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Amy Adams

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Green Ribbon Award finalists announced

To mark World Environment Day, Environment Minister Amy Adams has today announced the finalists for the 2014 Green Ribbon Awards, which honour outstanding contributions to protecting New Zealand's environment.

"Over the 24 years of the Green Ribbon Awards, more than 150 environmental champions have been recognised for their initiative, commitment and dedication to tackling environmental issues," Ms Adams says.

"For this year's awards, 113 nominations were received across 12 categories. The finalists come from a range of backgrounds and the work they do is challenging, time-consuming and sometimes unrewarded.

"World Environment Day is an ideal occasion to show the human face of environmental issues, and promote the fantastic work that is happening in our communities

"Tackling environmental issues is not easy. The Green Ribbon Awards provide an important opportunity to appreciate and showcase the diverse, innovative and interesting environmental activities that are happening around New Zealand.

"New Zealanders have always valued and taken part in voluntary activities, but it is also great to see the range of private and public sector groups that are now making sustainability an integral part of their business."

The finalists include councils, schools, scientists, community organisations, conservation groups, and businesses. Their environmental projects include waste reduction, protecting native species, public education, lowering carbon footprints, reducing water pollution, and more sustainable business practices.

The finalists will attend an awards dinner at Parliament on June 16. Winners will be announced in each category, and then an overall supreme winner will be revealed.

The finalists are:

Protecting our biodiversity

Auckland Council Ark in the Park

This is a collaborative eco restoration project which enhances the biodiversity of more than 2000 hectares in the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park. 600 volunteers have contributed more than 90,000 work hours to the project; setting and maintaining 430 traps and baiting and maintaining more than 4000 bait stations to control pests.

Department of Conservation Ahuriri Napier

Since 2011 the department has worked collaboratively with iwi, councils, the local community and businesses to protect and restore 8000 hectares of land north of Napier. The project has successfully encouraged the return of bird species, retired and re-vegetated farmland, researched pest control, and educated the community about the environment.

Genesis Energy Whio Recovery Programme

The programme assists with the protection and recovery of the whio or blue duck. It is a partnership between Genesis Energy, the Department of Conservation, Forest and Bird and the Central North Island Blue Duck Trust and it supports 14 whio protection sites throughout New Zealand. Thanks to the programme the number of whio pairs in the wild has increased and it is expected that the 10 year Whio Recovery Plan will be delivered three years ahead of schedule.

Reducing our Greenhouse gas emissions

Auckland War Memorial Museum

The museum has reduced its carbon emissions by 50 per cent in the last three years, resulting in 1000 fewer tonnes of carbon entering the atmosphere. The museum has a recycling programme and turns food waste and paper towels into fertiliser, which means that 72 per cent less waste is going to landfill.

Kapiti Coast District Council

The council has reduced its greenhouse gas footprint by 48 per cent. The council has less waste going to landfill and is using less energy due to the refurbishment of the Civic Building and better management of the Waikanae Pool. The Council is focussed on making sustainability affordable and savings are recycled into the budget for new energy conservation projects. Other councils are now replicating the sustainability models implemented at Kapiti Coast District Council.

Victoria University

The university's energy management programme is significantly reducing the university's carbon emissions. The programme includes the use of smart meters to identify trends in energy use, the installation of energy-saving fuel cupboards in laboratories and the use of energy-saving computer software. Victoria University's gas expenditure is currently \$105,000 below target and its electricity expenditure is around \$1.2 million below target.

Minimising our waste*Christchurch City Council Target Sustainability*

This programme provides businesses with free resource efficiency services to help them become sustainable. Target Sustainability is working with more than 80 building projects to reduce waste and encourage energy and water efficiency.

Mt Eden Corrections Facility

150,000 kilograms of waste produced by prisoners and staff at the corrections facility is effectively managed and re-used thanks to their 'Zero to Landfill' initiative. More than a million worms in Serco's 'hungry bin' worm farms eliminate an estimated 60 per cent of the prison's organic waste and recycling bins ensure that inorganic material is properly sorted, recycled or reused.

Whanganui Resource Recovery Trust

The trust handles more than 2000 tonnes of community waste per year, including problem wastes such as waste oil, e-waste, tyres and batteries. Part of the Resource Recovery Centre includes Sustainable Whanganui, a library, education and seminar room where school holiday programmes and workshops are held to educate the community.

