

The Jobs Letter

No. 135

1 December 2000

Essential Information on an Essential Issue

KEY

KAITAIA ZERO WASTE
CONFERENCE

DIARY

14 November 2000

US economist and author Jeremy Rifkin says that the current growth of the US economy is very similar to that of the 1920s. He says the growth is founded on record levels of consumer credit, and that American households now have a negative savings rate for the first time since the Great Depression. Rifkin warns that any kind of financial crisis, such as a stock market crash, or an increase in already inflated oil prices, could easily burst the American economic bubble.

Te Kuiti shoe company Fabia is cutting 20 jobs from a workforce of 52. The company says weak local demand and cheap imports are to blame. Fabia is one of the few local shoemakers left in New Zealand.

The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) has released a report which says that local welfare agencies are unable to meet the demand for help or have been forced to cut back on the help they provide to low income and disadvantaged Australians. Tough welfare rules are forcing more people to rely on churches and welfare agencies. ACOSS president Michael Raper says the Australian government needs to boost the unemployment benefit, which is well below the poverty line.

Sustainable New Zealand

- Next week, twenty-five district and city councils from throughout New Zealand will be gathering in Kaitaia for the second annual Zero Waste conference. The councils, representing a third of the country's local authorities, have joined the campaign to achieve as close as possible to 100% recycling and reuse of their local waste streams by the year 2015. The governance decisions made by these councils will not only help to save resources and the environment, they will also see the development of hundreds of skilled and "green collar" jobs in the recycling and the recovered materials industries. (see *The Jobs Letter* No.118). And these "jobs from waste" are only a part of the employment potential that many eco-entrepreneurs believe will come from New Zealand adopting "sustainability" as a key principle in its economic and social vision.

Zero Waste NZ trustee Warren Snow, in a special feature written for this issue, argues that may be possible for New Zealand to create full employment within 5 years by adopting measures for sustainable community economic development. Snow: "There are many jobs in communities that need doing even though they no longer support a living for a person and are not self-funding. The market will no longer deliver these jobs – but the community sector, with a little support, can step in and create a local infrastructure that will result in both employment and community wellbeing."

- Besides the council representatives, the Kaitaia conference will also be attracting a range of business leaders, academics, community groups, consultants and environmentalists. These include several guest contributors from the US, Britain and Australia.
- Environment Minister Marian Hobbs will be attending the conference and is expected to issue a public discussion paper on waste minimisation, from a working party convened by her ministry and Local Government NZ. Among other things, this paper will canvass the possibility of national landfill levies, such as are already imposed by Christchurch City Council to finance a sophisticated recovery and recycling operation.
- The main keynote speaker for the conference will be Tachi Kiuchi, Chairman and CEO of Mitsubishi Electric America, the company which made the world's first CFC-free refrigerator (winning the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's award for its innovation).

Mitsubishi Electric also makes some of the world's most efficient solar cells, and the new fuel cells that turn simple hydrogen to electricity, with no pollution. Fuel cell powered vehicles promise to be both lighter and safer, cost both the producer and consumer less, and have fuel efficiencies as high as 200 miles per gallon. It is these fuel cells that feature prominently in Paul Hawken's book *Natural Capitalism*, foretell-

The Jobs Letter

DIARY

15 November 2000

The Medical Council and the Medical Association say spiralling student loan debt among medical graduates is endangering the health and safety of the public. Student loans are causing many young doctors to leave NZ, leaving hospitals short-staffed. The medical groups say high loan debts are also forcing doctors to become specialists, which is resulting in a shortage of GPs.

The Auckland University of Technology, in partnership with Microsoft, is setting up an e-business section, and will add e-business to its Bachelor of Business degree next year.

16 November 2000

A new \$1.9m computer network for Student Job Search is launched in Auckland. The new system enables Student Job Search centres to contact employers via e-mail, post jobs to an online job board, and includes an interface with Winz.

The Government's decision to remove all import tariffs on the world's 42 poorest countries is heavily criticised. Trade Unions Council secretary Paul Coulter says the decision will cost jobs. Green Party co-leader Rod Green says the move will be the death knell of the local clothing industry.

Social Services and Employment Minister Steve Maharey releases a Winz report which concludes that the work for the dole scheme has been a complete failure. The report says beneficiaries are no better off in Community Work than if left on a benefit, and that participants in the scheme are less likely to find positive employment.

