

ZERO WASTE VOLUNTEERS: WASTE EDUCATORS

Welcome to Zero Waste at Ostend Market.

Zero Waste volunteers do more than manage the waste station and ensure that market goers' waste goes in the right place. We're waste educators.

We engage with people and provide them with tangible ways to help the environment, both at Ostend Market and in their homes and workplaces. We act as reminders that even small actions, when repeated by many, have the potential to make a difference.

This guide sets out our expectations and provides you with the information you need to get started, as well as some key talking points for engaging with the public. Please take the time to read it through.

Remember, by volunteering with us, you *are* making a difference!



The role

Zero Waste volunteers manage the waste station at the market every Saturday. During the summer, there are two stations as the market becomes significantly busier. We are responsible for checking that the stations are set up correctly when we arrive, monitoring them throughout the shift and packing them down when we leave.

Volunteers are expected to work a 2 ¼ hour shift. There are two shifts: from 8:30 am to 10:45 am, and from 10:45am to 1:00 pm. While on duty, we help people make the right decisions when using the bins to dispose of their waste. We are available to answer questions and supply information about waste, recycling, and various types of composting, (traditional, commercial and Bokashi.)

An event is considered 'zero-waste' by Auckland Council if more than 75% of the waste is diverted away from landfill. Our aim each week is to achieve and exceed that target.

Lunch voucher

To recognise the volunteers' role in helping the market to be environmentally sustainable, Zero Waste volunteers are given a voucher to spend at a food stall of their choice to the value of \$10. (Please note that change is not given.)

Health and Safety

As the job involves standing out in the open, it is important to dress appropriately for the season. Though Zero Waste provides sun umbrellas, in the summer months remember to use sunscreen, wear a hat and drink plenty of water.

Remember also to use the tongs when handling rubbish and to sanitise/wash your hands at the end of the shift.



THE STORY OF ZERO WASTE AT THE OSTEND MARKET

Back in 2015, Ostend Market had a problem. Every Saturday in summer, the market filled four to five big rubbish bags, all of them needing to be carted to the dump. Penny Holmes, the market co-ordinator at the time, met with Kate Lowe from Auckland Council Zero Waste, and with Waiheke Resources Trust, they kickstarted Zero Waste at Ostend Market.

They conducted a waste audit and the findings did not make for good reading. As suspected, 92% of market waste was going straight to landfill, with only 8% of it recycled.

The first step was to purchase two stations from the Waiheke Resources Trust, using upcycled hessian coffee sacks as reusable bin bags. With advice and support from

Charlotte Parkes of the Home Grown Trust—the original designer of the waste stations, Zero Waste at Ostend Market introduced a system of separating waste into landfill, composting, recycling and Bokashi for food waste.

The biggest change came with phasing out all polystyrene, and non-recyclable materials used by vendors, with a switch to using only compostable/biodegradable food packaging. The public, initially bemused by the coffee sacks, soon came on board.

Four years later, even in the height of summer, the waste stations regularly collect less than half a bag of landfill waste.

The long term goal? Zero.



The Ostend Community Garden is now producing fruit and vegetables for the Grow Stall, grown in compost produced from the market. That for me is the success of our Zero Waste circular journey.

- Penny Holmes



Setting up the waste station

Our aim is for a uniform set-up at each market. A tidy, organised waste station creates a strong, first impression.

When setting up, please check the:

- ✓ Bins are in the 'traffic light' order with the bins evenly spaced
- ✓ Sacks are secured with rings
- ✓ Plastic bucket is available for Bokashi/food waste
- ✓ Signs are straight, with poles firmly in the ground
- ✓ Zero Waste flag is flying, and the flag base is weighted down
- ✓ Sun umbrella is set up to shade the station if needed during the summer months, and fastened into the weighted stand
- ✓ Zero Waste cover is over the metal bin in the centre of the reserve and the big bins outside the Ostend hall
- ✓ Apron and grabber hand are ready to use
- ✓ Incorrectly sorted items are moved/removed from each sack



When closing down, please:

