

Report No:	REP11-11-08
File No:	E390
Date:	10 November 2011
Information Only -no decision required	

REPORT SUMMARY

Report to: Environment & Planning Committee
Meeting Date: 23 November 2011
Report Author: Rob Francis, Environmental Education Officer
Subject: **ECOFEST REVIEW**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains a comprehensive Ecofest Review put together by Nelson City and Tasman District staff with supporting information. Also attached is an Event Analysis of Ecofest 2011 by Jo Reilly, Project Manager.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Ecofest Review be received.

1. That the event continues on an annual basis for the three year period 2012/15, after which it should be reviewed again. Ecofest remains a valuable platform for engaging our community and making sustainability accessible.
2. The event format should further develop both interactive/experiential learning at the expo, as well as further developing activities and programmes strongly linked to the event which can be offered across the region.
3. Continuation of a theme as trialled in the 2011 event through the partnership with Civil Defence is recommended. Potential themes/partnerships for 2012 could involve transport. The event should involve community partnerships as much as possible.
4. Further consultation to take place with exhibitors to ensure that the event is an effective vehicle in 2012 for their needs as well as Councils. Promoting a "sustainable shopping experience" can be developed as an event draw-card - focusing on the reduce/re-use perspective through partnerships with Sunday second-hand market; clothes and product swaps and farmers market. Monitoring of quality of exhibitors and products relating to Ecofest objectives to continue.
5. There is potential to develop Ecofest as a national event, including looking at synergies with other events and organisations, eg, conferences, environment centres, environment awards. This aspect to be explored further.

6. There is an opportunity to promote innovation and new technologies which support sustainability through a competition in this area. Consideration to be further given to whether this could be a joint Council/sponsor activity at a regional or national level. This activity could link to the region's profile as the solar energy capital of New Zealand. Additional funding would be required.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

THAT the Environment & Planning Committee receives the Ecofest Review REP11-11-08

THAT the Ecofest event continues on an annual basis for the three year period 2012/15, after which it should be reviewed again. Ecofest remains a valuable platform for engaging our community and making sustainability accessible.

THAT:

- a) **The Environment & Planning Committee authorises the organisers of Ecofest to apply to The Canterbury Community Trust for \$7,500 as a contribution to Ecofest 2012;**
- b) **The Environment & Planning Committee authorises the organisers of Ecofest to apply to The Lion Foundation for \$10,000 as a contribution to Ecofest 2012; and**
- c) **The Environment & Planning Committee authorises the organisers of Ecofest to apply to Positive Projects Trust for \$5,000 as a contribution to Ecofest 2012.**

Note: We apply for grants each year to support Ecofest expenses and the charities we apply to need a minute resolution from the appropriate Committee to support the application



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Environmental Education Officer

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ECOFEST STRATEGIC REVIEW
Nelson City Council & Tasman District Council

Project Objective

Review to establish if Ecofest in its current format is still aligned to both councils objectives, and is effective as a vehicle for community engagement

Project Outcomes

- Both Councils will be satisfied that either the existing event supports sustainability objectives, or different activities will be identified to meet these objectives
- The final outcome of this report will be a recommendation to Council on the future of Ecofest for the next 3 years (2012/15)

1. BACKGROUND

Ecofest has run as a joint Council environmental expo for 11 years. The following are the objectives for the event for the years 2008/11:

To raise community awareness and promote environmental behaviour change:

- Motivate community members to engage with the environment and take every day actions to effect change
- Showcase the Council's commitment to sustainability
- Provide information on a wide range of sustainability issues in a one-stop-shop format
- Provide a national significant example of best practice for sustainable events and environmental expos
- To support community groups and businesses who highlight solutions to living sustainably
- To demonstrate that the environment can be positive and fun to be involved in

Throughout its history the coordination of the event has been contracted to JR Events, primarily through the project manager; Jo Reilly of JR Events. Jo reports after each event on the objectives.

Visitor numbers and venues:

2008: 6000 - Trafalgar Centre
2009: 8000 - Founders Park
2010: 6000 - Trafalgar Centre
2011: 6000 - Trafalgar Centre

It is worth noting that these numbers compare well to a “mainstream” event such as the Home & Garden Show.

In order to complete this review, a range of research covering both the three events prior to 2011, and the 2011 event itself, has been carried out. A summary of the research conducted is available in Appendix A. A summary of Council Objectives is available in Appendix B, along with a breakdown of event finances for 2009 to 2011 in Appendix C.