Protecting our coasts and oceans*Dune Restoration Trust of New Zealand*

The trust is made up of a national network of community, industry and government groups who work together to promote the restoration and management of New Zealand's more than 21,000 hectares of dunes. The trust has developed methods of establishing native sand binders for coastal plants, has worked with Maori to sustainably harvest pingao for weaving and has led workshops for the community.

Te Korowai o Te Tai O Marokura (Kaikoura Coast Marine Guardians)

The group has developed the Kaikoura Marine Strategy, Sustaining our Sea, which has informed the proposed Te Korowai o Te Tai O Marokura Marine Management Bill. The Bill proposes a new marine reserve, whale and fur seal sanctuary, customary fishing areas and fishing regulations.

Veolia Water (Wellington)

Over the past 20 years Veolia Water has developed and implemented an effective and environmentally-responsible wastewater treatment system for the Wellington region. The wastewater plants reduce odour and ensure that effluent discharged to the ocean is within consent requirements. There has been a visible improvement in coastal ecology in Wellington since the implementation of the programme.

Communication and education*Genesis Energy – Schoolglen*

Established in 2006, the initiative provides schools with free solar panels so they can reduce their energy usage and educates students on the importance of renewable energy and resources. Close to 550,000 kilowatt-hours of electrical energy have been generated by more than 50 schools involved in the programme

Hurunui College Nina Valley EcoBlitz

The Hurunui College Nina Valley EcoBlitz event gave more than 175 Canterbury and Westland school students the opportunity to work with ecologists, university lecturers and university ecology students and to discover and document the species of the Nina Valley and surrounds. The event consisted of 119 field activities which educated and inspired students and teachers and highlighted the importance of scientific methods in fieldwork.

Paper4Trees (Taranaki)

The programme educates schools and pre-schools in the Taranaki region about the importance of diverting paper and cardboard from landfill. Currently 93 schools and 6 pre-schools in the region participate in the programme which has prevented more than 1000 tonnes of paper and cardboard from going to landfill.

Community focus*Conservation Volunteers NZ*

Conservation Volunteers NZ facilitates and manages community engagement in practical conservation across New Zealand. Since 2006, Conservation Volunteers NZ has maintained more than 150,000 metres of walking tracks, removed more than 2,300,000 square metres of weeds, collected more than 26,000 kilograms of rubbish and planted more than 510,000 stems.

Protect Kiwi Trust (Coromandel)

The community-based project protects the North Island brown kiwi on the Kuaotunu Peninsula on the Coromandel's east coast. The Trust is involved in pest control of rats, possums, cats, stoats and weasels which protects the kiwi as well as the biodiversity of other flora and fauna such as the New Zealand dotterel.

Urban Ecoliving Charitable Trust (Auckland)

The trust operates the Tread Lightly Caravan – Auckland's only mobile environmental classroom. Programmes run through the initiative inspire children to consider careers in science and technology and educate them and their families to live more sustainably. More than 14,000 Auckland students have benefitted from the Tread Lightly Caravan programme.

Small business leadership*Stormwater 360 (Auckland)*

Stormwater 360's products protect New Zealand's rivers, lakes and coastal waters from pollution. The products remove more than 1000 tonnes of contaminated material from storm water annually, preventing it from reaching our waterways

Sustainability Trust (Wellington)

The trust has converted a concrete bunker into a unique space for environmentally-focused projects. The conversion was built using 80 per cent recycled and recovered material and uses natural light to save energy. The public education space provides workshops and events to educate and inspire environmentally responsible living.

Wormworx (Cromwell)

Thanks to the worm farm, thousands of tonnes of horticultural, primary production and supermarket waste have been prevented from going to landfill. Wormworx has also successfully trialled processing dairy waste to further reduce waste in our landfills.

Large business leadership*Coronet Peak Ski Resort*

Coronet Ski Resort has put in place practical actions to reduce solid waste going to landfill, reduce carbon emissions, reduce the use of salt and other chemicals and remove noxious weeds and pests. Some of their initiatives include a massive mountain clean-up with staff over summer, using an energy-efficient snow-making system, implementing a 'switch it off' campaign and expanding the bus fleet and 'share a ride' promotion to save on fuel. Combined, these initiatives have resulted in a 60,000 litre fuel consumption reduction and a saving of 10 per cent of electricity.

