

Media Statement 22 April 2022

Paewira viewed as a part of NZ's waste transition

“We are proud recycling professionals, caring of and for our environment. We are very conscious of good waste management practice, stewardship of material and the cost involved. That is why we see Paewira as a significant contributor to NZ's transition to a low-waste economy.

The recycling facility, which is a major part of the waste to energy plant (WtE) development, will enable us to maximise value extraction from large quantities of material that is already directed to landfill. Once recyclables are removed, the balance of material is then used in our system to fuel the energy plant. The complete process optimises value extraction from waste material rather than the material being sent to landfill where it would continue to pollute our land for decades and emit methane to the atmosphere for just as long.

The plant uses modern European technology that has been rigorously developed to minimise environmental effects. The system complies with European emission standards which are more stringent than NZ standards and the technology is in wide-spread use in other parts of the world.

Incineration of material including wood chip and tyres and cremation and autoclave processes are being utilised in NZ currently without the support of modern air emissions technology.

Processing Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) in a WtE plant is a new process for NZ. Our expert analysis confirms that our WtE process has a similar carbon footprint as sending MSW to landfill, without methane emission or leachate. In addition, our expert analysis also confirms sending plastics and cardboard offshore to be recycled generates a significant carbon footprint. Processing this material in our WtE process reduces this carbon footprint.

Global Contracting Solutions Limited is a majority Māori owned company. The Director Craig Tuhoro has whakapapa links to Ngāti Apakura, and to the whenua where we propose to build the plant. Global Contracting Solutions Limited acknowledges and works to uphold its responsibilities as kaitiaki of the whenua and the people.

The proposed site for the plant is adjacent to the Mangapiko River. We confirm that we will not take water from or release waste to the river. As part of our consent application, we are working with the Waipa District Council to develop a remediation plan for this section of the River which includes connection with the proposed Ngaroto cycleway. We want our plant to be a destination for education and learning about waste management, and also the history of the whenua and local area, as well as contributing to the local economy, community, and the environment.

Our engagement with the local Council, with Ngā Iwi Tōpu o Waipā, and with mana whenua has been extensive. We have initiated consultation early in the project in an attempt to build genuine relationships with these groups and to facilitate an early flow of information about the project. We endeavour to explain the science, technology and the tikanga in these processes carefully and considerately.

Recently, Para Kore released a statement to the media in opposition to our project. We have not been approached by Para Kore to discuss our project or to provide information to them from our experts about the potential effects of the plant. We disagree with the statement made by Miss Forbes and would welcome an opportunity to engage in a similarly mature, considered discussion with her.

Our statement of effects in terms of the plant's operation is included in our consent application. We have trust in the Council representatives and related experts to judge the plant on its merits and are engaged with them to help them understand what we have proposed."

Q&A

Q. Why build it in Te Awamutu?

Te Awamutu is well placed on transportation links and relatively central to the waste creation area of the Waikato. Significant amounts of waste are already being transported around the area to be deposited to landfills.

It also has the added advantage of being within the rohe of our mana whenua. People involved in this project including the Managing Director Craig Tuhoro whakapapa to this area and hold a strong connection to the whenua. It gives us a chance to provide direct economic support and employment for our whanau and highlight the history of the area.

There is a report included in the Consent application which explains the detail.

Q. Why this piece of land in particular?

Industrial land can be hard to come by. Rural land suitable for an industrial plant is even more difficult to find. Council's encourage industrial businesses to be located together, and not rurally located or spread out, by providing zoning and appropriate transport links.

We searched extensively prior to settling on Racecourse Road . Our current site was most suitable in that it has the right zoning, good transport links with minimal residential surroundings, access to water and access to a power substation suitable for the scale of power generation.

Q. Why this technology?

Our principal, Global Metal Solutions Limited, already daily produces more than 100 tonnes of waste from our recycling processes. All of which currently goes straight to landfill. Four years ago, we started to question what else could be done with that? With one of our goals as a company being to support the environment, we went looking for a solution.

So, we went to Europe and researched what else could be done. We knew that countries in Europe outlawed landfills decades ago, what were they doing with their waste? That's when we dug deeper into waste to energy. We saw that these plants, particularly the modern ones, were built amid large cities sitting comfortably within their urban surroundings.

The system allows us to first remove and maximise the amount of recyclable materials from the material that we receive and also extract as much value as possible from the material that cannot be recycled, by turning it into electricity with so minimising the end-product being that is an inert material and the smallest possible quantity for landfill. And even that material has reusable potential.

Q. Why now?

New Zealand has a waste problem by creating 3.5 million tonnes of waste per annum and GMS is looking for solutions for managing their own waste.

We acknowledge the circular economy is the right approach. Initiatives such as waste recovery, community recycling facilities, household recycling and product stewardship initiatives are important. Unfortunately, NZ will not achieve zero waste and circular economies overnight when we keep producing and consuming waste products that cannot be recycled. We are also reliant as a society on a large volume of imported goods from countries that do not hold the same philosophies yet.

Even under a circular economy model there will always be an element of waste. Simple numbers tell us this.

Our proposed plant can process 150,000 tonnes of waste material per year. That is less than 5% of NZ's total waste. Hamilton City currently produces between 700-1,000 tonnes per day on its own. We can handle 500 tonnes per day. Even if NZ halves its waste production, we will still only be able to process a fraction of the total. That is why recycling and waste minimisation practices must still continue to develop.

We look forward to a low-waste economy future but there will be a transition period to get there. We believe Paewira can provide a platform for the future and contribute to that transition.

Q. How does your proposed plant interact with the Mangapiko River?

The short answer is we have next to no interaction with the Mangapiko River from a discharges perspective. We do not take water from the River and we do not release waste into it.

The water we need for our plant will come from the town supply.

Our wastewater will either be recycled within the plant or removed from the site to another facility. In fact, the wastewater is suitable for GMS to use at its other sites as washdown and fire system makeup water – meaning we could reduce our use of town supply water at our other recycling facilities.

Q. How do you propose to deal with the flood waters the site supposedly experiences?

The site experiences no more flooding than any other stretch of the Mangapiko River. We have engaged experts to provide us with high level advice on this matter which is reviewed by the Council as part of the consenting process. The design of our project will ensure the facility is above any 100-year flood level and minimise any further distribution of flood water elsewhere, as required under Council rules.

Q. What about other iwi interaction with the River?

We have consulted with mana whenua, NITOW and Waikato Tainui in relation to our consent applications and will continue to work with those groups around hapu and iwi engagement with the awa. We acknowledge and understand, as mana whenua ourselves, the cultural significance of the awa. We are working with the Waipa District Council to develop a remediation concept for this stretch of the river within our consent. This includes an allowance and connection with the proposed Ngaroto cycleway. We want to enhance the mana of the awa through betterment of the Mangapiko and its surroundings, and by acknowledging its cultural significance.

Q. What about the noise and odour impact?

Our assessment of effects is included in detail in our consent application.

Our building is designed to fully enclose all operations. The noise impact has been measured as less than the current ambient noise levels.

Similarly, because we aren't accepting putrescible or hazardous materials there will be no odour created. And by fully enclosing the operation there would be no odour release if there was.

Q. How is the traffic accounted for?

It is an industrial plant and will require heavy vehicles to deliver waste and remove recyclables. Racecourse Rd is a District collector road servicing this piece of industrial zoned land, so it must account for this type of traffic anyway. It has been designated in the Council's plans as suitable to service the site and is expected to support the types and scale of vehicle movements we will require.