

The Government's waste and resource efficiency strategy

Minimising waste and improving
waste management



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

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

Reducing waste and waste emissions can help us reduce environmental impacts and meet our climate targets.

The New Zealand waste and resource efficiency strategy presents the Government's priorities for minimising waste and improving waste management. It sets out what we want to achieve, and the tools to help us get there. Achieving change will include targeted investment and ensuring we have the right legislative tools. We will work with the sector, businesses, iwi/Māori, local government and communities to develop and implement practical cost-effective solutions.

We want to ensure we retain valuable resources in the economy. We need to reduce the amount of waste we dispose of per person, so we aren't lagging behind other countries we usually compare ourselves with, like Australia. Mismanaged waste and litter can cause harm to people and the environment – and there is much to gain from taking a proactive approach to remediating contaminated sites, including those that are vulnerable to severe weather events.

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

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Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment



These are the outcomes we want to achieve



Reduction of waste disposal per person



Increasing reuse and recycling of materials and products so that we retain valuable resources in the economy



Minimising emissions and environmental harm from waste and litter¹



Ensuring resource recovery and disposal facilities are managed to minimise their environmental impacts



Limiting the environmental harm caused by contaminated sites including legacy sites

1 Including, where relevant, consideration of impacts not just associated with disposal.

This is how we will achieve these outcomes



Fit-for-purpose legislation that supports:

- an efficient market for waste management and recycling
- optimal investment decisions
- appropriate responsibilities across the supply chain



Cost-effective, outcomes-focused investment of the waste disposal levy in infrastructure, innovation and local projects



Working with the sector, business, iwi/Māori, local government and communities to develop and implement practical cost-effective solutions

