



2013 Lincoln Envirotown Trust (LET) AGM report from the Chair

Sue Jarvis

6th May 2013

We have had a very busy and productive 12 months since the last AGM. There were many notable activities and events whereby, anecdotally at least, community awareness in positive responsible sustainable living has increased, along with community actions. In many cases conversations about how to live more sustainably were just as important as direct action.

We continue to put into action the ideas in the Lincoln Community Action plan. We have continued with our aim of providing reliable information to enable people to make responsible choices about their actions for sustainability, and we are putting a lot of effort into our 4th objective, which is to be a role model for other communities in Selwyn/Canterbury.

We have helped and continue to give advice to other communities who have started their own "Envirotowns". So far, we have helped more than six communities to start up their own groups: Prebbleton Enviro-Village, Rolleston Enviro Town, Enviro Ellesmere, West Melton Enviro Community, Springston Enviro-community and the latest one - Tai Tapu Envirotown. All groups have chosen their own names. Leeston Envirotown has changed its name to "Enviro Ellesmere" as it has grown to encompass Southbridge, Doyleston and Dunsandel and surrounding rural districts.

We continue to have a huge number of people involved at various levels and in various sub-groups. The monthly newsletter is sent directly to at least 700 people, and it likely reaches thousands of others as it is sent around Lincoln University, AgResearch, Landcare Research, Plant & Food Research and a number of other enviro groups who are part of the Canterbury Transition Forum.

Significant Achievements/Activities

Responsible Business Awards 2012:

Lincoln Envirotown has been involved in many, many things in the area of environmental sustainability since our first meeting in June 2005. One of our major initiatives was to encourage and support local businesses to operate in a more environmentally sustainable manner, as well as to promote "shop local" practices.

The Responsible Business Award scheme was trialed in 2007, following the production of the initial survey in conjunction with Jeska McNicol. Prebbleton joined in 2009 and Leeston with Southbridge and Doyleston in 2010 and Dunsandel in 2012. In 2011, the Leeston area awards were renamed the Ellesmere Awards rather than the Leeston Envirotown Awards as they cover a much wider area. Rolleston had their first awards in 2011.

In 2012, we had three ceremonies with businesses from Rolleston, Lincoln, Prebbleton, Leeston, Southbridge, Dunsandel, Doyleston, Tai Tapu and Little River receiving awards. The awards were organised by the Lincoln Envirotown Trust, with many helpers from the various areas.

The businesses are awarded a bronze, silver, gold or platinum certificate if they have met the criteria. For example, to receive a GOLD award a business needs to be doing 80 to 94% of what it is possible for that business to do in the areas of environmental sustainability, while to get PLATINUM 95% and over. Businesses gaining a silver award and above are given a free listing on the Lincoln Envirotown web site if they provide us with the information.

Ruth Guy was employed as the Responsible Business Award overall coordinator. Thanks for a great job!

Rolleston Responsible Business Awards

About 50 people turned up to the Rolleston Responsible Business Award ceremony on Friday 19th October 2012. Certificates were presented by the Mayor, Kelvin Coe, with 34 businesses gaining awards this year. Four businesses gained platinum awards and the trophy for the top business (joint winners this year were **BNZ Rolleston** and **Rolleston Drycleaners and Laundromat**) was presented by Lloyd Bathurst of Rolleston Square Ltd who generously gifted the trophy.

The previous winners of the trophy, Liz and John Veix of Solar Electric Specialists donated native plants to all

businesses at the ceremony as a thank you. John said that he didn't say thank you properly last year as he was too stunned on being awarded the trophy.

Thank you to Sandra Davies, the Rolleston assessor for all her hard work.

Lincoln and Prebbleton Responsible Business Awards

About 50 people also turned up to the Lincoln/Prebbleton Responsible Business Award ceremony on Thursday 25th October. Five businesses gained Platinum and nineteen gained Gold awards. Businesses from Tai Tapu and Birdlings Flat joined the Lincoln area, as there are no awards for their areas (yet!). The awards were presented by the Mayor Kelvin Coe. John Barnes the CEO of Meadow Mushrooms Ltd gave a very informative talk at the start of the evening about how they had changed their practices and procedures to become more sustainable and had gained an Enviromark gold certification. This year we had a new trophy for Prebbleton Businesses gifted by Meadow Mushrooms, made of a piece of 45,000 year old kauri. The inaugural winners of this trophy were **Trents Nursery Ltd.** The Lincoln trophy was presented by Hirini Matunga, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Lincoln University, and Kerry Watson, Development Manager – Special Projects, Ngāi Tahu Property Limited. There were joint winners of this trophy: **Kidsfirst Kindergarten Lincoln** and **The Faithful Gardener**. Thanks to Ruth Guy and Dean O'Connell, the two assessors.

