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Auckland Council announces world-class food scraps processing contract

Auckland Council is excited to announce a 20-year partnership with kiwi-owned and operated Ecogas Ltd to process the food scraps that will be collected kerbside across urban Auckland. Not since recycling came to our streets has there been such an innovation in the way we reduce waste.

Auckland Council's Environment and Climate Change Committee Chair Richard Hills celebrates this "major step forward to bringing daily solutions to the climate emergency to every Auckland home by diverting waste from landfill and putting it to use for our planet."

IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

If food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world. Food scraps currently make up close to half the weight of the average Auckland household's rubbish bin. When the food scraps kerbside collection rolls out in 2021, it will shrink the 100,000 tonnes of domestic food scraps that are currently sent to landfill each year from Auckland.

Processing our food scraps instead of sending them to landfill reduces the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Many people believe that food decomposes in a landfill, so it's okay to put it in your bin. The reality is, landfills are designed to store waste, not to break it down. Instead of wasting our food, we can put it to use making heat, energy, and fertiliser to grow more food sustainably.

Our food scraps in Auckland will use anaerobic digestion to naturally enrich the soil and heat greenhouses to grow food year-round.

PROVEN TECHNOLOGY

Auckland Council is using world-class technology to make it easy for Aucklanders to recycle our food scraps. Anaerobic digestion is already the preferred method of food scraps processing around the world, and Ecogas's processing methods follow successful models used throughout Europe and the USA.

Andrew Fisher, Ecogas Director and Development Manager, sees the potential for the food repurposing industry to revolutionise the way we deal with waste across the country. "The technology is already developed across much of the world. We are honoured to be trusted with bringing it to New Zealand. Together, we will turn your leftovers into food and fuel using this carbon neutral circular economy solution."

The contract tendering process saw a good number of responses covering a wide range of technologies. Waste Solutions General Manager Parul Sood says, “It was encouraging that the project attracted high-quality submissions, and the method chosen will complement the exciting commercial and home composting initiatives currently supported by the Council to keep food out of landfill.

“We know that a number of Aucklanders compost their food scraps at home, but our research shows that the majority of households don’t. Aucklanders can put items in their food scraps bin that are difficult to compost at home such as large quantities of meat and bones.”

A weekly food scraps collection service for urban Auckland will give us the opportunity to reduce our waste going to landfill. Food scraps processing can bring a significant reduction in household waste - by up to 35 kg per person, contributing to Auckland’s Zero Waste by 2040 goal. The kerbside food scraps collection is expected to rollout from October 2021 and will continue in the areas that already have this service in place.

GETTING TO ZERO WASTE

Auckland Council’s four-tiered approach to managing food scraps is based on the waste hierarchy principles of:

- **Reduce** – plan what you buy and use up leftover food. [Love Food Hate Waste](#) focuses on reducing food scraps in the first instance.
- **Rescue** – Auckland Council supports organisations such as [Kiwi Harvest](#) that rescue food and turn it into valuable and nutritious meals for people in need.
- **Reuse** – keep it local and compost at home. [The Compost Collective](#) educates and encourages homes and communities to reuse food scraps by composting at home through training, workshops and ongoing engagement.
- **Recover** – keep food scraps out of landfill. The proposed food scraps kerbside collection service for urban Auckland, beneficially reuses and recovers the remaining food scraps, turning them into clean energy and natural fertiliser that can be used to nourish our precious soils and grow more food.

“This new service will help build our resiliency to the climate crisis we are in and allow more Aucklanders to access a solution to reducing their waste. We encourage people to join one of our composting workshops now, or look at one of the many clever strategies Aucklanders are already doing to create a sustainable future for us all to thrive.” shares Auckland Council Environment and Climate Change Committee Chair Richard Hills.

ENDS

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