The employment website Seek (www.seek.co.nz) is named the best employment site in New Zealand at the Netguide Web Awards 2000.

18 November 2000

An international study of 10,000 workers in 32 countries finds only a third of them are loyal to their employers. The study says if companies want to retain their employees they must be family friendly, show interest in the talents of individual employees, give them freedom to make their own decisions, and make them feel they are being paid fairly according to their individual merit.

ing a fundamental transformation in the automobile and petroleum industries.

- Tachi Kiuchi is also chairman of the Future 500 group of companies — a network of corporations who are exploring industrial ecology and advanced resource productivity. He was also the first CEO of a major company to be trained in *The Natural Step*, a programme developed by Karl Henrik Robert in Sweden to help companies avoid products and processes that violate principles of sustainability in nature.

Consequently, Mitsubishi Electric America has trained all its managers in *The Natural Step* programme ... with the overall aim of integrating the company's core operations with environmental policies that aim for the company to operate within nature's limits.

Kiuchi: "It seems to me that the global business community is driving quickly toward a cliff, and we have our eyes closed. If we opened them, we would see that 600 million of the Earth's inhabitants — in Europe, Japan, and the United States — enjoy the material benefits of industrialism. Soon, 2.5 billion more — in China, India, the former Soviet republics — will join us. And after them, the final three billion will demand and deserve the same. To do that today, we need three planets. But we have only one. So we cannot do that by continuing to take our wealth from nature.

"We must learn a new way, a way to cultivate wealth like nature, to provide affluence without effluence. We must develop prosperous human communities, with meaningful work and social equity between various groups. And we must do so by consuming *less* from the environment, not more."

- One of the clearest signals that the "waste" and "sustainability" issues have moved from the economic margins into the mainstream can be seen in the number of international business leaders taking an interest in Zero Waste principles.

An outstanding example of this is found in Ray Anderson, chairman and CEO of the Atlanta-based Interface Inc, the world's largest producer of commercial floorcovering. Anderson was a keynote speaker at the *Redesigning Resources* conference in Christchurch in June (see [The Jobs Letter No. 127](#)), and is considered a corporate "elder statesman" in his commitment and experience in pioneering a business strategy for sustainable development.

Anderson says that for the first 20 years of his corporation's existence, the main environmental policy was simply to comply with government regulations. Because carpets use a lot of nylon and polyesters, Interface was a very petro-chemically-intensive company. The corporation was a case study of old-age industrialism — a highly productive, *take-make-waste* manufacturing and consumption system that assumes infinite resources and infinite sinks for industrial wastes.

After studying the growing literature on sustainable business practices, Anderson took up a new challenge: to lead the way to "the next industrial revolution" by becoming the first sustainable corporation, and eventually a *restorative* enterprise.

Anderson: "What we call the next industrial revolution is a momentous shift in how we see the world, how we operate within it, what systems will prevail and which will not. At Interface, we are completely reimagining

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TRENDS

FULL EMPLOYMENT IN FIVE YEARS

— Sustainable Community Economic Development

by Warren Snow

- I once heard someone say that a community that is not in control of its economic process will not be in control of its social processes. I have since seen first-hand many times the truth of that statement—and in all of my work over the last few years I have tried to find a common theme for processes that will enable communities to flourish and survive.

For many people, the present economic system is not meeting their needs. In fact, we have just learned that around 30% of New Zealand children live in poverty. The bottom rung of the economic ladder has moved up and it is very difficult for increasing numbers of people to participate in society. We have attempted to compensate through social welfare but the rungs on this ladder go nowhere. There must be a different way!

I have come to the view that sustainability is the key. It is a progressive concept, and by its nature, it unwinds many of the trends that have left communities powerless. The concept of sustainability also leads to an 'ecology of community' that returns at least some of the economic processes of communities back into local hands to in turn reinvest in future local prosperity.

I am convinced that most of the tools and solutions for the problems facing people lie within their own communities—the resources human, natural and economic just need unlocking. We have to create new rungs at the bottom of the economic ladder. This is quite achievable but requires community self-realisation and empowerment.

There are many jobs in communities that need doing even though they no longer support a living for a person and are not self-funding. The market will no longer deliver these jobs – neither will it provide finance,

housing, community security and participation to a growing number of our society. The community sector though with a little support can step in and create a local infrastructure that will result in both employment and community wellbeing.

