



lifeafterwaste

CLOSING THE LOOP ON WASTE BY CHANGING THE WAY WE ACT

The **lifeafterwaste** Programme

At The WasteMINZ Annual Conference last year the challenge was made by Brian Richards to the many sectors in the waste arena to become actively involved in formulating new directions on how to reduce waste in New Zealand. The first steps in accepting the challenge were taken at a workshop held in March of this year, where a hundred participants set about defining the vision and determining the next steps. Following the workshop it was agreed that WasteMINZ would work with Brian Richards to prepare a draft implementation plan for presentation and discussion at this year's annual conference.

Jim Bradley has been assisting Brian by interviewing representatives of key sectors to gather information on current attitudes towards waste, the adoption of new attitudes in the future and what actions and changes are required for a major shift in attitudes to be achieved. The information from these interviews has been used to formulate the implementation programme. This programme has now been branded **lifeafterwaste**.

The vision of the Programme is to close the loop on waste, by changing the way we act. The Programme addresses waste in its widest sense and encompasses a national approach by seeking to involve and integrate all sectors, organisations and initiatives as well as each and every New Zealander. It establishes the vision, sets out the eight principles that guide the Programme, identifies six change actions required to

achieving the vision and puts in place four steps for launching **lifeafterwaste**.

The Programme also makes a number of challenges and recommendations for other sectors.

The soon to be released Central Government and Local Government National Waste Minimisation and Management Strategy makes this a very exciting time for waste minimisation and management in New Zealand. However, as set out in the **lifeafterwaste** Programme, we only have one chance to get it right and that chance is now. The Programme's vision and principles are consistent with those of the National Strategy. The Programme complements the Strategy in that it provides a set of steps to launch **lifeafterwaste**.

WasteMINZ is committed to the **lifeafterwaste** Programme, but it recognises that the Programme addresses matters that are far beyond our membership. However, we believe that the **lifeafterwaste** Programme will be a catalyst that ignites the nation to change the way we act and close the loop on waste.

We greatly appreciate Brian's and Jim's hard work and are indebted to all those of you who gave your time so freely and willingly when asked to be interviewed. Your involvement, ideas and visions underpin this Programme.



Allan Goddard - Chairman
Waste Management Institute New Zealand



Nature has always done this.

Life after waste, is when all material at the end of one life,
becomes the technical or organic nutrients for new life.

To change the way we act in New Zealand and close the loop on waste,
we need to shift our attitudes and processes from linear to cyclical.

This is **lifeafterwaste**

The Vision

To achieve life**after**waste we New Zealanders need to change the way we act. Each and every one of us needs to make a commitment to embark on our own personal journey for a better New Zealand. With individual commitment and action we can make the change from waste disposal to waste avoidance, we can be a resource efficient nation and we can clean up our environment. Central Government and Local Government are setting the scene with their National Waste Minimisation and Management Strategy. Let's make the commitment to close the loop on waste by changing the way we act and find life**after**waste.

Imagine if on every day of the year you could swim in the waters of the Waitemata without fear of swimming through sewage overflows or illegally dumped waste. This is how life could be after waste.

Imagine if on every clear day you could stand on the Port Hills above Christchurch and look out and see the entire City. This is how life could be after waste.

Imagine if that anywhere along the Wellington coastline you could gather shellfish to take home and eat. This is how life could be after waste.

Imagine if the only container you needed to place at the kerbside once a week was a recycling bin. This is how life could be after waste.

Imagine if every time you took a product off the supermarket shelf you knew it was wrapped in minimum packaging that was recyclable and you could feel good about using. This is how life could be after waste.

Imagine if the farmers were happy and the water in our streams and rivers was of a quantity and quality that we could always swim in and if lucky enough catch one of the many fish. This is how life could be after waste.



One Set of Change Principles

One Chance to - Seize the Opportunity

One Framework - that of Sustainable Development

One Goal - to be a Resource Efficient Nation

One Holistic Approach - to Waste and the Environment

One True Initiative - with No Smoke and Mirrors

One All Inclusive Way - No Individual will be Excused

One Set of Targets - that are Realistic and Attainable

The Change Actions required to achieve The Vision of life after waste are based on one Set of Change Principles. The focus of these principles is on personal actions to ensure that "no one person is excluded" and that "no one person is excused". The philosophy on which these principles are based is that of achieving "real things for real people".

The one Set of Change Principles reflects the oneness of the approach required to bring about change. We are one Nation, we have one Big Problem with waste, we need one Simple Set of Actions and we only have one Chance to seize the opportunity.

