



Zero Waste Update

Please pass on

February 2003, Issue 31

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

Inside this issue:

Zero Waste South Australia	1
Landfill Levies	1
Zero Waste Community Enterprise Network	2
Community News	2
Plastic Bag Update	3
Council News	3
International News	4
Resources	4

Zero Waste South Australia

The South Australian Government has recently announced that it is to establish Zero Waste South Australia (ZWSA), a statutory waste body charged with dramatically reducing waste to landfill. It will be funded through a rise in the Waste Depot Levy (from AU\$3/ tonne to AU\$10/ tonne).

The money raised through increases to the levy will be used for initiatives that focus on waste avoidance, reduction, recycling, reuse and recovery.

The formation of ZWSA provides a new legislative framework under which the Government can work with the private sector and Local Government to drive a new and integrated strategy for waste reduction in this state.

These programmes will provide a springboard for new businesses, job opportunities and the provision of more equitable recycling services for South Australians. Reforms also include establishing local government waste management groups to improve coordination of waste service activities and achieve economies of scale and development of a State Waste Strategy. The Local Government Association of South Australia has applauded the Government's efforts and recognise the benefits that the extra \$2 million per year will provide to councils and communities.

Landfill Levies

Landfill levies are a good example of 'green taxation' as they shift the burden of tax from labour onto the consumption of resources. Generally, the tax aims to encourage waste minimisation by motivating waste producers to recycle or prevent the generation of waste.

Landfill levies (on top of the usual tipping fees) have been implemented in the following European countries: UK, France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Italy, Ireland and Switzerland. It is common for states in the US to impose landfill taxes and the money raised goes to a community host fee that "offsets" the local impact of living near a landfill. Some states in Australia also have them in place (including South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia).

UK

The UK introduced the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme in 1996. Since then the scheme has distributed half a billion pounds (or NZ\$1.5 billion), although unfortunately approximately only £20 million of this was spent on actual recycling and the UK's recycling figure has increased by only 3-5% so far.

Several community recycling groups throughout the UK have benefited from landfill tax funding and implemented city-wide household kerbside collections.

Other 'approved categories' for landfill tax spending included the restoration of historic buildings and building children's adventure playgrounds ('compensating' communities living near landfill sites.)

The UK Waste Strategy review report (released in November 2002) calls for immediate action to combat the growing rubbish mountain in England. Measures it sets out include raising the level of landfill tax and reforming the fund distribution scheme to fund more programmes committed to reducing waste and developing recycling infrastructure. The UK Chancellor recently signalled that from 2005/6 the landfill tax will increase by £3/ tonne/ year. Currently it stands at £13/ tonne (equivalent to NZ\$45/ tonne).

Europe

In Austria and Denmark, the story is more positive.

In Austria, the landfill tax (together with other initiatives) has reduced the landfill rate for household waste from 63 to 32% while recycling has increased.

The Danish landfill tax has contributed to a huge increase in the recycling of construction and demolition waste - from 25 to 90%.

Meanwhile, in **New Zealand**, the much awaited Ministry for the Environment landfill levy report is still in the Cabinet queue.

NEWS CLIPPINGS

Please note we have significantly reduced the number of news clippings sent out every month in an attempt to reduce the amount of paper consumed. We also prefer to send as much information out via email as possible. If you would prefer to receive your news clippings as a pdf via email rather than by post, please contact Lu at; lucy@zerowaste.co.nz. Please note, the clippings are usually more than 5 MB in size.

EMAIL YOUR

NEWS

AND VIEWS TO

lucy@zerowaste.co.nz

Zero Waste Community Enterprise Network

The ZWCEN has recently produced a strategic report outlining plans for its' development. Part of this plan is to highlight and promote the work carried out by community recycling groups throughout New Zealand.

In this month's column we feature **Wastebusters Trust Canterbury** based in Ashburton.

The concept of WasteBusters evolved in 1994 when Anita Coghill and Sheryl Stivens were invited to participate in community consultation with Ashburton District Council to develop a solid waste management strategy.



