MEDIA RELEASE

December 8, 2021 – Under embargo until 12.00 8/12/21

Firstgas and Ecogas to turn kerbside waste into renewable gas for use in homes and businesses

Firstgas Group and Ecogas are celebrating New Zealand's first large-scale biogas to pipeline project that will transform kerbside waste into a valuable source of renewable gas for homes and businesses.

Once completed, the plant will supply the equivalent of 9,000 homes and businesses with biomethane, a type of renewable gas which is produced from organic waste like food scraps, agricultural and landfill waste. It is expected to eliminate more than 11,000 tonnes of CO_2 per year; action that helps move New Zealand towards its target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Paul Goodeve, Chief Executive, Firstgas Group said, "This groundbreaking project will, for the first time in NZ, enable us to deliver renewable gas to homes and businesses, allowing them to enjoy the benefits of renewable gas in their existing appliances, while saving up to 19 times the carbon emissions."

"Biomethane is chemically identical to natural gas so there is no need to modify pipeline infrastructure or gas appliances, and it has the potential to replace all of New Zealand's residential and three quarters* of commercial gas use, which is equivalent to taking 415,000 petrol cars off our roads.

"Together we have our sights set on scaling up operations, which will see multiple renewable gas to pipeline sites around the country in the future," adds Goodeve.

The first of these is Ecogas' Reporoa facility, near Broadlands in the central North Island, which is on track by mid-2022, to take 75,000 tonnes of organic waste from businesses and kerbside food scrap collections and put it through an Anaerobic Digester which turns the waste into biogas and bio-fertiliser.

From there, Firstgas Group's biogas to biomethane upgrading and treatment facility at the same site, will separate the biogas into pipeline-quality biomethane, as well as separate the carbon dioxide. The renewable gas goes into the natural gas pipeline network for homes and businesses to use and the CO_2 goes into a nearby glasshouse where it helps to grow food.

Alzbeta Bouskova, General Manager Ecogas said, "This project is a great example of a low carbon circular economy in action. Anaerobic digestion is the most environmentally responsible way to recycle organic waste and works in tandem with cities facing waste challenges and companies trying to reduce their emissions. Injecting this renewable gas into the pipeline is proven technology overseas and we are excited to be part of bringing it to New Zealand."

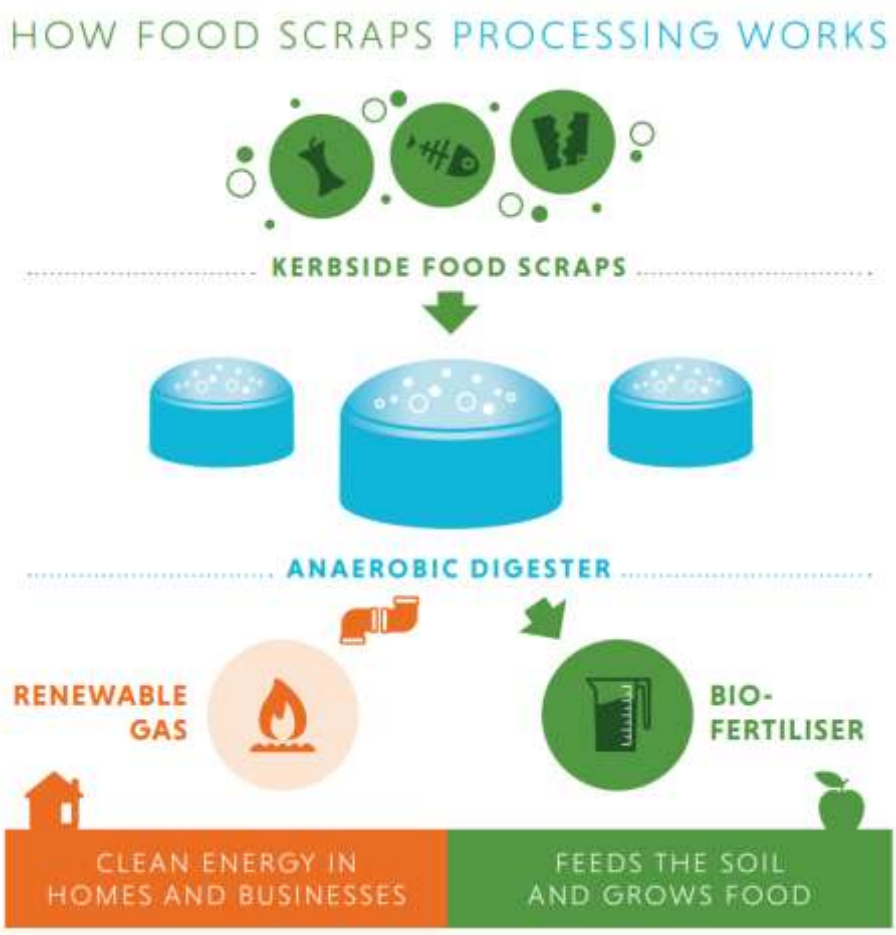
"We believe there are big opportunities to use our respective expertise and capabilities, existing infrastructure and access to markets to grow renewable gas use here in the near future," she adds.

Internationally, renewable gas has been identified as a key pillar of decarbonisation. There are more than 203 operational biogas facilities in Germany that inject into gas pipelines, and Denmark, that began its biogas journey in 1975, is currently using biomethane to supply 20% of its natural gas grid,

with a goal to increase to 100% by 2050. In Australia, the Malabar Biogas project is underway and will see thousands of Sydney homes and businesses using renewable gas in 2022.

Ecogas and Firstgas Group are aiming to begin installation of the biogas to biomethane upgrading facility in Q4 2022.

ENDS



For more information please contact: Cressida Gates-Thompson, Firstgas Group External Communications Specialist, 027 703 6177 / Cressida.gates-thompson@firstgasgroup.co.nz

*The Biogas Report estimates that implementation of wide-scale anaerobic digestion in New Zealand could produce enough renewable gas to supply all residential users and three quarters of commercial gas users with carbon free fuel, equivalent to taking 415,000 petrol cars off our roads