

Managing our waste on Aotea

A local steering group is being formed to develop a blueprint for how we can develop greater community leadership and ownership of our waste on Great Barrier Island. Rick Thorpe from Xtreme Zero Waste and the Zero Waste Network shared information on community-led enterprises to reduce waste, work towards zero waste and provide employment/economic opportunities in isolated rural communities and islands at a meeting on 12 January with a group of key people involved with waste management and minimising waste on Aotea. Rick Thorpe has a wealth of experience in managing waste as part of the famous Raglan Xtreme Zero Waste, through a joint venture with Xtreme Zero Waste to form Waiuku Zero Waste Community Recycling Centre and more recently helping Chatham Island improve their resource recovery and waste management systems.

At the meeting it was acknowledged that Aotea is already ahead of the game in many aspects of sustainable living. There is a wealth of knowledge on Aotea, including with existing contractors and community-led initiatives. All at the meeting shared a concern to ensure that our rubbish does not further degrade our environment working towards a Zero Waste Aotea and developing ways to better reduce and reuse our waste in a more sustainable way than currently is our aim.

The steering group will work on a plan for community owned and led ways to better manage and reduce our waste on island and use it as a resource. This could- include what comes to Aotea, what is able to be reused on island, what needs to be sent off for reuse or recycling, and finally what needs to go to landfill. Our group will seek expert advice from the Zero Waste Network, the umbrella group for community recycling organisations in New Zealand.

We will work closely with Auckland Council to ensure we develop an integrated and collaborative approach.