



Sustainability Options

*Sustainability Report
2024*

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This Sustainability Report has been prepared to evaluate the wider sustainability of Sustainability Options and its impacts on the community during the 2024 financial year (FY24) from 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024. To further reveal the scope of Sustainability Options' impact, 2020-2024 case studies and an [Appendix](#) are included to show historic community projects.

A message from our Lead Team

Nik Gregg, Phil Gregg, Jo Wills and Lee Siegle

I write this message on behalf of Sustainability Options.

In starting, I want to thank Amy Earles for bringing this report together and for her tireless pursuit of keeping us going in our efforts to document our pursuit of sustainability. The purpose of this report is to quantify and qualify our journey towards sustainability. This report is our first in 8 years so it's pretty big, quite comprehensive, and serves as a historic benchmark in our efforts to be good stewards of our responsibilities towards one another and towards the world we live in.



Back (L-R): Lee Siegle, Nik Gregg

Front (L-R): Jo Wills, Phil Gregg

Sustainability means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. For us, quite simply, it is about creating the ability and capacity to keep on keeping on. How can we as a business be more intentional and more inspirational in caring for one-another, in minimizing our environmental footprint, and in restoring the beauty and marvel of the world we live in? We call ourselves an altruistic business, we want to do well by doing good, but not just for today's generation, for future generations. We want to leave a more harmonious world for our grandchildren's grandchildren.

Our efforts in sustainability cover environmental, social and economic considerations. In this report, Amy has touched upon all three of these and has linked them to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

As I read through this report, I feel proud of our pursuit and our journey, grateful to all those who support us, and thankful for the privilege of being able to help others. This report shares our journey and also challenges us that there is so much more to be done.

Thank you for taking the time to read and share our journey.

Nik Gregg

A message from our Sustainability Advisor

Amy Earles

Sustainability Options is a business that I have admired for a while now.

It was in 2019, as a student attending Enviro Challenge, where I decided that I wanted to pursue a career related to the environment and sustainability. It was during this time that I worked with Nik and gained an introduction into the work that Sustainability Options does.

I was fortunate enough to start my role as Sustainability Advisor and Data Analyst at Sustainability Options in early 2023, following my completion of my Bachelor of Science (Environmental Sciences) at the University of Waikato.



The team is full of generous and compassionate people who really care about the wellbeing of others. Through writing this report, it is amazing to reflect on Sustainability Options' journey over the last 12 years, from the initial brainstorming by two brothers who wanted to make their own positive difference in the world but weren't exactly sure how it was going to work, into the important, growing business that it is today.

There is such a need out there for the work that Sustainability Options does, and I admire the team's commitment to contribute positively to their communities and help make a difference in people's lives while caring for the natural environment.

This report has been prepared considering Sustainability Options' engagement with individuals on different projects and capturing different dimensions of sustainability, its importance within the team and in the communities that the business has worked with.

I thank the lead team for their support and for giving me the opportunity to be involved in Sustainability Options' sustainability journey.

Amy Earles



A compassionate business story

Back to the beginning



It was 2012 and brothers Phil and Nik Gregg were both working in different roles in the business world. They realised they wanted their work to take them in another direction. One where profit wasn't everything and business success wasn't just a measure of the financial. Both brothers were inspired by their environmentally conscious father to care for the planet and the community you live in, from a young age.

Phil thought 'if we could get everyone to move 10% (toward more sustainable living), that's a big shift. Then, if they get on that journey, they will move another 10%. You have just got to keep getting people to move a little bit more'.

Nik wanted to start a business 'that was compassionate, generous, willing to give and driven by doing good. Wouldn't that be an interesting business model?'

It was decided that Sustainability Options would be an altruistic business driven by environmental passion and the desire to provide good, unbiased knowledge for free.

Today, Sustainability Options is a small business that receives thousands of referrals to homes in the Bay of Plenty and beyond each year, to help anyone and everyone, improving living conditions, housing performance and lowering environmental impacts. The focus is on both environmental and social sustainability.

'We want to leave a more harmonious world for our grandchildren's grandchildren to live in, by sharing social and environmental sustainability advice.'



2012: Nik and Phil started Sustainability Options, creating a special guide for doing good; 4ESL (for ethically sustainable living). Environmental care, social justice, charitable good, and people compassion were the four components of the 4ESL plan.

2013: Nik presented a TED talk on our altruistic business model and vision for compassionate business. This sparked public awareness of our goals and people started asking us to help them make informed, unbiased sustainable living choices.

2014: We began working with over 20 kindergartens, coaching them in both the classroom and through free home sustainability visits. Energy conservation through installing solar energy systems was a main element of this work. Between 2015-2019 we worked in schools providing hundreds of hours of free time to support the education and sustainable leadership of high school students. We ran the regional Enviro Challenge program to further this commitment.

2015/2016: We became the biggest micro-inverter, domestic solar power installer in New Zealand. We were commissioned to review the future of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations for the Bay of Plenty region. We also imported EVs in 2015 and piloted a solar powered EV charging station in Tauranga's CBD.

2020: 20 Degrees (20D) was established with the support of: TECT, Bay Trust, Rotorua Trust, Bay of Plenty District Health Board, Toi Te Ora Public Health, Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Trust Horizon. Our vision is for all homes in the Bay of Plenty to be able to maintain 20 degrees on a cold, winter night. This program incorporates our repairs and maintenance work, education, assessments and workshops to take homeowners on a journey with us to improve their homes.

2024: Today our activity involves a blend of social and environmental sustainability. We run and support a range of recycling projects (heater bank, curtain bank, blanket bank, recycled building materials) that improve the wellbeing of our communities. We are in active pursuit of a smaller business footprint and we are visiting over 1000 homes each year to provide advice that will improve health and wellbeing and reduce negative environmental impacts.

A compassionate business story

FROG: Forever Reliant on Good

Sustainability Options' logo is a frog, and it is strategically chosen too. Frogs are an indicator species that are sensitive to changes in environmental conditions and thus can tell us a lot about the health of the environment (Ranjan and Singh, 2016). The frog represents our environmental vulnerability and our need for ecological care.

FROG also stands for 'Forever Reliant on Good', a guiding principle for us and our desire to do good for the environment and people. Our vision is that we might inspire, encourage and see a world served by compassionate business. 85% of our profits are directed to charity, to community, to our vision of doing good, our staff and our customers.

The altruistic business compass (shown in Figure 1 below), created early in the business' journey, is an internal framework showing the motivation behind the work that we do.

