



About Powerco

New Plymouth-based Powerco is the nation's largest electricity distributor and second-largest gas distributor by network length, supplying power to 320,000 customers and gas to 100,000 customers. It has 310 staff, most working from its headquarters and operations depot in New Plymouth.

What used to happen

An ad hoc approach was taken to waste minimisation. Recycling facilities were available but weren't particularly promoted. In some cases, staff had to go out of their way if they wanted to recycle material – it was easier to bin it.

What changes were made

A voluntary Workplace Sustainability Team was formed in 2009 with the objective of making Powerco a more sustainable and environmentally friendly place to work. The team focuses on three core elements: energy use, waste reduction and sustainable travel. After an initial waste audit, all staff were provided with desktop paper recycling, and colour-coded and clearly labelled recycling and compost bins were placed in all kitchen areas. A commercially sized worm farm was also established at the New Plymouth depot. Other initiatives by the Workplace Sustainability Team have included e-waste collections, a sustainable travel campaign, and involving staff in Keep NZ Beautiful clean-ups.

The outcome

- A 40% reduction in waste to landfill per employee.
- A 37% per cent decrease in carbon emissions per employee.
- A 21% reduction in electricity use.
- A 20% increase in sustainable travel to and from work.
- The recycling of 1.5 tonnes of e-waste collected from staff.
- Up to 70 staff have taken part in annual Keep NZ Beautiful clean-ups.