

19 September 2023

Via email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

**Official Information Request for Proposed Waste Management New Model
Ref: OIA 094/23**

We refer to your official information request dated 23 August for information relating to the new proposed waste management new model.

How much of this report was prepared by Tonkin & Taylor Consultants and how much did the T & T input cost? What input did council staff have?

The report was prepared by T&T and the analysis of the proposal was elaborated between T&T and the BDC Waste Management Coordinator.

\$33K has been paid to T&T so far, that includes Regional Joint Committee Establishment Advise, Three Council workshops for each West Coast District Council (Grey, Buller and Westland), Technical Specifications drafting for the new waste management services contract, and Statement of Proposal for the Buller Public Consultation. Note, the costs have been funded across the Three West Coast Councils in a collaborative approach for elements of this work.

Item 1.1 Having a Regional Waste Minimisation and Management Plan. What is the current Waste management plan and does the council know:

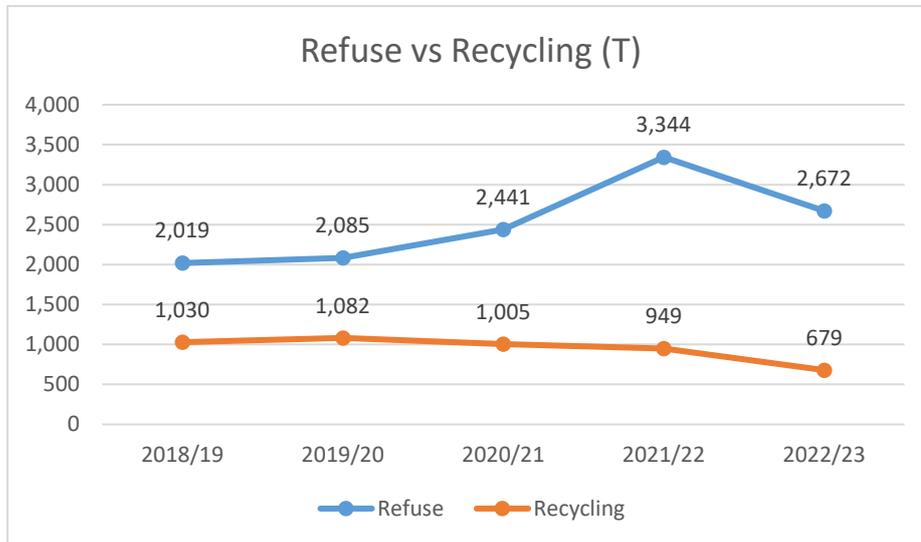
Yes, 2018-2024 WMMP (online at our BDC website)

How many tons of waste is collected every year?

The quantity of material collected in the kerbside collection services for the July 2022 to June 2023 period was 904.84T (31% refuse, 69% recycling).

The total of waste received in the Westport and Reefton transfer stations for period of year from July 2022 to June 2023 was 2,672T of refuse and 679T of recycling (Note: this includes the refuse and recycling collected in the kerbside collection services above)

Can you produce a graph of waste for the paste 5 yrs?



Note: above the spike in tonnage experience in the 2021/22FY is attributable to the July 2021 and February 2022 Flood and Storm Events

How many tonnes is recycled?

The total of material recycled at the Westport transfer stations from July 2022 to June 2023 was 679T

The graphic above shows the data for the last 5 years.

What are the percentages of the various recycle materials?

Glass:	67%
Fibres:	25%
Plastics 1,2,5	5%
Ferrous:	3%
Non-Ferrous:	2.4%
Others:	0.4%

Note: the above is by weight not volume; so, while volumetrically there is significant plastics in the recycling stream, by weight glass is the most dominant in weight.

What percentage of plastic waste is recycled?

As above 5%

How many tons of plastic go to the land fill?

Discards from the MRF got to Landfill. Buller has a very high contamination level in its recycling (at times >30%) and all other plastics that are not #1,2 & 5 will go into the refuse to landfill. National data would indicate that to be approx. 10% of refuse weight to be unrecyclable plastic. Unrecyclable plastics remains a national challenge post China national sword policy.

What is the estimated percentage of “food waste / biodegradable” waste in each 60ltr rubbish bag? If the average household produced 10kg of food waste each week this equals 50 ton/week or 2 truckloads to Nelson each week or 2500 tonne/yr?