One Chance to Seize the Opportunity
We only have one environment.
At present our "Clean Green" image remains intact. However, how long can this last? The reality is that the true state of our environment no longer reflects this image. How long will it be until the image becomes tarnished and reflects the reality of a "Not so Clean Green" New Zealand? We still have one Chance to change. Let's seize that opportunity.

One Framework that of Sustainable Development
There is only one Framework for us to work within to achieve the results we require. All change must take place within the context of a Sustainable Development

framework. The outcomes we are seeking will only succeed if we work within a framework that includes social, cultural and environmental factors as well as economic factors. We need to ensure that we manage our resources in a manner that will meet the needs of future generations. Only one Framework that of sustainable development will deliver this.

One Goal to be a Resource Efficient Nation Our one Goal as a nation must be to achieve resource efficiency. To do this we need to change the way we view the resources that we currently call waste. The focus must be on linking waste avoidance, material reuse and recycling with the upstream benefits of resource conservation and efficiency, pollution prevention and sustainable development. Until we clearly understand the relationship between waste reduction and resource conservation and efficiency we cannot achieve the one Goal of becoming a Resource Efficient Nation.

One Holistic Approach to Waste and the Environment There is only one Approach to how we manage waste and our environment and that is the holistic approach. Waste is much greater than just solid waste, it includes sewage, stormwater, gaseous emissions,

agricultural runoff and the inefficient use or misuse of resources such as water, air, energy and land. We need to understand how all these wastes interact with the wider environment. Until now we have been spoilt by "engineering solutions" that delay the inevitable. We engineer the guilt away instead of embracing holistic, full cycle approaches that work with the environment in protecting resources. "End of pipe" approaches are not sustainable. The approach required is the "up the pipe", big picture approach, that of the one holistic approach.

One True Initiative with No Smoke and Mirrors With only one Chance to change we need one Set of Actions that can easily be understood and that people can personally commit to. We need to have a clear understanding of the action required, why it is necessary, what it will achieve, how to carry out the action and what outcomes will be. People also need to feel good about the actions they are taking, so not only do the actions need to be simple but also they must encompass "feel good factors".

One All Inclusive Way No Individual will be Excused For people to personally commit to the lifeafterwaste Programme, they must feel that the initiative is honest and has integrity. Its principles must be founded on a one True Initiative.

All linkages must be transparent and all outcomes must be reported back. All Sectors, all organisations, all communities and all individuals must be involved. Every group, organisation and individual must be clear about the interactions, and receive and understand the results. There will be no "hidden agendas" and no "smoke and mirrors".

To change the way we act, each individual New Zealander will need to make their own personal commitment to the lifeafterwaste Programme. A commitment which involves only one all inclusive way. No one person can be excused and no one person can be excluded. Each and every one of us can make a difference, but change will not happen unless we take responsibility and make our own personal commitment.

One Set of Targets that are Realistic and Attainable For people to commit to the lifeafterwaste Programme they need "To Dos" - one Set of Actions. They also need one Set of Targets that are realistic and attainable so they can measure the progress and success of their actions. The targets must be focussed at the individual level, but linked to national environmental targets and outcomes. People need to understand how their actions impact upon the environment.

Change Actions

1 PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

People have become disconnected from their environment. Councils have made waste disposal too easy for their citizens. People have been removed from the problem. They have lost sight of their personal responsibility and ownership of their actions. We need to re-establish the linkages between individual actions and environmental outcomes, empower people to develop their own environmental stewardship ethics and inspire them towards lifeafterwaste.

ISSUES

- Loss of personal ownership and individual responsibility
- People do not appreciate the value of the environment
- In our consumer society convenience has outstripped understanding. We are not questioning why we have waste in the first place
- As a nation we have an "Out of sight out of mind" mentality
- Community lacks understanding about what waste is, how waste is disposed of and its effects on the environment
- Councils have made it too easy for people, they have removed people from the problem. "I pay my rates so it is the Council's problem"
- Maori losing Kaitiakitanga due to the nature of waste - foreign to the natural cycle - cannot be returned to Papatuanuku. Loss of control over destiny because of loss of Kaitiakitanga
- Our national psyche is "I have a right to produce waste and for the Council to get rid of it for me" "Right to dump"
- People are overwhelmed "I can't save the world by myself"
- Develop the "feel good factor" one person can make a difference and recycling is one way of starting them on the journey
- No one individual is without responsibility. Each individual has a "duty of care"

REQUIRED ACTIONS

- Implement a nation-wide campaign that will reconnect people with their environment, develop personal stewardship - Kaitiakitanga ethics and take responsibility for their actions
- Establish community targets and plans
- Provide environmental indicator reporting with feedback at an individual level (re-establishing the links)



Change Actions

2 EDUCATION AND KNOW HOW

The key to overcoming the lack of understanding about waste and its interaction with the environment is education. However, education will only succeed if it is integrated, all encompassing and relates to the individual. Education must be from 'top down' as well as from 'bottom up'. It must target all sectors and include all cultures and generations. Education cannot simply be about raising awareness it must provide people, businesses and organisations with the desire, commitment and tools to change their behaviour.

