

waste *net* southland



SOUTHLAND'S WASTE MANAGEMENT AND MINIMISATION PLAN 2026–2032

Reducing Waste
Protecting Southland
July 2026



Waste Free Workshop - Winton School



WASTENET SOUTHLAND WASTE MANAGEMENT AND MINIMISATION PLAN 2026–2032

FORWARD



As Chair of WasteNet Southland, I am proud to introduce this Waste Minimisation And Management Plan (WMMP) which builds on our progress during the previous 2020-2026 plan and recognises that we have more to do. The plan takes the opportunity to address changes in our approach, both at the national level and the local level, towards waste over the last six years and it sets our strategic direction for the future.

It is informed by an assessment undertaken in 2025 by Eunomia Research and Consulting which highlighted the actions that have been completed in current plan, gaps in the plan and actions which remain incomplete. The assessment suggests that our population growth and increase in economic activity will continue to drive the demand for waste services.

Our new plan is driven by our vision ‘the effective and efficient stewardship of waste as a resource with a residual value to protect our health and environment.’

Council waste services in our region are governed by a joint arrangement between Invercargill City Council, Southland District Council and Gore District Council, known as WasteNet Southland. However, the management of waste in our region also involves the private sector and the community/non-profit sector.

In developing a waste minimisation and management plan, our goal is to provide a service that is efficient and effective, pays attention to national direction, meets legislative requirements and recognises that waste is everyone’s responsibility. It is evident that through our individual behaviour as well as strategies such as good product stewardship, we can reduce the tonnes of waste sent to landfill and improve our recycling efforts.

Long term we want to have a service that is managed in line with the waste hierarchy. This means that within the period of this new plan we will likely be discussing how we might deal differently with organic waste and construction and demolition waste in particular. We will need to fully research the options identified in the waste assessment, including the cost implications, with our declared intention of improving waste management and minimisation in the Southland region.

This WMMP sets out specific actions and timeframes for delivery, noting that the plan not only records our Councils combined goals and objectives over the period of the new plan, but also ensures that public health is adequately protected.

It recognises that making a difference and implementing a plan that is effective and efficient relies on collective actions across Southland and I thank Iwi, businesses, community organisations, the public and the waste sector for being actively involved in formulating this plan.

Prioritising a continued focus on collaboration with our partners and working well together, during this life of this plan, offers an opportunity to respond in a proactive manner to changing circumstances and enables us to define local solutions on how we meet the demands of providing an environmentally responsible waste management system.

Councillor Christine Menzies
WasteNet Advisory Group
Chairperson

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
CONTENTS	4
PREAMBLE	6
HOW THE PLAN IS LAID OUT	6
1 PART ONE	7
- THE PLAN	7
1.1 Why WasteNet Southland needs this plan	7
1.2 Purpose of this plan	8
1.3 What this plan covers	8
1.4 Working with iwi and te ao Māori	9
1.5 Vision, goals, objectives and guiding principles	9
1.5.1 Vision	9
1.5.2 Goals	10
1.5.3 Objectives	10
1.5.4 Guiding principles	10
2 PART TWO	12
- CONTEXT	12
2.1 Statutory and strategic context	12
2.2 Waste Minimisation Act	12
2.3 New Zealand Waste and Resource Efficiency Strategy	12
2.4 Services and infrastructure in Southland	13
3 PART THREE	14
- THE EVIDENCE BASE	14
3.1 What the Waste Assessment tells us	14
3.1.1 How waste is generated and managed in Southland	14
3.1.2 What the waste is made up of	15
3.1.3 Where councils can influence outcomes	16
3.1.4 Barriers and constraints to waste minimisation	17
3.1.5 Opportunities identified through analysis and engagement	17
3.1.6 Using the evidence to inform action	17
3.1.7 Progress since the previous WMMP (2020-2026)	18
3.1.8 Data scope and limitations	24
3.2 Key opportunities and challenges	24
3.2.1 Recognising waste as a resource	24
3.2.2 Making best use of organic materials	25
3.2.3 Limited local processing and distance to markets	22
3.2.4 Materials with persistent system challenges	25





3.2.5	The role of community and not-for-profit organisations	27
3.2.6	Preventing waste through procurement and design	27
3.2.7	Illegal dumping, access, and legacy waste issues	27
3.2.8	Education, participation, and inclusion	28
3.2.9	Climate resilience and emergency waste management	28
3.2.10	Linking challenges and opportunities to action	28
3.2.11	Priority materials for the 2026–2032 period	28
3.3	Objectives and priorities for action (2026–2032)	29
3.3.1	Objectives	29
3.3.2	Priorities for the 2026–2032 period	29
3.3.3	Role of the councils	30
3.4	What success looks like for Southland (2026–2032)	30

4 PART FOUR – THE DRAFT ACTION PLAN 33

4.1	Regulation	33
4.2	Measuring and Monitoring	33
4.3	Education and Engagement	34
4.4	Services	35
4.5	Infrastructure	36
4.6	Supporting and Cross-cutting Actions	37

5 PART FIVE – FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION 38

5.1	Funding approach	38
5.2	Decision-making and governance	38
5.3	Role of partnerships	39
5.4	Prioritisation and flexibility	39
5.5	Implementation responsibilities	39
5.6	Monitoring and reporting	40
5.6.1	What will be monitored	40
5.6.2	How information will be collected	40
5.6.3	Reporting on progress	40
5.6.4	Using monitoring to support adaptive management	40

APPENDIX 1: THE GOVERNMENT'S WASTE AND RESOURCE EFFICIENCY STRATEGY 42

APPENDIX 2: THE DRAFT ACTION PLAN (SAME CONTENT DIFFERENT FORMAT) 46

PREAMBLE

This Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) has been prepared by Whirika Consulting Ltd on behalf of the three Councils that make WasteNet Southland (WasteNet), being Gore District Council (GDC), Invercargill City Council (ICC) and Southland District Council (SDC). The plan has been developed with input from iwi and stakeholders. The plan covers the period 2026 to 2032 and sets out a practical and coordinated approach to reducing waste and managing residual waste across the Southland region.

The WMMP is a statutory planning document required under the Waste Minimisation Act 2008. It describes how waste will be minimised and managed within the region and includes an action plan that outlines what will be done over the life of the plan, who is responsible for delivering those actions, and how they are expected to be funded.

This plan builds on previous waste planning work and reflects current knowledge about how waste is generated and managed in Southland, the infrastructure available, and the environmental, social, and economic factors that shape local waste outcomes. It recognises that while reducing waste is important, some waste will continue to be generated and must be managed in a way that protects public health and the environment.

In preparation for developing this WMMP, WasteNet Southland completed a comprehensive Waste Assessment. The Invercargill, Southland and Gore Waste Assessment, was prepared by Eunomia Research & Consulting in May 2025, and examined both historic waste monitoring data as well as a survey of current waste composition across the region. This work has directly informed the direction and actions in the plan, helping to ensure they reflect local priorities and are realistic and achievable.

While WasteNet Southland and the WasteNet Councils have responsibility for implementing this plan, achieving meaningful improvements in waste minimisation will depend on collective action across the region. Households, businesses, iwi, community organisations, the waste sector, and other partners all have a role to play in reducing waste and improving how resources are managed.

HOW THE PLAN IS LAID OUT

This draft WMMP sets out how WasteNet Southland will work with councils, iwi, communities, businesses and the waste sector to minimise waste and manage residual waste effectively.

The plan is informed by:

- engagement with iwi and stakeholders,
- analysis and evidence presented in the Waste Assessment, and
- national waste policy and legislative requirements.

Part One outlines the purpose and scope of the plan and sets the strategic direction for waste management and minimisation in Southland. This includes the vision, goals, objectives, and guiding principles that underpin the plan.

Part Two describes the statutory and policy context for the WMMP, including relevant national direction, and outlines the current waste infrastructure, services and systems operating in the region.

Part Three summarises the key issues, opportunities and challenges identified through engagement, analysis and implementation experience, and the evidence that underpins the priorities in this plan.

Part Four presents the Action Plan for 2026–2032, including what will be progressed, by whom, and indicative timeframes.

Part Five outlines funding and implementation considerations, including governance and decision-making processes, the role of partnerships, and how progress will be monitored and reported.

1 PART ONE – THE PLAN

Part One sets the strategic direction for this WMMP, including why it is needed, its purpose and scope, and the vision, goals and principles that guide the plan.

1.1 Why WasteNet Southland needs this plan

Waste management and minimisation are essential services that support public health, environmental protection, and the wellbeing of communities across the Southland region. How waste is generated, handled, and disposed of has direct and long-term implications for land, water, air quality, climate emissions, and community amenity.

Like regions throughout New Zealand, Southland's communities, industries, and rural activities generate a wide range of waste materials. While some of this waste can be avoided or diverted through reuse, recycling, composting, or recovery, a significant proportion continues to be sent to landfill. Waste disposed of in this way represents a loss of potentially valuable resources and, if not managed carefully, can result in environmental and financial costs that extend well beyond the point of disposal.

Managing waste also comes at a cost to households, businesses, and councils. These costs include the provision and operation of collection services, transfer stations, disposal facilities, education and engagement programmes, and regulatory activities. There are also less visible costs associated with waste, including impacts on ecosystems, emissions, and long-term liabilities that must be managed over time.

The Waste Minimisation Act 2008 requires councils to take a proactive approach to reducing waste and improving how residual waste is managed. This includes understanding how waste is generated in the region, identifying opportunities to reduce waste at source, and ensuring that waste that cannot be avoided is managed in a way that protects public health and the environment.

Southland has characteristics that influence how waste can be managed and minimised. These include:

- a dispersed population over a large geographic area,
- long transport distances,
- the nature of local industries, and
- the availability of waste infrastructure and markets for recovered materials.

These factors mean that not all waste minimisation options that may be effective elsewhere are appropriate or feasible in Southland, and that local solutions must be carefully assessed.

This WMMP provides a coordinated framework for addressing these challenges. It sets out how WasteNet Southland and the WasteNet Councils will work with iwi, communities, businesses, the waste sector, and other partners to improve waste minimisation outcomes over time, while ensuring that essential waste services continue to operate effectively.

By setting clear direction, priorities, and actions for the period 2026 to 2032, this plan supports informed decision-making, helps guide investment in services and infrastructure, and provides a basis for monitoring progress and adapting approaches as circumstances change.



1 PART ONE – THE PLAN

1.2 Purpose of this plan

The purpose of this WMMP is to set the direction for how waste will be minimised and managed across the Southland region over the period 2026 to 2032.

This plan fulfils the statutory requirements of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, in particular sections 43, 44, 45, 46 and 50, which require territorial authorities to adopt and regularly review a waste management and minimisation plan and enable two or more territorial authorities to jointly prepare and adopt a plan. This WMMP has been jointly prepared by the three WasteNet Councils through WasteNet Southland, providing a coordinated framework for action across the region.

The WMMP provides a framework for coordinated action by WasteNet Southland and the WasteNet Councils, and for working in partnership with iwi, communities, businesses, and the waste sector. The plan builds on the findings of the Waste Assessment and reflects input from early engagement with iwi and stakeholders, with the final adopted version refined based on feedback from the wider community. It establishes a clear set of priorities and actions to improve waste minimisation and management outcomes, while recognising the need to balance environmental, social, and economic considerations.

The WMMP is intended to support informed decision-making, guide investment in services and infrastructure, and provide transparency about the actions that will be undertaken between 2026 and 2032.

1.3 What this plan covers

This WMMP covers the WasteNet Councils' role in minimising and managing waste generated within the Southland region, in accordance with the requirements of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008. It applies across the full Southland region, including Rakiura / Stewart Island, and encompasses the geographic areas administered by Invercargill City Council, Southland District Council, and Gore District Council.

The plan applies to all types of waste generated in the region, including waste managed directly by councils and the larger proportion of waste that is managed privately. It addresses council-owned waste services, facilities, and programmes, as well as the councils' roles in enabling, coordinating, and influencing waste minimisation and management beyond council services.

The WMMP includes actions relating to:

- council-provided household waste collection services and transfer stations,
- education, engagement, and behaviour change initiatives,
- regulatory and policy tools available to councils,
- support for community-led waste minimisation and resource recovery initiatives,
- collaboration with the private sector and neighbouring regions, and
- data collection, monitoring, and reporting.

