



Why Waste Waimate

is a community response to Project Kea, a proposal by South Island Resource Recovery Ltd (SIRRL) to build a Waste to Energy (W2E) Incinerator Plant in the Waimate District. It is proposed as a waste management solution — burning the worst waste from municipal landfills over the whole South island, baled and trucked to Waimate daily.

Who we are

We are a group of Waimate residents who share a commitment to safeguarding the beauty, the friendliness and the lifestyle we enjoy here. The prospect of the arrival of this W2E plant has raised alarming questions we can't ignore. We want to secure our right to peace, clean air, clean water and food.

We acknowledge the good people already working hard to bring change and repair environmental damage done here in the past: Bushtown, Point Bush Ecosanctuary, Waihao Wainono Catchment Group and others. Likewise we fear that pollution and land degradation from SIRRL's W2E would create another future environmental burden for our rangatahi.

Manaaki te whenua, manaaki te tangata, haere whakamua | Look after the land, look after the people, move forward.

There are potential health risks for the community from the factory's toxic dioxin emissions. Cancers have been detected in populations overseas, living close to these incinerators. The jobs that are promised are few, and the benefits of the plant for countering climate change are distorted with its excessive CO₂ emissions. Many overseas incinerators are being closed down.

Dioxin entering the food chain could be devastating for our agricultural district, for the mahika kai. Why Waste Waimate believe Project Kea offers an outdated and dirty technology and we oppose it.

SIRRL the Company

Track record

South Island Resource Recovery Ltd (SIRRL) are a company made up of Chinese (the controlling shareholder) Spanish (American owned) and NZ investors. The NZ percentage is owned by Renew Energy Limited (REL).

REL have already tried and failed to get similar proposals through Westport, Hokitika and Belfast. The company has been rejected by these communities for several reasons, but deliberately withholding important information seems to be the reoccurring theme.

The company's chequered past also includes:

- threatening media and council staffers,

- investigation of Directors by the Serious Fraud Office,
- requesting that councils avoid Official Information Act requests,
- illegally storing thousands of bales of waste, and forced to move it by Environment Canterbury (ECan).

A company employed by REL to bale waste has also recently been found illegally stockpiling thousands of bales of waste for the purpose of supplying it for the proposed Waimate plant.

Experience

Waste to Energy Incineration plants are notoriously complex to build and operate.

The company proposing this have no experience and are completely unproven in the industry. The scant technical information they are able to reveal is managed by a PR company.

“It smelt like hell”

Waste storage

The waste for incineration at the plant is freighted to the site as one-tonne, pressed, plastic-wrapped bales. The company has previously told ECan that these bales will contain a mixture of content that could include paper/cardboard, plastics, nappies/sanitary, metal, glass, rubber, tyres, textiles, timber, rubble organic/putrescible and gib board.

They claim that the site will have a sorting facility and recyclable material will be removed. However it makes very little sense to freight bales to site, remove the recyclable material and then freight that away again. This is not economically viable and the likelihood is most of it will be incinerated. It has been well documented, countries that use waste to energy incineration have low recycle rates when the recyclables are of value as fuel.

REL put in a proposal to store 130,000 bales (a 4 month supply) at Reefton while they commissioned a plant in Westport. This was done after an REL director told media that they would not need to stockpile waste anywhere ahead of the plant being commissioned.

REL stockpiled 4000 bales of waste illegally in Belfast to the dismay of locals who claimed the bales were “torn open, smelt like hell and were attracting vermin”.

Reefton residents also had concerns that the company could walk away and leave Reefton with the clean up, as the company would have already collected a huge amount of money to receive the waste.

Below: The Belfast waste bale pile that ECan made REL remove after community complaints. (Image courtesy of Stuff)



Environmental concerns

Waste to Energy Incineration has been around for a while and the environmental risks are well documented. While there are plants in Europe that boast clean air emissions, these are also hugely expensive builds. To achieve cleaner emissions requires more budget.

