



Home-grown sustainability work in the Bay

Hawke's Bay has some businesses and organisations doing good things in the sustainability space.

Our work at 3R Group means I've interacted with a fair number of them over the years.

The list below has some notable examples which have impressed me over the years, but I'm sure there are many others doing equally great work; I don't claim to know about everyone championing sustainability in their areas of work.

I hope these will serve to inspire businesses and organisations in the Bay.

Nourished for Nil and The Food Basket

We're lucky to have two well-established food rescue organisations running in the region – Nourished for Nil in Hastings and Napier, and The Food Basket in Waipukurau.

Both were founded in 2017 and receive food donations from local supermarkets, restaurants, cafés, and producers which they distribute for free to the community. Combined, they have rescued thousands of tonnes of food.

This not only gets usable food onto peoples' tables but reduces greenhouse gas emissions as organic waste creates methane when it breaks down in landfill.

While the underlying focus is simply to prevent usable food going to landfill, the organisations have helped many people and families experiencing challenging times to access nutritious groceries.

Nourished for Nil has taken their work a few steps further, having

merged with the Hastings and Napier food banks in 2022. After Cyclone Gabrielle their depots played a crucial role, receiving and boxing up food parcels for distribution to the hardest hit communities.

This year also saw them open a social supermarket. "Although, people can only access the store by agency referral at this stage, we're very proud to be able to provide additional support on top of our food depots. It is a significant step towards reducing food waste and improving access to nourishing food for local communities," says Nourished by Nil founder, Christina McBeth.

Theirs is an example of sustainability having a dual impact - environmental and social.

Hawk Group

Ever wonder where all the paper and cardboard you put out for recycling ends up? As it turns out if you live in Napier or Hastings, it doesn't go far, landing at Hawk's processing facility in Whakatū.

There it goes through a sorting and pulping process before being turned into brand new, moulded fibre (a soft version of cardboard) trays for packing and transporting fruit. These are all made from 100% recycled material, can be recycled again, and are an example of the circular economy in action, right here in the Bay.

Hawk's pulping system means they can accept more cardboard and paper than other processors because they can take things like greasy pizza boxes. In other regions this material must be clean, but thanks to Hawk, more paper and cardboard from the Bay can be recycled and less is wasted.

Still, don't throw your cheese-encrusted cardboard in the recycling. Spare a thought for the crews collecting this material, and keep your

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recycling as clean possible.

Hawk says the location of its factory was also chosen with sustainability in mind – right in the centre of the country's largest apple growing region. This means shorter transport distances for their trays to the growers, and less emissions as a result.

Stewart Group

Our financial advisor neighbours across Karamu Road North in Hastings are the founders of the Te Rehe Solar Network, the first private peer-to-peer energy network of its kind in New Zealand.

The network was created as a result of Stewart Group working to reduce their reliance on the national power grid by installing a 44kw per hour solar array on their building. For comparison, the average household consumes around 22kw a day.

In April 2022 the network officially kicked off as a non-profit, community network of environmentally focused members. It has since grown to 80 members, made up of both solar energy generators and users – businesses and households.

At the Stewart Group building the solar panels power the offices as well as charge their EV fleet on weekdays, with any excess energy going into the solar network. Come the weekend or public holidays, almost all the solar energy goes back into the solar network.

The EV chargers are also made avail-

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able for the public to use at the weekend, through the Parkable app, with the profits being donated to local charities.

"We're hoping to encourage people to think about how they use electricity, where it comes from, the carbon impact, and to keep it local," says Stewart Group CEO Nick Stewart. By 2026 they hope to have 1,000 members.

The solar energy initiative is part of their B Corp certification in their sustainability-focused investing strategies.

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Bin Hire

As anyone who diligently separates their recyclables from their rubbish knows, a lot can be kept from landfill if you make some extra effort. This is the philosophy behind Hastings company Bin Hire, which puts a particular emphasis on sorting through the 'rubbish' they collect to ensure everything that can be recycled or reused is kept from landfill.

Dan Montaperto founded the company over a decade ago, as he recounts, in a paddock on a concrete pad recycling everything he could. "It's always been about recycling and waste diversion for us – to the extent that in the office and the workshop we recycle everything we can, or compost leftovers from our lunches," he says.

They have since grown into large premises in Whakatū where they can sort through the material collected from local businesses and homes.

They also run the Black Bridge Refuse Station near Haumoana. Here, again, the priority is on keeping anything from landfill which can be recycled or reused.

The labour costs are higher, Dan says, but the landfill costs are decreased. "The team also get a kick out of saving useful things from landfill," he says.

Hats off to Bin Hire for using their waste management business to create and promote sustainability in their region.

Designing buildings to reduce or eliminate waste during construction, be energy efficient, fit for purpose, long lasting and promote the wellbeing of the people who use them, is vital.

DCA Architects of Transformation

Becoming more sustainable isn't just about dealing with waste at the end of the pipeline. The design phase is critical so the things we make last longer, are fit for purpose, and are easily reused, repurposed, repaired, or recycled.

No other industries contribute a greater volume of waste than the construction and demolition sector – around half of all waste.

During their life, buildings have a big footprint from the energy they use. Designing buildings to reduce or eliminate waste during construction, be energy efficient, fit for purpose, long lasting and promote the wellbeing of the people who use them, is vital.

These goals are at the centre of DCA Architects of Transformation's thinking, says Hawke's Bay Area Manager Marie Fleming. "We take a longer-term view on a building because it has a big impact on so many aspects – from the urban infrastructure to the wellbeing of the people who use it."

They aim to design buildings which have as little waste as possible during construction, are fit for purpose so they have a long useful life, are durable and easy to maintain.

Marie has been instrumental in growing the region's network of sustainability-focused building professionals over the past five years. The industry is starting to get on board, she says, particularly as climate standards for new government buildings including Greenstar-rated builds and reducing the 'whole of life' embodied carbon are implemented.

The result is upskilling in the industry with its flow-on effects – buildings which create less waste, last longer, are more energy efficient and overall nicer places to be. ●

3R design, implement and manage product stewardship schemes for individual businesses or industry-wide groups. They also help businesses take a fresh look at their waste to first minimise and then recover what would otherwise be wasted.



OUR COMMUNITY,
OUR ANIMALS

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