



Waste Management and Minimisation Plan 2025-2031

STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL

Consultation open Monday 10 March to Friday 11 April 2025



Background

This Statement of Proposal summarises the current state of waste management in the district together with our draft Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) 2025-2031.



The Council is required to have a **Waste Management and Minimisation Plan** (a “WMMP”) that sets out how we will **manage and reduce the waste** in our district. We also have obligations under the Health Act 1956 to ensure that our waste management systems protect public health.

The WMMP covers a **six-year period**, with the last one being from 2018-2024. Council’s Long-Term Plan 2024-34 sets out budgets and activities to be delivered by the Council over the next 10 years. The Long-Term Plan, adjusted annually through the Annual Plan process, is reviewed in-depth every three-years.

Contents

Mayor's message	Pages 4-5
Why do we need a Waste Management and Minimisation Plan?	Page 6
What does a Circular Economy look like?	Page 7
Our waste journey so far	Pages 8-9
New vision and plan of action	Page 10
Six key actions for next six years	Page 11
Funding our plan	Page 12
Feedback Form	Pages 13-17



Your feedback on our draft Waste Management and Minimisation Plan will help Council design and deliver services that will help protect our precious environment on which our economy and way-of-life depends.



Mayor's message

Council is inviting you to have your say on our draft **Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) 2025-2031**.

This plan sets out how we will manage and reduce waste in our district while ensuring our waste management systems protect public health.

Why Waste Minimisation Matters

The WMMP drives Council's efforts to reduce waste in Ruapehu, shaping how we manage waste services over the next six years.

It plays an important role in supporting a healthy environment on which our economy and lifestyle depends – we must act as responsible kaitiaki (guardians) of our natural resources.

The WMMP aligns with the core values in Council's **Strategic Framework**:

- **Kaitiakitanga** – Guardianship
- **Manaakitanga** – Care for others
- **Rangatiratanga** – Enabling others
- **Accountability**
- **Environmental Stewardship**

Building on Our Progress

Our **previous 2018-2024 WMMP** marked a **significant shift in waste management** for Ruapehu, responding to the closure of the Taumarunui landfill.

This drove new waste diversion initiatives, including:

- Kerbside **food scrap collection**
- Construction of a **Hot Composting Unit** in Taumarunui
- Expansion of **Resource Recovery** operations in Taumarunui and Ohakune
- Adoption of a **Zero Waste by 2040** goal

Thanks to these efforts, **Ruapehu has outperformed** many other councils, producing less waste and diverting a higher proportion from landfill than the national average.

However, we know there is **still room for improvement** – around **one-third of kerbside waste** could still be diverted – **particularly food waste**.

The Next Step – Our 2025-2031 WMMP

The new **2025-2031 WMMP** takes another major step forward, aligning with the **2023 Aotearoa New Zealand Waste Strategy – Te rautaki para** and the shift toward a **circular economy**.

The Government's strategy envisions a **low-emissions, low-waste society** by 2050, and under the **Waste Minimisation Act**, councils must **"have regard to the New Zealand Waste Strategy"** by embedding its core principles into our own waste minimisation strategy.

Council recognises the **critical role of local government** in implementing the New Zealand Waste Strategy and achieving its objectives.

This includes our **investment in** the key building blocks such as the **local facilities and services** needed to support waste minimisation efforts, and **encouraging behaviour change** through good policies and education efforts.

Despite **constrained budgets** for new initiatives we see plenty of **potential for doing more** with what we have in the new WMMP and are committed to **making the most of existing resources**.

Our six key focus areas for the next six years are:

1. **Promote waste hierarchy** and **circular economy** principles
2. **Divert more waste** from **kerbside** collection services
3. **Improve waste diversion** by visitors and tourists
4. **Enhance waste services** for rural communities
5. **Increase waste diversion** through the transfer station network
6. **Investigate new initiatives** including a solid waste bylaw for commercial waste, managing erosion risks at closed landfills, addressing medical waste, and exploring new waste diversion technologies.



Waste minimisation is a top priority for Council with our economy and way of life being critically dependent on the health of our environment – we cannot afford to take it for granted.