Most modern built plants have \$700 million to \$1 billion budgets. The plant proposed for Waimate has a budget of \$350 million. The more you spend on filters, scrubbers etc, the cleaner the emissions. However even the most advanced European technology does not totally eliminate emissions. If you're going to burn toxic material you're going to get toxic residue.

Fly ash is one of the problems associated with incineration. Fly ash contains Dioxins, Furans, Nitrous Oxides, Mercury, Cadmium...the list goes on. Overseas, fly ash is treated like nuclear waste. It is encased in concrete and buried because it is so toxic. NZ has no consented landfills to take fly ash but REL's west coast proposal was to landfill it. This was discussed behind closed doors by the Mayor of Westport and REL and eventually contributed to the Mayor's departure.

This time around SIRRL is proposing **Plasma Thermal technology** to turn the fly ash into an inert glass-like substance. This involves using incredibly high temperatures of up to 15,000 degrees celcius in a furnace. This requires huge amounts of electricity to achieve and the high heat causes the machinery to break down very quickly.

This is why experts claim no one is using it for this purpose. It simply isn't economically viable to do so.

Bringing waste to Waimate

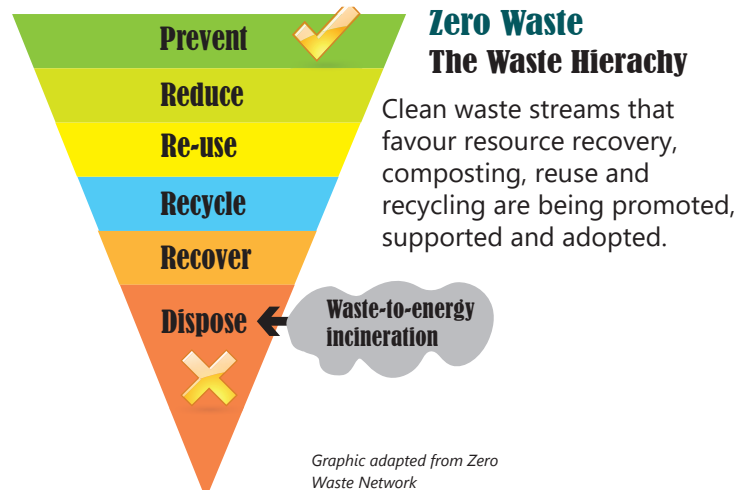
W2E plants also release huge amounts of CO2 into the environment, which is a climate changing greenhouse gas. Initially SIRRL want to freight in waste via trucks. They predict 70 loads out of Christchurch alone per day, with plans for the whole South Island to send their bales to Waimate, all adding more to the carbon footprint of the plant as well as clogging our roads.

Road degradation and noise will affect communities along the south island regional routes.

New technologies

What are the alternatives?

W2E incineration companies usually lock councils into 30 year contracts to supply a constant waste stream. Incineration stifles innovation and the hunger for massive fuel loads to create limited amounts of energy quickly blights W2E operations.



In reality, the operational solutions for waste management are already moving fast to a Zero Waste model around the world. Zero Waste creates jobs, and a circular economy.

Methane reduction

Reducing methane emissions is identified as a high priority for our nation to meet greenhouse reduction targets. Incineration has been touted by SIRRL as the solution to reducing high methane levels from big landfills.

However new technologies that capture 95% of methane at source and utilise the gas for electricity are emerging, mitigating any further processing.

Capture of greenhouse gas at source and preventing and reducing the amount of material going into landfills are better solutions.

More information

Where to from here?

There will be opportunities to make submissions to the ECan consent process. Keep in touch with us by any of the methods below to find out how to have your say.

You are welcome to join us at our regular meetings - details and dates on the facebook page or just email us.

Useful updates and resources

Check our Facebook page: [why waste waimate](#)

Look at our website for informative links and discussion: www.whywastewaimate.co.nz

Contact us at Why Waste Waimate

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