



The three district councils in Taranaki provide the majority of the region's waste services and infrastructure including kerbside recycling and rubbish collection, transfer stations and resource recovery facilities and disposal of landfill waste to Bonny Glen Landfill in Marton.

The Taranaki Solid Waste Management Committee is a collaboration between the Council and the district councils, who work together to identify opportunities to reduce and manage waste. In 2011, the Committee adopted the Waste Management and Minimisation Strategy for Taranaki, which seeks to reduce the harmful effects of waste and

improve the efficiency of resource use. This strategy guides the development and implementation of regional waste minimisation and management plans.

An important focus of this strategy is ensuring our communities understand how and why we need to minimise the production of waste. Facilitating and measuring the outcomes from behaviour change around waste minimisation is an integral part of achieving the targets from each council's waste management and minimisation plan.

**43%**  
of kerbside refuse is **food waste**

Commercial refuse is **60%**  
of **landfill waste**

**13**  
**transfer stations**

The Junction has **diverted**  
**38.8+**  
of waste from **landfill**

## What we know

### Landfill waste

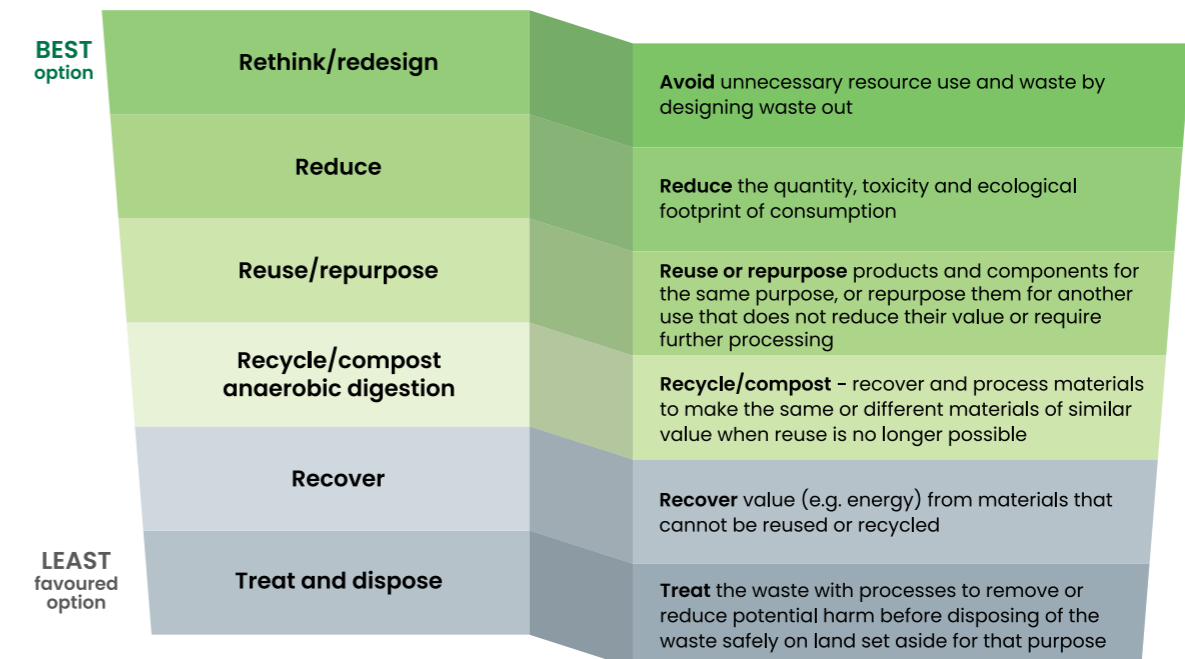
Historically there were numerous municipal landfills across the region, with most towns having at least one active disposal site and, in some cases, many sites. Most sites were poorly controlled and presented risks to the surrounding environment. As standards improved, it became more economical to maintain fewer, better-engineered landfills.

