

Practical steps to reduce waste & emissions



Zero Waste is Climate Action

Zero Waste strategies help us solve our waste and plastic pollution problems. They also enable us to reduce CO₂ and methane emissions.

The global population has doubled since the 1970's but we are using four times as many resources. Keeping products and materials in circulation for longer means we don't need to pull so much out of the environment and into our economy. Extracting less makes it easier to protect and regenerate ecosystems and biodiversity and to limit climate change.

The materials and energy we use to make all our stuff get wasted when we throw things away. Careless use of resources creates many forms of pollution and environmental damage. Wasteful use of energy and resources is a form of economic inefficiency. Shifting to a more responsible approach to production and consumption feels like a big job. But like all journeys it starts with a few simple steps.

Zero Waste gives us a roadmap, a toolkit and a destination.

To get us on the right track we need to:

- 1** Establish the Container Return Scheme, which will radically improve recycling outcomes and set us up for product stewardship.
- 2** Develop a nationwide network of zero waste hubs to give more people and businesses access to reuse, repair, recycling and composting.
- 3** Focus on real solutions that design waste and pollution out of our economy by rethinking products and business models.

Implement the Container Return Scheme

to help fund the transition

We can't run the circular economy on grants and subsidies. Product stewardship is the tool that creates the revenue flows we need to fund reuse and recycling systems. The Container Return Scheme is a good stepping stone towards large scale, nationwide product stewardship schemes.

It is also a better way to recycle drink containers:

- **Everybody loves it** - 98% of the responses to last year's Government consultation were in support.
- **It works** - high return rates, high quality recycling, low litter, proven result in many countries over decades.
- **It pays for itself** - covers all the real costs of recycling so we don't have to use rates budgets to subsidise drink container recycling.
- **It sets us up with infrastructure** - establishes a nationwide network of take-back sites that can also be used by emerging Reuse and Refill business models.



"As far as I can see CRS is a no brainer. We get our deposit back when we drop off the empty container and we know it will get recycled properly. It just makes sense."



Citizen Story

"Our customers expect us to do the right thing. Having a nationwide scheme that we can tap into is much more efficient than every business having to come up with their own system."



Business Story

"At the moment recycling doesn't pay for itself. The handling fee would cover the real cost of recycling all the drink containers we get from residents, businesses and events."



Recycler Story

"We have supported introducing CRS for years. It reduces upward pressure on rates. And the high recycling rates and good quality materials would help rebuild the public's trust and confidence in recycling which is at an all time low."



Council Story

The background work has already been done:

- Inclusive, comprehensive co-design process
- International evidence shows benefits of container return schemes
- Public consultation confirmed very strong public support
- Been through the rigour of cabinet due process
- Legislation ready to be drafted

The next step is to:

Give the green light to CRS by committing to implement the Container Return Scheme in the first 100 days of the new Government.

So that we can:

- ✓ Take pressure off councils and ratepayers who won't have to subsidise drink container recycling
- ✓ Recycle 90%+ of our glass, plastic and aluminium drink containers
- ✓ Solve the litter and plastic pollution problems caused by drink containers for good

Invest to expand & establish Zero Waste Hubs

because we need more places like these

Zero Waste Network members have led the way for 30 years. Our model shows it is possible to use simple tools and systems to divert 70%+ of the material flowing into local transfer stations. These organisations are kaupapa driven and embedded in their local communities. They create good jobs and put their money back into local economies.

Zero Waste Hubs (community resource recovery centres):

- **Deliver services communities want** like reuse, repair, composting, resource recovery and recycling. They are ideal drop off points for the Container Return Scheme and future product stewardship schemes like electronic waste.
- **Combine engagement and education with service delivery.** That means the households and businesses they work with come on a journey up the waste hierarchy so that reducing, reusing, recycling and composting become the norm.
- **Collaborate through national and local networks** to share knowledge, skills and experience. Collective work on behaviour change supports the shift away from single use, towards reuse, durability, 'Right to Repair' and sharing models.



"We come to our local Hub pretty much every weekend. The kids love it and I love it too. Being able to do everything in one place makes it so easy to do our recycling, drop off batteries and e-waste, and do a bit of second hand shopping!"

Customer Story

"We depend on our local Hub staff to give us good advice about reducing our waste. They help us cut through all the greenwash claims about products and packaging. Running a small business is 24/7, we don't have time to do all that research ourselves."

