

# Waste and Hazardous Substances Policy - DRAFT

Final draft for ratification

## Vision

**All activities in Aotearoa New Zealand reject waste and pollution, circulate products and materials, and regenerate nature.**

## Values and Principles

- *Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi*: Tangata whenua have primary decision-making power over the elimination and reduction of waste and hazardous substances production, as well as their management and disposal, and all decisions in this area show respect to the taonga of te taiao.
- *Ecological Wisdom*: Material growth should be limited, such that waste production is avoided or redirected for use in a circular economy.
- *Social Responsibility*: The management of waste and hazardous substances should not further disadvantage or burden marginalised groups within or outside Aotearoa New Zealand.
- *Appropriate Decision-Making*: Decisions regarding the management of waste should be based on mātauranga Māori and western science, and determined in partnership with whānau, hapū and iwi.
- *Non-Violence*: A precautionary approach to hazardous material should be taken to ensure that no person, ecological environment or native species is harmed by the production, management or disposal of hazardous materials.

## Summary

This policy seeks to transform all sectors of the Aotearoa New Zealand economy into a circular economy in which the production of unnecessary waste and hazardous substances is eliminated and, where this is not possible, they are effectively managed through reuse and recycling, safely, effectively, and responsibly, to ensure the wellbeing of current and future generations.

## Strategic Priorities

The Green Party's strategic goals include:

*"Our nation will be in transition to a zero waste economy, where single use plastics are largely eliminated, wasteful consumption is ended, and all-of-lifecycle product stewardship is in place across the economy."*

Actions in this policy that will help achieve this include:

- 1.1 Transition rapidly and justly to a circular economy, where life-cycle and end-of-life analysis are widely used and the components of products used in Aotearoa New Zealand are either repairable, reusable, recyclable, or biodegradable.
- 1.5 Affirm the tino rangatiratanga of iwi, hapū, and whānau in:
  - 1.5.1 Decisions regarding waste elimination, management and disposal,
  - 1.5.2 Their customary role as kaitiaki, including in their efforts to protect sites, such as customary food gathering areas and wāhi tapu, from the negative impacts of pollution.
- 1.12 Facilitate a zero-waste-to-landfill cultural shift, including promoting thoughtful and moderated consumption and restricting advertising promoting hyperconsumption.
- 2.2 Minimise the use of inherently polluting substances at the production and import stage
- 2.4 Develop a national resource recovery network that redirects waste streams for use as resources wherever possible across the economy.
- 2.7 Require all products that include plastics and rare earth metals to be readily recyclable.
- 2.25 Lead international efforts to avoid plastic pollution and clean up plastic and other harmful waste from the Pacific Ocean.

## Connected Policies

This Waste and Hazardous Substances Policy is connected to our [Economic](#), [Environmental Protection](#), [Freshwater](#), [Land Use and Soils](#), and [Marine](#) Policies.

## Policy Positions

### 1. [Towards A Circular Economy](#)

#### *Issues*

Aotearoa New Zealand currently has a linear economic structure, where the production of waste and the end life of products are often not considered when making decisions about production, distribution, and use. This leads to an excessive focus on extraction of new resources rather than repair of products and reuse of already available resources. It generates waste that could have been avoided, and inappropriate management and disposal of waste products. Redefining "waste" and moving towards a circular economy and closed loop systems, can create jobs and reduce our impacts on nature.

#### *Actions*

- 1.1. Transition rapidly and justly to a circular economy, where life-cycle and end-of-life analysis are widely used and the components of products used in Aotearoa New Zealand are either repairable, reusable, recyclable, or biodegradable.
- 1.2. Create a new agency with a circular economy and zero waste focus to coordinate implementation of the circular economy as a national strategy.
- 1.3. Use an alternative indicator to GDP, which is not based on an infinite-growth economy, to measure economic success (see our [Economic Policy](#)).

#### **A. Te Tiriti o Waitangi**

- 1.4. Centre Tiriti-based decision-making and operational management in strategies that aim to move Aotearoa New Zealand towards a circular economy.
- 1.5. Affirm the tino rangatiratanga of iwi, hapū, and whānau in:
  - 1.5.1. Decisions regarding waste elimination, management and disposal,
  - 1.5.2. Their role as kaitiaki, including in their efforts to protect sites, such as customary food gathering areas and wāhi tapu, from the negative impacts of pollution.
- 1.6. Ensure that land, soil, and water are treated as taonga and protected from the discharge or irresponsible storage of waste and hazardous products.
- 1.7. Ensure wild foods in terrestrial, freshwater, and marine environments are not contaminated by dangerous levels of hazardous chemicals.
- 1.8. Ensure decisions about the management or disposal of waste and hazardous substances consider not only the productive value of affected land but also its cultural and spiritual significance to tangata whenua.
- 1.9. Resource Māori organisations working to support a circular economy.

#### **B. Research and Education**

- 1.10. Promote innovation and investment in resource efficiency, reuse and recovery.
- 1.11. Gather accurate information on the volume, composition, management, and disposal of waste and hazardous substances in New Zealand.
- 1.12. Facilitate a zero-waste-to-landfill cultural shift, including promoting thoughtful and moderated consumption and restricting advertising promoting hyperconsumption.
- 1.13. Invest in social research on consumption and attitudes towards waste.

