

Zero Waste Update

August 2002, Issue 26

Please pass on

Mission Statement: "To encourage and motivate all sectors of New Zealand society to work towards a target of zero waste."

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Extended Producer Responsibility: Deposit Refund Systems

The principal goal of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is sustainable development through environmentally responsible product development and recovery. It aims to push responsibility for wasted resources back up the pipe. Producers are encouraged to prevent pollution and curb resource and energy use at each stage of the product life-cycle - from changes in product design and process technology, to recovery at the end of a products' life.

EPR initiatives generally involve either a voluntary system where industry takes the initiative, or a mandatory system enacted by government legislation.

Worldwide, a number of tools are currently being employed to shift responsibility for product and packaging waste from government and taxpayers to producers and consumers.

The deposit refund system for refillable glass beer and soft drink bottles, adopted by the beverage industry in the USA nearly 100 years ago, is perhaps the earliest form of EPR.

Deposit refund systems encourage reuse and recycling therefore conserving resources, reducing litter, providing financial incentives to the consumer to return the product or package and creating an infrastructure for its collection and recycling.

There are a number of countries that have enacted Container Deposit Legislation (CDL) as a means to increase recovery rates. The most well known of these are in **North America**, with ten US States

and eight Canadian provinces having implemented CDL, leading to container recovery rates of at least 80%. The 'Bottle Bill' campaign was recently revived in the USA with the Hawa'ii Bottle Bill being legislated in July, making it the eleventh US state to have one.

Nine countries within **Europe** have embraced CDL:

Germany was the most recent country to impose deposits on beverage containers and this will take effect from January 2003;

Sweden requires that aluminium cans must be recycled at a rate of 90% or face being banned. The development and implementation of the system has been left up to industry.

Japan, Korea and Taiwan have taken the lead in Asia and **South Australia** is the only state in Australia to have fully realised the potential of CDL combined with kerbside collection schemes.

In **New Zealand**, the Ministry for the Environment is developing various economic instruments which could "fund waste minimisation and change wasting behaviour". However, CDL features low down on the Ministry's list and is unlikely to shift unless public pressure increases. Despite New Zealand being a small country with a widely dispersed population opportunities exist for CDL to be implemented. Small scale local take-back schemes are in existence, such as Beerworks in Wanaka and nationally the Associated Bottle Company operate the 'swap-a-crate' scheme for 745ml beer bottles.

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lucy@zerowaste.co.nz

"Litter is the first place people see the growing bottle and can waste problem. While kerbside programmes provide a convenient service, they do nothing to address litter concerns or the growing trend towards purchasing beverages away from home", Lance King, Container Recycling Institute.

Unbelievable facts about aluminium can wasting in the USA

- Since 1990, Americans wasted over 7 million tons of cans: enough to build over 300,000 Boeing 737 jet airplanes.
- Had it been recycled this metal would have had a market value of US\$7 billion.
- In 2001, 759,000 tons of cans weren't recycled - more metal than was used in all transportation applications nationally.
- Aluminium can recycling decreased by just over 15% from 1992 to 2001
- About 3 million tons of greenhouse gases were emitted last year just to replace the 50 billion cans wasted.

Source: The Container Recycling Institute, www.container-recycling.org.



The full report on deposit return systems will be available shortly from the Zero Waste Office. If you would like to be put on the mailing list for this, please contact lucy@zerowaste.co.nz.

For further information, also go to www.bottlebill.info, www.grrn.org & www.ilsr.org.

Guest Column



Pat Franklin,
Executive Director,
Container Recycling
Institute,
USA

'Zero Waste for Beverage Containers: You can't get there without deposits'

Beverage bottles and cans are piling up in landfills and along roadsides as recycling rates in the U.S. continue to drop. Last year Americans trashed an estimated 120 billion glass, aluminium and plastic beverage containers, 50 billion of which were aluminium cans. Yes, unbelievably, half of the aluminium beverage cans sold in the United States are not being recycled. The 49.2 % recycling rate for aluminium cans in 2001 was 6 % lower than the 2000 rate and more than 15 % lower than the rate in 1992. When the most recyclable, most valuable material in the recycling bin drops below 50 %, you know we're a long way from zero waste in America.

