

## 9. DRAFT WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SOLID AND HAZARDOUS WASTE 2003

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The purpose of this report is to present the results from the submissions received to the draft waste management plan together with the recommendations of the Subcommittee appointed to consider these and to make recommendations on the adoption of the Waste Management Plan (Part 1).

### BACKGROUND

On 12 December 2002 the Council resolved to notify the draft Waste Management Plan for public submissions. The review process specifically excluded the vision, goal and targets of the existing 1998 plan, which had already been separately reviewed and updated by the Council in June 2001.

The public notices for the submissions process appeared in the Christchurch Star and The Press on 22 and 25 January 2003 respectively inviting submissions from 27 January 2003 to 14 February 2003. Apart from the public notices a press release was made available and both the Christchurch Star and The Press carried reports on the invitation for submissions, with the Christchurch Star (free to all households) placing the article on the front page as the main article. Copies of the draft plan were made available to the public at all service centres and libraries, and some were mailed out upon request. The draft plan was also placed on the Council's web page with the option of electronic submissions, which a substantial number of submitters utilised.

On 11 February 2003 the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee appointed Councillors O'Rourke, Broughton and Buck to serve on the Hearings Panel to consider the 88 written submissions received. The Panel met on 14 March 2003. Most submitters (85) did not take up the offer to discuss their submissions with the Panel. The panel duly considered all 88 submissions including three further oral submissions and this report reflects the main themes that emerged from the submissions. In response to the submissions the report concludes with recommendations containing specified changes to the draft plan notified in January 2003.

This review of the waste management plan occurs against the backdrop of the release of the *New Zealand Waste Strategy in March 2002 - "Towards Zero Waste and a Sustainable New Zealand"* by central government, which this Council subsequently supported by adopting the strategy as a basis for local plans (eg Waste Management Plan), programmes and actions.

### MAIN THEMES EMERGING FROM THE SUBMISSIONS

#### Waster Pays and Black Bags

1. Some submissions strongly supported the positive impact of waster pays and purchased black bags on waste reduction (including support from Environment Canterbury and the Sustainable Cities Trust). Unused space in black bags is often filled with materials that should be diverted from the waste stream through reuse or recycling. A survey of black bags has shown that the typical content of a bag is 46% green and kitchen waste, 28% paper, 10% plastic 3% each metal and glass and 10% other materials. Submitters felt that purchasing of bags would encourage further recycling.

The Panel noted that the principles underlying waster pays is endorsed by the New Zealand Waste Strategy, and pointed out that by introducing waster pays the Council was therefore following central government policy in this regard.

2. The majority of submitters focussed specifically on their opposition to the proposed purchasing of black bags by residents, and waster pays. It is evident that many submitters saw the purchasing of black bags as an increase in costs not realising that rates funding for bags will then stop. The Panel pointed out that without waster pays black bags the rates increase would have been higher, by around 3% in a single year, with the total rates amount being approximately \$5 million more. Certain submitters pointed out that landlords may not pass on the savings on rates resulting from waster pays to tenants (the rental market is 31% of the residential market).

The Panel recommended that effective communication programmes be developed for waster pays and waste minimisation. (Note: The Council has already resolved to undertake such a programme in the 2003/04 year, and has set aside \$200,000 for that purpose. In addition to this, on 25 March 2003 the Council resolved to undertake a special consultative procedure from October 2003 on the issue of household waste removal, which clearly sets out the costs and benefits of each option).

