for a regulator and it seems to us this could be misused by governments that might want to interfere with civil society, including the more outspoken and critical organisations.

Members and Friends are urged to read the document and offer up your wisdom on the matters canvassed.

Submissions closed on 30 September 2011.

Denniston Coal Mine Proposal

by Brian Anderson

The ecologically-special Denniston Plateau is under threat from a Perth-based mining company, Bathurst Resources. This company is proposing to establish a large open-cast coal mine on high-value conservation land.

When Gerry Brownlee announced the government's 'backdown' on mining he said, amongst other nonsense, that he had been given a mandate to increase mining on conservation land that is not in Schedule 4. We are starting to see the affects of that policy on the Denniston Plateau. The West Coast Environment Network produced a summary of the proposal's impacts which can be found on the ECO website: www.eco.org.nz/key-issues/mining.html

The mine and coal processing plant would together destroy 200 ha of largely unmodified, historically rare and biodiversity rich conservation land. In return, it would increase New Zealand's coal exports by 62% and likely leave a degraded, weed-infested area that would continue to produce acid mine drainage affecting water quality for decades. This is just the first in a series of mines that Bathurst are planning for the Denniston Plateau (and beyond), which is 92% in public conservation land.

The resource consents, heard before Buller District Council/ West Coast Regional Council Commissioners, have recently been granted, despite the Commissioners expressing grave concerns over the likely destructive cumulative effects of mining the Plateau. It is very likely that these consents will be appealed. The company also still needs an access agreement and concession from the Minister of Conservation, Kate Wilkinson. Surprisingly the Department of Conservation did not appear at the resource consent hearings. The reason given was 'prioritising resources' but the real reason is likely DOC's new working paradigm that 'business is good for conservation'.

The Department of Conservation is currently assessing an access agreement under the Crown Minerals Act and a concession under the Conservation Act (for the



Photo courtesy of Marijke Lettink

West Coast green gecko on the Denniston Plateau.

“The mine and coal processing plant would together destroy 200 ha of largely unmodified, historically rare and biodiversity rich conservation land.”

coal processing plant). There is no explicit provision for public input into the access agreement process but we hope that the Minister of Conservation will publicly notify both matters - this is likely to be in the next month or two.

The concession process faces a much higher hurdle, being carried out under the Conservation Act and subject to explicit requirement for public notification. The technical reports from the Department (obtained under the OIA) show that there are significant values (particularly ecologic and historic) that will be destroyed. Any rational decision maker would conclude that the mine proposal is not consistent with section 61 of the Crown Minerals Act nor the provisions of the Conservation Act. However, the Department and Minister of Conservation cannot be relied on given the current Department underfunding and government policy.

It is really important that this mine is refused access by the Minister of Conservation as:

- the proposed site is protected as public conservation land and has significant conservation values;
- it is the first of Bathurst Resources' proposed mines which would eventually destroy the Denniston Plateau and produce 125-167 million tonnes of climate-changing coal;
- it would compromise a proposal by Forest and Bird for the area important values to be protected as a coal plateau reserve (see the proposal linked on the ECO website); and

- it would encourage other multi-national miners to think that NZ coal is ‘easy pickings’.

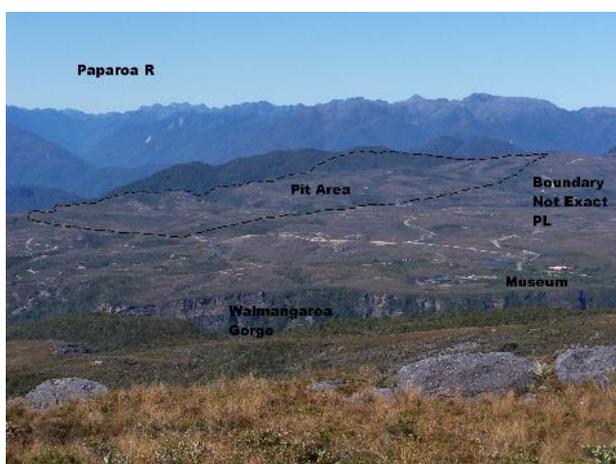
The Too Precious to Mine (2p2m) campaign mobilised a fantastic number of New Zealanders and we believe that most of those concerned thought they were protesting about mining on any conservation land. The proposed open-cast escarpment coal mine at Denniston is the first large-scale mine to be considered on conservation land since then.

