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WETLANDS PLAN APPROVED

18/24—Nutrient-reducing floating wetlands may be created for Rotorua lakes suffering water-quality issues, after a deal between Environment Bay of Plenty and Te Arawa Lakes Trust.

The wetlands would help to reduce nutrients by enabling nitrogen in the water to convert to gaseous nitrogen, which can be released into the air.

STRETCHING OUT YOUR DOLLAR

10/14—Kiwis suffering from “recession depression” are urged not to blow the extra cash in their pay packets from tax cuts, which come on the back of latest figures from the Reserve Bank and Statistics New Zealand showing we’re finally taking control of our finances.

Retirement Commissioner Diana Crossan told earners: “Don’t let the extra money slip through your fingers. Find out how much you’ll be getting and make a conscious decision about what to do with it.”

Crossan’s plea for workers to make their tax cuts work for them - by applying it to knocking down debt or saving an emergency fund - comes at the same time as signs that New Zealanders’ love affair with credit has already waned.

Reserve Bank and Statistics New Zealand data for total outstandings on all cards in February continues a dramatic softening of credit card outstandings over the past eight years.

Growth peaked at more than 20 per cent in February 2001 and sits now at just over 3 per cent.

Stuart McKinlay, New Zealand manager for MasterCard, says this shows cardholders are increasingly using their credit cards as payment tools, not as a way of borrowing.

Declining credit card billings reflect consumers consciously changing their spending behaviour, choosing to use credit cards less and debit cards more.

Combined with a continuing cardholder trend towards reducing revolving debt levels, “we are seeing a

WETLANDS PLAN APPROVED

8/12—Nutrient-reducing floating wetlands may be created for Rotorua lakes suffering water-quality issues, after a deal between Environment Bay of Plenty and Te Arawa Lakes Trust.

The wetlands would help to reduce nutrients by enabling nitrogen in the water to convert to gaseous nitrogen, which can be released into the air.

Rotorua Lakes programme manager Andy Bruere welcomed the deal, saying it would simplify the approval process for groups creating such wetlands.

Te Arawa Lakes Trust chairman Toby Curtis said it was a non-intrusive and environmentally friendly way of addressing lakes’ water-quality issues.

The National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (Niwa) recently trialled the wetlands for Environment Bay of Plenty, and two demonstration wetlands were built at Lake Rotoehu.

NZ TOPS IN ECO PROJECTS

Eight New Zealand conservation projects have been named among the best in Australasia after an 18-month search by a specialist panel.

A panel set up by the journal of the Ecological Society of Australia - Ecological Management & Restoration - and the Society for Ecological Restoration International named 25 top ecological restoration projects in Australia and New Zealand.

They include Maungatautari ecological island, Wellington’s Karori sanctuary and Tiritiri Matangi island near Auckland.

Professor Bruce Clarkson of Waikato University, the New Zealand representative on the selection panel, said the result was impressive given the relatively small size of the country.