ISSUES

- Education has been ad hoc and often poorly focussed e.g. "end of pipe" and "bumper sticker education"
- No integrated, comprehensive and consistent approach to education
- Education will change the mindset of the community
- Education will change customer behaviour
- Need to get the message to and "buy in" from small businesses
- Re-educate the professionals on the holistic approach to waste - change from a linear "end of pipe" approach to a closed cycle
- Community first needs to understand the problem before it can act
- Education will not work in isolation, it must be supported by "how to tools" (infrastructure), monitoring and feedback

REQUIRED ACTIONS

- Holistic and consistent approach to education in terms of messages and process and with a focus at the individual level
- Central government and local government to take a lead, but must be consistent and integrated
- Combination of "top down" "bottom up" approaches, incorporating a "working with and not dictating to" philosophy
- Educate the children and they will educate their parents and grandparents
- Establish a nation-wide education package for schools
- Put sector programmes and strategies in place

3 OUR SPECIAL PLACE

The image of our country that is promoted nationally and internationally is that of a "Clean Green New Zealand". This image is a key driver of the value New Zealand is able to obtain for its goods and services in the international market place. We are fortunate that the value relates to the image of our environment and not the true state of our environment as the image no longer matches the reality. Unless we take responsibility and change our behaviour the outcome will be a "Not So Clean Green New Zealand".

ISSUES

- Getting our national identity and national thinking on track and strengthened
- Realising the true value of our environment and maintaining a clean green image
- Understanding the linkage between lifestyle and environment
- Importance of district and regional identities e.g. eco tourism, wilderness values, lifestyle
- New Zealand is looked upon as a world leader in terms of environmental quality, but not for long if we fail to embrace change
- Hypocrisy and vulnerability of our clean green image
- Promoting the clean green New Zealand the wrong way. It should be "better for my environment and better for me" - build in the personal ownership
- Interrelationships and conflict between rural land use, environment and agricultural waste management

REQUIRED ACTIONS

- Determine, confirm and reinforce our national identity
- Leverage off "no longer clean green New Zealand"
- Move from a "clean green image" to a "clean green programme" that has an integrated, nation-wide approach
- Leverage off local, district, regional resources and images e.g. Kaikoura - whale watching-eco tourism
- Propel New Zealand back into a global leadership position
- Truly establish our integrity in our international markets

Change Actions

4 PERCEPTIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

As a nation we hold a number of misconceptions and misguided perceptions about waste. We consider that it is ok to generate waste as long as it is disposed of appropriately. Therefore, "if I have recycled I have done my bit". We are not asking ourselves how and why there is waste in the first place. We need a holistic approach to waste. One that recognises that the creation and disposal of waste uses valuable resources, that waste comprises much more than solid waste and that waste generation does not mean economic growth. We also need an honest approach to waste in terms of who generates what and setting realistic targets.

ISSUES

- Perception that it is ok to generate waste as long as we recycle
- Too focussed on recycling. The focus must be on not producing waste in the first place
- Community perception that we are "doing council a favour" by recycling
- Need for a waste prevention and resource valuing approach
- Not taking a holistic view of waste, resource valuing, resource efficiency and environmental integration
- Failure to perceive waste in a broad sense. Too focussed on solid waste and not thinking about the big picture waste of resources e.g. energy, air, water etc.
- Assumption that everything to do with the environment costs money
- Negative perceptions towards some industries e.g. chemical industry, waste management contractors
- Packaging industry targeted negatively due to high visibility of litter
- Misconceptions about ability to actually achieve zero waste, particularly when considering all waste types

REQUIRED ACTIONS

- Educate and give people "to dos"
- Change consumer behaviour by developing personal stewardship - Kaitiakitanga ethics and actions
- Set realistic attainable targets that individuals can relate to
- Use positive images e.g. "Living Earth" and tell "good news" stories
- Change negative images e.g. "the rubbish man"
- Break the connection between and the misconception that economic growth is a product of resource use and waste generation



Change Actions

5 INTEGRITY OF VALUE ADDED

A misconception exists that anything to do with environmental enhancement costs money. However, many sectors and organisations are not identifying the true cost of doing business. What is not being realised is the value that can be added to a product if it has been produced in a sustainable and resource efficient manner. What is also not being realised is the cost of using resources inefficiently. Consumers drive change. When people shop they want to "feel good" about their purchases. The way to achieve this is by purchasing "guilt free" products, being those products that have environmental integrity.

