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Title – Our strategic approach to waste and resource efficiency

Subtitle – The Government’s waste strategy

Visual – Head shot of Minister, picture, Government logo.

(Potentially something like this: [Beach Clean at Tomahawk Beach in Dunedin | Uview](#))

Message from the Minister for the Environment

New Zealanders care deeply about protecting and enhancing our country's unique environment.


We all have a role to play. Reducing waste and waste emissions can help us reduce environmental impacts and meet our climate targets.

The New Zealand waste strategy presents the Government's priorities for minimising waste and improving its management. It sets out what we want to achieve, and the tools that can help us get there. Achieving change will include targeted investment; working with the sector, business, local government and communities to develop and implement practical cost-effective solutions; and ensuring we have the right legislative tools.

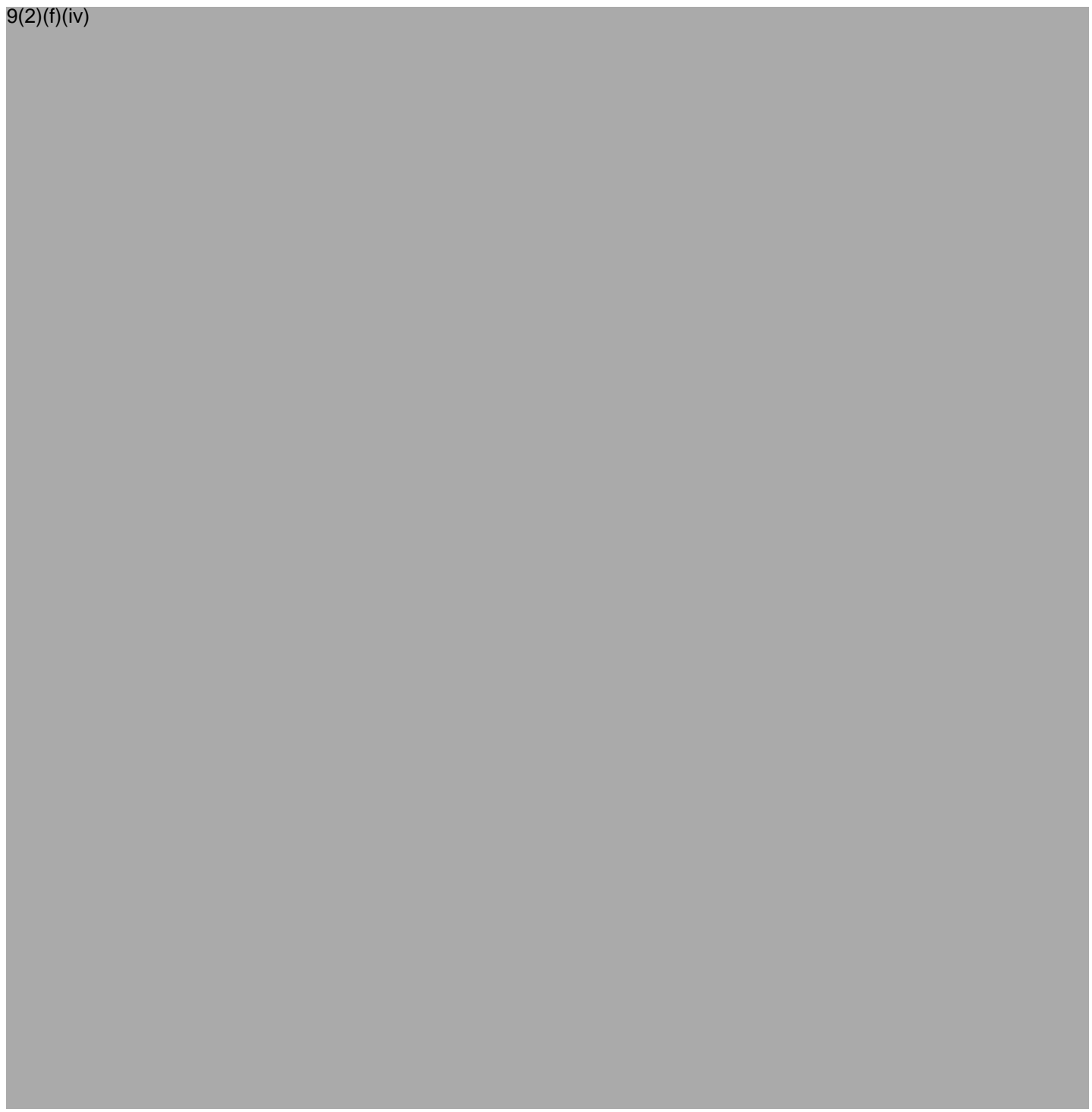
We want to ensure we retain valuable resources in the economy. We need to see a reduction in per-capita waste disposal, so we aren't lagging behind our counterparts elsewhere. Mismanaged waste and litter can cause a range of harms – and there is much to gain from a more proactive approach to remediation of contaminated sites, including those that are vulnerable to severe weather events.

Collective issues like waste need collaborative solutions. Together we can tackle New Zealand's waste problem and this strategy sets in place a plan for doing this.

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The waste hierarchy

Best option
Reduce the resources being used and redesign to avoid producing waste
Keep things in use for as long as possible, without significant reprocessing
Process materials to make the same of different material of similar value when reuse is no longer possible
Recover any remaining value, sustainably and without increasing emissions (eg, chemical recycling, renewable energy)
For any truly residual waste, treat to remove or reduce potential harm before final disposal
Least favoured option

Waste causes environmental and economic harm



Greenhouse gas emissions



Hazardous or problematic materials such as microplastics



Inappropriate disposal and litter



Harm caused by legacy contaminated sites and old landfills



Lost resources and value

Waste statistics

The waste sector contributed 4.5 per cent of New Zealand's total greenhouse gas emissions and around 8.5 per cent of biogenic methane emissions in 2022. Most waste emissions are caused by the breakdown of organic materials in landfills.

Australia has a recycling rate of 60 per cent – New Zealand's equivalent rate is 39 per cent.

New Zealanders use over two-and-a-half billion single-use drink containers each year – nearly 500 per person every year. More than half of these empty containers end up in landfills, unused stockpiles, and as litter.

1,797 landfills (56 per cent) are assessed as potentially exposed to one or more hazards (coastal edge proximity, coastal inundation, and river and surface flooding). 176 landfills (5 per cent) are potentially exposed to all three hazards.

72 per cent of New Zealanders say that they actively try to reduce waste.

Design note: something like this:

