



WasteMINZ Conference 2025

Auckland Council and Re.Group – A bold new approach for the Auckland Council MRF

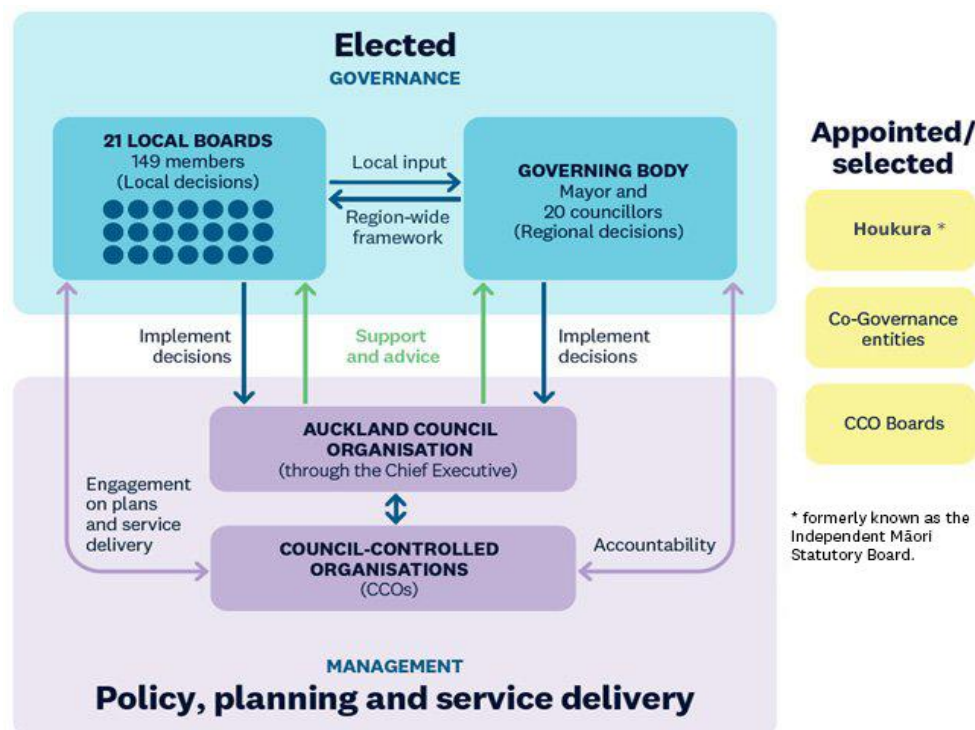


The Service

- Introduction
- Overview of the Auckland MRF Services
- The need to be bold
- The first twelve months - what we're learning
- A fresh new approach to education and engagement
- What's next

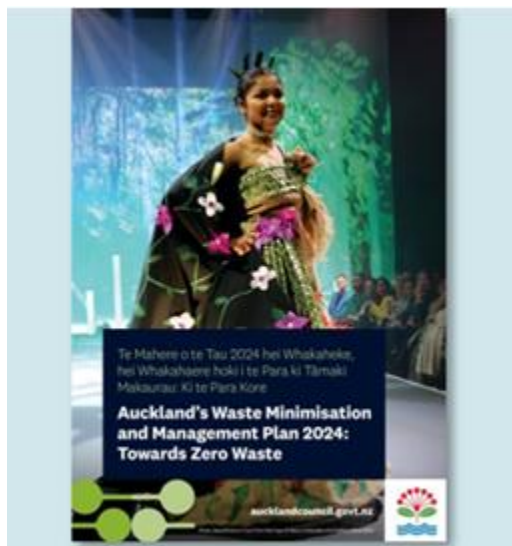
Introduction

Auckland Council



- Merger of seven councils back in 2010, forming the largest Council in Oceania
- Auckland Council performs the functions of both a local and regional council
- Over 1.6m people living across 550,000 households
- Aspirations of a zero-waste future by 2040

Auckland Council



Auckland Council

MANAGING WASTE IS BIG BUSINESS, EVERY WEEK AUCKLAND COUNCIL SENDS...



