

Moving towards a low-waste, low- emissions economy

Policy and programme update

Shaun Lewis, Director – Waste and Resource Efficiency



Moving towards a low-waste, low-emissions economy



Aotearoa New Zealand is one of the highest generators of waste per person in the world.

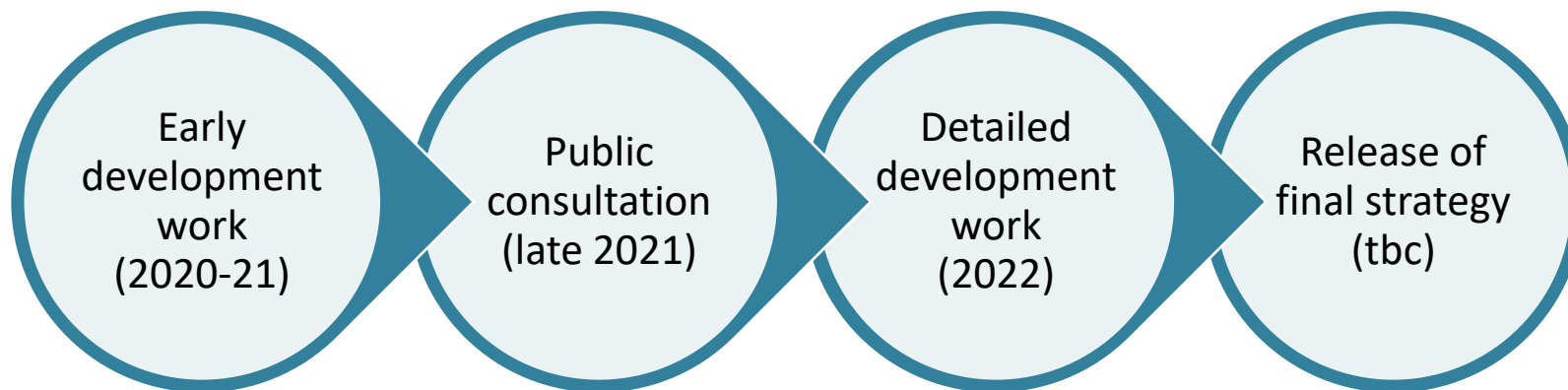
- It is estimated that in Aotearoa New Zealand we generate 17.49 million tonnes of waste per year, of which an estimated 12.59 million tonnes are sent to landfill.
- In 2019, the waste sector contributed around 4% of Aotearoa New Zealand's total greenhouse gas emissions and around 9% of its biogenic methane emissions.
- On average each New Zealander sends at least 60 kilograms of plastic to landfill every year.
- Our recovery and recycling rates for plastics are low.
- Plastic is present in our soils, water, food and even the air we breathe.

The policy landscape – lifting our performance

Circularity, climate and duties of care are driving factors

- National waste strategy and updated legislation
- National Plastics Action Plan – less plastic, more circular, better for the environment
- Phasing out problem plastics
- Regulated product stewardship for plastic packaging
- Improving kerbside recycling
- Container Return Scheme
- Plastics Innovation Fund - \$50M across four years

A new long-term waste strategy



What will it do?

- Set a clear long-term direction
- Outline shorter term targets, goals and priorities
- Set the context for more detailed Action & Investment Plans, each looking out about 5 years
- Influence council WMMPs as they are revised
- Provide a platform for evaluating and reporting on progress

Critical links:

- Emissions Reduction Plan:
 - Specific commitments to reduce emissions from waste
 - Development of circular economy and bioeconomy strategy
- New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy

Proposing a new comprehensive Act

1. Create clear and coherent roles and responsibilities
2. Regulate how we manage and dispose of waste
3. Enhance powers to regulate products and materials
4. Strengthen compliance, monitoring and enforcement powers

Next steps:

- Aiming to take final policy proposals to Cabinet in late-2022
- Legislative process (introduce bill, Select Committee) during 2023-24

Regulated Plastic Packaging Product Stewardship

Declaration

All packaging used for consumer goods at retail or wholesale level (excluding beverage containers) made of plastic resin codes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7, singly or in combination with one or more of these plastics or any non-plastic material, and not refilled by the producer for retail sale or able to be refilled by the consumer at a retail establishment.

