



Xtreme's FAQ on Waikato District Council's "Let's Talk Rubbish" Council seeking your feedback

Council has sent every ratepayer a letter asking for feedback on changes to their services. They have also sent a letter to residents of Te Uku, Te Mata, and Waitetuna (approx. 300 houses) asking if they are keen on a kerbside collection of pre-paid bags and recyclables. Feedback is required as part of Council's formal consultation prior to the changes going into the Long Term Plan including next year's Annual Plan. Our community has the opportunity to offer feedback/submissions now on the form supplied with the letter, as well as to the Long Term Plan in April 2015.

Background

All councils are required by the Waste Minimisation Act to adopt a Waste Minimisation Management Plan (WMMP). The WMMP is the guiding document for councils in directing their efforts towards achieving effective and efficient waste management and minimisation within their districts. Waikato District Council has a great waste minimisation plan with a target of zero waste to landfill and a description of services needed to achieve it. These services minimise waste to landfill, make resources available to our community and provide jobs. The services recommended by Council are becoming 'industry best practice' throughout the country.

What are the main changes proposed?

Waikato District has a number of different ways of managing waste due to historic contracts and recent boundary changes. There are 3 quite different systems that WDC wants to change into 1 similar service throughout the Waikato. In brief, WDC wants to establish community recycle centres at Huntly and Te Kauwhata, similar to Raglans, and small rural drop off points feeding these centres. Pre-paid bags (or stickers) will become the system for kerbside waste collection across all Waikato. Kerbside collection of recyclables, with the pre-paid bags, will be extended into rural Waikato. The inorganic collection will be changed to a ring-in service offered to most ratepayers who have a kerbside collection.

What is proposed for Prepaid bags?

WDC is recommending that a pre-paid bag or sticker be developed for the whole of the district, including Raglan. The price will be set by WDC and they are recommending it be initially set at \$1.50 per bag.

This sounds like a great price considering our current pre-paid bags are set at \$2.80 each, however the \$1.50 per bag is not the total cost. The bags will still cost \$2.80, but the district ratepayers will pay the \$1.30 top up through their rates. The reason for setting such a low cost is that in the rest of the district, WDC feel people will more easily transition from a total rate paid system to a user pays system if the cost is low. If the sticker system is introduced, people will have to purchase their bags on top of the \$1.50 price of the sticker. Bags currently range from 20-30 cents each.

Waste should always be charged to the people who generate it. Equally, those who choose to recycle and divert waste from landfill should be awarded by only paying for what they produce. By having a large proportion of the bag price paid by the ratepayer, the producer of waste will be subsidised and the diverter of waste will be penalised.

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Subsidising the cost of waste will cause major problems with the recycling industry. Recycling is always compared with the cost of waste to landfill. Cheaper landfill takes away incentives to recycle. Many people and businesses make decisions on finances alone. This will have serious consequences to the recycling industry. Cheaper waste equals more waste and less waste diversion.

In Raglan, we currently have 2 sizes of bags – full (60 litre) and half sized. The smaller bag was introduced to support our elderly who find it hard to fill a large bag and to reward them for being resourceful and diverting waste from landfill. With the new system the half sized bag will go.

Recommendations: We recommend that the pre-paid bag system is extended to cover as much of the District as practical. That the bags are priced at full cost rather than subsidised by the rate payer and that half sized bag is offered to encourage waste minimisation.

What is proposed for rural kerbside recycle collection?

Council are recommending an extension of this service into more rural areas. In Raglan this is being offered along the Main Road as far as Otonga Valley Rd, Waitetuna, Old Mountain Rd, Okete Loop Rd, Te Mata Rd (as far as the township), Ponds Rd, Ohautira Rd (10kms or so) and Maungatawhiri Rd. In the proposal, approximately 300 houses will be offered both the weekly pre-paid bag and recyclable collection.

It is likely that this will result in the removal of the Te Uku drop off point as this site is not coping with the volume of material, which is predominantly being dropped off by Raglan residents. The Te Mata drop off point will remain as it copes with the volume and services a larger rural area that won't be serviced by the kerbside collection of bags and recyclables. The drop off points at the junctions of the Main Road and Maungatawhiri and Te Mata will also be removed.

Recommendations: We recommend support for the extension of the rural kerbside collection of pre-paid bags and recyclables.

Will Raglan get an inorganic collection?

Council proposes to offer an inorganic collection to all Raglan town residents and rural areas receiving a collection of recyclables and pre-paid bags. This will be a phone-in service – not a pile on your front lawn service!

Inorganic collections are being phased out throughout the country as they are wasteful, expensive and abused by industry enjoying free dumping. Inorganic collections are replaced by recycle/reuse centres.

In Raglan, we already have a recycle/reuse centre, and are able to bring goods to the centre. has recently purchased a trailer for hire to help with transport of reusable goods. An inorganic collection paid for in rates is inefficient and expensive.

Recommendation: In our view, inorganic collections are inefficient and expensive. We favor drop-off recycle/reuse centres, such as already exists in Raglan.

What changes will be made to rates?

Council wish to set these the same across the District at \$121.08 instead of the current \$102.58 in Raglan. This is an increase for Raglan residents although they get an inorganic collection plus cheaper pre-paid bags at \$1.50 per bag, but will pay a percentage of the top-up as the real bag price will stay around \$2.80 per bag.

If you are living in Raglan and putting out 2 large rubbish bags a week, your annual costs will go down. However, if you are not putting out two bags a week, you will be subsidising prepaid bags and inorganic collections across the district. Again, the producer of waste will be subsidised and the diverter of waste will be penalised.

Recommendation: That Raglan rates remain at \$102.58 to cover costs of kerbside recycling, and recycle centre. We don't want inorganic collection or subsidisation of district pre-paid bags in our rates. Lower rate should be a reward for Raglan residents for the hard work we have all done to minimise waste in the past.

Summary of Recommendations

- We recommend that the pre-paid bag system is extended to cover as much of the District as practical. That the bags are priced at full cost rather than subsidised by the ratepayer and that a half sized bag is offered to encourage waste minimisation.
- We recommend support for the extension of the rural kerbside collection of pre-paid bags and recyclables.
- In our view, inorganic collections are inefficient and expensive. We favor drop-off recycle/reuse centres, such as already exists in Raglan.
- Raglan rates remain at \$102.58 to cover costs of kerbside recycling and our recycle centre. We don't want inorganic collection or subsidisation of district pre-paid bags in our rates. This lower rate should be a reward for Raglan residents for the hard work we have all done to minimise waste in our community.