



**Sustainable
Business
Network**

Media Release

20 October 2020

Billions of dollars of NZ business' purchasing power aims for more sustainability

Major businesses, local authorities, three major New Zealand universities and representatives from national and local government are all working together on a new initiative to make business purchasing more sustainable.

Fletcher Building, NZ Post, Westpac and AMI are among the household names taking part in the new Sustainable Procurement Leaders Group, convened by the Sustainable Business Network (SBN). They are working alongside the likes of Auckland Transport, AUT University and Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington.

The aim is to accelerate New Zealand's drive to become a world-leading sustainable and resilient economy.

The group is meeting quarterly to develop and share best practice, tools and resources, with the aim of making a radical shift in New Zealand's supply chains to a more resilient, sustainable path.

Holly Norton is SBN's Wellington-based senior project and partnership manager.

"It's clearer than ever that all New Zealand businesses must take a sustainable approach to their supply chains. This is the best way to secure the resilience they need in their operations.

"Businesses know they have huge influence. They can reduce their environmental impact through changes in procurement. It's about what they buy, who from and how. Their policies can set high standards on the climate, waste, water and social impacts of the products and materials they buy. And this can often represent huge quantities.

"But it's tough to find the right suppliers and know what to ask them. It's challenging to monitor changes, measure success and get leadership buy-in. Making this the norm means changing the system for everybody.

"The programme has specifically targeted large businesses with significant influence over their supplier markets. So we're delighted to see such a high level of interest."

Westpac NZ Chief Financial Officer Ian Hankins says all New Zealanders stand to benefit from a more sustainable economy.

“We’re really proud to be part of this initiative. Businesses need to be thinking collectively about how to tackle big issues like climate change, and that means setting an example by procuring sustainable products and services.

“Earlier this year we became New Zealand’s first Toitū-certified carbonzero bank, and we are now working with our suppliers to help them to get a handle on their environmental and social impacts.”

The first meeting for the group was on September 23. Its activities are set to be followed by a series of progress reports and action plans. But Holly says the real action will be seen in the operations of the businesses themselves.

“In the coming months we hope to see a host of new collaborations,” she says. “We want to broaden and deepen decision making. We want to shift the dial from making decisions based on short term costs in dollar terms, to a more holistic view of long term value for the businesses and for New Zealand. That’s where real success lies in the long run for all of us.”

Editor’s Note:

To find out more about the Group, go to: <https://sustainable.org.nz/procurement-group/>

or contact

Holly Norton

holly@sustainable.org.nz

027 774 6559