Please write to the Minister of Conservation and West Coast Conservator expressing your opposition to the proposal and ask them to refuse the grant of an access agreement.

“The proposed open-cast escarpment coal mine at Denniston is the first large-scale mine to be considered on conservation land since the Too Precious to Mine campaign.”

There also needs to be very strong opposition to the concession for a coal processing plant which will be notified soon. Apart from the fact that it is unjustifiable under the Conservation Act, its presence on the Denniston Plateau for 35 years would perpetuate large scale coal mining on conservation land. Further details and a link to a template letter can be found on the ECO website: www.eco.org.nz/key-issues/mining.html

Brian Anderson is secretary of West Coast Environment Network, an expanding collaboration of individuals interested in the rich diversity of life, stunning landscapes, and wilderness on the West Coast of the South Island.



The Denniston Plateau - area zoned for mining

‘Generation Zero’ calls for Zero Emissions Plan

Kicking the fossil fuel habit and achieving zero net greenhouse gas emissions are central to a positive future for young New Zealanders.

Generation Zero is a campaign by young New Zealanders intent on reclaiming our future. This new movement seeks to unite young people around a vision of a zero carbon New Zealand, and empower them to stand up for their right to a positive future.

Generation Zero Spokesperson Chelsea Robinson says, “Right now our futures are under threat because of short-sighted decision making. Rather than just growing increasingly worried and angry, we are standing up to make sure that climate change starts getting the attention it deserves.”

New Zealand has no credible emissions reduction plan, only a mechanism to shift most of the costs to a future generation – the Emissions Trading Scheme. According to a recent UN report, the plans currently in place will achieve only one third of the emissions reductions required to meet the Government’s own 2020 target. In purely financial terms, young people stand to be lumbered with an undue share of the carbon debt being racked up due to current inaction.

Generation Zero urges all political parties and government agencies to raise their ambition to what is required, not what we are told is politically acceptable.

That means:

- A plan to achieve zero net emissions in New Zealand before 2050
- A timetable set in legislation to action the plan, with three year milestones
- A plan that emphasises emission reductions but allows the use of permanent, biodiverse afforestation to meet targets
- A plan that ensures today’s carbon bills get paid today.

“We are Generation Zero: the generation to oversee the transformation to a zero carbon world,” says Chelsea. “This isn’t just a name, it’s an identity. It’s our place to step up and make our voices heard on how this plays out, and it’s our time – this election – to ignite change.”

Further cuts at the Department of Conservation

by Cath Wallace

The Department of Conservation is going to lose over 96 staff all around New Zealand by the end of the year.

These cuts follow on from cuts initiated by the current Government in the 2009 budget which saw \$54 million cuts from the conservation vote over four years and future budget cuts in natural heritage management of \$9.3 million per year included in this year's budget. Natural heritage management is the appropriation for maintaining, restoring and protecting ecosystems, habitats and species.

The budget included a reduction of the area under sustained possum control of 35,000 hectares and currently less than one-eighth of conservation land is controlled for possums, rats and stoats.

The Government has failed to recognise that funding the Department of Conservation is an investment in protecting natural capital: it is an essential part of Government activity.

The department currently has 1800 staff around the country to manages 33 percent of the New Zealand including offshore islands (total of 8.25 million ha), marine reserves, and marine mammals and seabirds, and international responsibilities.

The biggest cuts are occurring in four regional centres – Northland, Whanganui, Nelson and Southland. Among the cuts are 40 percent of the staff in Nelson, a third in Whanganui office and a third in Southland.

Jobs affected included those in science, planning, legal and communications. While the Government are arguing these are back room jobs, when has science not been frontline to the Department of Conservation? The Department of Conservation has an international reputation for using science to protect threatened species and habitats.

The budget cuts and the loss of biodiversity expertise to the department will harm its work in protecting threatened habitats and retrenchments are bound to attract international attention.



Takahe - one of the 250 threatened species under management by DoC

Currently only 250 of more than 2700 threatened species are under active management by the Department of Conservation.

Conservation land provides the clean water that economic activity relies on. Our unique species whether they are kiwi, kaka, kowhai or Kauri are what makes New Zealand special and an essential part of our sense of place.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's (PCE) report on 1080 noted that less than one-eighth of conservation land is controlled for possums, rats and stoats. The current budget cuts the area under active possum control by 35,000 hectares.