- ✓ Empty compost sacks into the green bin behind the RSA
- ✓ Leave the landfill bag and recycling sack by the lamppost beside the main station.
- ✓ Take down and pack up the Zero Waste flag and sun umbrella
- ✓ Remove covers from the bins outside Ostend Hall and in the centre of the reserve.
- ✓ Return all equipment to the lock-up
- Record how many sacks of each type of waste were produced during the market (e.g. ½ sack of recycling, 2 ½ sacks of compostables, etc.) in the notebook which is left hanging in the lock-up next to the equipment
- ✓ Empty the food waste bucket into the Bokashi bin inside the lock-up. Press down with the masher and sprinkle a single scoop of Bokashi bran. Make sure that the lid is sealed on tightly.
- In summer: the metal bin frames are left outside the lock-up
- In winter: the metal bin frames are stored inside the lock-up

Engaging with the Public

We want market goers to take notice of what we're doing, to trust our advice, and most importantly to make changes to their own habits. How we connect with the public, and carry out our work goes a long way to earning this trust.

We are there to help, and to encourage everyone to be more aware of where their waste is going. We're not there to lecture, criticise, or make people feel overwhelmed by the size of the problem.

Teach a person to fish...

The old saying goes give a person a fish and they'll eat for a day, teach a person to fish and they'll eat forever.

Certainly, each cup, plate and food scrap we can divert from landfill reduces the amount of waste and lessens the market's carbon footprint, and we're proud of what the Zero Waste stations achieve each week.

But if we can encourage people to shift habits in their daily lives, or other organisations to adopt a zero-waste approach, the amount of waste diverted increases exponentially. Provide a waste station and a person can compost their cup... but encourage them to get a re-usable cup for their coffee...

Here are some suggestions when engaging with the public:



Body language is important. Be warm and engaging. Show that you care, and that you enjoy what you do in the way that you present yourself.



Remember, most people are keen to do the right thing with their waste. Encourage their efforts. *Thanks for taking the time to stop.*



If you see someone looking puzzled, use that as an opportunity to engage with them. *Is there something I can help with?*



Many people find the recycling system and biodegradable plastics confusing. That's because they are confusing. Assure them they are not alone in feeling that way. *Do you have any questions I can try and answer?*



Give advice and share what you know in a respectful manner. We are all at different stages in both effort and understanding when it comes to helping the environment. *I've just started bokashi myself...*



If you don't know the answer to something, just admit it. It's a complex subject. *Good question, I'm not sure on that one. I'll have to look into it.*

It's really important to never get into an argument, become aggressive or raise your voice. It won't solve anything or change minds. Most likely it will achieve the complete opposite. *That's an interesting point... Let's just say we'll agree to disagree... Thanks for taking the time to bring it up.*

If a member of the public is particularly insistent, you can direct them to Penny Holmes or Paul Mason who will be happy to help.



THE WASTE STATION:

The waste station follows a simple traffic light colouring system, in order from least preferable (landfill) to most preferable (compost and Bokashi.)

Some key information about each category follows.

Note: while every effort has been made to provide complete and accurate information, the waste landscape is subject to frequent change.



Landfill

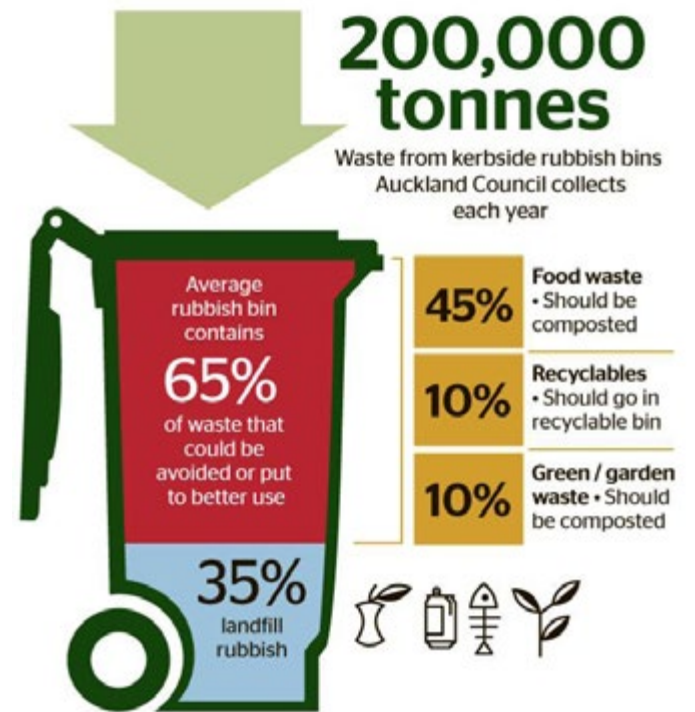
Landfill waste is ferried off the island to Auckland. The biggest landfill in Auckland is in Waitakere where 300 truckloads of rubbish are dumped each day. It is estimated that more than half of the waste in the average rubbish bag could be avoided, or used in better ways.