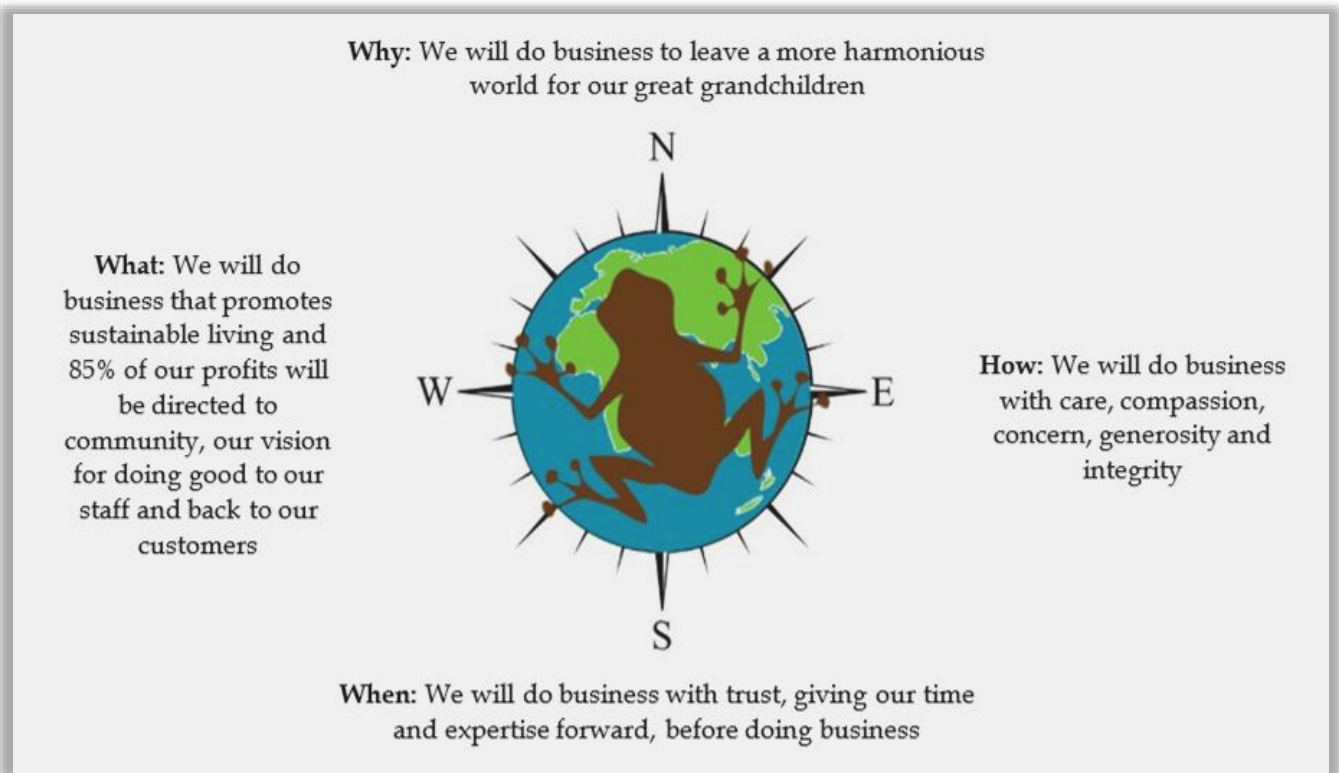


Figure 1: The F.R.O.G altruistic business model, Sustainability Options' internal framework

Sustainability values and mission

Our approach

The why:

We want to **leave a more harmonious world** for our grandchildren's grandchildren to live in.

Our pledge to support ethical and sustainable living involves **four** ingredients:

Social justice, environmental care, charitable good, and people compassion.



Social Justice

We aim to improve housing conditions and health outcomes for all New Zealanders, especially lower socioeconomic groups. We believe everyone should have the opportunity to live in a comfortable, heated home that can sustain a temperature of at least 20 Degrees Celsius on a cold winter night.



Environmental Care

We understand there is no separation between us and the natural environment which sustains us. Kaitiakitanga (guardianship) is a principle we embrace. We will provide free sustainable living advice to every home who asks.



Charitable Good

We all flourish when everyone's needs are met.

Our lowest income, most struggling families need the greatest support to embrace sustainability. We will do what we can to help them.



People Compassion

It takes time, patience, care and concern to build the trust, capability and capacity of whānau and communities to live more sustainably. Compassion is our combined passion to work together with our whānau and communities.

Sustainability highlights

Sustainability by numbers

FY24



2.98 tonnes
of
avoided emissions

2605
repairs, maintenance and safety
interventions implemented

496 homes
received at least one
draught proofing
action

147
homes insulated

1225 
total homes visited

50
heat pumps
installed

769 curtains
saved from landfill

Over **100** portable
heaters saved from
landfill

33
workshops held



Sustainability highlights

At a glance

Over the 2024 financial year, we completed **1225 home visits** throughout the Bay of Plenty region, engaging with whānau and providing sustainable living advice. Some of the helpful interventions we have implemented in homes include organising the installation of **heat pumps** and **insulation**, **draught proofing doors and windows**, undertaking **minor repairs**, fixing **leaking roofs**, hanging **curtains and rails**, providing **blankets**, delivering **portable heaters** and installing **smoke alarms**. We are strong supporters of repurposing materials where possible (see [Making a Difference- Repurposing](#)) and encourage donations of heaters, blankets and curtains. We deliver these to homes we visit.

Curtain Bank is a charitable community service where used curtains are provided free of charge to members of the community who couldn't otherwise afford them. Having originally established the Curtain Bank in Mount Maunganui, we now support the Red Cross in running this. We ask for donations from the community to support the continued life cycle of good quality curtains, diverting **769 curtains from landfill** during FY24. We know that well installed, lined, well operated curtains can **potentially triple the thermal performance of single glazed windows** and so through installing curtains in homes, we are increasing the ability of a room to retain its heat and keep the whānau warm. It is a double win, reducing heat loss reduces energy use, repurposing curtains reduces landfill.

We can also undertake **draught proofing** of doors and organise the professional draught proofing of windows in the homes we visit. Reducing uncontrolled air flow improves the ability of the home to retain heat ([Level: The Authority on Sustainable Building, 2023](#)). In some cases, the homes we visit do not have any form of heating present. We either organise the installation of a heat pump (the most efficient form of heating) or the delivery of a portable heater (with education on how to cost effectively use these). During FY24, we organised the installation of **50 heat pumps** and **delivered over 100 portable heaters**. Every portable heater provided is either a second hand heater that has been donated by the community, or a new heater donated by private donors. The second hand heaters when donated, are electrically tested, approved as safe and placed in homes with no bedroom heating. This provides healthy heating and saves unwanted but useable heaters from ending up in landfill.

We understand that the implementation of these forms of heating increases the overall carbon footprint of the home, however it is the **combination of our actions** alongside the implementation of new heating sources that acts to **reduce heat loss and increase the energy efficiency of the home**. Our **community workshops** (of which **33** were held during FY24) are focused on educating individuals to utilise heating effectively and inspire them to implement draught proofing actions in their homes. Our website is also full of cost effective tips for home occupants to implement in their home including bubble wrap insulation, secondary glazing and lining curtains. It is our collective actions and generosity in sharing our knowledge to empower and build the capacity of communities which acts to improve the warmth, increase the energy efficiency and ultimately improve the health outcomes of communities.



Moving forward

Our goals

As an altruistic business committed to sustainability, we are guided by four long term goals:

- We aspire to inspire other businesses, leaders, and influencers to embrace sustainability and altruism in their operations by leading by example.
Explore our 'compassionate business model':
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xq5tf4RfeQQ>).
- We aim to demonstrate that it is possible to run a profitable business whilst prioritising care, compassion, and concern for others, offering hope and support to both current and future generations.
- We want to help anyone that needs and wants our help, especially those who are struggling, have low income, and live in vulnerable and risky situations.
- In pursuit of our mission, we want to realise the potential of all our team members.



Our pathway in pursuit of these goals, is to visit every home, engage every community, gifting our knowledge, sharing sustainable living advice, and building the capacity of those families and communities to better engage and embrace sustainable living.

