

Living Here

The environmental newsletter for Canterbury



July - August 2008

School pupils and commuters choose Metro



The price of fuel means more and more people are leaving their cars at home and taking Metro to work and school. In particular, out-of-Christchurch commuters and school pupils from North Canterbury's towns are flocking to the new Northern Star Metro service which ECan upgraded less than two years ago.

In that time, the service has increased patronage by more than 30 percent. But the success has come at a price with some heavy loadings at peak times of the day.

As a result, ECan is introducing a new, dedicated school service to reduce peak pressure for North Canterbury Metro travellers, starting on July 21 for the third term.

In the morning, one bus will circulate Rangiora before travelling to Kaiapoi via Woodend and then on to Papanui and Merivale schools. A second bus starting in Kaiapoi will travel directly to Shirley schools and students will have access to both services when they meet in Kaiapoi.

In the afternoon, a service will run from Shirley to Kaiapoi and Woodend, another from Papanui to Kaiapoi and a third bus will run from Bealey Ave to Rangiora via Kaiapoi and Woodend.

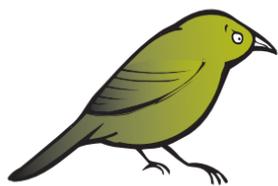
Wide school networks

North Canterbury pupils travel into many Christchurch schools - St Margaret's, Rangi Ruru, St Andrew's, Papanui High, St Bede's, Shirley Boys, Marian, Avonside Girls and Villa Maria College, often using cross-connecting buses the Metro Star or Orbiter once in Christchurch.

So how much does it cost an adult to travel to Christchurch from Rangiora?

With Metrocard, just \$3.75 for a one-way fare, \$7.50 return or \$37.50 for a full week's return travel. Or for Kaiapoi Metrocard travellers: \$3 for an adult one way, \$6 return or \$30 for a full week's travel. People under 18 pay approximately half the adult fare.

These students of Christchurch's St Andrew's College will be able to catch the dedicated Christchurch schools bus from the third term, this year, from their homes in North Canterbury to town, reducing pressure on the popular Northern Star. Left to right, Louise Rich, 14, Campbell Robertson, 13, Thomas Mauger, 15 and Oliver Bersani, 13.



Doubling the bellbird chorus

Sally Blunt of Kaikoura is a champion weedbuster. Her dedication to destroying weeds so that native plants can thrive has won her the overall excellence prize in the 2008 Canterbury Weedbusters Awards, organised through Environment Canterbury. Sally and her husband, Tim, have spent nine years weedbusting on nearly 10 hectares of their property.

"One of the huge satisfactions of what I do is seeing the bush regenerate and the birds come back. Our area of QEII reserve has rebounded with fuchsia, young kowhais, mahoe, pungas, orchids, lycopodiums and the bellbird chorus in the early morning has at least doubled.

"Tim and I are both really keen on the wonderful flora and fauna we have in this country and I personally hate seeing the riverbeds degraded so badly by gorse, broom and buddleia and Russell lupins." Old man's beard is rampant in Kaikoura bush spreading its seeds far and wide, Sally says. "There are several people in Kaikoura who do an absolutely amazing job fighting this horrible climber but we need more to clip it where we see it, paint the stump and reduce this problem so that we can really call ourselves clean and green." Wandering jew in riverbeds is another weed which smothers native plants, Sally says.



Other Weedbusters award winners for 2008

- Kurow Town Enhancement Group, for cleaning up 20 hectares on Kurow Island
- The Ohau Conservation Trust - wilding pines eradication
- Timaru's Aoraki Polytechnic Third Age Adventurers - wilding pines
- Sue Lovett, of Robinson's Bay, Banks Peninsula - seven years weed war
- Taylor's Mistake, Christchurch, boneseed battler Keith Briden
- Ian Jury, of South Brighton, Christchurch - reducing old man's beard and Darwin's barberry
- Sally Tripp, of Governor's Bay, Banks Peninsula - fighting weeds and taking the message wider
- Summit Road Society Weekenders - reducing cotoneasters in Victoria Park.

i Interested in weedbusting?
Go to www.weedbusters.co.nz



Sally Blunt, supreme Weedbuster, of Kaikoura.