Your Input Matters

While our new WMMP has ambitious goals, we are mindful of financial constraints on both Council and our communities. Your feedback will help us refine our strategy to ensure we achieve the best possible waste minimisation outcomes with the resources available.

Have your say and help us build a cleaner, more sustainable future for our district!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Weston Kirton".



Weston Kirton
MAYOR
RUAPEHU DISTRICT COUNCIL

Why do we need a waste plan?

“New Zealand needs to change how we make, use, manage and dispose of waste... we can, and should, do better”

Hon. David Parker

Former Minister for the Environment

In 2023, the Government released **Te rautaki para Aotearoa/ New Zealand Waste Strategy**. In this strategy, the government sets out the vision:

“By 2050, Aotearoa New Zealand is a low-emissions, low-waste society, built on a circular economy.

We cherish our inseparable connection with the natural environment and look after the planet’s finite resources with care and responsibility.”

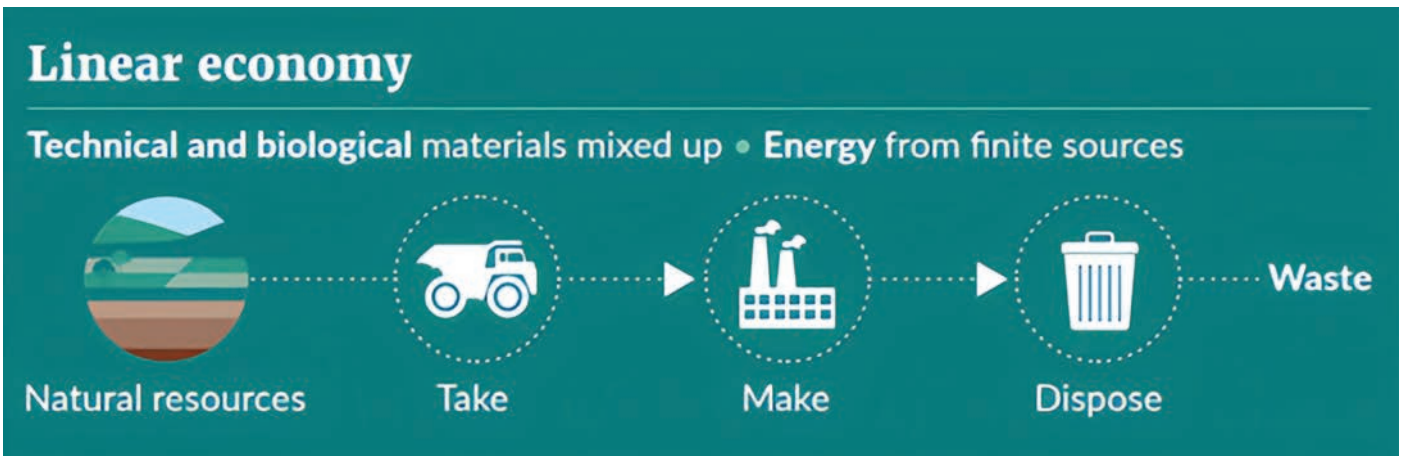
This national strategy sets out the **long-term waste priorities and targets** across Aotearoa, **with local government and our communities** being key to achieving these priorities.



What does a circular economy look like?

At the moment, **our waste moves in a mostly “linear” way**, from extracting natural resources out of the ground, through to production, consumption and ultimately thrown away. This **results in valuable resources being discarded into landfills**, which pollutes our environment and means that we need to take more from the environment to replace them.

This is demonstrated in the graphic below:



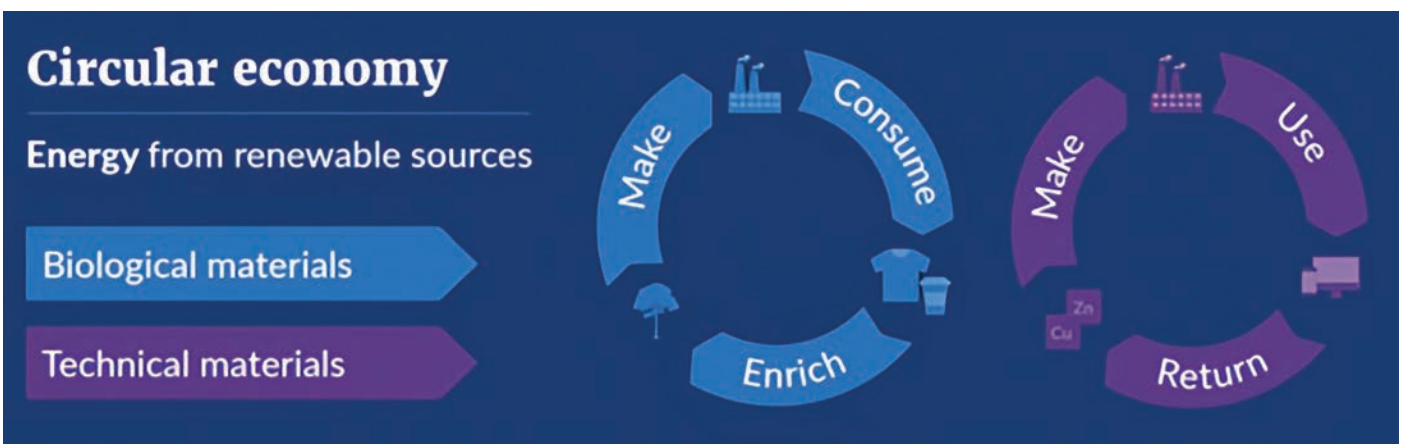
What is a circular economy?

An economy which is more “circular” creates products with the end of their life in mind. Products are designed to be easy to repair, disassemble, reuse or recycle, turning them into something new and retaining their value.

We separate “technical” materials that can be reused or recycled (such as plastics, metals and electronics) from biological materials like food waste. As a result, valuable materials can be recycled and organic matter can be composted, enriching the soil with important nutrients.

Transitioning to a circular economy is a major shift, requiring changes nationally and locally. This starts at how we design the products that we use and will require new and improved infrastructure to ensure that we are retaining as much value from what we consume.

The benefits of a circular economy include resilience to climate change, and a low-emissions economy which is respectful of our natural environment.



Our journey so far

How our waste gets collected

Council provides residential kerbside collections for refuse bags, recycling crates and food waste bins in urban areas.

The services are provided to approximately 3,970 households in the three main urban centres (Taumarunui, Ohakune and Raetihi) and other areas included (Waiōuru and Kakahi).

As rural residents do not have access to kerbside collection, council operates four smaller, rural transfer stations provided at Ōngarue, Waimarino (National Park), Ōhura, and Ōwhango.

These are open for a half day, four days a week. There are two larger transfer stations, with resource recovery centres, in Taumarunui and Ohakune.

Private refuse and greenwaste collection services are available in the district. These services are provided on a user-pays basis, like Council's refuse bags.

Private services also target customers that don't receive a Council service such as rural households outside collection areas, or they target customers for which the standard service doesn't meet the needs.

Where our waste goes

There are no operating landfills in the Ruapehu district, so waste is transported from the transfer station network to Taumarunui for consolidation and transportation to their final destinations where waste materials are sent for further processing, recycling, or disposal.

Recycled paper, cardboard, plastics, and glass are sent to Hamilton by the Council's waste contractors. Food waste and some greenwaste are processed into compost at the hot composting unit in Taumarunui.

Residual waste is disposed to out-of-district landfills, including Hampton Downs. The Hampton Downs landfill represents best-in-class practice in New Zealand, where gasses generated from decomposing waste are efficiently captured and turned into energy that supplies the landfill, and surplus energy to the national grid.

Transporting our waste out of the district comes at a cost to ratepayers and adds to the council's carbon footprint with the long travel distances. Increasing the amount of reuse we do, including through composting, will reduce costs and help to protect our environment.

Waste assessment

As a part of reviewing this plan, the Council conducted a waste assessment in 2023. This assessment showed that the Ruapehu District is performing well, significantly better than the New Zealand average, producing less waste and diverting a higher proportion of its waste to landfill.