In FY25 we have four annual objectives:



Decrease our carbon footprint per person employed (be the change we want to see).



Continue our pursuit of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and embrace the Inner Development Goals.



Continue to visit more homes and engage more communities as we are invited to do so.



Develop an impact model that will better enable us to measure and understand the impact we are having.

Sustainable development

Our framework

Sustainability Options' sustainability framework has been developed using the internal FROG altruistic business model and considering the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also integrates our contributions to the different areas of sustainability. The following table (Table 1) has been used to help develop Sustainability Options' sustainability framework visual.

SDG Number 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) is the overarching goal that links to our main business aspiration of creating a more harmonious world for our grandchildren's grandchildren.

Table 1: Table used to develop Sustainability Options' sustainability framework.

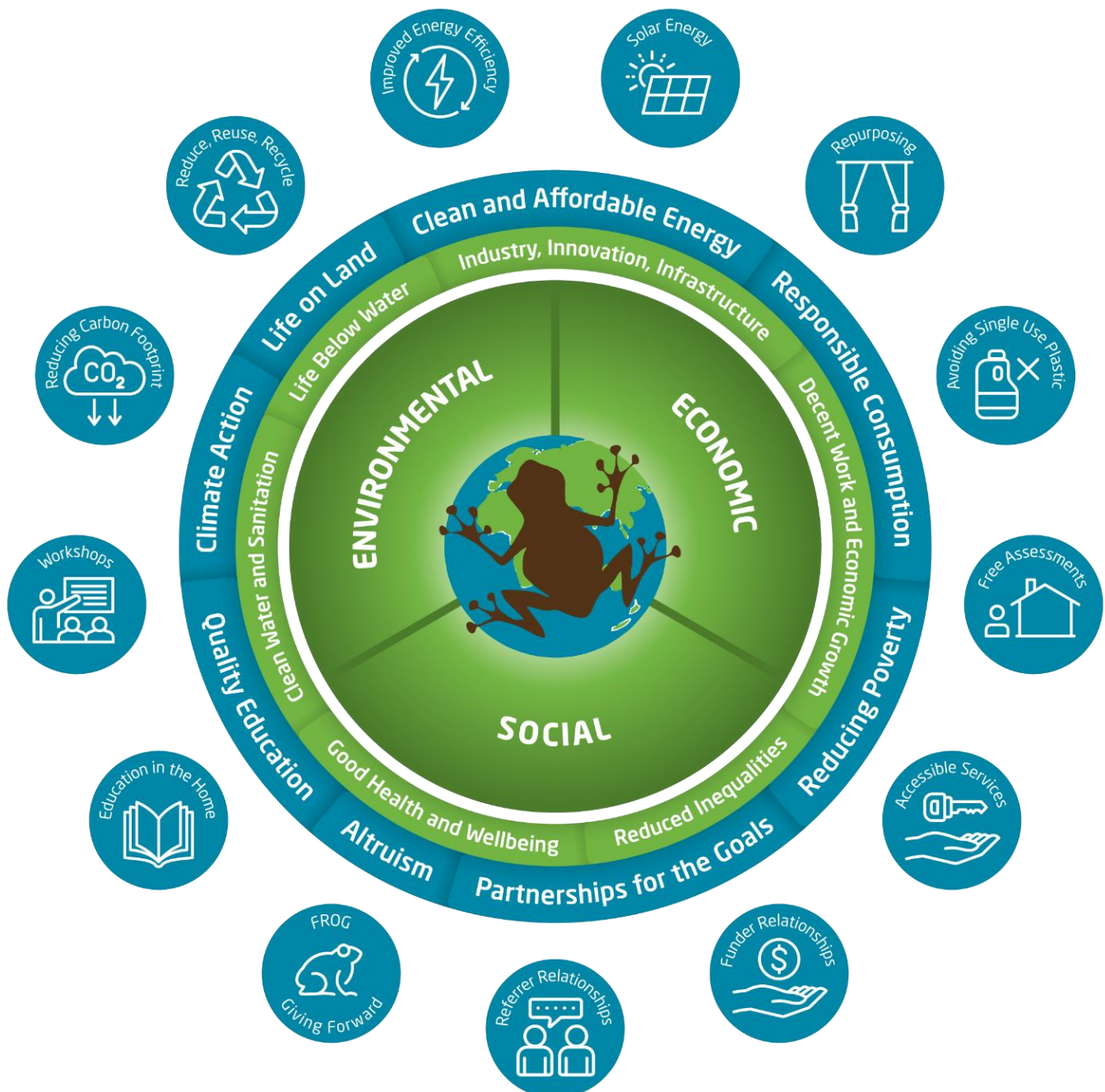
Area of sustainability	Sustainability objectives	Impact	Link to SDG
Environmental	Displaying kaitiakitanga (stewardship) through environmental care; supporting energy efficient living options, water conservation, repurposing materials where possible, encouraging active and public transport options for employee commuting, reducing our plastic use and food waste in the office.	Educating our staff and people in the community to help them feel more informed about their actions on the natural environment and how they can reduce their carbon footprints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation • SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy • SDG 12 Responsible consumption • SDG 13 Climate action • SDG 14 Life below water • SDG 15 Life on land • SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals

Social	<p>Showing care and compassion for our team, for all those who ask for our help, and for our communities. Providing opportunities and advocating compassion and care for all people.</p> <p>Continuing to respect, embrace and incorporate principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi into our operational engagement. A large percentage of our work is with Māori and we wish to connect with them, helping them feel understood and ensure they feel comfortable with our presence in their whare.</p>	<p>That our staff feel appreciated and inspired. Improving housing conditions, and sustainable health outcomes for everybody, regardless of who they are, in all communities.</p> <p>Embracing Te Ao Māori within our own kaupapa, developing appropriate tikanga that merges compassion and cultural sensitivity, and engaging Te Reo Māori within our mahi.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 1 No poverty • SDG 3 Good health and wellbeing • SDG 4 Quality education • SDG 5 Gender equality • SDG 10 Reduced inequalities • SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals
Economic	<p>Our economic sustainability focus is an enabler to our environmental and social sustainability outcomes. In pursuit of our <u>objectives</u> as an altruistic business, we seek to generate our own financially supporting relationships with willing clients, customers and funders. We aim to sustain an ongoing profit to enable our environmental and social sustainability pursuits.</p>	<p>Building partnerships to acquire funding to implement interventions in homes that we visit.</p> <p>Delivering commercial projects and activities that advance social and environmental sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy • SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth • SDG 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure • SDG 12 Responsible consumption • SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals

The Sustainability Options'

Sustainability Framework

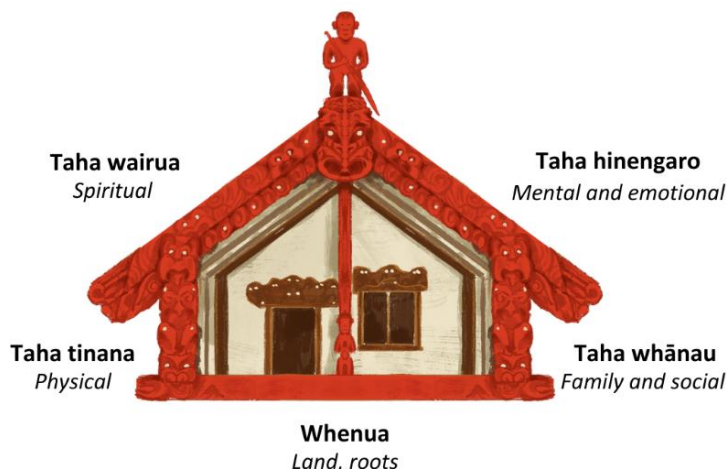
Sustainability Options' sustainability framework reveals the connection between the different pillars of sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals that relate to these different areas of sustainability. The framework highlights some of our main collaborations and our commitments to different sustainability goals and values. Sustainability Options would like to thank Jody Linton from Vanlinton Design for his involvement in designing our sustainability framework.