Some examples :

WASTE AND RECYCLING

- Many groups around the country are proving that there are jobs in recycling – approximately 20 times more than through landfilling waste. The Zero Waste NZ Trust has been working over the last three years to provide support for a growing network of groups, projects and initiatives creating local business and employment opportunities from waste.

These include a growing number of jobs making new products from recycled or recovered materials. A recent report by Robin Murray of the London School of Economics (*Creating Wealth from Waste*) suggests that the UK can create 55,000 new jobs through recycling intensive waste disposal. You can multiply that by a factor of at least 5 for the downstream jobs.

"Is clean-green New Zealand burying in landfills an industry that could rival Telecom or Fletchers in size?"

— Warren Snow

A recent report from Japan predicts a 10% increase in GDP through recycling intensive waste management — that's a staggering \$600 billion. In Germany the recycling industry, which includes significant manufacturing of recycling related plant and machinery is now bigger than their telecommunications and building industries.

- Numerous studies from around the world are showing that the recycling and recovered material industries are one of the key job growth engines of the future — in California they are calling it the new gold rush. Is clean-green New Zealand burying in landfills an industry that could rival Telecom or Fletchers in size? A 1996 survey of 64 recycling businesses in Auckland found a combined turnover of \$ 133 million with 1700 employees on an average wage of \$12 per hour.

HABITAT PROTECTION

- Over a very short span of a hundred years or so we have seriously degraded the Earth's living systems and this has impacted on local habitat areas in most communities. Society is recog-

nising the need to pay people to put the environment back together. Habitat protection is a real business with a significant and growing market of funders worldwide who are prepared to provide the financial means to restore the earth. A number of communities have created initiatives employing people to do this work. The best ones are cross-sectoral initiatives involving schools, unemployed people, businesses and tourism groups — where the whole community can get involved for a win-win result all round.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- This is a relatively new area with significant growth potential. If we can help 4,000 homes to save \$5 per week, we save a lot of energy — in fact over \$1 million per year — money which stays in the community and in people's pockets. This creates jobs as groups train people in how to make a solar panel and to save energy or insulate houses. Interestingly we have had reports of health improvements amongst children in energy-retrofitted homes.

There is also growth potential in local alternative energy generation. We can create a network of locally owned energy companies selling energy savings and solutions and in some cases generating power through windfarms.

HOUSING

- The Government and the private sector are no longer providing long-term housing solutions for people below a certain income level — perhaps up to 25% of people in New Zealand are effectively locked out of housing ownership. Part of the problem may be that there are a similar number who have purchased second and third houses as part of an investment portfolio.

Low income housing provision is a training and job-rich area that, with the right support, will result in stronger and healthier communities around NZ. There are a growing number of groups emerging to provide housing for those excluded from the housing market. They all work in different ways and range from very well organised large national structures such as 'Habitat for Humanity' to small local groups such as 'Just Housing' in Dunedin.

One thing that they all have in common is that they don't just build a house and shove people into it to fend for themselves. They involve the families in the whole process and make sure that they have a sense of ownership and pride through having worked for their home. They also provide ongoing mentoring and support and can identify other issues such

as literacy that need addressing. Through my previous role with the Tindall Foundation we were able to assist in the development of a Trust that will provide support to these groups. The trust will attract funding from a range of sources and distribute them to local housing groups.

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

- Many farmers can no longer afford chemicals, and yet it is not easy to switch quickly to organic processes. When a farm does go organic however, the chemicals are replaced by labour — financed by the premium that people are increasingly prepared to pay for healthy food. This is a significant area for job growth in the future, and we need to support groups working to promote organic practices and markets.

FORESTRY

- A deteriorating environment means we will have to stop the depletion of the rainforests. In Kaitaia there is a group making wooden outdoor furniture from Eucalyptus, and it is of a higher standard than the imported versions made from rainforest timber. If New Zealand were to ban the import of rainforest products the market for locally made furniture would rise instantly.

There is huge potential in alternative species to pine and opportunities galore for local groups to form community initiatives around planting surplus lands into sustainable forestry. Financing could come from a range of sources including private investors prepared to invest in their communities for long-term returns.

LOCAL LOAN FUNDS

- Access to finance is the main impediment to small enterprise start-ups. There are a number of community loan funds around New Zealand specialising in providing low or no interest loans to low income people who want access to finance to help set up enterprises either as individuals or through non-profit groups. These funds are loaned out and repaid to be put to work again and again.

