

Hon Eugenie Sage

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Minita Tuarua mō Te Taiao



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PĀNUI PĀPĀHO
MEDIA STATEMENT

More action on waste – Government funds recycling infrastructure, moves to standardise kerbside collections

- **\$36.7m Government investment in high-tech recycling plants nationwide**
- **Plan to standardise and improve the nation’s kerbside collections**

As part of a wider plan to reduce the amount of rubbish ending up in New Zealand’s landfills, the Government is to fund the upgrading of seven high-tech recycling plants from Northland to Canterbury announced Associate Minister for the Environment Eugenie Sage today.

She also welcomed the recommendations in a report on how New Zealand’s kerbside recycling can be standardised. The report, *Standardising kerbside collections in Aotearoa*, was released today.

“There is much to do to improve how we recycle in New Zealand and Covid-19 lockdowns have created further challenges.

“This \$36.7 million investment and implementing the kerbside report recommendations will help improve recycling infrastructure and materials recovery,” said Eugenie Sage.

“Currently New Zealand’s recycling system relies on a lot of manual sorting of materials so that they can be reprocessed. It’s not pleasant work, especially when people put rubbish in their recycling bin.

“Investing in high-tech optical sorters will make for safer workplaces and speed up the sorting process to separate different materials, such as paper and plastics.

“Some plastic materials are very difficult to tell apart, even for the professionals. This is where the optical sorter can in a split-second determine whether for example, a clear rigid plastic is made from 1, 3, 6 or 7. The latter three plastics are considered as contamination in many kerbside collections nowadays.

“This investment sits alongside other Government initiatives to reduce household and other waste going to landfills such as the [expanded and increased waste levy](#), and designing a container return scheme for beverage containers.

“New Zealanders care deeply about recycling, about doing the right thing for the environment. While we continue to tackle Covid-19 we are also focused on a recovery that creates a win-win for our people, the economy and environment.

“This \$36.7 million is part of the \$124 million the Government [previously announced](#) it is investing from the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Fund (CRRF) in a number of significant waste infrastructure initiatives across the country.

“Today’s announcements are to upgrade Material Recovery Facilities at the following sites throughout New Zealand.”

- **EcoCentral’s Christchurch facility**
 - agreement in principle for up to \$1.8m grant funding for a plastics optical sorter
 - agreement in principle for up to \$15m grant funding for a fibre optical and mechanical sorter
- **Auckland Council’s Auckland Materials Recovery Facility**
 - agreement in principle for up to \$0.6m grant funding for a plastics optical sorter
 - agreement in principle for up to \$16m grant funding for a fibre optical and mechanical sorter
- **EnviroWaste Services Limited’s existing New Plymouth facility and a new Hamilton facility**
 - two optical (fibre and plastics) sorter units in each of these Materials Recovery Facilities, with agreement in principle for up to \$1.9m grant co-funding for the four units
- **Smart Environmental’s facilities at Thames and new Napier facility**
 - a plastics optical sorter unit in each of these Materials Recovery Facilities, with agreement in principle for up to \$1m grant co-funding
- **Plasback collection facilities in Northland, Bay of Plenty and Canterbury**
 - three waste plastic balers and processing equipment will be installed, with agreement in principle for up to \$442,000 in a grant co-funding

“This major investment in waste infrastructure will help ensure New Zealand emerges from Covid-19 with a far better recycling and resource recovery system, with an important focus being the creation of new jobs.”

“Internationally, the experience is that there are more jobs, and more skilled jobs, in resource recovery than in old-fashioned waste collection and disposal to landfill,” said Eugenie Sage.

“It will help New Zealand deal with waste and recycling onshore, recover more materials, and reduce the amount of rubbish ending up in the tip. I’m pleased we’re making progress to make recycling easier and more effective,” she said.

A report, *Standardising kerbside collections in Aotearoa*, prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by WasteMINZ and Sunshine Yates Consulting released this week recommends that:

- Materials are standardised for domestic kerbside recycling collections across the country (e.g. plastics 1, 2, 5; metal, glass, cardboard and paper)
- Local authorities are incentivised to collect food waste for composting or anaerobic digestion
- Local authorities are incentivised to collect glass separately to other recyclable materials
- Best practice is promoted for food waste, recycling, and residual rubbish collections to increase consistency across the country.

An immediate first step the sector and councils can do is move towards collecting the standardised materials outlined in the report.

“There needs to be a collaborative approach between central and local government, respecting that councils have their local contexts and existing services to manage.”

“In mid-2021 the Ministry for the Environment will reconvene the sector to develop the roadmap for implementing the recommendations in the report.”

Notes to editors:

Attached is the *Standardising kerbside collections in Aotearoa* [report](#)