Photo courtesy The Marlborough Express

Want to get involved in transport planning?



Environment Canterbury is looking for six people to serve on its Regional Transport Committee. Sitting alongside elected representatives, the community members will represent these interests in relation to transport:

- cultural
- economic development
- access and mobility
- safety and personal security
- public health
- environmental sustainability

Each position will run until September 2010, with at least four committee meetings each year, generally held in Christchurch.

If you are interested and would like a full outline of the committee's role and what your commitment would require, please email robert.woods@ecan.govt.nz or write to Programme Manager Transport, Environment Canterbury, PO Box 345, Christchurch. Meeting fees and travel costs may be payable.

Nominations and supporting information must be received by 5pm, Monday, August 11, 2008.



LivingHere is the newsletter of Environment Canterbury.

It is delivered free to Kaikoura, Hurunui, Waimakariri, Christchurch, Selwyn, Banks Peninsula, Ashburton, Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate, part Waitaki.

You can email us at: livinghere@ecan.govt.nz

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Nigel Chapman of the Timaru Garden Centre with two alternative plants to the pesty aluminium plant or Mexican daisy.



Aluminium plant



Mexican daisy

Photo courtesy Auckland Regional Council

Are you trafficking plant pests?

Many people simply don't know the range of plants that they're not supposed to grow in their gardens. That's the feedback from Timaru Garden Centre owner Nigel Chapman, after a woman rang him recently, trying to get hold of the ground cover artillery/aluminium plant (*Galeobdolon luteum*).

"She wanted the plant for the garden in a new house, and said if I didn't have it, could she tell me where she could find one, or she would get a cutting from her old house. She didn't know that the plant was illegal," he explains.

Nigel has had two to three people in the last year ask specifically for some of the plants that fall under the restricted or unwanted species lists.

He says the most commonly discussed plants are the aluminium plant, as a previously popular ground cover under trees, Mexican daisy (*Erigeron karvinskianus* daisy) and pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*).

"The simple fact is that people have had these things in their gardens for years and don't know they're illegal. Many are common to an English style of garden." There are now more introduced plants growing wild in New Zealand than native plants.

Nigel says he tried to offer an alternative plant, and most people are happy to consider these. "It is difficult, because some plants are banned, like German ivy, but other similar looking varieties are not."

ECan's biosecurity team carries out annual checks at garden centres to ensure that they are not selling plants listed on the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy or the national plant nasties list.

These plants have been identified as potential threats to the agricultural or native landscape generally, as they have exhibited weedy tendencies either within Canterbury or elsewhere.

Under the strategy, you do not have to remove any restricted plants if they are already in your garden, but people are urged to be careful how they dispose of these plants or cuttings, so that they don't spread.

Other plants on the "restricted" list include the common purple buddleia (*Buddleia davidii*), artillery/aluminium plant, Spanish heath (*Erica lusitanica*) and German ivy (*Senecio mikanoides*).

i Take a look at the "restricted plant" list: www.ecan.govt.nz/Restricted-plant-list
See also: www.weedbusters.co.nz

i If you think you may have an invasive plant pest in your garden talk to the ECan Biosecurity staff in Timaru, Christchurch, Kaikoura, Amberley, Cheviot, or Little River.

Clean and green but not a native to be seen?

The Canterbury Plains are one of the worst examples of the loss of native plants in New Zealand, says Lincoln University's Professor Ian Spellerberg. "Less than one per cent of native vegetation remains on our Plains."

Returning to Canterbury from overseas, Ian was disappointed at the lack of natives compared to English hedgerows, now some of the last bastions of wildlife habitat.