#### **C. Business and Industry**

- 1.14. Require companies to communicate to investors how, through their circular economy activities, they can provide return on investments.
- 1.15. Ensure all products entering or made in Aotearoa New Zealand meet quality, efficiency, and recycling standards.
- 1.16. Legislate the right-to-repair.
- 1.17. Prohibit planned obsolescence.

- 1.18. Implement mandatory product stewardship schemes for products with a significant waste-related impact.
- 1.19. Provide business and organisational support for innovative circular economy and zero waste businesses.
- 1.20. Participate in and support a strong global plastics treaty.

#### **D. Climate Change**

- 1.21. Increase awareness of the role of waste management in climate change mitigation in this country, including the contributions of different sectors.
- 1.22. Prioritise the immediate implementation of the national waste strategy and associated waste legislation so that appropriate interventions can start now, with sufficient funding.
- 1.23. Create a Waste Reduction Agency dedicated to developing a circular economy and moving toward zero waste.
- 1.24. Fund a wider rollout of kaupapa Māori-based zero waste initiatives such as Para Kore.

## **2. Waste Streams**

### *Issues*

Waste management and disposal is often inefficient, with recyclable or reusable products and materials sent to landfill due to cost and difficulties associated with more appropriate streaming. Waste is not yet treated as a valuable resource for use in a circular economy.

### *Actions*

#### **A. Reduce**

- 2.1. Require and support key sectors to work within a zero-waste, circular economy model, including food waste, health, construction, fishing, and textiles (see our [Agriculture and Rural Affairs](#), [Health](#), [Housing and Sustainable Communities](#), [Marine](#), and [Sustainable Business](#) Policies)
- 2.2. Minimise the use of inherently polluting substances at the production and import stage (see our [Economic](#) Policy), including:
  - 2.2.1. Prohibit, following public consultation on necessary exceptions, most single-use plastic products and non-recyclable and non-home-compostable packaging.
  - 2.2.2. Set exposure limits for hazardous substances that protect the whole human population, including the most vulnerable, and ecosystems.
  - 2.2.3. Prohibit all hazardous substances which have non-hazardous alternatives available, based on best practice, scientific evidence, and indigenous knowledge.
  - 2.2.4. Register the remaining necessary hazardous substances in New Zealand for specific uses.
  - 2.2.5. Prohibiting or restricting the use of a chemical when there is emerging scientific evidence that it is causing adverse human health or environmental effects.
- 2.3. Fund community-based repair services.

## **B. Reuse**

- 2.4. Develop a national resource recovery network that redirects waste streams for use as resources wherever possible across the economy, including:
  - 2.4.1. Increase investment and support of existing local services/programs
  - 2.4.2. Support replication of small scale local solutions.
- 2.5. Expand container return, reusables, and refillable beverage schemes.
- 2.6. Enable repurposing of EV batteries as energy storage devices.

## **C. Recycle and Rot**

- 2.7. Require all products that include plastics and rare earth metals to be readily recyclable.
- 2.8. Require any recycling of waste produced in Aotearoa New Zealand to occur here, except where robust systems are in place that avoid inefficient replication of services at the local level (e.g., aluminium cans).
- 2.9. Provide residential and commercial composting facilities and services for organic and compostable waste.
- 2.10. Ensure clear product labelling with common standards so people can have confidence in products marked “compostable” and “recyclable”.
- 2.11. Enable and encourage the use of composting toilets, where practicable (see also our [Housing and Sustainable Communities](#) Policy).
- 2.12. Phase out the use of hazardous chemicals during burial proceedings, to prevent these chemicals entering the environment (see our [Health](#) Policy).
- 2.13. Support the use of biogas generated from organic waste products (see our [Energy](#) Policy).
- 2.14. Resource and promote grey water reuse and recycling.

## **D. Managing the Legacy of Waste and Hazardous Substances**

- 2.15. Ensure that wastewater and sewage treatment standards and processes are sufficient to support ecosystem health and reflect mātauranga Māori (see also our [Freshwater](#) Policy).
- 2.16. Require stormwater treatment in areas where stormwater is shown to be contaminated beyond a given threshold.
- 2.17. Set out a clear pathway for the phasing out of landfills.
- 2.18. Support the transition of retired landfill sites into other appropriate uses.
- 2.19. Prevent long-term ongoing pollution from old landfill sites into soil and groundwater, and protect those that are vulnerable to flooding, erosion and sea-level rise.
- 2.20. Ensure that communities exposed to hazardous substances are fully involved in the investigation and reporting of any health, community, or ecological impacts, and receive appropriate treatment and compensation.

- 2.21. Resource efforts to prevent and remove microplastic pollution and environment harm.
- 2.22. Invest in the remediation of contaminated sites.
- 2.23. Ban trade in hazardous wastes unless for the purpose of safe recycling or reprocessing, in which case it must be tracked (see our [Trade and Foreign Investment Policy](#))
- 2.24. Fund the recycling or return of waste that has been transported to Pacific Islands for recycling or disposal.
- 2.25. Lead international efforts to avoid plastic pollution and clean up plastic and other harmful waste from the Pacific Ocean (see also our [Marine](#) Policy).