ISSUES

- Businesses and organisations are undervaluing resources and services and in doing so are failing to understand the true costs in terms of the environment
- Incorrect assumption that anything to do with improving the quality of the environment costs money
- Not realising the true value of a clean green environment
- Businesses will change if they can see that value can be added
- Some sectors are not valuing waste as a resource. Smarter material reuse can create new businesses
- Not identifying the true cost of doing business
- The cost of waste needs to be made fully transparent
- Efficiency is not just about time and money, it also includes resources, materials and the environment
- The more disposable income, the greater the purchasing power
- Understanding the power of the consumer. Consumers will drive change e.g. fashion, brands etc.
- Sectors will change if they can see value being added

REQUIRED ACTIONS

- Educating business on the true cost of doing business through proactive and integrated sector associations and organisations and sector champions e.g. Dick Hubbard and Stephen Tindall
- The Ministry of Economic Development and other agencies working with businesses to promote resource efficiency
- Educate consumers to make wise purchasing decisions
- Introduction of triple bottom line reporting - people, planet, profits

6 LEADERSHIP

To bring about change requires strong committed leadership at all levels and through out all sectors. In the first instance this must come from Central Government. We look to Central Government to set direction, introduce legislation with teeth and provide the resources for compliance monitoring. We also need national heroes and champions to inspire and lead by example to change mindsets and behaviour.

ISSUES

- Lack of Central Government leadership, direction and commitment
- Need for strong government and social leaders, leading and believing
- National heroes and local champions to inspire and impassion people
- Legislation with teeth and direction
- No point in legislation if there are no resources to monitor and enforce
- If Central Government puts the right mechanisms in place Local Government will fall in line
- Negative reaction to over regulation - industries and businesses may move off shore
- If there is no change in legislation and vision we will still be landfill focussed

REQUIRED ACTIONS

- Strong Central Government leadership to set direction, legislate and resource
- Nation-wide media campaign featuring national heroes to champion the vision
- Set national standards and guidelines to ensure efficient use of resources
- Use the Resource Management Act effectively, not just "end of pipe" approaches
- Require mandatory annual reporting of waste minimisation policies, targets and outcomes by all government and local government organisations

Sector Challenges

1 INTEGRATION

Integration and understanding the linkages are fundamental to achieving change. Integration must occur on all levels. This means integration between Central and Local Government, integration between and within sectors and integration of projects, education and infrastructure, organisations and the community. It also means taking an integrated, broad-spectrum view of waste and making the connection between waste, resource use and environmental degradation.

ISSUES

- Issues and perceptions about water, energy and waste are all similar
- Integrate all waste streams i.e.- solid waste, sewage, stormwater etc
- Too many organisations, initiatives and projects are resulting in a loss of focus
- Central government, regional council, district and city council integration and integration with sectors and community
- Inter sector and intra sector integration
- Lack of linkages in terms of waste disposal and its interaction with the environment
- Integrate and interact Maori philosophy of the web of life - "waste being part of the food chain" with western philosophy of "humans being at the top of the food chain"

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Commitment to a holistic view of waste and the environment
- Integration and collaboration between Central and Local government, Sectors and the community
- Integration and rationalisation of organisations, projects and initiatives
- Proactive and integrated sector associations and organisations



Sector Challenges

2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COLLABORATION

Local government collaboration is essential in changing the national psyche from that of a "right to dump" to that of personal responsibility and action. This means collaboration, integration and consistent approaches on all levels. Cities, districts and regions need to work together and with their communities and businesses to achieve a resource efficient nation. People want a level playing field in terms of pricing mechanisms. They want local authorities to put in place consistent and effective environmental policies and standards. They are confused and frustrated with the mixed messages they are receiving.

