Household Environmental Impacts in New Zealand: 
A Case Study of Auckland

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Abstract

The New Zealand environmental context is reviewed in light of international environmental efforts and agreements about climate change with a view to understanding why environmental impacts are relevant at the household level. The global, national and local environmental management structure is discussed leading into a discussion of how household environmental impacts have been measured and by whom.

A survey was undertaken of two parts of North Auckland, New Zealand; Torbay and Helensville/Kaukapakapa in order to understand if the international goal of reducing human environmental impact is followed through at the household level. It investigated the environmental impacts of energy use and conservation, water consumption and conservation, waste and recycling, transport, and environmental awareness. Results were compared with similar data around New Zealand and worldwide.

Conclusions show the people of Helensville/Kaukapakapa and Torbay are environmentally conscious but unwilling to alter household infrastructure or behaviour unless it is deemed to be a financially beneficial option for them. Convenience is a factor in household environmental impact in both a rural and suburban context. New Zealand households could be doing more to reduce household environmental impacts, however, where cost or convenience is a barrier this survey shows that they are unwilling to do so. Results also showed that participants gain environmental knowledge primarily from media sources.

Recommendations are made that are aimed at encouraging the uptake of environmental behaviours and increasing environmental awareness. They include increasing subsidies on sustainable changes to houses and the accuracy of environmental reporting in the media and online.
Acknowledgements

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<th>Expanded Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFCs</td>
<td>Chlorofluorocarbons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITES</td>
<td>Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIA</td>
<td>Department of Internal Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoC</td>
<td>Department of Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECG</td>
<td>Ecosystem Conservation Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEA</td>
<td>European Environment Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EECA</td>
<td>Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
<td>Environmental Protection Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHG</td>
<td>Greenhouse Gas</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPCC</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFAT</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MfE</td>
<td>Ministry for the Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPI</td>
<td>Ministry for Primary Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIWA</td>
<td>National Institute for Water and Atmosphere</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZEPA</td>
<td>New Zealand Environmental Protection Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCE</td>
<td>Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIF</td>
<td>Pacific Islands Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>Polluter Pays Principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSR</td>
<td>Pressure State Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMA</td>
<td>Resource Management Act (1991)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USEPA</td>
<td>United States Environmental Protection Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMO</td>
<td>World Meteorological Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWF</td>
<td>World Wildlife Fund</td>
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