



MEDIA RELEASE

25 November 2021

Community Finance wins Transforming NZ award at Sustainable Business Awards

[Community Finance](#) is the supreme award winner at the Sustainable Business Awards, first winning the **Outstanding Collaboration** category and then nudging out finalists Chia Sisters and All Good to win the supreme award.

Kiwis are finding themselves increasingly locked out of the housing market with housing unaffordability continuing to increase. Community Finance breaks through the complex barriers to build desperately needed houses. Community Finance is a collaboration between philanthropic foundations, financial institutions, community housing providers and the Ministry of Housing. The model involves socially good investors financing community housing partners at affordable rates to build new, energy-efficient and affordable homes for Kiwis.

Working with community housing partners, Community Finance has created the first social impact bond in Aotearoa New Zealand, a form of investment that contributes to better social outcomes.

The Salvation Army Community Bond raised \$40m to build 118 apartments and houses over three locations during the Covid crisis. These have housed 150 adults and 59 children. All homes are built to a minimum of NZ Green Building Council Homestar 7 rating.

Community Finance has taken bold strides and issued the [Aotearoa Pledge](#) with an enterprising vision to raise \$100 million in 2021. It was established to bring transformational change for the community and those in need. As of May 2021, it secured \$71m from investors including ANZ, Forsyth Barr, Generate, Pathfinder, Simplicity and The Clare

Foundation. This will support a build-to-own programme in partnership with the community housing sector.

Rachel Brown, CEO Sustainable Business Network, which hosts and operates the Awards said “collaboration across sectors is absolutely essential in solving systemic failures like the housing crisis Aotearoa faces. It is fantastic to see this working so effectively and with such great buy-in from visionary partners. This will lead to long term change and inspire others too”.

Altogether there were 10 winners and seven commendations for purpose-led businesses, producing products and services that inspire positive choices and create a better future.

Supreme award finalist [Chia Sisters](#) is collaborating to reduce tonnes of carbon emissions in the Nelson area and is using an industry-led model that could be a blueprint for Aotearoa New Zealand to follow. Supreme finalist [All Good](#) has supported the building of a full-service medical centre in Ecuador through its long-term commitment to Fairtrade bananas. Kiwis lap up All Good Fairtrade bananas at a rate of 400,000 bunches per month.

Brown says “We are confronted daily with the impacts of Covid and climate change. The businesses winning sustainability awards tonight have not only recognised that the future of business requires different skills and a strategic sustainable lens, but they have also developed skills to meet these challenges that also sees them serving their communities”.

This year’s Sustainability Superstar, a coveted award for an individual’s work, went to Camden Howitt from multi-award-winning [Sustainable Coastlines](#). Howitt’s dedication and skills make a difference to communities, government policy and our environment every day.

-ENDS-

2021 Sustainable Business Awards winners

TRANSFORMING NEW ZEALAND – SUPREME AWARD

Winner: Community Finance

Finalists: All Good, Chia Sisters

SUSTAINABILITY SUPERSTAR

Sponsored by NZI

Winner: Camden Howitt, Sustainable Coastlines

Commendation: Charmaine Bailie, Kaipatiki Project

CHANGE MAKER

Sponsored by Environmental Protection Authority

Winner: Sophia Olo-Whaanga, Dempsey Wood Civil

OUTSTANDING COLLABORATION

Sponsored by Toitū Envirocare

Winner: Community Finance

Commendation: Piritahi

SOCIAL IMPACTOR

Sponsored by MAS

Winner: Gap Filler

Commendation: Fair Food New Zealand

COMMUNICATING FOR IMPACT

Sponsored by Kind&Co

Winner: Businesses for Climate Action

Commendation: NZ Panels Group

GOING CIRCULAR

Sponsored by Auckland Council

Winner: Citizen

Commendation: Maggie Marilyn

CLIMATE ACTION LEADER

Sponsored by EECA

Winner: Chia Sisters

Commendation: New Zealand Post

CLIMATE ACTION INNOVATOR

Sponsored by Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency

Winner: CoGo

GOOD FOOD

Sponsored by New World

Winner: All Good

RESTORING NATURE

Sponsored by Department of Conservation

Winner: Tahi Estate

Commendation: HealthPost

2021 Sustainable Business Awards – Winners' stories

Camden Howitt, Sustainable Coastlines – winner of Sustainability Superstar Award

Camden Howitt is Co-Founder and Programmes Director of multi award-winning charity Sustainable Coastlines. He is also a founding member of Aotearoa Plastic Pollution Alliance and an Edmund Hillary Fellow. He is a passionate advocate for our oceans and a driving force behind community solutions.

Since 2008, Sustainable Coastlines has delivered large-scale coastal clean-ups, education and data collection activities around Aotearoa New Zealand. Camden leads strategy, fundraising and design. He manages national and international stakeholder relationships. He also raises the profile of the cause through media and speaking opportunities.

