



EARTHCHECK

For more information about how EarthCheck can help your business, please email: [andre.russ@earthcheck.org](mailto:andre.russ@earthcheck.org)

EarthCheck Pty Ltd  
PO Box 12149  
George Street  
Queensland 4003  
Australia

P: +61 7 3238 1902  
E: [andre.russ@earthcheck.org](mailto:andre.russ@earthcheck.org)  
W: [www.earthcheck.org](http://www.earthcheck.org)



# OAMARU BLUE PENGUIN COLONY, NEW ZEALAND

The Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony is located between Christchurch and Dunedin, in the South Island of New Zealand. Owned by Waitaki District Council, the colony is Oamaru's largest tourist attraction and receives in excess of 75,000 visitors per year.

Site facilities include retail space, an information display area, parking facilities and penguin viewing facilities. Although facility staff have always been environmentally aware and used environmentally friendly practices, a number of changes have been made to improve the facility's long term sustainability as part of the EarthCheck Program.

The area where the colony is sited was previously a disused rock quarry. The blue penguins began nesting there after it was abandoned in the 1970s and today, some 150 breeding pairs call the quarry home.

The colony requires constant monitoring to guarantee the wellbeing of the surrounding environment. The centre committed to the EarthCheck Program to assist them with environmental management and make more efficient use of the natural resources available to them.

Since 2006, the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony has undergone annual EarthCheck Benchmarking.

Silver Certified, the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony achieved the following benchmark results in 2010:

Energy consumption was 1.6MJ per customer; **92.3% better than Best Practice**

Greenhouse gas emissions was 0.1 kg CO<sub>2</sub>-e per customer; **90% better than Best Practice**

Potable water consumption was 5L per customer; **82.2% better than Best Practice**

Waste sent to landfill was 0.2L per customer; **91.7% better than Best Practice**

Paper products rating was 100 points; **20 points better than Best Practice**

Cleaning products rating was 100 points; **20 points better than Best Practice**

Renewable energy used was **100%**.

## KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

### REDUCING THE USE OF FRESHWATER AND WASTEWATER GENERATION

Several initiatives have been put in place to eliminate excessive water consumption. Management installed low/dual flush toilets in bathroom facilities and showers were fitted with low flow restrictors; as were most taps throughout the property.

Staff members check for leaks and breakages on a weekly basis as this helps to ensure water is not being unnecessarily wasted. As a result the facility achieved a water savings rating of 77.8 points; **27.8 points better than Baseline Level.**

The Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony does not irrigate outdoor green spaces and uses mulch to enhance their gardens. These water saving initiatives have resulted in potable water consumption of 5L per customer; **82.2% better than Best Practice.**

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony operates on an extremely energy efficient system and 100% of the facility's energy is from renewable hydro sources.

To reduce energy consumption, staff and visitors are encouraged to use electrical equipment only when absolutely necessary. They are encouraged to turn lights off when they are not in use, and only use heaters/coolers when it is essential. All computers - with the exception of security servers - are turned off at the wall each night.

Energy-saving light bulbs have been installed throughout the property to



further reduce energy consumption. These simple initiatives were extremely effective, as facilities energy consumption has been measured at 1.6MJ per customer, which is **92.3% better than Best Practice.**

All company vehicles were serviced in 2010, which is at Best Practice Level. These energy and emissions focused initiatives have resulted in a greenhouse gas emissions measurement of 0.1 kg CO<sub>2</sub>-e per customer; **90% better than Best Practice.**

### SOLID WASTE REDUCTION

Waste management is a key factor in long term sustainability and the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony has established an extremely effective waste disposal and recycling system that has resulted in a very small amount of overall waste being sent to landfill.

Key is the separation of plastic, paper, cardboard and general waste into clearly

labelled bins that are located throughout the colony.

The centre also encourages responsible travelling for all tourists who come through the centre, especially in relation to their travel through the country in camper vans.

A recycling agreement has been put in place with a local contractor and this determines what they can pick up to recycle and how often they collect the waste. In 2010, **the proportion of recycled/reused/composted waste was 47.6%.**

Where possible, the colony works with a local waste exchange program to recycle reusable waste throughout the business community. This initiative contributed to a waste recycling rating of 91.7 points; **11.7 points better than Best Practice.**

As a result of these waste minimizing initiatives, the centre measured waste sent to landfill at 0.2L per customer; **91.7% better than Best Practice.**

### SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING TO REDUCE WASTE

Through connections and partnerships with suppliers, a business can greatly improve their sustainability and environmental performance. The Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony purchase environmentally friendly products that have a minimal impact on the environment and result in a minimisation of waste sent to landfill.

Correspondence was sent to all suppliers requesting that they reduce their packaging when sending stock. In the case when packaging must be used, the centre reuses the containers for other functions within the facility. This system reduces the amount of waste generated by the supply chain and encourages other businesses to act sustainably in their practices.



The centre uses only eco-friendly cleaning products such as Green Works, Eco-Store, and Kleen-Air brands. This resulted in a cleaning products rating of 100 points, which is 20 points better than Best Practice. No weed killers, fungal killers, or insecticides are used on the property, resulting in a pesticide products rating of 75 points, which is **25 points better than Baseline Level**.

Eco-friendly and recycled paper products are favoured by the centre, resulting in a paper products rating of 100 points, **20 points better than Best Practice**.

### COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SUPPORT

The Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony is committed to supporting their local community and encouraging environmental awareness outside of the business.

The facility provides formal training to all staff on sustainability issues and practices and offers ATTO tourism training for staff who would like to obtain tour guide qualifications.

The facility supports its local community by employing local contractors to undergo the majority of the service contracts and by purchasing locally made items; such as the ones for sale in the shop. This dedication to the local community secured the centre a community commitment rating of 89%; **29% better than Baseline Level**.

As the centre sits within an historically protected area along the Oamaru Harbour foreshore and so the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony supports and protects natural heritage in a number of ways. They hold an archaeological authority from the Historic Places Trust and report all artefacts found.

The centre also has a staff member who serves on the Heritage Committee and develops all of its facilities in harmony with local preservation principles.

Community support projects include hosting work experience with local high schools and working with the Scout Organisation on service projects. These initiatives contributed to a community contributions rating of 91.3 points, **11.3 points better than Best Practice**.

Regular meetings are held with agents and operators to discuss their activities and to gain feedback. Public meetings are held each year to explain the facility's operations.

The Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony communicates its environmental knowledge to the public through channels such as their website, public meetings, brochures, advertising, interactions with suppliers, and live commentary during evening shows.



A slideshow presentation is displayed at the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony and this includes information about the EarthCheck Program; giving a basic definition of its purpose and displaying the colony's Silver Certification logo. Additionally, the EarthCheck logo is included on all paperwork and advertisements.

The Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony cares for the local environment and strives to have a minimal impact on its surrounds.

One way in which they do this is by incorporating natural building materials into the design and construction of facilities. An example of this is the locally quarried Oamaru Stone, which features in grounds landscaping.

The colony has **set aside 66.7% of their property for habitat conservation**. Native plants feature and planning programs focus on reinstating native species. The property has a fence around the perimeter to protect the penguins and traps are set to capture predators such as wild cats, stoats and ferrets.