Rubbish



94 Rubbish trucks on the road collecting **3771** tonnes of rubbish per week



Recycling



71 Recycling trucks on the road collecting **1868** tonnes* of recycling per week



Food Scraps



60 Food scraps trucks on the road collecting **610** tonnes of food scraps**



Inorganics



23 Inorganics trucks on the road collecting **27** tonnes of reusable items

* Recyclable materials only (excludes contamination).

** Estimated in first months of food scraps collection - expected to increase.



Re.Group is an innovative company that design, builds, owns and operates recycling facilities and systems across Australia and New Zealand.

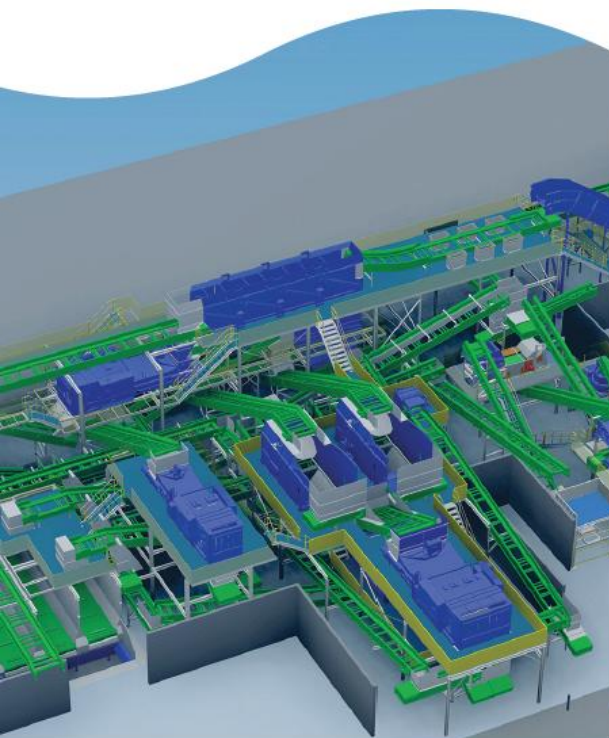
We provide kerbside recycling services for more than 5 million people across 40 local government areas, and service thousands of customers, paying refunds on +20 million used beverage containers each week.

Our proven model for collaboration delivers transparent results and provides best value outcomes for Governments and the communities they represent.