2. OPTIONS FOR REVIEW IN THIS REPORT:

2.1 That Ecofest cease to continue as an event

2.2 That Ecofest continue as an annual event

2.3 That Ecofest be run as a bi-annual event

3. SUMMARY OF STAFF CONCLUSIONS:

3.3 Measuring against objectives:

The event meets the objectives listed previously in “Background”, but it does need to broaden its appeal with regards to topics and accessibility across the region. See Appendix B for a list of relevant Council plans and strategies.

Comments from visitors survey about what is most valued at the event:

“We are in a generation which needs to be continuously reminded of the impact we are having on our environment, and alternatives”

“displays that were not selling particularly but had genuine interest in helping”

“the range of options on show for doing things differently and the feel of a festival”

3.4 Event Fatigue

One of the primary concerns when conducting this review was to address some consistent comments about the event becoming boring and repetitive.

Certainly this is a perception for those of us who have been involved in the event for several years.

However, whilst the event retains a similar feel each year, the research is not pointing towards overall evidence of event-fatigue. An interesting survey response was the visitor exit survey for 2011. 428 visitors were polled (approximately 9% of total numbers). Of these 426, when asked if they would come again, responded yes. These respondents broke down into an approximate split of 60% repeat visitors, and 40% first time visitors. Visitor numbers are holding steady and this year were comparable to the three day gate for the commercially run Home & Garden Show.

There are opportunities to further develop the interactive/engagement part of the event to continue its evolution as an event which effectively supports change in our community. Comments on this are included in staff recommendations.

Comments from visitors survey about what would encourage them to come back:

“Good, practical, common-sense everyday living activities that I can do in harmony with our natural environment”

“Promoting different themes as well as workshops and seminars”

“If it stays the same, my family and I will continue to attend Ecofest. We thoroughly enjoy it”

“Something different to the usual stands each year. Having a theme”
“More new ideas on how to save money”

3.5 Financial Background

The event represents good value for money (see Appendix C for financials). The level of support from sponsors means that this is a cost effective way to engage large numbers in the community, and participation can still be offered to visitors and exhibitors alike at comparatively low rates, which makes the event much more accessible than many of its competitors. At a time when many events are struggling financially and many are no longer viable, Ecofest continues to hold its own.

3.6 Messaging

Ecofest continues to provide a clear message from both Councils on values relating to the environment and sustainability, and provides an important platform for both community and Councils to “walk the talk”. The Ecofest “brand” is well established throughout the community - enabling the promotion of sustainability in a positive and engaging way. The event is also an excellent example of partnership between the two councils which in itself is a valuable message.

3.7 Themes and Partnerships:

The 2011 trial of a partnership between Ecofest and Civil Defence had excellent outcomes for all stakeholders, with clear links between outcomes for sustainability and Civil Defence around building community resilience. Ecofest does present opportunities for strengthening/partnerships around Council priorities - another example being transport and the launch of the upgraded Nelson/Richmond bus service in 2012, which ties in well also with promotion and engagement around new and existing cycle trails around the region. This could form an important theme for a 2012 event. There are also opportunities to consult more with community stakeholders such as DOC.

3.8 Comparison to Other Events

One key area for review was whether other events are now providing the same outcomes as Ecofest. Based on the research responses this would not appear to be the case, although some aspects of living sustainably are covered through events such as Nelson Growables and Festival of Opportunities. Overall, Ecofest appears to remain the only comprehensive platform for advice and support on how to live more sustainably.

Comments from sponsors/funders survey:

“I see it as part of our business...like an extension to our daily activities”

3.9 Exhibitors

On the whole exhibitors appear to be satisfied with the event. Whilst there is a tension between providing a community-oriented engagement event and a commercial expo, on the whole the event manages to meet the expectations of all stakeholders. However, there are opportunities to freshen the appeal of the commercial component and at the same time meet the needs of the commercial exhibitors. It is also important to ensure that community exhibitors are not marginalised to meet the needs of commercial participants.

Another important development has been the involvement of the Council Eco Design Adviser in ensuring that exhibitors and their products genuinely support the objectives of the expo (avoiding “greenwashing”).

Comments from this year’s standholder survey:

“Great show - more mainstream folks attending” (Mapua Country Trading)

“Excellent. Great weather & plenty of kids participated” (Bunnings)

“Less numbers than last year, but good energy” (Little Pig Building Co)

“Loved our spot. Can you pencil us in for this one next year.”