The co-design project (2-years)

- Led by Packaging Forum and supported by New Zealand Food and Grocery Council
- Government funding via WMF up to \$994,900 (total project costs \$1.36M)
- Representatives from all areas of the plastic packaging chain will be involved

Improving household kerbside recycling

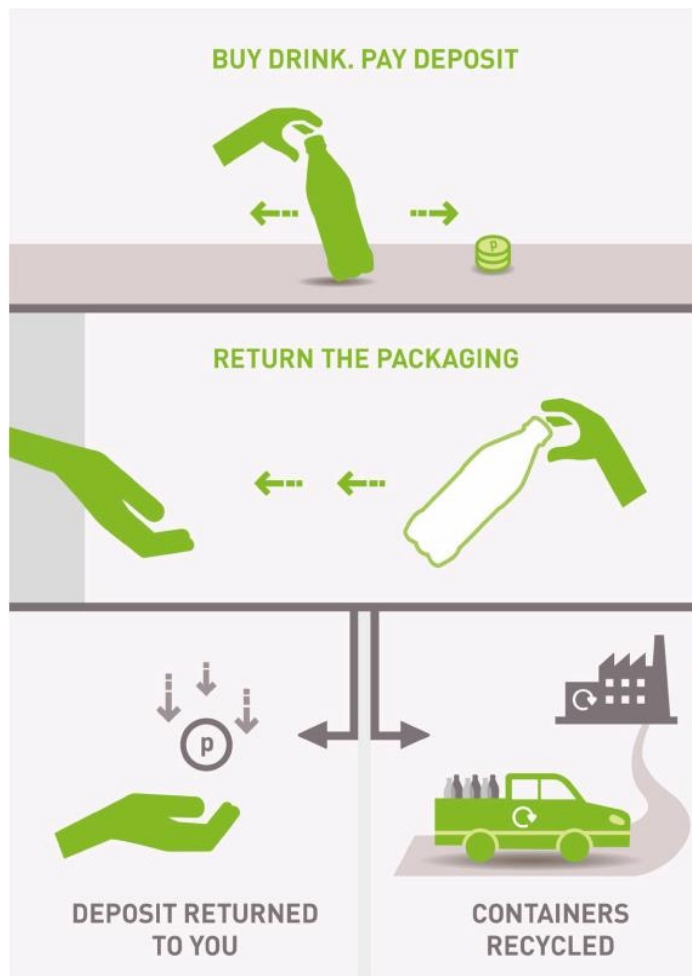


Standardising kerbside to help:

- Increase the amount of recycling in kerbside and decrease contamination
- increase the quality of material recycled
- make it easier for the public to recycle correctly
- contribute to NZ meeting its emission targets.

Container Return Scheme

Overview of work to date



- A container return scheme (CRS) is a recycling scheme and form of product stewardship for beverage containers (requires legislation to establish a scheme).
- **Co-design project in 2020:** A co-design project ran from late 2019 to October 2020.
- **Late 2020 – 2022:** Analysis of the co-design outputs and advice to the Minister for the Environment on the option for a scheme.
- **Public consultation 13 March – 22 May 2022:** *Transforming Recycling* consultation, including the proposal on a New Zealand Container Return Scheme (NZ CRS), received well over 6000 submissions.
- **Cabinet decision:** The expected timing of Cabinet decisions is late-2022. If Cabinet decides to implement a scheme, a NZ CRS could be operational in New Zealand by 2025/26 at the earliest.
- More information can be found on our website: <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/areas-of-work/waste/container-return-scheme-reducing-waste-landfill/>

Plastics Innovation Fund – progress to date

Round one complete, Round two underway



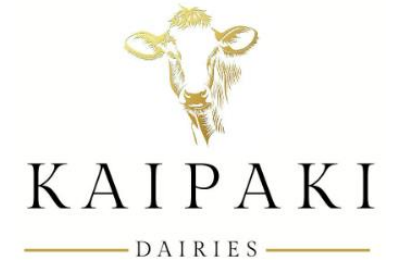
A research and development project by Pinehurst Associates, **in collaboration with Scion**, to develop biodegradable nursery pots as an alternative to traditional plastics pots. The pots would degrade once planted, to support plant growth.



Marley NZ, partnering with Waste Management and Unitec, to minimise construction waste by breaking down old plumbing pipes made of PVC and HDPE and using the material to make new pipes.



A partnership with Policon to expand New Zealand's onshore recycling capability, by turning waste polystyrene, such as you find in appliance packaging, into innovative building products.



An initiative with Kaipaki Dairies that extends their reusable milk keg delivery service, removing up to a million single use plastic milk bottles per annum.

My challenge to the packaging sector

- Designing out waste is best! (Refuse it, reuse it).
- Supply chain accountability is coming (Regulated Product Stewardship).
- Simplifying, and focusing on end of life.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a small, light blue, irregularly shaped object over a surface of sand. Several other similar blue objects are scattered on the sand in the background. The hand is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the frame, with fingers slightly curled. The sand is a light tan color with some darker specks. The blue objects appear to be small pieces of plastic or debris.

Questions?

Or visit:

<https://environment.govt.nz/publications/waste-reduction-work-programme/>