



# no effort wasted

When it comes to us so-called Tidy Kiwis living in clean, green New Zealand, there's actually quite a gap between fiction and fact when it comes to the figures.

Did you know that, per capita, New Zealand is ranked among the top 10 highest rubbish producers in the world? Each year, we throw out 3.2 million tonnes of garbage – about 40% of which is food scraps? A further 20% is paper, which could so easily be recycled. And it all sits there in the ground, slowly breaking down, over hundreds of years if it's plastic, and breathing methane into the atmosphere if it's organic.

The exciting thing, though, is that it doesn't have to be this way. Turning those figures around is one challenge that every one of us can help make happen, simply through small lifestyle tweaks. Collectively, these have the potential to create major change for the better... and significantly reduce our household bills as well!

"A lot of us are very aware that there's a problem, but don't know how to tackle it. Because there is more to just being right or wrong when it comes to going green. Is it about being less toxic, creating less carbon, using more renewable resources... the list goes on?" says Carthew Neal, creator of TV3's WA\$TED! programme and the resulting "how-to" book of the same name, which was launched in bookshops last month. "And you know what? It's not so much about saving the planet – that'll go on turning, whatever the weather does – it's about making sure we're still around to enjoy it!"

Carthew pitched the idea for WA\$TED! at a film and TV conference back in 2005, having just got back to New Zealand from working in television in the UK. It was

Resene  
Buttery White

Resene  
Double Alabaster



immediately embraced, funding was sourced from NZ On Air, and filming started in March last year. Now, WA\$TED! is screening or in production in Canada, Denmark and Spain – this is a global, not a regional concept, and New Zealand television is now leading the way.

“In the UK, I saw popular programmes on our guilt around cleanliness at home, and could see another greater modern-day guilt coming: wastefulness. The good news is that we can all do something about it,” he says. “In the course of making WA\$TED!, we found that everyone who starts on the journey gets hooked. It’s a great, empowering feeling to be creating healthy spaces and healthy lifestyles, and to know that you are making a very real difference.”

And as he rightly observes, there’s no point laying out all the problems if you can’t offer solutions as well. This is why the WA\$TED book! starts by introducing a method for auditing the impact your lifestyle is having on the world around you, so that you have a benchmark by which to judge progress as you start to make the little alterations that lead to cheaper bills and a weekly rubbish bin that’s only half full. From there, the extensive list of ways to reduce your household’s eco-footprint – along with instructions and hints, and a guide to how much money you can save! – includes:

- > Putting food scraps into worm farms – which reduce food scraps to 5% of their original mass – compost heaps or Bokashi, and making sure you don’t over-purchase at the supermarket.

- > Keeping an eye on the amount of packaging you take home as an incidental extra to shopping – we send more than 80,000 tonnes of plastic to landfills every year, much of which is packaging.

- > Re-using your shopping bags – if the country’s plastic bags were recycled and turned into fence posts, they would go around our coastline one-and-a-half times.

- > Sending whiteware and electronic equipment to a recycler, not the dump – Fisher & Paykel takes back 25,000 appliances each year, and manages to recycle around 75% of the weight of each one.

- > Making sure litter goes into the rubbish bin – and that includes cigarette butts, which can contain up to 4000 toxins!

- > Purchasing a power monitor to assess electricity usage.

- > Making sure homes are insulated, ventilated and gaps are sealed – every \$1 spent on insulation saves the country \$2 in doctor’s visits and days off work.

- > Turning down the hot water cylinder – every extra 10 degrees uses 15% more electricity.

- > Considering solar heating.

- > Using energy-efficient bulbs – if every NZ household installed five of these, we’d save enough energy to power every home in Christchurch.

- > Setting the fridge correctly – if all our beer fridges were turned off, we could close down the South Island’s Coleridge power station.



- > Collecting rainwater and grey water.
- > Biking, walking, skateboarding, or using public transport.
- > Planning car travel efficiently.
- > Tuning the car regularly.

For masses more ideas and ways to track your own progress, pick up a copy of WA\$TED! (we have a few to give away in this issue of Habitat on page 70) or log on to [www.wastedtv.co.nz](http://www.wastedtv.co.nz). **H**

## did you know:

WA\$TED! isn't just about talking environmental responsibility; keeping the programme's own footprint as small as possible was a key concern for the production crew behind the scenes as well, and won them the government's Green Ribbon Award. Initiatives included:

- > Using a hybrid vehicle.
- > Using travel mugs instead of disposable cups.
- > Recycling and composting in the office and on location.
- > Recycling DVDs and CDs.
- > Crew car pooling.
- > Buying recycled paper and toilet paper.
- > Composting and recycling all the waste collected from homes featured in the show.
- > The book is printed on paper sourced from sustainable forests.
- > Remaining unavoidable emissions were offset through the purchase of carbon credits through carboNZeroCert™.