The various local loan funds provide business advice and mentoring along with the loans and have surprisingly good repayment rates. They are picking up where the private sector has left off — providing access to capital for those who have usually no credit history or collateral and who the banking system have decide no longer have a right to participate in the economic system.

These local revolving loan funds can also promote themselves to people who want to either gift or invest in back into their communities. We will find that not everyone feels the need to have their money ranging round the world for that one more point of higher interest — but we must build the alternative structures for them to be able to invest in local economic redevelopment.

“Community enterprises are building new economies where the mainstream economic system has withdrawn — they are putting the bottom rungs back on the economic ladder for those who cannot find a way into the employment and business world.”

— Warren Snow

COMMUNITY ENTERPRISES

- A number of the groups around New Zealand working in the above areas are defining themselves as community enterprises and are already responsible for many projects employing low skill and previously unemployed people.

We need to support them with funds and capacity-building techniques. They are working with the sector of society that is the shock absorber of the main economy. They are building new economies where the mainstream economic system has withdrawn — they are putting the bottom rungs back on the economic ladder for those who cannot find a way into the employment and business world.

They are not a threat to the mainstream economic system — on the contrary, in many cases they are working in with private companies providing job-ready people with more confidence and creating joint ventures that enable mainstream business to work better in local communities.

- Too often groups are funded for their projects and outcomes but find it difficult to find the support for new development work — or even for basic administration expenses. Funding must be friendly and at times patient — to allow plans to unfold. There is risk involved, but there are good ways of achieving a high level of accountability whilst at the same time allowing groups to make changes in plans along the way.

It's important that grant makers support people and processes as well as, or even instead of, projects and outcomes. There are “social

entrepreneurs” in every community — they can and will make their projects happen but they need support.

The closer you are to the problem the more likely you are to be able to solve it. The COGs model of distributing funds is successful because of the local accountability concepts it embodies. Community Foundations might also be a good way to allocate to local initiatives in communities around NZ and to help restore the “ecology of community”.

THE ANSWERS ARE IN OUR BACKYARDS

- We have become a society that would rather build a new prison than address the deeper issues of crime prevention, a big new power station rather than conserve energy, a new landfill rather than reduce the sources of waste, a big new motorway rather than plan for smarter growth, another hospital rather than ask what is wrong with our lifestyles and eating habits. In this endless quest we have chased our tails to the point of collapse and exhaustion — and we have strip-mined and damaged community in the process.

It sounds rather glib, but the answers to many of our problems are right beneath our noses. We have become so focused on traditional growth models that we fail to see the less glamorous but simple, cheap and achievable solutions right in our own back yards.

There are many great new ideas around for job creation in the knowledge economy, and in the hi-tech arena, which will certainly create jobs — but we must include sustainable community economic development using the previously untapped resources within each community to finally end the absurd idea of unemployment.

The most important area for growth in our society today is in creating safe happy sustainable communities where local ownership and pride is high — and where, for young people, it is a viable option to stay in their hometown. We can create full employment — or as the “Mayors for Jobs” forum recently called it the “zero waste of people” — in five years. And this can be done by restoring the “ecology of community” through sustainable community economic development.

Source — “Full employment in five years — sustainable community economic development” by Warren Snow Wsnow@voyager.co.nz, special to The Jobs Letter No.135 1 December 2000

The Jobs Letter

DIARY

19 November 2000

Sydney-based telecommunications analyst Paul Budde says the government should consider investing in broadband internet access if Telecom will not. He says the country could have a great future in e-commerce, but if the government does not pressure Telecom to expand NZ's broadband access, or take action itself, it will severely hamper the development of the New Zealand economy.

Winz statistics show that the number of people registered as out of work for more than a year has risen to a record of 110,081 people. ACT employment spokesperson Muriel Newman says Social Services and Employment Minister Steve Maharey is hiding behind the Household Labour Force survey figures, which do not include beneficiaries who work just one hour a week. Newman: "I challenge the Minister to stop hiding his head in the sand and front up to the fact that he has a serious long-term unemployment problem on his hands."

and redesigning everything we do, including the way we define our business. We believe that there's a cure for resource waste that is profitable, creative and practical. We must create a company that addresses the needs of society and the environment by developing a system of industrial production that decreases our costs and dramatically reduces the burdens placed upon living systems..."