3. Some submitters did not realise that the cost of a council approved black bags (currently \$1.00 per bag but slightly more when waster pays is introduced) includes all costs related to collection from the kerbside, transport to a transfer station, transfer station costs, and transport to and disposal of at the landfill (which includes site costs and aftercare costs). The actual cost of a black bag (plastic and manufacturing) is minimal, around 10 cents a bag.
4. The Support Fund already approved by Council to assist needy households with a supply of unpaid black bags would be a positive step towards addressing cases of hardship, with such cases currently proposed to be dealt with through service centres and as part of the package of assistance offered through the Mayor's Welfare Fund. The Panel recommended that staff approach some social service providers (such as possibly Nurse Maude and others) to assist in making coupons for unpaid bags available where circumstances call for it. (Funding details of this proposed system are to be reported back to Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee).
5. The Panel furthermore noted that those households that produce less waste, including the elderly, are often disadvantaged by rates funded black bags, as they are in effect subsidising those that waste a lot. Purchasing black bags would therefore amount to a saving for those households, as well as for those who already are good at reuse, recycling and composting.
6. In response to the issue of black bag costs, the Panel also pointed out the difference between (a) the current Christchurch practice of charging for black bag collection through rates as a percentage of capital value (that means that the higher the house price the more you pay for black bag collection and *vice versa*), and (b) a uniform annual charge for waste collection (a flat fee for each residential unit for waste collection, note this system is not used in Christchurch).
7. Various submitters recommended a phased introduction of purchased bags - over a year or two - and subsequently on 25 March 2003 the Council resolved to postpone full implementation of waster pays by supplying 26 bags to households in April 2004.
8. Some submitters suggested that the size of black bags could be reduced seeing that other options for diverting waste exist, and would likely increase in future. The issue is to be looked at by staff and reported on in due course.
9. The issue arose of a potential increase in illegal dumping following waster pays. During 2003/04 annual plan briefing meetings provision has been made for additional resources to assist in managing this issue, however taking on board experiences at other communities where rates paid black bags were replaced with purchased bags, it is not anticipated that this would be a big issue.
10. Council's financial management. Some submitters were of the opinion that if Council spending was better managed and prioritised (eg 'overspending' on the Square and other Council projects), there would be no pressure on rates, and no need to take away rates funded black bags.

### **Weekly Collection of Refuse Collection to Remain**

Some submitters appeared to be confused on this issue, the Panel emphasised that the current practice of collecting black bags weekly from the kerbside is unaffected by the waster pays principle, and would continue as before.

### **Greenwaste Collection**

Strong support emerged for the Council to provide some form of green and kitchen waste collection system, and the Panel supported the introduction of a wheelie bin system for green and kitchen waste to coincide with the phasing out of rates paid black bags.

On 25 March 2003 the Council resolved to progress this issue in the following way:

*“That the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee investigate and report on all aspects of the kerbside collection of refuse based on:*

- (a) A staged introduction of ‘waster pays’ for refuse bags over two or three years.*
- (b) The introduction of a rates funded wheelie bin for all households, later in 2004, initially for the collection of green waste only and later to also include household putrescible waste.*
- (c) Additional ways of dealing with household organic waste (such as enhanced home composting methodologies).”*

### **Tangata Whenua Principles for Solid Waste Management**

The Panel recommended that the principles for cooperation with Tangata Whenua on solid waste issues (attached to the report in appendix A) be supported by the Council, and be incorporated into the plan.

### **More Recycling Bins Next to Rubbish Bins in Public Places**

The Panel recommended that staff consider this issue.

### **Removal of Rubbish Bins in Council’s Regional Parks**

This issue falls outside the waste management plan, however, a number of submitters raised the issue, disagreeing with the implementation of this initiative by the Council.

### **INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS SUPPORTED BY THE PANEL**

Apart from the main themes summarised above, the Panel has recommended that certain individual submitter suggestions be supported.

1. A submission motivating the inclusion of a new target for the reduction in disposal of wood waste. The Panel considered the suggestion and recommended the following additional target *“Reduce the residual disposal of untreated wood by 90% by 2010”*. This recommendation required the amending of the existing building target for building rubble in the plan, and the Panel recommended the following amended wording: *“Reduce rubble going to landfill by 90% by 2005”*.
2. Rephrase certain targets and principles as set out in the summary below.
3. Insert the following definitions for domestic waste, and for treated and untreated wood.

*Domestic waste:* That part of the waste stream originating from households (typically garden and kitchen waste and refuse disposed of in the Council black bags).

*Untreated wood:* Wood that has not been treated (see treated wood).

*Treated wood:* Wood that has been chemically altered in such a way that makes it, or its parts potentially hazardous (eg wood that has been surface coated with lead base paint, impregnated with preservatives and manufactured using binding agents).

### **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Below is a list of recommendations that resulted either from individual submissions or from the main themes set out in the report. Proposed changes to the existing wording are in bold.

- Under Additional Targets, the insertion of a new target: **“Reduce the residual disposal of untreated wood by 90% by 2010”**. This change affected the target for rubble which was changed to **“Reduce rubble going to landfill by 90% by 2005”**.
- Under the heading “Additional Targets”, change the hazardous waste target to “The Council has adopted the Canterbury Hazardous Waste Management Strategy 2001 **and is committed to achieving its** target of Zero Hazardous Waste by 2020.”

