

# SUSTAINABILITY

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## Join the Evolution

Whether you adhere to the language of science where natural disasters happen because they've always happened, or the mythology of religion where they are acts of God(s), it would seem that in the past couple of years there has been an acceleration in their number and intensity.

Yes, natural disasters – the possibility of which we've been hearing about since we first sat in our scratchy school uniforms and learned of the advantages of doorways in an earthquake – are upon us. That "future" that the preachers, geologists, greenies, and other mad zealots have been warning us about is our new reality.

And there's not much we can do about it other than be ready in case of disaster, because like the biblical version of Armageddon where Jesus comes like a thief in the night (at least I think it was Jesus – my memory of Revelations is hazy), acts of nature tend to catch you with your pants down. Sometimes literally, as the subjects of a planned documentary about people who were on the toilet when the earthquake struck will no doubt be able to attest.

Being prepared, or what we at the UC Sustainability Office like to call Future Proofing, is the subject of a series of lunchtime discussion workshops taking place in the Okeover Community Garden on Tuesdays from April 12.

The discussion topics will be organised around some of the major issues to be highlighted in the recent series of quakes – First 24 Hours, Emergency Kits, Water, Sewerage – but rather than bring in experts, we want Future Proofing to be based on the knowledge gained by the participants. In other words, we want to share our experiences in a format that will help us all gain greater practical awareness and skills.

I'm betting that every single one of us would have invented something over the past few weeks either in response to the immediate crisis or just to make our lives a little easier. The bogs at the rather euphemistically named [showusyourlongdrop.com](http://showusyourlongdrop.com) are testament to our skills at making do with flair and humour, but even in the simplest of ways, improvements are made on a daily basis: the ruler through the handles of cupboard doors to stop food ending up on the already grubby floor; putting buckets under the holes in the guttering when it's raining; tying an old green recycling bin to a skateboard when there's not enough wheelbarrows to go around.

"Kiwis" are of course famed for their ingenuity, although most of us city-dwellers have grown a bit useless over the past couple of generations. Yet we managed, and in a few action-packed weeks our collective DIY gene raised itself a few notches (or whatever it is that genes do – apologies genealogists, but my science gene's a bit of a 'tard).

Which is why we want to get all those great ideas together in the same garden (it's safer than a room) and work out ways we can help each other in implementing them. Just quietly, we're hoping for an Evolution – and we all know what the mythology of that particular belief system hinges on.

So come and join us in our Future Proofing workshops (aka Survival 101) and be amongst the first of the species to adapt.

### FUTURE PROOFING

**When:** Tuesdays 12noon – 1pm

**Where:** Okeover Community Garden, Engineering Road (or Sustainability Office if raining)

**Why:** Because Darwin may have had a point. Bring: lunch, along with pictures, plans, examples etc. of brilliant inspired ideas. Fair Trade coffee, tea and hot chocolate will be available.

#### Topics

The First 24 Hours: April 12, 12–1pm

Emergency Kits: April 19, 12–1pm

Water: April 26, 12–1pm

Sewerage: May 3, 12–1pm

For more information or to register your interest please email: [sharon.mciver@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:sharon.mciver@canterbury.ac.nz)

### ECO-MY-FLAT

The popular eco-my-flat competition where student flats compete to eco up their homes was supposed to start on March 1, but has been postponed until the second and third terms. Now running from May 9 to August 12, the 2011 competition will incorporate an element of survivalism with an extra workshop added on preparing emergency kits and collecting and storing water. We're hoping that our resourceful flats will not only excel in the area of emergency preparation, but will be able to teach us a thing or two as well! If you think your flat could do with an eco-spruce up, and you like the idea of winning prizes, we'll be taking sign-ups from April 18.

Go to [www.sustain.canterbury.ac.nz/ecomylat](http://www.sustain.canterbury.ac.nz/ecomylat) for more information and to sign up to this awesome competition.