Our Business Pillars



Combining world's
best technology with
Australian know-how

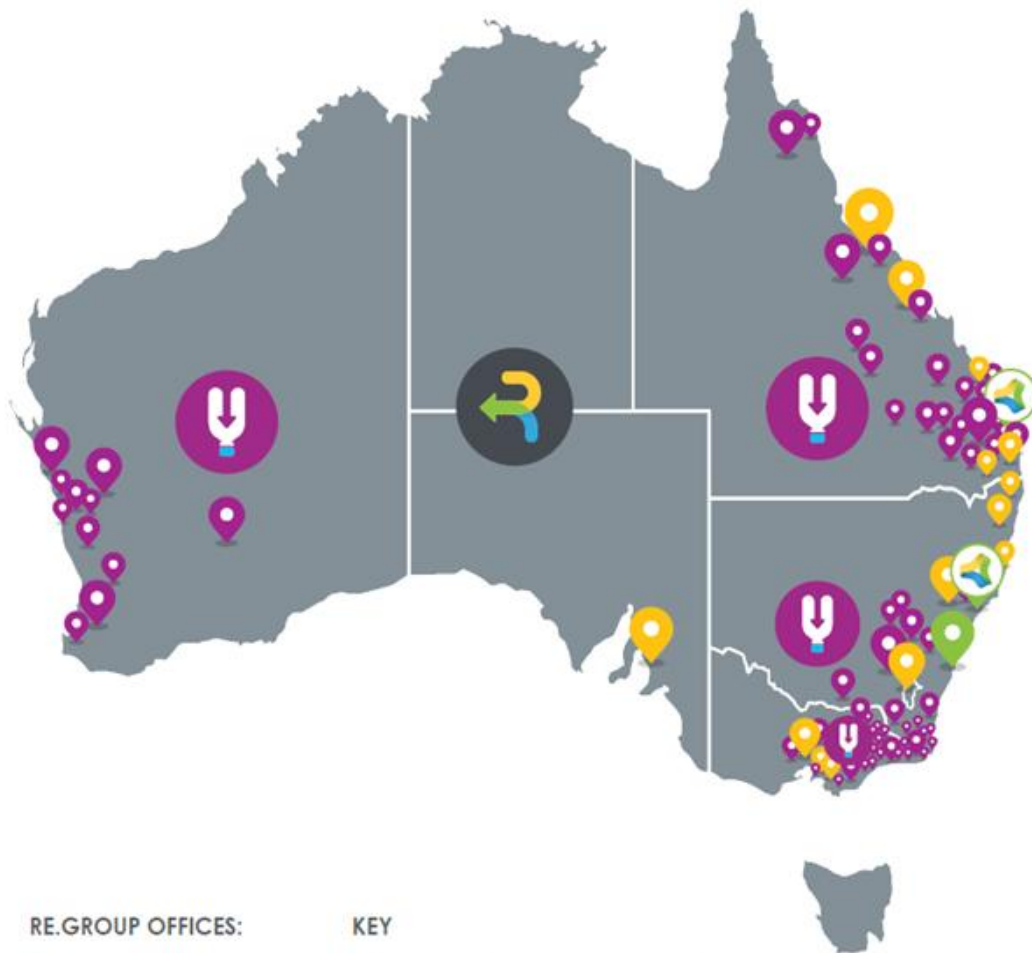


Helping our partners
achieve their resource
recovery goals



Maximising the social &
environmental benefits of
container return schemes








RE.GROUP OFFICES:

-  **SYDNEY**
Head Office
-  **BRISBANE**
Engineering Office

KEY

-  Commingled recyclables (Yellow bin)
-  Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO)
-  Container refund points

KEY

- | | |
|---|--|
|  TOWNSVILLE MRF
Commingled recycling |  ENFIELD MRF & GBP
Commingled plus glass |
|  MACKAY MRF
Commingled recycling |  CANBERRA
Commingled transfer |
|  SUNSHINE COAST MRF
Commingled recycling |  COBURG BALING
Source separated baling |
|  BROWNS PLAINS MRF
(Coming soon) |  DANDENONG MRF & GBP
Commingled plus glass |
|  ROCKLEA BALING
Source separated baling |  HALLAM PLASTICS PLANT
Container & plastics sorting |
|  CHINDERAH MRF
Commingled recycling |  ADELAIDE SOUTH MRF
Commingled recycling |
|  GRAFTON MRF
Commingled recycling |  AUCKLAND MRF
Commingled recycling |
|  GATESHEAD
Commingled transfer |  SHELLHARBOUR
FOGO composting |
| |  RETURN-IT CONTAINER REFUND SCHEMES
Network operator in VIC East and ACT, major operator in QLD and WA, depot operator in NSW |
| |  RECOLLECT COLLECTION SERVICE
On-demand bookings via the ReCollect App for eligible recyclables |

The MRF/Service



The Service

- Operates 24/5, with R&M weekends
- Operates every day except Christmas
- Upgraded in 2022 – 30% increased capacity
- Employs more than 70 people
- Diverse team
- Handles around 10,000t per month

Journey to Date

- Material Recovery Facility (MRF) was built by Visy Recycling in 2008 for the Auckland Council
- Re.Group won a tender to operate the MRF in 2022
- Contract started 1st July 2024
- Focus on partnership, being open and transparent



Why did we need to be bold?