Ian wants to see native plants spreading across the Plains again and he says the Te Ara Kakariki Greenway Trust is one way to make it happen. (Kakariki means green in Maori and te ara means the pathway.)

The trust aims to encourage native plant communities for all reasons – restoration, boundaries, shelter belts, crops, tourism. Its long-term vision, maybe taking hundreds of years, is to make connections between the mountains and sea by using corridors and stepping stones of native plant communities. Another goal is a one-stop-shop for information. Encouragingly, Motukarara Conservation Nursery says they can't keep up with the demand for native plants.

The land between the Waimakariri and Rakaia rivers gives the project an identity and anyone can be involved.

This year, in conjunction with Southern Woods Nursery, 25 Selwyn District schools will be invited to design and plant a native plant community for their school.

Ian is enthusiastic. "I have this dream of tourists coming to see Te Ara Kakariki, a Canterbury icon. Imagine native plant hedgerows on those long stretches of road. It's the loss of associated native wildlife too: maybe we could re-introduce the kakariki (native, endangered parrot) back to Canterbury.

"We underestimate the value of natives in an uncertain future. What's the environment going to be in ten years? What about land use and changes in weather? We have to think about what roles native plants will play then – after all, these plants evolved to live in dry, windy conditions."



Professor Ian Spellerberg and Diana, Lady Isaac at recent native plantings at Peacock Springs, north-west Christchurch. The Isaac Centre for Nature Conservation (ICNC) was established 11 years ago to build on and focus the skills and scholarship of Lincoln University staff for research, teaching and vocational training in nature conservation. ICNC sponsors the Annual State of the Nation's Environment address, facilitates an annual nature conservation think tank (Flock Hill workshops) and provides a free service to schools via Waterwatch.

i Would you like to be involved in Te Ara Kakariki? email: Spelleri@lincoln.ac.nz
For more information: www.lincoln.ac.nz/section645.html



visit www.bethere.co.nz
for things to do in Christchurch



Canterbury plant nurseries for natives

- Motukarara Conservation Nursery
- Trees for Canterbury
- Southern Woods Nursery.

Smoother sailing with plan change



For non-yachtspeople, a mooring is a specially-designed block of concrete attached to a chain which holds boats safely in place.

There are more than 600 moorings on Canterbury harbours administered by Environment Canterbury – mostly at Kaikoura, Lyttelton, Akaroa harbours and the Kaiapoi River.

A change to the Regional Coastal Environment Plan was recently agreed to which will make mooring in particular areas a permitted activity under the Resource Management Act. This will remove the need for retrospective resource consents for moorings and also for existing structures like slipways, decks and boatsheds in the coastal marine zone.



Christchurch mooring owner Peter Maher rows out to his yacht at Purau Bay, opposite Lyttelton.

2008

Canterbury Resource Management Awards: time to get noticed!

Entries are now open for the Canterbury Resource Management Awards 2008, with four categories from throughout the region: Community/Interest Group, Commercial/Industrial, Professional/Institutional and Individual.

"Whether you're involved in a large company or a small non-profit organisation, or on your own, you will probably find a section of the awards to suit your project," says Environment Canterbury Chairman Sir Kerry Burke.

The awards are supported by Crown research institutes Landcare Research and NIWA (the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research), Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu, the Sustainable Business Network and EECA (the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority). Each of these organisations will contribute a special award.

Entries close on August 15. Further information on the Canterbury Resource Management Awards 2008 is available on 03 353 9735, or toll free on 0800 EC INFO (0800 324 636), or from Environment Canterbury's website: www.ecan.govt.nz/rmawards

Judges for all categories will be looking at the practicality and sustainability of entries. They will also take into account any consultation that has been carried out as well as the way the project affects other resources.

"Projects might include work relating to air or water quality, soil conservation, preservation of natural areas, efficient regional transportation, pest management, rural and urban planning and civil defence," Sir Kerry says.

