

The Greenspace – *a functional, friendly event environment*

The Greenspace provides a fresh environment for fresh thinking.

By **MARY HOLMES**
Wintec Student

Annie Perkins and Dave Campbell created. The Greenspace a service that stimulates learning to help clients achieve positive change.

The specially designed business venue is helping the environment as well as helping others.

The Greenspace on Te Aroha Street, Hamilton East is far enough away, but still within walking distance, of the busy city centre. With plenty of off-street parking and a quiet courtyard, the comfortable, natural surroundings are a peaceful but invigorating environment for inspiring thinking.

Annie set up the venue as part of her existing consultancy business, Groundwork Associates Limited. They needed a good meeting room for their own clients so utilised the area to make The Greenspace into a commercial function centre. Now she can provide her business with a diversified income so it is not solely reliant on consultancy.

"Staff can help on both things, it's a great way of utilising a great team," said Annie.

It took a year to renovate the house to the standard it is today. Annie and Dave wanted to keep the character of the 1930s bungalow but use sustainable materials.

"It's unique. An old bungalow renovated to a high standard and made greener at the same time ... There aren't many venues in an old renovated house. Most of them are more corporate. It feels comfortable." And Annie says that really encourages people to progress.

Some of the character of the house is kept in the old light fittings where they replaced the bulbs with energy efficient ones.

Natural light helps to reduce power consumption and replacing dark glass to make use of natural light was an important feature of their renovation work.

Annie says although it looks like many trees have gone, they put in a lot more than they took out.

They built an extension around an old tree and included a vege garden at the back of the property which she is now looking to extend.

"We salvaged a lot of timber and tried to minimise what we sent to the land fill," said Annie. The timber from the

trees they cut down made the large wooden tables in their meeting rooms. The windows were made locally and are double glazed to keep heat in.

"We deliberately didn't use air conditioning, instead we have fans."

At The Greenspace they are happy to host anybody and everybody. The venue has space for 16 people in their board room or they can host 20-24 people as a cafe-style training venue.

At The Greenspace they are very flexible. They work towards helping their clients have the best possible experience.

The Greenspace is taking part in a University of Waikato strategic analysis on its carbon footprint. Energy efficiency is important at The Greenspace.

They collect rain water off the roof and can store 200 litres of water to feed the gardens and flush the toilets which are their highest demands for water.

They use less water than the Hamilton City Council's minimum usage charge for meters. Annie raised the issue with the council to persuade them to drop the minimum which should encourage people to use less.

Their waste management policy includes compost and recycling systems and means they have less than one black rubbish sack a month. Seventy



THE GREENSPACE TEAM from left to right: Annie Perkins, Bonny Adams, Daryne Begbie and Maureen Soanes.

percent of The Greenspace rubbish is compost. Annie says compost is one of the best things you can do for the planet.

They created an indoor-outdoor flow which utilises the section. Annie encourages people to get outside during breaks and pick fresh herbs out of the garden.

"It's a chance to hear the birds," she said. Business meetings can be taken outside the four walls and into nature.

Annie understands the right environment is important in business. The Greenspace is unlike other meeting rooms, where people can get off site and concentrate on their business in a comfortable, natural environment.

She says your working environment affects the ability to do good work.

"People say that because

it's out of the city, it makes them feel like they are escaping the city."

The eco-friendly function centre has high-tech features on-site, making this place stand out from other conference venues where you may have to supply them.

They also offer services to assist you in your business, including staff that can help run meetings, take notes and write minutes. Annie wants to provide a complete service.

She says she has an entrepreneurial tendency. "I enjoy running my own business, it suits me really well. I am really passionate about what we do."

Her family is in America, so she thinks of her work community as a surrogate family.

Annie encourages minimisation within her workplace and says the trick with com-

post and power efficiency is to make it really easy to use so it's not hard to do the right thing.

The Greenspace shows you can make a difference to the environment by taking time to plan an eco-friendly business. Small things like changing to eco-friendly light bulbs and having double glazing can save on power costs.

By having a compost bin and an efficient recycling system you can significantly reduce waste.

The Greenspace is a functional, modern setting for any business gathering with a friendly welcoming environment it is the ideal place for any event.

For more information on The Greenspace,
Phone: +64 7 855 7163
Email: info@groundworkassociates.co.nz