- In line with by Paul Hawken's *Natural Capitalism* principles of "moving to a solutions-based business model", Interface redefined its business operations from "selling carpeting" to "leasing floor-covering services". The corporation developed a new carpet material that requires 97% less material and is completely recyclable, is more attractive and cheaper to produce.

Interface also pioneered the world's first system of perpetual leases for carpet, which they called the Evergreen Lease. This means they don't only make the carpet (with recycled content) but they take responsibility for installing the carpet and maintaining it. They clean it regularly, and because it is system of free-lay carpet tiles, they replace worn and damaged areas ... enabling them to also recycle the carpet tiles that are replaced.

The consumer isn't buying a carpet — which, under the old system would have probably ended up in a landfill after 25 years. The consumer is now paying a monthly rental for the services that the carpets deliver — colour, texture, warmth, beauty, acoustics, comfort under foot and cleanliness.

Anderson is the first to admit that his corporation is only a small way along the journey towards sustainable business practices ... but it is determined to invest in the processes and technologies to get there. And if Interface can get it right, then Anderson believes that the corporation will never need to take another drop of oil from the earth.

CONFERENCE

- **Other contributors to the Kaitia conference include:**

- **Gary Liss**, President of Gary Liss and Associates, California, a company that helps public and private sector clients develop strategic solid waste and recycling policies, Zero Waste Plans, recycling contracts, resource recovery parks and joint ventures with innovative reuse, recycling and composting companies;

- **Robin Murray**, Visiting Research Associate at the Centre for the Study of Global Governance at the London School of Economics. Author of 'Creating Wealth from Waste', which outlines the economic and employment potential of the new waste economy;

- **Andy Moore**, Coordinator of the Community Recycling Network a national umbrella organisation set up in the United Kingdom for over 250 community groups, co-operatives and not-for-profit businesses in the community waste sector;

- **Ray York**, Executive Officer of the Western Australian Waste 2020 Taskforce, which is promoting a strategic action plan with a target of Zero Waste by 2020;

- **Robert Joy** Executive Director, Environment Protection Authority, Victoria, and former Deputy Chair of the State Government's Resource Recovery and Recycling Council and EcoRecycle Victoria;

- **Dan Knapp** Founder and Executive Director of Urban Ore, a resource recovery centre and eco-industrial park in Berkeley, California;

- **Eric Lomabardi** Executive Director of Eco-Recycle, Boulder, Colorado; the largest community-based recycling organisation in the U.S.A., which currently processes over 3000 tons of recyclable materials per month and employs 55 staff.

DIARY

20 November 2000

Public hospitals say they want to hire more low-paid "healthcare assistants" to combat a drastic nurse shortage - a move considered unsafe by nursing leaders. Hospitals are also assigning doctors' duties such as minor surgery to nurses. Auckland Healthcare chief executive Graeme Edmond says the country faces a serious shortage of nurses and other health professionals.

Te Kuiti contracting company Fieldway Services Ltd has gone into liquidation, with the loss of 32 jobs.

21 November 2000

Enrolment at the Southland Institute of Technology in Invercargill has skyrocketed as a result of its zero fees scheme. All places on all courses are full. Chief executive Penny Simmonds says the institute will have to turn away a number of students.

The OECD says in its biannual report that the NZ economy will rebound - helped by the boost that the low NZ dollar has given to exports - although it warns that the Employment Relations Act could lead to rising inflation. Finance Minister Michael Cullen says that despite its caution about the Employment Relations Act, the report confirms NZ's economy is on the right track.

October migration statistics released by Statistics NZ say 72,583 NZ'ers have left since the Labour government came to power. ACT leader Richard Prebble notes that two hundred NZ'ers, enough to fill a Boeing 767, are leaving the country every day.

ACT employment spokesperson Muriel Newman says Steve Maharey has deliberately misled Parliament over the cost of the Community Wage in order to turn public opinion against the scheme.

Winz's budget of \$113 million for subsidised work schemes is likely to be used in full this year, after being underspent in the past. The Job Plus scheme gives employers \$214 a week for six months to a year, to take on people who have been unemployed for over six months. National commissioner Ray Smith says firms are more willing to give the unemployed a break in return for assistance.