Rakiura / Stewart Island has distinct waste management considerations due to its geographic isolation and scale. While the island forms part of the Southland region and is covered by this WMMP, waste services there are administered directly by Southland District Council and sit outside the WasteNet contracted service model. Except for green waste that is managed locally, waste generated on Stewart Island must be transported off island for further processing or disposal. These logistical constraints influence service design, costs, infrastructure options, and opportunities for diversion. This WMMP recognises the unique context of Rakiura / Stewart Island and supports locally appropriate approaches that reflect its transport dependencies, smaller scale, and tourism pressures.

The plan also recognises that waste flows do not always align neatly with jurisdictional boundaries. Waste generated in high-visitor locations such as Milford Sound / Piopiotahi is transported through Southland's waste system, including disposal via facilities such as the Te Anau transfer station, and therefore has practical, environmental, and cost implications for the region. Although Milford Sound / Piopiotahi sits outside the WasteNet Councils' direct governance, this WMMP acknowledges the regional impacts of waste generated there and supports collaboration with relevant land managers, tourism operators, central government agencies, and neighbouring councils to improve waste minimisation and management outcomes where appropriate.

The detailed analysis underpinning this plan is set out in the Waste Assessment, which provides information on current waste generation and management practices, identifies key waste streams and challenges, and informs the priorities and actions included in the WMMP.



1.4 Working with iwi and te ao Māori

WasteNet Southland recognises the importance of working in partnership with iwi and acknowledging te ao Māori perspectives in the stewardship of resources and the environment. The interconnected relationship between people, land, water, and natural systems aligns closely with the objectives of waste minimisation and responsible management of residual waste.

In developing this draft WMMP, WasteNet Southland undertook early engagement with iwi representatives, including targeted discussions with Te Ao Mārama Incorporated (TAMI) on behalf of the Rūnanga. These discussions focused on priority waste streams, service design considerations, and opportunities to strengthen waste minimisation outcomes across the region.

Engagement feedback highlighted strong support for:

- improved glass management through separation (including separate glass bins),
- increased access to safe and convenient battery drop-off points across the region, and
- strengthened, ongoing education to support waste minimisation and behaviour change.

These priorities have directly informed the plan's direction. They are reflected in:

- the identification of glass and batteries as priority materials,
- actions relating to improved glass management within council-provided kerbside services,
- support for product stewardship and safer battery recovery pathways, and
- expanded education and engagement initiatives under the Action Plan.

Iwi engagement also reinforced the importance of long-term environmental protection, intergenerational responsibility, and early involvement in decisions relating to infrastructure and service changes. This WMMP therefore commits to ongoing engagement with iwi throughout implementation, including early dialogue on infrastructure planning, service reviews, and priority material pathways.

WasteNet Southland will continue to strengthen relationships with iwi and explore opportunities to reflect mātauranga Māori and support iwi-led waste minimisation and resource recovery initiatives as part of future work programmes.

1.5 Vision, goals, objectives and guiding principles

1.5.1 Vision

The vision for waste management and minimisation in Southland is:

**THE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT STEWARDSHIP
OF WASTE AS A RESOURCE WITH A RESIDUAL VALUE
TO PROTECT OUR HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT.**

This vision reflects the understanding that waste materials have ongoing value and that how they are managed has implications for environmental protection, public health, and long-term community wellbeing.



1 PART ONE – THE PLAN

1.5 Vision, goals, objectives and guiding principles

1.5.2 Goals

Achieving this vision requires changes in how waste is generated, managed, and perceived across the region.

Three goals, based on the previous WMMP, underpin this plan:

- G1.** Work together to improve the efficient use of resources,
- G2.** Use the waste hierarchy to guide decision-making, and
- G3.** Reduce the harmful effects of waste on our health and environment.

These goals guide the development of objectives and actions throughout the WMMP.

1.5.3 Objectives

The objectives are based on the previous WMMP (2020-2026), the waste hierarchy and provide the framework for prioritising actions over the life of the plan:

1. Reduce the amount of materials entering the waste stream (under G1),
2. Reuse or repurpose materials so they have additional life before recycling or disposal (under G1),
3. Reduce the amount of materials sent to final disposal by maximising recycling and diversion opportunities (under G2),
4. Make the best use of recoverable waste as a renewable resource (under G2), and
5. Ensure the appropriate treatment and disposal of waste to protect public health and the environment (under G3).

1.5.4 Guiding principles

In addition to using the waste hierarchy to guide decision-making, this plan is informed by the following guiding principles:

Global citizenship

Responsibility for managing waste extends beyond Southland and New Zealand. Some waste impacts are national or global in nature, including climate emissions, marine pollution, resource depletion, and the export of waste materials to international markets. Decisions about waste management should consider these broader environmental and ethical consequences.

This principle recognises that local actions contribute to global outcomes. It supports reducing waste at source, minimising greenhouse gas emissions from waste, improving material recovery, and ensuring that materials sent outside the region or country are managed responsibly. Southland's waste system should reflect both local realities and global environmental responsibility.

Kaitiakitanga / stewardship

All Southlanders share responsibility for caring for the environment and managing the impacts of the products and materials they use and discard. This principle recognises the obligation to protect the life-supporting capacity of the environment for current and future generations.

For mana whenua, this responsibility reflects the principle of kaitiakitanga, the active guardianship of land, water, and natural resources, and the duty to uphold the mauri (life force) of ecosystems. Waste management decisions directly affect whenua, wai, and coastal environments, and therefore carry cultural as well as environmental significance.

This WMMP recognises that effective waste minimisation aligns with kaitiakitanga by preventing harm to land and water, conserving resources, and supporting intergenerational wellbeing. WasteNet Southland and the WasteNet Councils commit to ongoing engagement with iwi and to considering cultural values alongside environmental, social, and economic factors in waste-related decisions.

Extended producer responsibility

Producers have responsibility for their products across their life cycle, from design and manufacture through to end-of-life management. This principle recognises that councils and communities should not bear the full cost of managing materials that are difficult, hazardous, or expensive to recover.



WasteNet Bin Inspection tags

WasteNet Southland supports nationally regulated and voluntary product stewardship schemes that shift responsibility upstream and create incentives for better product design, reduced packaging, and improved recyclability. Advocacy for stronger product stewardship frameworks is an important part of this WMMP, particularly for priority materials such as batteries, farm plastics, and hazardous products.

Full-cost pricing

The environmental and social costs of producing, using, and disposing of goods and services should be reflected as closely as possible in their price. When disposal costs are artificially low or environmental impacts are not internalised, wasteful behaviour is encouraged.

This principle supports transparent funding mechanisms, appropriate user-pays systems where suitable, and alignment with national tools such as the waste disposal levy. Considering full costs, including long-term environmental liabilities, helps ensure that decisions about services and infrastructure are financially sustainable and environmentally responsible.

Life-cycle approach

Products and materials should be designed, produced, used, and managed in ways that minimise environmental impacts across their entire life cycle. This includes extraction, manufacturing, transport, use, reuse, recycling, and final disposal.

A life-cycle approach supports decisions that avoid simply shifting impacts from one stage to another, for example, reducing landfill emissions while increasing transport emissions, or improving diversion while creating new contamination risks. This principle underpins evidence-based assessment of waste service changes and infrastructure investments within this WMMP.

Precautionary principle

Where there is a risk of serious or irreversible environmental or health effects, a lack of full scientific certainty should not delay cost-effective measures to prevent harm.

In the context of waste management, this may apply to emerging materials, hazardous products, battery technologies, or infrastructure decisions where long-term impacts are uncertain. This principle supports proactive risk management, careful assessment of new waste streams, and protective measures that safeguard public health and the environment.

2 PART TWO – CONTEXT

This section outlines the statutory, policy, and service context within which this WMMP has been developed. It describes the legislative requirements that apply to waste management and minimisation, the national policy direction, and the waste services and infrastructure currently operating in the Southland region.

2.1 Statutory and strategic context

Waste management and minimisation in Southland operates within a framework of national legislation and policy, alongside local government responsibilities for service provision and public health.

This WMMP has been prepared in accordance with the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 and aligns with national direction set out in the New Zealand Waste and Resource Efficiency Strategy. The plan also supports the WasteNet Councils' broader responsibilities for environmental management, community wellbeing, and infrastructure planning.

At the time of preparing this WMMP, the Government has signalled and progressed reforms to national waste legislation, including proposals to amend the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 and replace the Litter Act 1979 with updated waste and litter legislation that would modernise the legislative framework for waste and support national waste outcomes. This WMMP has been developed based on the legislative and policy settings in place at the time of drafting, reflecting the statutory context and national waste and resource efficiency strategy. Should national legislation change during the life of this WMMP, the WasteNet Councils will consider the implications of any new or amended legislative framework and adjust implementation priorities where necessary through established governance and planning processes. The WMMP will be reviewed within the statutory six-year timeframe, or earlier if required due to significant legislative change.





2.2 Waste Minimisation Act

The Waste Minimisation Act 2008 is the primary legislation governing waste management and minimisation in Aotearoa New Zealand. The purpose of the Act is to encourage waste minimisation and reduce the amount of waste disposed of, in order to protect the environment from harm.

Under the Act, territorial authorities are required to:

- promote effective and efficient waste management and minimisation within their districts,
- prepare and adopt a WMMP (Waste Management and Minimisation Plan),
- undertake a Waste Assessment to inform the development of the WMMP, and
- review the WMMP at intervals of no more than six years.

This WMMP has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 and fulfils the WasteNet Councils' obligations under sections 43 and 50 of the Act. The plan provides a framework for managing council-controlled waste services, influencing waste managed by others, and supporting waste minimisation initiatives across the Southland region.

For the purposes of the Act, the WasteNet Councils have jointly prepared this WMMP to address waste management and minimisation at a regional level, in accordance with Section 45: Joint Plans.

2.3 New Zealand Waste and Resource Efficiency Strategy

The Government's waste and resource efficiency strategy, published by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) in March 2025 (see Appendix 1 for MfE supporting infographics), provides national direction for reducing waste and improving resource efficiency across Aotearoa New Zealand. The strategy focuses on reducing waste at source, increasing reuse, recycling and recovery, improving the management of residual waste, and strengthening product stewardship and extended producer responsibility.

This WMMP has been developed to align with the direction of the national strategy while recognising the specific characteristics, constraints, and opportunities within the Southland region. The actions in this plan contribute to national objectives in a manner that is appropriate and achievable at a regional scale.

The WMMP has been assessed against current and signalled national waste and climate policy settings and is considered to be aligned with anticipated requirements to the extent reasonably possible based on information available at the time of preparation.

2.4 Services and infrastructure in Southland

Waste management and minimisation in Southland is supported by a combination of council-provided services, privately operated facilities, and community-led initiatives. The WasteNet Councils provide or support a range of services, coordinated through WasteNet Southland, including:

- household kerbside waste and recycling collections,
- refuse transfer stations,
- education and engagement programmes, and
- regulatory and enforcement activities related to waste.

In addition to council services, a significant proportion of waste in the region is managed by private operators, particularly in the commercial, industrial, and construction sectors. Community organisations also play an important role in waste minimisation and resource recovery through activities such as reuse, repair, composting, and education.

The Southland region is served by established disposal infrastructure, including the Southern Regional Landfill. This infrastructure incorporates systems to manage leachate and landfill gas in order to minimise environmental impacts and protect public health.

The dispersed nature of Southland's population, the distance between communities, and the availability of processing and reprocessing facilities influence how waste services can be delivered and which waste minimisation options are feasible. These factors are considered throughout this WMMP when identifying priorities and actions.

Further detail on waste generation, material flows, and infrastructure capacity is provided in the Waste Assessment, which informs the evidence base for this plan.

3 PART THREE – THE EVIDENCE BASE

Part Three brings together the evidence that underpins this draft WMMP. It draws on the Waste Assessment, early engagement with iwi and stakeholders, and practical experience gained through implementing the previous WMMP. Together, this evidence highlights where Southland’s waste system is performing well, where challenges persist, and where focused effort is most likely to deliver meaningful and achievable improvements over the 2026-2032 period.

