

Submission on

Draft Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan

From:

**Andrew Dakers
ecoEng Ltd
63 Bowenvale Ave
Christchurch 2
dakers@paradise.net.nz**

5 May 2004

Submission

The Christchurch City Councils Solid & Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2003, Part I, states;

The Christchurch City Council is committed to a Sustainable Christchurch which includes the long-term equitable use of resources and quality of life for all residents in an environmentally responsible way. To help achieve this, the council adopted The Natural Step (TNS) philosophy in August 2000 as a guideline towards holistic decision making. The key principles are:

- 1. Reduce non-renewable resource use*
- 2. Eliminate emissions of harmful substances*
- 3. Protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystems*
- 4. Meet people's needs fairly and efficiently*

The Management Plan acknowledges the Councils adoption of the principles the Natural Step, which includes biomimicry(ref:

<http://www.ccc.govt.nz/SustainableChristchurch/WhatIsSustainableChristchurch/>)

The principles by which nature achieves sustainable processes are diversity and decentralisation. Apart from the provision of solar energy, nature distributes (decentralises) its services (i.e ecosystem services). There are sound ecological reasons for this. Like it or not, it is a scientific fact that we humans and our engineered support systems are, by nature, interconnected and interdependent components of ecological systems.

I believe truly sustainable living can only be achieved if we design and manage the city's services and physical infrastructures with knowledge and understanding of the importance of decentralised or distributed services and achieve a more appropriate balance with existing centralised services.

I accept that centralised services are sometimes the most pragmatic option in certain circumstances, but I believe the **strategic direction** should be to distributed services. **Sustainability can only happen when it happens at the individual and community level.** This means individuals and community actually taking greater responsibility for the implementation of sustainable practices on the street, in the home, school, office, factory or on the farm – in other words at the source of unsustainable practices. Moving to greater responsibility at the source will be achieved by distributing/decentralising services. Centralising services tend to appeal to people's inclination to avoid taking their necessary share of responsibility.

I note in Part 2 of the CCC Solid & Hazardous Waste Management Plan highlights the statement (p5):

We all have a responsibility to each other and to nature, to strive for a better, more sustainable future.

Assuming the “we” is each and every individual and not, for example, “The Council” then this is a very important principle that should be built in to policies, strategies, design criteria and management structures of the various the services. I don't think the radical challenge of this thinking is well understood by our decision makers.

I wish to refer to the more specific issue of **kerbside collection of putrescibles**. One of the unresolved issues appears to be the conflict/disagreement between those advocating a centralised and those wanting a distributed (home composting) service. Between these 2 groups I suspect there is no disagreement about the principles of waste reduction, recycling and resource recovery. I agree that there clearly will be those in homes, offices and businesses who will not be at all keen on home composting. I also agree that home composting has to be done well (even enthusiastically) to avoid health and nuisance risks. Clearly recovering, processing and using waste resources on-site has got to be the most energy efficient and sustainable option.

I wish to recommend that the CCC ;

1. Adopts and implements the stated outcome (Solid & Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2003, Part I, Section 6.1) of; *The City's organic resources are utilised in a sustainable way to the benefit of the local community.*
2. Provides ongoing incentive and education to foster home composting and
3. offers a voluntary kerbside collection and a community composting services for those who do not wish to home compost. My preference is for a number of community composting facilities strategically located within the city.

Recommendation 3 should be first piloted within the city.

How the city's waste service is designed and managed is one of critical issues for the present and future citizens of this City.