ZERO-WASTE COUNCILS IN NZ

- There are now 25 local authorities participating in the Zero Waste network. Zero Waste NZ Trust reports that significant waste reduction outcomes are already being recorded by the councils and many new waste reduction initiatives and education programmes have been launched.

The Trust: "It is inevitable that even greater waste reductions will occur over the next two to three years, creating a momentum that will fuel new innovations, businesses, jobs and local economic development."

- The Zero Waste councils include :

FAR NORTH
THAMES-COROMANDEL
OTOROHANGA

KAWERAU
WHAKATANE
OPOTIKI
GISBORNE
WAIROA
HASTINGS
PALMERSTON NORTH
MASTERTON
PORIRUA
NELSON
TASMAN
BULLER
WESTLAND
KAIKOURA
HURUNUI
SELWYN
CHRISTCHURCH
ASHBURTON
TIMARU
MACKENZIE
CENTRAL OTAGO
DUNEDIN

- The New Zealand corporate leader most identified with the sustainability message is Stephen Tindall, founder and director of New Zealand's largest retail group, The Warehouse.

Tindall has sponsored speaking tours throughout New Zealand by both Paul Hawken and Ray Anderson — tours which have helped catalyse further initiatives such as the *Redesigning Resources* conference.

The Warehouse company has set itself the goal of "zero waste to landfill" by 2020. It plans to reduce the amount of waste sent from stores to landfills by a third, and recycle paper, plastic and cardboard (which represent up to 80% of total waste) from all its stores.

Tindall has also used his family's philanthropic trust, The Tindall Foundation, to promote initiatives for sustainable development. This foundation is the main backer behind Zero Waste NZ, the trust which has become an important catalyst in encouraging local authorities and community enterprises to embrace a Zero Waste vision.

- Stephen Tindall's overall goal is to work towards New Zealand becoming "the first sustainable country on earth".

Tindall: "Because of our isolation and our small population, our country is very "clean and green" relative to other countries in the world. However, when you scratch the surface, there are a lot of things that we could do better with. I think that we have an unbelievable opportunity to be world leaders as the first sustainable country ... and to take from that a premium on our export goods and attract lots and lots of tourists because we would have a true "clean and green" label..."

The Jobs Letter

DIARY

22 November 2000

Winz says it accepts responsibility for the student loans fiasco this year and has learned its lesson. Alliance MP Liz Gordon says up to a thousand students left this year because of loan problems.

23 November 2000

Plans are unveiled for an \$80 million private hospital in Hamilton. 150 new jobs will be created when it opens in mid-2002.

The Christchurch Medical Students' Association calls upon the Government to change student funding. The Association recommends permanently capping fees, bonding medical graduates in return for free education, rewarding graduates who stay here by discounting their loans, and paying all students a universal allowance.

Tindall believes that just as New Zealand was once seen as the “social laboratory” of the early social-democratic welfare states ... perhaps, in this new century, New Zealand has a unique opportunity to become a “sustainable laboratory” for a planet that is finally coming to grips with the limits of the first industrial era.

Ray Anderson agrees: “It’s not important if one company like Interface, based in Georgia, succeeds in this challenge ... but it’s the *influence* that one little company has that will be important. If we can prove the model, then the influence will be enormous. The same will be true if New Zealand can do it. Your country is small enough that maybe all of New Zealand could do it. If the world could see a Sustainable New Zealand — the power of *influence* you would have will be enormous.”

- At the Kaitaia conference, the spotlight will also be on what community organisations can do to support the economic and employment spin-offs from a Zero Waste vision. Here, the “power of influence” can certainly be seen in the work of the Kaitaia Community Business and Environment Centre (CBEC).

In the last ten years, CBEC has achieved a “turning of the tide” with a 66% reduction in waste carted from the Kaitaia to the Far North’s only big remaining landfill, at Ahipara. The centre not only runs the town’s recycling base and an associated kerbside collection, but operates depots in Te Hapua and Russell and is preparing a waste reduction plan for the Far North District Council.

It has four tutors touring schools with a “slash trash” message, owns plant and tree nurseries from which it runs landscaping and afforestation services, and holds shares in a solar water-heating firm providing subsidised units to community-card holders.