(Plankville)

“Seemed to be more product stands than in previous years. Danger of Ecofest being captured as retail trade expo.” (DOC)

3.10 Event Format

Moving the focus from big ticket talks to a more varied range of short workshop opportunities is proving popular, continuing the intention of making hands-on experiential learning part of the Ecofest experience. Continuing to ensure that the event content is relevant to our community and every day choices is important for the future, and also that the event is more accessible across the community.

A few survey responses have suggested moving to a bi-annual event, but there has not been a huge amount of feedback suggesting this. At this stage there still appears to be sufficient interest in the event to warrant running it on an annual basis.

Comments from visitors' survey on what people would like to see more of:

“easy ideas to make a start towards more sustainable living”
“more good seminars and workshops. More interactive stuff for kids”
“more community groups and what they are doing”

3.11 Venue

The visitors' survey contained a range of responses about wanting a more central location to both areas, such as Richmond. However, the Trafalgar Centre continues to be the only venue currently which offers sufficient space to run the indoor component of the event and accommodate visitor numbers. It also has good transport links and it is acknowledged that this is likely to remain the best venue option. The one year that the event took place at Founders Park saw a spike in visitor numbers and many positive comments about the atmosphere of the venue and it is good fit with Ecofest, but as a venue it is even less accessible for those outside of Nelson than the Trafalgar Centre, as well as being weather-dependent and more expensive to set up. Whilst the event remains in Nelson, it is important to recognise that for some parts of the region Nelson is not an accessible option, and therefore making event-related activities more accessible is an important trend to continue.

The Saxton complex is not currently suitable for staging Ecofest due to fire safety limitations on numbers indoors in the main stadium, and conflict with sports codes use during winter weekends.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS:

“Because it is essential that people are provided with easily accessible opportunities To make sustainable choices in how they live their lives and conduct their businesses”
(visitors' survey)

4.1 Staff Recommend Option 2.2:

That the event continues on an annual basis for the three year period 2012/15, after which it should be reviewed again. Ecofest remains a valuable platform for engaging our community and making sustainability accessible.

4.2 The event format should further develop both interactive/experiential learning at the expo, as well as further developing activities and programmes strongly linked to the event which can be offered across the region.

4.3 Continuation of a theme as trialled in the 2011 event through the partnership with Civil Defence is recommended. Potential themes/partnerships for 2012 could involve transport. The event should involve community partnerships as much as possible.

4.4 Further consultation to take place with exhibitors to ensure that the event is an effective vehicle in 2012 for their needs as well as Councils. Promoting a “sustainable shopping experience” can be developed as an event draw-card - focusing on the reduce/re-use perspective through partnerships with Sunday second-hand market; clothes and product swaps and farmers market. Monitoring of quality of exhibitors and products relating to Ecofest objectives to continue.

4.5 There is potential to develop Ecofest as a national event, including looking at synergies with other events and organisations, eg, conferences, environment centres, environment awards. This aspect to be explored further.

4.6 There is an opportunity to promote innovation and new technologies which support sustainability through a competition in this area. Consideration to be further given to whether this could be a joint Council/sponsor activity at a regional or national level. This activity could link to the region’s profile as the solar energy capital of New Zealand. Additional funding would be required.

Report Authors:

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Rob Francis, Environmental Education Officer, Tasman District Council

Assistance from:

Yvonne Gwyn, Policy Adviser, Nelson City Council

Charlene Dick, Cadet

APPENDIX A

Research conducted for review:

1. EXPOS PRIOR TO 2011

The following surveys have been conducted through Survey Monkey on the previous three expos:

- Visitors
- Exhibitors
- Sponsors/funders
- Others (including Council staff)

Copies of surveys available if required.

Summary of surveys:

1.1 Visitors

Responses: 40 (70% Nelson, 30% Tasman)

Commentary

A range of questions covered the visitor experience over the three previous years. These established that the majority of reasons for visiting were aligned with the event objectives in section 1. The majority of respondents reported that the event met their objectives. The previous programmes of seminars and talks resulted in a more mixed response, which is in line with changes made already to 2011 event moving the focus away to more practical workshops. Comments on what would improve Ecofest in the future ranged from more stands and opportunities to purchase eco-products; to less stands and more focus on the community - demonstrating the variability we often encounter in people's perceptions of sustainability. Other suggestions included a careers information opportunity at the event and showcasing of new technology - which again demonstrates the varied interests of the respondents. Visitors did not identify many opportunities for other events which meet the same needs, but where they did, Nelson Growables was the key candidate.