From L to R: Sheryl Stivens, Peter Rutherford (Artist) and Anita Coghill

Both women shared a vision for the future of establishing and promoting waste diversion systems with the school children of the district and up through the community. They began working as volunteers, visiting the 28 schools in the district and developing a comprehensive waste minimisation programme.

WasteBusters' innovative projects are wide ranging.

By 1996 WasteBusters had developed a negotiated contractual agreement with the Ashburton District Council to deliver waste minimisation education to the community.

In 1997 Selwyn District Council contracted WasteBusters Trust to extend their community Waste Minimisation Programme into the neighbouring Selwyn District.

Developments in 1999 included researching rural solutions to organic waste, particularly worm-driven waste management and efficient ways of composting waste from businesses such as hotels, bakeries and even wool scours. At this stage a 15-metre tunnel house was set up, housing thousands of very hungry tiger worms. In 2001 an innovative education centre was established at Ashburton's new Resource Recovery Park.

Walking into the centre through the bicycle wheel archway and following the wiggly tiger worm path to see tyre worm farms, compost displays, ground glass mulches, telephone book walls and the solar straw bale couch is only the beginning. Many new features are being developed gradually through a series of environmental workshops. Participants learn how to make mosaics; adobe plaster using shredded paper, crushed glass mulching and design, tyre retaining walls and more.

WasteBusters Trust Canterbury has grown rapidly and now employs 21 people. New contracts include processing and marketing kerbside collections and operating three recycling depots.

Over 150 tonnes of recycled materials are sent to markets monthly.

Community Employment Group invested \$60,000 over the past 15 months to help WasteBusters become a Community Employment Organisation and over \$330,000 has been returned to the local community in wages, transport and goods bought locally.

The social benefits of this community owned resource recovery operation are immense and ongoing.

The support from local businesses helps make this a model for true sustainable community development. Contact mcwastebusters@clear.net.nz for more information.

Community News

Extreme racing challenge

Xtreme Waste recently held its third Recycled Trolley Derby in Raglan.

The aim of this event was to maintain the fun in recycling and to create an opportunity for Raglan residents to participate in a community spirited day. Raglan residents have worked hard over the years to divert waste from landfill and the Recycled Trolley Derby gave the community an opportunity to celebrate waste minimisation and recycling successes.

The wild and wacky collection of racing trollies included four men racing on one vehicle travelling 68km/hr.

Many fantastic trophies made from recycled materials were awarded to participants.

Xtreme Waste would like to challenge all communities throughout New Zealand to enjoy a Recycled Trolley Derby in their town or neighbourhood.

For more information contact Susa Kupa from Xtreme Waste on tribe13@raglan.net.nz.



Toxic E-Waste

Mid Canterbury Wastebusters and Molten Media have put together a petition addressed to Environment Minister, Marian Hobbs, calling on the government to make the dumping of Cathode Ray Tubes from TV's and computer monitors illegal, as is already the case in Europe and California.

These 'toxic bombs' contain a list of ingredients that equal a recipe for human and environmental disaster. If you have not received a copy of this petition but are interested in distributing one throughout your community please contact Richard Rowe at Richard@ecocomputerservices.co.nz.

Slash Trash

The Far North Slash Trash team is continuing to expand with project managers now covering Whangarei (Sheryl Mai being helped by Damian Huston), Southern Far North (Bronie Nicol) and Kaitaia (Kelly Spriggs).

The team are working on delivering an improved education programme to schools in the Northland region after having attended the Wastebusters Zero Waste Education course in Ashburton last September.

Their most recent success is with Kerikeri Primary School whose Caretaker instigated the removal of their incinerator. Co-incidentally, the Slash Trash team are to run a series of seminars for school Caretakers in Northland during the next couple of months. They recognise that without the support of the Caretakers, school recycling systems implemented by the children may well collapse.

For more information contact the team through slashtrash@cbec.co.nz or 09 408 1092.

