

Community Energy Action Celebrated By The Energy Efficiency Conservation Authority As A High Achiever

October 2008

Community Energy Action Charitable Trust (CEA) was one of 5 organisations acknowledged by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) as a Top Achiever for delivering subsidised insulation to low income households. The award was made in Wellington on 29 September 2008 to organisations contracted by EECA under its ENERGYWISE programme. All five exceeded their targets.

In accepting the award CEA's Chief Executive, Bede Martin said CEA's success is due to its commitment to people. He defined this as "a commitment to our customers, to our staff and to those people and organisations CEA works with in partnership."

In commenting further on partnership he said "Success will only come when we fully understand what working as partners' really means." He outlined key principles that he believes are essential to true partnership. "Partnerships are between equals with different roles and responsibilities; they are built on trust and a willingness to take risks; mutual acceptance – equal but different – where the partners work alongside each other rather than in a 'top down' relationship" he said.

"If we don't base our partner relationship with EECA on these principles then we become merely an arm of EECA, a means to its ends, rather than working for the community and its needs, using our different strengths and perspectives to achieve an agreed outcome."

He acknowledged EECA's Chief Executive Officer, Mike Underhill, saying "Mike has a real strength in that he is prepared to take risks and has encouraged his team to work in a partnership with the community sector. There has been significant progress in the relationship between EECA and trusts such as CEA under Mike's leadership, and I commend you, Katie Mathison (EECA's community programmes manager) and your team for this."

Bede Martin said it is only in the spirit of partnership between non-government organisations, the business sector and a whole-of-government approach that 'whole house' solutions will be achieved.

"By this I mean", he said, "we need to address both insulation and heating of low income households, deal to the very real problem of fuel poverty, support the development of more curtain banks around the country, encourage more landlords to make their properties warmer, drier, healthier and more energy efficient, and find a way to provide free, independent household energy advice and community education." He noted that in dealing with fuel poverty there needs to be a solution that works case by case, not a "one programme fits all" response.

"In my view we can only achieve all this if we work together and put people first. Then, and only then, can we truly celebrate success" he said.

Other recipients of the Achievers' Awards were MainPower NZ Ltd, North Canterbury's Line Company which uses CEA to deliver its household insulation programme, WEL Energy Trust, Tamaki Ki Raro Trust with Eco Insulation Ltd, and Energy Options.