

ECO MY FLAT

Prizes include a trip for one of the winning flats to Kaikoura on the TranzScenic train, a stay at the YHA and tickets to Whale Watch, Kaikoura Kayaks, Seal Swim Kaikoura and Dolphin Encounter, with dinner at Hislops Wholefood Café and \$500 off their power account from Community Energy Action. The other winning flat is sent by Intercity to stay at Waihi Bush Organic Farm near Geraldine, with lunch at Verde Café, and a go on Rangitata Rafts.

Sign up at:
sustain.canterbury.ac.nz/ecomyflat

Lush up your pad with eco-my-flat

→ THE “STUDENT FLAT” HAS BEEN A MUCH MALIGNED HABITAT HISTORICALLY, but since 2008, the UC eco-my-flat competition has been helping students lush up their digs in new and interesting ways. Whether competing for great prizes, or reading about it in *Canta* or local papers, eco-my-flat has prompted all sorts of people to think about their lifestyle choices and make changes (some temporary, but many permanent) towards reducing their environmental impact.

Last year I was privileged to be asked to help coordinate eco-my-flat, and I have to say, my involvement seriously expanded my knowledge about sustainable living. At Orientation I tried to convince students to enrol in the competition, even promising all-guy flats that an eco-flat would be a serious chick magnet (I mean, home cooking, clean bathrooms and snuggling under blankets – what’s not to love?).

When the competition started, I visited a diverse sample of student flats, a few of which were enhanced by the aroma of fresh baking. I handed out giveaways at the weekly workshops, and learned something new at each of the discussions where students shared their successes and struggles, and occasionally, their excess garden or foraging produce (which was lucky because I had little time to shop). We tackled the commonplace eco-solutions, along with the less commonplace – such as forgoing showers for the duration, or ensuring that your undies didn’t come from China by making your own.

When the month was up, I helped sort vast amounts of sponsored goods into prize packs. The prize-giving made the crazy weeks worth it as flats – some of whom had previously been ‘eco-virgins’ – proudly claimed their booty.

The second UC eco-my-flat competition had been a success, but the general consensus was that maybe next time it could last a little longer.

You’ll be pleased to know that eco-my-flat 2010 is bigger and better than ever and is running over all of Semester One. To help them get started, students entering the competition will be given plenty of free giveaways, donated by companies including Energy Mad, Bin Inn, the Supershed, King’s Seeds, EnviroSax, Ecostore and Earth Angel, and Cyclops Yoghurt.

So if you want to do something good for yourself – and the planet – then sign up today (you have until February 28), and make your flat into an eco pad (and hottie magnet) to be proud of. ←