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Report to Environment Committee
From Romae Duns, Sustainable Business Facilitator.

Submission on Towards a National Waste Minimisation Strategy

1. Purpose

To present for ratification the draft submission prepared for the Ministry for the Environment and Local Government New Zealand on the Waste Minimisation Strategy.

2. Background

Waste is causing a problem in New Zealand and the rest of the developed world. Consumerism is prevalent and waste generation in New Zealand has increased by 30% between 1982 and 1995. The Wellington Region is no exception to this trend.

In the year 2000, more than three million tonnes of waste was sent to landfills around New Zealand. During 1999, about 490,000 tonnes of material was landfilled in the Wellington Region, (enough to fill the stadium twice¹). This figure does not include construction and demolition material that is disposed of at the various 'cleanfill' sites around the region. Construction and demolition material constitutes a significant portion of the waste stream.

The Minister for the Environment and Local Government NZ have set up a Waste Minimisation and Management Working Group to provide advice on the development of a National Waste Management Strategy. The Minister and LGNZ want to establish vision, goals and principal objectives for waste minimisation nationally.

¹ Source: Measuring Up (WRC State of the Environment Report, 1999)

The Working Group released 'Towards a National Waste Minimisation Strategy' in December 2000. This document raises a number of issues regarding the minimisation and management of waste and the direction New Zealand should take with regard to these issues. The Working Group has called for submissions on the document and these are due at the Ministry for the Environment on 1 March 2001. A workshop has been held recently involving agencies and interested parties from across the Region to discuss the issues within the strategy. Waste is an important issue with Wellington and consequently it is vital that we comment on the Strategy. A draft submission for discussion and approval is attached to this report.

3. **Key Issues from the Strategy**

The strategy document outlines 10 issues for discussion and the draft submission addresses each of these in turn. Perhaps the most significant issues are Issues 3 and 5

Issue 3 discusses the roles and responsibilities for waste prevention and minimisation. Current legislation does not provide a clear mandate for regional councils to take on this responsibility and so we have tended not to be involved to a great extent. Our draft submission suggests that the legislation should be altered to allow Regional Council a clearer and more responsive role in this area.

Issue 5 pertains to the introduction and implementation of a Waste Management Levy and how such a levy should be administered. Our draft submission supports the levy and suggests regional administration.

4. **Communication**

The submission will be forwarded to the Ministry for the Environment for consideration by the Working Party. Little would be gained at this stage in communicating the content of the Council's submission

5. **Recommendation**

That the Committee approves the submission on 'Towards a National Waste Minimisation Strategy'.

Report Prepared by:

Approved for submission:

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Attachments: 1