



MEDIA RELEASE

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Survey reveals overwhelming public demand for sustainable KiwiSaver funds

A survey of New Zealanders has revealed that Kiwis care deeply about how their KiwiSaver funds are being invested and that they want more sustainable KiwiSaver options.

The survey of 1400 New Zealanders, conducted by the Sustainable Business Network (SBN), has also uncovered a strong public desire for KiwiSaver providers to report on the sustainability performance of the companies in which they are investing on the public's behalf.

The results of the survey were announced by SBN today at an event held jointly with the Responsible Investment Association of Australasia. The key findings are:

- 97% of respondents would actively look to change their KiwiSaver provider to a more sustainable one if the financial return was the same. Almost two thirds would do this even if the financial risk was higher.
- 96% of respondents want their KiwiSaver provider to report on the sustainability performance of the companies in which they are investing. They want to know about environmental and social indicators, as well as financial.
- One in five respondents is able to influence the default KiwiSaver provider in their organisation at present.
- 90% of respondents want to be actively investing in companies with a strong sustainability commitment, such as:
 - Renewables and clean technology
 - Sustainable transportation options (such as biofuels)

- Recycling and resource recovery.
- A large majority would avoid investing in 'sin' industries. More than 90% would avoid investing in labour exploitation, tobacco and arms, while more than 80% would avoid investing in gambling, pornography and fossil fuels.

Rachel Brown, CEO of the Sustainable Business Network, says the survey results show categorically that there is a good, and growing, public demand for sustainable KiwiSaver options.

"There is a need for KiwiSaver providers, as well as other wealth management advisors in New Zealand, to meet the needs of a growing client base wanting to invest in smart, clean tech, healthy, future-focused businesses," she says.

"New Zealanders across all age groups want a more sustainable future. Generations X and Y are the active young professionals who in particular want to be able to use their investments to positively influence the types of companies that will exist when they retire and access their KiwiSaver funds. They are very keen on smart money decisions that will help create the positive future they believe is possible."

Simon O'Connor, CEO of the Responsible Investment Association Australasia, says that consumer interest and scrutiny of the investment sector is on the rise globally - a trend that is only going to continue and will shape the industry over coming years.

"The results of this survey show clearly that there is a strong desire for KiwiSaver options that play a role in building a stronger and more sustainable New Zealand, whilst also focusing on delivering strong financial returns," he says.

"Pleasingly, responsible and ethical investment products are emerging to meet many of these demands and the performance of these funds has been very strong.

"It's now time to move from talk to action: by showing that money will flow to more responsible and sustainable investment options is the loudest signal New Zealanders can send to the investment community to continue developing those investment options."

SBN believes that investment is a key mechanism for influencing and supporting sustainable behaviour, and for helping transition New Zealand to a sustainable society. SBN will be working with willing companies to identify what is needed to meet the consumer demand identified in this survey and ensure that these consumers have products they will be proud to invest in.

The survey, which was conducted in June-July 2014, was designed by the Sustainable Business Network with support from AMP Capital, Prometheus Finance, Glenn Saunders and Colmar Brunton.

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About the Sustainable Business Network

The Sustainable Business Network (SBN) provides advice and support to help business succeed through becoming more sustainable. As the largest organisation of businesses dedicated to sustainability in New Zealand, the SBN actively helps our network of progressive companies to: collaborate with other innovators and learn; profile stories and connect; and access practical support.

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