



## Kiwi companies could do better suggests international report



Pictured: Peter Webster, EIRIS Executive Director

A recent report in the UK newspaper, The Independent, listed the top Ten green companies in the world, based on data collected by EIRIS (the Ethical Independent Research Service). A not-for-profit organisation, EIRIS does not investigate companies' financial status but looks at their social, environmental and ethical policies and practices.

an economic slump. Customers and shareholders will become increasingly valuable so companies maintaining or expanding their responsible image during this time may be likely to experience a proportionally lower decrease in share value and loss of market share. Conversely, companies that view responsible business as a fringe activity adopted to avoid negative publicity may discontinue their responsible business practices during periods of economic instability."

Environmental Choice New Zealand licensee SCA (Svenska Cellulosa) was rated second in the world list. Among the Swedish company's products are nappies, sanitary towels, tissues and packaging. All wood supplied to its mills to produce paper must meet Forest Stewardship Council standards, and the company has policies to avoid illegal logging and to promote carbon-neutral fuels; they also have very high waste recovery.

Aside from business motivations at times of possible recession, the 2007 State of Responsible Business report by EIRIS restates the compelling UN statistics (WHO and Unicef) for motivating environmental responsibility: nearly 20% of the world's population does not have access to drinking water, and 40% lack access to sanitation facilities.

### At the bottom of the list were Hong Kong, Singapore, USA, New Zealand and Australia

EIRIS has published a list of companies demonstrating an improvement in environmental performance, analysed by country. The highest achievers were Netherlands, UK, France, Greece and Switzerland. At the bottom of the list were Hong Kong (worst), Singapore, USA, New Zealand and Australia. Less than 25% of companies surveyed in Australia and NZ in the 2007 report demonstrated improvement in environmental performance. (The authors do remark that less developed policies for reporting environmental performance may have lowered the score for the Asia-Pacific nations.)

The EIRIS Foundation is a charity, set up in 1983 with the help of a group of churches and charities that wanted to apply their principles to their investments. They needed a research organisation to help them put their principles into practice when making investment decisions. Ethical Investment Research Services (EIRIS) Ltd, a subsidiary company of EIRIS, undertakes most of the research for clients and provides commercial services to a wide range of international agencies and companies including ABN-Amro, Credit Suisse, Lloyds TSB, Merrill Lynch, AXA, FTSE and some government pension funds. The report quoted surveyed 3000 companies worldwide including all companies in the FTSE All World Developed Index, measuring them against 60 environmental and social benchmarks.

The report also applies its conclusions to a timely subject. "In the event of a recession it is possible that companies will seek to expand their responsible business practices rather than reduce them. When there was a market crash in 1993, those companies that invested in advertising to boost brand image were the ones that emerged as leaders once the markets recovered. As companies are adopting responsible business practices to protect their brand value and build customer trust, the trends should arguably be the same in the event of

EIRIS works with the Centre for Australian Ethical Research (CAER) which is an independent, not-for-profit research organization, established in 2000 to provide independent social and environmental data on companies operating in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. The data is based on publicly available information gathered from company and government websites and company Annual Reports. The full report can be viewed by pasting into your web browser <http://www.eiris.org/files/press%20releases/stateofrbsep07.pdf>

*The information above does not necessarily reflect the view of The NZ Ecolabelling Trust.*



## Autumn Paint Jobs

All paint manufacturers carrying the ECNZ label must demonstrate stewardship in recovery of unwanted or unused paint (consult your chosen ECNZ-certified paint supplier through our website for details of individual processes).

Dulux launched its Envirowash system two years ago, offering one solution to the task of cleaning up water-based paint brushes and rollers responsibly. The unit, which is the size of a wheelie bin, converts waterborne paint washings into clear water and solid waste, allowing for easier and safer disposal.

The units are two-part, a sink and a separate filtration tank. Painting equipment is washed in the sink, using a connected mains water supply. These paint washings then transfer into a holding tank, where specialist additives flocculate and separate the washings into clear water and inert paint solids.

The clear water is then drawn off and either re-used or disposed of while the remaining residue is pumped through a filter ready for removal and drying. Once dry, this solid inert residue typically equals 5kg per 450-litre discharge and can be disposed of as non-hazardous waste.

There are 3 different sized units available, the larger 450ltr and 800ltr are ideal for major construction sites and heavier usage, whilst the more compact 160ltr is more mobile and can easily fit into a small van. For further information or to arrange a demonstration, please contact Murray Gray at Dulux on 021 926 225.