Downer New Zealand

Downer New Zealand has implemented initiatives to ensure that the environment is protected from accidental sewage and wastewater discharges during the Christchurch rebuild. More than 1500 contractors have learned and benefitted from their best practice guide and innovations.

Trevelyan's Pack and Cool Store (Te Puke)

Trevelyan's Pack and Cool Store has implemented a sustainability framework and has introduced many environmental and social initiatives. The company has reduced its fossil fuel consumption and has reduced waste going to landfill from 150 tonnes to 20 tonnes. The company also has an onsite native bush area to encourage biodiversity.

Public sector leadership*Auckland Council La Rosa Reserve*

This initiative involves the council working with the community to restore freshwater streams and reinstate natural ecosystems in the Auckland region. The La Rosa Reserve has many benefits; it improves water quality, creates a recreational space and connects people with their local environment.

Hurunui College Nina Valley EcoBlitz

This initiative involved scientists, senior high school students, university students, teachers, and helpers take part in two days of intensive ecology fieldwork in the Nina Valley. Students were able to learn about ecology from the experts and practice scientific methods in a hands-on way.

Western Bay of Plenty District Council

Instead of the biosolids from the Waihi Beach and Katikati wastewater treatment plants going to landfill, the council has applied the biosolids to stock paddocks. The biosolids are then used as a natural fertiliser and soil conditioner on productive farmland. Thanks to this innovative initiative 100 per cent of the council's biosolids are being diverted from landfill.

Green economy*Abodo Wood (Auckland)*

Through using new technologies Abodo Wood, has developed a range of high-performance wood cladding products that are free from wood preservatives. The products utilise renewable New Zealand plantation wood which is grown in a sustainable way. Using local timber has many benefits including carbon sequestration, erosion protection and biodiversity protection. It also provides a responsible alternative to native timbers and imported species that may not be grown as sustainably.

Donaghys Industries (Christchurch)

Donaghys Industries' product N-Boost helps reduce nitrogen losses from dairy farms by improving the efficiency of fertiliser. This can lead to less nitrogen finding its way into our waterways, a reduced need for synthetic nitrogen fertiliser and increased biological nitrogen fixation from the atmosphere, all of which benefit the environment.

Stewardship champion

Auckland Council Ark in the Park

Auckland Council Ark in the Park works in partnership with Forest and Bird to enhance the biodiversity of the Waitakere Ranges, covering around 2100 hectares of the Waitakere River Catchment. The project is an excellent example of how the environment can be protected through partnerships and community involvement.

Friends of Oakley Creek

The organisation is a driving force behind the protection, enhancement and restoration of Oakley Creek, the longest urban stream in Auckland. It has worked with the council and hundreds of community volunteers to implement pest control, weed control and re-vegetation programmes. Thanks to the efforts of the group there has been a considerable improvement in stream ecology and a significant increase in the number of community members enjoying the creek environment.

Keep Dunedin Beautiful

The volunteer organisation is committed to projects that encourage citizens to take pride in and care for their environment. The Keep Dunedin Beautiful Committee raises funds for an environmental theatre group to visit students in Dunedin. Each year, more than 6000 primary school children learn about the importance of waste minimisation through recycling, reuse, reducing and refusing over packaged products.

Caring for our water*Auckland Council La Rosa Reserve*

This initiative has restored streams and reinstated natural ecosystems in the Auckland region. The project improves water quality, creates a recreational space and connects the urban community with the environment. Project team members, the council and the local community have restored stream banks at the reserve and protected habitats so that freshwater species can flourish.

Downer New Zealand

A major contractor involved in the rebuild of Christchurch, Downer has implemented best practice ways of working so that the environment is protected from accidental sewage and wastewater discharges. In July 2013, Downer set a target of no dry weather overflows to rivers as part of operation 'Dry July.' This initiative will protect river ecology and fragile ecosystems from the additional pressure that the rebuild is putting on the Canterbury environment.

Whangawehi Catchment Management Group

The group works with marae, landowners and agencies to protect and enhance water quality of the Mahia Peninsula, one of New Zealand's most precious natural landscapes. The group has retired hectares of wetlands, riparian margins and native bush on farmland to protect the habitat of native fish species. Other initiatives include water monitoring, pest control and knowledge sharing with the local school to encourage the next generation of environmental champions.

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