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MASSEY UNIVERSITY

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

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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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.

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List of Abbreviations

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