3.1 What the Waste Assessment tells us

The Waste Assessment provides the evidence base for this WMMP. It brings together data on waste generation and management across the Southland region and draws on waste composition surveys, service information, stakeholder input, and analysis of current and future challenges.

The purpose of the Waste Assessment is not to propose solutions, but to help understand:

- how much waste is generated in the region,
- what types of materials make up that waste,
- where waste comes from and how it is managed,
- which parts of the waste system councils can directly influence, and
- where the greatest opportunities and constraints lie.

Section 6 of the Waste Assessment (Future Demand and Gap Analysis) describes the key factors likely to influence future demand for waste management and minimisation services over time and notes the inherent uncertainty in forecasting. It identifies demand drivers including population change, economic activity, lifestyle and consumption trends, and evolving waste management approaches, and sets out the main gaps and issues for the Southland region across service areas and material streams.

Section 7 of the Waste Assessment provides the required statement of options to address the forecast demands and gaps identified in Section 6. It presents options by work area and describes, at a high level, the issues addressed, expected impact, and the role councils could take for each option.

Section 8.1 sets out the statutory obligations that councils must meet in determining their role, including the requirement under Section 42 of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 to promote effective and efficient waste management and minimisation within their districts. Consultation with the Medical Officer of Health (refer Appendix 1.0 of the Waste Assessment) supported that the proposals in this WMMP are appropriate from a public health perspective.

Section 8.2 outlines the range of roles available to councils in responding to identified needs and forecast demand, including strategic leadership, facilitation, regulation, funding support, and direct service provision. The roles adopted by the WasteNet Councils are set out in this WMMP and are reflected throughout the objectives, priorities, and actions in the plan.

3.1.1 How waste is generated and managed in Southland

The Waste Assessment shows that Southland generates waste from a range of sources, including households, construction and demolition activities, commercial and industrial operations, rural and agricultural activities, and processing industries.

A large proportion of waste generated in the region is managed privately, particularly waste from commercial, industrial, and construction activities. Council-managed services, such as household kerbside collections and transfer stations, account for a smaller share of total waste volumes, but remain an important point of influence for waste minimisation and education.

Waste disposed to landfill in Southland includes a mix of general waste, construction materials, organic material, and other residual waste streams. The Waste Assessment confirms that disposal to landfill continues to play a necessary role in the region’s waste system, while also highlighting opportunities to reduce reliance on disposal over time.



3.1.2 What the waste is made up of

Waste composition surveys undertaken at the Southern Regional Landfill provide insight into the types of materials currently being disposed of. These surveys show that organic material makes up the largest proportion of waste sent to landfill, followed by plastics, paper, and other materials.

The composition data highlights that a significant proportion of waste disposed of to landfill consists of materials that could potentially be diverted from landfill or recoverable under the right conditions, depending on the availability of services, infrastructure, markets, and participation.

Organic material represents a significant component of the waste stream, alongside recyclable materials such as plastics, paper, cardboard, metals, and glass.

The Waste Assessment also highlights that contamination, convenience, and limited local processing options influence whether materials are diverted or disposed of. In many cases, materials that are technically recyclable or recoverable still end up in landfill because suitable systems to support or enable diversion are not available or practical at a regional scale.

The Waste Assessment and stakeholder engagement both identified glass as a priority material requiring system change, due to its disproportionate impacts on safety of those delivery waste management services, processing efficiency, and contamination when commingled with other recyclable materials.

Figure 3.1: Composition of waste disposed of at Southern Regional Landfill (image based on data from the Waste Assessment, 2024)



3 PART THREE – THE EVIDENCE BASE

3.1.3 Where councils can influence outcomes

The Waste Assessment makes clear that the WasteNet Councils have direct control or strong influence over only a portion of the total waste generated in the region, primarily through:

- council-provided household kerbside collection services,
- refuse transfer stations,
- council-owned facilities and operations, and
- education, engagement, and regulatory tools.

The Waste Assessment (May 2025) reflects council-provided kerbside service settings at the time the data was collected (2024). Since this analysis was undertaken, Gore District Council reintroduced kerbside mixed recycling collections (glass and other recyclable materials included in the same recycling bin) in November 2025, and this WMMP reflects the current service context.

While council-provided kerbside collections account for a smaller share of total waste by volume compared to privately managed commercial and industrial waste streams, they represent the area where councils have the greatest direct influence over waste outcomes. Decisions about service design, accepted materials, collection frequency, pricing, and supporting education can significantly affect how households manage waste and what materials are diverted from landfill.

The council-provided kerbside service composition data shows that a substantial proportion of material placed in household rubbish bins is organic or otherwise potentially divertible. This indicates that changes to council-provided kerbside services, alongside education and supporting infrastructure, have the potential to deliver meaningful waste minimisation outcomes over time.

For waste streams managed privately, councils' influence is more indirect. This includes options such as supporting and enabling better practices through policy settings, bylaws, collaboration with the waste sector, education, and advocacy for national product stewardship and extended producer responsibility schemes. This distinction is important for setting realistic expectations about what this WMMP can achieve and where partnership and shared responsibility are essential.

3.1.4 Barriers and constraints to waste minimisation

The Waste Assessment identifies several factors that affect the feasibility of waste minimisation and resource recovery in Southland. These include:

- the dispersed nature of the population and long transport distances given the geography of the region,
- limited local processing and reprocessing facilities for some materials,
- reliance on markets outside the region for certain recovered materials,
- the scale and variability of waste streams, and
- cost considerations for households, businesses, and councils.

These constraints mean that waste minimisation solutions must be carefully assessed to ensure they are environmentally effective, financially sustainable, and appropriate for local conditions. Engagement highlighted that landfill disposal costs are a strong driver of concern for households, businesses, and community organisations, particularly where practical and accessible alternatives for diversion are limited.

3.1.5 Opportunities identified through analysis and engagement

Alongside these constraints, the Waste Assessment identifies several opportunities to improve waste minimisation and management outcomes over time. These findings are supported by themes raised through early stakeholder engagement. These include:

- improving the performance and consistency of existing services,
- increasing participation in waste minimisation through education and engagement,
- supporting community-led initiatives that encourage reuse, repair, and recovery,
- improving data collection to better understand waste flows and trends,
- working with the private sector to enable better separation and recovery of materials, and
- advocating for national action on product stewardship for priority waste streams, and supporting businesses to develop locally led product stewardship approaches and consider lifecycle impacts in their decision-making.

These opportunities form the basis for the priorities and actions set out in the following sections of this plan.

3.1.6 Using the evidence to inform action

The Waste Assessment provides a clear picture of where waste minimisation efforts are likely to be most effective and where councils can have the greatest influence.

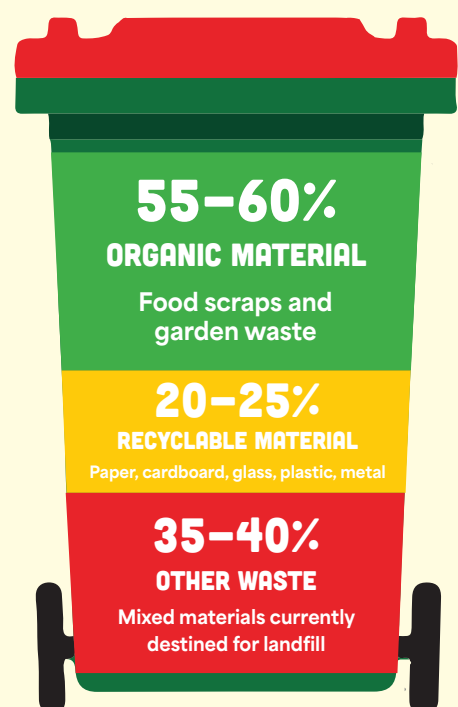
The findings from the Waste Assessment, combined with stakeholder input, have been used to:

- identify key opportunities and challenges,
- develop realistic objectives and actions,
- prioritise activities over the life of the WMMP,
- inform decisions about services, infrastructure, education, and regulation.

This ensures the Action Plan is directly informed by the forecasting, options assessment, and evidence requirements of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008.

The next section of this plan builds on this evidence to describe the key opportunities and challenges that WasteNet Southland will focus on over the period 2026 to 2032.

WHAT'S IN OUR KERBSIDE RUBBISH BINS – AND WHAT COULD BE DIVERTED



More than half of kerbside rubbish in Southland could potentially be diverted from landfill

WasteNet surveyed kerbside rubbish bins across Gore District, Invercargill City and Southland District. The results show that a large share of what is currently placed in rubbish bins is organic or recyclable material. While this indicates significant potential to reduce landfill waste, additional services and infrastructure would be needed to enable greater diversion across the region.

Diversion potential depends on available services.

Figure 3.2: Composition of council-provided kerbside rubbish collected in the Southland region, 2024 (regional average)

3 PART THREE – THE EVIDENCE BASE

3.1.7 Progress since the previous WMMP (2020-2026)

The WasteNet Councils have been working under a shared vision for waste management and minimisation since the previous WMMP took effect in 2020. During this period, the focus has been on strengthening the foundations of WasteNet Southland, including employing a WasteNet Director, a Waste Minimisation Data Officer, a Community Engagement & Education Officer. Together they have improved the regional waste system, including understanding of waste flows, supporting behaviour change, and enabling collaboration across councils, communities, and the waste sector.

While significant waste challenges remain, progress over the 2020-2026 period has helped establish a stronger platform for the priorities and actions set out in this 2026-2032 WMMP.

Improved waste data and systems

One of the most important areas of progress has been the improvement of waste data collection and management. Enhancements to data systems and monitoring practices have strengthened understanding of waste flows across council-managed services, including kerbside collections, transfer stations, and landfill disposal.

Although data gaps remain, particularly in relation to privately managed waste streams and diverted material quantities, the region now has a more robust evidence base to identify trends, assess performance, and inform future decision-making. This improved understanding underpins the evidence-based approach taken in this WMMP.

Education and behaviour change

Over the term of the previous WMMP, education and engagement efforts have continued to play a central role in supporting waste minimisation across the region. A region-wide refresh of communications under the Rethink Rubbish banner introduced consistent messaging across print, digital, and face-to-face channels, focused on recycling correctly, reducing contamination, and encouraging waste reduction at home, in schools, and in businesses.

These efforts were supported by system changes that made correct behaviour easier. This included the rollout of kerbside recycling service standardisation, aligning the materials accepted in household recycling bins with national standards across New Zealand, with the exception of glass (which is collected but is comingled). Clear and consistent messaging accompanied these changes to help households understand what could and could not be recycled.

Education programmes delivered through schools with support from WasteNet Southland have included Para Kore, WasteFree Wanda, and EnviroSchools. Such programmes have continued to support waste awareness and behaviour change among young people, reinforcing waste minimisation messages within households and communities.

In addition, council-provided residential kerbside recycling bin inspections were reintroduced in 2024, providing targeted feedback to households and contributing to improved recycling performance and reduced contamination. During this period, Gore District Council also reintroduced a council-provided kerbside recycling service in November 2025, extending access to recycling services and supporting more consistent waste minimisation outcomes across the Southland region.



Composting Workshop - Sacred Heart School

Waste Free Workshop - Thornbury School



CASE STUDY:



School-based zero waste education in practice

WasteNet Southland has supported Zero Waste Workshop education initiatives delivered in partnership with the EnviroSchools programme, helping to build understanding of waste minimisation, resource recovery, and sustainable behaviours among children and young people across the region. Support has included funding, attendance and sharing of technical knowledge.

These workshops focus on practical, age-appropriate learning about waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting, and support schools to apply Zero Waste principles within their own environments and wider communities. School-based education plays an important role in shaping long-term behaviour change and compliments council-led waste minimisation initiatives at the household and community level.

This case study demonstrates the role of education as a foundational, long-term component of Southland's waste minimisation system, supporting the objectives of this WMMP by embedding waste awareness and skills early and reinforcing consistent regional messaging.



Waste Free Workshop - Invercargill

CASE STUDY:



Getting recycling right - kerbside bin inspection programme

WasteNet Southland has reintroduced a recycling bin inspection programme to improve the quality of materials collected through council-provided household kerbside recycling services and reduce contamination that can result in recyclable material being sent to landfill.

