

THE ZERO WASTE NEW ZEALAND TRUST

TURNING WASTE INTO TERRITORIAL ECONOMIC RESOURCE

By Ivan Lawrence White

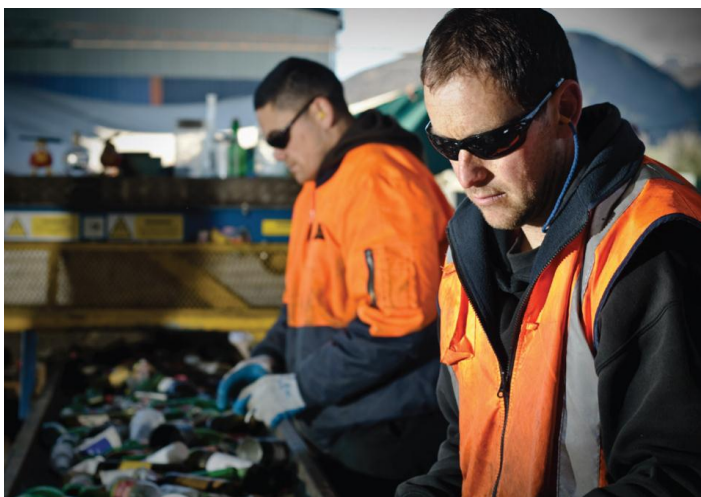
Waste management awards, the Zero Waste Academy and most of all community group recycling operations are the ingredients for New Zealand's successful Zero Waste policy.

New Zealand's National and local Governments have relied on market-driven voluntary initiatives to control waste. New Zealand is strongly marketed as clean and green, legislation controlling waste is new and most controls are at a regional or local level. For this reason, [Zero Waste New Zealand Trust](#) was created as a no-profit organisation whose focus is to support the activities of community organisations, councils, businesses, schools and individuals involved in waste minimisation and recycling. The Zero Waste Trust influenced and encouraged many people in New Zealand and overseas to think of rubbish as a resource, and on actions leading to a sustainable society.

The Trust introduced the idea of zero waste and influenced over 350 New Zealand councils and community groups to aim for zero waste. By adopting the Zero Waste approach, some of the best City and District Councils in New Zealand managed to divert 60 to 90% of their waste from landfill by sorting their waste and finding secondary markets for the various separated and recovered products. For instance in Penrose, the glass manufacturing plant has been recycling glass since 1922 and manages to produce over 50,000 bottles per hour. Another successful example is the Green Ribbon Award Winner Kapiti District Council which has been reducing its absolute greenhouse gas footprint by 48 per cent since 2010, due to many energy and waste initiatives.

As a policy, Zero Waste New Zealand Trust seeks to redesign the way resources and materials flow through society taking a *whole community system* approach. This innovative approach proposes solutions that maximize recycling, minimize waste, and a design principle which ensures that products are made to be reused, repaired or recycled back into the marketplace or nature. The Zero Waste website delivers useful information related to these solutions, and moreover on best practices to manage the [most common waste categories](#) (i.e. glass, biofuels, farm plastics, tires, used batteries, e-waste), in order to facilitate new recycling initiatives.

Zero Waste New Zealand suggests that the entire concept of waste should be eliminated. Waste should instead be thought of as a *residual product* or simply a *potential resource* to counter our basic acceptance of waste as a normal course of events.



Opportunities such as reduced costs, increased profits, and reduced environmental impacts are found when returning these *residual products or resources* as food to either natural or industrial systems.

The strategy is to channel waste into purpose built *Resource Recovery Centres* for processing, dismantling and remanufacturing. What was once termed waste will be turned into jobs, businesses and new products. In fact, [community groups](#) have proved that they can create jobs and generate money flows within their territory by diverting resources from the waste stream. In particular community businesses add value to local businesses through purchasing, processing and transportation services and helping to up-skill the local work force.

In particular Zero Waste New Zealand encompasses several assets and actions amongst which: Cleaner production for industries and productive activities by using less resources and creating less pollution; A sensible product redesign so that products parts can be reused, recycled or composted; Promotion of reusable and recycled products and their recovery; Identification and implementation of waste free legislation and regulations; Helping communities achieve a local economy that operates efficiently, sustains good jobs and promotes self-reliance; Creation of new jobs and finally the reduction of community costs to manage, dispose and reduce waste.

The results of Zero Waste New Zealand initiatives can be summarized as:

- Reduction of waste costs as recycling is more cost effective than land filling
- Job creation through waste minimization and recycling initiatives
- Economic development. Revenue can be generated from recycled or reused resources commodities otherwise destined for landfill, creating employment
- Increasing trading with partners for recycled scraps and materials
- Preservation of natural heritage through the preservation of the environment and conservation of natural resources
- Reduction of pollution by decreasing litter, greenhouse gas emissions and the burden of landfill remediation or contamination
- Tourism benefits by keeping the country's clean and green image.

Zero Waste New Zealand has further evolved from the community operation approach by developing an educational framework to support the growing waste industry through the [Zero Waste Academy \(ZWA\)](#). Established in 2002 by the Zero Waste New Zealand Trust, Massey University and the Palmerston North City Council, the aim of the Academy is to facilitate R&D engagement between the waste and recycling industry and the University's academic community.



In this context, the Academy is involved in a variety of research, consulting, advisory and recycling industry and community development initiatives to support New Zealand's sustainable development.

The journey to Zero Waste is not an easy one, however Zero Waste is a reality which promotes not only reuse and recycling, but also, and more importantly, a positive change towards a more sustainable lifestyle within communities, a passion about bringing people together to initiate changes that benefits the wider community and leads towards an impact full zero waste era.

To know more

[Zero Waste Trust website](#)

[Zero Waste strategy](#)

[Community Recycling Network website](#)

[Old Tyres recycled](#)

[On the road recycling](#)

[Zero Waste Academy](#)

[Mount Eden Village website](#)

[Article in Pacific Scoop](#)

[New Zealand Packaging Accord](#)

[Waste Management and Minimisation Plan Auckland Council](#)

[Platform to implement the zero waste strategy](#)