1.2 Exhibitors

Responses: 9 (85% Nelson, 15% Tasman).

78% commercial sector, 11% public sector, 11% community sector.

Commentary

The majority of respondents see Ecofest as their primary vehicle for environmental messages - and as such their point of access to this market. In this capacity Ecofest meets their objectives. Comments include positive views on relaxed and friendly show; ethos and target value. Every respondent was supportive of Ecofest continuing.

1.3 Generic (including Council staff)

Responses: 19 (86% Nelson/14% Tasman).

76.5% from public (govt) sector and 23.5% from the community sector, with 85.7% from Nelson and 14.3% from Tasman.

Commentary:

Respondents quoted sustainability, platform for community engagement and education/awareness raising as outcomes, with 50% stating these objectives fully met, and 50% partially met. Event valued as only dedicated platform for these activities, and as a valuable forum for translating ideas into action and networking, and as a council vehicle for walking the talk. However, view of event as repetitive also noted, and awareness of the dangers of product endorsement perceptions. Value seen in attracting out of region visitors and broadening appeal of event. School children should be free. Overall full support for continuation of event as a one stop shop giving clear Council message on sustainability.

1.4 Sponsors

Responses: 3 (2 Nelson/0 Tasman/1 Other)

Commentary:

Ecofest meets objective of linking brand with environment - it is seen as a community rather than a commercial event.

2. RESEARCH CONDUCTED AS PART OF 2011 EVENT:

2.1 Visitor Exit Survey:

428 visitors surveyed (9% of visitors - 60% repeat visitors; 40% first time visitors). Response to question: would you come to Ecofest again: 422: Yes; 6: No

2.2 Standholders Exit Survey:

Responses: 80

Commentary:

Most exhibitors positive about event but less people-engagement was noted with sales interest down on previous years. Concern about numbers, but overall there was a positive view of event.

3. SWOT ANALYSIS:

A range of SWOT analysis were carried out:

- Event organisers, including project manager

- NCC staff debrief
- TDC staff debrief
- NCC/TDC Biosecurity team
- TOTSEE (Top of the South Environmental Educators)

The following is a summary:

Strengths:

- Showing leadership
- Unique platform for sustainability
- Sponsor support
- Community spirit
- Removes barriers
- Access to eco-savvy audience
- Established event
- How-to demos
- Relaxed event atmosphere
- Quality of exhibitors
- National role model
- Project Manager

Weaknesses:

- Promotion campaign does not reach everybody
- Same old-same old
- Name (perceived as “hippy”) and associated language
- Not reaching some demographics
- Better Council stand presence/signage
- Better use of PA system

Opportunities:

- Council engagement with the community
- Practical themes
- Attract youth
- Grow event nationally/support regional development
- Internal and external partnerships to promote messages
- New technology
- Involve the arts/fashion show development
- Partnerships
- Solar links
- Visibility for Council leaders
- Better promotion, including signage

Threats:

- Liability for hands on activities
- Event fatigue
- Other events
- Weather

- Visitor numbers
- Perception of Council endorsement of products/services
- Loss of project manager

APPENDIX B

Relevant Council strategies and plans:

1. NELSON CITY COUNCIL:

1. Nelson Community Plan 2009-19:

Environmental Management/Fostering Change through non-regulatory means: Environmental advocacy, education and behaviour change programmes are a key part of non-regulatory methods to achieve environmental goals. Council works with other organisations and community groups to achieve good environmental outcomes in the community. Key initiatives include Ecofest.

Community Outcomes/Goals:

- Healthy land, sea, air and water - we protect the natural environment
- People-friendly places - we build healthy, accessible and attractive places and live in a sustainable region.
- A strong economy - we all benefit from a sustainable, innovative and diversified economy

1.1. Service level: sustainability advocacy - Ecofest

2. SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Aims: Demonstrate leadership in sustainability across the region

- Achieve best practice standards
- Meet and strive to surpass requirements of environmental legislation targets
- Build partnerships and projects that create learning networks
- Take account of the impact on future generations when making decisions
- Provide decision makers with the information they need to deliver sustainable outcomes

2. TASMAN DISTRICT COUNCIL:

Community Outcome: Our diverse community enjoys access to a range of spiritual, cultural, social, educational and recreational services.