PaintPlus has long operated a paint return policy, but it was at the beginning of summer that John Warman sent out this flyer, commenting: "We have run a paint return policy since the inception of our company. After 10 years it was time to formalise it and put it into print form. We have a policy of only producing paint to a top quality standard and this applies to the re-manufactured returns".

## GM Dinz out

Environmental Choice GM Robin Taylor addressed the New Zealand National Design Conference late last year, and emphasised the importance of sustainable considerations at the very beginning of the creative process, the design stage.

The Best Awards, presented in conjunction with the conference, included a sustainable product design award, judged against criteria that include life cycle assessment.



One of the attributes credited by the judges is possession of a valid ecolabel such as Environmental Choice.

The Gold award was won by Formway Design / Formway Furniture for the Met Adapt Meeting Table. (Formway have applied for Environmental Choice certification). Full criteria for this and the other annual design awards can be found at the newly launched website: [www.bestawards.co.nz](http://www.bestawards.co.nz)

## Just when you thought it was getting better...

Michael Field, sustainability manager for North Shore City Council offers this cure for complacency, from a variety of sources:

80% of the original forests are gone  
25% of mammal species are threatened  
50% of all mangroves are gone  
10% of bird species is threatened  
50% of the words coral reefs is in danger  
70% of sea fisheries are over-fished or have completely collapsed

60% of the worlds largest rivers are dammed or diverted  
50% of all wetlands have gone  
67% of all farmland is degraded  
50% extinction probability for humanity

For better news, please read on....

## Zoolos spotted in West Auckland

Patrons at Auckland Zoo will face the Environmental Choice logo whenever they use the wash-room, thanks to an initiative by licensee the E. Sime Group. Simes supply the dispensers, paper hand towels and toilet tissue, stocked with their BayWest Paper products.



Business development manager Lauren Hay says the company designed a custom sticker for the dispensers. "It was important to the Zoo, and to

us, to know that the public was aware that the paper was environmentally preferable."



According to Peter Fraser, Auckland Zoo conservation officer the product and the client were an ideal match. "We made the change to Bay West toilet tissue, hand towels and dispensers in late 2007. We were looking for a solution that supports our sustainability objectives, and BayWest were a great fit, with 100 per cent post-consumer waste recycled paper that has Environmental Choice accreditation."

## Figure it out...

We would once again like to thank Michael Field, sustainability manager for North Shore City Council, for the following facts, this time from behind-the-scenes research for the latest book from the Earth Policy Institute, by Lester R. Brown.

### First the bad news

The eight warmest years on record have all occurred in the last decade.

For seven of the last eight years, the world has consumed more grain than it produced; grain stocks are now at a historic low.

One fifth of the US grain harvest is now turned into fuel ethanol.

One third of reptile, amphibian, and fish species examined by the World Conservation Union are considered to be threatened with extinction.

Grain yields increased half as fast in the 1990s as they did in the 1960s.

Life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa today is lower than it was in the late 1980s.

Today's economically recoverable reserves of lead, tin, and copper could be depleted within the next 25 years if extraction expands at current rates.

Nearly half of the annual global military budget of \$1.2 trillion is spent by one country -the USA.

### And now the good news

South Korea leads the world in paper recycling, recovering an estimated 77% of paper products.

Conservation agriculture is practiced on more than 100 million hectares around the world.

Four years after London introduced a fee on vehicles entering the city, average car traffic had fallen by 36%. Bicycle trips increased by 49%.

The world produces 110 million bicycles a year, more than twice the production of 49 million cars.

Fish farming, largely of herbivores, is the fastest growing source of animal protein worldwide, increasing by an around 7% each year since 1995.

World soybean production has quadrupled since 1977.

Coal use in Germany has dropped 37% since 1990; in the United Kingdom it has fallen by 43%.

Solar cell production is doubling every two years, making it the world's fastest growing energy source.

Electricity used for lighting around the world can be cut by 65% through efficiency improvements like switching to compact fluorescents.

Find out more in Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization, on-line at [www.earthpolicy.org/Books/PB3/index.htm](http://www.earthpolicy.org/Books/PB3/index.htm), and explore the complete datasets at [www.earthpolicy.org/Books/PB3/data.htm](http://www.earthpolicy.org/Books/PB3/data.htm).)

