



# Signs of Change

A national e-conference showcasing transition

15-16 November 2010

## Press Release

### *1 Country, 2 Days, 50 Signs of Change!*

History will be made in November when people in six cities attend a national conference, without travelling! They will go to a venue, meet people, listen to thought-provoking speakers, discuss with others over tea and muffins, ask questions, and contribute to a dialogue. But they will only have to travel to their nearest university to participate. The organizers are expecting at least 400 participants around the country with an emissions savings of 22 tones of CO<sub>2</sub> by attending locally while participating nationally.

The theme we have chosen for this event is *Signs of Change*. We have not invited international experts to tell us how big the problems are, and what we must do (most of which we can't do). The problems of unsustainable use of resources and impacts on the environment have been discussed at length in many forums. This national conference is a showcase for changes in a sustainable direction. We will learn about the future by hearing short reports from New Zealanders from all walks of life who are exploring in a positive direction.

Agriculture, Environment  
Energy, Transport  
Society, Health, Youth  
Governance, Law, Business, Economics  
Education, Architecture

The new HD323 bridge technology will be used for the first time to host a public event. The technology will allow participants in lecture theatres in Auckland, Dunedin, Wellington, Hamilton and Palmerston North to see the speaker and view the power point slides from the theatre in Christchurch. The robust national dialogue via modern technology will be a sign of change in itself. There will also be locally made videos aired and discussion groups.

This conference is the brain-child of Associate Professor Susan Krumdieck, from the Mechanical Engineering Department at University of Canterbury. "I was going to go to an international conference on sustainability in Europe, but it was going to be the same old thing – we must reduce our emissions, we must switch to renewables, we must get new economic theories – blah blah. I thought, I'd rather find out if there are people actually making changes that reduce what is unsustainable. I had the idea that I could use the funds I would have spent for one academic to go to one overseas conference and host a national 'convergence' about a new direction." Dr. Krumdieck put her idea to the Engineers for Social Responsibility and they agreed to support the event as their national conference. A network of academics has been volunteering some time to work with their universities and IT specialists to set up the conference. "The response from the public has been overwhelming" says Dr. Krumdieck. "I even had someone recommend to me the other day that I should attend this Signs of Change conference they heard about... that is awesome!"

Registrations are now open and more information can be found on the conference website (which cost roughly the same as 2 nights hotel in Vienna to have built). [www.signsofchange.org.nz](http://www.signsofchange.org.nz)