

## **Frequently Asked Questions - Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP)**

### **Why do we need a waste plan for Auckland?**

Change is needed in the way we deal with waste in Auckland to reduce harm to the environment, meet government legislation, manage costs and work towards becoming the world's most liveable city. The plan was adopted by Auckland Council on 20 June 2012.

### **Why do we need a new system for household rubbish and recycling collection?**

Up until now the way Auckland rubbish and recycling has been collected has varied across the seven former councils, both in terms of how and what is collected, and how it's paid for. With the creation of one council, we have seized the opportunity to create a system that is fair to everyone, is managed efficiently and can more effectively reduce the amount of waste to landfill.

### **What are the key elements of the plan?**

- standardising the way households pay for refuse collection (by extending disposer-pays region wide) and introducing wheelie bins across the region, with a choice of bin sizes from 60 litre to 240 litre in urban areas and the option of a pre-paid bag or bin for rural areas and the Hauraki Gulf islands;
- retaining a rates-funded recycling collection, with a choice of wheelie bins ranging in size from 140 litre to 360 litre and an increase in the range of recyclables accepted;
- introducing a rates-funded organic waste collection in urban areas;
- providing a rates-funded inorganic collection for households regionwide;
- implementing communications and community engagement activity to help householders and businesses adapt to the changes and reduce waste to landfill.

### **How was the plan developed and who was consulted on?**

Council prepared and developed a draft waste plan with input from central government, the waste industry, and Local Boards.

More than 2000 submissions were received on the draft plan from a wide range of individuals and organisations across the region. A number of elements of feedback were incorporated in the final plan.

### **When will the changes happen?**

Change will be made incrementally over the next six years. Some things, such as work on a proposed bylaw and community education programmes, will start in 2012. Major changes to kerbside collections will be introduced as current contracts expire, from 2015.

### **We already have a supercity – what's the hold up?**

Changes to kerbside collections can only be introduced as the seven former councils contracts expire, from 2015 onwards.

## **FUNDING**

### **What's changing regarding how waste and recycling services are paid for?**

Under the new plan, council will continue to collect rates to pay for some services, including everyone's recycling services and organic collections, as well as requiring disposer-pays for refuse collection.

### **What is the benefit of changing to disposer-pays?**

Disposer-pays for refuse collection is not new to all Aucklanders – residents in five of the seven former councils already pay for rubbish collection this way. Data from the previous councils clearly shows that, when households pay for what they put out (disposer-pays) the volume of rubbish they put out decreases.

### **So how much of our rates will go towards waste collection?**

From 2015 onwards (or whenever services are standardised across the region) approximately \$150 - \$160 of each household's annual rates bill will pay for recycling, organic collections, inorganic collections, servicing of litter bins, clearing illegal dumping, waste minimisation programmes and other waste-related services.

### **How much will the disposer charge costs for refuse collection be?**

Households will pay for their refuse collection per lift of their bin (not by weight). People will get a choice of bin size and be able to put it out fortnightly or less frequently, only being charged each time it is emptied. An 80-litre bin will cost approximately \$2.50 per lift (a cost based on market pricing).

### **When will the new rates level and disposer-pays take effect?**

It is proposed from 2015 onwards.

### **When we move to disposer-pays and pay for our general rubbish collection separately, will rates be reduced?**

For those who currently pay for their kerbside rubbish collection in their rates, there will be a reduction in that part of the rates bill.

### **How will that reduction be passed on to tenants, who do not pay rates?**

One of the actions in the plan is for council to hold discussions with landlords and Housing NZ to persuade them to be transparent about the rates decrease in rent payments, and to help their tenants reduce waste as well.

### **Disposer-pays charging could be a hardship on the poor, particularly for large households already under pressure. Surely that's not fair?**

When all households are charged a flat rate regardless of how much they put out, that's unfair on smaller households (including the elderly). It's also unfair on households that put a lot of effort into recycling and reducing the amount that they send to landfill.

Disposer-pays encourages people to put out less rubbish, because they'll be better off under a disposer-pays system if they do.

## **REFUSE**

### **What's changing?**

All households will have a disposer-pays fortnightly kerbside collection using council-provided wheelie bins (with choice of size from 60L-240L). In rural areas and in the Hauraki Gulf Islands there will be a choice of either wheelie bins or pre-paid bags.

### **Can you explain the disposer-pays idea?**

Under disposer-pays, households will pay for their rubbish disposal and collection per lift of their bin (not by weight). People will get a choice of bin size and be able to put it out fortnightly or less frequently, only being charged each time it is emptied. The use of Radio Frequency Identification tags on all bins will allow the collector to connect the collection charge to the user. The charge will be debited from a pre-paid account, similar to the tolling system for the northern motorway.

### **How will the council prevent people from putting their rubbish in someone else's bin?**

In most situations, the bins put out for collection will be full so it is unlikely there will be room for other rubbish. Households may also have the option to lock their bins in between times.

## **RECYCLING (plastic, glass, paper/cardboard, aluminium/tin cans)**

### **What's changing?**

A rates-funded kerbside collection will continue but households will have a choice of wheelie bin sizes available (from 140L to 360L) and a wider range of recyclables will be collected including:

- All plastic codes 1-7
- Aluminium and steel
- Glass bottles and jars
- Tetra Pak milk and juice cartons.

### **What is commingling?**

Commingling is the term used when glass, paper, plastics, metals etc are collected together.

### **Is it true that North Shore residents can keep their paper separate?**

During the submission phase, North Shore residents submitted to keep their paper materials collected separately. In the waste plan, council has proposed to explore with the paper recycling industry how they could meet the extra cost of collecting paper separately rather than it falling on the ratepayer.