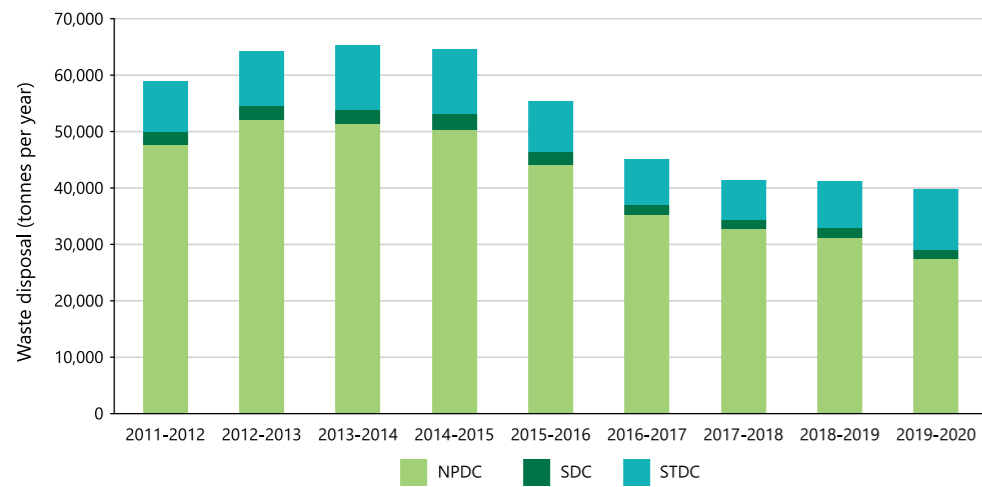
From 2004, all waste collected in Taranaki was disposed of at the Colson Road Landfill in New Plymouth, until its closure in 2019. It has since been disposed of at the Bonny Glen Landfill in Marton in Manawatū-Whanganui, with 13 transfer stations in Taranaki servicing both urban and rural communities.

Total waste to landfill continues to reduce over time, presently decreasing at about 3% per year. The volume of waste to landfill peaked at 65,257 tonnes in 2013-2014

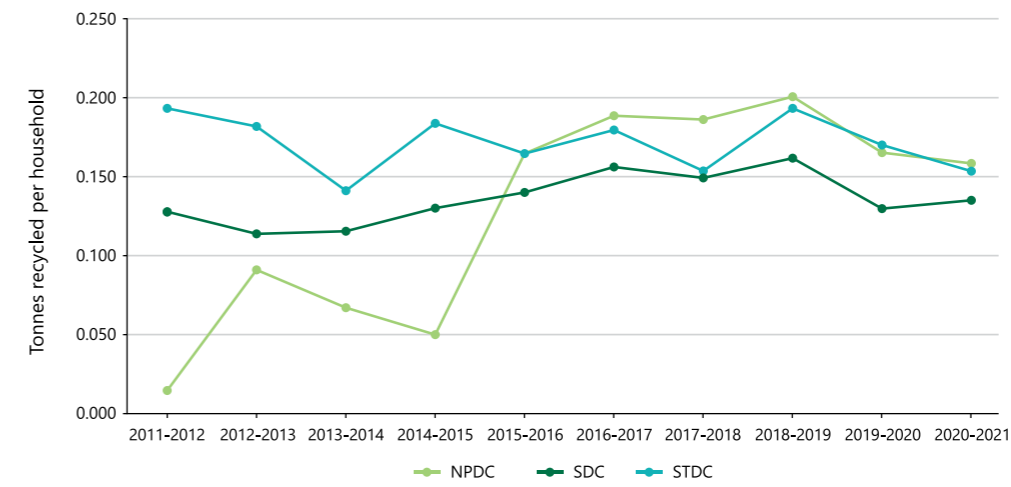
and reduced significantly from 2015 when all three district councils aligned their recycling collection services and created a regional materials recovery facility in New Plymouth to process recyclables. In 2014, the waste to landfill in the region per person was 595kg falling to 311kg per person in 2020-2021.

In Stratford and South Taranaki, there has been additional commercial and green waste introduced via the Hāwera and Stratford transfer stations since Colson Road Landfill closed. Reducing commercial and organic waste is a focus for the region's councils.





Total waste to landfill, 2011-2020.