The Government has its priorities all wrong. In contrast the government has increased funding for Crown Minerals of \$5 million per year and about \$20 million allocated over 3 years for seismic surveying.

More job losses are likely next year at conservancy and local area offices. The Department and other public services is also being required to directly fund from the current budget the cost of KiwiSaver, and some State sector retirement schemes for their employees. The Government made a decision to transfer these costs and not including the current funding without information on what the costs would be for government departments.

ECO calls on all political parties to promote the adequate funding of the Department of Conservation at the upcoming election.

New Zealand faces an ewaste crisis, says new report

by Lara Charles

The eDay New Zealand Trust released a report in July highlighting the spiralling electronic waste (ewaste) problem in New Zealand. The report estimates that 2.2 million televisions and 1.5 million home computers, each containing toxic cathode ray tubes, will be dumped in the next few years.

The New Zealand government estimates currently there are 80,000 tonnes of electrical and electronic waste disposed of into landfills each year. The eDay trust estimate that 20,000 tonnes of this comes from televisions, computers and computer peripherals.

“Our desire for the latest gadget has resulted in this huge environmental crisis in New Zealand and the world. Computer sales are on the increase and we are facing a disposal deluge of cathode ray tube TVs with the imminent switch to digital television in September 2012,” said Laurence Zwimpfer, Chair of the eDay New Zealand Trust.

“This hunger for electronics must be met with Government regulation to ensure thousands of tonnes of toxic ewaste will not be dumped in our landfills.”

The report, titled *Ewaste in New Zealand: five years on*, follows from *e-Waste in New Zealand: taking responsibility for end-of-life computers and TVs*, produced in 2006. Both reports can be downloaded from www.eday.org.nz.

With the release of the report, the eDay Trust is calling on industry and Government to work together and permanently solve the increasing problem through a national co-regulatory ewaste product stewardship based recycling scheme.

The Government’s “going digital” programme as part of moves to phase out analogue TV may not prevent over 1.5 million cathode ray TVs being dumped without greater action.

“We are not talking about heavy handed Government intervention. We’re calling on the Government to give the IT and TV industries a clear commitment to support an industry managed scheme with the necessary regulations to ensure all suppliers and importers contribute equitably to the costs of a national recycling scheme,” Mr Zwimpfer said.



Electronic waste stockpile in Christchurch

In June the Australian Parliament passed the Product Stewardship Bill and the first scheme to be established under the new legislation will be a national, industry-led television and computer recycling scheme, which is to be phased in from the end of 2011.

As the report notes product stewardship “calls on those in the product lifecycle – manufacturers, retailers, users and disposers – to share responsibility for reducing the environmental impacts of products”.

Currently 27 of the OECD countries now have e-waste product stewardship regulation. Much of Asia has implemented e-waste legislation, including South Korea, Japan, China and Taiwan. E-waste regulations could be developed under section 23 of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008.

“The eDay Trust is calling on industry and Government to work together and permanently solve the increasing problem”

“These recent developments in Australia represent an example of positive cooperation between industry and Government. New Zealand is rapidly falling behind Australia and the rest of the world as the voluntary approach advocated by the New Zealand Government is simply not working, and the evidence we present in our report from other countries strongly suggests that voluntary schemes will never work for waste electronics,” said Mr Zwimpfer.

Crime against the environment as a crime against humanity

by Diana Shand

“Eday hopes the NZ industry can demonstrate the same level of e-responsibility they are demonstrating in Australia.”

As the report notes “voluntary approaches to solving the ewaste problem will not work because of the structural and behavioural market characteristics of e-product retail markets”.

The report sets out a road map to achieve product stewardship scheme involving both industry and the government.

The Government has announced the establishment of 20 e-waste recycling

centres around the country. A further \$1 million over 2 years is to go towards helping electronic waste get recycled including the establishment of a further 15 centres. The charges for dropping of e-waste will be a negative incentive for the scheme to work, being higher than tip charges.

In addition it is doubtful that these centres would be sufficient to deal with the flood of e-waste over the next two years as people respond to the change to digital television.

An integrated product stewardship scheme should be a government priority.

“Our desire for the latest gadget has resulted in this huge environmental crisis in New Zealand and the world.”