Ironically, a system exists that can reverse this wasting trend and bring us "darn close to zero waste". The system is one that requires refundable deposits on beverage containers. Modeled after the original deposit system invented by the beer and soft drink industries to retrieve their empty, refillable bottles, the deposit system provides consumers with a financial incentive to recycle.

The fact that beverage bottles and cans in the 10 'deposit states' are recycled at rates that are two to three times the rates in the 40 'non-deposit' states, is proof that deposits work. Furthermore, unlike municipal kerbside recycling programmes that are funded by local government and taxpayers, deposit systems are funded by producers and consumers. But existing and proposed deposit systems or 'bottle bills' continue to be attacked across the country by the well-financed and politically powerful beverage industry lobby. They oppose container deposits because it's a system that makes beverage producers responsible for their wasteful packaging.

On Earth Day, 2002, Sen. Jim Jeffords, a U.S. Senator representing the state of Vermont, introduced a bill that would extend the deposit system to all 50 states and make producers responsible for their beverage container waste. The Beverage Producer Responsibility Act sets a performance standard for beverage producers of 80% recycling for all of their beverage cans and bottles and requires a 10-cent deposit on the containers. The beverage industry is at liberty to devise the most efficient system possible.

Achieving the 80% recycling rate would save the equivalent of 42 million barrels of oil over a ten-year period—enough to provide the electricity needs of 7 million households for one year. And, we'd be a lot closer to 'zero waste than we are today.

For more information go to www.container-recycling.org. We also have copies of the CRI's latest newsletter. Please contact Lu for more details, lucy@zerowaste.co.nz.

Community News

Wanaka Wastebusters



The beauty of the natural environment inspires the people who reside or visit Wanaka. In recent years this small rural centre of Central Otago, which services the Upper Clutha region has become a thriving tourist resort town. The population of Queenstown and outlying towns (including tourists) is about 19,000. For Wanaka, it is about 6,500 (census 2001). This fluctuates with the different tourist seasons.



Cardboard loadout

Due to a lack of a waste minimisation programme or green waste and recycling depots in the district, a public meeting was held in September 1999 that inspired local people to form a waste minimisation committee.

Wanaka Wastebusters (WW) was up and running in just over a year.

After becoming an incorporated society, writing a constitution and business plan and submitting applications for funding WW opened the doors of its 20 x 10 metre building in September 2000. They received a huge amount of support from over 200 local volunteers as well as a wide range of funding bodies including Queenstown-Lakes District Council (QLDC) and Zero Waste New Zealand Trust.

The challenges are not small - WW is the furthest recycling centre from a port in New Zealand and freight costs make glass recycling prohibitive. Despite operating at a \$6000 loss this year (\$2000 less than the previous year) WW made over \$70,000 from sales in their second hand shop alone.

WW now has representation on the QLDC's working party that is forming a waste management strategy and aims to include targets as per the Ministry for the Environment's National Waste Strategy, a kerbside collection and Zero Waste goal.

WW is a success story for this community with a realistic approach and commitment to preserving the Upper Clutha environment.

For more details contact Jude Battson on 03 443 1602 or jude@watchdog.net.nz

Accountants tackle sustainability

The Sustainability Working Group was set up in October 2001 with the primary focus of raising awareness and increasing the involvement of the 28,000 members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of New Zealand; to show there is much more to business than accounting, reporting and verification.

A steady trickle of people are being attracted to the working group; not all of whom are accountants and it is still very much 'early days'.

The Group aims to engender change within organisations by complementing other groups working in this area and helping them get their message out.

As a result of the Group's activity the Institute has set up a Task Force on Sustainable Development Reporting. Its findings will be considered at the Institute's Council AGM in October.

As part of its activities the Group has monthly meetings. A video link between Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch (Hamilton can also be hooked in) is used. Presentations have covered Zero Waste, the 'Take, Make, Waste' model, triple bottom line reports and reporting and the Natural Step.

The Group produces a fortnightly newsletter, 'News and Views' which complement the Groups' website, www.sustainabilitymatters.co.nz.