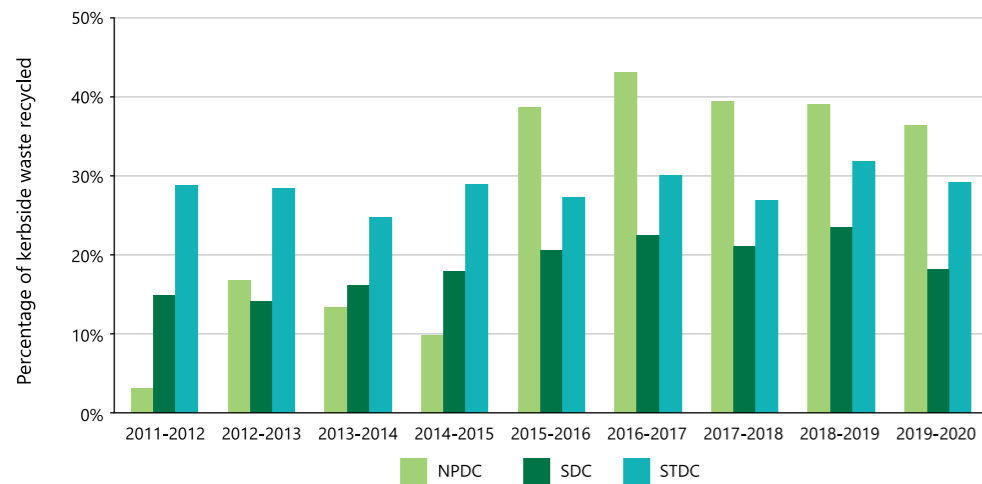


Kerbside recycling per household, 2011-2021.

### Kerbside collection

All district councils provide kerbside landfill, glass and mixed recycling services and separate glass collection. Over the past five years, Stratford and South Taranaki household waste disposal has remained static. Stratford has the highest disposal rates per household for landfill waste collected at kerbside, and will need to increase its recycling rate of 20% to meet its 2023 target of 29%.

On a per household basis, the three councils have similar rates of recycling at kerbside with a slight decreasing trend in the last two years.



Proportion of kerbside waste recycled annually, 2011-2020.

Contamination of kerbside recycling bins is an ongoing issue and occurs when people place non-recyclable items in recycling bins. Contamination in Taranaki has increased steadily over time, particularly since 2018. In the 2020 kerbside recycling audit, the most prominent contaminants were mixed materials, lids on bottles and dirty recycling.

In the past five years, the recycling market has seen significant changes. In early 2018, China introduced tighter restrictions on acceptable products, to improve its own recycling and environmental outcomes. This prompted the waste industry in New Zealand to look at local processing options for recycling in an attempt to reduce the reliance on the more volatile international markets.

In Taranaki this prompted a number of initiatives including the sourcing of local markets for paper, cardboard and plastics, improving the quality of sorted recycling, accepting only plastics 1, 2 and 5 and aligning operations with recommended national standards for what is acceptable at the kerbside.

### Composting and organic waste

After identifying that 43% of kerbside landfill was food waste, New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) introduced a weekly food scraps collection in 2019 as part of its kerbside service. Data from 2019 to 2021 shows 2,828 tonnes was diverted from landfill to a commercial composting facility.

This service also provided an opportunity to introduce a fleet of electric collection vehicles, which has reduced carbon emissions by 69,103kg CO<sub>2</sub> eq., equivalent to removing about 15 cars from the road annually.

Options for processing organic waste in an environmentally sustainable manner are somewhat limited. Proposed national emission reduction targets that focus on reducing emissions from organic waste mean we need to look at alternative solutions to address the high proportion of organic waste going to landfill in Taranaki.

Taranaki district councils are co-funding a feasibility study, investigating how they might collectively build and operate an organic waste processing facility. If this proves feasible, such a facility could potentially process domestic, commercial and industrial organic waste streams from around the region.

## What we're doing

### The Junction

There are 13 transfer stations in Taranaki servicing both urban and rural communities. As part of the upgrade to the Resource Recovery Facility in New Plymouth, NPDC established The Junction Zero Waste Hub on Colson Road.

The Junction is operated by Waitara Initiatives Supporting Employment and Sustainable Taranaki, both charitable trusts that run daily services and education initiatives focused on reuse and recycling. It is a shop and drop zone that resells items from tools and household items to building materials. It also manages e-waste services. Items diverted from landfill are sorted, checked and resold. Excess glass and recycling can be dropped off in a drive-through style depot, as can building materials such as windows, timber framing and other reusable items.



### Working with businesses

In 2019, NPDC employed a commercial waste minimisation officer who has since supported more than 60 businesses with waste reduction programmes and general guidance. Surveys in 2019 and 2020 also helped understand the needs and barriers faced by the business sector in reducing waste.