A regular contributor to national, regional and global dialogue on marine litter, Camden relentlessly pushes for innovative solutions. He has twice addressed the United Nations at

its headquarters in New York, and presented at the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya.

Camden has devoted 12 years to designing, delivering, refining and scaling Sustainable Coastlines' work to connect more people to nature and inspire positive change. Without his communication and influencing skills, the organisation would not have achieved the level of recognition and influence it has around Aotearoa New Zealand. His dedication makes a difference to communities, government policy and our environment every day.

Sophia Olo-Whaanga, Dempsey Wood Civil – winner of Change Maker Award

Sophia designs systems to eliminate waste. She partners with local organisations and trains operational staff. She drove development of the company's sustainability app. This automates data capture and monitors carbon, waste, water, materials and energy.

Sophia cultivates meaningful and consistent engagement with the community, iwi and hapū. She established Ngātahi, the company's support network. This builds cultural foundations for workforce wellbeing. She launched our Māori Leadership programme (Whakapuāwai) funded by Te Puni Kokiri. Senior staff at the firm have gained cultural confidence through the Tikanga and Te Reo courses she implemented.

She helped develop and launch a Tiriti Policy and Māori engagement Strategic Plan. This aims to ensure equitable outcomes for Māori staff, iwi and hapū partners.

Sophia takes her passion back to her marae. She builds the capabilities of rangatahi (youth) through employment leads and environmental programmes.

Businesses for Climate Action – winner of Communicating for Impact Award

Businesses for Climate Action is led by volunteers with a passion for climate action in Te Taihū (Nelson/Tasman/Marlborough). The organisation encourages and supports Te Taihū businesses to measure and reduce their carbon emissions. It also helps them collaborate and encourage others to follow their lead.

Businesses for Climate Action provides education and tools to help businesses attain and exceed carbon-neutral status. The communications strategy involves workshops, activation groups, high-profile events, case studies, media articles, podcasts and submissions to local and national governments. The volunteers work hard to attract leaders and speakers to the region.

Businesses for Climate Action nurtures links with key businesses and climate players, including Nelson City Council, Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce, Nelson Regional Development Agency, Nelson Tasman Climate Forum, Zero Carbon Nelson Tasman, Te Taihū Intergenerational Strategy, Wakatū Inc, and Project Kōkiri (Covid-19 regional collaboration). To date the team have reached more than 6,000 businesses through their communications.

Gap Filler – winner of Social Impactor Award

Gap Filler is a social enterprise that runs Good Spot, a community-minded car park in central Ōtautahi Christchurch. Good Spot is a partnership with Fletcher Living to grow community on sites awaiting future development as part of residential development in the central city.

This area comprises five blocks that were left vacant as a result of post-quake demolitions. The initiative is bringing life, a sense of new community and energy to rebuilding this part of the city.

Good Spot provides a service (car parking). It has parking attendants on site each morning from Monday to Friday to help out, say hello and foster a sense of community.

Good Spot was created as a local, community-minded model of carparking to grow community and keep profits circulating locally. It aims to be an example of regenerative economics in the way it addresses local issues (unemployment, segregation and gentrification) through a partnership with local organisation Te Whare Roimata.

By employing marginalised people as attendants who have daily interactions with inner-city workers, Good Spot is supporting the creation of community and interactions between people from different socio-economic situations. It has also raised nearly a million dollars for community projects delivered within 500m of the car park, keeping the benefits local.

Citizen – winner of Going Circular Award

A third of all food produced each year is wasted. In Aotearoa New Zealand, food waste creates 400,000 tonnes of carbon emissions annually. In 2020 Citizen set out to reduce food waste by taking surplus and unsold foods and food production by-products and upcycling them to create high quality, great-tasting food and drinks. In the process, it raises awareness of the food waste crisis.

Citizen's first products offered a circular solution to Aotearoa New Zealand's most wasted food: bread. Citizen rescues unsold supermarket bread and uses it to replace a quarter of the malted barley in its craft beer. It makes flour out of brew mash leftover and creates sourdough bread. All products are branded as 'rescued + reworked' upcycled food products.

Citizen collaborates with other organisations. In partnership with Sawmill Brewing, it replaces a quarter of the malted barley in craft beer with rescued, unsold supermarket bread. With Wild Wheat Bakery it makes flour out of brew mash leftover and creates sourdough bread. With Lost and Found Wines it makes Piquette, a light wine-style spritz from leftover winemaking grape pomace.

Since launch, Citizen has rescued 140,000+ slices of bread. It has re-purposed 7,000+ plastic bread bags into fence posts via FuturePost. Citizen's product range now includes four craft beers and two Piquette products (a beverage made using leftover winemaking grape pomace). The collective is working on collaborations with like-minded brands seeking to reduce food waste.