Ellesmere Responsible Business Awards

So many people turned up to the Ellesmere Responsible Business Award ceremony in Leeston on Thursday 1st November we ran out of space! Four businesses gained Platinum awards. This is the first time Ellesmere businesses have reached Platinum standard – congratulations!

Congratulations to **Rakaia Island Dairies** for being the inaugural recipient of the new Ellesmere trophy for the most responsible business. The trophy was gifted by Ravensdown Ltd.

Among other things they showed: commitment to native biodiversity on Rakaia Island and in the wider community, excellent water quality management practices, and staff awareness of environmental issues relating to farming on an island. It was good to see a dairy farm winning the trophy! The awards were presented by the Mayor Kelvin Coe.

Thanks to the Ellesmere assessors, Dean O'Connell and Sarah Pritchett, and also to Ruth Guy, the Responsible Business Award coordinator, for their hard work.

Selwyn Earth Hour 2013 coordinated by the Lincoln Envirotown Trust:

This year there was more than a week of events leading up to the international Earth Hour celebration which encourages us all to take real action to reduce our impact on climate change.

We started the lead up by showing the film "**One man, One cow, One planet**" to about 60 people at Lincoln University at lunch time.

This was followed by the now very popular Kim Hill led event: "**The Ultimate Balancing Act**" – with panellists Brent Clothier, Andy MacFarlane, Andy West, Nick Daniels, Jon Manhire, with Nick taking the place of Liz Wedderburn at the last minute.

Sarah Walters, Deputy Chair of the Selwyn Council, who acted as MC for the event, kindly made a summary of the discussions which listed many ideas for longer term solutions but ended with:

Short term things we can do (this year) – hug a farmer, don't buy a new plasma TV, and plant more trees.

Sponsors for the evening in addition to the Lincoln Envirotown Trust (who organised the evening), were Landcare Research, Lincoln University, Plant & Food Research, Selwyn District Council, AgResearch and Ray White Real Estate Lincoln branch. Waipara Wines provided the wine.

The Earth Hour Acoustic Concert was amazing and was organised by the Selwyn Youth Earth Hour Committee headed by a Lincoln University first year student and member of LET, Rachel Cottam. The electrical equipment for the concert was powered by a bicycle generator while the lighting on the tables was provided by battery LED "candles" from Phillips. Thanks to all the performers and musicians for a magical evening.

Selwyn Earth Hour Environmental Video Competition: A number of local schools and preschools entered the competition. The overall winner was the team from Lincoln High School (Taylor Hamlin and Kusal Ekanayake), second was the team from Rolleston Primary School. The videos were so good that all the teams won prizes. The event was organised by LET trustee Sam Rowland. The certificates and prizes were presented by Kelvin Coe, Mayor of Selwyn. We were pleased

to see that not only the Mayor and Deputy Mayor attended, but also Tom Lambie, Lincoln University Chancellor!

Obviously the event to be at! **Watch the videos:** www.lincolnenvirotown.org.nz

Judged by: Cody Frewin is the Community Relations Ranger for Mahaanui Area Office of DOC

The Selwyn Earth Hour barn dance on the 23rd March, with the wonderful band “Bantam of the Opera”, was well attended, as always, and as one couple said it was “the best event they had ever attended” – praise indeed. It was great to see all ages at the dance; everyone enjoyed the actual **Earth Hour** from 8.30-9.30 pm when the band played acoustically with no loudspeakers etc. while we danced around them in the candle light. This was a symbol for all the things we are doing to encourage people to make changes in how they live their lives to reduce our impact on the environment. The team for running the barn dance included Lyn and Terry Windle, Jess Page and other Lincoln University Future Leaders, as well as other volunteers from LET and Rolleston Envirotown.

Sue made it right through the week, without collapsing quietly under a table at the barn dance – she even managed to get to the **Earth Hour Walk** run by the new Tai Tapu Envirotown group on the Sunday afternoon.

There were other events around Selwyn, such as star-watching at West Melton. This year Selwyn was one of only two areas in NZ that were given funding by WWFnz and actively promoted Earth Hour.

The events were co-coordinated by Lincoln Envirotown Trust, which is funded by SDC and Canterbury Community Trust. Smaller donations were also received from individuals and businesses which enabled them to coordinate these events.