Introducing Te Whare Tapa Whā

A wellbeing model



Te Whare Tapa Whā was developed by Sir Mason Durie ([Manatū Hauora Ministry of Health, 2023](#)). This model describes hauora (health & wellbeing) as a wharenui (meeting house) – a house of four walls. Each wall represents a dimension of health, and our connection with the whenua (land) forms the foundation.

When these four dimensions of our wellbeing are in balance we thrive, but if one or more things are out of balance, our wellbeing can be impacted. When our whenua (land/place/roots) is compromised or eroded, this also impacts our sustainable wellbeing.

Our kaupapa is to build the capacity of whānau and community through trusted relationships, journeying with them and listening to their voice. Our kaupapa seeks to reflect all five considerations of the Te Whare Tapa Whā model. Our mahi can improve people's wellbeing today and empower generations to come. By ensuring all four dimensions of wellbeing are balanced, and the platform of whenua is stable, we will not just survive, but thrive. These areas of health and wellbeing have been incorporated into our framework.



Hope becomes real, when we can confront the challenge together.

There is little that is more invigorating than supporting one another, working together, teaching others and enjoying food together.

Ehara tāku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini.

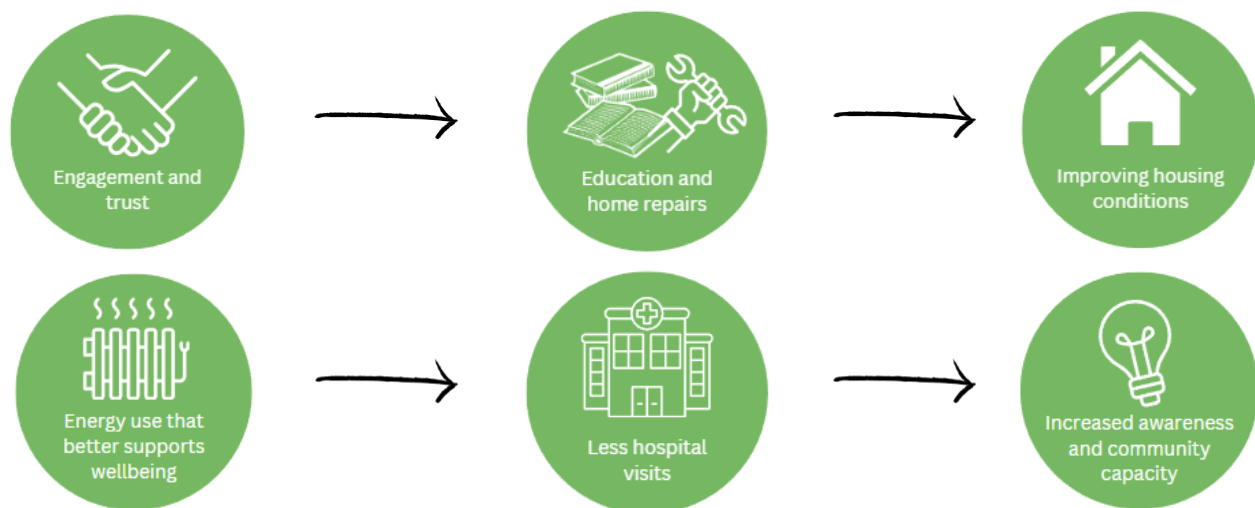
My strength is not as an individual, but as a collective.

Systemic approach

Our response

The ripple effect

Our natural world is a system. Within this system our houses and our bodies operate and function. We have referenced this relationship ‘the ripple effect’. We know that improving housing conditions improves household energy efficiency, as well as occupant health. The impacts of our mahi ripple through within whānau groups and the wider community including the health system.



During our initial home visit, we aim to quickly build trust with whānau, creating a collaborative process that reflects their voice. Together with whānau we put an action plan in place for how we can work collaboratively to improve the warmth and health of their home. This involves sharing knowledge, discussing behaviours and maintenance as well as identifying any repairs or soft interventions that will help the whānau achieve a healthier home. Actions can include draught proofing windows and doors, fixing broken windows, minor roofing repairs, as well as ordering insulation and heat pumps or even gifting heaters, beds and blankets. It’s the combined actions of knowledge sharing, repairs and interventions that delivers positive and sustainable health and environmental outcomes.

Expanding on the associated health impacts, we know through dedicated research (over a five-year period) that the healthy homes actions that businesses like ours implement have resulted in an 18.60% reduction in hospitalisations per person and a 5% reduction in school absence from illness for children ([Pierse et al., 2024](#)). Reducing hospital visits not only has a measurable impact on the emotional, physical and financial wellbeing of whānau (less time off work, more time in school, less stress), it also uses less medical resources and results in less emissions as a result of travel to and from healthy facilities. We all flourish when everyone’s needs are met.

Emissions reporting

FY24

Our reach and scope of action increases each year as we visit more houses, complete more repairs and maintenance work, and connect with more individuals in the energy and health sectors. For the purpose of our reporting, we will be looking at our employee commuting and business travel greenhouse gas emissions separately. Our goal is to ultimately reduce emissions in the very long term by building the capacity of communities through our workshops, attendance at conferences and hui throughout the motu, to share knowledge with individuals on how they can improve their living and housing conditions.

Main findings:

- Employee commuting:

Our employee commuting emissions reduced by 9% in FY24 compared to FY23. A big contributor to this was the commitment by several of our staff beginning to use electric bicycles or scooters on a regular basis to commute to work, as opposed to their petrol vehicles. Staff presented a level of satisfaction with using more active transport to commute to and from work.

An excerpt from one of our staff: 'I have been using an e-bike to get to and from work for a while now. You get lovely fresh air in the morning and you already feel accomplished by the time you've got to work. I have saved so much petrol and money since using it and often get to where I'm headed faster than when I use a car, rather than sitting in traffic. I know I'm making an environmental impact and feel great for making a difference'.

- Business travel:

Our fuel emissions increased by 20% in FY24 compared to FY23. The number of home assessments we completed in FY24 increased by 43.80% compared to FY23, contributing to this change.

Our business travel increased from FY23 to FY24. Although we have been opting for online attendance at meetings where possible, the main reason for this increase in business travel emissions was due to an increase in our flights as a result of our contractual requirements and attendance at different regional conferences and meetings. However, we purchased carbon offsets for all our flights taken throughout FY24, accounting for 3.33 tonnes of emissions.

We have calculated that an average of 0.03 tonnes of business vehicle emissions occurs per home we visited in FY24.

The following page outlines Sustainability Options’ greenhouse gas emissions by scope during the 2024 Financial Year. We follow the requirements of the international carbon footprint reporting standards (ISO 14064-1), reporting all three scopes of greenhouse gases. We have decided to focus on data collection, analysis and reporting all three carbon footprint scopes to give us a more complete picture of our emission sources and highlight our commitment to our environmental goals.