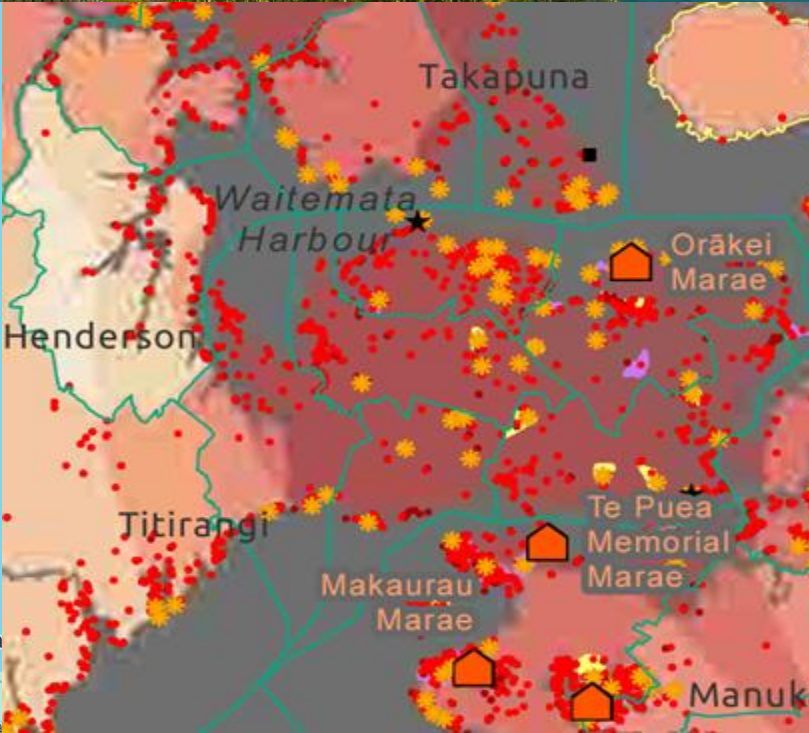
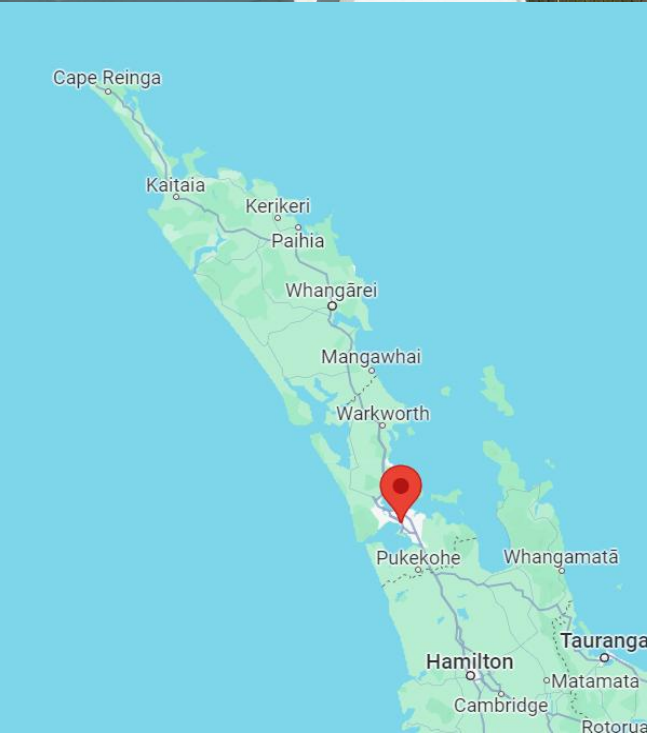














1940's



Auckland MRF

2010's



-  Marae (Mana Whenua)
-  Historic Maori Occupation
-  Archaeological Site (CHI)
- Heritage New Zealand Listed Sites**
 -  Wahi Tapu
 -  Wahi Tapu
- NZ Archaeological Association (NZAA) Archaeological Sites**
 -  Combination Site Type
 -  Maori Site Type
-  Co-governed or Co-Managed area
-  Sites and Places of Significance to Mana Whenua (Unitary Plan)
-  Local Board Area
-  15 Tribal Overlaps
-  4 Tribal Overlaps

Current state



The first twelve months.....