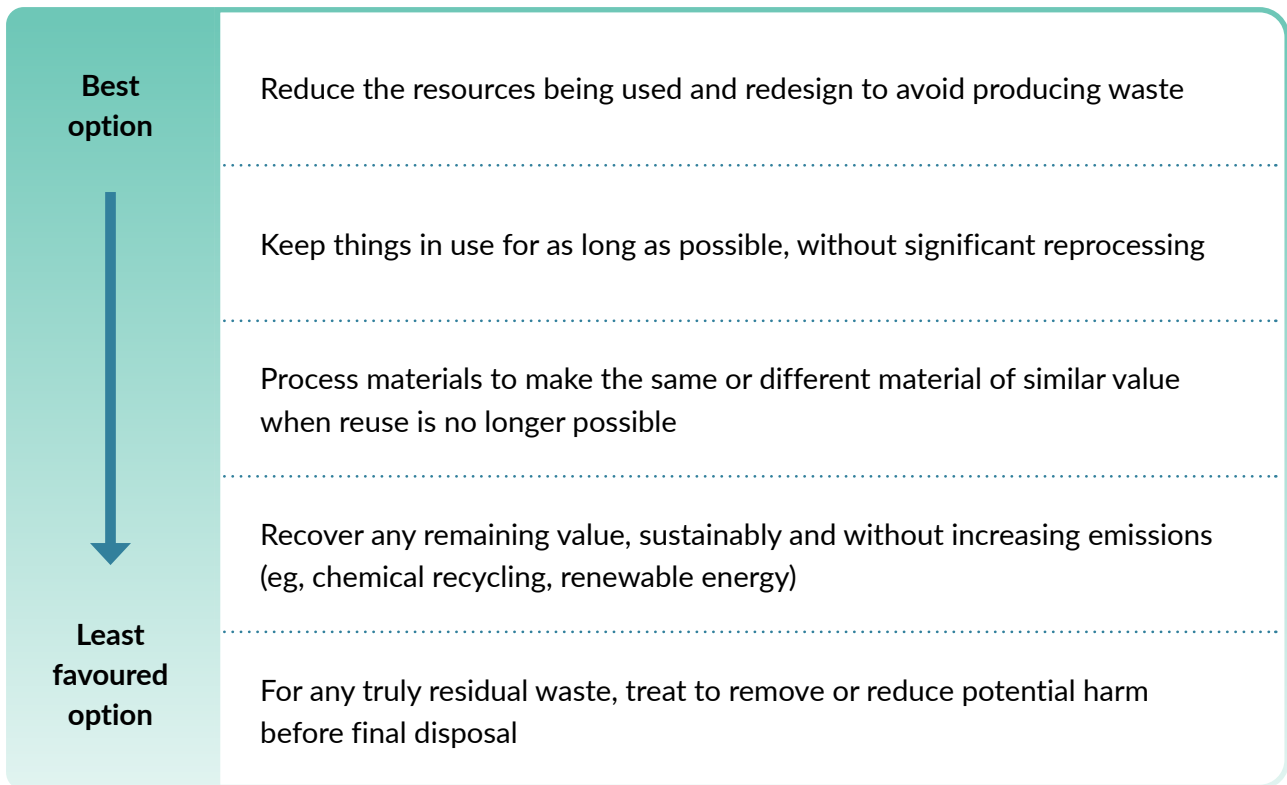


Where necessary, targeted policy and regulatory measures

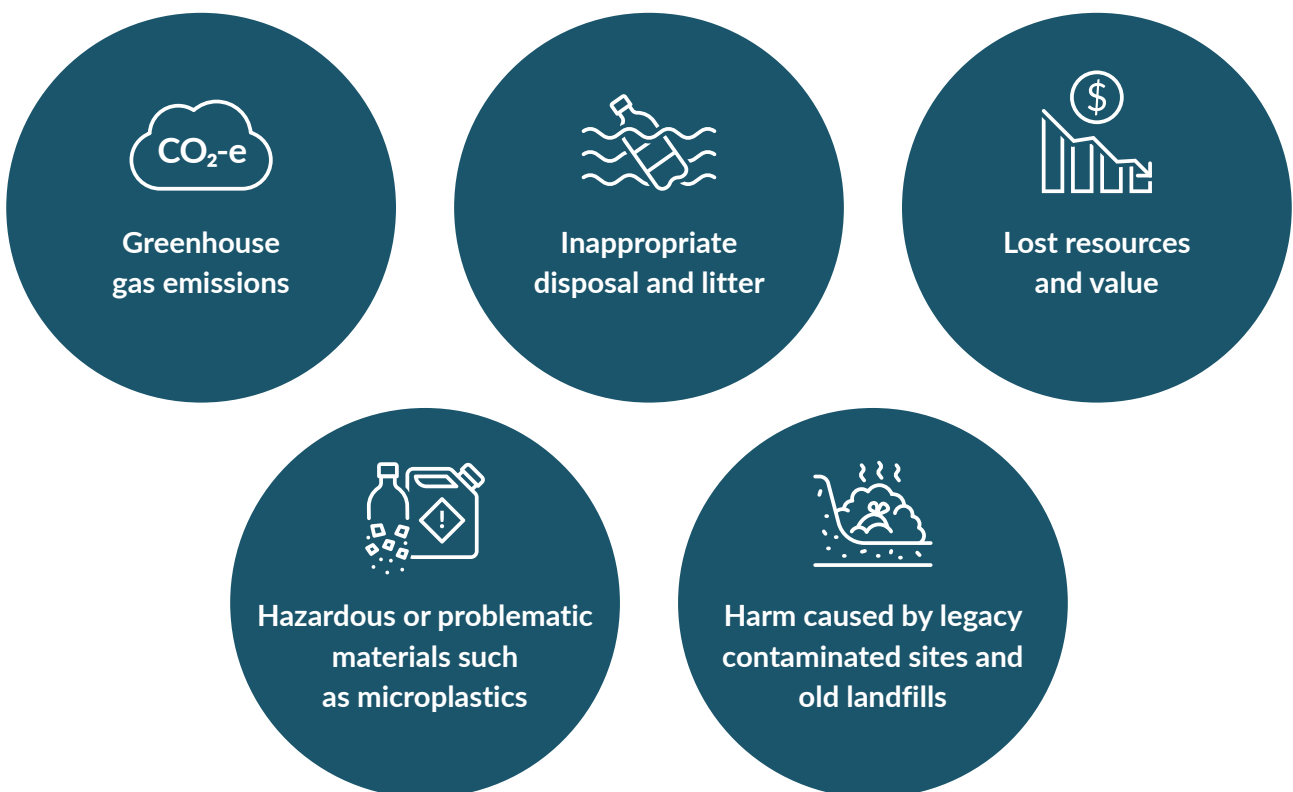


Using the waste hierarchy to guide decision-making, enabling us to keep resources in the economy at their highest value where possible

The waste hierarchy



Waste causes environmental and economic harm

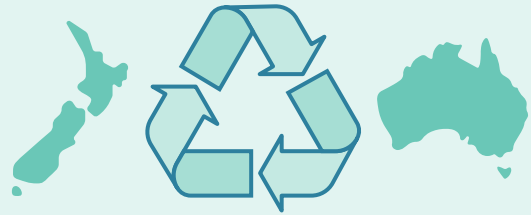


Waste statistics snapshot

In 2021/22, New Zealanders used over

2.5 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



New Zealand's recycling rate is

39%

Australia's equivalent rate is

63%

In 2022, the waste sector contributed approximately:

4.5%

of New Zealand's total **greenhouse gas emissions**

8.5%

of **biogenic methane emissions**

Most waste emissions are caused by the **breakdown of organic materials in landfills**

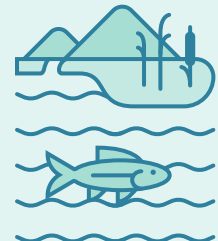


1,797

landfills (56 per cent – including closed landfills) 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**



In 2023, we disposed

669kg

of waste per person at municipal landfills



72%

of New Zealanders say that they **actively try to reduce waste**

