



Newtown Residents' Association Oral Submission on the Proposed Wellington City Council Solid Waste Management and Minimisation Bylaw 2020.

Presented by Rhona Carson on 21/10/2021

Firstly, we are interested in the purpose of this bylaw. There are many important provisions that focus on health and safety and we fully agree with all of these. However we hope that the City Council has a fundamental goal to reduce waste and to stop filling up the landfill. I join other submitters in recommending that this aspiration should be reflected in the language that is used in the bylaw. Most obviously, wherever there is a requirement for plans, we would like to see these called zero waste plans, or waste minimisation plans, not waste management plans.

We would also like to see Council being more ambitious about controls on the separation and repurposing of organic waste. This is a menace in the landfill because of methane production, and it is also a wasted resource. It follows though that resources and education are needed to make it feasible for all organic waste to be converted to compost, and we hope the the Council will encourage and support a range of solutions. This could include worm farms, bokashi and compost systems, on an individual, community or municipal scale.

Multi Unit Dwellings

The proposed bylaw has expectations for all multi unit developments with 10 or more units to have plans for waste management. We don't have any objection to this, in fact we support it, although we foresee complications when the units are in private ownership and there is no overall owner or manager to take responsibility.

Our difficulty comes with clause 12.1 *The owner and/or the manager of a multi-unit development must make adequate provision for the management of all waste, recycling and organic waste generated within the premises. This includes arrangements for the regular collection of waste to the satisfaction of Council....* This implies that the Council contractors aren't going to collect the waste and recycling, a service that is available to other Wellington residents. I know that this was discussed at the Strategy and Policy Committee Meeting on 18th June and the Councilors passed an amendment to *Agree that the existing rubbish and recycling collection service for existing multi-unit dwellings be retained for the period of the bylaw.* This isn't reflected in the wording of the bylaw itself, but it is acknowledged in the controls, in clause 2.16, which concludes- *no Council provided waste, recycling or other diverted material collection service will be available to any new multi-unit development of 10 or more residential units from two years following the commencement date of the Bylaw.* By extrapolation these services should be available to existing multi unit developments.

We query why the Council is so adamant about not providing this service. I have heard the arguments about the difficulties of collecting rubbish and recycling from multi unit dwellings when it is treated in the same way as from smaller dwellings – that is, a proliferation of bags and or wheelie bins at the

kerbside creating a hazard for other road and foot path users – but there is an expectation that the multi unit developments' waste plans will have a provision for waste to be collected. It seems logical that the council could contract a service to collect this rather than a private contractor being engaged by the dwelling owners or managers. This would not only be more equitable in service provision but would allow the Council to have more direct influence over the quality of the service. We expect the multi unit dwellings making their own arrangements will do this by providing a skip or similar for rubbish and another for recycling. There is probably a flat charge and no incentive to reduce waste, and probably little quality control over what goes in each bin. The likely result is skips full of contaminated recycling going to the landfill. It should be possible to work out alternative creative solutions for each development during the process of developing waste minimization plans. This might involve each unit taking responsibility for their own waste, according to the agreed plans, and assembling it at an agreed time and place where Council contractors can access it.

'Zero Waste' at Events

We have been involved with this for many years because of our long association with Newtown Festival. I personally have the dual role of Residents' Association President and Festival Administrator. The organisation Wellington Waste Managers had its beginnings in developing the zero waste aspirations for Newtown Festival, and the Festival team still relies on them to provide these services.

We strongly support WCC bylaws to enforce appropriate waste minimization, but we agree with WWM and other submitters that this proposal doesn't go far enough. In fact we agree with and endorse all the proposals in the WWM submission.

We don't understand why indoor events are specifically excluded from regulation. We recommend that they should be required to follow the same regulations as outdoor events - waste is waste wherever it is generated.

We recommend that there should be a clear expectation that event waste plans should follow the waste minimisation hierarchy so that waste is avoided as a first choice. Reusables should be expected instead of single use products, disposable products should be compostable whenever possible, with recyclable products only used if there is no compostable version, and landfill should be a last resort.

We think that smaller events, up to 1000 attendees, should also be expected to have waste minimization plans. If events are held on Council land or in Council premises there is generally a requirement to have permission and a health and safety plan. It would be straightforward to add a waste minimisation plan to this. Equally if an event applies for Council events funding, a plan and budget for waste minimisation should be one of the requirements.

We want to acknowledge that effective waste minimisation at big events costs a lot. We spent over \$11,000 on this at the 2020 Newtown Festival. This isn't a complaint, it is one of the necessary costs of putting on an event, and if we had been able to afford more we could have got an even better result. However whatever the Council can do to lessen the costs would be very welcome. One thing is for the Council to be a source of expertise and best practice guidance so that events don't have to spend time reinventing systems. Help with access to reusable products would also be very valuable. At Newtown Festival we benefit from the stocks of serve ware that Newtown Community and Cultural Centre has built up, and we have plans for improving the access to dishwashing and sterilising so that the Wash

Against Waste program can expand. This is the sort of thing that could be brokered by the Council so that all events can make use of similar facilities

Finally, a question that I hope isn't necessary – will Council-run events follow the expectations of this bylaw? We have noticed that this has sometimes been a gap in the past, but ideally in future Council events will set a good example for everyone else to follow.