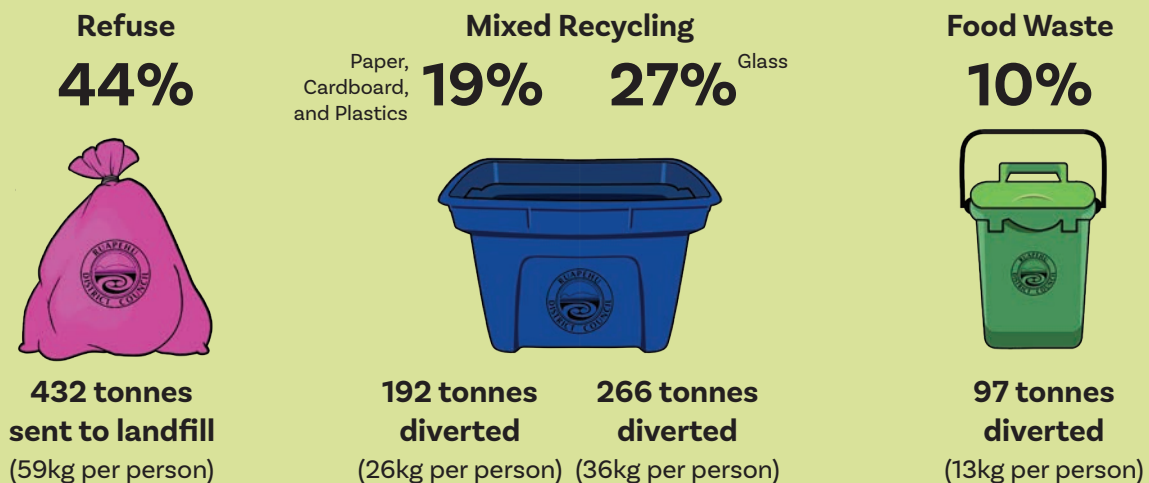
The graphics below detail the most recent statistics for the Ruapehu District.



Average weight of refuse sent to landfill per person

- On average, each person in Ruapehu sends 255kg of waste to landfill every year.
- The New Zealand average per person is 608kg.

Kerbside waste: Average percentage of kerbside refuse mix



What we have achieved

Waste Management and Minimisation has been a priority for the Council for a number of years. The Ruapehu District compares well against other areas of the country on rates of waste diverted from landfill and other key metrics.

Some highlights from the past six years include:

- Introducing kerbside collection of food scraps for all urban areas in 2020
- Building a hot composting unit at the Taumarunui Resource Recovery Centre to turn food scraps and green waste into compost that can be sold. We expect the compost quality to reach a level where this can happen this financial year.
- Introducing bunkers at transfer stations to hold recycling until it is economical to move
- Worked with Para Kore to deliver education in our District's schools

We have also completed or partially completed 11 of the 12 actions from the Action Plan in our 2018-2024 WMMP and achieved most of the targets we set.

Our progress against the targets from the previous WMMP are detailed in the table below:

Objective	Target	Results (as of 2023)
Reduce waste to landfill	Reduce waste to landfills from 368kg to 175kg per person per annum by 2022.	Achieved: Council controlled refuse to landfill was 124 kg per person in 2022/23.
Prioritise waste reduction, reuse and recovery & recycling initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase diversion from 222 kg to 640 kg per person per annum by 2022. • All waste initiatives and services implemented during the term of this WMMP. • Three new initiatives implemented by 2020, focus on waste reduction, reuse or recovery/recycling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not achieved: Total diversion was 126 kg per person in 2022/23 • Completed or partially completed 11 of 12 actions • Achieved: Initiatives and facilities initiated.
Improve council access to information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2020, council-controlled waste contracts include clauses requiring contractor(s) provide data on all refuse and diverted materials. • By 2020, introduce a waste licensing system which includes a mechanism to collect waste data relating to council and privately collected waste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved: Waste collection contracts renewed. • Not achieved: The NZWS is expected to develop more detail for waste licensing systems.

How much better could we do?

Despite our good performance, we estimate that one-third of kerbside waste collected in Ruapehu could be diverted, including food waste, clean paper and cardboard, recyclable plastics, glass and metals.