E-Waste collection:

On EDay 2010 (6 November) there was:

17,787 cars through the eDay sites, about 76,899 items collected, with an estimated tonnage of 877 tonnes.

This includes around 65,000 computer desktop boxes over the 3 years of EDay (2007-2010).

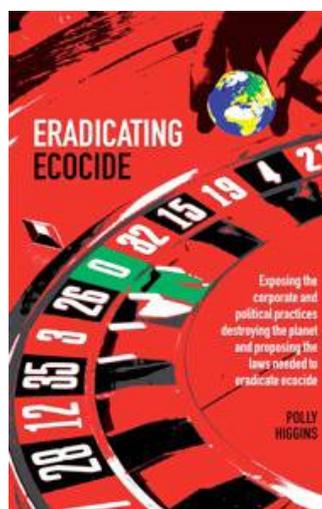
The concept that serious damage to the environment, the basis of our life, should be seen as a criminal act is gaining serious consideration. Polly Higgins, a British environmental lawyer has recently addressed audiences in New Zealand, expounding on her proposal that Ecocide become the 5th Crime Against Peace, to sit alongside Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity, War Crimes and Crimes of Aggression. as an international crime. (See www.pollyhiggins.com/)

Higgins argues that corporations and governments should be prosecuted in the International Criminal Court for widespread, longlasting and severe environmental damage or “ecocide”. These entities, or the people responsible within them, should have a duty of care, the same responsibility as individuals to act without recklessness and to be responsible for the harm they cause to others.

She proposes that ecocide might be defined as “mass damage, destruction or loss of ecosystems of a given territory, whether by human agency or by other causes, to such an extent that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been severely damaged”.

Polly Higgins points out that international laws apply for ecocide in wartime and the defining conditions of size, duration and impact of the damage could and should be extended to peacetime. She has proposed this legislation to the United Nations, and the Bolivian Government is one which has adopted such legislation in domestic law. Her book, *Eradicating Ecocide* has won the UK People’s Book Prize.

See www.eradicatingecocide.com/



Eradicating Ecocide, by Polly Higgins

“Exposing the corporate and political practices destroying the planet and proposing the laws needed to eradicate ecocide”

Energy Policy fails sustainability and climate test

The Government's recently released energy strategy (2011-2016) will fail in moving New Zealand to a low carbon economy. The strategy is still wedded to expanding oil drilling in New Zealand waters and lacks vision to move New Zealand to a low carbon economy.

The goals of the policy are absurdly contradictory and there is clearly a massive disconnect in Government goals. The strategy uses "sustainable" only once and that in relation to the Resource Management Act.

The government's goal is for "New Zealand to make the most of its abundant energy potential through the environmentally responsible development and efficient use of the country's diverse energy resources."

The New Zealand Energy Strategy 2011-2021 sets out four priority areas:

- Diverse resource development;
- Environmental responsibility;
- Efficient use of energy; and
- Secure and affordable energy.

The strategy includes the commitment that: "By 2050, we aim to achieve a 50 percent reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels."

The strategy doesn't indicate how that goal will be met when there is considerable focus on increasing drilling for oil and gas. The document promotes the idea that, "New Zealand's oil and gas production could be substantially increased – potentially to the point where New Zealand becomes a net exporter of oil by 2030."

The strategy includes the commitment that, "by 2025 we are aiming to have 90 percent of our electricity generated from renewable resources." In contrast the projections put forward in the document indicated that fossil fuels are still likely to represent around 20 percent of generation in 2025. It is unclear how the Government proposes to get to 10 percent without the previous legislated mandate or imposing some other requirement on the electricity sector.

The Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is being relied on to deliver reductions in emissions but the weakening proposed in the current review and all projections indicate that it is not up to that task.

The Government states that: "Developing a mix of energy options makes good economic and environmental sense and will help us transition to a prosperous and secure low-carbon future." But all the projections in the strategy and associated documentation point to increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

The transport section is lacking in vision and bizarrely includes the uneconomic roads of national significance as part of its efficient use of energy. There is no great vision of the need to develop a low carbon transport system to respond to climate change over the next 40 years.

"All the projections in the strategy and associated documentation point to increasing greenhouse gas emissions."

The Government also released their revised Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy 2011-2016 (NZE ECS), a companion strategy, which is specifically focused on the promotion of energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy.

