

SUSTAINABILITY

IRL has embraced the government's prioritisation of environmental sustainability as an important goal for Crown Agencies. Sustainability is reflected in IRL research programmes such as our energy research and we also strive to achieve environmental sustainability in other aspects of our activities and operations.

Energy initiatives

IRL is a member of EECA's Energywise Company scheme and adheres to its principles. Our measures to save and make the most effective use of energy include:

- effective use of electricity supply through voltage smoothing, load shedding and automatic peak load minimisation
- instilling a culture among staff of turning off electrical devices when not required
- applying a building management system where energy-hungry equipment is required outside core hours
- applying a detailed but flexible plant and equipment shutdown policy over long holiday periods
- using video linkages, where appropriate, in lieu of air travel.

Environmental protection

We have put in place policies to protect the environment by taking care in the use and disposal of waste substances and the release of emissions. These include:

- careful liquid disposal practices to avoid water pollution
- containing liquid chemical waste in holding tanks and treating it to ensure it meets local authority standards before releasing it through approved trade waste outlets
- maintaining up-to-date contingency plans for any accidental discharges of pollutants
- careful, segregated storage of dangerous goods and containment of biological materials
- disposing of any dangerous chemicals and asbestos through licensed specialist companies
- maintaining spill-kits and solvent recovery drums on site for containing any spillage or leaking containers
- recycling solvents used in laboratories together with paper and cardboard, glass and plastics
- responsibly disposing of computers and computer screens through recognised trade outlets.

The Waiwhetu Stream borders the IRL Wellington site and we are represented on both the Waiwhetu Stream Working Group and the Hutt City/Greater Wellington Regional Council Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Committee. Those committees have been working with the Greater Wellington and Hutt City Councils to clean up the stream, which is highly contaminated by undiluted and untreated industrial discharges which were pumped directly into the stream up until 1978, when a trade waste sewer was installed. During the year, a \$13.5m contract was let by Hutt City Council to remove contaminated sediment from the stream. The work will also help protect the area from floods such as the one that swept through the community in 2004.

IRL has also been undergoing a riparian planting programme along the stream bank to remove noxious weeds, minimise erosion and restore traditional vegetation.