This shows that there is significant room for improvement and the need to prioritise behaviour change, despite RDC offering services that are among the best in New Zealand.

A full version of the **Waste Assessment** can be found on Council's website: ruapehudc.govt.nz

Our new vision and action plan

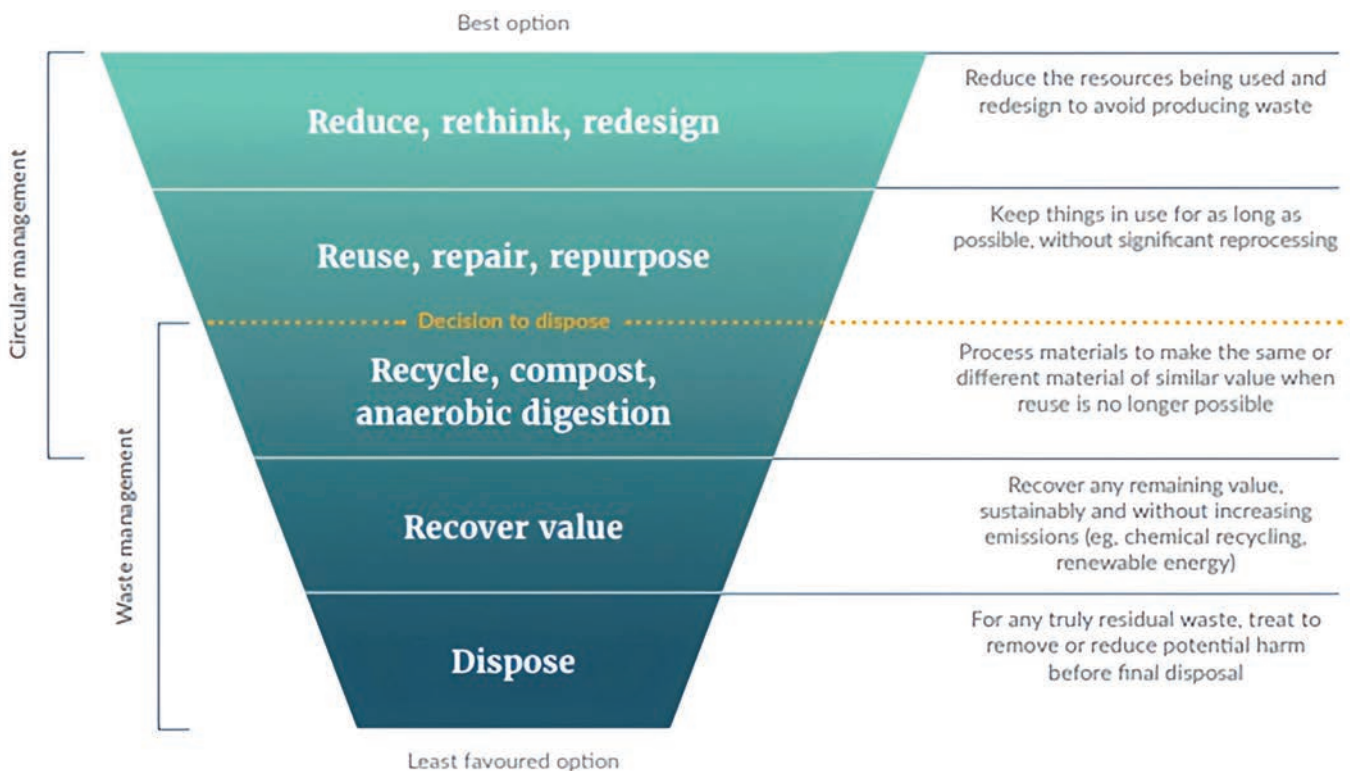
By 2050 Ruapehu District is a low-emissions, low waste society build upon a circular economy.

To help us achieve our targets by 2031, Council has developed a **new vision and action plan** for the next six years that **are aligned** with the **Government’s Waste Strategy and Waste Hierarchy**.