To find out more contact Ray Skinner at: ray@sustainabilitymatters.co.nz

Introducing the Zero Waste Academy



Over the last year Zero Waste New Zealand Trust has been working towards establishing the Zero Waste Academy - a training facility to help build capacity within the Zero Waste Network. Now that half the councils in New Zealand have adopted Zero Waste targets and there are over 40 community organisations working towards making the goal reality, there's a real urgency to ensure that the community sector, in particular, which has been the key driver behind the Zero Waste movement, is well equipped to handle the increasing opportunities.

Achieving Zero Waste is going to require the expertise of everyone, from economists and engineers to sociologists and product designers. The Academy will eventually address all these disciplines, but because the heart of the Zero Waste movement is the community sector, this is where the initial focus will be. There is a rich knowledge base already out there; it is a matter of harnessing the wealth of experience distributed amongst Zero Waste practitioners around New Zealand (and eventually overseas) and making it available to the growing number of new groups that are coming on stream.

The Academy will be based in Palmerston North to make use of the central location and the close association that Zero Waste New Zealand Trust has with Massey University and Palmerston North City Council. It will eventually link in with overseas initia-

tives such as the proposed Zero Waste Institute in Boulder, Colorado.

Training courses for community initiatives are also being developed by John Ransley and Josie Uren of Innovative Waste Kaikoura (IWK), and by Sheryl Stivens of MidCanterbury Wastebusters.

They will be run on these two community groups' sites to provide hands-on training and experience. The first course will be held in early October with a limit of 6 participants each. One is aimed at developing leadership skills for managers of community initiatives (Kaikoura) and another at developing community and school education skills (Ashburton) Courses will be run on an ongoing basis after this.

The Academy is a dream that is finally becoming reality. It's still in its infancy and there's a long way to go but we'll keep you informed of progress through the Zero Waste Update. We'll provide more information on the courses in the next Update but if you'd like to register your interest for these, contact julie@zerowaste.co.nz.

Zero Waste Council News in Brief

Dunedin City Council



The new Green Island Resource Recovery and Transfer Station was recently opened in Dunedin by Mayor Sukhi Turner.

The new \$1.3 million facility includes an easy to use upgraded recycle centre, upgraded reuseables collection area located in the new 'Recover Store' and sealed areas for greenwaste and hazardous waste.

The newly organised reuseables collection area now means that all items dropped off at the centre are safety checked and cleaned before being made available for sale. The Recover Store was designed to take full advantage of the sun - warmth and natural light are vital to keep staff happy!

The Recycle centre now collects plastic milk and soft drink bottles and steel cans in addition to other materials. For more details contact Angela McErlane at amcerlane@dcc.govt.nz



Opening of Dunedin's new Resource Recovery Centre

Business News

Airline's recycling efforts aim sky high

Qantas, in collaboration with Visy Closed Loop, are now offering a space saving mealbox instead of the traditional tray service on domestic economy flights.

Once used, the meal boxes, including leftover food, are gathered by cabin crew and returned to flight catering centres where they are compacted and picked up.

The waste is mechanically sorted to harvest the maximum amount of resources. It is estimated that 3000 tonnes of materials can be recovered and recycled each year. For more info go to www.visy.com.au/qantas.

(From Eco Voice, Autumn 2002)

Employment opportunity

The Golden Bay Papercrete Group in Takaka (Nelson region), is researching and developing papercrete (a product using recovered resources in a variety of applications). They are seeking keen cooperators to work with their site coordinator and team. Work includes resource collection, facilitating volunteers, papercrete production, building improvements and landscaping, and contract fulfilment.

Contact the Golden Bay Papercrete Group on 03 525 6229 or e-mail: goldenbaypapercrete@ihug.co.nz

Looking for work

Experienced UK Composting Manager seeking employment within the NZ Waste Industry. Experience includes operational management of three composting centres, pioneering recycling/ source separation schemes for Local Authorities in the UK & implementing methodology for product quality and environmental protection. Contact Chris Griffiths on 0291204537 or Christopher.Griffith@works.co.nz

Resources

The Zero Waste New Zealand Trust office has a number of publications from around the world available for your interest. Articles can be reproduced for a small fee. These include:

UK

The Waste Paper, Bulletin of the Community Recycling Network (CRN), published monthly. It contains a wide variety of articles written by CRN members. (www.crn.org.uk) This will be of particular interest to community groups.

