

Submission by



to the

Ministry for the Environment

on the

Taking responsibility for our waste:

Consultation document

10 December 2021

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NZTech Submission

Taking responsibility for our waste:

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SUMMARY:

1. NZTech thanks the Ministry for the Environment for the opportunity to submit on the Consultation Document.
2. NZTech is happy to engage further with the committee to discuss our submission in detail and provide further assistance.

BACKGROUND:

3. NZTech is a member funded, not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation that represents 20 tech associations with over 1600 members, who collectively employ more than 10 percent of the New Zealand workforce.
4. Our purpose is to help create a more sustainable, equitable and prosperous New Zealand underpinned by technology. We do this by helping our members work together to connect the tech ecosystem, promote the importance of technology for New Zealand and New Zealand technology for the world, and help advance the growth of the tech ecosystem and the New Zealand economy.
5. Our members include New Zealand tech exporters, local and multinational IT firms, startups, universities, government agencies, financial service providers and large corporate users of technology. Our members cover a very broad range of industries, including those most impacted by climate change: agriculture, energy and transport.

COMMENT:

6. NZTech supports the vision of aspiring for a circular economy for Aotearoa New Zealand by 2050, noting that it is deliberately ambitious given the amount of change required. NZTech agrees that this level of ambition is critical.
7. NZTech supports the six core principles. However, given the essential role of innovation and technology in achieving the vision of a circular economy, and the constant progress of technological solutions, we recommend the addition of another principle, "Constant improvement through the application of innovation and technology".

8. NZTech supports the proposed approach of three broad stages between now and 2050, and the recognition of the societal and cultural changes that will be required to move to a circular economy. However, we recommend bringing technology considerations into each of these timeframes.
 - 8.1 Digital technologies are evolving rapidly and have the potential to make significant positive impacts in horizon one. By horizon three the potential of digital solutions, such as artificial intelligence, to support waste management and circular design will no doubt be immense.
 - 8.2 Additionally, the breadth of technological change over thirty years will be enormous. To realise the opportunities offered by our innovation and technology systems we will need to invest in some technology and innovations, such as biotechnology solutions, in horizon one to have them ready to take effect by 2050.
9. We recommend the waste reduction strategy increases its focus on the role of innovation and technology. [NZTech's submission](#) on the recent Emissions Reduction Plan consultation highlighted the critical need for a supporting technology roadmap, to ensure investment and alignment with emerging and established technologies. Over the next thirty years digital technologies and biotechnologies, among others, will play an essential role in waste management. NZTech recommends the adoption of a considered and planned approach, to ensure the potential of these technologies is realised.
 - 9.1 NZTech recommends that the proposed Technology Roadmap for the Emissions Reduction Plan include a section on waste management and a circular economy.
10. In stage 1, priority 1, collecting data is noted as a headline action. The New Zealand Government has had policies on open data since 2011 yet the majority of data is not easily accessible, limiting innovation. NZTech recommends that where possible, data collected is made available as open data, and recommends the following change: "Building a practice of systematically collecting good data and reporting on it publicly" should be changed to "'Building a practice of systematically collecting good data and ensuring it is publicly available as open data'".
11. In stage 1 we recommend ensuring the Government's research, science and innovation system investment has some level of alignment with the waste reduction strategy, given the critical role of innovation and technology in addressing waste management issues.

CONCLUSION:

12. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. NZTech is happy to engage further to discuss our submission and provide any further assistance. If you have any further queries do not hesitate to contact me.

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