

Behaviour Change Sector Group minutes, Monday 25 March 2019

Location: teleconference

Present: Angie Taylor (Mackenzie District Council), Donna Peterson (Invercargill City Council); Duncan Wilson (Eunomia Consulting Ltd); Harriet Lock-Ingham (New Plymouth District Council) Jacqui Forbes (Para Kore); Kate Meads (Waste Free with Kate); Katie Buller (Auckland Council);

In attendance: Jenny Marshall (Facilitator) WasteMINZ

Apologies: Gina Dempster (Wanaka Wastebusters)

1. Plastic Free July

This year Plastic Free July coincides with the launch of the government's plastic bag ban on 01 July. So, members of the behavior change sector group are strongly encouraged to take part this year. WasteMINZ hopes to create some New Zealand specific resources for plastic free July. If you are interested in getting involved with the development of these resources, please contact jenny@wasteminz.org.nz

2. Plastic bag ban

- WasteMINZ has created an FAQ blog on their website which can be viewed [here](#). The Ministry will be releasing resources for retailers in early April.
- Some retailers are preparing for the ban. Donna recently bought two items from a hardware store and the retailer tried to put each one in a separate bag explaining he was trying to get rid of the bags before the ban. On the other hand, Kate spoke to a knife manufacturer who said he could cut off all the handles on his existing plastic bags and then they wouldn't be banned by the legislation as only bags with handles are banned.
- In New Plymouth at the markets people are handing out degradable bags saying these aren't plastic bags, these are degradable so there is still confusion out there.
- In Twizel supermarkets have been putting out cardboard boxes for customers to use. Tourists are using these boxes and then folding them flat and placing them into public place recycling bins which is unfortunately due to their size filling up the bins.

3. Councils who are no longer able to collect plastics 3-7 - how to communicate this change effectively to the public

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- It's important to use multiple channels to communicate. It can be helpful to draw up a mind map of all the different audiences you need to communicate to e.g. schools, farmers etc. and then identify the best channels to reach them. It's also important to be aware of what other languages people speak and whether there will be any groups which are harder to reach.
- Some suggestions from other councils include: Put a letter in people's boxes warning them that the change is going to happen in a couple of weeks and why. Then the week before include a flyer in the empty crate once it has been emptied. Then on the week that the change occurs leave behind at kerbside any items which are no longer being accepted with an explanation as to why. This is what Tauranga did when they stopped collecting glass and it worked well. This gives people several chances to change their behavior.
- Written material in letterboxes is not sufficient. Consider using social media; have a stand at your local supermarket or market with examples of what materials can no longer be accepted and suggestions of plastic free alternatives.
- Also think about some fun and engaging ways to spread the message. E.g. could you hire a Mr Whippy van to go around announcing the change and get a flyer together with a free small ice cream? Or have a megaphone around the streets announcing that 3-7's are no longer connected?
- Provide an explanation of why you are no longer collecting these items but also reassure people that the other items that are being collected for recycling are actually being recycled. Kate received an email from a member of the public "Given that they have stopped collecting plastics I'm just now burning it together with my plastic ones and twos" so it is important for people to re-establish trust. There may not be room for a full explanation on a flyer, but you could include that information in press releases or on the council website.
- Make sure that your councilors and council staff are on board and can understand and explain the changes as they can be great advocates. Send out a memo to all staff; hold a lunchtime q and a for staff from all departments.
- Provide resources for your local schools e.g. activities where students need to identify which type of plastic is which number.

4. Dog poop

A fact sheet has been developed as a number of councils are considering promoting alternatives to plastic bags for collecting dog poo. Many councils park teams have also been contacted by compostable bag manufacturers asking them to consider this as an option. The committee reviewed the draft factsheet. In New Plymouth they have 10 bins for doggy poop around the city parks and they are meeting with their parks team to discuss options. They also have a group of students doing a project on this. The factsheet should be made available in April.

5. Best practice guidelines for council websites

A guidance document has been drawn up for councils with best practice guidelines on website design for recycling and rubbish information. The committee reviewed the guidelines which are based on work done by WRAP in the UK. It was noted that for some councils they are aware that their pages are not as effective as possible but budgetary constraints or pushback from the council website team means it can be difficult to get them improved. It was agreed that the guidelines

would be helpful in raising the issue with the relevant communications and waste teams at council. Feedback from the committee will be incorporated into the guidelines but more work is needed before they are ready for general publication.

A discussion was held around on the use of images on council websites. It was felt that images should be used to draw attention to the items which could be recycled whereas words may be better for a list of what can't be recycled. The importance of consistency in images was raised. If bottle tops aren't accepted for recycling, make sure that none of your images show containers with lids on. Try where possible to avoid branded products. The use of a Hell's pizza box on a recycling brochure caused a few concerned ratepayer complaints. Auckland Council found it hard to find the images they needed on Shutterstock so they commissioned a photographer to take photos for them. If using images, it is important that they are large enough so that people can see the items easily.

The use of video was also discussed as some of the committee members have children who tend to use YouTube as their search engine rather than google when looking for information. Para Kore is in the planning stages of making some videos short clips with alternatives to cling film etc. The videos will be targeted at specific audiences and will be less than 20 seconds long. Kate Meads has produced a longer series of videos. These were hosted on YouTube once people watched the first video, they often watched the others. People will watch longer on YouTube than on Facebook.

6. General business

WasteMINZ is beginning work on the conference program and suggestions for speakers and topics are now being sought. Please email your suggestions to Jenny@wasteminz.org.nz