Resource: A New Perspective on Waste, published bi-monthly. This excellent magazine features leading stories about the most innovative and up-to-date resource management techniques around the world. Easy to read while being extremely informative. (For information regarding subscription email subs@resource.uk.com)

USA

Biocycle - A journal of composting and organics recycling (www.biocycle.net)

New Zealand

Media Clippings from around New Zealand also now including International news from The Guardian, UK.

Recent articles include 'The Big Clear Up': the introduction of Zero Waste in the UK as a real alternative to landfill and incineration, showcasing New Zealand as a top example to be followed. And 'Heaps of hope', demonstrating the community sectors' ability and successes in preventing Britain from being at the bottom of Europe's recycling league table.

Contact Lu (lucy@zerowaste.co.nz) to have clippings sent with the Update.

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The Zero Waste Update is printed on 100% recycled paper.

International news

UK proposing rubbish charges

The UK Government is conducting a full waste review and has suggested charging householders if they produce over two bags of rubbish per week and do not recycle. Michael Meacher, Minister for the Environment, said "charging people would provide a useful incentive to reduce and recycle waste. The important first step is to make sure that everyone has the facilities to compost and recycle. Already they can take unwanted items to the civic amenity tip but they need facilities at the kerbside and we want every council to do that".

(From www.letsrecycle.com)

Canada's Councils charging ahead to Zero Waste

There's no stopping the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN), writes Al Stanley, Waste Reduction Coordinator.



RDN's Zero Waste Truck & volunteers at the BC Summer Games

The RDN is located on the southeast coast of Vancouver Island in the province of British Columbia. The district covers a relatively large geographic area that stretches along the coast for about 90 kilometres and runs inland as far as 60 kilometres. Within the boundaries of the district are the municipalities of Nanaimo, Parksville and Qualicum Beach. In all, the population is approximately 160,000 (about two thirds of the residents live in the municipalities with the rest in the outlying areas). In British Columbia regional districts are required to organise services that are regional in nature, such as solid waste management, sewage treatment, water supply and some recreational facilities. For example, the RDN owns and operates, among other facilities, a landfill, a transfer station and four sewage treatment plants. As part of the solid waste management

mandate, the RDN is required to develop, with public consultation, a solid waste management plan, which details how waste is going to be handled by the district.

The RDN has too much garbage. Even though we have met the goal of 50% diversion, set by the province in 1990, we still have around 50,000 tonnes per year to dispose of. Our landfill is almost full, and the only option that we have for our disposal is exporting the waste to a landfill in the interior of the province. This involves loading the waste onto trailers, ferrying them over to the mainland and then hauling them around 400 kilometres to the landfill. This is expensive and unsustainable. The solution is Zero Waste. Thanks to groundbreaking work done in places such as New Zealand and California, our political Board decided that our vision must see a future where waste is a thing of the past. Resources, not waste will be what we create and manage.

The first step is to have the citizens of the RDN actively engaged in the waste debate. The problem of over-consumption or unwise consumption will not be solved with dictates or programmes from the local Board; it will be solved by an engaged and knowledgeable public. The initial objective of the RDN Zero Waste public outreach strategy is make sure that the public has the information required to understand that the waste problem is not some abstract, disconnected theory but something that is a direct result of their actions. Actions have consequences, good or bad and the public will be challenged to become the solution.

The RDN has a vision that is Zero Waste. Goals and targets will be set but only with a clear understanding that however we end up getting there, there is only one destination.

For more details of RDN's Zero Waste programme go to their excellent website www.rdn.bc.ca or contact Al Stanley at AStanley@rdn.bc.ca

There are now three regional districts in British Columbia that have endorsed a Zero Waste Goal.

The **Regional District of Kootenay Boundary** not only has a 'Resource Recovery Department' instead of a 'Waste Management Department' within Council but also an excellent Zero Waste Strategy available for all to see online. Go to ww.rdkb.com/recover/media/zerowast.pdf for more details.