Web site management: Rob Spijkerman has continued as our web manager. Recently he has reorganised our web site so that we can make our own changes. Some of us have been “trained” so we can do this and we will probably need to do more training. Our web site has a Responsible Business Award section for the communities who have awards so that we can publicise their achievements in operating with minimum negative impact on the environment. We also want to promote “buy local, support your local community, and reduce food miles”. The LET web site provides information about our projects, our back newsletters, and lots of information on many environmental topics. www.lincolnenvirotown.org.nz

Community gardens: Thanks especially to Ruth Wood, our garden coordinator, who is doing a great job as well as thanks to her husband Errol Wood, and to Terry Windle for their help with the ongoing development. There have been a number of workshops at the gardens, which are well attended. The raised gardens are all “adopted” by families or groups such as the Kidsfirst Kindergarten Lincoln. Many groups come to visit and people often drop in including relatives and children of mums at the hospital. The chairs and tables under the shade sail are a great resting/meeting place. We now have a sign by the road, thanks to Ray White Real Estate Lincoln. We had many well-attended workshops in the past year: A Spring Garden workshop was held at the property of the long time Lincoln Community Garden mentor, Terry Windle, attended by an amazing 75 people. We had a demonstration of fruit tree maintenance by Keith Dickson, on 12th August 2012. Over 80 people attended, some coming from a considerable distance, including a couple from Geraldine. Keith was impressed with the enthusiasm of the participants and the good questions they asked. A container-gardening workshop run by Sven Christenson was attended by about 35 people in February 2013.

Native Biodiversity:

The Mahoe Reserve: A lot of work has been carried out in the past year – there has (and will continue to be) a working bee every month, plus a lot of extra work by Denis Blomquist. Many people use the reserve as part of a walking route through Lincoln and also stop off to sit at the seats, and sometimes have a picnic. We have met people who come from a variety of areas around the city. We continue to use money we have raised for buying eco-sourced plants, which we plant in the autumn and spring. We have a number of dedicated locals as well as Lincoln High School and Lincoln University students and overseas volunteers who have helped. We even had someone from Lincoln, UK who planned her whole trip to NZ so she could come to our December Mahoe working bee.

Native Planting by Springs Road/Gerald Street Corner: The natives planted here are growing unfortunately, so are the weeds. The area is being weeded and mulched by local volunteers, but needs more work.

Biodiversity Education: West Melton Enviro Community has organised two workshops, one on native plants and one on local insects living in the Waimakariri flood plain area.

Speakers: We continue to invite a number of speakers to our meetings who talk about topics of interest to LET and

the wider community.

Children's education:

Kidsfest: We have continued with holiday activities with an environmental theme. Children are involved from all over the district as well as a few from farther away. We think that it is very important to involve children and their families in environmental sustainability education. Students from the High School and Lincoln University are on our LET committee and are involved in many of our activities.

Video Competition: Local school and preschool groups enter our Earth Hour Environmental Video competition—a great way to showcase and encourage young people.

Lincoln Envirotown Sign: One of the milestones for LET is the installation of “Welcome to Lincoln” and “NZ’s first Envirotown” signs this year!

MOU with Lincoln University: Another notable milestone is the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Lincoln University, which formally puts in place the “in kind” help that the University gives LET.

Other notable activities:

We have undertaken many things since the last AGM report, too many to comment on in detail. Most activities are chronicled in our newsletters and monthly reports, but here is a list of some of the things not already mentioned:

- We continue to work with the High School LEO (now called Enviro council) and the University LEO and Lincoln University Waterwatch team, Lincoln University Future Leaders group, as well as with the Lincoln kindergarten and Primary school
- We have a LET representative on the Lincoln Community Committee.
- Backyard biodiversity booklet - this continues to be very popular with a reprint!
- Native Planting Guide: this has been re-written to encompass surrounding communities as well as Lincoln and is also popular. It is available on our web site as well as in print version.
- LET/BHU/ Organic Farm – founded by LET, but now this continues to be self managing.
- Liffey Stream Community Water Testing – this is carried out with a number of groups and is recorded on our website.
- Working with developers - We have continued to work with developers, encouraging them to produce more sustainable developments and to consult with the community. It is gratifying to see ponds, swales, thousands of native plants and other environmental features at the Ngai Tahu housing development following extensive consultation.
- We are often approached by organisations to talk about LET. We have provided a tour of LET’s activities in Lincoln for Lincoln University students.

