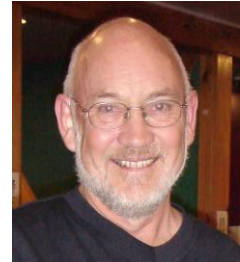


## We need waste to energy plants

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Acknowledgement to The News-Westport, Westport, 25 January 2019

### **Bioenergy Association of New Zealand executive officer, Brian Cox, says waste to energy (WtE) plants must be part of our waste solution.**



The News article by Lee Scanlon “Waste to energy” ‘regrets solutions” (January 9) suggests that waste to energy (WtE) is a “regrets solution” for the world’s waste problem. It suggests that WtE is a temporary fix and could delay the emergence of something better: zero waste practices that eliminate the need for landfill and incinerators.

Zero waste is an inspirational goal. It is great to have but highly unlikely to be achieved. However, zero waste to landfill is a realistic goal every New Zealander should be committed to achieving.

It would be great if all councils adopted a zero waste by 2040 policy, as Auckland City has done.

The Bioenergy Association is advocating to Government that zero waste to landfill by 2040 should be a nationwide policy.

To achieve that target will require communities to minimize waste; recover and recycle material that can be reused; and either compost or produce energy from the residual organic waste that can’t be recovered or recycled.

Internationally this is being done and there is no reason why all our communities can’t do the same.

Landfilling is recognized as the least preferred disposal method for organic waste. It poses risk to human health and the environment.

Although methane can be captured, landfills are not a closed system. Pollution cannot be controlled for the entire lifetime of a landfill.

None of the material sent to landfills is converted into reusable material.

1½ Westland Milk Hokitika facilities) will be available to new businesses near the energy recovery facility. Lee Scanlon refers to examples of where WtE facilities have had a range of negative environmental effects. This should never happen if a facility is properly designed and operated. There should be no pollution to air, land or water.

Little value is obtained from the resource.

There are several methods for treating residual organic waste to produce energy. The choice of technology depends on the type of waste requiring treatment.

## Bioenergy in the news

Configuring our municipal and industrial waste water treatment facilities so that we gain value from liquid waste by producing biogas should also be part of an integrated regional zero waste strategy.

Using our waste rather than putting it in landfills creates jobs, new business and new products.

Renew Energy advises that its proposed Westport facility will process 330,000 tonnes of residual solid waste that cannot be sensibly recovered or recycled.

About 30 megawatts of electricity will be generated – enough to power 30,000 homes. Around 90 megawatts of thermal energy.

New Zealand is fortunate as the Resource Management Act process for consenting of industrial facilities should ensure that best practice is sued and that there are no adverse effects.

In Scandanavia, WtE facilities often operate in the centre of urban areas as, with proper design, they have no external effects of smell, smoke or other discharges. Many of these facilities have also supported the development of associated waste recovery and reuse programmes.

It would be useful to focus discussion on the full range of initiatives that can be taken by each of our communities, big and small, so we start implementing an integrated waste utilization strategy to achieve zero waste targets by 2040.

WtE needs to be part of the range of solutions. We need to develop a full zero waste action plan for the region.

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