The programme involves visual inspection of yellow-lidded recycling bins at the kerbside, with immediate feedback provided to households using a simple tagging system. The approach is primarily educational and is supported by a region-wide communications campaign, clear inspection guidelines, and consistent messaging across Southland. Inspection results are recorded digitally, enabling trends to be monitored and targeted follow-up where contamination issues persist.

Early results indicate measurable improvements in recycling behaviour in areas where inspections have been implemented. For example, in targeted locations such as Manapouri, the proportion of green-tagged bins increased from approximately 80 per cent to close to 100 per cent within two inspection cycles, while in Riverton township inspections have resulted in no red tags being issued, with the majority of households receiving green tags.

The bin inspection programme responds directly to Waste Assessment findings that contamination in kerbside recycling can lead to entire loads being rejected by processors, increasing disposal costs and reducing diversion. By focusing on council-provided kerbside services, where councils have the greatest direct influence, the programme demonstrates how targeted, education-led interventions can deliver measurable waste minimisation outcomes and support the objectives of this WMMP.

3 PART THREE – THE EVIDENCE BASE

3.1.7 Progress since the previous WMMP (2020–2026)

Community partnerships and funding

To support local action, the WasteNet Community Waste Minimisation Fund was established in September 2023. The fund provides financial support to community-led projects that focus on reusing, recycling, and recovering materials. To date, funding has been allocated to several initiatives across the region, helping to enable locally driven solutions and strengthen community participation in waste minimisation.

These initiatives demonstrate the value of supporting community organisations as part of the wider waste minimisation system and inform the continued emphasis on community-led action in this WMMP.

CASE STUDY:

Reuse, social value, and the hidden cost of waste - Habitat for Humanity Southland



Habitat for Humanity Southland operates reuse retail stores in Invercargill that divert reusable building materials, furniture, and household goods from landfill while generating funding to support housing and social outcomes in the community.

Reuse through op shops plays a critical role in the waste minimisation system by extending the life of products, reducing demand for new materials, and delivering significant social benefit. However, engagement highlighted that these benefits are often accompanied by substantial and largely hidden waste management costs for not-for-profit organisations.

Habitat for Humanity Southland has advised that, across its two Invercargill stores, it budgets approximately \$30,000 per year for waste management, with costs increasing over time. A significant driver of these costs is the disposal of unusable or damaged donated items, as well as fly-tipping outside store premises, where organisations are left to manage and pay for waste they did not generate.

As disposal costs rise, some not-for-profit organisations are limiting the types and quantities of donations they accept. This reduces diversion from landfill and places additional pressure on council waste services, despite strong public support for reuse and donation-based models.

This case study highlights the important role that reuse organisations play in waste minimisation, alongside the financial pressures they face within current systems. It demonstrates why community and not-for-profit organisations should be recognised as part of the region's waste minimisation infrastructure, and why clearer rules, consistent fee structures, and supportive policy frameworks are important to sustain their contribution over time.

Engagement also highlighted interest in greater collaboration between not-for-profit organisations across Southland to share knowledge, advocate collectively, and engage more effectively with councils and the waste sector.



CASE STUDY:

Community recycling in practice - Pakeke Lions Recycling Centre, Gore



The Pakeke Lions Recycling Centre in Gore has supported recycling and community outcomes for more than 30 years. Operated entirely by volunteers, the centre provides a local recovery option for a range of materials, while generating funding returned to the community through grants, scholarships, and support for local organisations.

Each year, volunteers at the centre process significant quantities of material, including an estimated 650 tonnes of cardboard, as well as metals, plastics, and other recyclable items. The operation relies on the ongoing commitment of local volunteers, with around a dozen people contributing their time on a typical day. For many involved, the centre provides not only an opportunity to divert material from landfill, but also a strong sense of purpose and connection to the community.

At the same time, the Pakeke Lions experience highlights the vulnerability of community-based recycling initiatives to external market conditions. Rising processing costs and volatility in recycling markets have led the centre to stop processing some materials, including paper, despite continued community demand. Even widely collected materials such as cardboard are subject to fluctuating prices, which can significantly affect the financial viability of recovery activities.

This case study demonstrates both the value and the limits of community-led recycling. It shows how volunteer organisations can deliver meaningful diversion and social benefits, while also illustrating why stable markets, appropriate infrastructure, and supportive policy settings are critical to sustaining recovery systems over time. For this WMMP, the Pakeke Lions example reinforces the importance of supporting community initiatives while recognising that not all challenges can be resolved locally, and that some materials and systems require broader regional or national solutions.



Gore Pakeke Lions Crew

3 PART THREE – THE EVIDENCE BASE

3.1.7 Progress since the previous WMMP (2020–2026)

Regional collaboration

Collaboration across the Southland region has continued to strengthen through WasteNet Southland. The WasteNet Councils have worked together to address shared challenges, coordinate services where appropriate, and align approaches to education, engagement, and planning.

This collaborative approach has supported greater consistency across the region and improved the efficiency of waste management and minimisation efforts, while also providing a platform for engaging with neighbouring regions and central government on issues that extend beyond local control.

A key milestone during the later stages of the 2020–2026 WMMP period was the expansion of household council-provided kerbside recycling services across the region. In November 2025, Gore District Council reintroduced commingled kerbside recycling services, completing the move to region-wide access to standard kerbside recycling services. This change represents a significant step in improving councils' ability to influence household waste outcomes and has informed the baseline assumptions and priorities in this 2026–2032 WMMP.

CASE STUDY:

Landfill gas capture and energy recovery at the Southern Regional Landfill



The Southern Regional Landfill, operated by AB Lime, receives municipal household waste from across Southland, along with approved industrial wastes. As a Class A landfill, the site is designed and managed to strict environmental standards, including engineered liner systems, leachate containment, and ongoing environmental monitoring. The landfill provides essential residual waste disposal capacity for the Southland region.

A key feature of the site is the capture and management of landfill gas generated from the decomposition of organic material. Methane-rich landfill gas is collected through a network of gas wells and used on site as an energy source, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Excess gas is flared to prevent uncontrolled methane release.

In addition to the direct use of landfill gas as a supplementary fuel for lime kilns, a landfill gas turbine has recently been installed and commissioned at the site. This enables landfill gas to be used to generate electricity on site, improving the efficiency and flexibility of energy recovery from residual waste and supporting the ongoing management of landfill gas emissions.

Leachate generated within the landfill is collected, treated, and either recirculated or transported for further treatment, with additional on-site treatment options under investigation. Wetland restoration and water-quality monitoring also form part of the site's broader approach to protecting downstream environments.

This integrated system demonstrates how residual waste disposal, emissions management, and energy recovery can be combined within Southland's existing waste infrastructure to reduce environmental impacts while supporting essential regional services. Consistent with the waste hierarchy, landfill gas capture and energy recovery are recognised in this WMMP as mitigation measures for residual waste, rather than a substitute for waste minimisation or diversion earlier in the system.



Foundations for future change

In addition to delivering ongoing programmes, progress has been made in understanding and preparing for longer-term system change. This includes the completion of a regional feasibility study for organic material management and the development of a business case to support renewal of councils' key waste service contracts.

While many of these initiatives are still in development, they have clarified the opportunities, constraints, and steps required to move from concept to implementation. This work has directly informed the priorities and actions proposed in this WMMP.

Examples of innovation and leadership in Southland

Alongside council-led activity, a wide range of community, industry, and private-sector initiatives have contributed to waste minimisation and resource recovery outcomes across Southland. These include: methane capture and energy generation from landfill, community reuse and repair initiatives, improved material separation in construction and commercial operations, food rescue partnerships, community-led e-waste recovery and repurposing programmes, and innovative uses of organic and other natural materials.

These initiatives operate independently of the WasteNet Councils but illustrate the potential for waste to be treated as a resource and the value of collaboration across sectors. WasteNet Southland's role in enabling, supporting, and learning from such initiatives has helped shape the approach taken in this WMMP.

Community-led e-waste recovery in Southland

Community organisations in Southland are developing locally-led approaches to recovering and repurposing electronic waste, including programmes that refurbish and redistribute devices, process components for material recovery, and create youth employment and skills pathways. These initiatives address a material stream that is growing in volume and complexity, and where local processing capacity and national funding support remain limited. They demonstrate how community-led action can deliver practical waste minimisation outcomes while also contributing to economic and social goals. WasteNet Southland recognises the contribution of these organisations and supports their efforts as part of the region's broader approach to problem and hazardous materials.

CASE STUDY:



Trialling diversion of plasterboard waste from landfill

The Southern Regional Landfill, operated by AB Lime, receives municipal household waste from across Southland, along with approved industrial wastes. As a Class A landfill, the site is designed and managed to strict environmental standards, including engineered liner systems, leachate containment, and ongoing environmental monitoring. The landfill provides essential residual waste disposal capacity for the Southland region.

A key feature of the site is the capture and management of landfill gas generated from the decomposition of organic material. Methane-rich landfill gas is collected through a network of gas wells and used on site as an energy source, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Excess gas is flared to prevent uncontrolled methane release.

In addition to the direct use of landfill gas as a supplementary fuel for lime kilns, a landfill gas turbine has recently been installed and commissioned at the site. This enables landfill gas to be used to generate electricity on site, improving the efficiency and flexibility of energy recovery from residual waste and supporting the ongoing management of landfill gas emissions.

Leachate generated within the landfill is collected, treated, and either recirculated or transported for further treatment, with additional on-site treatment options under investigation. Wetland restoration and water-quality monitoring also form part of the site's broader approach to protecting downstream environments.

This integrated system demonstrates how residual waste disposal, emissions management, and energy recovery can be combined within Southland's existing waste infrastructure to reduce environmental impacts while supporting essential regional services. Consistent with the waste hierarchy, landfill gas capture and energy recovery are recognised in this WMMP as mitigation measures for residual waste, rather than a substitute for waste minimisation or diversion earlier in the system.

3 PART THREE – THE EVIDENCE BASE

3.1.7 Progress since the previous WMMP (2020–2026)

Building on progress

The progress made since 2020 demonstrates that incremental improvements, supported by collaboration, education, and improved data, can deliver meaningful outcomes. At the same time, the experience of implementing the previous WMMP has highlighted the need for continued focus on infrastructure, system design, product stewardship, and regionally appropriate solutions.

This WMMP builds on these foundations, using the lessons learned over the previous planning period to guide a practical and coordinated approach to waste minimisation and management for Southland from 2026 to 2032.

3.1.8 Data scope and limitations

The Waste Assessment that informs this WMMP draws on the best available data and information at the time of preparation. While it provides a robust overview of waste generation and management across the Southland region, some waste streams, activities, and disposal pathways are not fully visible to WasteNet Southland or the WasteNet Councils.

In particular, data relating to privately managed waste, commercial and industrial activities, rural and on-farm practices, and waste transported outside the region may be limited or based on estimates. These limitations are common across waste assessments nationally and have been considered in the development of this WMMP.

3.2 Key opportunities and challenges

The Waste Assessment, together with early engagement with iwi and stakeholders during the development of this draft WMMP and prior to public consultation, has identified a set of interrelated opportunities and challenges for waste minimisation and management in Southland. These reflect both the physical characteristics of the region and the practical experience of those involved in generating, managing, and dealing with waste.

Across workshops and engagement sessions, participants consistently expressed frustration that significant volumes of recoverable material continue to go to landfill. Contributing factors include limited local processing options, high disposal costs, constrained regulatory tools, and a lack of accessible alternatives. There was strong interest in practical, locally appropriate solutions, particularly for organic materials, construction and demolition waste, textiles, and problem materials such as batteries. Participants also called for clearer rules, better data, and education that explains not just how to dispose of waste, but why it matters.

Engagement with iwi reinforced strong support for improved glass separation, increased battery drop-off access across the region, and strengthened education efforts. These themes align closely with the priority directions identified through the Waste Assessment.

At the same time, it was recognised that services and activities must remain financially affordable and operationally viable.

Engagement also acknowledged that councils' ability to regulate and require data from private waste operators is constrained under current legislation. More comprehensive or mandatory reporting across privately managed waste streams would require national-level regulatory reform.

This section summarises the key issues that have informed the priorities and actions in this WMMP.

3.2.1 Recognising waste as a resource

Engagement consistently highlighted the importance of reframing waste as a resource with residual value, rather than viewing it solely as a disposal problem. Participants emphasised that materials currently being discarded represent lost environmental value, missed economic opportunity, and foregone community benefit.