CBEC has become a major employer in a district of high joblessness, paying \$36,000 a month to about 20 staff, and hiring up to 100 people

LINKS

- Warren Snow, and the Zero Waste NZ Trust can be contacted at P.O. Box 33-1695, Takapuna, Auckland phone 09-486-0734 or visit their website at www.zerowaste.co.nz.
- *Jobs from Waste*, special issue of *The Jobs Letter* No.118, is available on the Jobs Research Website at www.jobsletter.org.nz/jbl11800.htm
- Tachi Kiuchi speech “*What I learned in the Rainforest*”, based on his address to the World Future Society on July 19, 1997 is available on the internet at www.globalff.org/Feature_Articles/Previous_Articles/Tachis_Adv/pre-tachi.htm
- The Future 500 website contains many practical articles for businesses pursuing sustainability objectives. This can be reached at www.globalff.org
- Ray Anderson is the author of “*Mid-Course Correction — toward a sustainable enterprise,*

the Interface Model” (pub 1998 by Chelsea Green Publishing). This book contains Anderson’s personal story towards taking up the sustainability challenge ... and the practical steps that Interface is taking to meet these goals.

- The Interface website is at www.interfaceinc.com.
- “*Working together to make New Zealand the first sustainable country on earth*” video of Stephen Tindall and Ray Anderson, recorded at the Aotea Centre, Auckland, and at The Warehouse Support Centre, 31 May 1999.
- The Tindall Foundation, Annual Report and other information available from P.O.Box 33-181, Takapuna, Auckland phone 09-488-0170.
- The *New Internationalist* website, which also contains back issues, can be reached at www.newint.org.

The Jobs Letter

DIARY

24 November 2000

A report released by the Equal Opportunities Trust says NZ has a long way to go before it eliminates discrimination in hiring employees. The report says immigrants, the disabled, Maori and Pacific Islanders, women, people committed to their families, and gays and lesbians are still discriminated against. The trust says that workplaces are missing out on talented staff because emphasis is still put on finding people who will "fit in" rather than hiring on the basis of qualifications, experience and merit.

An unprecedented demand for subsidies to help businesses recruit long-term unemployed is forcing some Auckland branches of Winz to cap subsidy amounts. An employer told the *New Zealand Herald* that a Winz official told him that future subsidies would be capped in some areas of Auckland at \$120 a week, compared to the \$214 he receives now for his three workers.

The report of the East Coast's Tairāwhiti Development Taskforce is released. Taskforce chairman, Deputy PM Jim Anderton, has now handed over the chairing of the Taskforce to the mayors of Gisborne and Wairoa, who were instrumental in establishing the group. The report outlines the achievements of the group which include: the announcement of a regional road, rail and port review, providing 2000 computers for schools and establishing 13 community computer hubs with government funding assistance, \$240,000 from the Government over three years for an advisory service to improve productive use of Maori land in the region, a home safety ad campaign on local radio stations, getting young people to undertake the Army's Limited Service Volunteer Scheme, and a commitment to work towards processing 60% of logs in the region.

Jim Anderton and Maori Affairs Minister Parekura Horomia launch Wairoa dot com, the first of 13 community computer hubs for the Tairāwhiti region. Horomia: "I believe that e-technology is probably one of the most powerful things that could be available to East Coast communities. I encourage all communities, particularly Maori communities, to get on board the cyberwaka."

a year for contracts in a range of activities from forestry to running the town's public swimming pool.

- These successes, however, haven't come easily. CBEC general manager Cliff Colquhoun says that the centre is constantly struggling for want of adequate government support after a decade of trying to promote community economic development. Although CBEC is hailed as a model of community enterprise, where few other such organisations have survived for long, Colquhoun says it could be doing far more with just a modest lift in Government cash.

The *New Zealand Herald* reports that the centre receives only about \$45,000 a year in government development money, yet returns more than four times that amount in income tax and GST, while spending up to \$500,000 in the local economy. It is also saving the district council at least \$75,000 a year on avoided landfill costs, while working in a grey area of profitability under which commercial companies would not find it viable to employ people.

