

## **Best communication, engagement or education initiative finalists**

**Auckland Council for Auckland's Inorganic Collections:** A new inorganics collection service was introduced in September 2015 and was the first major service change of the Council's Waste Management and Minimisation Plan. The pre-booked, on-property service is offered annually to 540,000 eligible properties across the Auckland region.

Collections are undertaken by Waste Management NZ. Material is separated on property and taken to the Waste Management's warehouse in Mount Wellington where it is sorted and distributed to community groups by the Community Recycling Network who are located on site.

The judges' highlights included:

- The project is a three-way collaborative effort, led by Auckland Council and supported by the Community Recycling Network and Waste Management NZ.
- Through a community engagement approach over 100 community champions were trained to deliver the message, being coached and mentored by the Council's Community WasteWise team.
- An incubation hub was established at the warehouse which enables four community enterprises to use workspace to test ideas. This has recently included Resource Rescue, an award winning social enterprise started solely on the back of the inorganic collections service.
- Over 80 community groups have received close to 2,000 tonnes of recovered material for reuse or sale. Community groups include Habitat for Humanity, Salvation Army, City Mission, The Roots collective and Community Recycling Centres.
- The judges noted that the project clearly demonstrates the benefits of councils willing to take on risk and try something new through a collaborative approach with the private and community sectors.

**Progressive Enterprises for Countdown Food Rescue:** Countdown Food Rescue began in 2011 and supports New Zealanders in need by donating food that cannot be sold, to foodbanks. What started as a food waste reduction programme has turned into much more; 99% of all Countdown stores are now connected with a food rescue charity partner.

Countdown's policy is to donate food that is fit for consumption, but not for sale, to charity partners. 91% of Countdown stores partner with The Salvation Army for donations of non-perishable food. Some 45% of Countdown stores have a partnership with a fresh food rescue charity partner. Many Countdown stores also have a relationship with a local foodbank.

The judges' highlights included:

- In the 2015 financial year (1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015), Countdown Food Rescue donated \$3.5 million of food to charity partners.
- 91% of stores partner with The Salvation Army for non-perishable food donations. Some 45% of stores partner with a fresh food rescue partner for perishable food donations (this includes organisations such as KiwiHarvest, Fair Food, 0800 Hungry and many more.)
- In August the company hosted nine of their largest food rescue partners at an all-day summit in Wellington to facilitate a discussion around challenges and opportunities, take away learnings from each other's experiences, and to educate government stakeholders about the importance of food rescue.
- The summit identified that funding is a major barrier to food rescue organisations' ability to grow. Following the summit Countdown announced contestable funding of up to \$100,000 to help support food rescue charities looking to grow.
- The judges noted that in addition to the significant social benefits of the programme, as of 2015, Countdown's recycling has increased by 39%; waste has reduced by 43% and carbon emissions capped at 2006 levels – all despite a 37% increase in floor space over this time.

**Sustainable Coastlines for Love Your Coast Wellington:** Love Your Coast Wellington is an annual education, capacity development training and coastal clean-up series run by Sustainable Coastlines. The Sustainable Coastlines team have been delivering the Love Your Coast programme and coordinating coastal clean-up events throughout the Wellington region every year since 2010.

The judges' highlights included:

- Over the last six years Love Your Coast has achieved:
  - Over 20,000 beach and harbour clean-up event attendees at 129 clean-up events
  - Over 34,000 school students educated, through some 298 presentations
  - 190 ambassadors trained in leadership, presentation delivery and event management
  - 174,299 litres of rubbish removed from the coastline
- The programme has broad goals including:
  - Educating Wellington school students to become kaitiaki of the coastline
  - Measurably improving their behaviour with respect to littering and single-use plastic consumption
  - Training local community members with presentation and event management skills so they can deliver important educational messages in the future.
- The judges noted that Love Your Coast is about positive and long-term behaviour change. This change is verified through robust monitoring and evaluation tools developed in conjunction with behavioural change psychologists.

**The Packaging Forum for Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme:** The project is a \$1.55 million initiative funded through a \$700,000 grant from the Waste Minimisation Fund and a commitment of \$850,000 over three years from industry. The project introduced a new recycling programme enabling New Zealanders to recycle their soft plastic packaging through a partnership between brands, manufacturers, retailers, government and social enterprises.

The judges' highlights included:

- Although it has been possible to recycle hard plastic materials for some time in New Zealand, there have been limited options for soft packaging materials that make up a considerable portion of a typical household's waste. The scheme seeks to fill that recycling gap.
- The scheme has partnered with Foodstuffs, The Warehouse and Countdown and is supported by REDcycle and Abilities Group. Furthermore over 30 brands provide direct funding and access to their customers.
- The project will, over 3 years, provide 70% of New Zealanders with access to a near-by drop off facility.
- As at 31st July 2016, the project has diverted 43 tonnes of soft plastic recycling, equivalent to around 10 million items. The project is forecast to collect 195 tonnes per annum by August 2018, increasing to 327 tonnes per annum by 2020.
- The judges noted that the scheme was a significant collaboration by a broad range of commercial stakeholders, who came together to address a significant issue for industry whilst also providing a solution for the public at large.

