

THIS CHAPTER COVERS:

Waste minimisation

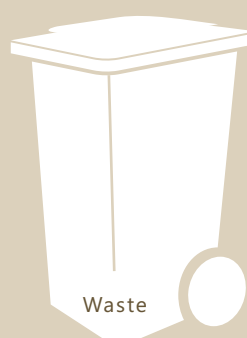
- Regional waste management
- Waste minimisation initiatives

Residual waste

- Waste to landfill
- Kerbside collection
- Hazardous and special waste
- Cleanfills
- Illegal dumping

WASTE

In today's world, the focus of waste management has shifted to minimisation—reducing the amount of waste created and therefore needing disposal. It's also about looking at ways to treat waste as a resource with potential to be recovered, reused or recycled.



*'The focus of waste management
has shifted to minimisation ...'*



Waste

The *Waste Minimisation Act 2008* defines waste as any thing disposed of or discarded and includes any type of waste that is defined by its composition or source—for example, organic waste, electronic waste, or construction and demolition waste. To avoid doubt, it includes any component or element of diverted material, if the component or element is disposed of or discarded. The Act establishes a hierarchy of priorities and preferences in waste minimisation and management. These are reduction of waste generated, reuse of items and materials, recovery and recycling for alternative uses, and finally, treatment and disposal of residual wastes.

In past years, waste management has been about the environmental effects of solid waste disposal in dumps—things such as managing odour, seagulls, and pollution leaching to groundwater. However, over the past two decades, most environmental issues associated with solid waste disposal have been addressed. Most small municipal landfills or 'dumps' have been closed, and there has been marked improvement in landfill engineering and management practices at new or remaining sites.

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The focus of waste management has shifted to minimisation—reducing the amount of waste we create and therefore need to dispose of. Recovery and recycling or reuse have become about recognising the opportunity to use waste as a resource—exactly as other activities use resources such as water, land, hydrocarbons, wind and air. The difference is that the resource is generated by human activities rather than being inherent in nature. Effective waste management also recognises that it is far more efficient to reduce the amount of waste we generate than to manage waste disposal.

Councils in the region follow current best practice in waste management by adopting the principles of minimisation, recovery, and recycling. On a practical level, this means minimising waste going to landfill, encouraging composting of organic material and reusing or recycling materials where possible. All of these actions help to minimise the environmental impacts associated with solid waste disposal and avoid the depletion of critical resources.

Unlike much of New Zealand, Taranaki has secured long-term access to a future landfill site. However, as a region, it is still important to reduce the amount of waste generated and to divert waste that does not need to go to landfill and could instead be recycled, composted or used in another process.

Effective and innovative waste management requires involvement of the whole community. It is no longer a case of leaving it to the local council rubbish truck crew. Education is a crucial part of ensuring that as a region, we manage waste in a responsible and sustainable way.