How the activity contributes: By promoting involvement in activities like Sea Week, Enviroschools, and Ecofest which allows different sections of the community to participate, learn and teach each other about matters relating to community well-being.

Activity Goal:

The Environmental Management activity goal is to:

Effectively promote the sustainable management of the District's natural and physical resources by:

(1 -6 not relevant)

7. Educating communities and providing information to enable sustainable, resilient and productive communities within the District.

Principal Objectives:

The principal objectives of the Environmental Management activity to advance the goal of the activity are to:

Work with, and disseminate to, the community, information about good environmental practices and behaviours.

I have reviewed the Ecofest financials as provided by Jo Reilly. From the original figures provided by Jo, I have reduced the income in 2009 and 2010 for the surpluses carried forward from the previous year. The updated figures are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Surplus/(Deficit)</u>
2004	60,735	50,020	10,715
2005	45,257	42,156	3,101
2006	53,676	43,644	10,032
2007	49,453	36,791	12,662
2008	71,652	59,600	12,052
2009	93,018	89,380	3,638
2010	116,971**	135,759	(18,788)
	<u>490,762</u>	<u>457,350</u>	<u>33,412</u>
2011*	115,622**	112,742	2,880

* = Not Finalised yet

** = adjusted for carry forward surplus

Note: Ecofest commenced in 2001.

The above figures relate to the Ecofest event for that calendar year. These figures do not agree easily to Council's general ledger as Council's financial year runs from July to June each year. Ecofest is held in August and therefore, the income and expenditure falls over two financial years with most expenditure falling in the previous Council financial year, and income from the event being in the following financial year.

I have performed a comprehensive review of the above figures for the 2008 event onwards. I have split the transactions from the general ledger into the relevant Ecofest annual event. Over the four years I have a small discrepancy which I have not attempted to reconcile. This discrepancy would most likely be due to the coding of Ecofest costs into other Council departments. A greater emphasis has now been placed on correctly recording income and expenditure within the Ecofest Activity.

Ecofest is accounted for by Council as a 'closed account'. This means that any surpluses/deficits each year are carried forward into the next year. From the beginning of the Ecofest event to the end of the 2010 event, Council's Ecofest closed account balance is \$24,186 (In funds). (\$9,490 deficit pre 2004, \$33,676 surplus post 2004).

Bryce Grammer
Financial Accountant

**APPENDIX D
Ecofest Expo 2011
Event Analysis**

How did we do?

We felt we created an interactive event, with a high profile for the “Futureproofing Your Family” goal.

Areas targeted were:

- Continuing with the interactive marquee
- Introducing more hands-on workshops
- Focusing on the profile in association with Civil Defence

Visitor numbers were approximately 5000, which were down on the previous year. We do however feel that with the current economic situation, as well as the huge number of events in the region for the World Cup, the public were forced to choose more carefully how they spent their dollar. It was noticed by many standholders that the people that came were very focused and committed to being there, rather than timewasters.

Breakdown of Hours

We attach at Appendix A, a full breakdown of hours over the year so far. Of course, work continues with ongoing enquiries, administering the website and applying for The Canterbury Community Trust grant as usual.

Sponsorships

The following sponsors were confirmed as supporters of the Ecofest Expo 2011:

Gold: *Approx. value*

The Cant. Community Trust	Grant	\$7,000
Positive Projects Trust	Grant	\$5,000
Radio Nelson	Radio publicity	\$12,000
Radioworks	Radio advertising	\$9,600
Lion Foundation	Grant	\$10,000
Absolutely Energy	Door prize	<u>\$4,200</u>
		\$47,800

Silver:

NZ Nature Company	Provision of items for gift bags & prizes	\$2,745
Stonefly Lodge	Provision of accommodation as OC prize & on air	\$2,000
The Nelson Mail	One-third of printed advertising	\$1,323
Arrow Motel Apartments	Accommodation & breakfasts	\$1,200
Printhouse	Printing	\$1,500
Labels	Co-ordination of Fashion shows & Shwap	\$1,500
NMIT	Provision of equipment for cooking demos	\$1,000
Hybrid Homes & Living	Sponsor of Advertising in Leaders	\$1,500
New Holland Publishers	Provision of books for giveaways & prizes	<u>\$1,200</u>
		\$13,968

Bronze:

Civil Defence	Support for 2011 theme (est.)	\$900
Drycrust Communications	10 free hours of design work	\$800
The Warehouse	Kids' prize - 2 bikes & helmets	\$600
Organic NZ magazine	Free speaker & profile	\$300
Arcadia Organics	Staffing of seminar tents	\$500
Mr Rental Nelson	Free hire of TV	<u>\$100</u>
	\$3,200	
<i>Plus additional small items provided for Eco Challenge prize</i>		\$600

Approximate Value \$65,568

(2010 sponsorships valued at approximately \$103,479 for the tenth birthday celebration).

