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Committee Environment
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Business Sustainability annual report 2006-07

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the business sustainability activities and achievements of the 2006-07 year.

2. EnviroSmart

EnviroSmart is a 2 year programme that focuses on improving the environmental performance and resource efficiency of businesses. EnviroSmart businesses not only finish the programme with a nationally recognised environmental accreditation (EnviroMark-NZ Gold), they also are able to increase their profits through improved efficiencies, win contracts and reduce waste.

The first programme began in July 2006 and 11 businesses joined. They are now working towards Gold level and will finish in July 2008. The second programme has just begun (official launch on August 2nd) with 12 businesses now working towards achieving their Bronze level. A total of 23 businesses are involved in the EnviroSmart programme in the region. (See **Attachment 1** for a list of participating businesses.)

Feedback from businesses in both programmes has been extremely positive, with many reporting benefits such as:-

- Cost savings – through efficiency improvements in the areas of waste, power, water and fuel use.
- Marketing benefits – many businesses have found it has improved their reputation, helped them gain a competitive edge over competitors and win tenders.
- Building capacity and in-house skills – through the appointment of a project champion and staff involvement.

Although feedback from EnviroSmart businesses has been positive, marketing and recruitment of businesses has been challenging. Greater Wellington Regional Council and the local councils involved have used their local newsletters & magazines (such as Elements), websites and networks to promote the programme. We have found that many of the businesses have joined because:

- Other businesses have recommended the programme to them.
- Their clients (e.g. Central Government – GOVT3) have insisted on them providing proof they are working on their environmental impact.
- They have seen an advertisement for the programme through their industry association network (e.g. Printers Association).

In order to utilise this more, EnviroSmart businesses have been invited to speak at various events. We also plan to use our procurement policy to encourage current Greater Wellington suppliers to get involved in the programme.

In order to get more businesses involved from other parts of the region (eg Kapiti, Wairarapa etc), the local councils in those areas have to agree to be a sponsor. Therefore all other non-EnviroSmart councils (Kapiti Coast District Council, Upper Hutt District Council, and Wairarapa Councils) have been contacted and the programme and its benefits outlined to key personnel in these councils. The feedback has generally been that it isn't the appropriate time for them but that they could be interested in joining up for Programme 3 next year. In addition, discussions have been held with the Wellington Regional Strategy team to explore potential linkages between the aims of WRS and the EnviroSmart programme.

3. Get Sustainable Challenge and Awards Programme

Greater Wellington is the principal sponsor of the Sustainable Business Network's (SBN) Get Sustainable Challenge, along with Wellington and Hutt City councils, as category sponsors. The annual Sustainable Business Awards (which are part of the Get Sustainable Challenge) were recently held on September 5th, and as the Environmental Education Department Report has already reported on these, this report will not repeat those details here. (In **Attachment 2**, there is a list of businesses that entered and a list of the winners of awards for both 2006 and 2007). A total of 62 businesses have now undertaken the Get Sustainable Challenge in both years. Businesses that enter are not only provided with advice on ways to improve their sustainability, they also receive membership of the SBN and access to their networking events and workshops. (**Attachment 2** also lists the business sustainability workshops that were run for SBN members in 2007).

4. Wellington CBD Tower recycling project

Following on from the work that was done on the Majestic Centre a year ago, Greater Wellington and the Wellington City Council received Ministry for the Environment SMF Funding to work together on a similar recycling project in 6 commercial office towers in the Wellington CBD.

The buildings participating in the trial were:- HP Tower, Vodafone on the Quay, ASB Tower, State Insurance Building, AXA Building, and the GEN-I Tower (details of the project can be found in **Attachment 3**).

Results

From the beginning of January to the end of August 2007, it is estimated that approximately 40 tonnes of recyclable material was diverted from the landfill stream into the recycling stream. A total of 53 businesses/departments participated in the trial and the overwhelming response to the recycling programme was positive. Key contacts indicated that recycling was integrated into the office environment with minimal hassle. The majority of tenants have decided to continue recycling except for some that felt they were too small or were planning to move.

Where to from here?

We are currently working on a news release on the project and aim to get that out in the next few weeks. This will acknowledge the businesses that were involved in the trial and promote recycling to other buildings and businesses in the CBD. The two councils plan to continue working together to improve waste minimisation and sustainability in the Wellington office building sector. A large number of useful contacts and knowledge of the office building sector were developed as a result of this trial.

5. Porirua business initiative

Business Porirua, Porirua City Council and Greater Wellington have received Ministry for the Environment SMF funding to work on a business sustainability project in Porirua. The plan is to work with a diverse range of Porirua businesses on sustainability initiatives which will include: waste minimisation, energy efficiency, water efficiency, air and water quality, transport and sustainable procurement. We are currently at the first stage of this project gathering information from a range of Porirua businesses to understand what the key sustainability issues are. The businesses include: retailers, manufacturing, food outlets, supermarkets, car servicing, warehouse, cafés, dairies, offices and bars. (**Attachment 4** outlines the plan for the rest of the project).

6. Recycling directory

Recycling Operators of NZ (RONZ) are currently working on updating the Wellington Region Recycling Directory. Once they finish this work, it will be available on the RONZ website alongside other recycling directories for other regions and cities. They also will send us an electronic copy of this information.

7. No throw waste exchange

The No Throw waste exchange (www.nothrow.co.nz) is currently being trialled in the Wellington region. The 10 month trial is being paid for by the Wellington Region Environmental Agency (WREA) and will be completed by October. At the next WREA in November a decision will be made about whether this service will continue for Wellington businesses. The waste exchange is a unique service that helps businesses connect their unwanted materials and recyclables with new owners through a web-based and free phone forum.

8. **Paintwise**

The Resene Paintwise service allows unwanted paint and paint packaging to be returned to designated Resene ColorShops. Good quality Resene paint will be gifted to community groups and cans will be recycled. Greater Wellington contributed along with other Councils to some of the set-up costs of this service.

9. **Working with individual businesses**

We have also worked with a number of businesses on a range of sustainability initiatives. These businesses are listed below:-

- Dulux
- BP
- NZ Rugby Union
- Contact Energy
- Sustainability assessments have also been carried out for Caffe L'affare, LSG Sky chef Catering Company, Miramar Golf Course and the Lighthouse Café at Pauatahanui.

10. **GW internal sustainability**

In order to maintain credibility and trust, it is vital that Greater Wellington Regional Council 'walks the talk' in terms of sustainability. In addition, by learning from experience and doing sustainability ourselves, we are better able to influence others (businesses, schools, community) to be more sustainable. The Council also has a role to play in influencing its supply chain to become more sustainable. Over the last year a range of internal sustainability projects have been put in place.

11. **Communication**

Communication and promotion of our business sustainability programmes has been an integral part of their implementation. It is not therefore necessary to communicate this summary report. (**Attachment 5** lists the various channels that have been used over the last year to promote our business sustainability work).

We intend developing a communications plan for this area of work. This will help increase the effectiveness and quality of communication and ensure that it reaches target business groups.

12. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Receives** the report.
2. **Notes** the content of the report.

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Attachment 1: EnviroSmart programme

Attachment 2: Get Sustainable Challenge (SBN)

Attachment 3: CBD recycling project

Attachment 4: Porirua Business Initiative

Attachment 5: Communication of business sustainability work