

## **Consultation on Recycling Symbols Update**

This consultation document is seeking feedback from interested parties on updating the freely available New Zealand Recycling Symbols.

### **Background**

The New Zealand Recycling Symbols were created in 2001. RONZ (Recycling Operators of New Zealand), the organisation who managed the symbols no longer exists and the symbols are currently hosted on the WasteMINZ website. Since the symbols were originally created, a number of changes have occurred in the industry.

Firstly, some materials which were previously not widely recycled are now being recycled (e.g. shrink wrap, polystyrene) and there are no symbols for those waste streams.

Secondly in 2015, councils around New Zealand, the Packaging Forum (who initiate public place recycling schemes); and key industry partners agreed to use standard colours for kerbside collection bins and public place recycling to indicate which bin is for rubbish, which is for paper recycling, food waste recycling etc. These colours were based on the Australian Standard and common industry practice in New Zealand.

As a result a number of the New Zealand Recycling Symbols are now out of date and new colours need to be agreed for waste streams, which weren't established in the previous consultation on bin colours.

### **How the Symbols will be managed**

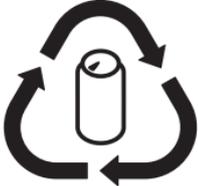
WasteMINZ will produce and manage a free downloadable standard set of symbols.

In addition template files will be available that allow some customisation of secondary wording to accommodate minor variations in what is collected following the layout naming principles outlined below.

Finally organisations will be able to request customised symbols (for a fee) from the graphic designer.

## The structure of the symbols

The New Zealand Recycling Symbol family uses three basic designs. These designs **are not** included in the consultation:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cans</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Aluminium</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Rubbish</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Non-Recyclable</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lightbulbs</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Compact Fluorescent</b></p>
<p>The main design uses a stylised 'mobius loop' with an image in the centre. This is used to designate material that can be recycled, reused or recovered through composting etc.</p>	<p>Non recoverable material is designated by a circle</p>	<p>Hazardous items utilise the international hazardous waste symbol format which is a red diamond with a black image in the centre</p>

## Consultation Information

Part 1 of this consultation seeks feedback on colours for the waste streams listed.

Part 2 seeks feedback on the wording of common waste streams.

### Part 1: Colours

To make it easier for the public to recycle effectively, in October 2015 councils around New Zealand, the Packaging Forum (who initiate public place recycling schemes); and key industry partners agreed to use standard colours for kerbside collection bins and public place recycling to indicate which bin is for rubbish, which is for paper recycling, food waste recycling etc. Using standard colours for recycling at home, at work and in public places, helps minimise confusion for the public, increase recycling, and reduce contamination. The standard colours already agreed upon are listed below.

Waste Stream	Colour
Rubbish	Red
Commingled recycling	Yellow
Plastics	Orange
Glass	Blue
Paper	Grey
Organics – food; food and garden	Lime Green
Organics – garden only	Dark Green

More details on how these colours were chosen can be found [here](#).

A number of other waste streams which are more frequently collected via transfer stations and resource recovery centres such as e-waste and textiles also require standardised colours. These include the following:

- Oil /Hazardous waste
- Reuse / Fabric / Furniture
- Ewaste / Appliances / Metal
- Construction and Demolition waste

### Key project principles for colour

In choosing the colours the following principles were taken into account:

- The aim of any colour choice is to make it as easy as possible for the public to recycle correctly.
- Commonly recognised colours should be used for waste streams to make it simpler for the public and for documentation. E.g. go to the brown bin rather than go to the tan / beige bin.

The commonly recognised colours that were available to choose from for the remaining waste streams were:<sup>1</sup>

- Black
- Brown
- Purple
- Pink

*Note: the colour white cannot be used because the symbols can be reversed out i.e. printed red on white or white on red.*

### Proposed Colours

The key high level waste streams and their suggested colours are presented in this section.

Proposed Waste Stream	Suggested Colour
Reuse / Fabrics / Furniture	Purple

This waste stream would include anything in working condition that can be resold or repaired, as well as items that may be recycled such as textiles and mattresses. This would include items such as

- Textiles – fabric, furnishings
- Household items – mattresses, sofas, tables



<sup>1</sup> Note all other commonly recognised colours have already been used

- Miscellaneous items such as books, toys etc.