Plastic Bag Update

Zero Waste New Zealand Trust recently put out a national press release calling on the Government to urgently impose a levy on plastic bags. Mike Morris, Chairman of Zero Waste New Zealand Trust, said that 10 cents per plastic bag was a small price to pay to protect New Zealand's clean green produce and "100% Pure" branding.

New Zealanders could be throwing away more than one billion plastic bags every year, filling up expensive landfill space and wasting natural resources.

Plastics make up between 15 and 20 percent of waste in landfills and they take hundreds of years to decompose. Though plastic bags only make up part of this, they are one of the easiest plastics to deal with.

Most of New Zealand's income comes from industries dependent on a pristine environment. These include tourism and food production. Putting a levy on plastic bags would be one of the most practical and simple moves towards sustainability. Biodegradable plastic bags are not seen as a solution to the problem – because they don't break down in landfills and produce methane gas. (Mike was subsequently interviewed by several radio stations and the Telstra Business Show.) Meanwhile, reusable unbleached cotton bags (retailing at \$2.25 each) will soon be sold through Pak'n'Save stores in the North Island. The design below will appear on the bags emphasising a sustainable environment for the future.



The design can be downloaded free from the WasteMINZ website (www.waste.minz.org.nz). Foodstuffs are importing the bags

which will also be available to Councils and community groups nationwide in mid-March. Alternatively, contact Lisa at Elldex Packaging Ltd to place an order. Call 09 415 6747 or 03 338 9309 or email sales@elldex.com.

Waste On- Farm Plastics Management

Farmers, growers, central and local government, plastics recyclers and the plastics and agrichemical industries have joined forces to find solutions for the problems farmers face disposing of waste farm plastics in New Zealand.

A major study into the safe management and disposal of farm plastics will take place over the next three years. The purpose of the study is to develop better options for farmers and growers than some of the current waste disposal practices, which are unsustainable.

The New Zealand Agrichemical Education Trust will be carrying out the study with funding being awarded by the Sustainable Management Fund of the Ministry for the Environment.

The Ministry for the Environment has recently proposed a national environmental standard that will prohibit the burning of plastics on farms, probably the most common method of waste farm plastics disposal.

Farmers and growers will be asked to participate in trialling methods in the Hawke's Bay, Waikato and Canterbury regions.

A steering group has been established for the study with representatives from the agricultural and horticultural industries, the Ministry for the Environment, local government, recyclers and the plastics and chemical industry. The study follows on from a major workshop held earlier this year attended by stakeholders from throughout the country.

For more information contact Sandy Sorrow, Project Manager on 07 578 9857 or email sandys@clear.net.nz.

Business News

Environmental Lighting Solutions have developed an environmentally friendly way of recycling fluorescent tubes in New Zealand. Funded through Technology New Zealand, the company has researched viable methods of recovering and recycling the mercury found within tubes as well as the glass.

The process removes at least 97 percent of the mercury from the tube in 15 seconds. The mercury settles into sludge which can eventually be distilled to extract the mercury for re-use.

Environmental Lighting currently collects 25-35,000 used fluorescent tubes a year in the North Island.

For further information contact Kenny Buchanan on 07 858 4092 or email Kenny.B@xtra.co.nz.

Council News

Paint Exchange

Horowhenua District Council (HDC) is trialling a "Paint Exchange" system at its Foxton Waste Transfer Station in accord with the "Towards Zero Waste" policy.

The paint exchange is a facility where residents can drop off any partly full paint containers free of charge. These are stored in labelled containers.

Residents may come along and take away this paint for their own use at no cost.

HDC is hopeful that the idea will catch on and is proposing to make further paint exchange facilities available throughout the District following the success of this venture.

For further information on this scheme contact Ken Hale at HDC at kennethIH@horowhenua.govt.nz.

Council Annual Plans

Have you checked lately to see when your Council is reviewing its annual plan?

It may be the time of year (end of financial year) when Councils are asking for public submissions on their Solid Waste Management Plans.

Therefore, if you would like to have your say on waste management issues and proposals within your community, please contact your Council to check whether they have released a discussion document for public consultation.