This perspective aligns with the waste hierarchy and circular economy principles, and supports a shift in focus towards preventing waste, recovering value from materials, and supporting reuse and repair. Adopting this framing helps create broader support for waste minimisation initiatives and encourages collaboration across households, businesses, community organisations, and the waste sector.



Gore Pakeke Lions Volunteers at WasteNet

3.2.2 Making best use of organic materials

Organic material represents a significant proportion of waste disposed of in Southland, both at kerbside and to the landfill, and was consistently identified as both a challenge and an opportunity. This includes food waste and green waste from households, as well as organic by-products from businesses and processing activities such as food and agricultural processing.

The Waste Assessment highlights the scale of organic material in Southland's waste stream, while engagement emphasised the potential value of organic materials for soil health, climate outcomes, and local reuse. At the same time, Southland's existing infrastructure, geography, population distribution, and transport distances influence how organic materials can be managed in a way that is environmentally and economically appropriate.

While Southland is well-positioned with established landfill gas capture and energy recovery infrastructure, landfill disposal represents the lowest level of the waste hierarchy and results in residual greenhouse gas emissions over time. Even in well-managed landfills, not all landfill gas can be captured. For this reason, landfill gas recovery is recognised as an important mitigation measure for residual waste, rather than a substitute for reducing or diverting organic material earlier in the waste system.

Opportunities identified include improving separation where feasible, supporting community and small-scale solutions that enable local diversion and reuse of organic materials, and continuing to consider and evaluate regionally appropriate approaches to managing organic materials over time. This includes assessing options that align with Southland's geography, emissions profile, costs, operational practicality, and existing disposal and energy recovery systems where appropriate.

The WMMP recognises that different organic waste streams may require different management approaches, and that decisions about organic material management will be informed by evidence, engagement, and staged assessment through the life of the plan, rather than predetermined solutions.

3 PART THREE – THE EVIDENCE BASE



Sacred Heart School Composting Workshop

3.2.3 Limited local processing and distance to markets

A recurring challenge identified through both the Waste Assessment and stakeholder engagement is the limited availability of local or regional processing options for many materials, including glass, plastics, organics, textiles, e-waste, and construction and demolition waste.

Southland's distance from major reprocessing markets increases transport costs and vulnerability to market disruption. These factors were widely recognised as structural constraints rather than behavioural failures. As a result, waste minimisation solutions must be scaled appropriately and assessed carefully to ensure they deliver genuine environmental and economic benefits.

Opportunities identified through the Waste Assessment and engagement include:

- exploring options for local or regional processing where viable,
- supporting the development of Resource Recovery Parks and hubs, and
- collaborating with neighbouring regions and the private sector to improve access to recovery pathways.

3.2.4 Materials with persistent system challenges

Several material streams were consistently identified as difficult to manage under current systems. These include glass, soft plastics, batteries, vapes, textiles, liquid paperboard containers, e-waste, and some agricultural and healthcare-related wastes. These challenges reflect a combination of market conditions, safety risks, service constraints, and limited end-of-life options, and are consistent with issues observed in other regions across New Zealand.

Glass in commingled recycling

Glass, in particular, was identified through the Waste Assessment and early stakeholder engagement as creating significant and ongoing challenges within Southland's current commingled recycling system. The Waste Assessment identifies health and safety risks, operational inefficiencies, accelerated equipment wear, and cross-contamination of other recyclable materials associated with commingled glass, particularly at material recovery facilities.

Stakeholders across the waste sector reinforced that these issues are not minor or transitional, but structural. Continued commingling of glass was seen to compromise worker safety and reduce the overall quality and value of recovered materials. As a result, there was strong and consistent feedback that the long-term retention of glass in commingled council-provided kerbside recycling is not sustainable under current or foreseeable operating conditions.



While councils must consider cost, service impacts, and regional feasibility, the evidence indicates that improved management of glass, including separation from commingled recycling streams as a necessary component, is a priority issue for the region and requires a clear pathway for change. Maintaining the status quo for glass management was not supported through engagement and is not considered a viable long-term option.

Textiles and market limitations

Engagement highlighted the growing burden of low-quality and non-reusable textiles on community organisations, particularly op shops, which are increasingly left to manage and fund the disposal of unusable donations. This was closely linked to concerns about fast fashion, declining material quality, and the lack of accessible end-of-life pathways for textiles.

More broadly, stakeholders noted the volatility of recycling markets for materials such as paper and cardboard, where commodity values can fluctuate markedly over time. Examples were raised of long-standing community recyclers reducing or ceasing processing of some materials due to rising costs and unstable markets. This highlights the vulnerability of certain recovery systems to economic conditions beyond local control, even where community demand and willingness to recycle remain high.

Batteries and fire risk

Batteries were identified as a growing concern due to increasing fire risk in collection, transfer, and disposal facilities, the prevalence of batteries embedded within consumer products, and limited clarity around safe and accessible recovery options.

Engagement distinguished between different battery types and associated risks. Lead-acid vehicle starter batteries (typically 12-volt batteries used in internal combustion engine vehicles) were recognised as having established recovery pathways and commercial value through scrap metal dealers. In contrast, lithium-ion and other rechargeable batteries, including those embedded in consumer products and larger battery systems such as those used in electric and hybrid vehicles, were identified as posing emerging challenges.

Stakeholders noted that lithium-based batteries present heightened fire risks when damaged or incorrectly disposed of, are often difficult to identify or remove prior to disposal, and currently lack consistent, accessible end-of-life pathways. As electric and hybrid vehicles become more common, engagement highlighted concern that end-of-life management of large vehicle batteries may become an increasing issue over time, particularly if disposal and recovery systems do not keep pace with uptake.

E-waste and electronic products

Electronic waste (e-waste) was identified through engagement as a growing concern for Southland, particularly given the pace of technological change and the emerging development of digital and AI-related infrastructure in the region. E-waste encompasses a wide range of products, including computers, televisions, mobile phones, small appliances, and increasingly, more complex items such as solar panels and large battery systems.

E-waste is included within the priority material category of problem and hazardous materials in this WMMP, reflecting its potential environmental and health risks if not managed appropriately. However, e-waste also represents a significant reuse, repair, and recovery opportunity. Many electronic products contain recoverable materials of value, and extending the life of devices through repair and refurbishment can deliver both environmental and economic benefits.

Southland's distance from reprocessing markets and limited local processing capacity are structural constraints for e-waste recovery. Community and not-for-profit organisations are already active in this space, developing locally led solutions that align with both Priority Area 5 (community-led initiatives) and the principles of extended producer responsibility. WasteNet Southland recognises the contribution of these organisations and supports their efforts as part of the region's broader approach to problem and hazardous materials.

At a national level, e-waste management is primarily a product stewardship matter. WasteNet Southland will continue to advocate for stronger national product stewardship frameworks for electronic products (Action C5) and will promote access to existing recovery schemes where available (Action S6 and E3).

Agricultural waste and farm plastics

Agricultural waste, particularly farm plastics, was identified as challenging to manage due to reliance on voluntary schemes, cost barriers, and limited access for some rural operators. While recovery options exist, engagement highlighted that affordability and logistics can limit participation.

Stakeholders also noted that this is an evolving area, with recent Government announcements signalling the development of regulated product stewardship approaches for farm plastics. While these schemes are still being implemented, they are expected to improve access, consistency, and funding over time, and will influence future waste management options for the sector.

3 PART THREE – THE EVIDENCE BASE

Medical and healthcare-related waste in home settings

Medical and healthcare-related waste was raised as a concern, particularly where waste is generated in home-based care settings through district nursing and in-home support services. Engagement highlighted that existing waste services do not always provide suitable options for managing this waste safely and with dignity, and that standard collection frequencies may be insufficient for some households.

This can create safety, storage, and disposal challenges for service users and carers, and highlights the need for clearer guidance, better coordination with health providers, and service responses that recognise the realities of home-based healthcare.

While councils have limited ability to resolve many of these material challenges independently, opportunities exist to improve outcomes through a combination of local initiatives, improved access to drop-off and recovery options, targeted education, service design considerations, and strong advocacy for nationally regulated product stewardship and extended producer responsibility schemes.

3.2.5 The role of community and not-for-profit organisations

Community and not-for-profit organisations play a critical role in waste minimisation and resource recovery in Southland. Activities such as reuse, repair, food rescue, composting, and community clean-ups divert significant quantities of material and deliver social and environmental benefits.

Engagement highlighted that these organisations often operate with limited funding and inconsistent policy support, and in some cases face barriers created by existing fee structures and systems. There is an opportunity to better recognise these groups, which range from locally based volunteer initiatives to established not-for-profit organisations, as part of the region's waste minimisation infrastructure and to support their contribution through funding, policy alignment, and access to facilities.

3.2.6 Preventing waste through procurement and design

Participants from industry, construction, events, and large organisations consistently noted that the greatest waste reduction opportunities occur before waste is created. Procurement practices, packaging choices, product design, and supplier standards were all identified as key leverage points.

Many of these levers sit primarily at a national or international level, through product design, manufacturing standards, and packaging requirements that are largely outside the direct control of local councils. National policy, regulation, and product stewardship frameworks therefore play a critical role in enabling meaningful waste prevention at source.

This applies across both the public and private sectors. Within their sphere of influence, councils have an opportunity to demonstrate leadership through their own procurement, events, and operations, and to support businesses and organisations to identify cost-effective waste reduction opportunities. Councils can also use their collective voice to advocate for stronger national action that supports waste prevention through improved product and packaging design.

3.2.7 Illegal dumping, access, and legacy waste issues

Illegal dumping, abandoned vehicles, legacy landfills, and dumped materials were widely raised as ongoing challenges, both for rural and urban communities. Contributing factors were observed as being access barriers, cost pressures, and inconsistent rules.

Opportunities to address these challenges include combining education with clear regulation and enforcement, improving access to appropriate disposal and recovery options, and trialling incentives or fee waivers for community-led clean-ups and good-Samaritan actions. Legacy waste sites were also identified as requiring ongoing attention due to potential environmental risks.

Engagement also highlighted that illegal dumping at community op shops and reuse organisations is an ongoing and growing concern. Not-for-profit organisations are increasingly left to manage and fund the disposal of unusable donations and materials dumped at their premises outside operating hours - costs they did not generate and cannot easily absorb. As noted in the Habitat for Humanity case study in Section 3.1.7, these disposal costs can be substantial and are rising over time. Treating fly-tipping at op shops and reuse premises consistently with illegal dumping in other settings, and ensuring appropriate enforcement pathways are available, would help reduce the financial burden on community organisations that play an important role in Southland's waste minimisation system.

3.2.8 Education, participation, and inclusion

Education and engagement remain essential to improving waste minimisation outcomes. Stakeholders emphasised the need for approaches that are ongoing, practical, and inclusive, rather than one-off or information-heavy initiatives.

Southland's diverse communities, tourism pressures including high-visitor locations such as Te Anau or Rakiura / Stewart Island, and transient populations mean that education must extend beyond schools and households to businesses, events, and visitors. Opportunities include the use of visual and multilingual tools, place-based messaging, and aligning education efforts with service changes to make preferred behaviours easy and accessible.

Engagement also highlighted the importance of education that goes beyond “what goes where” to explain the consequences of incorrect disposal, including contamination costs, safety risks, and impacts on recovery systems. This was seen as particularly important for visitors and transient populations who may be unfamiliar with local waste rules and expectations.

3.2.9 Climate resilience and emergency waste management

Climate change and extreme weather events were identified as emerging issues with implications for waste management, particularly in rural and agricultural contexts. Participants noted the need for greater preparedness for managing waste arising from emergencies, including damaged materials, contaminated waste, and food rescue during disruption.

There is an opportunity to better integrate waste minimisation with climate adaptation and emergency management planning, ensuring systems are in place before events occur and recovery can be managed efficiently and safely.

3.2.10 Linking challenges and opportunities to action

The opportunities and challenges outlined in this section provide the foundation for the objectives, priorities, and actions set out in the remainder of this plan. They reflect both the evidence from the Waste Assessment and the practical insights gained through engagement, and they guide a balanced, regionally appropriate approach to waste minimisation and management in Southland over the period 2026 to 2032.



3 PART THREE – THE EVIDENCE BASE



Sacred Heart School Composting Workshop

3.2.11 Priority materials for the 2026-2032 period

The Waste Assessment and early engagement highlighted that a small number of material streams account for a disproportionate share of the challenges, risks, and opportunities within Southland's waste system. These materials recur across multiple issues, including landfill volumes, safety risks, service performance, community concern, and system cost.

For the purposes of this WMMP, these materials are referred to as priority materials. Identifying priority materials does not predetermine specific solutions or commit councils to particular services or infrastructure. Instead, it provides a consistent lens for focusing effort across education, services, infrastructure planning, regulation, and advocacy. Decisions relating to services or infrastructure for priority materials will be subject to detailed assessment, funding approval, and consultation through established council processes.

The priority materials identified for the Southland region during the 2026-2032 period are:

- Organic materials, including food waste, green waste, and organic processing residues,
- Glass, particularly within commingled council-provided kerbside recycling systems,
- Construction and demolition waste,
- Textiles, including low-quality and non-reusable clothing,
- Problem and hazardous materials, such as vapes and e-waste,
- Batteries², particularly lithium-based batteries and batteries embedded within consumer products, including emerging end-of-life challenges associated with electric and hybrid vehicles, and
- Agricultural and rural waste, including farm plastics and related materials.

Medical and healthcare-related waste, particularly waste generated through home-based care, was identified through engagement as a growing concern. Due to the specialised nature of this waste and the limited availability of robust data, it is addressed in this WMMP as a sector-specific issue rather than a core priority material stream.

Actions throughout this WMMP are designed to address these priority materials through a combination of prevention, improved separation and recovery, service and infrastructure assessment, regulation and data improvement, education, and advocacy for national product stewardship and extended producer responsibility schemes.

3.3 Objectives and priorities for action (2026–2032)

3.3.1 Objectives

The objectives set out in Part One of this WMMP reflect the continued focus on reducing waste, recovering value from materials, and protecting public health and the environment.

Actions have been developed under each objective to support progress toward the vision over the period 2026 to 2032.

3.3.2 Priorities for the 2026–2032 period

While the objectives provide an overarching framework, the Waste Assessment and early engagement with iwi and stakeholders have highlighted a number of priority areas where effort is most likely to deliver meaningful and achievable improvements in Southland.

The following priorities guide the focus of this WMMP and inform the Action Plan that follows.

Priority 1: Improve access to appropriate waste infrastructure and services

A key priority for the region is ensuring that households, businesses, and communities have access to waste and resource recovery infrastructure that is effective, safe, and appropriate for Southland's geography and scale.

This includes maintaining and improving existing services, exploring opportunities for new or improved infrastructure for priority materials such as organic waste and construction and demolition waste where feasible, and collaborating with neighbouring regions and the private sector to improve access to recovery options.

Organic and green waste is a specific focus within this priority. Exploring opportunities to prevent organic waste from being generated in the first place, to manage where it is generated, and to divert it for beneficial use such as composting rather than disposal to landfill are important parts of improving Southland's waste infrastructure and services over the 2026 to 2032 period. This aligns with Action I1, which commits WasteNet to assessing options for managing organic materials in a manner appropriate to Southland's geography, scale, and existing infrastructure.

Priority 2: Manage waste materials in line with the waste hierarchy, where practical

This plan prioritises actions that prevent waste, support reuse and recycling, and make best use of recoverable materials, while recognising that disposal to landfill will continue to play a role in Southland's waste system.

Decisions about waste management will consider environmental outcomes, emissions, costs, operational practicality, and existing infrastructure, with a focus on solutions that are appropriate for local conditions.

Priority 3: Continue to improve household waste and recycling services

Household kerbside services are one of the areas where councils have the most direct influence on waste outcomes. Improving the effectiveness, consistency, and performance of these services is a priority for reducing waste to landfill and improving material recovery.

This includes reviewing and refining current services, addressing contamination, supporting participation, and ensuring services continue to meet statutory requirements and community needs. It also includes addressing known opportunities within existing services, particularly the management of glass in commingled recycling, where evidence and strong stakeholder feedback indicate that the current approach is not sustainable and that change is required. It also includes ensuring services are accessible and equitable, recognising that some households, including those with disabilities, elderly residents, and people in rural or remote locations, may face additional barriers to participation.

Priority 4: Strengthen regulation, data, and understanding of waste flows

Improving understanding of waste generation and management across the region is essential for informed decision-making. Without good data, it is difficult to target resources effectively, assess the impact of interventions, or make the case for investment in new services or infrastructure.

Consistent approaches across the WasteNet Councils are a priority, alongside clear implementation and enforcement that is fair, practical, and proportionate.

This includes strengthening data collection, improving monitoring of both council-managed and non-council waste streams, and using regulation where appropriate to support better waste management outcomes.

It also recognises that education and monitoring are closely linked - better data helps identify where education is needed, and better education improves the quality of data collected through services such as kerbside recycling.

3 PART THREE – THE EVIDENCE BASE

Priority 5: Support community-led and not-for-profit waste minimisation initiatives

Community organisations and not-for-profit groups play a critical role in Southland's waste minimisation system. Through activities such as reuse, repair, food rescue, composting, education, and resource recovery, these organisations divert significant quantities of material from landfill while also delivering social, economic, and community benefits that go well beyond waste outcomes alone.

This plan prioritises enabling and supporting community-led initiatives where they align with the WMMP objectives and deliver measurable benefits. Support is intended to be provided through funding, facilitation, and policy settings that recognise these organisations as an integral part of the region's waste minimisation infrastructure.

This includes supporting organisations involved in reuse and repair, food rescue, composting, and recovery of materials such as textiles and electronic waste, as well as recognising the contribution of volunteer-led recycling operations and not-for-profit reuse stores. It also includes acknowledging the financial pressures these organisations face, including the costs associated with managing unusable donations and fly-tipped materials at their premises, and working to reduce barriers where councils have the ability to do so.

Priority 6: Work collaboratively and advocate for national action

Many waste challenges in Southland are influenced by factors beyond local control, including product design, packaging, and national recycling and recovery systems.

A priority for this plan is continued collaboration across the region through WasteNet, working with neighbouring councils, the private sector, iwi, and public sector organisations including health and other government agencies, and advocating to central government for stronger product stewardship and extended producer responsibility schemes. This includes supporting businesses to develop locally led product stewardship approaches and to consider lifecycle impacts in their purchasing and operational decisions.

3.3.3 Role of the councils

The WasteNet Councils have a shared responsibility for delivering this WMMP, working collectively through WasteNet Southland and individually within their respective statutory roles. Responsibilities differ depending on whether actions are best delivered at a regional, coordinated level or through individual council decision-making and service delivery.

Through WasteNet Southland, the councils collectively:

- provide regional coordination and leadership on waste management and minimisation,
- facilitate collaboration across councils, iwi, communities, the waste sector, neighbouring regions, and central government,
- lead region-wide education, engagement, and behaviour change initiatives,



Gore WasteNet Bin Inspection vehicle

- facilitate business engagement on product stewardship and lifecycle thinking,
- coordinate regional data collection, monitoring, and reporting,
- support and administer regionally focused funding and initiatives, and
- advocate for improved national policy, regulation, and product stewardship schemes

Individually, each WasteNet Council:

- provides and funds waste services and facilities within its district,
- makes decisions on service design, contracts, infrastructure, and funding through its own governance processes,
- regulates waste management activities where required, including through bylaws and enforcement,
- supports local community-led waste minimisation initiatives,
- embeds waste minimisation considerations into procurement, operations, and asset management, and
- monitors performance and reports on outcomes within its area of responsibility.

The actions set out in Part Four have been developed to reflect this shared delivery model. Each action contributes to one or more priority areas, with responsibilities assigned according to whether the action is best led regionally through WasteNet Southland or delivered by individual councils within their statutory and governance responsibilities.

3.4 What success looks like for Southland (2026–2032)

This WMMP sets direction for change over a six-year period. This WMMP is not intended to preserve the status quo, but to guide steady, evidence-led improvement across Southland's waste system. While not all outcomes can be delivered immediately, the actions in this plan are intended to move Southland's waste system toward a more effective, resilient, and resource-efficient future.

By the end of the 2026–2032 period, success for this WMMP would be reflected in the following outcomes.

A waste system that treats materials as resources

There is reduced reliance on landfill for materials that can reasonably be avoided, reused, recycled, or recovered. Organic materials, construction and demolition waste, and other priority material streams are increasingly managed in ways that retain value and reduce environmental harm.

Demonstrated through:

- an increased diversion rate from landfill,
- reduced disposal of priority materials (including organic materials and construction and demolition waste), and
- increased uptake of reuse, recovery, and diversion initiatives across the region.

Safer, more effective recycling services

Household recycling systems operate more safely and efficiently, with reduced contamination and improved material quality. Known opportunities, particularly the management of glass within commingled recycling, are being addressed through evidence-based service and infrastructure changes.

Demonstrated through:

- reduced contamination rates in kerbside recycling,
- fewer health and safety incidents associated with recycling operations, and
- evidence-based changes to service or infrastructure design, including progress on improved glass management.

Locally appropriate solutions supported by strong evidence

Decisions about waste services and infrastructure are informed by improved data, practical experience, and a clear understanding of Southland's geography, scale, and markets. Solutions reflect what works best for the region, rather than replicating approaches from elsewhere that may not be appropriate.

Demonstrated through:

- improved availability and use of waste data,
- documented assessment of options that considers emissions, costs, transport distances, and operational feasibility, and
- clear rationale for service and infrastructure decisions based on Southland's context.

3 PART THREE – THE EVIDENCE BASE

Stronger community participation and locally led action

Community organisations, not-for-profit groups, and local initiatives are recognised as an integral part of the waste minimisation system. Increased support for reuse, repair, composting, and food rescue contributes to waste reduction while delivering social and community benefits.

Demonstrated through:

- continued or increased funding of community-led waste minimisation projects,
- growth in reuse, repair, composting, and food rescue initiatives, and
- measurable diversion outcomes achieved through community-based activities.

Clearer rules and better visibility of waste flows

Councils have more consistent local regulatory tools and a clearer understanding of waste generation and management across both council-managed and privately managed waste streams, within the limits of existing legislative powers. This supports more informed planning, better-targeted education and investment, and stronger advocacy for national action where local tools are insufficient.

Demonstrated through:

- progress toward more aligned waste bylaws and regulatory approaches across the WasteNet Councils,
- incremental improvements in data and understanding of non-council waste streams using existing tools (e.g. contracts, licensing, engagement, and regional data sources), and
- clearer identification of data gaps and system limitations, informing targeted education, enforcement where appropriate, and advocacy for improved national data and regulatory frameworks.

A system that is better prepared and more resilient

Waste management is better integrated with climate adaptation and emergency management planning, where councils have influence, and gaps in national frameworks are clearly identified. Councils, communities, and partners are more prepared to manage waste arising from extreme weather events and other disruptions in a way that protects public health and the environment, while advocating for stronger national recognition of waste as critical infrastructure.

Demonstrated through:

- clearer guidance and roles for waste management during emergencies within existing local and regional emergency management arrangements,
- improved coordination with emergency management partners, and
- increased preparedness for managing waste from extreme weather events and other disruptions, alongside active advocacy for inclusion of waste within national emergency management frameworks.

Shared responsibility and national alignment

Progress is supported by collaboration across councils, iwi, communities, the waste sector, neighbouring regions, and central government. Southland's experience informs advocacy for stronger national product stewardship and extended producer responsibility schemes, reducing pressure on councils and communities over time.

Demonstrated through:

- active participation in regional and national forums,
- contributions to the development and implementation of product stewardship schemes, and
- reduced pressure on councils and communities as nationally regulated solutions are implemented.

Together, these outcomes provide a practical and realistic picture of what success looks like for Southland over the life of this WMMP. They reflect the evidence from the Waste Assessment, the priorities identified through engagement, and the actions set out in the plan. Progress toward these outcomes will be monitored and reported over time, recognising that improvement will be incremental, adaptive, and informed by evolving evidence and circumstances.