*New Licensee welcomed to label*

# INTER-WEAVE

## INDIVIDUAL BY DESIGN

A custom fabric designer and supplier, the company's projects include Auckland Town Hall and Chicane Bar in Ponsonby. Managing Director, Tracy March, says that over the past 30 years, Inter-weave Ltd has grown to become a leading designer and manufacturer of premium wool and wool blend furnishing fabrics. "We are one of NZ's few manufacturers that converts a primary, local commodity into high-end fabrics exported internationally. We supply fabric wholesalers throughout the globe, where our products range from aviation upholsteries to top of the range domestic fabrics and luxurious homewares.

"Like so many industries, our company defies the 'bigger is better' tag. Instead we simply seek ways to work smarter across every facet of our operation. We employ the state-of-the-art Nedgraphics CAD system which works seamlessly with our electronic jacquard and dobby looms to transform a design to a woven sample.

"Inter-weave Ltd is part of a national group of companies - all involved in various areas of the woollen textile industry - with a wealth of experience spanning more than 80 years. This 'semi-vertical' structure offers substantial benefits to our clients. Not only do we source yarn from our

parent company, we also offer in-house facilities from yarn and piece dyeing through to specialised wet and dry finishing. This gives our clients a sense of true accountability - offering streamlined project management and very competitive lead times. Inter-weave is also renowned for a willingness to provide low minimums, another example of our service-orientated philosophy.

"Inter-weave's team of skilled technicians can provide a range of special finishes to enhance the anti-soiling and FR properties of our products, however, wool in its natural state scores very highly in these categories. Not only is this a local, natural, rapidly renewable material, but it has numerous advantages over other man-made fibres eg. appearance retention, durability, comfort, natural flame retardency, sustainability and, not least, the ability to absorb toxic VOC's that are released into the atmosphere by many building materials, thus purifying the atmosphere.



R ecycable  
E nvironmental  
A ccredited  
L uxurious

## *Every colour is green*



Resene proactively prints brochures, labels, many colour charts, and Resene News on sustainable paper stocks, so sourcing sustainable paper stock for their main colour charts was a natural step, but not, it seems, as easy as you might hope.

Resene worked with its main colour chart supplier, Colour Communications, for nearly 18 months to test a vast variety of sustainable paper stocks for

durability and aesthetics to complete the transition of the last of their charts to sustainable paper stocks. Being the first time that the colour chart supplier had been asked to help develop sustainable stock options, finding paper stocks that would stand up to the demands of colour chart production was a surprisingly slow process with many sustainable paper stocks too lightweight to withstand the twisting and pulling of colour chips. Numerous production trials later stocks were confirmed for production late last year.

Resene colour charts are finished in Environmental Choice approved Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen, Resene SpaceCote Flat, Resene Enamacryl Metallic and Resene Non-Skid Deck & Path, while the remainder are finished in waterborne inks. Not only do the Resene paints give a truer representation of the actual colour, but they also reduce solvent emissions compared to traditional solvent-borne lacquers. This contrasts overseas colour chart production, where much of the colour chart market is still based on direct deposit colour swatches using solvent-borne lacquers.

## Green film covers the country



Environmental Choice, New Zealand's official ecolabelling certifier, is to make a sponsorship grant to "Reel Earth" - the Aotearoa Environmental Film Festival. The general manager of the Ecolabelling Trust, Robin Taylor, says that raising awareness of environmental issues, and the companies that address them responsibly, is a valuable contribution to sustainability. "An Inconvenient Truth, White Planet and The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour are all high-profile recent movies that have drawn attention to environmental imperatives. In a layer behind this, in a "reel" New Zealand context, are local filmmakers who are focussing on the environment. We are pleased to support them.

"The annual doubling of the number of companies passing assessment for the Environmental Choice label is proof of the growing power of environmentally preferable products in New Zealand. Unfortunately, as in the rest of the world, there is also a growing wave of greenwash here – partial, unsustainable, or irrelevant claims of environmental "friendliness". Our certification processes require 100 percent proof and are based on internationally-recognised standards that weed out pale green imitations.

"Reel Earth encourages investigative film-making relating to the environment and sustainability in New Zealand and globally. Our assessors are also investigators, ensuring that all environmental claims made by label applicants are able to be factually justified. Sponsoring the best young filmmaker award in this festival allows us to foster the early artistic expression of investigative environmentalism."

## New self-help eco-leaders sought

An invitation is being issued to manufacturers and marketers of products not already covered by an Environmental Choice specification to help themselves onto the coveted label list. They will still need to prove their products are environmentally preferable to those of their competitors.