Buller Council hasn't done bag analysis – but National averages are anywhere from 25~40% food scraps and kitchen waste (estimation). 3~5kgs per household per week is about where the national average lays (Auckland is 3.3kg per household per week) **Note: that some communities are able to do at home diversion and composting better than other communities (for example a rural, or rural residential household like we have in Buller may have chickens or livestock and therefore are better able to divert food waste than a community for example in Urban Auckland or other large cities how don't have the means to compost.

Collection and diversion of food scrap wastes for smaller councils (like us) will still come at a significant cost for all ratepayers to set in place such collection and create the process and treatment systems. Therefore, the current WMMP strategic direction is to encourage householders (ratepayers) to undertake their own diversion and composting on site. Council is working with the other two West Coast Councils to place a bid into the MfE National Waste Levy Contestable funding pool to support and resource a detailed look at food waste collection and diversion for our communities.

What is the cost per kg for waste management.

\$503 per Tonne (Incl GST)

Is there anywhere that BDC can show with details where waste has been minimized, reduced through any action of the BDC?

- Composting workshop (including Mitre10 sponsoring a start kit, often more than \$100,- in value)
- Agrecovery Programme in Reefton
- Kerbside recycling collection
- Recycling drop of at both transfer stations
- C&D project (in progress)
- Battery & E-Waste disposal
- Karamea Recovery Centre
- Maruia Recycling Facility

What contract does BDC have with the Nelson Tasman Land fill company for accepting Buller waste for how long?

Currently SEL is contracted to dispose, and they are a 'gate' client at York Valley.

What is the projected life of the York Valley land Fill?

The York Valley Landfill Business Unit is currently looking at expansion plans to ensure longevity of site, and management of environmental risk. York valley still hold significant remaining life.

Our Vision for Buller. (Separate file on BDC Web)

“Is operating sustainably & meets climate & waste management standards”.

- **Who says we are operating sustainably?**
- **Where is the evidence? If it exists, why isn't it published?**
- **Who is monitoring it?**
- **Education & collaboration. Is it successful? How are you measuring the success. Can it be done better. More “keep NZ Green” signs. Just look at the rubbish in the drains alongside our roads and judge for yourself. Maybe it is time for school trips doing clean ups alongside the roads and north beach. Who is measuring, reporting and policing?**

The current contract lacks significant KPI's and this is a big part of our new Waste Management Tender for the new Solid Waste Management Contract 2025 onwards. It will hold and require reporting on clear KPIs.

The current KPI monitored in this contract are (the 2014 contract):

- Monthly waste received in the transfer stations
- Monthly waste processed in Material Recovery Facility in Westport
- Monthly waste and recycling collected from Kerbside collection services
- Monthly rate of recycling contamination from recycling bins

Waste Minimization Goals! (See Our Vision file on BDC Web)

- **Reduce the average waste per resident to 25kg/month.**
- **From what value?**
- **What is the current kg/head?**
- **Why isn't this info published. It should be a KPI for senior management and councillors.**

Note, the aim is to reduce the quantity of waste disposed to landfill to 25kg per head a month. The current indicator from our data is it sits at 23.2Kg per head a month.

Reduce the percentage of contaminated recycle to 20% per month. (See Our Vision file on BDC Web)

- **What is the current status?**

This has been as high as 30%. We undertook 2 x summer of Audits and drove it down to 19% in December of 2022 from an average rate of 32% of contamination during the years 2021 and 2022. The current contamination rate a July 2023 has begun to raise back up again to 31%. See graphic below. Nationally the contamination rate sits at anywhere between 16% - 20%

Buller remains over the national average. Bin audits help, but when the pressure is reduced with the staff checking the contamination, the rate spike back up. This is part of not having a regular and sustained refuse disposal option into a universal and regular bin, leading residents to contaminate the yellow bin with refuse.

This has large impacts, as contamination in bins, can not only spoil that yellow bins content, but once loaded onto the truck, can spoil the whole truck and then in turn if it enters the MRF can spoil a whole 'bale'.



Why isn't this published every 3 months

We undertake Bin Audits at select time of year only.

The data is in the graphic above. Council will arrange to release the data periodically.

Increase the percentage of recycling collected to 35% per month of total waste collected. (See Our Vision file on BDC Web)

- What is the current status? -

The percentage of recycling collected on the kerbside collection is 69%

The percentage of recycling collected at recycling centres in 19%

Who is measuring & reporting.

Smart report to Council monthly and Council report Quarterly to the Ministry for Environment as per established in the Waste Data report requirements.

These reports should be published every 3 months to keep general public awareness.

Noted, we would consider releasing the data; this is indeed a good idea and our staff have looked into have an online counter/indicator of the 3-monthly data able to be publicly viewed.

