

Warren Snow, Envision, will explain why Auckland should follow the lead of smaller communities and take an 'economic development approach' to reducing its waste costs and volumes.

Title: Solving Auckland's Waste Crisis – the Kaitaia way

Abstract

In 1990s a small group in Kaitaia decided to do something about the economic decline of their community resulting from the 1984 government reforms. They formed the Community Business and Environment Centre (CBEC) and won a contract from the Far North District Council to operate the local transfer station as a recycling centre. Now 20 years later, CBEC runs a range of businesses throughout Northland employing over 70 full time staff with annual revenues of over \$6million. Profits that would otherwise have gone to large out-of-town waste companies have instead been recycled back into the local economy to develop new employment creating businesses and local services.

The key lesson from the Kaitaia model is that the waste crisis is first and foremost a social problem – one that technicians alone cannot solve. The second lesson is that if the community can get its hands into the waste stream it can achieve significantly better results than large waste companies who are focused more on profit generation than waste reduction. Kaitaia and the surrounding area, now recycle 75% of their commercial and residential waste.

Using the expertise he developed at CBEC, Warren Snow assisted Auckland City (as Project Manager) to introduce their first kerbside recycling scheme. He later set up sustainable economic development consultancy, Envision..

Envision has since researched and promoted Zero Waste and EPR (extended Producer Responsibility) as drivers for change and pushed for the re-introduction of refundable deposits to solve the crisis of low beverage recycling rates, which results in beverage containers filling up landfills, littering streets, clogging waterways and making their way into the oceans (witness the Texas sized Great Pacific Garbage Patch which is largely made up of Beverage Containers).

Envision has also researched ways to optimise business and employment opportunities through the creation of Recycling Business Parks or Resource Recovery Centres.

In 2005 Envision with the support of Waitakere City Council researched the costs of waste management in Auckland and found that the annual cost to handle and dispose of the region's waste was \$163 million.

A subsequent Envision report entitled **Reclaiming Auckland's Resources** proposed replacing Auckland's waste infrastructure with seven large Resource Recovery Business Parks (hubs) which would be fed by around 100 community recycling centres. All waste in the region would go through this resource trading system to be recycled, reused, dismantled, traded, and refurbished. Only the final residue would be sent to landfill after all possible options for maximising the utility and economic value of the resources has been exhausted.

Warren will outline this grand plan for Auckland inspired by the successes in the Far North and put the challenge to similarly turn Auckland's waste into new jobs and businesses. To reclaim Auckland's resources by taking an economic development approach to solving the waste crisis.