### **How recyclable is a recycling bin?**

Very. Most of the wheelie recycling bins in use throughout Auckland are manufactured here in NZ. A typical recycling wheelie bin contains up to 35 percent recycled-HDPE (high-density polyethylene), made from milk bottle and other plastic bottles. And when those bins reach the end of their life, they can be fully recycled and start a new life as a new bin or some other product.

## **ORGANICS (food and green waste)**

### **What's changing?**

There will be a regular kerbside collection of organic waste funded by rates. There will be no collection on the Hauraki Gulf Islands or in rural areas.

### **When will the organic collection start and how regular will it be?**

The start date is still to be confirmed, but the intention is that this will be rolled out before the introduction of disposer-pays for refuse. The frequency of collection and the type of material collected will be determined during the procurement process.

### **Why is this service needed?**

Providing organic collection services means that more people will start separating organic waste from their rubbish. This will help divert more of the vast amounts of food and garden waste (50 per cent by weight) that end up in landfill.

### **Why not just encourage people to compost at home?**

For many homes, composting is a great way of recycling organic waste and improving the soil. Council has a programme called Create Your Own Eden, with lots of online resources and free courses on composting, bokashi and worm farms <http://www.createyourownden.org.nz>.

However, composting is not appropriate or possible for all households. Providing an organic collection service enables those households and others who chose to use the service to divert their organic waste from landfill.

### **Will the organic waste bins be smelly and unhygienic?**

They shouldn't be. Households can wrap food scraps in newspaper, or the use of compostable bags or similar could be looked at. Organic waste is proposed to be collected weekly unless a low odour bin can be designed.

### **What about private organic waste providers?**

The council will aim to minimise the impact on the existing green waste industry and will carry out pilot schemes to find the right solution for Auckland.

## **INORGANICS (items not suitable for regular recycling or too large for your refuse bin/bag but not hazardous)**

### **What's changing?**

Kerbside collections will be phased out over time as more effective systems for the recovery of inorganic material are developed. These new systems will aim to ensure more inorganic material is recovered than with the present collections.

### **So will there be any inorganic collections from homes?**

Once the current biennial kerbside collection system is phased out, from 2015 every ratepayer will get one rates funded on-site booked inorganic collection per year.

### **What's happening to the Hazmobile service?**

There will be no more collection services for hazardous waste (such as chemicals) in your neighbourhood by the Hazmobile. Residents can still drop off hazardous waste at four sites and two more locations will be developed over the next three years.

### **What is a Resource Recovery Network (RRN)?**

An RRN is a series of locations where businesses can drop off sorted materials and residents can drop off items at smaller scale community recycling depots.

### **Where will RRNs be located?**

The RRN concept and the facilities will be developed together with the community and industry. The network will include existing facilities, transfer stations where appropriate and small-scale community recycling depots located within communities – owned and operated by the private sector, community enterprises and/or the council. If there are gaps identified in terms of a lack of facilities, these will be developed and set up in consultation with Local Boards and the community as appropriate.

### **What is product stewardship and does it really work?**

Product stewardship schemes encourage the relevant industry to take responsibility for safe disposal of their products eg. the paint industry to look after the disposal of old or unwanted paint. Similar schemes have been successful in Europe and the US. The plan advocates that central government should introduce mandatory product stewardship schemes for problematic items such as tyres.

## **APARTMENTS/HAURAKI GULF ISLANDS and RURAL RESIDENTS**

### **What about large apartment blocks?**

Work is being carried out to find practical solutions for multi-unit dwellings (with 10 or more units) as we understand that having 2-3 bins per unit is simply not practical.

### **What about Hauraki Gulf Island residents?**

Hauraki Gulf Island residents will be able to use pre-paid bags for refuse. They will also have the option of a wheelie bin (of varying capacity) on Waiheke Island.

Charges, which are still to be determined, will reflect the added cost of the service, and will be partially subsidised.

Further work will be carried out together with local boards (Waiheke, Great Barrier and Rodney) to determine the level of service provision on the Hauraki Gulf Islands and the level of disposer-pays charging/level of subsidy for refuse.

### **What if I live rurally?**

Rural residents will be able to use pre-paid bags for refuse. They will also have the option of a wheelie bin (of varying capacity). Charges, which are still to be determined, will reflect the added cost of the service.

### **Where are the rural / urban boundaries set?**

Council will work with Local Boards to determine the rural/urban boundaries.

## **ILLEGAL DUMPING AND LITTERING**

### **How will you prevent illegal dumping by people trying to avoid paying?**

Council data shows that illegal dumping isn't necessarily linked to the payment method – it's about bad behaviour. But education and enforcement makes a difference, and the plan proposes a greater focus on both these aspects when disposer-pays is introduced.

When the former Papakura district and Waitakere city councils changed from rates-funded to disposer-pays refuse collections in 2006 and 1999 respectively there was no noticeable increase in illegal dumping thanks to a public education campaign and a well-funded enforcement programme.

### **What about littering?**

People can already be fined for dropping litter and cigarette butts under the Litter Act. Anyone can report littering although it is not easy to fine pedestrians unless they are identifiable. If litter is thrown out of car windows people can phone the Council (on (09) 301 0101) so a litter infringement notice can be issued. Information such as the date, time and place of occurrence, along with a description of the person and their car registration number are required. The council is adopting a system of instant fines across the region that allows for a fine of \$100 for a first offence and \$400 for repeated offences for dropping litter.

## **COUNCIL'S ROLE**

### **What is council doing to walk the talk of waste minimisation?**

The plan supports an in-house waste reduction programme for both council and all Council-Controlled Organisations. Waste minimisation and the use of recovered materials may also be promoted in all council contracts.