- Under heading *Action Areas*, change the description of “Enhance the rules” to: Use bylaws **and other legal mechanisms such as Rules in the City Plan** to encourage waste minimisation and beneficial use of resources.
- Under Guiding Principles, change the wording of *Regional Cooperation* to: The Council is signatory to the Regional Waste Management Agreement adopted by **ten territorial authorities in Canterbury****The Council is also committed to regional cooperation on the management of hazardous waste through its involvement with the Canterbury Hazardous Waste Management Strategy.**
- Support the Tangata Whenua principles for managing solid waste as set out in Appendix A.
- Insert definitions for domestic waste, as well as for untreated wood as above in the ‘Individual Submissions Supported by the Panel’ section above.

The Panel further **resolved**:

1. That the Panel supports the introduction of a wheelie bin for the collection of green and kitchen waste to coincide with the phasing out of rates paid black bags. (See Council resolution quoted under *Greenwaste* above).
2. That the Canterbury Waste Subcommittee be requested to recommend to its constituent Councils that standardised definitions be developed for use in all waste management plans in the region.

#### **CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS**

During the discussion by the hearings panel on the submissions to the revision of the Waste Plan, it was considered that the report should contain an explanation of the philosophical background to the ‘water pays’ principle. It was thought especially important to do this in the light of some of the submissions that cast doubt on the Council’s motives. Some clearly thought that the Council had an ulterior motive in cutting costs so that it could spend more in other areas. Some even thought that the Council might be double-dipping, ie asking people to buy their rubbish bags but without a co-related reduction in rates. Some doubted the waste minimisation aspects.

My purpose, with support of the hearings panel, in writing these comments, is to record a few basic points to demonstrate why the adoption of the ‘waster pays’ principle has been promoted:

1. ‘Waster pays’ is an important part of the government’s national waste minimisation strategy. The government is now actively promoting this throughout the country. Christchurch is a little behind in adopting it.
2. The cost of collecting, transporting and dumping household rubbish will greatly increase to about \$100 per tonne following the opening of the new regional landfill at Kate valley in 2005. This means an additional cost on rates of about \$5 million per year to dispose of the household waste the Council collects on behalf of residents. Therefore rates would then go up by \$40 to \$60 per household. If ‘waster pays’ for rubbish bags was introduced at the same time, there would be a saving of about \$5 million on rates. Therefore if both things happened at the same time, there would be a rates-neutral effect. This was considered appropriate given that it is the increased cost to dispose of the bags, which is countered by the adoption of ‘waster pays’.
3. The reason for the increased dumping costs at Kate Valley is the much higher environmental protection incorporated in it than is current at Burwood landfill. Under the Resource Management Act this is not an avoidable cost.
4. I and the majority of Councillors, do not generally subscribe to the ‘user pays’ principle. Accordingly Christchurch has not sought to adopt it for water supply, waste-water services, toll roads to meet roading costs, or in other basic service provision areas, and there is no intention or thought to change this. ‘Waster pays’ is an exception, and the rationale for it is not economic, but instead it is:
  - (a) To reduce waste by asking people to pay directly for waste collection, transport and dumping, so that the direct cost to them will act as a disincentive to create waste.

- (b) To optimise recycling by encouraging people to use the alternative to the rubbish bag in the form of the recycling bin and (later) the greenwaste wheelie bin.
- (c) To eliminate cross-subsidies by charging actual costs to residents for waste disposal, as opposed to the 'capital value rating system' under which it is the value of a resident's house which determines how much they pay for waste disposal rather than how much rubbish they produce.
- (d) To make it possible for residents to reduce the number of rubbish bags they need instead of imposing 52 (or any other number) whether they need them or not, thus making it possible for them to reduce their costs, which is currently not possible (ratepayers pay between \$40 and \$60 per year as part of their rates bill irrespective of whether they need that much rubbish disposal capacity).

As a final comment I would like to state in regard to the Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan vision statement *'To manage solid waste to avoid irreversible damage to the physical environment'*, resource consents for the Kate Valley landfill are expected to be obtained by 2004 and with the opening of this facility as an environmentally sound landfill this should ensure that this part of the vision statement is achieved.

#### **SUMMARY**

The report identifies the main themes that came through the submissions process, including support, as well as opposition to waster pays, and the proposal for purchased black bags instead of rates-funded black bags and recommends certain changes to the draft waste management plan.

#### **Subcommittee**

- Recommendation:**
1. That the changes to the draft Waste Management Plan for Solid and Hazardous Waste 2003 (Part 1) as contained in the report be adopted, and that the report be finalised.
  2. That all submitters be thanked for their contributions and be provided with a copy of this report and the final version of the plan.