



He Tūāpapa ki te ora | Infrastructure for a Better Future

Submission from: Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance

About us

[The Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance](#) represents 22 food rescue organisations with dual aims tackling food insecurity and food waste.

Food waste in general

It is encouraging to see how reducing waste has been highlighted in your report. Reducing food waste should be a priority due to the methane emissions that are produced when food decomposes in landfill – and the fact that 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to food waste.¹ Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas and in a recent UN report the head of the United Nations Environment program said “Cutting methane is the strongest lever we have to slow climate change over the next 25 years and complements necessary efforts to reduce carbon dioxide.”²

Combatting food waste across the supply chain is currently being coordinated at a national level through [NZ Food Waste Champions 12.3](#). A separate submission will come through that organisation.

Food rescue in particular

However, one major solution to combat food waste is food rescue. Food rescue organisations pick up surplus food and redistribute it to people in need. Ensuring people are fed, rather than sending food to landfill, is a no-brainer.

Responses to your discussion questions:

How else can we use infrastructure to reduce waste to landfill? (p 126)

On p 51 you mention several areas of infrastructure that offer opportunities to improve the way we deal with waste. We recommend you include:

- “Infrastructure needed to support food rescue at a national scale”.

Food rescue is a cost-effective tool to reduce demand for waste infrastructure while delivering societal co-benefits. Reducing waste through food rescue includes infrastructure (sites, chillers and electric vans) for our [22 food rescue members](#) from the top of the North Island to the South Island. The critical nature of the food rescue sector was highlighted after the impacts of Covid-19, in which most of our membership retained “essential services” status to get food out to people who need it most.

¹ FAO “[Food wastage footprint & Climate Change](#)”.

² UNEP “[Cut methane emissions to avert global temperature rise, UN-backed study urges](#)”

Encouraging this sector through easily-accessible, ongoing and reliable funding would increase the capacity of food rescue groups. Additionally reviewing incentives such as charitable tax law could assist in reducing food waste to landfill.

Responses to F1 “Prepare infrastructure for climate change”

F1.7 Drive a culture of waste minimization

We recommend considering the following wording change here:

- “Require the design of public-sector projects to **consider the prevention of waste** and then to evaluate the use of recycled/ **redistributed** products [delete: where feasible]”

Adding a requirement around prevention reflects the waste hierarchy where prevention is the **first** important step to take. Adding “redistributed” conveys the redistribution of products to others at a lower cost so that it can be re-used, such as food rescue.

We also recommend the Government uphold their commitment to set a definition of food waste, measure a baseline and set a national food waste reduction target.

F1.8 Efficient pricing of waste

We endorse your aim to have “waste-disposal charges that reflect the true cost of disposal to landfill”. We note the recent proposed increase to the landfill levy through the Ministry for the Environment was nowhere near international rates, for example New South Wales in Australia (up to \$147.10 a tonne).³ **We recommend the rate is higher.**

Raising the levy is important due to the revenue being reinvested in projects that minimise waste, such as food rescue organisations. To date, the Waste Minimisation Fund has only supported a very small portion of our food rescue members. It is important that we increase the levy at pace and get investment out to the organisations on the ground making a difference on waste minimisation – which in the food rescue context, includes increasing infrastructure and capacity to rescue more food. This has become more important in the wake of Covid-19, but the Waste Minimisation Fund is not meeting the current need and is an unwieldy and slow process to follow. Operational costs also need to be supported through that fund, which is not currently occurring.

In a [Kaibosh submission](#) on the landfill levy expansion and increase, that food rescue organisation recommended considering a higher rate for the disposal of organics, due to its contribution to climate change over other waste streams. **The recommendation of a separate (and higher rate) for organic waste should be revisited.**

We would also encourage you to explore putting a “value” on food rescue as a carbon-offsetting option. This would encourage large players in the food system, like supermarkets, to continue relationships with food rescue organisations. The Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance is exploring research on ‘fee for service’ or ‘carbon-offsetting’ for food rescue organisations as part of our research goal under our [Action Plan](#). We would be happy to collaborate in this area of carbon off-setting and have had initial conversations with Toitu and Ekos.

³ EPA New South Wales “[Levy regulated area and levy rates](#)”.

Thank you for considering our submission. You can get in touch with our General Manager [REDACTED] through: [REDACTED]

We were unable to consult on this submission with all of our food rescue members due to time constraints. We are however a representative body.