Publicity

All publicity was done in association with Dry Crust Communications, with good support from Nelson City Council Communications Department. Excellent publicity was achieved in all of the following areas:

- Printed Press:
 - Standholders were encouraged to mention Ecofest in any press releases during the months leading up to the Expo. This resulted in several articles about standholders ending with a reference to them being at the forthcoming Ecofest.
 - The Nelson Mail editorial department continues to be supportive, with Ecofest-related items showcased as follows:
 - the Friday Lifestyle section on several Fridays leading up to the Expo,
 - Monday's "Pics" page after the Expo, with supporting article.
 - The colour pull-out advertising feature was printed in The Nelson Mail on Saturday, 13 August, and was well supported by our standholders' advertising - resulting in a double-sided page pull-out.
 - A full page colour ad in all three Leaders appeared on Thursday, 18 August.
 - Regular advertisements and mentions appeared in The Nelson Mail and local papers, and in the Newsline Updates appearing in the Waimea Weekly.
 - Our full colour Out and About page in Wild Tomato.
- Radio
 - Regular contact was established with The Radio Network (Classic Hits etc.), Radioworks (More FM etc.) to ensure all details of the programme and standholder information was available to them.

- Regular radio advertising was a part of the radio sponsorship on both radio networks, and built up appropriately over the days prior to the Expo.
 - Both radio stations ran on air competitions and giveaways with items provided by us.
 - Both radio networks had relevant support advertising from other businesses, enforcing the green message.
 - The Radio Network also heavily promoted the “Most Prepared Family” competition, including acting as MC for several of the challenges over the weekend.
- Council Newsletters
 - Ecofest was well advertised and profiled in both *Newsline the Mag* and *Live Nelson*.
 - The Ecofest Expo programme appeared in the issues delivered to homes around the first week of August.

The councils’ newsletters form a key part of the promotion of Ecofest and are promoted as such to sponsors, providing coverage to over 70,000 people in the Nelson/Tasman region.

- Website

The website continues to receive a good number of hits, and more and more businesses and general public are getting in touch via the website. We continued the inclusion of a carpooling link and bus timetable on the website, and they received good support. The Eco Challenge workshop timetable and the Ecofest programme were both available as downloads.

Event Structure and Administration

- Layout

We are comfortable that the layout utilised inside the Trafalgar Centre achieves a spacious feel. We were able to introduce a number of additional stands, in order to provide demo/workshop areas in the main hall without losing available stand numbers. This included being able to offer display spaces for schools in the middle of the large aisle on the stage side of the Centre.

The combination of using the external cafe marquee for both the cafe and food demonstrations worked well, and the large interactive marquee continues to draw great feedback regarding its atmosphere and focus.

We had some external layout constraints due to the World Cup, and this affected where the Most Prepared Family were able to be based, but generally achieved a good open feel outside as well. This included good space for children to do bike skills, and for people to have a go on a Segway.

- **Carparking and Transportation**

Rotary staffed the Trafalgar Centre carpark and additional parking at the tennis courts on Paru Paru Road, which ensured we got the most out of the limited parking available. It was appreciated to have Council expedite the work on the courts to provide us with this additional space. As previously stated, there was a carpooling weblink on the Ecofest website, as well as the ongoing provision of free buses around Richmond and Nelson for Expo weekend. The provision of free buses to the Expo is an important sustainable transport message from the Councils, and this year we were able to secure grant funding from the Positive Projects Trust to continue with the free buses. The bike stands at the entrance to the Expo were also well supported.

- **Staffing**

1. The One Day School staffed the public entry and exit, and volunteers maintained the recycling stations.
2. St John's Ambulance was again onsite as the first-aiders, and had an informative stand in the hall.
3. Claire Webster was terrific support as chief assistant for the three days, with Karen, Rob and several volunteers as additional support, together with other volunteers who staffed the Shwaps.