Prior to adopting a zero waste approach at Ostend Market, 92% of market waste went to landfill.



There has been a **10% reduction** in waste since the establishment of a waste management plan in 2012

Shrink the bin!





Recycling

Plastics

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Clear, tough.
Drink bottles, sports drinks, food trays.
A high-quality plastic, easily recyclable.
Processed in NZ. ✓
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Hard to semi flexible, waxy surface, opaque, 'squeezy'.
Milk bottles, ice cream containers, shampoo bottles,
chemical and detergent bottles.
A high-quality plastic, easily recyclable.
Processed in NZ. ✓
- 

Hard but still flexible, waxy surface.
Dip pottles and ice cream tubs, chip bags,
straws, microwave dishes, lunch boxes. *
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PVC, strong, tough. Plumbing pipes. *
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Soft, flexible. Cling wrap, rubbish bags. *
- 

Polystyrene. Clear or opaque. Brittle when solid,
or light when foamed. Plastic cutlery, water
station cups, some coffee cup lids, sushi boxes. *
- 

'Other' plastics. *
- Tetrapaks. Juice cartons, milk cartons. *

- ✓ Tins
- ✓ Cans
- ✓ Bottles and jars
- ✓ Empty aerosol cans
- ✓ Clean paper and cardboard
- ✓ Advertising mail and envelopes

Recycling is **NOT** the best solution.
While we should continue
to recycle, it is better to
**REFUSE, REDUCE
AND REUSE.**

Things to note:

- The triangle symbol does **not** guarantee that a container will be recycled.
- Many councils in NZ only accept plastics #1 and #2.
- Recyclables must be washed and clean.
- Countdown accepts soft plastics (bags, packaging) for recycling.
- If the plastic has no identifiable marking, it is best **not** to try and recycle it. As much as we would like to, we can't **wish-cycle** something.
- Waiheke operates a community owned resource recovery park.
- If you hand sort at the recycling station it results in a higher quality recycling product and a greater return for the Waiheke community.
- Mixed recyclables from wheelie bins are sent off island to the VISY facility.

Where does it all go?

- Plastics other than #1 and #2 are shipped to Australia and Asia—countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia..
- Paper and cardboard can be recycled in New Zealand, but is also sent to paper mills in Indonesia.
- Glass is recycled at OI a glass bottle and jar manufacturer in Auckland. Glass is highly recyclable.
- Tins and cans are highly recyclable both in New Zealand and overseas. It takes less energy to recycle them than it does to produce new ones.

* China stopped accepting international recycling imports in 2017. While technically recyclable, there is currently **no processing path** for these products. They have a **negative market value**. They are currently separated out after collection and **sent to landfill**.

3 EFFECTIVE WAYS TO CUT DOWN ON PLASTIC WASTE

Refuse single-use plastic whenever possible. Things like plastic bags, cutlery, straws, drink bottles, coffee cups, cling film and take-away boxes.

Reduce plastic consumption. Choose to buy items with the least amount of packaging. Choose unwrapped options if they are available. Choose packaging that has been recycled. Buy bulk. Use bulk bins—and use paper mushroom bags instead of plastic bags. Instead of mini packs of chips or pots of yoghurt, buy bigger and divide it. All of this sends a message to the producer.

Reuse: Buy a cloth shopping bag, a reusable drink bottle, a keep-cup, and beeswax wraps. Take a Tupperware to the takeaway shop.