ISSUES

- Lack of integrated waste management practices within and across districts and regions
- Need for long term partnering between waste sectors and local government
- Local government providing services and facilities on a populist basis without always understanding what they will achieve
- Local government not always focussing on actions that will achieve more sustainable outcomes
- Inconsistent approach to setting environmental policy, standards and charging mechanisms
- Local government opting for the perceived easiest and cheapest solutions
- Lack of support for local initiatives

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Local government collaboration to achieve integrated waste management planning and implementation
- Establishing level playing fields for service delivery and pricing mechanisms
- Local government and waste sectors collaborating to achieve a level of service equitable to true cost
- Consistent approach to setting environmental policy, standards and charging mechanisms

3 PRICING DYNAMICS

As long as waste disposal is perceived as the "cheapest" option there will be no major change. While we undervalue our resources and the environment and fail to identify the true costs of waste disposal there will be no economic driver to prevent waste. Pricing mechanisms must be put in place that identify the true costs of consumption and disposal of materials and the associated environmental outcomes.

ISSUES

- Failure to identify the true cost of doing business
- The undervaluing of the environment, resources and services limits full cost pricing
- Mixed and non true pricing signals and mechanisms
- Pricing structure will drive change, but it must be true cost and show real value
- Conflict between waste minimisation and paying for landfills
- Waste management is a big business. Waste is needed to sustain the business
- The community does not understand, and local authorities are undervaluing landfill costs and charges
- People do not see a relationship between the rates they pay and the services that are provided
- Polluter pays instead of being rewarded with cheap disposal
- Producer responsibility - ability to impact on "end of pipe" waste by designing products and packaging that use less material and energy and have potential reuse opportunities

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adopt full cost pricing including realisation of environmental values
- Establish procedures for resource valuing, resource efficiency and environmental integration
- Adopt triple bottom line reporting

Sector Challenges

4 INFRASTRUCTURE AND MARKETS

Reuse and recycling initiatives and industries have been growing steadily in spite of a number of significant obstacles. These include problems in securing sustainable markets for recovered materials, difficulties in obtaining consistent supplies of secondary materials, inadequate infrastructure, lack of access to capital and expertise and insufficient government and local government support. The keys to ensure the ongoing growth and development of material reuse and recycling are long term secure markets and sound infrastructure.

ISSUES

- Limitations to the reuse and recovery of materials - New Zealand geography and population spread, lack of infrastructure and availability and security of markets
- How to go from the "feel good" factor to true understanding and knowledge
- Clarifying the ownership of the waste stream to facilitate market development and investment
- Providing the right tools in conjunction with education and feedback
- Lack of support for reuse and recycling ventures from central and local government
- Lack of smart, visible systems
- Smarter material reuse will generate new business
- One-way flow of materials from virgin resources, to producer, to consumer, to landfill
- Insufficient sound, factual data to support market development

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Link waste prevention, reuse and recycling to sustainable development initiatives (Local Government Act Review)
- Increased government and local government support including financial support for reuse and recycling ventures
- Develop new product specifications based on "design for environment" approaches that incorporate reclaimed and recycled materials
- Create local markets for recovered and recycled materials
- Develop secure markets and establish sound infrastructure



Four Steps for launching the **lifeafterwaste** Programme

Every Change Action has a Required Action and every Sector Challenge has a Recommendation. There are four common themes that have consistently been repeated throughout the Actions and Recommendations. These themes have been used to define the Four Steps that will launch the **lifeafterwaste** Programme.

- 1 THE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM**
Establish a multi representative team that will bring together all stakeholders in a collaborative way and ensure every one is committed to the **lifeafterwaste** Programme. With so much support and good will for this WasteMINZ initiative, the foundations for this step are well in place.
- 2 THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN**
A Government lead and funded nation wide media campaign to change the national psyche and the way we act. The scale needs to be similar to that of the "Smokefree" and "Drink Drive" campaigns
- 3 THE EDUCATION PROGRAMME**
A co-ordinated, consistent nation wide education programme. Targeted at the individual and promoted through schools, Central and Local Government organisations, all Sectors and the wider community. The Education Programme must be integrated with Step 2 The National Campaign and the Central Government and Local Government National Waste Minimisation and Management Strategy.
- 4 INDIVIDUAL BENCHMARKING**
Establish a series of benchmarks that each New Zealander can measure themselves against to check their individual progress on the **lifeafterwaste** Programme.

The Four Steps for Launching the **lifeafterwaste** Programme are the first steps that must be taken to begin to implement Required Actions and Recommendations of the Programme.



The following is a list of people who were interviewed as part of the development of this project.

We appreciate their participation and this project would not have been possible without their and their organisation's valuable input.

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CREDITS

Strategy & Design - **Brian Richards** - Brian R Richards Ltd
Field Research - **Jim Bradley** - Montgomery Watson Harza
Editorial - **Paula Hunter** - Montgomery Watson Harza
Environmental Sculptures - **Martin Hill & Philippa Jones**
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