- **Vouchers**

The voucher system was continued to offer food and drink vouchers to the core staff, volunteers, speakers, and other appropriate people. This acts as a good acknowledgement of support and is well received.

- **Signage**

We continued to build on our stock of permanent signs that can be re-used each year, with new billboard signs being created, and a number of large corflute signs for around the Expo. Stock will continue to be added to.

- **Waste**

We continued with our "towards zero waste" focus this year, staffed by a lead volunteer. We provided very strict guidelines to the standholders, who did their best to comply, and we also included in our publicity that we were Zero Waste. We believe our standholders did very well this year, and this shows the zero waste education and compulsory compliance is getting through to them.

- **Health and Safety**

Due to the Expo being held at a Council-approved venue, we worked closely with Trafalgar Centre Management to ensure we were working within the health and safety plan for the venue, and provided a hazard plan to them. All layout, stands and displays were reviewed regularly to ensure compliance.

- **Budget**
The budget is attached at Appendix B. We believe we have received all invoices so this is a realistic guideline as to how the budget looks. We are pleased that a very tight budget was met this year, resulting in a comfortable profit, and the cost savings we introduced were effective.
- **Eco Challenge**
As a form of pre-publicity for the Expo, the Eco Challenge certainly promotes Ecofest's profile well in advance of the Expo.

This year we went back to the tried and trusted formula of a timetable of workshops leading up to Ecofest - all with the "futureproofing your family" focus. These were well supported, with anywhere from 6 up to 36 people attending, depending on the type of workshop or demo, and the Civil Defence stand at Richmond Mall attracted considerable attention through the day.

This was a good way of gaining an Ecofest profile right around the region, with a good number of events being held in Golden Bay, and several in Motueka. The rest were predominantly held in Nelson and Richmond.

- **Exhibitors**
We continue to increase our mailing list throughout the year with a view to ensuring new and different exhibitors join the Expo each year. This year we had 35 new or different exhibitors from last year, and reduced the number of standholders back to 130, in order to avoid needing to pay for another large marquee.

We received good and constructive feedback via the Standholders' Survey forms. We had 78 survey forms returned (compared with 77 last year), and the winner of the free stand for next year is Mapua Country Trading. We have previously circulated the feedback spreadsheet, which is attached at Appendix C, but a few of the comments include:

Key Points from Survey Forms:

- Great show - more mainstream folks attending
- People not spending the same as last year but were very interested in product and information given out.
- Very enjoyable, very targeted, great response.
- Interesting crowd, covered the range I was hoping for. Event well organised & friendly.
- I really love the atmosphere of Ecofest. You do a great job keeping people in the eco-spirit (standholders).

We continued with doing the organisation and provision of the screens, using Hirequip as our local firm to perform the task of providing and setting up. The Interactive Marquee was extremely well received again, with the hands-on opportunities a huge hit. Note however, that this marquee is subject to funding being received to cover the huge cost of the marquee.

- Seminars and Workshops

It was certainly cost-efficient and more practical to have the seminars located in the Victory Room, rather than in an outside set up. The only disappointing factor was the numbers of people attending. The maximum number of people that attended was around 30, with several of the seminars attracting considerably less.

It is felt a “big name” is needed for each day in order to attract good numbers. This will have to be factored into the budget, with possible sponsorship offsetting the costs.

However, the demonstrations and workshops that took place inside the main hall were a big success, particularly those with a hands-on or gardening focus. The SeniorNet mornings were both well attended with rotating visitors, and the main successes were on the How to grow your own food stand, and the DIY stand. This shows quite clearly what the main interest for the public is! And is certainly a focus we suggest we continue with.

- Public Feedback

Additional questionnaires for the public provided feedback on the seminars, the types of things they found most useful, things that saved them money and things they would like to have at Ecofest.

The feedback analysed is attached at Appendices D and E.

What did you like best: Variety & quality, Civil Defence, solar displays, heat pumps, Kids’ activities, Fashion shows, Everything!

Notably: Those that have been before (sample) - 256 & not - 172 - which shows we are still continuing to both maintain our regulars and bring in a considerable percentage of newcomers each year.

- Funky Fashion Shows and Shwap

Our Fashion Shows continue to be a great success with a number of the schools, and we introduced a “hat” section this year as a potentially smaller and more doable item for some. We have so many entries now that Christine’s own business, Labels, does not have room in the fashion show! However, she is totally committed to doing the fashion shows and the philosophy they support.