EMAIL YOUR NEWS

AND VIEWS TO

lucy@zerowaste.co.nz

Resources

Reports

The **European Environment Agency** has recently published a report on waste minimisation initiatives in Europe. '**Case studies on waste minimisation practices in Europe**' examines ten case studies covering five themes including producer responsibility, voluntary agreements, legislative requirements, information programmes and waste taxes.

Go to <http://reports.eea.eu.int> for more details.

Producer Responsibility Guide

The **Washington Centre for Resource Conservation** has produced a fun and informative pamphlet called '**A Citizen's Guide to Producer Responsibility**'.

A simple interactive checklist helps citizens understand how producer responsibility addresses their concerns and interests. The guide also provides detailed information, sources of further information and actions citizens can take. To view the Guide go to www.wastenotwashington.org.

Events

Zero Waste NZ Trust will be presenting a workshop at the WasteMINZ workshops being held in Napier on May 27/28 2003.

It would be great to see you there! Watch this space for more details. Contact Carole Inglis from WasteMINZ for more details on the event on 09 486 6722.

Websites

The Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Canterbury has created a website to distribute information about composting research and practice with particular reference to New Zealand and the South Pacific. The site looks at a number of issues including a list of composting companies, products and services in New Zealand. Go to www.civil.canterbury.ac.nz/compost/.

Zero Waste New Zealand Trust

PO Box 33 1695,

Takapuna, Auckland

Phone: 09 486 0734

Fax: 09 489 3232

Email: mailbox@zerowaste.co.nz

www.zerowaste.co.nz

International news

European WEEE Directive formally adopted

The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive, and its sister Directive on the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) have been formally adopted by European law and will now have to be implemented by EU member states by August 2004.

The Directives include a collection target of 4kg per capita per year for WEEE, a ban on the use of heavy metals and toxic flame retardants in goods by July 2006 and the ruling that individual producers should be responsible for financing the waste treatment of their own products.

(Source: Warmer E-News February 2003).

'Bag Yourself a Better Environment' campaign

Clean Up Australia has announced its 'Bag Yourself A Better Environment' campaign, incorporating a month of action during March 2003. The campaign is aimed at retailers and customers, to reduce plastic shopping bag use.

Dr. David Kemp, Federal Environment and Heritage Minister, called on retailers and small businesses to join forces with government and the community in a national voluntary effort to reduce plastic bag waste.

In Australia, 6.9 billion plastic shopping bags are used each year, 4000 are thrown away per minute and 230,000 are dumped in landfills every hour.

During the month long campaign, retailers will be providing reuseable alternatives, encouraging customers to reduce their use of plastic bags, providing discounts for those who reuse their bags, trialing plastic bag-free lanes and promoting in-store plastic bag recycling facilities.

(Source: What's New in Waste Technology, Feb/March 2003)



UK Community Recyclers receive funding boost

Community recyclers throughout the UK will soon be able to access funds through a new programme called Transforming Waste. £49.5 million (equivalent to NZ\$150 million) of National Lottery money is to be awarded through the New Opportunities Fund.

The fund has been designed to support community recycling, reuse and composting initiatives that are directly connected to increasing the amount of waste diverted from landfill.

For more information go to www.nof.org.uk.

Japan moving towards Zero Waste

The UK Centre for Sustainable Design has reported that Japan's landfills could run out of space within five years. With that in mind, Japan is likely to be one country in the world that has to rethink their product design and manufacturing strategies.

New laws on recycling and green purchasing have been passed. (Half of all home appliances must be recycled at the end of their working life).

Sony is already thinking about eco-design and plans to double its sales by 2010 without increasing its environmental impact.

(Source: Edie News, www.edie.net)

Hewlett-Packard recycling programme

In the US, Hewlett-Packard announced a recycling programme, called HP Planet Partner e-Coupon, in which it will credit customers with up to US\$50 for any computer hardware from any manufacturer.

Consumers can put their credit towards any item purchased on Hewlett-Packard's Internet site. For information about the recycling programme, go to www.hp.com/recycle.