Compost

Eco cups and lids
Paper food wrap
Wooden cutlery
Paper plates
Bio cups
Napkins



Compost

Compost reduces greenhouse gases

Organic waste buried in landfill breaks down anaerobically (without oxygen.) This produces methane, a greenhouse gas. **Methane traps 26 times more heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide.** By diverting this waste from the landfill and into compost, we reduce our carbon footprint. Organic waste accounts for 12% of New Zealand's methane emissions, second behind agriculture.

Compost is a valuable resource

Compost benefits the garden and improves soil quality, reducing the need for fertiliser. Compost reduces water use. It also promotes root and plant growth

What happens to the things in our compost bins?

At the Ostend Market, stallholders agree to use compostable/biodegradable containers. The waste in our compost sacks goes to The Compost Co. (run by the Waiheke Resources Trust) composting facility next to Te Motu vineyard. There, the compost is carefully managed, tested and kept at a consistently high temperature. It takes approximately twelve weeks to turn the market waste into healthy soil.

'BIO' AND 'ECO' PLASTICS: ARE THEY REALLY ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY?

Look closely enough and you will see that compostable cups and lids usually have the words 'compostable' or 'bio' or 'eco' stamped on them. They are made or lined with biodegradable plastics such as PLA (polylactic acid). These can be put in our compost bins.

But take the 'bio' and 'eco' labels with a huge dose of salt. While PLA can be composted, these plastics will only break down in a composter that is properly managed. Without proper handling—in a compost pile at home, or in the landfill, PLA plastic will not break down for years. In the ocean they are simply just another example of plastic pollution.

Single-use, biodegradable plastics are not the solution. The Ministry for the Environment states that biodegradable plastics are less environmentally friendly than reusable plastic. Having a reusable bottle that is used multiple times is a better choice than a single use 'bio plastic' option. (*5 things you may not know about biodegradable plastics* <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/>)

Bio or eco lids also carry a #7 recycling symbol. That means they can be recycled, right? Wrong. **Biodegradable plastics are non-recyclable in NZ.** These do not belong in the recycling bin. They must either be commercially composted, or they must go into landfill.

Some plastic coffee cup lids from outside the market carry the #6 recycling symbol. They look the same and feel the same as PLA, but **#6 plastic won't be accepted for recycling in NZ.** These have to go to landfill.

Confused yet?

Food scraps Bokashi

Vegetables
Fruit
Bread
Meat
Dairy



Bokashi

Bokashi is a form of 'pre-composting' that uses a bran treated with EM (effective microorganisms) to ferment food scraps, before they are buried in the ground or added to a traditional compost heap as a "green" layer. Bokashi takes roughly 2 weeks to ferment, and then another 2 weeks in the ground before you can plant over it.

Why do it?

Bokashi has all the benefits of composting, plus:

This method of converting food waste produces little to no greenhouse gas. You can also treat a wider variety of food waste: including bread, dairy, meat scraps and cooked food.

Food Waste: a global problem

"30 percent of food is wasted globally across the supply chain, contributing 8 percent of total global greenhouse gas emissions. If food waste were a country, it would come in third after the United States and China in terms of impact on global warming." **The Washington Post.**

In New Zealand, the average household throws away three shopping trolleys worth of edible food a year.

Studies have shown that the most common reasons for throwing away food are: not writing a shopping list, not planning meals and not knowing what was in the house before going shopping.

TIPS TO CUT DOWN ON FOOD WASTE

- ✓ Check what is already in the cupboards and fridge
- ✓ Plan meals
- ✓ Make a shopping list
- ✓ Buy only what is needed
- ✓ Store food correctly
- ✓ Read the labels on food
- ✓ Use leftovers





ENJOY THE ROLE!

3 KEY STEPS EVERYONE CAN TAKE

- ✓ Refuse. Reduce. Reuse. *Then* Recycle.
- ✓ Cut down on food waste.
- ✓ Compost any organic waste.

Too much to take in?
Much of the information in this guide can be found in bullet points on the back of the waste station signs, ready to help you on your next shift. You can also refer back to this guide at any time, or download a copy on your phone so it's easily accessible.



Ostend Market Zero Waste would like to acknowledge the ongoing funding from the Home Grown Trust and the practical support we receive from Waiheke Resources Trust and The Compost Co.

