



Weekend



Big bucks to tackle waste in limbo

Mike Jones with hundreds of bales of recycled plastic at Masterton Transfer Station.
PHOTO/STEVE RENDLE

Wheelie bins roll out around Wairarapa

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Wairarapa's war on waste will get 17,000 more weapons from next week as wheelie bins for household recycling are rolled out across the region in response to increased volumes from residents.

And millions of dollars are being spent to improve plastic sorting at Masterton's refuse transfer station and tackle hundreds of bales of plastic left in limbo by the collapse of overseas markets for recycling.

Plastic containers have a number stamped on them indicating the type of plastic they are made from – currently, only numbers one and two are recyclable in New Zealand, after China and Indonesia ended the import of waste for recycling.

There is currently a year's worth of large bales of compressed plastic recycling piled at the transfer station,

made up of a mix of types one to seven.

Mike Jones, managing director of Earthcare Environmental which provides rubbish collection services to Wairarapa's three district councils, said more than \$3 million of equipment was being installed in a new Materials

Recovery Facility [MRF].

The MRF will include an optical reader, allowing plastics to be identified and sorted by type, and will be a key part



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of processing recycling from wheelie bins.

It will also enable bales, once split apart, to be reprocessed and repackaged into type one and two plastics.

Carterton will be the first area to get wheelie bins, but collections will not begin until September 9 when distribution around the region is complete.

Recycling volumes have increased by 20 per cent in the past five years and the new 240 litre wheelie bins are designed to be used in conjunction with existing 40 litre and 60 litre bins, offering an additional 140 litres per fortnight, Masterton District Council [MDC] says.

The bins should continue to

be used for glass, but all other recycling, including paper, cardboard, plastic and tins, should be put in the wheelie bin.

Weekly collections will alternate, with glass one week, and wheelie bins the next.

A handbook will be provided for each bin, which will also feature a clip to keep the lid closed if it falls over, limiting spillage.

Bins will be numbered and contain a tracking device to enable them to be “more easily recovered if they go missing”, the council said yesterday.

Jones said the introduction of wheelie bins reflected what was happening in the majority of areas around the country.

“More and more people are trying to reduce the amount of material they put into the waste stream, and that is increasing the amount being recycled.”

While welcoming the trend,

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–Mike Jones



Clean recycling call

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he urged residents to avoid simply tossing empty plastic containers, unwashed, into bins.

“Recycling is about having clean, sorted material,” he said.

“Recycling is an alternative to dumping everything, but we do need to have buy-in from people.”

Jones urged shoppers to check the numbers when choosing what to buy.

“It’s something to consider when making purchasing decisions,” he said.

“Sometimes you have a choice between two different items [with different packaging].”

MDC’s assets and operations manager David Hopman said progress was being made on plastic recycling.

“We are doing a really good job of one and twos,” he said.

“And that is 96 to 98 per cent of plastic.

“We don’t want people to think it is a waste of time.”

While some residents have called for wheelie bins for general waste, that does not encourage good rubbish behaviour, it seems.

“Bags help people think about what they are throwing away,” Jones said.

“Pay per throw does reduce the amount people are putting in the waste stream.”

The council is also monitoring alternative uses for recycling plastic, including the process of adding it to asphalt for use in roading, as is being trialled by

New Plymouth District Council.

While sizes of councils limit how much experimentation they can do, “we are waiting to see what is proven”.



Masterton District Council assets and operation manager David Hopman and Earthcare Environmental managing director Mike Jones with some of the 17,000 recycling wheelie bins being delivered throughout Wairarapa from next week.
PHOTO/STEVE RENDLE