The landfills and plastic waste are the legacy we are leaving for future generations. Do you really care? This issue is just as important as climate change and water quality.

Agree.

Item 1.3.2 New Zealand's Waste System changes.

Recently the Government announced some key changes to New Zealand's waste system, these are future focused and are working towards the commitment to a low-emissions, low-waste circular economy by 2050. A lot of us will be dead by then.

Among the key changes outlined is the intention to deliver 'improved household recycling and food scrap collections, making it easier for people to recycle and divert food scraps from landfills. Under this banner, the three main changes being introduced are:

- From February 2024, councils across Aotearoa will accept the same materials in their household collections - the current recycling service meets these requirements.
- More than half of the plastics are NOT recyclable. What is the govt doing about that? By 2027, recycling collections will be available to households in all urban areas - the current recycling service meets these requirements.
- By 2030, food scraps collections will be available to households in all urban areas. – a new service will be required by 2030.

What plans does the BDC have to implement this? Clearly this is where we can reduce our cost by collecting food and biodegradable waste and composting with the overburden at the Stockton and Okari mineral sands sites. When will it start or does the council plan to delay until 2030? We can't afford to wait for govt action. We have been waiting too long.

Plans are:

- Standardisation of service level across the coast (BDC proposal of moving Bags to Bins)
- Collective re-tendering of our Solid Waste Contract to get a modern waste collection service
- Business and Proof Concept studies funded by MfE (via the contestable waste levy fund) to explore the following:
 - C&D Waste Management (construction sector) – in progress
 - Food and kitchen scraps disposal and composing feasibility study – currently being bid for / applying for MfE funds

Item 1.3.5 Cost of Kerbside rubbish service to households

The cost for a household using 1 bag per fortnight is \$9.10 per bag (from 1 July 2023) or around \$239 per year. For a household using a bag per week the cost is around \$478 per year, more than the cost of a fortnightly wheellie bin service. When compared with similar areas bag prices in Buller District are relatively high, most likely reflecting the rural nature of the district and high disposal costs (including transport). So, what are these costs? This document is repeatedly stating efficiencies and cost savings but there is no details of costs and accounting to substantiate the claims. It is a propaganda document. What are the people in BDC doing, where is the evidence and facts and professionalism?????

\$375-450 is the estimate – will required tender. Estimates are based on what we are seeing as the costs on other parts of the Coast currently; noting the other Councils are already providing Bins via rates and the costs we are seeing at other parts of the Country.

Yes, 120ltr bins would be acceptable if the user pays for when it is emptied. The bins can have Bar Codes or electronic ID sensors that will automatically debit an account. Users can prepay at the council or supermarket etc. This would truly be “User Pays” similar to what exists now. Please get smart.

Noted.

Item 4. Other Alternatives Considered for Rubbish Collection

In considering how to ensure that households in Westport and Reefton have access to rubbish collection services a number of other options have been considered. These are:

- **Continue the current weekly bag service funded by bag sales:
There is an industry wide move away from bag-based collections due to health and safety and efficiency concerns. The current bag collection competes with private sector wheelie bins, this has an impact on the cost for each household.
On balance this option is considered more expensive for households, less safe and less effective in containing waste prior to collection.**

Again, this is an assumption. In the proposal for 2025 the Est cost is \$175 - \$225. There is a 25% difference between the lowest proposed cost and the higher cost. Again, it is just an estimate. How many times have we seen these estimates blown away in the past few years. Rate payers need fixed costs not estimates. The recycle estimate for 2025 is “TBD”. Surely this is also unacceptable?

Tender needed to inform costs. Indicative information is used, accounting for cost escalation and indicate disposal costs and providing an indicate of range. Tender costs to be included LTP 2024-2034 deliberation and consultation that Council will run in its LTP engagement.

On 21 Aug 23, the Nelson Tasman landfill business proposed a 17.7% increase in land fill fees. The Govt also will also increase the Waste Minimization Levy by 20% effective from March 2024. So additional costs are coming. So, we know they are coming so why can't the cost be more defined. Ask for quotes now.

It needs to be noted that landfill disposal costs make up but a component of the total Refuse costs to the Buller District. However, it is noted that current direction on cost pricing, including ETS and Government Charges remains on an increasing pathway; this makes it even more important for Buller to seek the best Refuse contract model and level of service to ensure future affordability.

