

UNDER STRICT EMBARGO TO 8PM WEDS 28 MAY 2014

## **BIOENERGY TRAILBLAZER K&L NURSERIES WINS 2014 EECA SUPREME AWARD**

A family-run flower growing operation in Christchurch has won top honours in the 2014 EECA Awards, for a New Zealand-first bioenergy project.

K&L Nurseries in Springston have installed an advanced boiler that runs on their own green waste. Sourced from Europe, the technology is the first of its kind in New Zealand. It's enabled K&L to stop using coal and run solely on renewable, carbon neutral biomass.

The Small to Medium Business Award winner beat nine other category winners to take the Supreme Award for a project the judges called "a splendid example of courage, innovation and excellence."

The project has cut K&L Nurseries' energy costs by \$100,000 a year, and is avoiding around 3,500 tonnes of CO2 emissions a year – giving the business a marketing edge.

Energy and Resources Minister Simon Bridges presented the company with the Supreme Award at the 2014 EECA Awards ceremony last night (subs: Weds 28 May).

K&L Nurseries produces more than two million stems of cut flowers a year, supplying 70% of the South Island's gerberas. A constant source of heat in its glasshouses is crucial to the year-round growing operation.

When examining long-term energy options, owner Paul Loader wanted to lock in low energy costs, and benefit from a marketing edge gained from using renewable energy. Although the Austrian-made boiler was more expensive than other options, it offered far greater flexibility, as it can run on wood and other fuel with up to 60% moisture content – halving the company's energy costs.

The project has also brought numerous environmental benefits. Ash from the boiler can now be used as fertiliser, unlike the coal ash which was toxic and needed careful disposal. The company's eliminated the need to dispose of 100 tonnes of green waste a year – as this is now simply burned as fuel.

The company also installed an innovative in-ground tank to store hot water, further reducing their energy needs. Future plans include investing in a chipper which will enable them to use neighbours' green waste as fuel, creating a win-win solution as it cuts energy costs further while removing the need for waste disposal.

The Small to Medium Business Award is sponsored by Knauf Insulation. K&L Nurseries was also highly commended in the Innovation category, sponsored by Z Energy.

EECA Chief Executive Mike Underhill said although the nursery business was relatively small, it had the potential to spur positive change in other sectors dependent on heat.

“From the outset, K&L Nurseries focused on sharing its success and helping others see the benefits of bioenergy. So while it has delivered sizeable benefits for them, it is also inspiring others, with similar boilers soon to be commissioned. They carried out in-depth research and have shown real long-term vision, with the benefits set to grow. They’re a very worthy winner.

“K&L’s achievement demonstrates you don’t need to be a large corporate to make significant savings from improved energy use. Energy efficiency and renewable energy delivers equally important benefits for smaller businesses.”

The EECA Awards, held every two years, celebrate organisations and individuals that demonstrate excellence in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Collectively, 2014 Awards entrants have saved or generated energy worth around \$100 million over the life of the projects, and have reduced or avoided 200,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

The EECA Awards are presented in partnership with Principal Sponsors Fujitsu General NZ, Opus International Consultants and Vector.

For more about the winning projects see [www.eecabusiness.govt.nz/awards-2014](http://www.eecabusiness.govt.nz/awards-2014)

The 2014 EECA Award Winners: full list

- Supreme winner: K&L Nurseries
- Large Business: Momentive Specialty Chemicals & Energy Plant Solutions
- Small to Medium Business: K&L Nurseries
- Public Sector: Kāpiti Coast District Council / Unitec
- Renewable Energy: Government of Tokelau
- Energy Management: DNZ Property Fund
- Innovation: Momentive Specialty Chemicals & Energy Plant Solutions / Ngati Hine Health Trust
- Community: Kāpiti Coast District Council
- Christchurch Energy Champion: Community Energy Action / Tait Communications
- Energy Leadership: Martin Fryer, Auckland International Airport

ENDS

*Note to Editors:*

*The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) is the Crown agency that encourages, supports, and promotes energy efficiency, energy conservation, and the use of renewable energy in New Zealand. EECA provides information to households through ENERGYWISE™ [www.energywise.govt.nz](http://www.energywise.govt.nz) and to businesses through EECA BUSINESS™ [www.eecabusiness.govt.nz](http://www.eecabusiness.govt.nz)*

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