

25 March 2011

Embargoed until 5pm, March 25th

NZ companies shine in Packaging Awards

Small and medium-sized New Zealand businesses have dominated the shortlist of eight products for the Unpackit Best Packaging Awards, released today at 5pm.

In contrast, the eight Worst Packaging Awards finalists are all large companies, mostly based overseas.

The finalists were chosen from over 100 public nominations.

Unpackit spokesperson Sophie Ward said the shortlists showed that multi-nationals could learn a lesson from the smaller local firms when it came to packaging.

“The Worst Packaging Awards shortlist features several so-called convenience foods which create a ridiculous amount of waste for a snack or small meal,” she said.

That includes Healtheries Rice Rounds, Sunsweet Individually Wrapped Prunes and Sealord Deli-menu. *(Full list of finalists at the end of press release).*

Brother Ink Cartridges and Oral Braun Toothbrush Heads also made the list for their excessive, non-recyclable packaging. Both were nominated more than once, with nominators mentioning the “annoyance factor” – not only do they create lots of waste but the packaging is really hard to get into.

Corn double wrapped in plastic also made the Worst shortlist.

In contrast, Ms Ward said the companies on the Best shortlists had all put some serious thought into packaging and what happens to it at the end of its life.

“These companies really nailed their packaging. Their packaging solutions are all different, depending on the needs of their product, but they are all minimal, waste-reducing and recyclable.

“Several finalists used cardboard containing a high proportion of recycled material, which helps to create a high-quality market for recycled cardboard,” she said.

Other finalists, the Ideal Cup and Rethink reusable bags, turned packaging into a product. Both products provide an alternative to disposable packaging: the single-use coffee cup and the plastic bag.

“We were happy that two classics also made the Best Awards shortlist,” said Ms Ward. The humble egg carton and the swap-a-crate have been around forever, but they’re still doing a great job.

Ms Ward said many of the finalists in the Best Packaging Award followed through on their commitment to good packaging with great labelling.

“Labelling sounds a bit boring, but it’s really key. There’s no point using compostable or recyclable packaging if people don’t know what to do with it once they’ve unwrapped the product.”

Ms Ward said several other New Zealand firms with innovative packaging were close to making the short-list for the Best Awards, but were let down by their labelling.

The shortlists are now up on the www.unpackit.org website. The winners will be chosen by public vote.

The Unpackit Roadshow of Joy leaves Wanaka on Tuesday 29th March to tour the country and encourage people to vote for the Best and Worst Packaging Award. For a full itinerary, please go to www.unpackit.org

Dates:

- Public voting for awards runs from March 25th until April 29th.
- March 29th, Unpackit Roadshow of Joy leaves Wanaka
- April 21st, last performance of Unpackit Roadshow
- Winners of awards will be announced May 6th.

ENDS

For photos of products on the Unpackit Packaging Awards shortlist, please contact Gina.

For more information, please contact:

Sophie Ward (spokesperson): (03) 443 8606 ext 9 or 021 0239 5498,
sophie@wanakawastebusters.co.nz

Gina Dempster (communications) (03) 443 8606 ext 9 or 027 443 7116,
gina@wanakawastebusters.co.nz

The Unpackit Packaging Awards and website are part of the Demystifying Packaging Choices project designed to help consumers make better packaging choices.

The project has received financial support from the Waste Minimisation Fund, which is administered by the Ministry for the Environment. The Ministry for the Environment does not necessarily endorse or support the content of this press release or the website.

Wanaka Wastebusters is a community enterprise set up by the Wanaka community ten years ago. Our work includes recycling, reuse and education for sustainability services. All surpluses are put back into our services with the vision of achieving a 70 percent resource recovery target for our community by 2014.

Shortlist follows.

Finalists in the Unpackit Best Packaging Award

Potatopak (Blenheim)

Plates and bowls for take-away food made from potato starch (a waste stream). Potatopak containers can be home-composted, or fed to pigs, birds, fish or worms.

Kokako Organic Fairtrade Drinking Chocolate (Auckland)

Box made from recycled cardboard, with cellophane box inside. Labelling says “The bag in here is made from wood pulp and is home compostable. Throw the box in your recycling and the bag in your compost. Too easy.”

Egg Carton from Independent Egg Producers (North Island co-op)

A humble classic which has successfully protected a fragile product for years, made from recycled cardboard pulp and re-used in many places.

Ideal Cup (Wellington)

New Zealand designed re-usable coffee cup which fits under standard coffee machines. All plastic components can be recycled.

Speights Swap-a-crate (Dunedin)

Another classic which deserves to make a come-back. A deposit is paid when the first crate is bought, which ensures empty bottles are returned for refilling over and over.

Wishbone 3-in-1 bike (Wellington)

Combines traditional packaging (cardboard box) with modern attitudes (packaging is printed for kids to play with it, 75% recycled material, cotton bag for extras).

Clearwater Yoghurt (Geraldine)

Go the extra mile by collecting used containers from suppliers and local consumers to make sure they get recycled. State this clearly on the label with their contact details. High quality plastic container for re-use at home, clearly marked for number 5 recycling.

Rethink (Auckland)

Sell reusable organic cotton bags and have worked with supermarkets to incorporate their bags into the check-out system, meaning the weight is automatically deducted.

Finalists in the Unpackit Worst Packaging Award

Cedenco Prepack Corn on the Cob

Corn on the cob wrapped in two layers of non-recyclable plastic.

Sunsweet Individually Wrapped Prunes

Each prune is wrapped individually in a non-recyclable wrapper. The outer packet is a non-recyclable tube, with an unlabelled plastic lid. The outer layer is wrapped in shrink-wrap plastic.

Brother Ink Cartridges

Three ink cartridges each wrapped in a plastic bag and a cardboard box, and all packaged together in a large non-recyclable plastic pack. The hard-to-get-into annoyance factor made this a popular nomination.

Oral B Braun Toothbrush Heads

Similar packaging to above, including the annoyance factor. Individually wrapped toothbrush heads, in PET recyclable plastic which is not marked with NZ standard recycling label. All contained in larger non-recyclable plastic container with cardboard inserts.

Sealord Deli-menu

Six non-recyclable pieces of packaging for a small bowl of tuna. Only one piece of plastic is labelled with a recycling triangle, but it is contaminated by two other materials: a brass ring and a wrapper made from a different grade of plastic.

Re-usable bag in meat-tray

Packaging or art? Prior to being nominated in the Unpackaging Awards, this reusable bag packaged in a meat-tray was displayed on the nominator's wall as an ironic statement on a "throw-away" culture.

Healtheries Rice Rounds

The rise of the multi-pack is responsible for an upsurge in packaging rubbish which many schools are combating with packaging-free lunch policies. Each Rice Rounds snack is packaged in its own bag with a non-recyclable plastic base.

Cadbury's Drinking Chocolate

Comes in a non-recyclable composite 'can' made from cardboard and foil. Plastic lid is labelled and can be recycled. This product used to come in a cardboard box. Consumers don't have a choice of packaging if they want to buy this brand of drinking chocolate.