Scope 1:

Emissions that are directly produced by Sustainability Options. These emission sources include company owned vehicles and stationary fuels such as natural gas for heating our Tauranga office.

Scope 2:

Emissions produced indirectly by Sustainability Options through the purchase and consumption of electricity, including lighting, some forms of heating and charging electrical office equipment such as laptops.

Scope 3:

Other indirect emissions produced by sources that Sustainability Options doesn’t own, but are related to activities carried out or materials used by the business. Business travel such as work related air and taxi/uber travel, accommodation, disposal of waste, employee commuting, and electronic hardware items are reported as scope 3 emissions.

Figure 2 below shows the distribution of Sustainability Options’ greenhouse gas emissions across the different scopes. It can be seen that Scope 1 emissions accounted for 58% of Sustainability Options total emissions during FY24, greater than scope 2 and 3 emissions combined, totalling 42%, of Sustainability Options’ total greenhouse gas emissions for FY24.

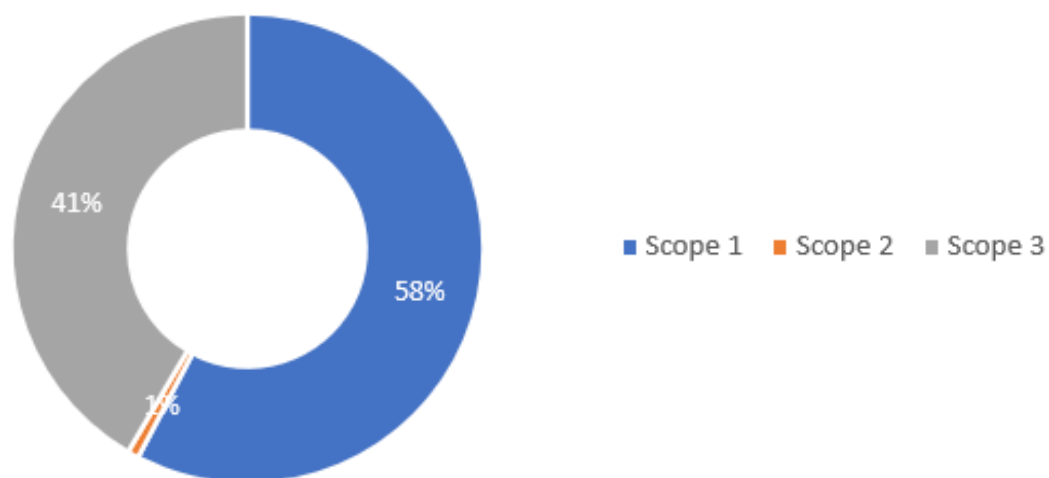


Figure 2: Sustainability Options’ greenhouse gas emissions by scope



Emissions reporting

Avoided emissions

It is a core principle of ours to get our team to consider their actions on the planet. We actively encourage the use of different methods of transport to commute to work, rather than consistently using personal vehicles. Since we began recording our carbon footprint in FY23 and sharing this information with our employees, we have seen a change in employee behaviour around commuting to work. Our team started brainstorming ideas for how they could live their lives with less negative impacts on the planet. Engaging all our team in our sustainability journey is important to us. Cycling and scootering have become popular ways for our employees to commute to work. We provide our team access to an e-bike, e-scooter and moped for commuting to the office and to meetings during the day.

One of the most significant additions to our data collection and emissions reporting this financial year involved the collection of data related to 'avoided' emissions. Specifically, this relates to the greenhouse gas emissions associated with employee commuting which have been avoided, due to using transport alternatives instead of a personal vehicle (including busing, walking, scootering, cycling, riding a moped, working from home or carpooling). We collect this data to recognise the changes in employee behaviour which have resulted in fewer greenhouse gas emissions being released. Our lead team are particularly proactive in setting a good example around the use of active and public transport, with 37% of the total 2.98 tonnes of FY24 avoided emissions attributed to the four person strong lead team.

2.98 tonnes
total avoided
emissions

Making a difference

Our case studies

Collaborations



Repairs &
Maintenance



Education



Repurposing



Advocacy



Generosity



Making a difference

Collaborations- 20 Degrees

Sustainability Options work with an amazing collaboration of partners to pursue a vision titled '20 Degrees' – the vision is to support every home to have the ability to sustain 20 Degrees temperatures on a cold winters night. This collaboration of partners involves local community funders: The Rotorua Trust, Tauranga Energy Consumer Trust and Bay Trust. In addition, the vision is also supported by Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Rotorua Lakes Council and Trust Horizon. Over and above these key supporters, Powerco and the Acorn Foundation are contributors, along with Carter Holt Harvey and Showerdome. With this collaboration already supporting our altruistic projects, we set out to improve the living conditions of the home in this case study and to make it safe.

Case study:

'I can clearly remember the day I first visited this home. It was a 1980's build, metal roof, fibrolite cladding, on piles, aluminium window joinery, 3 bedrooms, particle board flooring, north facing deck. The grounds were over-grown, the cladding needed a paint, the roof was ok-ish. The house was the home of a lovely old Nan. She was in her 70s, suffering from dementia and she was being looked after by her son. He was trying to care for her, whilst holding down a job locally. We had been asked to visit the home by a local kaiarāhi (guardian) who was worried about Nan. When I knocked on the door, the son came to the door, we chatted on the step for a bit and he then asked me in to look around, warning me to watch my step. As I stepped through the front door, I stepped on to a network of planks. To my left was the kitchen, the network of planks crossed around the floor, balanced on the floor joists. To my right was a small laundry area, the hot water cylinder cupboard and the fridge. The fridge was leaning back against the wall, as it was balancing on a joist, there was a plank in front of the laundry tub. The son explained that the hot water cylinder had been leaking and the floor had fallen away. I walked through to the lounge, where Nan was in a lounging chair, we smiled and I said hello. We went through to the bedrooms, they were ok and then through to the toilet. The floor around the toilet was soft, but still holding up. We went in to the bathroom, the floor around the shower was falling away and one needed to be careful about where we stood, so as not to step through the soft wood. The water damage from the hot water cylinder and the plumbing had effected the entire wet areas of the home. The son explained to me that this was Nan's home, she wanted to stay here, but he had to be around to use the kitchen and to help her with bathing. Nan could not safely use the bathroom and the kitchen. The toilet was becoming increasingly risky. Wow, I thought, this is tragic and it's a tragedy waiting to happen, what can I do?'

A phone call was made to the local Good Neighbour Trust. They fairly quickly set about cleaning up the exterior of the property. Another call was made to Curate Church. They assisted with the property clean up and then offered to provide willing hands to help restore the interior of the property. We also linked up with a number of corporates and tradies to provide time and materials, and called in some favours and generosity. It was a huge collaboration. Once the trades work was completed, we then worked with volunteers from Curate Church and from our own organisation, and we organised a number of painting days, to repaint the entire internal of the home. We worked with a local carpet provider (The Flooring Room) to put down carpet. When the home was finished, the result was amazing. This home, which was considered beyond repair, was transformed through the old adage: 'many hands, make light work'. The collaboration extended from the formal partnership with the funders and supporters of the 20 Degrees vision, on to other community organisations, and local trades and businesses, as well as our own families coming along and helping out.