The NZE ECS has been prepared in accordance with the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act 2000. It focuses on six sectors: Transport, Business, Homes, Products, the Electricity System, and the Public Sector.

Most of the objectives lack concrete targets apart from the improvement in the commercial and industrial energy intensity, increase in woody biomass or geothermal use, increased insulation of 188,500 homes by 2013 and the 90 percent renewable target by 2025.

The strategy is much less detailed than the previous strategy and has business as usual targets of a 1.3 percent per annum improvement in energy intensity which is exactly the same trend as over the last 20 years. New Zealand must do much more than that if it is to be serious about reducing energy greenhouse gas emissions and reducing our energy environmental footprint.

The strategies and background information can be found on the Ministry of Economic Development website: www.med.govt.nz

New Zealand's Native Trees - John Dawson and Rob Lucas

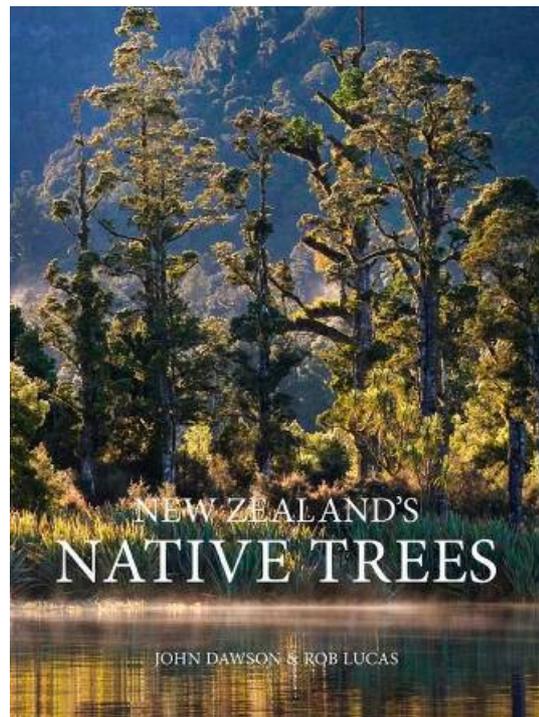
A new book on New Zealand's native trees, to be released in September, is the most comprehensive book on the subject to be published in the last 30 years, according to its publisher, Jane Connor. The substantial, 576-page *New Zealand's Native Trees* covers more than 320 species, subspecies and varieties of native trees, from the massive kauri and the ubiquitous cabbage tree to rare and endangered species found only on offshore islands.

'Not since John Salmon's *The Native Trees of New Zealand* was published in 1980 has a book covered our native trees in such detail,' says Connor, Managing Director and Publisher at Craig Potton Publishing. 'One of the most remarkable features of the book is the stunning collection of 2300 photographs, almost all taken by Rob Lucas. Over the last seven years, he has been from Cape Reinga to Stewart Island several times in search of trees at just the right stage to photograph.'

New Zealand is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, and our unique native forests are a major reason for this status. Not only do they look, smell and feel like no other forest on earth, the majority of plants occur nowhere else. Along with this exceptionally high level of endemism, ancient botanical connections to other places and the extraordinary adaptations of plants over millions of years of isolation add up to something that is of huge significance globally.

As well as being a fabulous reference for identification, *New Zealand's Native Trees* is a celebration of the incredible diversity of our native trees and forests. An appealing aspect of the book is the more than 50 boxed features, which tell some of the fascinating stories associated with our native trees, such as the relationship between kakapo and rimu, and the close connection between certain moths and species of *Olearia*.

Botanist John Dawson and photographer Rob Lucas have previously collaborated on several books, including *Nature Guide to the New Zealand Forest*. This new book is published in two editions, standard RRP \$120.00 and limited deluxe RRP \$180.00. *New Zealand's Native Trees* is a wonderful contribution to the documentation and understanding of the richness of New Zealand's native flora, and will inspire a new generation of New Zealanders to value and preserve our natural heritage.



In partnership with the publishers, ECO is able to offer readers of *ECOLink* a 10% discount on all orders made before 31 December 2011. So, if you want to own this comprehensive book on New Zealand's diverse native trees, be sure to send in your order! ECO will receive 5% from orders so this is a great way of supporting ECO as well.

You can request an order form by either emailing the ECO office at: eco@eco.org.nz or contact the publisher's direct at: info@copp.co.nz or call them on 03 548 9009 and quote ECO offer.

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