Our vision is a local version of the Government’s vision for New Zealand; that

“by 2050 Ruapehu District is a low-emissions, low waste society build upon a circular economy”

The **Waste Hierarchy** is a way of thinking about waste which we can all apply to our lives – from management of waste at a district-wide level to how we manage waste at home.



Our six key actions for the next six-years

1. Promote upstream waste hierarchy and local circular economy principles

Focusing on actions at the top of the pyramid, we plan on supporting and promoting the kinds of activities that will move us to a more circular economy. This includes **participating in national schemes** to collect difficult to manage or hazardous materials (such as refrigerants), **providing education** in schools to share this kaupapa with our rangatahi and **advocating at a regional and national level** for the tools we need to make a difference.

2. Divert more from kerbside collection services

We will focus on continuing to deliver our existing services, including both the kerbside collection as well as transfer stations and resource recovery centres. We will also keep residents informed and up to date with any changes, conduct regular surveys to advertise our services and understand how we can overcome barriers to waste minimisation.

3. Improve waste diversion by visitors and tourists

The Ruapehu District attracts approximately one and a half million visitors ever year, and tourism is vital to our local economy, employing approximately 20% of our workers and worth over \$100 million per year. However, these visitors generate waste, and managing that waste comes at a cost.

We will continue to provide litter and recycling bins in public places and will review our public litter bin policy to assess whether our current bins are sufficient. We will also work to better promote these services during peak visitor periods, and work with the tourism and hospitality sectors to increase diversion from landfill.

4. Improve access to appropriate waste services for rural communities

Rural households make up approximately 43% of the population in the Ruapehu District. We will continue to provide existing rural services including the four rural transfer stations, drop-off points and the new trailer service for Raetihi. We will investigate options to extend these services with external funding if it becomes available.

5. Use the transfer stations to divert more from the overall waste stream

There are two large transfer stations in Taumarunui and Ohakune, as well as four rural transfer stations in Ongarue, Waimarino (National Park), Ohura, and Ōwhango. These transfer stations are a point of customer contact and provide an opportunity to provide education and promote diversion of waste. We will investigate options for the provision of rural services to ensure they are fit for purpose.

6. Other actions

Aside from our five targeted action areas, we have a number of other actions that we wish to progress over the life of the WMMP. These include:

- Investigating a solid waste bylaw to better manage commercial waste in the district,
- Assessing closed landfills for risks of erosion and new treatment options,
- Exploring opportunities to work with the health sector to manage medical waste, and,
- Pursuing new and emerging opportunities for waste diversion through technology.

Funding our waste plan

Council provides its **waste services and facilities** at an annual cost of **\$3.4 million**, accounting for **6.4% of Council's total operating costs** and supported by **\$1.9 million (6%) of Council's rates** funding (FY2024/25 Budget).

This includes the below:

Activity provided	Where	Cost (per year)
Kerbside recycling	Taumarunui, Ohakune and Raetihi	\$144,000
Kerbside rubbish collection	Taumarunui, Ohakune and Raetihi	\$144,000
Kerbside food scraps collection	Taumarunui, Ohakune and Raetihi	\$219,000
Transfer stations	Taumarunui, Ohakune, Ōngarue, Waimarino (National Park), Ōhura, and Ōwhango	\$1.55 million

Note on funding for new services

Any additional levels of service introduced by the Council in the future **will come at a cost to those receiving increased services**, in line with the Council's **Revenue and Financing Policy**.

Currently, this Policy provides for funding of kerbside services through targeted rates only, while waste management facilities are funded through a mix of user charges, general rates and funding provided from the Government through the **Waste Minimisation Levy**.



Food scraps collected as part of the kerbside collection service are turned into high-grade compost in the Taumarunui Hot Composting Unit

Feedback: Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Ruapehu Ruapehu District Council Waste Management and Minimisation Plan 2025-2031



- We want to hear what you think about this plan. By responding to the following questions you will help us inform the WMMP, as well as future Council decisions around levels of service for waste management.
- While we are seeking feedback on specific questions you can provide feedback on any aspect of our proposed plan or other waste issues in Ruapehu that you like.

