

products

Changing The Present

"Changing the World, One Gift at a Time," <http://ChangingThePresent.org> allows you to protect an acre of the rainforest, invest in a sanitation programme or promote environmental education. You can invest in environmental research, fund a lawyer defending land rights or help fight climate change. And that's just on the environment. ChangingThePresent offers something for virtually any cause.

ChangingThePresent.org



Plantic



"Changing the nature of plastics" is the slogan of Plantic, an Australian based biodegradable materials technology company. Plantic Technologies has developed an entirely biodegradable, water soluble and organic alternative to conventional plastics based on non-genetically modified corn. One its latest uses was on So Organic Easter Eggs from Sainsbury. According to an article in The London Times, Sainsbury's use of this new bioresponsible packaging could save seven tonnes in landfill waste.

www.plantic.com.au

Eco Kettle

According to the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA): "If everyone boiled only the water they needed to make a cup of tea instead of 'filling' the kettle every time, we could save enough electricity to run practically all the street lighting in the U.K." The Eco Kettle has a patented dual reservoir, one of which holds 1.5 litres of water, along with a measuring button which allows any quantity — from a single cupful to full capacity — to be released into a separate boiling chamber, saving consumers up to 30 per cent of energy compared with a normal kettle. The kettle has a 3 kilowatt stainless steel concealed element, a washable limescale filter, and a locking lid.

www.ecokettle.com



Smile



The Sustainable Model in Lighting for Everyone (SMILE) project, spearheaded by Royal Philips Electronics, aims to provide affordable, high-quality, energy-efficient lighting where it is most needed. Two lighting solutions are the heart of SMILE: a rechargeable portable lantern, and a hand-cranked LED flashlight. In partnership with UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize winner Development Alternatives, Development of Humane Action Foundation and MART Rural Solutions, Philips is developing a business model that will allow families to light their homes without creating indoor air pollution or risking fire. Currently available in four Indian States, the programme will soon be rolled out to eight more. The products also benefit shopkeepers, night fishermen, and children studying at home.

www.philips.com/About/sustainability/Section-15220/article-16680.html

TracElite



Illegal logging is both big business and a major contributor to climate change. Developed by the Tropical Forest Trust, TracElite is a global computerized system that tracks wood from stump to store aiding the battle against illegal logging and helping consumers choose sustainable products. Under the system, which has been tested in Indonesia, a tree destined for legal felling is given a unique barcode identifying its type and location, which it carries all through the process from forest to furniture. When the barcode is scanned, a server in London verifies the information. Because the system functions via the Internet, it is always on. Wholesalers and retailers can act immediately to identify problems before products containing wood of unknown origin are manufactured, packaged and shipped.

www.tracelite.com

Hybrid school bus

One of the United States most enduring symbols — the school bus — is getting a makeover thanks to IC Corporation, USA's largest school bus manufacturer, and Enova Systems, a leading provider of hybrid drive systems. As a result of an initiative called the Plug-In Hybrid Electric School Bus Project, 19 hybrid buses have been awarded to states around the country by Advanced Energy, a non-profit corporation that initiated a buyer's consortium of school districts, state energy agencies and student transportation providers. The new hybrid school bus technology could reduce emissions by 90 per cent. An added benefit: as school buses are generally not air conditioned, their windows are commonly open in warm weather. Children are therefore exposed to diesel exhaust during pickup and drop-off. The hybrid system promises reduced exposure diesel particulate matter.

www.enovasystems.com/



Light relief



Australian Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull made global headlines in February 2007 when he announced that Australia would phase out incandescent light bulbs in a bid to curb greenhouse gas emissions. Yellow incandescent bulbs, which have been in use virtually unchanged since their invention in the 19th century, will be replaced by more efficient compact fluorescent bulbs by 2009. Approximately 95 per cent of the power consumed by an incandescent light bulb is emitted as heat, rather than as visible light. With less than 5 per cent efficiency, an incandescent light bulb is about one quarter as efficient as a fluorescent lamp, which is about 20 per cent efficient. Banning incandescent bulbs could cut 800,000 tonnes of carbon from Australia's current emissions by 2012 and lower household lighting costs by 66 per cent.

<http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/env/2007/pubs/mr23apr07.pdf>