Mararoa School Composting Workshop

4 PART FOUR – THE DRAFT ACTION PLAN

Part Four sets out the Action Plan for the 2026–2032 period. The actions give effect to the objectives and priorities of this WMMP and reflect the different roles councils play in waste minimisation and management, including service provision, regulation, facilitation, education, and advocacy. Implementation will be staged over the life of the plan and will be progressed through normal council planning, funding, and decision-making processes. Many actions in this plan depend on collaboration with communities, iwi, industry, and central government. WasteNet Southland’s role is often to enable, coordinate, and advocate rather than deliver directly.

Each action in Part Four contributes to one or more of the six priorities set out in Part Three and should be read alongside those priorities. Actions have been prioritised based on councils’ sphere of influence, financial sustainability, and the need for staged implementation over the life of the plan.

For guidance purposes, classified implementation timeframes are:

Short Term 1 – 3 years

Medium Term 3 – 6 years

Long Term 6 + years

4.1 Regulation

REF	ACTION	IMPACT	COUNCILS' ROLE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
R 1	Work toward the development and adoption of a comprehensive and consistent solid waste bylaw across the region.	Enables more consistent regulation, improves access to data on non-council waste, and supports better waste management practices outside council services.	Regulator	Medium term

Note on R1: This action focuses on alignment and consistency, rather than immediate regulatory change and relates to known data gaps (M3). Any bylaw development would follow standard consultation and decision-making processes.

4.2 Measuring and Monitoring

REF	ACTION	IMPACT	COUNCILS' ROLE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
M1	Maintain current monitoring of waste at kerbside, transfer stations, and Southern Regional Landfill.	Provides continuity of baseline data to track trends over time.	Provider	Ongoing
M2	Continue to embed monitoring relating to participation rates, set-out rates, contamination levels, and composition.	Improves understanding of service performance and informs future service and education decisions.	Provider	Short to medium term
M3	Develop improved understanding of waste from specific sectors, e.g. construction and demolition, events (linked to R1).	Supports targeted interventions and sector-specific solutions.	Regulator / Facilitator	Medium term



4.3 Education and Engagement

REF	ACTION	IMPACT	COUNCILS' ROLE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
E1	Continue region-wide education and engagement programmes (e.g. school-based programmes, recycling education, home composting).	Maintains baseline awareness and supports correct use of existing services.	Provider	Ongoing
E2	Expand targeted education and engagement for priority waste issues and sectors (e.g. construction, textiles, event waste) through practical, culturally appropriate approaches.	Improves understanding of specific waste challenges and encourages sector-specific waste reduction.	Provider / Facilitator	Short to medium term
E3	Promote awareness of product stewardship schemes, support locally led product stewardship initiatives and facilitate business understanding of lifecycle impacts and upstream waste reduction opportunities. Councils' role is primarily facilitation and education rather than direct programme delivery.	Increases uptake of stewardship schemes, encourages upstream waste prevention, and builds business capability around lifecycle thinking.	Facilitator	Short to medium term
E4	Increase use of community-based behaviour change approaches by working with local groups to co-design and deliver initiatives.	Supports locally relevant solutions and increases participation.	Facilitator / Funder	Medium term

Note on E4: This includes working with existing community sustainability groups and networks that already operate collection points, education programmes, and local waste minimisation initiatives, recognising the value of building on established community infrastructure rather than creating parallel systems.

4 PART FOUR – THE DRAFT ACTION PLAN

4.4 Services

REF	ACTION	IMPACT	COUNCILS' ROLE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
S1	Continue current household kerbside collection services, including embedding and optimising the standardised kerbside recycling service across the region, and ensuring all service requirements are met.	Meets statutory service requirements and maintains consistent service delivery.	Provider	Short term
S2	Renew and implement the region's key waste service contracts in alignment with WMMP objectives and priorities.	Ensures long-term service delivery supports waste minimisation, safety, and value recovery outcomes.	Provider	Short to medium term
S3	Review household collection services to assess future options and inform the renewal and implementation of key waste service contracts and implement agreed outcomes.	Ensures services remain effective, efficient, and fit for purpose.	Provider	Underway / Medium term
S4	Develop and assess options to remove glass from commingled council-provided kerbside recycling and identify a preferred approach for improved glass management in Southland.	Improves worker safety, reduces contamination, and increases the quality and value of recovered materials.	Provider / Facilitator	Medium term
S5	Work with the commercial waste sector to identify, trial, and facilitate practical opportunities to improve material separation and recovery, particularly for priority material streams.	Supports increased diversion of recoverable materials and improved performance of commercial and industrial waste systems including through pilots, guidance, or sector-specific initiatives.	Facilitator / Leadership	Medium term
S6	Work with product stewardship scheme providers to encourage access to additional services and collection options in the region, and promote uptake of regulated and voluntary stewardship schemes among businesses and households.	Increases diversion of priority materials and reduces pressure on council services.	Facilitator / Leadership	Ongoing
S7	Review approaches to managing illegal dumping, abandoned materials, and legacy waste sites, including education, access to services, and enforcement tools.	Reduces environmental and public health risks and improves system responses to illegal dumping.	Provider / Regulator	Medium term

Note on S1: This includes ongoing implementation support following Gore's commencement of council provided kerbside recycling in November 2025.

Note on S7: This may include trials of fee waivers for community clean-ups, improved access to disposal options, or targeted enforcement where appropriate.



4.5 Infrastructure

REF	ACTION	IMPACT	COUNCILS' ROLE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
11	Assess options for managing organic materials (including food scraps, green waste, and processing organics) in a manner appropriate to Southland.	Informs future decisions on organic material management.	Provider / Facilitator / Leadership	Medium term
12	Support communities to establish or expand community composting initiatives where appropriate.	Enables local diversion of organic material.	Facilitator / Leadership	Medium term
13	Consider options for future processing of council-provided kerbside recyclables as part of service reviews and procurement processes.	Supports effective long-term recycling outcomes.	Provider / Facilitator	Medium term
14	Work with the commercial sector to identify opportunities to divert construction and demolition waste.	Reduces disposal of recoverable materials.	Facilitator / Leadership	Medium term
15	Work with community organisations to identify infrastructure needs that support reuse and repair activities.	Enables community-led waste minimisation.	Facilitator / Leadership	Medium term

4.6 Supporting and Cross-cutting actions

REF	ACTION	IMPACT	COUNCILS' ROLE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
C1	Continue collaboration across the Southland region through WasteNet Southland on strategy, services, and engagement.	Improves consistency, efficiency, and shared learning.	Leadership	Ongoing
C2	Work collaboratively with the commercial waste sector to support improved services and infrastructure.	Encourages private-sector-led solutions aligned with regional priorities.	Facilitator	Ongoing
C3	Continue to build collaboration with neighbouring councils to identify shared opportunities, e.g. through SOWN (Southland Otago Waste Network).	Achieves efficiencies and improves access to services.	Facilitator / Leadership	Ongoing
C4	Raise awareness of Southland-specific waste challenges and opportunities with central government.	Supports national policy and funding decisions.	Leadership	Ongoing
C5	Advocate for stronger product stewardship and extended producer responsibility schemes.	Reduces burden on councils and communities.	Leadership	Ongoing
C6	Embed waste minimisation considerations into council procurement, events, and asset management practices.	Reduces waste generation at source and demonstrates leadership through council operations.	Leadership	Medium term
C7	Support businesses and organisations to identify upstream waste reduction opportunities through procurement and design.	Enables cost-effective waste prevention beyond council operations.	Facilitator	Medium term
C8	Work with emergency management, rural, and community partners to improve understanding of waste management considerations during emergencies and recovery.	Improves preparedness and coordination for waste arising from extreme events.	Facilitator / Leadership	Medium to long term

5 PART FIVE – FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION



Part Five sets out how the actions in this WMMP will be implemented, funded, monitored, and reviewed over the 2026–2032 period. It describes the governance and decision-making processes that support delivery, the role of partnerships, and how progress will be tracked and reported to ensure transparency, accountability, and ongoing improvement.

Not all actions will require new funding. Many will involve continuing existing programmes, improving coordination, or incorporating waste minimisation considerations into current activities. Where additional funding is required, this will be considered through normal council planning and budgeting processes.

5.1 Funding approach

A range of funding sources may be used to support the implementation of this plan, depending on the nature of the action. These may include:

- General rates and targeted rates, where actions relate to council-provided waste services or infrastructure.
- Fees and charges, such as user-pays fees at transfer stations or for specific services.
- The WasteNet administration fee on materials entering the Southern Regional Landfill as per the provisions WasteNet's contract with AB Lime.
- Waste disposal levy funding, returned to councils under the Waste Minimisation Act and used in accordance with legislative requirements. In accordance with clause 32 of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, WasteNet Southland confirms that waste disposal levy funds allocated to GDC, ICC, and SDC are used to support a range of waste minimisation activities across the region. Use of levy funds currently includes offsetting the cost of kerbside recycling collection and public drop-off recycling services so as to facilitate and encourage recycling efforts. Levy funds are allocated directly to, administered by and reported on by each individual council. The use of levy funds will continue to be reviewed and reported in accordance with legislative requirements over the life of this plan.
- External funding, including central government funding programmes such as the Waste Minimisation Fund and other contestable funding sources.
- Product stewardship funding, where nationally regulated schemes provide funding for collection, recovery, or processing of priority materials.
- Council contributions to WasteNet Southland operations, which fund regional coordination, planning, education, monitoring, and engagement activities.

The use of each funding source will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to fairness, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with the objectives of this plan.

Funding for WasteNet Southland's coordination and administration functions is provided through agreed council contributions, while service delivery and infrastructure funding decisions remain the responsibility of individual councils. Some actions in this plan focus on enabling improved systems, behaviour change, and coordination rather than direct service delivery. These actions are expected to be progressed largely within existing budgets, through integration with current programmes, or by leveraging partnerships and external funding where available. In all cases, funding decisions will be guided by the principles of fairness, transparency, and alignment with the objectives of this WMMP.



Recycled aluminium cans ready for delivery

5 PART FIVE – FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION

5.2 Decision-making and governance

Significant actions that require new or increased funding, changes to services, or investment in infrastructure will be subject to detailed assessment and approval through each council's Long-Term Plan, Annual Plan, or other relevant decision-making processes.

This ensures that:

- costs and benefits are clearly understood,
- risks are appropriately managed,
- communities have opportunities to be informed and provide input, and
- decisions are made in a transparent and accountable manner.

WasteNet Southland provides a regional coordination role, supporting alignment across the WasteNet Councils and helping to prioritise actions for consideration. Each council remains responsible for decisions within its statutory and governance responsibilities.

5.3 Role of partnerships

Many actions in this plan rely on collaboration with external partners, including community organisations, the waste and resource recovery sector, neighbouring councils, and central government.

Where appropriate, councils will seek to:

- leverage private-sector investment and expertise,
- support community-led initiatives through funding or facilitation,
- collaborate regionally to improve efficiency and reduce costs, and
- align local actions with national product stewardship and policy initiatives.

Partnership-based approaches are particularly important for waste streams and challenges that cannot be addressed by councils alone. Partnerships with community organisations, emergency management agencies, and the private sector will be particularly important for actions relating to reuse and repair, illegal dumping responses, procurement leadership, and preparedness for waste arising from emergency events.



Gore WasteNet Bin Inspections in process

5.4 Prioritisation and flexibility

The Action Plan is intended to provide clear direction while retaining flexibility to respond to changing circumstances, new information, and emerging opportunities.

Priorities may be refined over time in response to:

- improved data and monitoring,
- changes in national policy or regulation,
- availability of funding,
- technological developments, and
- feedback from communities and stakeholders.

This flexible approach helps ensure that resources are directed to actions that deliver the greatest benefit for Southland over the life of the plan.

5.5 Implementation responsibilities

Waste minimisation and management in Southland involves shared responsibility. While the WasteNet Councils play a central coordinating role, implementation also relies on the actions of households, businesses, community organisations, the waste sector, and central government.

Councils' roles in implementation may include:

- providing and funding services and facilities,
- regulating and enforcing where appropriate,
- enabling and facilitating partnerships,
- supporting education and behaviour change, and
- advocating for national action.

This shared approach reflects the complexity of waste systems and the need for coordinated action across the region.

5.6 Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting are essential to understanding whether the actions set out in this WMMP are being implemented as intended and whether they are contributing to improved waste minimisation and management outcomes over time.