- Cliff Colquhoun is disappointed that CBEC has had to trim job-creating operations to survive, while the government carries on spending more than \$1 million a week on unemployment and related benefits in Kaitia, not counting crime and other social costs. He points out that there is no way capital investment can create enough jobs for the area's 1,600 unemployed — a planned expansion of Juken Nissho's mill would produce 150 jobs at most. Colquhoun believes the government needs to better support "social entrepreneurs", such as himself, in order to create local opportunities in the community and environmental sectors.
- *Media Watch*. The November issue of the *New Internationalist* world development journal has been devoted to the theme of "searching for sustainable solutions"

Editor Wayne Ellwood traces the current popularity of the term "sustainability" to the release in 1987 of the Brundtland Report which showed how unplanned economic growth has pushed the planet to its limits. To deal with the thorny issues of over-consumption by the rich combined with widespread poverty — both of which are continuing to trash the planet — Brundtland called for "... *development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*"

- Ellwood argues that the idea of "sustainability" opens a deep fissure in the bedrock of conventional economic thinking. Central to the new discipline of *ecological economics* is the idea of 'natural capital'. This embraces the complete stock of the earth's natural assets — fish, forests, arable soil, fresh water and clean air. It also includes the life support systems which are maintained by the planet itself — the water cycle, the carbon cycle, the protective capacity of the ozone layer, and the waste absorbing abilities of land, air and water. Some of this capital is renewable as long as we don't over-harvest it. Some of it is replenishable over a long period of time. Other kinds of natural capital like petroleum or minerals are non-renewable and any use diminishes the stock forever.

Ellwood: "Sustainability means living off our natural income, rather than our natural capital, and using it no faster than it can be replenished. The human load has grown so that current consumption exceeds natural income. We are liquidating our natural capital for short-term gain. But the human economy is a subset of the ecosphere,

The Jobs Letter

DIARY

27 November 2000

According to a Morgan & Banks Job Index survey, 30.1% of 1200 employers plan to increase their staff in the next six months. It is the highest level of staffing required since the launch of the Job Index in May 1997.

21 schools have been chosen to test the Government's new Gateway – Te Tomokanga programme in 2001. The programme enables Form 5-7 students to gain structured work experience at a workplace in their local community during school time, as well as attending regular classes.

Editor

Vivian Hutchinson

Associates

Dave Owens

Jo Howard

Rodger Smith

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not the other way round. That is the key lesson of the natural capital analysis.”

- The *New Internationalist* has also taken a critical look at the *Natural Capitalism* message of eco-entrepreneur Paul Hawken, and his co-authors Amory and L. Hunter Lovins.

Writer Mary Jane Patterson acknowledges that the *Natural Capitalism* manifesto is an “attractive vision of the future that is rare in its appeal to environmentalists and the business community alike.” But she argues that the authors are using a “popular, easy-to-assimilate and apolitical definition of capitalism” which avoids political action on the objectives of equity and overcoming consumerism.

Patterson: “Natural capitalism may be reasonable and desirable ... but it is not the way the world runs at the moment. There are examples of businesses saving money while operating in a more environmentally friendly manner. But this doesn't mean that most businesses could follow suit. For most, absorbing the ecological and social costs of their operations would be expensive and perhaps suicidal, unless their competitors did the same.

“The changes [advocated by the book *Natural Capitalism*] would require substantial political intervention into the market and extraordinary political will at all levels from the municipal to the international. And this is not something that the natural capitalists address.

“Maybe they're right to assume they'll have more success if changes are wrapped in the cloak of neutral economic logic. But the reality is that the conditions for natural capitalism are unlikely to arise from the market itself. They will have to be imposed by co-operative, collective action — by governments and other organisations of civil society hip-deep in politics.”

VOICE

on MATERIALISM and the WEST

“The culture of the West is usually seen as deeply, even incurably, materialistic. Many of the evils that disfigure Western society, its greed and wastefulness, are blamed on an excessively materialist view of the world.

“This needs to be challenged. For a truly materialistic society would have a far greater respect for the material world than the West displays. How can its heedless abuse of the resource-base of the world be called materialistic?

“Truly materialistic societies are those of indigenous peoples, those who live in symbiosis

with the earth, for they treat the source of their well-being with reverence. The fact that they make sacred what is useful to them helps to conserve and to continue traditional cultures.

“We in the West are in thrall to a curious form of mysticism: it is as though we were eager to tear through the fabric of the earth that sustains us, seized by a desire to reach the other side of destruction, to gut the planet of its treasures, so that we may face — and defy — the gulf that lies beyond.”

— Jeremy Seabrook, journalist, broadcaster, and author of “In the Cities of the South”.

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The Jobs Letter — P.O.Box 428, New Plymouth, New Zealand phone 06-753-4434 fax 06-753-4430 email editor@jobsletter.org.nz