

Tourism New Zealand's "100% Pure international marketing campaign has been very effective in portraying the country's natural beauty. Moving forward New Zealand is challenged to meet the expectations of savvy travellers, both international and domestic, who require not only authentic experiences set in our stunning sea to mountain landscape, but with minimal environmental impacts.

Staying in commercial accommodation is an integral part of the visitor experience. Until recently, as the region's largest hotel with 151 rooms, Kingsgate Hotel Palmerston North generated an excessive amount of rubbish at a high financial cost.

Despite being a city with a strong recycling culture both residents and schools, many businesses in Palmerston North don't recycle, and until now haven't been incentivised to recycle. The team at Kingsgate Hotel Palmerston North saw the opportunity, and with assistance from Awapuni Sustainable Development Centre and TBL Solutions very quickly underwent a waste audit and introduced a recycling policy.

Unlike a typical office, Kingsgate Hotel Palmerston North generates a diverse range of rubbish. By diverting rubbish from landfill, the hotel has increased customer satisfaction, and has saved a significant amount of money in the process.

New Initiatives since January 2008

- Recycling of all paper, cardboard, plastic (#1 and #2), tin, aluminium, glass and food scraps.
- Removal of plastic bags from all guest rooms.
- All kitchen oil & fat is picked up by the Tallowman.
- Removal of black, plastic bin liners from most parts of the Hotel.
- Trialling of liquid soap in guest rooms instead of single use soap bars.
- Disposal of items through waste exchange programmes such as www.nothrow.co.nz. This ensures that where possible waste is diverted from landfill, and recognises that rubbish could be 'someone else's treasure'.
- Each department has recycling boxes for toners and paper.
- Decommissioned fridges are degassed before leaving the property and are responsibly disposed of.
- Purchasing decisions take into consideration the carbon footprints of the items concerned.
- Where possible invoices are emailed, instead of printed and posted.
- Incandescent lights have been replaced with CFL's where appropriate.
- Fluorescent lights and CFL's are responsibly disposed in compliance with New Zealand regulation through Interwaste. The highly toxic mercury is diverted from landfill, and the metal and glass are recycled.
- Ensuring that everything we do completes a circle.
- Establishment of an environmental committee.
- Host to the local chapter of Green Drinks.

Tangible Benefits

- A cost saving of between \$500-00 and \$800-00 a month.
- Estimated diversion of over 110,230 plastic bags from landfill each year.

Part of the Hotel's success in implementing environmentally responsible policies, relies upon the 'buy in' of staff. To monitor and advise on the systems in place, an environmental committee has been set up, to which the staff are proactive contributors.

Kingsgate Hotel Palmerston North is also demonstrating environmental leadership in the wider community by hosting the local chapter of Green Drinks. This is an international network, which facilitates socialising and information exchange between organisations, businesses and individuals who share an interest in environmental issues. It is also a forum for updating interested parties in local environmental initiatives.

Continuing on the Environmental Journey

In a short time frame Kingsgate Hotel Palmerston North has significantly reduced the amount of rubbish it produces from going to landfill. With conscious effort the team has minimised environmental impacts, created a more cohesive staff culture, and has generated good will amongst the local community.

We have commissioned TBL Solutions to conduct a second waste Audit which will monitor what we are doing and to lead us into the future. This will ensure we are putting in place accurate measures to complete the circle.

Moving forward, the Hotel's environmental committee will introduce further initiatives of good merit, and as data sets are generated, benchmarks for waste minimisation, energy consumption and other environmental impacts will be set. All activities will be undertaken without compromising the Hotel's commitment to service.