The Fashion Shwap continues to be a success, with a Home Craft Shwap being added this year. This received some support, and was a very easy to manage addition, so may be continued in conjunction with the Fashion Shwap.

Our SWOT analysis included ways to develop our Fashion Shows further, and these will be discussed in detail with Christine, subject to the Councils' confirmation.

- **Organic Cuisine**

As a result of the tough analysis of the whole Organic Cuisine section, the Café in the marquee was combined with all food demonstrations, and the subject of the food demonstrations altered to be very “product” focused. This meant a very “how to” focus was introduced: how to use tofu, how to make cheese, etc. These proved to be exactly what the public wanted and we had good crowds at all of them, usually around 20-30, which is the ideal number for something sharing a marquee and not costing us anything! It is expected to continue with this format and several of the businesses involved in the demonstrations have already expressed their support for the future.

- **Kids Activities**

The Kids Trail was another success, and a particular hit was the “Shaky Room” for the children to experience how an earthquake would feel. In addition, Bunnings' craft section, adjacent to our own Sustainable Kids section, anchored a good space for the kids.

- **Bus Tours**

The tours are always well received and we believe are a strong interactive component in education about environmentally-friendly homes and businesses. Interestingly, it was difficult to find enough eco-homes in the Tasman area earlier this year, and as a result we only offered one home tour and one garden tour.

The Nelson/Waimea home tour sold out, with Richard Popenhagen hosting.

The Urban Edible Garden Tour sold 16 tickets, and a smaller bus was put on as a result. Again, we believe the World Cup events and general economics may have had an impact on the tour sales this year.

Good feedback continues to be received for our tours, and their presenters.

Key Points from Survey Forms:

- Enjoyed the variety of homes
- Many were building or planning to build and looking for ideas
- Many raved about Richard Popenhagen!
- Many interested in homes from natural materials

Business Event

It was decided this year to do a Sustainable Business Seminar, with a futureproofing your business focus. We were fortunate enough to secure Paul Lonsdale of the Christchurch Central City Business Association (has appeared on television many times), and we contracted Carol Taplin to create a practical tips and information session to follow on.

Regrettably, this session was not supported. We utilised **all** email and e-newsletter and information networks and the Chamber of Commerce, and with only two tickets sold up to the day before, it was agreed to cancel this event.

In debrief, we felt it may have been the timing (it was scheduled for the evening), and may have been more successful as an afternoon event. (Although we would not have been able to secure Paul if it was.) It is felt that in future, tying a sustainable business event to the Chamber of Commerce or the Cawthron, as one of their own events, may be more effective, and to ensure it is held during the day.

- Next Year - 2012

We understand Ecofest is being full analysed by the Councils, and the SWOT from our debrief is attached at Appendix F, which highlights the main points for discussion and development.

We believe the strengths and opportunities show an exciting path forward that we would fully support exploring further.

Regarding perceived weaknesses or threats, we put forward a few thoughts:

1. We suggest the idea of holding the Expo every second year is not viable, due to the loss of momentum in our profile as an annual event, loss of standholders who may look elsewhere for their profile, and loss of an appropriate "sustainability focused" platform for both Councils to interact with the public.
2. We suggest the "same old" comment is something that can be applied to every similar annual event, and is not Ecofest specific. However, all the other similar annual events (A&P, Home & Garden Show, etc.) continue to be held annually, which most likely brings us back to point 1.
3. The weather factor has been planned for and the placement of the large marquee, café marquee & demos considerably reduce the potential impact from bad weather. There are usually a number of external stands that take the risk, and it has only impacted on one year out of the eleven expos.

4. Holding Ecofest in August is particularly relevant as the public have had their large July and August power bills and are therefore focused on reducing those bills and making their homes more energy efficient generally. It is also the time to start preparing the garden and planting seeds, so the timing actually works well from a number of aspects. Nelson weather is usually settled in August.

Contract

Assuming confirmation of Ecofest for 2012 and beyond, contract price plus inflation at 4.6% (CPI Sept 2011) increases to \$30,757.63 plus GST.

Our hourly rate for variations is \$40 plus GST per hour, and 80 cents plus GST per km for mileage where applicable, ie. Golden Bay and Murchison.

Summary

We are pleased with the budget surplus achieved this year, and believe the opportunities for Ecofest's development in the future are considerable.

We would like to reiterate our long-term commitment to Ecofest.

Jo Reilly
J R Events Ltd