## **Best project or initiative in the commercial or public sectors finalists**

**4Sight Consulting for Benmore Pole 1 Deconstruction:** The Benmore substation is owned by Transpower New Zealand. The substation is part of the main electricity link between the South and North Islands. Following a technology upgrade the Pole 1 facilities were excess to needs, so deconstruction of the buildings was planned. However, deconstruction could not take place until mercury and asbestos were removed. Typical removal methods for asbestos involve grinding, which could volatilise or spread the mercury. In addition, there was no clean up standard for elemental mercury in concrete.

The project entailed removing the ACM and elemental mercury to make the concrete suitable for reuse as fill material in the basement of the deconstructed building.

The judges' highlights included:

- The project avoided a great deal of waste to landfill and environmental impacts from transport associated with waste disposal and importing cleanfill material.
- It introduced new techniques for asbestos removal that provide for worker safety and environmental protection.
- It helped set a precedent for methods of monitoring environmental protection of groundwater and surface water where no clear standards existed.
- Lastly, it provided for several methods of removing elemental mercury from concrete to allow for reuse of materials.
- The judges noted that 4Sight and Transpower clearly demonstrated new procedures and processes to successfully remove asbestos and mercury while reducing environmental and employee exposures. Further, it allowed for reuse of large quantities of previously contaminated concrete as fill material.

**Foodstuffs and EnviroNZ for Foodstuffs Waste Minimisation Programme:** Since 2014 Foodstuffs NZ has been working closely with EnviroNZ to deliver a holistic approach to managing waste. The programme turns traditional waste management practice on its head; rather than focussing on waste to landfill with recycling a side-line, the aim is to maximise diversion with targets of 80% diversion for stores after 12 months on the programme, and 90% after 24 months.

To this end, EnviroNZ manage the separate collection of up to ten different waste streams from stores. This includes the usual cardboard, plastic wrap, co-mingled recycling and mixed paper, and also food waste, including surplus food suitable for human consumption and waste foods such as protein, produce and bakery waste suitable for animal feed or reprocessing.

The judges' highlights included:

- There are currently 90 sites on the programme and a further nine stores signed up and transitioning over.
- On average residual waste has decreased by 45%, with 23,500 tonnes of waste diverted in the last 12 months alone.
- For the 12 months to 30 June 2016 two-thirds of stores achieved or exceeded an 80% average diversion rate. The top seven stores sustained an average of 90%+ over that period. Kilbirnie PAK'nSAVE was the exemplar store. Starting in July 2014 with a benchmark diversion rate of 61%, by February 2016 they reached 90% and since March have maintained 95%.
- Stores are also seeing financial benefits with the average store now saving >\$2,000 per month, which ensures the programme's viability.
- The judges noted that the programme works with a broad range of partners to achieve positive waste minimisation outcomes. What was once a waste product to the store is now a valued commodity. Where possible the programme also aims to have materials utilised within New Zealand, thus minimising the environmental impact and supporting the local economy.

**Waste Management NZ for Powering into the future - Our move to electric vehicles:** Waste Management NZ has been working on an electric vehicle program for over 12 months. It commenced with the introduction of light electric vehicles into the business as a trial in late 2015. At the same time, they investigated electric trucks.

As part of the launch of their Sustainability Commitment in September 2016, they announced plans to move towards converting their light fleet and trucks to electric.

By the end of 2016 Waste Management will have the first electric box body truck operating in the Auckland Council Inorganic Collections. In early 2017, they will add two side-load trucks in Auckland and Christchurch municipal collections. Their light vehicle fleet will be converted as leases expire over the coming five years.

The judges' highlights included:

- Waste Management has a significant fleet including over 200 light vehicles and 800 trucks and the organisation has clearly signalled they want to lead the New Zealand waste and environmental services sector in the adoption of electric vehicles.
- The company's truck pilot will likely help inform future investments in electric vehicle technology in heavy fleets across New Zealand.
- The transition presents an opportunity for the company to significantly reduce their carbon footprint and fuel costs.
- Just one day's collection for a side-load truck would generate enough electricity from landfill gas to power that truck for a day, as well providing enough electricity for one electric car to drive 32,000kms.
- The judges noted that the impacts of full fleet electrification would be significant. Converting one truck to an electric vehicle would save 125 litres of diesel a day, which would be equivalent to some 115,000 litres a day across the company's entire fleet.