Council to provide a weekly collection of rubbish in 80L wheelie bins: This would continue the weekly service, but with 80L wheelie bins (larger containers than the 60L bags currently sold for rubbish collection). This service is likely to be more costly than the current for households, reflecting the cost of the wheelie bins and the weekly collection. Provide larger containers for a weekly service is likely to increase the proportion of garden waste and recyclable materials in the rubbish container. On balance, this option is considered more expensive for households and result in more green waste and recyclables disposed of as rubbish. Again, where are the substantiating facts?

This is a volumetric increase from 60l bag per week to 80l bin per week, and holds none of the savings, i.e. truck and km routing will still be need to effect weekly collection, so hence forth it will be at greater costs.

Nationally there is movement towards fortnightly bin collection for waste services across New Zealand. The other two West Coast councils have already moved to fortnightly bin collection.

Who is “considering this option” and making the recommendations? A lot more homework and detailed reporting is required. Where is the professionalism of our council staff?

In essence the Council has resolved to engage with the community on the current service level review and we are doing that now. Then Council will hold hearings and make decision as the Governance members.

Clearly, local district councils need leadership from central government. The recent ban on single use plastic bags in fruit and produce stores etc have little effect when supermarkets respond by pre-packaging all goods in their delicatessen in plastic trays and film wrap.

Council remains supportive of Government direction in waste minimisation initiatives in this space.

Why not make all milk bottles out of clear plastic. This applies to all soaps, conditioners and any liquid currently sold in colour plastic or plastic that is not recyclable.

Council remains supportive of Government direction in waste minimisation initiatives in this space: especially product rules governing product stewardship.

Why does the consumer have to make the decision and worry about what is and what isn't recyclable. Why does the consumer end up paying for all the waste packaging. Why aren't producers forced to comply and reduce the types of plastic or find alternatives that are recyclable or biodegradable. The govt has been putting significant pressure on farmers to ensure not bad run off from their properties into rivers. Actions at the source of the issue. Why not the same approach to our waste issues? Surely this is a non brainer and you our council need to be putting pressure on central government to get URGENT solutions.

Noted.

There needs to be as much publicity (propaganda) about waste as there is over gas emissions and

other environmental issues. This is clearly an issue for all three west coast districts and should also be under the umbrella of the West Coast Regional council.

WMMP are collaborative strategic direction agreed amongst all 3 x Council and WCRC.

The new 2024-2028 WMMP is begin created this year. The current WMMP 2018-24 is on our Website for viewing.

We urgently need a local bio waste facility. We need to be sorting out wood (20% of construction waste is timber) and other fuel sources which can be burnt in domestic fires for heating.

Agreed – all councils working on our successful \$0.9M Construction & Demolition (C&D) bid from MfE.

Reducing waste is largely dependent on producers and manufacturers presenting their products in recyclable containers with the minimum amount of recyclable packing. The local councils and regional councils need to be proactive and lobby for legislation changes that will ensure these targets are met.

Yes – as above. Product Stewardship rules and also CRS Container Return Scheme begin currently considered by Government.

Making the new 120ltr bins mandatory will not help reduce the volume/weight of waste we produce in Westport or anywhere in NZ. It will increase the cost for some people, and it also takes away the right for people to choose who they want to provide their waste removal service.

Noted - a compromise across all rate payers in a universal approach to service level provision.

This council and the West Coast regional council need to take a step back and review why we can't have a landfill in Westport.

A Class 1 Municipal Landfill for Buller alone remains an unaffordable proposition.

There is 4500t of coal removed from Stockton every day or perhaps the new mineral sands site at Okari. Both sites are obligated to restore the sites and perhaps the biodegradable / nontoxic waste from our town can be mixed with the overburden and produce very fertile soil?

This would result in a significant reduction in the waste removal costs. Have either of these companies been approached?

BDC is currently in talks with BT Mining about compostable/kitchen waste collection to stream into their Site Remediation process and material needs. This is part of our MfE Waste Levy Contestable Fund bid for the Business Case.

Before the council rushes into the proposed mandatory 120lt bins, it needs to complete a thorough study and publish the results and then perhaps alternative or other options will become apparent.

As for now there are too many unanswered questions. This current proposal is a “sham” and tunnel vision because someone else has done it hence the Tonkin Taylor contribution!!!

So leave our current rubbish bag collection as it is for another year until you have done your home work and come up with solutions that no longer need taking our rubbish to Nelson and which should result in a significant reduction in cost to the local rate payer.

Noted.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact the Buller District Council by return email to lgoima@bdc.govt.nz.

Kind regards



Michael Duff
Group Manager Infrastructure Services