Other Enviro towns/ communities:

West Melton Enviro Community: They have run a number of biodiversity workshops and surveys. They have also run a very successful, booked out “Energy Homes Tour” of local homes showing how the owners build or retrofit in ways that save and generate energy.

Springston Enviro-Community: Their biggest success has been starting the “Springston Secret Garden” (name chosen by the Springston school children). The garden is behind the school and so it is ideal to involve the school children. A great thank you to Helen Mather for providing the land. Three local farmers spent many hours building a shade house/potting shed using money supplied by WWFnz. We now have a volunteer garden coordinator, Zanada Maclean, who organises the garden and works with the children from the school four times a week. The school is now aiming to become an Enviroschool, and has made their learning theme for the whole school this year to be “Growing”! We seem to have made a real change here! The Springston group have been a great assistance in helping to run the Earth Hour barn dance 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Rolleston Envirotown: They have set up a very successful farmer’s market and a community garden. They have carried out a community survey and have been involved in the Selwyn Earth Hour for the last 4 years. The Rolleston Responsible Business awards were started in Rolleston in 2011 and continued in 2012. (See above for more

information on the Rolleston Responsible Business Awards). They need to attract more committee members.

Prebbleton Enviro Village: This year they are planning to start a community garden around the new community cottage.

Leeston Envirotown: This has now become **ENVIRO ELLESMERE**

Linda Hermiston is the chair of the new extended group (Leeston, Southbridge, Doyleston and Dunsandel). The Responsible Business Awards were a great success – see above.

Tai Tapu Envirotown: A new envirotown has been formed. About 35 people attended a community meeting and brainstormed ideas for an action plan. At the next meeting, a chair person, secretary and a treasurer were chosen and a short list of actions were made. The group organised a successful Earth Hour Tai Tapu walk and a well attended meeting with Denis Chapman, designer and owner of the “Tai Tapu Castle”, as guest speaker. Denis spoke about new technologies for the Houses of the Future. There will be a trip to the “Castle” at a future date to view the technology that Denis has developed to make his building self sufficient in energy, water and sewage disposal, as well as his extensive native plantings.

Getting our message out there:

Website, monthly newsletters, writing articles for local papers, educational activities such as Earth Hour events, Community Gardens, Kids club (to which adults come too!), children’s holiday activities, trips, speakers to various groups, garden workshops.

Our Chairperson Sue has talked to Lincoln University sustainability classes and has been a guest speaker on many occasions including at the Selwyn cluster meeting of the Enviroschools. Many groups including University MSc classes have been to Lincoln Township as part of their course, including the gardens, the Mahoe reserve, the LET stall at the weekly Lincoln Farmers’ Market, a sustainable business (McCormick Motors), the Green-gold Enviroschool Lincoln Kidsfirst kindy. We are part of the Canterbury Transition Forum, which publicises our events on the group web site.

Funding:

We continue to apply for funding to support our programmes. A number of our funding sources have dried up, and the ongoing after-effects of the earthquakes have made things even more difficult. Our main financial ongoing support comes for the Selwyn District Council and the Canterbury Community Trust (CCT). The CCT halved our funding for the 2011-2012 year, but increased it again for the 2012-2013 and halved it again for 2013-2014. We will continue to look for other sources of funding and we have employed Sarah Pritchett to help us find more funding this year.

We continue to receive donations from individuals and businesses both in cash and “in-kind”. Special thanks to Lincoln CRT, Ray White Real Estate, Lincoln New World, Nevada Sport, and many other Lincoln and Rolleston businesses and organisations. We get ongoing in-kind support from the Selwyn District Council staff, Landcare Research and Lincoln University, who provide an office, technical and secretarial support, copying and printing facilities, etc.

Over the last year, LET has paid the writer of this report (Sue Jarvis) as a project manager and overall coordinator for 30 hours per week (but she puts in many more hours of unpaid time in order to coordinate and complete projects both within Lincoln and in the surrounding areas), a community garden coordinator (Ruth Wood) for 10 hours per week, and a number of people on contracts – Rob Spijkerman as web manager, Responsible Business Award assessors for Lincoln, Leeston, Prebbleton and Rolleston and we have paid for someone to staff our table at the Lincoln market.

Submissions and Working Groups:

We continue to be involved in making submissions and being involved in working groups. Sue is representing the trust on the Selwyn Waihora Limit Setting focus group.

More details of all our activities and those of all the envirotowns are to be found in our newsletters which are available from our web site www.lincolnenvirotown.org.nz