

Environment

## Athletes compete for green titles

By Eloise Gibson 4:00 AM Friday Feb 26, 2010

Olympian Barbara Kendall saved 33 per cent on transport by replacing her old Toyota Landcruiser for a more efficient and carbon-friendly Hyundai diesel i30 car. Photo / Dean Purcell Shrink

Olympian Barbara Kendall saved 33 per cent on transport by replacing her old Toyota Landcruiser for a more efficient and carbon-friendly Hyundai diesel i30 car. Photo / Dean PurcellShe ditched the gas-guzzling 4WD, replaced her fridge and changed all of her lightbulbs.

But Barbara Kendall's hopes of winning carbon-saving gold in the Project Litefoot competition have been trounced by the Evers-Swindell twins, after Georgina slashed 40 per cent from her personal carbon footprint.

The rowing gold medal-winning sisters (now Georgina Earl and Caroline Meyer since their marriages) and the Olympic boardsailor are among seven top sportspeople vying for the title of lightest carbon footprint.



All Black Conrad Smith topped the home energy table by insulating his floor and ceiling, and cricketer Brendon McCullum took out the private transport category by walking the school run and getting a more fuel-efficient car.

Kendall was second in both categories - but ended up last overall after a couple of trips to the Pacific Islands saw her carbon footprint grow overall between 2008 and last year.

The athletes' CO2 output was rigorously counted over two years by auditors at Landcare Research who have access to their power bills, fuel receipts, flight boarding passes and even the number of rubbish bags they put out each week.

Kendall managed to shave 28 per cent off her power use, without giving up the family spa pool, by switching lightbulbs and the fridge for more energy-efficient ones.

She saved 33 per cent on private transport use by switching from the family's old diesel Toyota Land Cruiser to a more fuel-efficient Hyundai diesel car - keeping a more efficient SUV for when they need to tow her boardsailing gear.

The rowing twins used energy-efficient lightbulbs and other appliances, solar water-heating and a diesel car.

Competition co-ordinator Hamish Reid said the idea was to harness sportspeople's competitive spirits to show others there were easy ways to cut energy and fuel use.

Kendall said nothing in her family's way of life had changed. "We've had a spa pool running the whole time so it's not as though we are sacrificing pleasures."

The stars' professional travel commitments do not count towards their totals. Instead, Mr Reid hopes to get sporting bodies such as the Rugby Union to reduce or offset these on behalf of their teams.

The next stage of the project is to get the athletes, who also include surfer Daniel Kereopa and the project co-founder, golf pro Michael Campbell, leading sports clubs and work places in a wider competition to lower their carbon footprints.

Mr Reid said that in three years, the project aimed to cut one million tonnes of carbon dioxide from New Zealand's output - about 2 per cent of the net total.

If every New Zealander saved as much as the seven athletes did last year, it would achieve 28 per cent of New Zealand's lower-end greenhouse gas emissions reduction target (of 10 per cent) in a single year, he said.

New Zealand has pledged to cut emissions by 10 to 20 per cent by 2020.

More details and a basic emissions calculator for your household are available at [www.projectlitefoot.org](http://www.projectlitefoot.org)

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