Win seeds more recognition: Orana Wildlife Trust

For the 2006 Resource Management Awards Supreme winner, Christchurch's Orana Park Wildlife Trust, winning was recognition that it is much more than just a cool place to see African animals.

Marketing manager Nathan Hawke said the award has encouraged the park to promote its conservation work more widely, even though much of it is unseen by visitors. "To have received an award based on our key conservation and sustainability projects is fantastic recognition for our team because conservation and environmental work underpins all aspects of our operation."

As well as winning the Supreme Award, the trust also won the Professional-Institutional category for its conservation, habitat restoration, environmental education and waste reduction programmes.

The trust has given its industry colleagues more information about the conservation side of its business through the award publicity and has continued to build on its habitat restoration programme.



Tara Atkinson, Orana Park head keeper, native fauna, talks about tuatara.



Native fauna keeper Alyssa Salton holding one of Orana Park's new kiwi.



Orana is involved in the breed for release recovery programme for the Blue duck/Whio which are nationally endangered. To date, 23 Orana-bred blue ducks have been released to the wild.



The Spotted Skink was thought to be extinct in this area of Christchurch but was recently confirmed to be living on the grounds at the park.

check out these local cycling websites:

- www.spokes.org.nz
- www.can.org.nz
- www.groundeffect.co.nz

Did you know?
Orana Wildlife Park

is home to six of New Zealand's 17 native dragonfly species

Farm plastics now recycled not burnt or buried

For generations, farmers like Methven's Ron Hydes have faced the thorny question of how to get rid of the hundreds of plastic containers they use every year.

Typically, arable or crop-growing farmers burned plastic packaging or buried it because of a lack of alternatives. But a greater awareness of the environmental consequences has led farmers like Ron to rethink.

Now, a new nationwide recycling programme run by the Agrecovery Foundation, a not-for-profit trust, allows chemical containers to be recycled, as long as they are triple-rinsed and delivered to an Agrecovery depot. Agrecovery has set up 50 collection sites around the country over the past year and collected about 80,000 plastic agrichemical containers from farms and orchards.

"So far, 30 of New Zealand's leading agrichemical companies have proved their commitment to the sustainability of their industry by voluntarily agreeing to place a small levy on every litre of product they sell," says Bruce Emerson, director of Agrecovery programme managers 3R Group. "The levy pays for the recovery programme."

Since the arrival of a Methven depot at Molloy Agricultural Spraying in April, Ron has been an enthusiastic convert. He goes through between 100 and 200 chemical containers a year growing small seeds like white clover, ryegrass and cocksfoot, as well as cereals and brassicas.

"I had been aware of the programme being available for a while in Ashburton, but it was inconvenient to take the containers down there and you don't really want to travel through town with a whole lot of spray containers on the back."

Having a depot in the country barely five km from his farm, made using the scheme a no-brainer. "I've only used it once so far because this is a quiet time of the year for us, but in spring, when we get busy I'll take a few down every month."

Molloy Agricultural Spraying operations manager David Mangin says it was a natural fit for the company to get involved with Agrecovery because they themselves use thousands of chemical containers each year.



Ron Hydes hands over chemical containers to David Mangin, from Molloy Agricultural Spraying, in Methven.

While farmers have been slow to use the programme, David believes in time the industry will recognise its benefits.

David believes as farmers become aware that they are paying for the scheme, at a cost of around 13 cents a litre levy on chemical, they will come around to recycling. In the meantime, other farming sectors see the potential in the Agrecovery scheme for their plastic byproducts. "I had a dairy farmer ring up who had big plastic drums he wanted to get rid of. It will come, it's just a stepping stone," says David.

Bruce Emerson says that Agrecovery is planning to add larger drum recovery and silage wrap recovery to its collection programmes within the next six to 12 months. "We are also working on a stewardship programme for old and unwanted agrichemicals to continue and add to the good work done by regional councils like ECan who have been systematically trying to remove this problematic waste from farmers and growers' sheds for years."

