

# Incinerators cause climate change



**Incinerators are a cause of climate change. They emit more CO<sub>2</sub> than natural-gas fired or oil-fired power plants<sup>1</sup> and are not renewable energy.**

**1** Incinerators convert waste directly into greenhouse gases, toxic emissions and ash. Every tonne of mixed waste incinerated releases up to 1.7 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>1</sup>

**2** Europe is moving away from incinerators because as organic waste diversion increases, waste is more carbon intensive (primarily plastics from fossil fuels)<sup>2</sup> making climate emissions much bigger.

**3** Evidence shows that more than half of what is currently incinerated could have been recycled or composted.<sup>1</sup>

**4** Waste-to-energy incinerators are not considered renewable energy because the raw materials are largely derived from fossil fuels such as plastics.

**5** The Te Awamutu incinerator proposal would have a significant impact on the national and global environment releasing 150,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per year.

**6** Incinerators harm the transition to a circular economy<sup>3</sup> further driving up emissions. Since both non-recyclable and recyclable waste can be burned in an incinerator, waste prevention and recycling are discouraged, locking-in an increasing generation of waste and emissions over time.<sup>4</sup>

**7** One goal of Aotearoa NZ's Waste Strategy is to recover value from waste without increasing emissions. This means using proven zero waste strategies like redesign, repair, reuse and repurposing.

**The carbon intensity of European incinerators is 4.7 times more concentrated than NZ's electricity grid<sup>1,5</sup>**

1] [Understanding the carbon impacts of Waste to Energy incineration. Zero Waste Europe. 2020.](#)

2] [Waste to energy technology implications in the Aotearoa New Zealand context](#)

3] [Zero Waste Europe - Waste-to-energy is not sustainable](#)

4] [Zero Waste Europe - Deliver pay waste incineration causes recycling slow](#)

5] NZ's 2023 electricity emissions intensity was 112.76 gCO<sub>2</sub>/kwh compared to European incinerators of 540g/kwh.

**Let's keep Aotearoa incinerator free**

**visit: [zerowaste.co.nz](http://zerowaste.co.nz) for more info**



**REGENERATION  
NOT INCINERATION**