

Caring for planet

A Whakatane-based company is the first in New Zealand to join an initiative that boosts environmental education in schools.

Alpha Pipelines owner Damian Lawsen has signed up as an official supporter of the nationwide Paper4trees programme, which helps school children plant trees and minimise waste.

Mr Lawsen's company already contributes to the programme by providing a free tree delivery service to 53 schools in the Whakatane-Opotiki-Kawerau area. Participating schools are encouraged to recycle and their efforts are rewarded with gifts of trees to plant in their community.

When the trust that runs the programme introduced 'supporter' packages — where firms that don't have the budget for major sponsorship can still donate up to \$360 — Mr Lawsen leaped at the chance to assist further.

"What these people do, helping schools recycle and rewarding them with trees, it just makes so much sense to me," he says.

"It's educating kids so we've got an upcoming generation that's hopefully going to take better care of this planet. And now that I'm a granddad, it's even more important to look at the future."

Mr Lawsen's company supplies both products and advice for



Damian Lawsen with his grandson Corey Kareko.

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water and wastewater-related projects, providing everything from tanks and pipes to technical advice. Latterly, he has focussed on working with remote communities to upgrade or install water treatment systems.

"A lot of my job is about helping people, empowering them, finding smart solutions which is why our involvement with Paper4trees makes so much sense — we believe in the same things."