WasteNet Southland and the WasteNet Councils will continue to collect and use waste-related information to monitor trends, assess performance, and inform future decision-making. This approach builds on existing monitoring and reporting practices and will be progressively strengthened through the actions set out in this plan.

5.6.1 What will be monitored

Monitoring will focus on understanding:

- the quantities and composition of waste generated and disposed of in the region,
- participation and performance of council-managed waste services,
- trends in key waste streams and sectors, including trends in priority material streams identified in this WMMP, and
- progress in implementing the actions in the WMMP.

This information will be used to track change over time, identify emerging issues, and assess whether further interventions or adjustments are needed.

5.6.2 How information will be collected

Monitoring will draw on a combination of existing and improved data sources, including:

- weighbridge data from landfill and transfer stations,
- waste composition surveys undertaken at landfill and council-provided kerbside services,
- service performance data such as participation, set-out rates, and contamination levels,
- information provided through licensing, contracts, and regulatory tools where appropriate, and
- data available through resource consent and regional reporting processes.

Actions M1 to M3 in the Action Plan set out how current monitoring will be maintained and where improvements to data collection and understanding will be progressed over time. These actions recognise the importance of balancing improved information with practicality, cost, and data availability.

5.6.3 Reporting on progress

Progress on implementing the WMMP will be reported through:

- regular updates to WasteNet Southland Waste Advisory Group meetings,
- reporting to the WasteNet Councils through existing governance and reporting channels, and
- information made available to the public through council and WasteNet Southland communication channels, where appropriate.

Reporting will focus on:

- progress against the Action Plan,
- key trends in waste generation and disposal,
- notable changes in service performance or participation, and
- lessons learned and emerging opportunities.

5.6.4 Using monitoring to support adaptive management

Monitoring and reporting are intended to support adaptive management over the life of the plan. Information gathered will help WasteNet Southland and the WasteNet Councils to:

- refine priorities and actions where needed,
- respond to changes in waste generation, markets, or policy,
- inform future service reviews and investment decisions, and
- support accountability and transparency.

This adaptive approach recognises that waste systems are complex and that conditions, technologies, and opportunities may change over time. Regular monitoring ensures that the WMMP remains relevant, responsive, and effective throughout the 2026-2032 period.

Where monitoring identifies material underperformance or emerging risks, councils may reprioritise actions within existing budgets or through future planning cycles.





NEW ZEALANDERS CARE DEEPLY ABOUT PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR COUNTRY'S UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT.

Reducing waste and waste emissions can help us reduce environmental impacts and meet our climate targets.

The New Zealand waste and resource efficiency strategy presents the Government's priorities for minimising waste and improving waste management. It sets out what we want to achieve, and the tools to help us get there. Achieving change will include targeted investment and ensuring we have the right legislative tools. We will work with the sector, businesses, iwi/Māori, local government and communities to develop and implement practical cost-effective solutions.

We want to ensure we retain valuable resources in the economy. We need to reduce the amount of waste we dispose of per person, so we aren't lagging behind other countries we usually compare ourselves with, like Australia. Mismanaged waste and litter can cause harm to people and the environment - and there is much to gain from taking a proactive approach to remediating contaminated sites, including those that are vulnerable to severe weather events.

Collective issues like waste need collaborative solutions and we all have a role to play. Together we can tackle New Zealand's waste problem, and this strategy sets in place a plan for doing this.



Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment
March 2025



THESE ARE THE OUTCOMES WE WANT TO ACHIEVE



Reduction of
waste disposal
per person



Increasing reuse
and recycling of
materials and
products so that
we retain valuable
resources in the
economy



Minimising
emissions and
environmental
harm from waste
and litter¹



Ensuring resource
recovery and
disposal facilities
are managed to
minimise their
environmental
impacts



Limiting the
environmental
harm caused by
contaminated
sites including
legacy sites

1 - Including, where relevant, consideration of impacts not just associated with disposal

THIS IS HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THESE OUTCOMES



Fit-for-purpose legislation that supports:
an efficient market for waste management and recycling



Cost-effective, outcomes-focused investment of the waste disposal
levy in infrastructure, innovation and local projects



Working with the sector, business, iwi/Māori, local government and
communities to develop and implement practical cost-effective solutions



Where necessary, targeted policy and regulatory measures



Using the waste hierarchy to guide decision-making, enabling us to
keep resources in the economy at their highest value where possible

APPENDIX 1: THE GOVERNMENT'S WASTE AND RESOURCE EFFICIENCY STRATEGY

THE WASTE HIERACHY	
BEST OPTION 	Reduce the resources being used and redesign to avoid producing waste
	Keep things in use for as long as possible, without significant reprocessing
	Process materials to make the same or different material of similiar value when reuse is no longer possible
	Recover any remaining value, sustainably and without increasing emissions (eg, chemical recycling, renewable energy)
LEAST FAVOURD OPTION	For any truely residual waste, treat to remove potential harm before final disposal





In 2021/22 New Zealanders used over

2.5 BILLION

single-use drink containers
each year - nearly 500
per person every year.
More than half of these
empty containers end
up in landfills, unused
stockpiles, and as litter.



New Zealand's
recycling rate is

39%

Australia's
equivalent rate is

63%

In 2022, the waste sector
contributed approximately:

4.5%

of New Zealand's
total **greenhouse
gas emissions**

8.5%

of biogenic
**methane
emissions**

Most waste emissions
are caused by the
**breakdown of organic
materials in landfills**



1,797

Landfills (56 per cent - including closed
landfills) are assessed as potentially
exposed to one of more hazards
(coastal edge proximity, coastal
inundation, and river and surface flooding)

176

landfills (5 percent)
are potentially exposed
to **all three hazards**



In 2023, we disposed

669KG

of waste per person at municipal landfills



72%

of New Zealanders
say that they **actively
try to reduce waste**



APPENDIX 2: THE DRAFT ACTION PLAN (SAME CONTENT DIFFERENT FORMAT)

REF	ACTION	IMPACT	COUNCILS' ROLE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	STATUS
REGULATION					
R1	Continue current household kerbside collection services, including embedding and optimising the standardised kerbside recycling service across the region, and ensuring all service requirements are met.	Meets statutory service requirements and maintains consistent service delivery.	Provider	Short term	
MEASURING AND MONITORING					
M1	Renew and implement the region's key waste service contracts in alignment with WMMP objectives and priorities.	Ensures long-term service delivery supports waste minimisation, safety, and value recovery outcomes.	Provider	Short to medium term	
M2	Review household collection services to assess future options and inform the renewal and implementation of key waste service contracts and implement agreed outcomes.	Ensures services remain effective, efficient, and fit for purpose.	Provider	Underway / Medium term	
M3	Develop and assess options to remove glass from commingled council-provided kerbside recycling and identify a preferred approach for improved glass management in Southland.	Improves worker safety, reduces contamination, and increases the quality and value of recovered materials.	Provider / Facilitator	Medium term	
EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT					
E1	Work with the commercial waste sector to identify, trial, and facilitate practical opportunities to improve material separation and recovery, particularly for priority material streams.	Supports increased diversion of recoverable materials and improved performance of commercial and industrial waste systems including through pilots, guidance, or sector-specific initiatives.	Facilitator / Leadership	Medium term	
E2	Work with product stewardship scheme providers to encourage access to additional services and collection options in the region, and promote uptake of regulated and voluntary stewardship schemes among businesses and households.	Increases diversion of priority materials and reduces pressure on council services.	Facilitator / Leadership	Ongoing	
E3	Review approaches to managing illegal dumping, abandoned materials, and legacy waste sites, including education, access to services, and enforcement tools.	Reduces environmental and public health risks and improves system responses to illegal dumping.	Provider / Regulator	Medium term	
E4	Review approaches to managing illegal dumping, abandoned materials, and legacy waste sites, including education, access to services, and enforcement tools.	Reduces environmental and public health risks and improves system responses to illegal dumping.	Provider / Regulator	Medium term	



REF	ACTION	IMPACT	COUNCILS' ROLE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	STATUS
SERVICES					
S1	Continue current household kerbside collection services, including embedding and optimising the standardised kerbside recycling service across the region, and ensuring all service requirements are met.	Meets statutory service requirements and maintains consistent service delivery.	Provider	Short term	
S2	Renew and implement the region's key waste service contracts in alignment with WMMP objectives and priorities.	Ensures long-term service delivery supports waste minimisation, safety, and value recovery outcomes.	Provider	Short to medium term	
S3	Review household collection services to assess future options and inform the renewal and implementation of key waste service contracts and implement agreed outcomes.	Ensures services remain effective, efficient, and fit for purpose.	Provider	Underway / Medium term	
S4	Develop and assess options to remove glass from commingled council-provided kerbside recycling and identify a preferred approach for improved glass management in Southland.	Improves worker safety, reduces contamination, and increases the quality and value of recovered materials.	Provider / Facilitator	Medium term	
S5	Work with the commercial waste sector to identify, trial, and facilitate practical opportunities to improve material separation and recovery, particularly for priority material streams.	Supports increased diversion of recoverable materials and improved performance of commercial and industrial waste systems including through pilots, guidance, or sector-specific initiatives.	Facilitator / Leadership	Medium term	
S6	Work with product stewardship scheme providers to encourage access to additional services and collection options in the region, and promote uptake of regulated and voluntary stewardship schemes among businesses and households.	Increases diversion of priority materials and reduces pressure on council services.	Facilitator / Leadership	Ongoing	
S7	Review approaches to managing illegal dumping, abandoned materials, and legacy waste sites, including education, access to services, and enforcement tools.	Reduces environmental and public health risks and improves system responses to illegal dumping.	Provider / Regulator	Medium term	

APPENDIX 2: THE DRAFT ACTION PLAN (SAME CONTENT DIFFERENT FORMAT)

REF	ACTION	IMPACT	COUNCILS' ROLE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	STATUS
INFRASTRUCTURE					
I1	Assess options for managing organic materials (including food scraps, green waste, and processing organics) in a manner appropriate to Southland	Informs future decisions on organic material management	Provider / Facilitator / Leadership	Medium term	
I2	Support communities to establish or expand community composting initiatives where appropriate	Enables local diversion of organic material	Facilitator / Leadership	Medium term	
I3	Consider options for future processing of council-provided kerbside recyclables as part of service reviews and procurement processes	Supports effective long-term recycling outcomes	Provider / Facilitator	Medium term	
I4	Work with the commercial sector to identify opportunities to divert construction and demolition waste	Reduces disposal of recoverable materials	Facilitator / Leadership	Medium term	
I5	Work with community organisations to identify infrastructure needs that support reuse and repair activities	Enables community-led waste minimisation	Facilitator / Leadership	Medium term	
SUPPORTING AND CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS					
C1	Continue collaboration across the Southland region through WasteNet Southland on strategy, services, and engagement	Improves consistency, efficiency, and shared learning	Leadership	Ongoing	
C2	Work collaboratively with the commercial waste sector to support improved services and infrastructure	Encourages private-sector-led solutions aligned with regional priorities	Facilitator	Ongoing	
C3	Continue to build collaboration with neighbouring councils to identify shared opportunities, e.g. through SOWN (Southland Otago Waste Network)	Achieves efficiencies and improves access to services	Facilitator / Leadership	Ongoing	
C4	Raise awareness of Southland-specific waste challenges and opportunities with central government	Supports national policy and funding decisions	Leadership	Ongoing	
C5	Advocate for stronger product stewardship and extended producer responsibility schemes	Reduces burden on councils and communities	Leadership	Ongoing	
C6	Embed waste minimisation considerations into council procurement, events, and asset management practices	Reduces waste generation at source and demonstrates leadership through council operations	Leadership	Medium term	
C7	Support businesses and organisations to identify upstream waste reduction opportunities through procurement and design	Enables cost-effective waste prevention beyond council operations	Facilitator	Medium term	
C8	Work with emergency management, rural, and community partners to improve understanding of waste management considerations during emergencies and recovery	Improves preparedness and coordination for waste arising from extreme events	Facilitator / Leadership	Medium to long term	



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RETHINK RUBBISH

SOUTHLAND
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Rohe Potae o Murihiku



GO RURAL
DISTRICT COUNCIL CITY
RE LIVING

