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Towards an Informed Public

Today Statistics New Zealand takes an important step forward in measuring sustainable development, with the publication of their report *Measuring New Zealand's Progress Using a Sustainable Development Approach: 2008*.

At the centre of the Statistics New Zealand report is a set of diverse indicators against which progress towards sustainability can be measured. Chief Executive of the Sustainable Future Institute, Wendy McGuinness, strongly supports this initiative, saying 'in times when most institutions are focusing on what is urgent, it is encouraging to see Statistics New Zealand working hard on what is important; a differentiation we address in our Think Piece 8, Magnifying Hope and Reducing Fear'.

'For democracy to work', she says, 'New Zealand must have an informed public. Statistics New Zealand's latest report provides a set of indicators aimed at mirroring New Zealand's performance; allowing readers to not only understand where we have been in 2008, but providing a base for a joint conversation on where we are headed.'

Mrs McGuinness says; 'One of the key findings of a recent report published by the Sustainable Future Institute, *Four Futures for New Zealand in 2058*, was the extent to which New Zealanders can shape the future. This means timely, trusted, complete and relevant information is needed on a regular basis'. She says 'We are clearly in for tough times ahead, and future decisions will be all the more easy to implement provided everyone understands the nature of the problem and supports the proposed solution.'

As one of a number of members of the advisory group to the Statistics New Zealand project, the Sustainable Future Institute is pleased to see this information being made available in a comprehensive, relevant, easy to read and transparent manner— what it believes is a New Zealand first. This information, ideally benchmarked over time, will act as a useful marker to measure progress over time for all New Zealanders, now and in the future.

'We manage what we measure, and as such, Statistics New Zealand is leading the way by putting the spotlight on New Zealand's long-term future', says Mrs McGuinness.

The Sustainable Future Institute is an independent think tank specialising in research and policy analysis. Based in Wellington, The Institute aims to provide relevant, accurate and comprehensive information, accessible by all New Zealanders. More information and publications can be found at www.sustainablefuture.info.

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