

11. RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING: PUBLIC OPINION AND PARTICIPATION

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The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Council on the participation and public opinion of kerbside recycling and current attitudes towards waster pays for domestic refuse collection. It is based on a recent telephone survey.

BACKGROUND

A phone survey of around 300 Christchurch residents was undertaken by the Christchurch City Council in June 2002. This survey is taken every six months and is part of ongoing research to better understanding the waste and recycling habits of Christchurch residents. The survey is also designed to assess the impact of various policy decisions (eg moving to a waster pays system for domestic refuse collection) and the effectiveness of promotional campaigns (eg the availability of a second 'free' recycling crate). Presented here are the key findings and recommendations based on these findings.

KEY FINDINGS

Waster Pays

- 65% of people agreed that people will recycle more if they have to pay for the waste they produce.
- 67% of people agreed that they are willing to pay for the waste they produce if the recycling service is 'free'.
- 76% of people think that a waster pays system will increase the illegal dumping of rubbish.
- 24% of people felt that moving to a waster pays system would encourage them to purchase a commercial refuse collection service (excluding those that already have commercial collection services).

Kerbside Recycling

- 93% of people interviewed considered the kerbside recycling service to be good or very good.
- 91% of households put out recycling on a regular basis (at least once every three weeks).
- 75% of people would like to do more recycling.
- 80% of people were not aware of the availability of a second 'free' recycling crate.
- 83% of people considered their recycling crate large enough, which is a departure from an earlier result (63%).
- 86% of people felt that they understood why items are left in the recycling crate after collection (ie rejected for recycling).
- Of those people not recycling, a lack of knowledge was noted by 46% as the main reason they did not recycle.
- 80% of people use kerbside recycling as a main way to dispose of recyclables, but only 60% of these recycle all the items possible.
- Paper (excluding newspaper), cardboard cartons and tins were commonly thrown out in the rubbish.

Refuse Disposal

- 66% of households use one black refuse bag per week and 10% use two bags.
- 76% of people with commercial wheelie bins still put out black bags for collection.
- 32% of the people interviewed have a commercial waste collection service and 14% have a commercial green waste collection service.

Composting

- 53% of households compost at home with roughly half of these composting most or all of their garden and food waste.
- The misconception about organic matter in the landfill has not changed over the last five years, with around half the people interviewed thinking that it is fine to throw it out because it breaks down.

Based on these results the Council will consider the following:

- Establish a system for monitoring and enforcing illegal dumping more proactively and reassure the public about this system to allay public concern about moving to a waster pays regime. (See Sustainable Transport and Utilities Report 12 September 2002: *Options for Managing the Illegal Disposal on Refuse in Christchurch*).
- Investigate further the public opinion regarding waster pays for domestic refuse collection and use this information as a basis for consultation on this issue. (See Sustainable Transport and Utilities Report 12 September 2002: *Waster Pays Consultation and Education*).
- Move to increasing and improving the kerbside recycling service further (eg more items able to be recycled and wheeliebins for recyclables as detailed in a Sustainable Transport and Utilities seminar on 20 May 2002). This will be of particular importance because of the proposed move to waster pays increasing the amount of recyclables being collected.
- In introducing the proposed waster pays system, the Council will need to minimise the move towards commercial waste collection services by appropriate price setting and by maximising the availability of the bags.
- Continue to promote the availability of the second 'free' recycling crate. The Recycling Centres (located at each of the Refuse Transfer Stations) will also be promoted as an alternative to kerbside recycling, during peak seasons (eg Christmas), when many recycling crates are over full.
- Promote further, the expanded recycling service (all paper and plastics marked with a 1 or 2).
- Implement a promotional campaign that targets those recyclable items commonly thrown out like paper and cans or tins. Slogans under consideration are "Don't screw it up" and "Don't can it".
- Build a closer relationship with the commercial wheelie bin providers to better promote kerbside recycling and increase the uptake of green waste only services (half of the material in wheelie bins can be composted).

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.