

Palmerston North City Environmental Trust
Chair's Report to the 18th Annual General Meeting
30 September 2009

Foreword

Since its inception in 1991, the Trust has increasingly recognised that environmental sustainability is the core of our welfare and vibrancy as a city. All positive outcomes in the economic and social arenas depend absolutely on it.

As a team, our vision is that Palmerston North becomes more environmentally sustainable and vibrant. It is by the wider community's position and attitude relative to these twin ideals that we mark our collective impact and value as an organisation in this City. It is an awesome responsibility, one that we must view in an honest and positive light.

This year we have much to celebrate, with a strong team and track record of achievements over the past year, and every opportunity for an even more remarkable year ahead.

The PNCET Team 08 -09

We have continued our expansion toward capacity Trust membership, with 11 of 12 positions now filled, and the recent appointment of a professional administrator to support the Trust. New team members this year are:

- Margaret Hunt – Trust Administrator.
- Paul Horton – Trustee, Environmental Officer for Rangitaane O Manawatu, with a strong background in ecology and experience and commitment in environmental resource management and cultural values.
- Helen Mays – Trustee, Environmental entrepreneur and writer & media presenter, with core interests in community interface and resource recovery and waste minimisation.
- Will Cooper – Trustee, Lecturer in Environmental Studies at IPC with interests in environmental advocacy and community awareness.

These team members join Brendan Lucas, Ee Kheng Ang, Karine Chagne, Terry Kelly, Christie Creed, Eddie Welsh, Alan Fielding, and myself.

This year we have also retired three Trustees: Ian Cook has returned to the Horowhenua region to pursue professional opportunities; Tristan Lavender is in Auckland to further a career in environmental compliance for the automotive industry, and long-serving Trustee and Rangitaane liaison Dr. Jon Proctor has concluded his valuable service to us. All retired Trustees are acknowledged for their contributions to our team, with particular mention of Jon Proctor's contribution and networks over the course of nearly ten year's service on the Trust.

PNCET Achievements 08-09

This year we undertook a range of activities to enhance the environmental sustainability of the City; including planning, advocacy, interface with the community and community leaders, and grant making; often in tandem with provision of expert advice and direct non-financial assistance.

Significant trust time was invested in the development of new a strategic plan for the Trust (retiring the 2003 strategic plan), and development of a team structure to delegate responsibility in key areas including grant making, Trust capability development, environmental sustainability advocacy and education, and Trust led environmental sustainability initiatives. I am particularly grateful to those Trust members who have stepped forward to co-lead in the first three areas; and look forward to the leadership assignments in the fourth area. Successful role delineation and delegation is a key for our own organisational viability.

A substantial investment of Trustee time and allied funds has gone into the establishment of a community garden in Palmerston North City. With suitable nurturing, this initiative will flourish into a gardens network and be a fantastic asset for this area, growing magnificent plants and fostering a stronger community.

The Trust is undertaking work to increase community awareness and relevance of the Trust by re-branding (last revised 1991), by development of a standalone website, and by identification of ways that the Trust's new brand and our aims can be better communicated and profiled in the community.

PNCET advocacy work over the past years includes submissions on the City budget plans, Mighty River Power's resource consent application for a windfarm in the Turitea Reserve, Horizon's Transport Planning, and DB Breweries resource consent application for industrial pollution discharges.

Interface with the community primarily took the form of the Trust members contributing to key community events including the inaugural Volunteers Expo, Living Lightly events, and Mai Farm Festival; and the Women's Lifestyle Expo, Reel Earth, and others. Often these were conducted in cooperation with Environment Network Manawatu, with whom we keep a close working relationship.

Through a successful awareness raising campaign we've enjoyed a marked increase in applications from a range of schools and community organisations for PNCET funds to spark these community led initiatives. Most have been partially or entirely funded. Many have had an educational flair and focus on gardening and local food production. Significant grants were made to Reel Earth for their fifth annual environmental film festival, and to Green Hub for a fluorescent bulb recycling initiative in Palmerston North. Where appropriate, Trust members have added value by working alongside funded projects providing expert advice, practical help, and in some cases taking leadership roles.

PNCET Assets 08-09

The Trust's members and networks are its greatest asset, and the source of all its notable achievements. It is our mutual accountability and use of those human resources that will deliver the greatest real value to our community.

Financially, the Trust remains in a modest position, with investments in excess of \$120,000. This past year we have been moderately active in grant making, at a level that allows the real value of the investment to be maintained.

We have now concluded a period of uncertainty with the successful re-instatement of a PNCC grant at a level of \$15,000 per annum, allowing us to continue our competitive grant application programme for local entities seeking the vital resources to undertake environmental sustainability projects in the city. We acknowledge the PNCC for their foresight in this area, and provision of these essential resources to address some environmental sustainability imperatives from a community-led angle.

Future Directions & Leadership

With the PNCET team largely assembled, our new strategic plan and implementation framework, and our small but relatively secure financial base; it is time for us to focus closely on the delivery of meaningful outcomes. Through the ups and downs of political and financial cycles; there is one enduring trend: the continued increase in pressure from man on the Earth and her natural systems for sustaining life and wellbeing. Some may suggest the PNCET size and local focus means we cannot make a meaningful mark for environmental sustainability, but I believe absolutely that it is our size and focus that allows us to make a great impact in the local environment.

Keeping this foremost in our mind will lead to a range of expanded activities over time, including a more active communications area, increased and more diverse sources of financial support, and increased engagement in conversations underpinning environmentally sensible decisions at the local level in all sectors.

As stated earlier, I believe our greatest asset is our Trust members, and it is my primary goal as Chair to ensure we are a healthy and focused team working toward a common goal of environmental sustainability for this community.

I greatly appreciate the support I've received in my first year as elected Chair, and thank each Trust member and the Trust Administrator for support and contributions.

In conclusion, we can each celebrate our good year together, and look forward to a remarkable one ahead.



Brent Barrett, Chair, PNCET
Palmerston North, New Zealand