- Our efforts to be bold!
- Lessons Learnt



Re.Group

- A strong commitment to partnership by both parties
 - Open approach to communication and data sharing – we all have roles to play, and every role is important
 - Transition went largely to plan, we used the wider experience of Re.Group to support when required and established a good working relationship with the incumbent, Visy
 - Operational changes, improvements are having a positive effect on our environment and commercial sustainability
 - Social outcomes, Māori Responsiveness, progress made, but still lots more to do to be truly genuine in this space
-

Re.Group

Te Kaunihera o
Tāmaki Makaurau
Auckland Council



Re.Group





Auckland Council

- Council now owns the site and facility – operational and strategic asset
 - Partnership approach with Re.Group - we bring different contributions
 - Contract governance is productive and regular
 - Greater involvement and visibility of operations, costs, asset management and end markets
 - Increased collaboration with collectors
 - Oversight of plant performance and output quality
 - Improved data insight and reporting for early identification of issues and trends
-

**A fresh new approach to education
and engagement**

Education and Engagement

SITUATION

- Contamination is high
- Public understanding of Kerbside recycling is low
- Attitudes are fractured, rumours persist - "it all goes to landfill"

How can we reach residents in a way
that they trust and relate to?

How does our partnership with Auckland Council
create new opportunities?



Education and Engagement

BOLD NEW APPROACH:

COLLABORATION – Sharing resources and audiences with complimentary organisations, within and beyond Auckland Council network e.g. Community Recycling Centres

DIVERSIFICATION – Relevant messaging via diverse voices and formats

AMPLIFICATION – Sharing and promoting each other's work



Education and Engagement

SAME MESSAGES – DIFFERENT DELIVERY

SOP: Messages designed and delivered
by MRF Education Manager

Am I that relatable? ...To everyone?
(be honest)



Average
white lady



Education and Engagement

SAME MESSAGE – DIFFERENT DELIVERY

New: Messages delivered by
a range of collaborators

Different organisations,
personalities, cultures, ages,
job roles, perspectives,
VOICES



**** WAY MORE RELATABLE ****

Education and Engagement

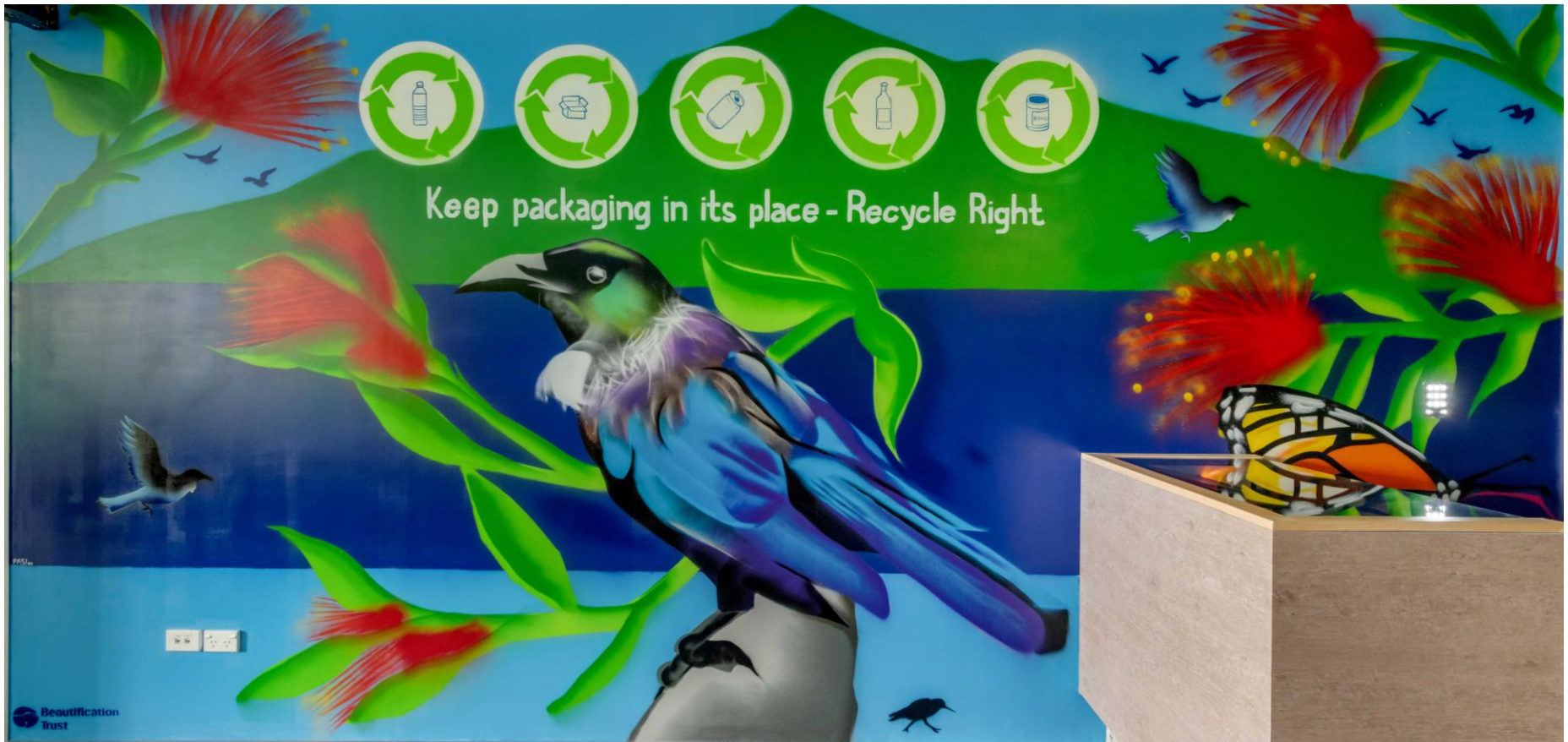
We aim to reflect the significance and diversity of our city, in everything we do.