What will Agrecovery take?

Agrecovery takes triple-rinsed HDPE (2) plastic agrichemical containers. The containers must be brands and products that are distributed by the companies that support Agrecovery. Old stock may not be branded with the Agrecovery logo but if the container belongs to one of the Agrecovery brand owners, they are eligible, sticker or not.

Other plastic containers that are triple-rinsed can be recycled, but these must have an Agrecovery "user pay sticker" attached. Stickers can be purchased on the AgRecovery website www.agrecovery.co.nz



Canterbury Depots

Amberley: Amberley Transfer Station, 03 314 8816
 Agrecovery service hours: Monday - Friday 9am - 4.30pm, Saturday - 9am - 12pm

Ashburton: Ashburton Resource Recovery Park, 03 308 9998
 Agrecovery service hours: First Saturday of month 10am - 2pm

Culverden: Culverden Transfer Station, 03 314 8816
 Agrecovery service hours: Wednesdays and Sundays 2pm - 4pm, Saturdays 9am - 10.30am

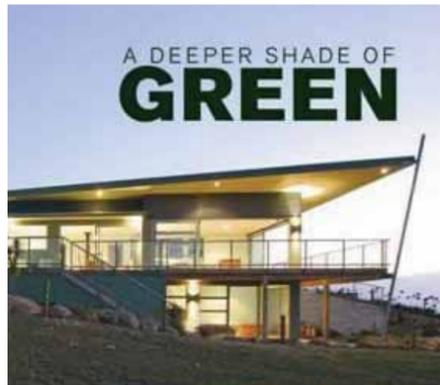
Kaikoura: Kaikoura Landfill, 03 319 7148
 Agrecovery service hours: First Friday of month 12pm - 4pm

Rolleston: Pines Resource Recovery Park, 03 347 2026
 Agrecovery service hours: Every Friday 12pm - 4pm

Timaru: Redruth Landfill, 03 687 7200
 Agrecovery service hours: Monday - Friday 7.30am - 4.30pm, Saturdays and Sundays 10am - 4pm

Christchurch: Styxmill Ecodepot, 03 941 8666
 Agrecovery service hours: Friday 12pm - 4pm

Methven: Molloy Agricultural Spraying, 03 302 8098
 Agrecovery service hours: Friday 7am - 5pm or by prior arrangement



Green building book draw winners:

These Living Here readers have each won a copy of the recently-released New Zealand sustainable building book "A Deeper Shade of Green", having sent in the right answers to last month's Living Here competition:

Kathy Guidi, Fendalton, Tobi and Alex Cohen, South New Brighton and Yeda Arscott, Cashmere, all of Christchurch. Congratulations!

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Free phone: 0800 324 636
or Christchurch: 03 353 9007
Website: www.ecan.govt.nz

Christchurch office: 03 365 3828
Timaru office: 03 684 0500
Kaikoura office: 03 319 5781
Ecan Laboratory: 03 353 9720
Metroinfo Christchurch: 03 366 8855
Businfo Timaru: 03 688 5544
Pollution hotline inside Christchurch: 03 366 4663 (24 hours)
Pollution hotline outside Christchurch: 0800 76 55 88 (24 hours)
Air pollution forecast (winter only): 03 353 9004
Civil defence: 03 366 2359
River and flood infoline (charges apply): 083 322 5522
River report: www.ecan.govt.nz/riverreport
Latest riverflows: www.ecan.govt.nz/riverflows
Didymo emergency hotline: 0800 809 966
Waimakariri/Ashley River Reserve rangers flood, harbours, urgent contact: 03 353 9725

your councillors

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tip: vinegar & baking soda
 use vinegar and baking soda for your household cleaning



No kids page this month
 but look out for the August Living Here kids page which will feature transport and how we get from a to b and back again.