Proposed Waste Stream	Suggested Colour
Construction and Demolition	Brown

This would include any construction and demolition items as well as items suitable for a cleanfill. Example materials under this colour include:

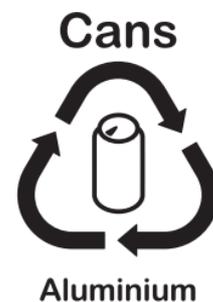
- Timber
- Bricks
- Concrete
- Plasterboard



Proposed Waste Stream	Suggested Colour
Ewaste / Appliances / Metal	Black

This waste stream includes any items which contain metal. It would include:

- Larger items with a plug that are dismantled or sold for scrap metal such as fridges and stoves
- Smaller items with a plug such as hair dryers
- Electronic items with product stewardship schemes such as mobile phones and cartridges
- Cans
- Scrap Metal
- Computers
- Televisions



Note: the working group discussed whether Ewaste should have its own colour separate to metal. The only other available commonly recognised colour was pink. It was also noted that many Ewaste items are also disassembled to extract the scrap metal and therefore would be subject to similar handling to items such as fridges and stoves. On that basis the working group is recommending that Ewaste signage also use the black colour.

Proposed Waste Stream	Suggested Colour
Oil/Hazardous waste/ Automotive Waste	The international symbol for hazardous materials would be used which is a red diamond with black writing

This would include any items that need to be stored safely on sites e.g.

- Chemicals
- Lightbulbs
- Tyres
- Gas bottles
- Engine Oil
- Cooking Oil
- Batteries

### Lightbulbs



Note: Whilst some hazardous items can be recycled, some items cannot currently be recycled and some are only recycled in certain locations in New Zealand due to financial and infrastructure constraints. For this reason the working group is recommending that the Mobius loop is not used and instead the International Symbol for hazardous materials is used. From the public's point of view the key message is that these items should not be included in general waste collections as they can either be recycled or require additional handling e.g. encasement in concrete before they can be safely disposed of in landfill.

## Part 2: Wording

### Key project principles for wording

- Short, simple words should be used which are meaningful for the public.
- Jargon, technical terms and insider language should be avoided wherever possible.

In terms of wording the RONZ symbols are structured with

- A top row of text – this typically identifies the waste stream. This is not changeable.
- A bottom row or rows of text – this typically provides an additional explanation of what is included in the waste stream. The symbols will be available as an editable pdf where the bottom row of text can be customised for your region or waste stream.

### Cans



Aluminium  
Tin / Steel

The working group is recommending the following wording for the main waste streams.

<b>Top</b>	<b>Bottom</b>
<b>Rubbish</b>	<b>Landfill</b>
<b>Recycle</b>	<b>Plastic Glass &amp; Cans*</b>
<b>Food Scraps</b>	
<b>Garden</b>	<b>Cuttings*</b>
<b>Glass</b>	<b>Bottles &amp; Jars*</b>
<b>Paper</b>	
<b>Cardboard</b>	<b>Flattened</b>
<b>Reuse (items that are dropped off at resource recovery centres and can be resold or repaired)</b>	<b>Furniture*</b>
<b>Wood</b>	<b>Treated*</b>
<b>Metal</b>	<b>Cans*</b>
<b>Appliances</b>	<b>Televisions*</b>
<b>Hazardous</b> (items that can cause harm to people or the environment and shouldn't be disposed of in rubbish bin)	<b>Car Batteries*</b>

\* Please note the bottom row can be changed according to the specific type of item being collected

The working group is seeking feedback on the following wording:

1. That the word Rubbish be used as opposed to the word Waste

Rationale: Waste is a word used by industry not the public. In New Zealand rubbish is a more commonly recognised word than garbage or waste.

2. That the word Recycle be used instead of Mixed Recycling

Rationale: Mixed Recycling is a word used by industry not the public. The bottom line of text underneath the symbol will be used to detail exactly what can be placed in the bin

3. That the word Food Scraps be used instead of Compostable or Organics

Rationale: The word Organics is most commonly associated with spray free produce. The word Compostable is most commonly associated with compost bins and garden waste rather than food and packaging.

4. That the word Appliances is used rather than Ewaste.

Rationale: Ewaste is a word used by industry not the public. From the public's perspective they may not understand whether Ewaste is used to mean electronic devices such as computers and laptops or other electrical devices such as televisions, microwaves. The bottom line of text can be used to indicate what specific items can be dropped off.