Chia Sisters – winner of Climate Action Leader Award

Chia Sisters makes natural, nutritious drinks at its solar-powered, zero carbon juicery in Nelson. While it has grown by 70% since 2018, emissions have been reduced by 30%. It has achieved zero carbon and climate positive status.

Chia Sisters uses its business as a platform and example to encourage and inspire local businesses to work together on climate solutions and innovations. It says this industry-led model can be used as a blueprint for Aotearoa New Zealand and the world.

As part of Businesses for Climate Action, Chia Sisters has influenced more than 1000 businesses to measure, reduce and offset emissions and build this into business decision-making processes. This has helped reduce carbon emissions in the region by hundreds of tonnes.

The Chia Sisters factory runs on solar power. It is Aotearoa New Zealand's highest rated Certified B-Corp. The owners say the business is 300% more profitable since they set out on their climate leadership journey.

CoGo – winner of Climate Action Innovator Award

CoGo's mission is to help consumers around the world understand the effect their spending has on their emissions.

The business provides consumers with the free CoGo app which calculates their carbon footprint in real-time, linked directly with their spending and lifestyle choices. The aim is to show them where they can have the most impact on reducing their emissions and reward them for making changes.

Specifically, CoGo encourages consumers to reduce meat from their diet, move to vegetarianism or veganism, home compost and buy second-hand.

To date, CoGo has helped 10,000 consumers across Aotearoa New Zealand and the UK with a third going on to reduce their carbon emissions by an average of 40 kilograms per month.

Community Finance – winner of Supreme Award (Transforming NZ Award) and Outstanding Collaboration Award

Community Finance was established in 2019 to bring affordable lending to the community housing sector. It brought together capital from five key stakeholders: The Lindsay Foundation, The Tindall Foundation, The Matua Foundation, Christian Savings and the Wilberforce Foundation.

Community Finance is helping to build new, energy efficient and affordable homes for Kiwis. All homes are built to a minimum of NZ Green Building Council Homestar 7 rating.

Community Finance's Salvation Army Community Bond, a social impact bond, is the first of its kind in Aotearoa New Zealand. It raised \$40m to build 118 apartments and houses over three locations during the Covid crisis. These have housed 150 adults and 59 children.

Community Finance has issued the Aotearoa Pledge. It's a bold vision to raise \$100 million in 2021. It secured cornerstone investment from the Generate KiwiSaver. As of May 2021, \$71m had been secured. Investors included ANZ, Forsyth Barr, Generate, Pathfinder, Simplicity and The Clare Foundation. This will support a build-to-own programme in partnership with the community housing sector.

Community Finance is a collaboration between philanthropic foundations, financial institutions, community housing providers and the Ministry of Housing.

All Good – winner of Good Food Award

All Good Bananas believes in providing New Zealanders with ethically-sourced food that helps others.

The business started in 2010. It now imports and sells more than 400,000 bunches of bananas per month and distributes to the Foodstuffs network and independent retailers.

Its Fairtrade and zero carbon bananas give New Zealanders a tangible way of supporting action on climate change and social injustice. Bananas are New Zealand's most commonly bought grocery item, and All Good Bananas says it's imperative that consumers are given an ethical choice. Presenting such an option motivates other brands to do better.

Eleven years ago All Good made a long-term commitment to a Fairtrade co-operative in Ecuador called 'El Guabo Association of Small Banana Producers'. With All Good's support, El Guabo has built a full-service medical centre providing health checks, emergency response and pharmaceutical support and an institution to support women and girls who have been sexually and physically abused in their homes. All Good also supports 30 schools in Ecuador through its partnership with El Guabo.

Tahi Estate – winner of Restoring Nature Award

Tahi is a private conservation retreat in Northland. When it was bought in 2004 as 780 acres of mostly degraded pasture, only 14 bird species were recorded. Now there are extensive wetlands, recovering dune systems, forests and shrublands. 71 bird species have been recorded recently, 22 of which are rare or endangered. Tahi reinvests 100% of profits directly into conservation and cultural projects.

Tahi has been working with scientists to develop the Bio Value Index (BVI). This is a research-based methodology that allocates carbon, biodiversity and hydro value to individual species, capturing the value they bring to a given ecosystem. Tahi uses BVI to measure the environmental impact of its restoration efforts and also as a tool to guide decision-making in ecosystem recovery projects.

BVI has the potential to guide strategies well beyond Tahi. At present, climate change and biodiversity loss are generally considered independently. Today's policies focus on planting foreign species and monocrops for carbon absorption, such as pine plantations. BVI would quantify the value of ecosystems alongside carbon sequestration to guide decision making in tackling climate change and biodiversity loss together.

Tahi has developed, tested and validated the concept of BVI to enhance its credibility and facilitate its wider adoption. It offers the opportunity for Aotearoa New Zealand to be a world leader in the carbon market.