Before



During



After



Making a difference

Case study: Repairs and maintenance

Johnson* grew up in a Rotorua home with his close family, his mother and his brother. No matter the circumstances Johnson felt like the family home was his haven. However, in his teenage years Johnson's mother became unwell and over the years he and his brother became her primary carers, whilst balancing full time jobs to pay the mortgage of their family home. The experience was tough on both young men and Johnson's brother experienced severe mental distress and disappeared. He still hasn't been found. This emotional turmoil and the deterioration of his mother's condition left Johnson taking on more of her care and he consequently left his work. With the time commitment to his mother and his lack of income due to not working, Johnson noticed the condition of the home worsening and didn't have the funds to fix the issues. The hygiene of the home was worsening and Johnson reflected on the dampness of the home, the holes in the floor, which were especially bad in the toilet room posing a safety risk, and cold draughts. The roof had been replaced in the past, but there was a lot of damage from the previous roof, drenched insulation every time it rained and moisture laden air creating a far from ideal environment for Johnson's sick mother. The ceiling was at risk of collapsing, there were unlined bathroom walls and damage to weatherboards, gutters and downpipes. Nik did an initial assessment and identified where Sustainability Options could assist. Critical bathroom repairs were covered by Te Puni Kōkiri and from here, Sustainability Options funded the rest.

The following repairs and maintenance work was undertaken by our repairs and maintenance team: Draught proofing windows, fixing of a downpipe and a plumbing leak, installation of soffits and corner flashings, applied silicone around the power box, installation of kitchen extraction fan, ceiling insulation and a heat pump, painted the home's exterior, fixed latches and installed curtains. Johnson also got involved too and attended one of our workshops, learning small ways in which he could improve the health of the home, both for his mother but also for his baby on the way.

'I want to build upon what we have already started with Sustainability Options, to keep things going.

We were put in a good position to start making steps towards improvements for the house and so I just want to continue that.'

-Johnson

* name changed



Making a difference *Education*

An important part of our mahi is sharing our knowledge about energy efficiency, housing performance and home maintenance with whānau and their communities, to empower individuals and give them the confidence and understanding to improve their housing condition and to sustain these improvements. We do this by offering free community workshops, speaking in forums, conferences and hui, as well as educating the whānau during home assessments. A key consideration for those being supported through the 20 Degrees vision is that whānau are open to engaging with the education component of 20 Degrees – workshops and DIY skill sessions that build the knowledge needed to keep homes healthy after the interventions are completed. Additionally, our website is full of content with healthy housing tips for individuals to download and watch to develop their understanding of how to increase the warmth of their homes.

Here's a case study from one of our workshops:

Tangiwai's health had been declining in recent years and she wanted to take action to protect herself and make sure her health didn't limit her life. A friend invited her to a Sustainability Options community workshop and encouraged Tangiwai to implement small changes herself to make her house healthier to support her health. From the workshops she has been motivated to insulate her windows using bubble wrap, bought sheets and attached them to the back of her curtains to double line them, made draught stoppers, started blast ventilating for 15 minutes morning and night, ensured every window had a curtain or blind, and started opening the windows daily for air flow, while ensuring to close them again at night. Tangiwai noticed her whare becoming warmer, particularly in her previously cold bedroom. Tangiwai has been able to save energy and redirect it to other areas, allowing her to maximise all the heat she is putting into the home. Her ability to reduce energy use in some areas means she has been able to create a warmer home without her overall power bill increasing. Through our workshops, she has felt empowered to implement changes at her son and grandson's homes. Her relief at the fact that her whānau are in a better physical and mental position due to the warmth and subsequent health within their whare only adds to the benefits of these learnings.

'If my whānau are healthy, I don't have to worry about them, if they are healthy and something happens to them, I know they will be strong enough.'

-Tangiwai



Making a difference

Repurposing

Our commitment to sustainability includes a passion for encouraging a circular economy and repurposing items where possible. We do this through four channels:

- Curtain Bank
- Heater Bank
- Blanket and linen collection
- Repurposing of building material

Curtain and Heater Banks

See [Sustainability Highlights At A Glance](#) section for description of Curtain and Heater Bank process.

Blanket and linen collection

We also send a call-out to the community to donate clean blankets and linen to us. We deliver these essentials to whānau where there is a need, particularly where there are young children and babies and where there are elderly who are especially vulnerable to illness.

Building material repurposing

We were awarded funding from Tauranga City Council as part of the Resource Wise Community Fund. We have used this fund to put towards our Building Materials Repurposing project. The main objective of this project is to assist our most vulnerable, who ultimately live in housing that requires overdue maintenance. By helping vulnerable families, we can repurpose building material that would otherwise end up as construction and demolition waste. We also engage with tradespeople to educate them on the wider environmental and social sustainability outcomes of repurposing materials. Throughout the 2024 financial year we were donated 8000 kilograms of curtains, 100 fan and oil heaters, 3 stoves, over 100 kilograms of carpets and 6 hot water cylinders along with the opportunity to recover all the materials from a house due for demolition, with the usable fixtures including decking, wardrobe storage, metal shelving, insulation and built in cabinets being recycled and reused in homes in our repairs and maintenance program. Through this project we estimate that 12,456 kilograms of building materials have been diverted from landfill. The estimated kilograms of carbon dioxide recovery from this project was 21,066 kilograms. Timber, curtains, linings and house fixtures such as fridges and kitchen sinks were the greatest contributor to our carbon dioxide recovery from this project. Overall, through the goods we collected during this project, we were able to help 230 homes across the Bay of Plenty get closer to achieving a healthy temperature of 20 degrees Celsius.



Making a difference

Advocacy

Sustainability Options has a strong commitment to sharing knowledge, and in many cases advocating for a social or environmental outcome, when we are invited. Jo and Nik have volunteered many hours to Tauranga City Council and the Western Bay of Plenty District Council, inputting to established community liaison groups focused on transport infrastructure, urban wellbeing developments and community engagement. Jo's first-hand experience as a person who cycles for transport coupled with years of sustainable training as well as exposure to international thinking provides a systemic viewpoint to the way the city faces growth pains. This expertise and experience from Jo has led to many passionate pleas, submissions and presentations advocating for vulnerable families, for the environment, for those without a voice and for those who have eyes on the wellbeing of our grandchildren's grandchildren.

Our work with whānau living in rental properties is another way we provide advocacy. It can be an uncomfortable experience for a tenant to ask a property owner for necessary improvements and many whānau choose not to risk the security of their home. This is the case even in dire situations such as when there is no heating or hot water. Often all it takes is a phone call to the property owner, who then with a deeper understanding of the issue can take remedial action. In the rare situations when an amicable outcome can't be reached, Sustainability Options will support the whānau to take further action, ensuring other parties such as community law and tenancy services are involved. Our mahi here is always on the whānau terms and with their permission.

In March 2024, Nik was asked to reflect to a senior management team at Te Whatu Ora the impact of improving housing conditions for the most vulnerable and at risk families/whānau/aiga. In his presentation Nik presented the concept that advocacy for a more harmonious future for our grandchildren's grandchildren begins with a commitment to others and a willingness to collaborate. Not only does the acronym 'T.E.A.M- together everyone achieves more' hold power in achieving great outcomes, but additionally the statement that 'hope begins with a commitment too – we can do this together' magnifies the potential for great outcomes. In advocating for stronger collaboration between purposeful business, government, community organisations and philanthropic organisations, Nik advocated for the power of being committed to, and able to, take a journey with families, providing them hope by taking that journey with them. He presented a story of a single mother, building a home in a remote location, for her 7 children, and in her darkest hours, when she was desperately struggling, she had the hope of someone who was there to take the journey with her.