If you prefer provide feedback on-line at: ruapehudc.govt.nz or use the **QR code**

Name:

Organisation (if applicable):

Postal address:

Best daytime contact number:

Email: Keep me advised of future consultations

Would you like to support your feedback by speaking to Council during the Hearings? Yes No

If you ticked 'yes' we will contact you to arrange a speaking date and time.
The Hearings are scheduled for Tue 29th April (Taumarunui) and Wed 30th April (Ohakune/Raetihi). You can choose to speak at either or online.
A maximum of two speakers and ten (10) minutes of total speaking time per submission is permitted.

1. Do you agree with the overall direction of Council's revised Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP)?

Yes. No.

2. Are there any waste issues you think we should be addressing as a priority that are not included in the draft WMMP?

Yes. No.

Tell us why or why not:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Tell us what waste issues and why:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Promoting a Circular Economy

How important do you think it is for Council to promote reducing waste at the source (e.g. encouraging businesses and residents to avoid unnecessary waste, repair, and reuse materials)?

- Very important**
Council should prioritise reducing waste at the source as a key strategy.
- Somewhat important**
It's a good approach, but should be balanced with other waste management efforts.
- Not important**
Council should focus on waste collection and disposal rather than reduction initiatives.

Tell us why or any other comment you want to add:

.....

.....

.....

What ideas or initiatives would help our communities move towards a more circular economy?

.....

.....

.....

4. Diverting More from Kerbside Collection (Food Waste Focus)

What barriers (if any) are there to you diverting food waste from landfill in your household or business?

- Lack of suitable collection or composting facilities**
No access to a food waste bin, compost, worm farm, or collection service.
- Time and effort required**
Separating food waste feels inconvenient or too much work.
- Concerns about hygiene, pests, or odors**
Worry that storing food waste separately could attract pests or create bad smells.
- Other reasons**
Please tell us what in the comments

Would you support new initiatives to reduce food waste diversion, such as subsidised home worm farming?

- Yes. No.

Tell us why or any other comment you want to add:

.....

.....

.....

5. Improving Waste Diversion by Visitors and Tourists

What improvements do you think would help visitors and tourists better manage their waste?

- More public recycling and food waste bins**
Easily accessible, clearly labeled bins in key visitor areas.
- Better education and signage**
Clear information on what can be recycled or composted, available in multiple languages.
- Incentives or requirements for businesses**
Encouraging operators to provide waste sorting options and promote responsible disposal.

... Improving Waste Diversion by Visitors and Tourists... continued

Another idea - on what would help visitors and tourists better manage their waste
Please tells your thoughts in the comments section

Have you noticed issues with how waste is managed in visitor areas (e.g. at parks, campgrounds, ski areas)?

Yes. No.

Any comment you want to add:

.....
.....
.....
.....

6. Improving Rural Access to Waste Services

Do you live in a rural area? Yes. No. If YES, what area:

Do you feel you have fair and convenient access to waste disposal and recycling services?

Yes. No.

What would make waste and recycling services more accessible for rural communities?

- Different opening days/hours at our nearest Transfer Station**
Tells us what Transfer Station and what days/hours would work better in the comments section.
- Subsidised composting and recycling solutions**
Support for home composting, worm farms, or community recycling hubs.
- Improved education and support targeted at rural communities**
Clearer guidance on the options for waste disposal, recycling, and waste minimisation for rural communities.
- Other**
Please tell us what in the comments section

Any comment you want to add:

.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Using the Transfer Stations to increase diversion from landfill

How do you currently use the district's transfer stations?

- For general waste disposal
- For recycling
- Green waste
- Resource recovery
- Reuse shops
- Other
Please tell us what:

.....

You can bring your feedback form into any Council office or have your say via:



Mail:

Freepost 492
Ruapehu District Council
Private Bag 1001
Taumarunui 3946



On-line:

Use our on-line submission form on our website: **ruapehudc.govt.nz** or use your phone and **the QR code**



Email:

consultation@ruapehudc.govt.nz



In person:

Don't forget you can support your feedback by talking to Council during the Hearings. This can be in-person or on-line.



Using the kerbside food scrap service is good for our environment and saves you money by using fewer pink rubbish bags.

Your food scraps also get turned into high-grade compost!