We started with a strategy for diversification, and a new Education Space, which reminds us **why** we're here.



Education and Engagement

Artwork created by Pas, of Beautification Trust



Education and Engagement

Artwork created by Pas, of Beautification Trust





Education and Engagement

Fortunately, the nature of the operational partnership between Re.Group and Auckland Council is open and cooperative.

And our goals are aligned:

Auckland Council – Zero Waste by 2040

Re.Group - A wasteless society

We haven't yet been working together for a full year, but we can see the approach of connection and collaboration elevating our efforts already.



Education and Engagement

We're training educators in the community, to foster connection across resource recovery initiatives, share knowledge, experience and resources.

We celebrate cultural perspectives and principles – **Kaitiakitanga.**

We're steering a narrative –

From 'waste' to VALUE.

From 'what' to WHY.



Education and Engagement

Because it's not about bin etiquette.

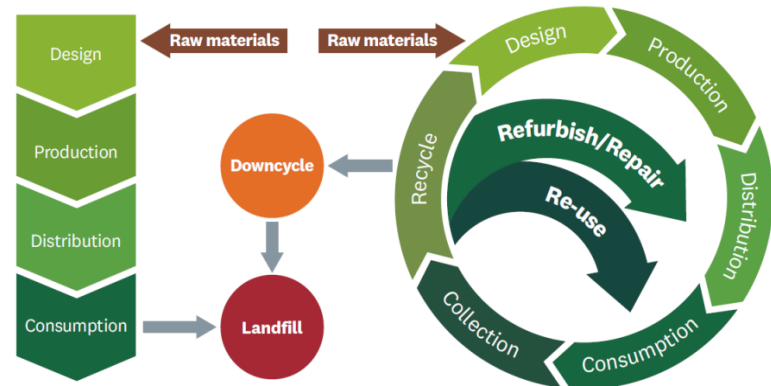
It's about respecting the value in resources
and becoming better Kaitiaki.

**Future Plans – what does bold mean
in the future.....**

What next?



LINEAR VS CIRCULAR ECONOMIES



What next?

- It is not going to be a picnic in the years ahead!
 - But there is lots of opportunity alongside the risks
 - MRFs and kerbside collections are not the silver bullet to save us from our troubles – they play a key role but not in isolation
 - We need holistic change to how we manage our resources, embracing education and product stewardship, whilst incentivising the laggards (most people!) to recycle more i.e. deposit returns
 - Needs to be supported by clear and effective government policy
 - We all need to be open to change
-



What next?

- The Auckland Council MRF and site can evolve to accept different materials or perform different roles i.e. reprocessing
 - We need to keep investing in technology
 - Collaboration keeps us learning together, and advancing together
 - Maintain a focus on the 'why' and celebrate success
 - We need to focus on our range of services so Aucklanders remember how easy it is to help make a difference
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