

Information on MfE's policy position and commitment to food waste prevention to support Circularity in delivering XLabs Future of Food.

*This document gives an overview of food waste initiatives being conducted at the Ministry for the Environment, it is by no means comprehensive.*

## Food waste in Aotearoa New Zealand

Food loss and waste is of increasing public awareness in Aotearoa New Zealand and globally. It is a complex and significant environmental and social issue with multiple causes. Addressing food loss and waste is a key area for achieving the Ministry for the Environment's strategic priority of a sustainable and resilient food system.

New Zealand is developing an agreed definition of food waste and loss, expected by mid-2023.

## Quantity of food waste in New Zealand

In New Zealand, the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) estimates that 314,000 tonnes of food was sent to municipal landfills in 2021/2022. Food scraps make up 9 per cent of waste sent to municipal landfills, but account for 22 per cent of these landfills' emission.

It is not known how much total food waste there is in New Zealand. For households, there is an estimated 157,398 tonnes of *avoidable* food waste (ie, food that could have been eaten) disposed to landfill through domestic kerbside rubbish collections per annum.<sup>1</sup>

MfE is procuring baseline data for food waste across the entire food supply chain as currently we only have estimates for food waste to municipal landfills. This is expected to be completed in early 2024. Once a baseline has been set, the government has committed to creating a national food waste reduction target.

## Emissions reduction plan

There are a number of initiatives in the emissions reduction plan which focus on food waste reduction and diversion from landfill.

1. **Improve household kerbside collection of food and garden waste (ERP action 15.2.1)** - The Government has [recently announced](#) the requirement for all territorial authorities to offer kerbside food scrap collections for households in urban areas by 2030.
2. **Require the separation of organic waste (ERP action 15.2.3)** - Future work is planned to progress the proposal to require businesses to separate their food waste as outlined in the *Transforming Recycling* consultation. This change will require new waste legislation to be in place before the final policy can be developed. This proposal is fundamental to achieving targets in the Emissions Reduction Plan.
3. **Support increased participation in kerbside food scraps collections (ERP action 15.1.3)** - Research has been procured to support understanding of behaviours relating to kerbside food scraps collections across the country, to inform best practice guidance for councils introducing collections.
4. **Investment into projects that divert food waste from landfill (ERP action 15.2.2)** - the Waste Minimisation Fund (WMF) has more than \$120 million in funding available (which includes \$75 million from the Climate Emergency Response Fund) over the next two years, which is focused on investment that will improve New Zealand's ability to reduce landfill (biogenic methane) emissions from organic waste, particularly kerbside collection assets, infrastructure and support for the roll-out of services for food scraps and green-waste, and organic waste processing facilities.

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<sup>1</sup> 2018, Sunshine Yates Consulting. [Microsoft Word - Final 1.0 - New Zealand Food Waste Audit Report 2018 \(lovefoodhatewaste.co.nz\)](#)

## Funding and partnerships

Since it was established in 2010, the WMF has provided funding to a range of initiatives dealing with food waste. Previous funding rounds have included \$460,000 invested into the national Love Food Hate Waste programme to raise awareness and change behaviour around food waste in New Zealand. Other types of projects funded included food rescue services, community composting initiatives, organic food de-packaging plants, various organic waste processing infrastructure including anaerobic digestion and in-vessel composting units, and feasibility studies looking at regional solutions to organic waste.

MfE is continually exploring potential partnerships with industry groups and NGOs for the implementation of national-scale programmes to prevent food being wasted by both households and businesses.

In November 2022 the Ministry supported the launch of Kai Commitment - a voluntary initiative that businesses can sign up to measure and take action to reduce food waste. Current signatories include Fonterra, Countdown and Silver Fern Farms among others.

MfE also funds the Toimata Foundation to deliver the EnviroSchools programme, with many participating schools focusing on addressing food waste (e.g. via waste audits, composting, worm farms etc).

## Reporting/Advice

The OPMSCA is researching food rescue and waste as their major project of 2022/23. They are working with experts and stakeholders across the motu and drawing on international experiences to understand the problem and explore evidence-based solutions to combat food waste throughout the food system. MfE is supporting this work by providing information and feedback on the reports.

## Useful Resources

[Champions 12.3 – Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#)

[Briefing to investigate food waste in New Zealand](#)

[Love Food Hate Waste Resources](#)

[Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor – Food rescue, food waste](#)

[Environmental educational resources | Ministry for the Environment](#)

[Emissions reduction plan](#)

## References

2022. *Towards a productive, sustainable and inclusive economy: Aotearoa New Zealand's first Emissions Reduction Plan*. [Aotearoa New Zealand's first emissions reduction plan | Ministry for the Environment](#)

2021. *Estimates of waste generated in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Ministry for the Environment. [Estimates of waste generated in Aotearoa New Zealand | Ministry for the Environment](#)

2018. *New Zealand Food Waste Audits*. Sunshine Yates Consulting. [Microsoft Word - Final 1.0 - New Zealand Food Waste Audit Report 2018 \(lovefoodhatewaste.co.nz\)](#)