The increasing number of applications for assessment for the government-backed ecolabel has included a broader product range than specifications have been developed for, says ECNZ general manager Robin Taylor. "In a recent two month period we've been approached by many companies with products for whom no specification has yet been developed. Many of these have some motivation to enjoy the competitive benefits of being the first in their product sector to carry the label, potentially giving them a foot up the ladder of government purchasing especially.

"It seems unfair to hold back those whose claims

The Reel Earth Festival opens at the Globe Theatre in Palmerston North on 17 May, and organisers plan to tour the festival to cities and towns throughout New Zealand, from Northland to Otago. The trust will be advertising its site in the film screenings as part of the festival sponsorship. For more, go to [www.reearth.org.nz](http://www.reearth.org.nz)

Environmental Choice has nearly a thousand environmentally-proven products on its website [www.environmentalchoice.org.nz](http://www.environmentalchoice.org.nz) with the number continually growing as applicant companies are able to prove the environmental preferability of their products.



Last year, two 13-year-olds were among the young New Zealand film makers who exhibited at the film awards. Theresa Speedy & Kayla Leonard's video Polluted Piako is a documentary about pollution in a New Zealand lowland river. It identifies problems and solutions that cause pollution.

can be proved, so we've decided to recognise their initiative by offering to work in partnership with them to develop specifications. The Environmental Leadership umbrella specification will provide a streamlined path through the process by allowing a non-specified product's existing, verifiable data to help us draw up the rules applying to its assessment. Whole lifecycle considerations will remain a staunch pillar of any ultimate specification."

The assessment will take place concurrent with the partnership development of the specification, and separate, independent technical assessors may supervise each parallel process to ensure its integrity. Robin Taylor stresses that there will be no reduction in standards. A similar move by the official Canadian eco-labelling agency resulted in just 25 percent of applicants becoming licensed. The usual public and industry submission phase will also need to be completed before any new specifications are finalised.

## Label on a roll

Until recently, Environmental Choice has been visible mostly on business and commercial products, and is now able to be carried by some 900 products.

In the last couple of months, supermarket consumers will have noticed the symbol on one of the most regularly-purchased, fast moving consumer goods ("FMCG"). Purex toilet tissue, marketed by SCA Hygiene, has presented shoppers with clear, very visible branding.

The general manager of Environmental Choice, Robin Taylor, says there is increasing competition in many sectors to be first off the block with certification, or to challenge the first to achieve certification in a sector. "We see visionary companies such as SCA rise above competitors by having the foresight to lead their product sector in certification, but also by capitalising as much as possible on their achievement, especially when they have, for a time, the monopoly in their sector. Some licensees have built commercial advantage over many



"In today's competitive setting, more and more now seek to share the favour of an increasingly eco-sensitive consumer who does not just choose certified products, but demands it. We believe that displaying the label prominently could strongly influence purchasing patterns, based on the rising emphasis that consumer surveys show for ecological purchase motivation."

It was only a matter of time before the procurement confidence shown for the label by the government and commercial sector would filter further down into mass retailing, says Robin Taylor. "With BEE cleaning products, Pink Batts insulation, and major paints among those flying the flag into retail, it is exciting for the Ecolabelling Trust to see the Environmental Choice tick plying its way further onto shopping shelves."

## Copy this

Licence holder Ricoh, the first office equipment supplier to be granted our green and black tick, has published a 6-page environmental statement (printed on FSC certified paper, of course). For three consecutive years, the Ricoh Group has been on the list of 100 Most Sustainable Corporations in the World (published by Innovest).

# RICOH

Among the technologies being used is replacement of petroleum-based materials in copiers – a corn-based plastic is one of the new materials. Polystyrene packaging is being recycled into garden edging, while some components of recycled toner cartridges end up as park benches and rulers.

Since 2004, Ricoh has planted over 10,000 trees throughout New Zealand, says Sustainability Advisor Margie Barriball. "Over its lifetime, an average tree provides more than \$57,000 in environmental and economic benefits," she estimates.



KONICA MINOLTA

Environmental Choice also congratulates Konica Minolta on achieving (in March) the Energy Conservation Grand Prize at Japan's 32nd Energy and Environment Exhibition for its Bizhub C650 series digital colour MFDs. This is one of the company's product ranges certified last year by Environmental Choice New Zealand.

# FUJI XEROX



Another license holder, Fuji Xerox, launched its new worldwide identity on 1 April, focussed on a "sphere of connectivity", which the company says brings up the image of "global", and which represents "the company's close connections to customers, partners, industry as well as society".