When we asked her, why do you want to share your story....

'When your community can't even give you the time of day, when strangers come into your life and just want to help that's what holds dear to your heart, because when strangers can come into your home, into your life, and say we are going to try and help as much as we can, what do you need? That's not normal. When uz came in, I was on the verge of giving up on life.....and..... (whisper) you guys gave me hope, that's what you did, you came in and gave me hope, that's why I'll never forget Alex (a member of the Sustainability Options team), she gave me the hope to carry on, as a woman, as a wife, more as a woman and a mum, that's why I can express I'll never forget her face, that's why when I could express that face that came, that loving warm face that came into my life, it wasn't about coming and helping with my home, it was about her heart reaching out to me and her wairua saying its ok, yeah, and then I met the rest of the family and uz are all the same and I'm like wow. and when this happened, I said that's what happens when you do good for others, it comes back, and I said when I most needed it, and I needed most because I was on the verge of saying goodbye to my babies because I couldn't cope and that's what I need most, was someone else to come and pick me up out of that shit pit I was in inside my mind, that I couldn't do it anymore.'



Making a difference

Generosity

When Sustainability Options was established in 2012, we had a vision: to see a world served by compassionate business for the benefit of future generations. In pursuit of that vision, we set out to be 'the change we wanted to see', we set ourselves up as an altruistic business and we developed a compassionate business model as a platform for our journey. Here we are 12 years on, still in the process of discovery. In our journey, it has become apparent that to follow a compassionate business model, generosity is a key component. It's very difficult to be authentic in having compassion for others, in seeking to do good for others, if we are not willing to be generous.

In this section of our Sustainability Report, we want to reflect on our generosity, in the context that generosity is critical to be a sustainable altruistic business.

Acknowledging the generosity of others:

Firstly, we want to acknowledge the generosity of those who support us. Over the past year, we have delivered on a number of contracts. These contracts have been funded on the basis of stated outputs and outcomes. Those who have contracted us, have done so knowing that we will seek to be generous in going above and beyond in helping others. Thank you to: Te Whatu Ora, The Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Rotorua Lakes Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Tauranga City Council, Tūwharetoa Settlement Trust, Te Kapua Whakapīpī and Meridian Energy.

We also want to acknowledge the support and generosity of our funders: Tauranga Energy Consumer Trust, Bay Trust, The Rotorua Trust, Trust Horizon, The Acorn Foundation, and The Eastern Bay Foundation.

Lastly, we want to acknowledge the support and generosity of our sponsors: Carter Holt Harvey, Showerdome, Powerco and the many, many trades that have helped us out.

Reflecting on our own generosity:

We have three principles that exhibit our generosity:

- A) If there is a need that we can help with, then let's help. Going 'above and beyond' is a core desire of the way we mahi.
- B) Always being willing to give forward.
- C) Our knowledge and expertise is there to be shared, be generous in sharing our IP.

Going above and beyond:

Much of this generosity is incremental, whilst we have a great many stories, the below six examples illustrate this example.

1. One of our staff members shared about their efforts to help a kaumātua in his home and during the conversation discovered that a strong need and desire for the kaumātua, was to build confidence in communicating via digital channels. She proceeded to help him to do this, seeking to connect him with appropriate services where he could attend support and training.
2. Another of our team members, upon visiting a home with an elderly occupant, discovered how lonely he was and that his TV was no longer operational. He decided to investigate why the TV wasn't operational. After a bit of investigation, he discovered a practical solution. He fixed the TV and the elderly occupant was delighted at being able to watch sports again.
3. Out of the blue we were called by a member of the public who had a lovely divan bed that they needed to move out of their house, that weekend. Before they dropped it off at a secondhand shop they asked us 'did we know of a family that might like to use it?' We phoned our families and discovered a local family with a 12-year-old girl who would be delighted to have the bed. So, one of our staff members organised with the donor for the bed to be delivered on a Saturday afternoon, and they then went out shopping for bedding. They attended the home, helped move the bed, and provided the bedding. The 12-year-old girl was delighted. She had never had her own bed. Her mother was massively gracious, knowing that she had her own bed back to herself, and that her wonderful daughter was now in her own sleeping space. It turned out that a pillow was still needed, so our staff member went back to the shops and purchased a pillow and returned to the home later in the day.
4. Every year we put out a request on social media for portable heaters that we can repurpose and deliver to homes that need them. We get donation calls from all over Tauranga. Various staff members go out and pick up the heaters in their own time, and other staff members help receive the heaters that are dropped off. With the support of ABS Electrical, two of our staff members test and fix the heaters in their own time and ensure they are safe, robust and ready for replacement.
5. One of our staff members visited an elderly kaumātua on a Saturday, just to be with him and to talk with him, keeping him company.
6. One of our staff members has taken delight in speaking to a mothers group every 2-3 months on a Saturday, sharing with them the importance of keeping baby's/pepi's bedroom warm.

Always being willing to give forward:

Every year over the past 12 years we have given forward free home assessments and ongoing advice to help anyone who asks for advice and support to improve the living conditions of their home and to assist with sustainable living considerations.

During FY24, we provided 106 visits/assessments that were unfunded, to whānau and families seeking our help.

Sharing our knowledge and expertise:

This is very hard to track. Essentially, if anyone asks us to share our knowledge or expertise we will do all that we can. Sustainability Options will provide templates, information, tips, materials, policy documents, workshops, attend meetings, send through research, provide contacts and introductions, anything we can do to share what we know. The meetings and instances are too numerous to record, however the following two examples might reflect our generosity in this space:

1. This year we had the privilege of continuing to work closely with Tūwharetoa in Taupō and Tūrangi. It's been an ongoing relationship over the past 3 years where we have shared as much as we can about what we do, as they seek to build up their own capacity to improve housing conditions and sustainable living for their communities.
2. One organisation from the South Island asked if they could send a team of six staff members up to spend a week with us, shadowing us in all aspects of our mahi. It was a delight to have them visit. We shared with them everything we did, how we did it, why we did it, and dedicated our team to spend the full week with them.

Appendix

Supporting information

References

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<https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Environmental-health/Healthy-Homes-Initiative-Five-year-outcomes-evaluation.pdf>

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Emissions reporting

FY2023

In 2022 we sought to formalize the collecting of data to determine our business carbon footprint. We had thought about the need to collect and record data for a while and knew that this was important if we were to be genuine in our commitment to environmental sustainability.

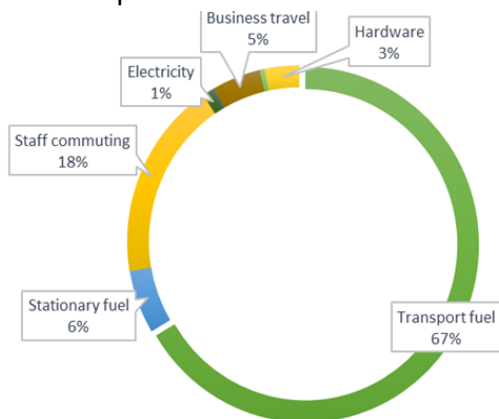
We began collecting and analysing data for our baseline reporting year FY2023. The scope of our reporting was determined, including all three reporting scopes from ISO 14064-1.

