

CASE STUDY: WAIUKU ZERO WASTE

Prepared by the Zero Waste Network in collaboration with Waiuku Zero Waste

Waiuku Zero Waste (WZW) is one of a network of community recycling centres across Auckland. It takes recycling, rubbish, e-waste, green waste, scrap steel and household goods in good condition, and diverts approximately 70% of this material from landfill. It works to change behaviours both of its immediate users, and of the wider community, through its projects:

- Waste reduction, repair and upcycling workshops
- Hosting the community workshop
- Tool library
- Predator free library
- The Junktion Re-use shop
- Kai cupboard
- Site tours
- Sharing knowledge and collaboration
- Waste minimisation at events
- One-on-one education on site and online
- Green waste collection

THE BIG PICTURE: AUCKLAND'S RESOURCE RECOVERY NETWORK

Community Recycling Centres are the backbone of Auckland's Resource Recovery Network (RRN). They are operated by social enterprises whose drive is to provide multiple benefits for their local community—jobs, training, volunteering, education, and spin off businesses from resources that would otherwise go to landfill. They provide evidence of the circular economy in action. They are a practical demonstration of how things can be done differently, and as a result help change Aucklanders' buying behaviours and attitudes. They are generating wellbeing now and for the future, and building resilience in times of change, shocks and unexpected events. The RRN has significant potential to contribute to Auckland's waste minimisation and other community objectives by making it easy for resource recovery and the circular economy to become a normal part of Aucklanders' lives and by creating the scale and innovation for significant waste diversion.



“ Collaboration with local and national partners is an important part of what we do and amplifies everyone's effort. We work closely with over 20 local groups ”

— Sue Wallis, General Manager

WASTE REDUCTION AND UPCYCLING WORKSHOPS

WZW hosts repair cafe on site directly changing behaviour by keeping items in use longer and reducing consumption of virgin resources. Repair cafes are hugely popular with multiple benefits on top of waste minimisation including building social cohesion and facilitating intergenerational exchange. WZW also hosts educational workshops in the community, such as recent school holiday upcycling workshops at Pukekohe Library making bags from textile waste and robots from e-waste.

IMPACTS: We've had 83 items repaired and 135 visitors to our repair cafes in the past year. WZW have hosted 10 workshops a year, reaching over 180 children and adults.

PREDATOR-FREE LIBRARY

WZW is a place for community to connect around caring for the local environment. That is most often around waste minimisation, but the predator-free library shows it can be expanded to include a variety of projects. WZW became an umbrella organisation to Sustainable Waiuku to form a Predator Trap Library located at WZW. Sustainable Waiuku's mission is to reduce entry barriers for people to get into predator control. Making sure people have access to traps and bait is key to successful predator control.

TOOL LIBRARY

The Tool Library is a lending initiative. Borrow tools just as you would borrow a book from the library, through a low-cost membership. Sharing with the local community is the goal, by helping people to avoid unnecessary purchases, especially of tools that may only be used once or twice.

IMPACTS: In the two years of operation of the Tool Library 1800 tool loans have been completed, with an average membership of 30 people. There have been a total of 110 members in that period.

WAIUKU COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Helping to spread the values and skills for repair, reuse, restoration and sharing are the aims of the Waiuku Community Workshop. It is a social gathering space where members share their skills and time to add value to resources that come through the WZW yard. A cup of tea is shared every Wednesday afternoon; here repair jobs for customers are often exchanged for fresh baking.

The Waiuku Community Workshop has tools and workbench space ready for working on furniture restoration, community builds and small engine repairs. Any skill level is welcome.

IMPACTS: 15 members currently, with 2904 volunteer hours in the past year from 198 volunteers across workshop, tool library, events and support.



THE JUNKTION - RE-USE SHOP

The Junktion is the name of the wildly popular re-use shop at WZW. It is a large 500 square metre warehouse and additional 300m² of outdoor area loaded with amazing resources for re-use including household items and building materials. The shop team enjoy conversations with regular customers, some coming in every day to find a bargain, finding out what they are planning to do with the items they are buying that day. Regular customers who are often known by name, with some coming in every day; these people are the WZW community advocates.

IMPACT: 1700 visitors per week

KAI CUPBOARD

The Kai cupboard provides food free of charge to the community in order to avoid it going to waste and landfill. It is conveniently located at the entry of the shop so customers can grab something as they walk by. It has been an instant success. It promotes behaviour change by educating people about food waste, normalising the sharing of excess food resources and giving people a place where rescued food can easily be taken by those who need it. This has also become a collaboration with Tuwhera Kai as they will bring their excess food from their food parcels to the cupboard for others to access.

IMPACT: approximately 20 people use the kai cupboard each week.



WASTE MINIMISATION AT EVENTS

The Waiuku Zero Waste team offers waste services for community and local events. Using bins for waste, recycling and food scraps for composting exposes the public at these events to better ways of dealing with resources. The service also provides diversion statistics to count how much was diverted from landfill so the value of this work can be measured.

Impact: Over the last year WZW have supported eight events with over 6000 attendees.

SITE TOURS

Offering the community and local organisations educational tours through the WZW site is one of the best ways of informing people what happens onsite and what kinds of resources are available. This is an invaluable learning opportunity for local tamariki to get “hands on” and better connect to where “waste” ends up. Working with local schools, WZW aim to inspire students to think and act differently when it comes to waste. WZW also host other groups and councils from around the country who are keen for information and advice on setting up their own site.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE & COLLABORTING

WZW was founded by the community, so collaboration onsite and offsite with community organisations is critical. WZW has supported local groups with funding applications, grant funding and general consulting work offering expertise. As an example, WZW secured Tuwhera Kai a grant for a compost system. WZW worked with Sustainable Waiuku to form a Predator Trap Library within the Workshop & Tool Library space. These collaborations build understanding and links between different organisations and kaupapa.



GREEN WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION

A weekly service is offered to our customers for collection of their greenwaste, or for commercial customers, their recycling. We have 67 customers utilising this service.

For larger pubs and event centres they would not otherwise have access to real recycling due to the large amount of recycling they generate.

ONE-ON-ONE EDUCATION ON SITE & ONLINE

Shop and yard staff spend time in conversation with customers every day and both model circular behaviour and share information and our values with the 3,500 customers who visit us each week. These conversations can be as simple as showing how to separate resources and why they go where they do, to in depth discussions on the benefits of product stewardship. The coal face of WZW is the “yard” that is often people’s first interaction with the site where waste, green waste & recycling services happen. While sorting out peoples’ waste in order to divert as much as possible, the yard team put effort into conversations, while signage and info on site communicate key messages about the waste hierarchy.

WZW’s website and social media promote a circular economy with clear information on projects and services, and four+ posts a week encouraging behaviour change and waste minimisation through composting, food waste reduction, upcycling and sustainability. The shop’s social media posts show what bargains are available and promote reuse.

IMPACT: 1750 people through the yard a week. Social media posts reach up to 7000 people.