The Resource Wise Business Programme helps businesses reduce waste to landfill in the commercial and industrial sector. Businesses attend introductory workshops, nominate two or more waste champions and commit to the four-year programme. A waste minimisation officer conducts yearly audits with the waste champions. The information collected helps assess current and potential diversion rates and in the design of an action plan to reduce waste to landfill.

A survey of businesses involved in the programme showed 86% are now diverting food waste and paper towels from landfill and 100% of businesses improved their waste sorting stations. A third intake of businesses will join the programme in June 2022.

### Raising awareness

Regular community workshops help the community improve waste habits and reduce food waste. In the past year, this has expanded into awareness of sanitary waste and flushable single use contaminants such as tampons, pads and wipes. All district councils run menstrual cup workshops for schools and community groups to promote reusable cups and pads.

This is an important campaign advocating for positive change in perceptions and reducing negative behaviours around menstrual education. It aligns with the national period poverty initiative created by the Government.

## Where we're heading

### National changes

In the past five years, there has been significant growth in the community's awareness of waste issues, alongside changes in recycling markets nationally and internationally. The increasing profile of waste and climate change in New Zealand has seen Government initiatives including a ban on single use plastic bags in 2019, introduction of six mandated priority products that will place lifecycle responsibilities on producers in 2020 and increasing the waste levy imposed on every tonne of landfill waste to \$60 by 2026.

The Government is currently considering proposals for a new national waste strategy and more comprehensive waste legislation. In addition, an emissions reduction plan with specific references to waste and a circular economy is under development. This will likely create significant change in the waste management sector in the near future.

### Waste minimisation

The region's focus is on working towards Zero Waste and developing a circular economy that addresses waste at the product's source and the end of its lifecycle. This is in line with the national approach directed and supported by MfE.

The concept at the heart of a circular economy is ensuring we can unmake everything we make. It is essential to keep resources in use for as long as possible to extract the maximum value from them, then recover and regenerate products and materials once they are no longer in use.

Reaching Zero Waste would mean no rubbish is disposed to landfill, due to extremely high levels of resource efficiency, re-use, recycling and re-purposing. The Zero Waste concept is being rolled out around the world including many parts of New Zealand.



### Commercial waste

Commercial waste makes up 60% of waste to landfill and therefore its reduction is key to achieving the goal of Zero Waste. In 2019 a feasibility study into options for reducing and diverting more commercial and industrial waste from landfill concluded the following would have the most impact:

- promoting existing recovery services in the region;
- extending the current domestic kerbside collection to appropriate small businesses;
- constructing a commercial and industrial recovery facility; and
- investigating a commercial food waste collection targeting medium-sized businesses.

These actions will be implemented over the coming years. A commercial waste sorting facility is due to open in 2022 and an extension of the kerbside residential collection service to small businesses, organisations and marae is set for 2024.

# Working together to reduce waste



In 2020, Enviroschools Taranaki collaborated with South Taranaki District Council (STDC) to deliver a range of workshops to local communities. The Enviroschools programme has waste as one of its key theme areas and 100% of its schools and kindergartens are working on waste issues.

These workshops drew on concepts from the Future Living Skills Programme. While the focus was on general sustainable living skills, many of the workshops included waste avoidance, waste alternatives, waste minimisation, resource recovery and/or and re-use components.

Workshops included:

- No dig lasagne garden composting in Ōpunake
- Make your own bathroom, kitchen & laundry products in Hāwera
- Waikawa (large basket) weaving in Eltham
- Low waste, low cost seasonal cooking in Waverley
- Plastic Free July in Hāwera

At many of the workshops, attendees were given resources such as recipe books or low-waste living products.

Enviroschools also hosted a well-received Plastic Free July lunchtime drop-in session for STDC staff featuring bees wax wrap making, homemade household cleaners and raranga (weaving).

STDC Environment and Sustainability Officer Brittany Rymer said it was great to partner with Enviroschools to take sustainable lifestyle education opportunities to the community.

“Their workshops help give residents the knowledge, tools and confidence needed to reduce their waste and live more sustainably.”

The community education partnership was expanded for the 2021-2022 financial year, with 12 workshops planned across the South Taranaki district including Pātea, Waverley and Kaponga. These will cover waste avoidance and minimisation topics including grow your own groceries, green gifting, preserve your harvest and composting/green waste.

Taranaki Regional Council co-ordinates the Enviroschools programme in Taranaki, with support from Toimata Foundation, the three district councils, Toi Foundation and Kindergarten Taranaki.