We want to acknowledge Bay Trust for providing us with financial support to start monitoring our carbon footprint and Tadpole Consulting who were instrumental in getting us set up on our carbon footprint journey, particularly Wymond, who has worked with us since 2022, and helped us in expanding our data collection each year. The engagement and assistance of both Bay Trust and Tadpole Consulting in commencing our data collection and providing ideas for emission reduction plans has been vital.

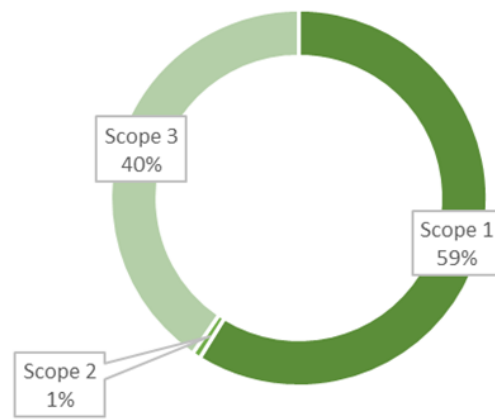
Below are some of our main findings from our 2023 Financial Year greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reporting:

- Emissions from transport fuel from our business vehicles were our main source of emissions, accounting for 67% of total emissions.
- Employee commuting was the next leading cause of greenhouse gas emissions, totaling 18% of our entire emissions.
- Our data showed a slight seasonal pattern, with the winter/spring period tending to be a time of greater emissions (with the exception of March), whilst the summer period generally resulted in lower emissions compared to the other seasons.

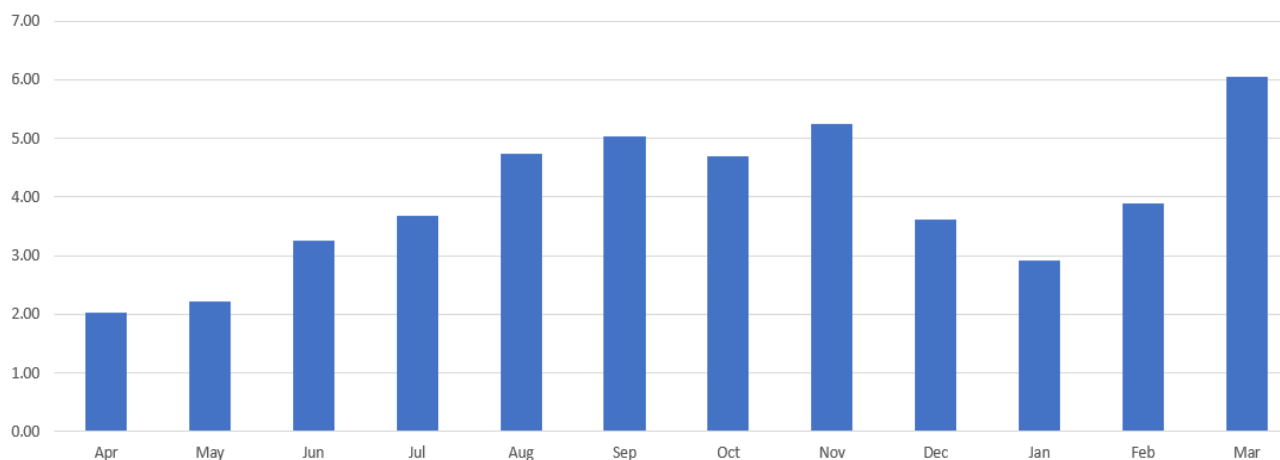
Our main data results were not unexpected because a large amount of our mahi involves lots of travel visiting homes for house assessments and repairs and maintenance work, along with travel to workshops, meetings and conferences to share our learnings and develop our knowledge further. Our winter period is also our busiest time for assessments because of increased demand due to the colder temperatures and increased chance of illness.



Appendix Figure 1: Sustainability Options GHG emissions from different emission sources FY23



Appendix Figure 2: Sustainability Options GHG emissions from different scopes FY23



Appendix Figure 3: Sustainability Options GHG emissions by month FY23
(1 April 2022- 31 March 2023)

Historical Activity

School engagement

Mentoring and Enviro Challenge

Between 2015-2019 Sustainability Options engaged with schools, mentoring students who shared a passion for the environment and helped schools on their sustainability journeys. During this time we engaged with schools in mainly the following areas:

- Waste minimisation; including recycling and also reducing chemical use
- Energy conservation; including efficiency and the use of renewable energy
- Water conservation; including recycling and collection

Some of the projects we helped collaborate on with schools include:

- Mount Maunganui College– student mentoring over 2 years with a focus on creating their own ‘sustainable building’ and renewable energy source for this.
- Trident High School– mentoring over 5 years, installation of a 30kW solar system, installation of waste recycling, installation of rainwater harvesting.
- Tauranga Girls’ College– working with students to give ideas around fundraising and assisting in the application for funds for solar panels for the school environmental classroom.

We also ran Enviro Challenge, a regional secondary school challenge for students passionate about the environment to form teams, share their school’s commitment to environmental sustainability and collaborate on different tasks throughout the day. Schools had months of preparation time for their sustainability ‘champions’ to come together and form a team, set sustainability objectives and plan how to share their visions. The purpose of the challenge was to inspire and encourage environmental leadership so the students involved continue their passion into further studies or career choices. Challenge day was always full of excitement and fresh ideas from innovative students.



Appendix Figure 4: Enviro Challenge day April 2019

Kindergarten visits

We started helping Inspired Kindergartens in 2014, to determine their need for solar panels and investigate their power usage. This project has involved engagement with several different Inspiring Kindergarten's across the Bay of Plenty and included collaboration in applying for funds for the installation of solar panels on kindergarten premises. In addition to this work, we also educated teachers, children and their families about energy conservation and efficiency including insulation and the use of energy efficient LED lighting. This work saw a 44% reduction in energy usage across 20 local kindergartens (2015–2020), which can be attributed to an increase in understanding of energy usage due to our education and also the operation of the solar panels.



Appendix Figure 5: Solar panels at Te Puna Kindergarten



Appendix Figure 6: Solar panels at Greerton Kindergarten

Electric vehicles

In 2015, curious about less direct emission intensive transport, we were leaders in the electric vehicle (EV) trials in Tauranga. We imported two EVs to lend out to people who wanted an EV trial. It was our vision to provide the opportunity for people to test them out to help bring normality to EVs as a viable option. Alongside these trial EVs, Sustainability Options partnered with Tauranga City Council, Powerco and a few other dedicated individuals to bring a solar supported EV charging station to The Strand in downtown Tauranga. This initiative was to showcase both technologies (Solar & EV charging) in a very public space. As well as this, Jo facilitated the introduction of EV charging stations to other Tauranga businesses in support of setting up a well connected charging network. Many of these systems are still in place and used to this day.

Sustainable Business Network Awards

In 2015, Sustainability Options was selected as a finalist in the Sustainable Business Network Awards- Cadence Communicating Sustainability Award category. These awards have been run since 2002 and recognise the innovation and commitment of businesses in striving to become more sustainable.

Sustainability Options

Sustainability Report 2024

*‘Only when the last tree has died and the
last river has been poisoned and the last
fish been caught will we realise we
cannot eat money’*

- Cree Indian proverb



Sustainability
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