

## 1. Introduction

Wellington City Council produced one of the country's first solid waste strategies or plans in 1995, under a 5 'R's framework of reduce, reuse, recycle, recover and residual disposal. The strategy pre-dated the passage of the Local Government Amendment Act (No 4) 1996, which required all local authorities to produce a waste management plan for the management of solid and liquid wastes.

The 1995 strategy now needs to be updated in terms of broad strategic direction, investment decisions and waste reduction targets. This solid waste management plan provides for that update. It does so within the legislative requirements of the Local Government Act 2002 which continues to give force to the original waste management planning requirements of the Local Government Amendment Act (No 4) 1996. The plan is also developed within the statutory requirement for local government to consider a sustainable development approach. It takes account of and works within the framework of the newly published New Zealand Waste Strategy 2002.

The focus on sustainable development encourages local authorities to think across traditional splits of environmental, economic and social outcomes. For solid waste management, this involves more than consideration of Council provided waste recycling and reduction services and a shifting of focus within traditional landfill management and transfer station services. It involves understanding and working towards the emergence of a viable waste recovery sector or economy. This includes understanding the economics of different recovery technologies and markets, the scale at which they must operate to be successful and how local authority actions can support the emergence of a sustainable sector.

Local authorities will also have to take a broader approach to the way they analyse investment decisions. Closed landfills have been identified as producing 5% of the country's greenhouse gases. Increasing pressure will be applied to force local communities to reduce gas emissions from landfills. Similarly there is likely to be increasing pressure on communities to deal with the impacts of closed landfill leachates on receiving waters. This will result in increased aftercare costs that must be factored into any analysis of costs and benefits of waste reduction actions.

Local authority solid waste management planning will also need to take more account of the particular characteristics and market realities of each waste stream. The common approach is to set waste reduction targets for total waste volumes to landfill, rather than to understand and develop waste reduction plans for each waste stream that incorporate market realities and recovery sector development.

Finally, there is a need to resolve the tensions between a traditional focus in landfill and transfer station services on ensuring sufficient waste flows to landfill to cover operating costs, and the desire to reduce waste. There is a need for local authorities to make a clear strategic statement as to their role and to build subsequent decisions, such as any pricing framework, within that context.

This waste management plan takes an innovative approach to these issues. It signals a new strategic direction which goes beyond a more common focus on waste reduction targets and provision of Council waste reduction and recycling services. These services continue to be important but must be seen as only affecting some parts of the waste stream. The plan sets out a new strategic framework and a series of issues that have been identified as requiring further investigation and analysis. It also describes how Council will approach the provision of current services.

The plan does not provide a detailed programme of action but sets the strategic framework for the next five to ten years, within the context of a number of broad long-term principles and goals.

The intention is to treat the waste management plan as a dynamic document, which will be updated as key strategic and operational decisions are made. Decisions will be consulted upon

in future reviews of the waste plan if they include a significant change of strategy, service or pricing or funding frameworks (the latter in conjunction with the funding policy), that have not previously been formally adopted in the current plan.

The waste management plan is broken into parts as follows:

- a summary of the principles that will underpin Wellington City's waste management
- the policies that shape Council action and a brief summary of key actions. This is structured around ten strategic action areas;
- individual waste stream targets
- an appendix which summarises waste reduction performance between 1995 and 2003.

This document comprises the first part of the overall waste management plan. The liquid waste component has yet to be prepared. In developing this part, the cross-over and links with liquid waste are fully recognised, especially the issues of biosolids and garden waste management. Hazardous waste management is also linked. Given that the waste management plan is focused on providing a guiding framework only, the specifics of the current biosolids/garden waste programme is not discussed. As the detailed waste stream plans and the liquid waste part of the waste management plan are progressed, these linkages will receive greater discussion.