Business Story

"These Zero Waste Hubs give the community a practical way to get involved. It is easy for people to see how they can play their part in composting, reuse, repair and recycling when it's already happening in their neighbourhood."

Council Story

The 2023 Waste Strategy has set clear goals and targets to shift to a circular economy.

Practical support to expand and develop the existing resource recovery network is a critical piece of the puzzle.

- The next step is to:**
- Co-fund 20 new Zero Waste Hubs
 - Expand and upgrade existing Hubs
 - Invest in local scale behaviour change work
 - Skills and capability training for the sector

- So that we can:**
- ✓ Give communities and businesses access to the services they need to reduce waste and emissions
 - ✓ Create good jobs with fair pay in the emerging circular economy
 - ✓ Establish the infrastructure for refill, reuse, repair, and sharing models for products

Focus on the real solutions

to design waste and pollution out of our economy

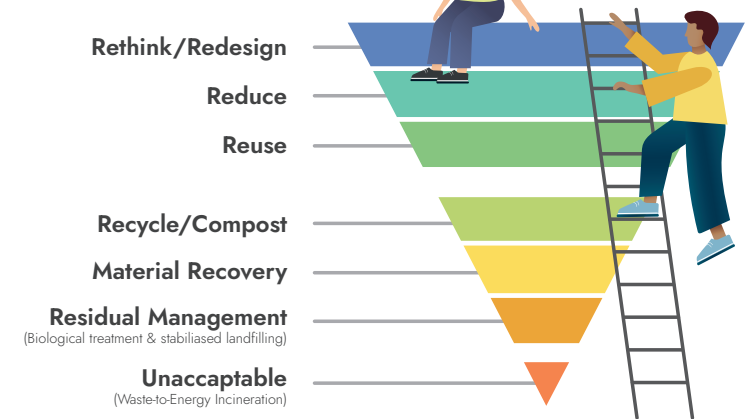
Real solutions follow the waste hierarchy: Shifting to a circular economy means we have to rethink and redesign products and business models. Legislation, regulation and policy need to incentivise reuse, refill, durability and repair in order to reduce single use packaging and create long-lasting, non-toxic products.

Real solutions reduce waste and emissions: Waste-to-Energy Incineration is being proposed as an alternative to landfill but burning mixed solid waste will not help us reduce waste or emissions. Incineration is a false solution that would take us in the wrong direction because it's just another disposal method. Burning or burying resources means we have to keep extracting new materials and energy to create more products which damages ecosystems and our climate.

Investing in large scale incineration plants would lock Aotearoa into a linear throwaway future because they use long term contracts to secure a continuous supply of rubbish to burn. Our sector is working hard to reduce methane emissions from organic waste going to landfill. It doesn't make any sense to start burning fossil fuel based plastic, which creates CO2 emissions and releases toxic pollutants, when New Zealand's goal is 100% renewable electricity generation.

Real solutions focus investment and innovation at the top of the Waste Hierarchy and clearly signal the direction of travel. They are safe for people, ecosystems and climate, viable because they build in ways to cover the real costs, accessible to everyone and regenerative because they leave things better than they were before.

Waste Hierarchy



"We want to live a zero waste lifestyle but it is hard work when the systems are not set up to support us. We need businesses to put better products on the shelves and to make reuse, refill and repair the norm."



Citizen Story

"Customers tell us how countries in Europe like Denmark are into Incineration. They don't realise that things have changed over there. Plastic is made from fossil fuel so burning plastics creates CO2 emissions. That's why Denmark has started shutting down their incinerators because they can't meet their emissions reductions targets."



Hub Story

"We are getting proposals for Waste-to-Energy Incineration plants. We know they won't help us make our economy more circular. But we don't have the regulatory framework or the expertise to make good calls on this very specialised topic."



Council Story

We need to rule out Waste-to-Energy Incineration which:

- Creates CO2 emissions
- Works against circular economy and resource efficiency goals
- Still requires landfills to contain toxic by-products

The next step is to:

Put a moratorium on Waste-to-Energy Incineration for mixed solid waste

So that we can:

- ✓ Protect biodiversity and regenerate ecosystems by focusing investment and action on real solutions at the top of the waste hierarchy
- ✓ Limit climate change by keeping products and materials in circulation for as long as possible to reduce waste and emissions
- ✓ Keep toxic chemicals out of our air, water, soil and food chain