

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Sustainability fails to inspire public**

Sustainability may be the new buzz word in government and business circles, but new research indicates that it has yet to catch on with the wider public.

A Research New Zealand-Clemenger BBDO poll into attitudes towards sustainability found that only 28% of New Zealanders said they followed the issue closely.

Research New Zealand Director Emanuel Kalafatelis said that those that did follow the issue closely have a well-defined demographic profile and were more likely:

- ◆ to be men (56% compared with 44% females);
- ◆ be aged 60 or older (26% aged 60+ compared with 17% of 15-29 year-olds); and
- ◆ have a university qualification (40% compared with 24% with a secondary school qualification).

Another finding was that while 83% of people agreed that sustainability is important, only about half believe it is very urgent that New Zealand does something about becoming environmentally sustainable, Mr Kalafatelis said.

The survey also identified a lack of clarity around what sustainability meant, Mr Kalafatelis said.

“When asked to define sustainability, 25% of those polled offered a definition that that included the idea of managing resources to ensure they are not depleted and available to future generations,” Mr Kalafatelis said.

“At the other end of the spectrum, 26% of New Zealanders said they didn’t know what it meant,” Mr Kalafatelis said.

“Overall there was only a limited understanding that sustainability relates to the economy and society in general and not just the environment and climate,” Mr Kalafatelis said.

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When asked who was in the best position to make an impact on New Zealand's sustainability, nearly three-quarters (72%) of those polled identified the Government or local authorities.

"Just under 40% thought that ordinary New Zealanders could have any influence on making the country more sustainable," Mr Kalafatelis said.

When asked to identify what they were doing to make New Zealand more sustainable 25% of people said they didn't know or were doing nothing.

Those that said they were doing something identified one or more of the following:

- ◆ Recycling or being more mindful of waste, 49%
- ◆ Conserving energy, 21%
- ◆ Using less fuel, 18%
- ◆ Not using plastic bags, 6%
- ◆ Educating myself and expressing an opinion, 6%
- ◆ Growing own food, 5%
- ◆ Other activity, 10%

This Research New Zealand poll of 501 people aged 15 and over was conducted by telephone between 18 to 25 July 2007. The margin of error is +/- 4.6% (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of New Zealand's general population. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organisation, but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.

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