

MEDIA STATEMENT

\$350 MILLION PLANT TO DELIVER RENEWABLE ENERGY-FROM-WASTE CONSIDERED

Investigations have begun into the viability of building an Energy-from-Waste plant that will safely convert 350,000 tonnes of waste, that would otherwise be dumped into South Island landfills annually, into renewable electricity.

Under Project Kea, South Island Resource Recovery Limited (SIRRL)*, a joint venture bringing together New Zealand expertise with world-leading Spanish and Chinese waste technology, is looking at possible sites to build an Energy-from-Waste plant near Waimate in South Canterbury.

Using world-leading, best available technology and the most stringent environmental management practices, the plant will produce a significant amount of renewable energy provided as steam and electricity for local industry and communities in the region.

SIRRL Board Director Paul Taylor says, "Waste materials that are delivered to the plant for disposal will be contained within a negative pressure bunker storage environment which eliminates any possibility of any odour from the plant. All emissions from the processing of the waste will meet strict air quality and noise standards set by central government and the regional council. "

Waimate Mayor Craig Rowley says that Project Kea is an exciting proposal which could create many benefits for the district.

"This would include new employment opportunities and is yet another example of the district's appeal to commercial operators. This initiative has yet to go through the required consenting process, but we know the growth these major enterprises can create - and that's a big positive for the Waimate District," Mayor Rowley said.

"Although its early days in our planning," says Paul Taylor, "our priority is to meet with the local Waimate community, prior to the lodgment of resource consent to build and operate the \$350 million plant. These meetings begin next week.

"In the construction phase, the plant will create work for over 300 people and over 100 direct and indirect roles on the plant's completion."

Mr Taylor says that these Energy-from-Waste plants are popular throughout the northern hemisphere, especially Europe, because they are providing an environmentally clean solution to a residual waste disposal problem at the same time as generating renewable energy. These plants are able to be located close to urban areas with no environmental, odour or noise issues.

All waste that goes to them needs to first have anything recyclable removed.

"We are very clear that recycling is the priority and desire only waste that is otherwise destined for landfill, after any options for reuse".

"There will be no visible air discharges emitted from the plant into the atmosphere other than non-toxic condensing water vapour. Steam produced within the plant is converted into electricity and delivered to local industries as well as to the national grid.

"New Zealand is in the middle of a landfill waste crisis, as was seen with the 2019 Fox River landfill environmental disaster," says Paul Taylor.

"Waste disposed at municipal landfills grew by 48 per cent between 2009 and 2019. Our waste systems now face major challenges, exacerbated by the global and domestic impact of COVID-19.†

"Many of the South Island's landfills are older, overpacked and failing. An increase in population and more extreme weather events will put further pressure on landfills.

"Landfill gas from waste contains high concentrations of methane, and if not first captured, has about 30 times higher global warming impact compared to carbon dioxide.‡

"The recent landfill disaster following the flooding of Fox River – part of a UNESCO World Heritage site - was watched by the rest of the world and was a stark, ugly reminder of what is barely under the surface of our beautiful country.

"The breakdown of these landfills is happening now – we cannot leave this problem for the next generation to deal with.

"The proposed plant can run alongside New Zealand's essential waste minimisation and recycling efforts and, at the same time, produce renewable energy to benefit the local economy.

"The local Waimate community is the first priority for SIRRL, and we will be talking with local people to answer any questions and hear community views on the proposed plant. It is important that community feedback is considered before a resource consent application to build and operate the plant is lodged later this year."

Consents will be required from both Environment Canterbury and the Waimate District Council.

"We have a website <https://www.projectkea.co.nz/> where anyone can learn more, including about the Energy-from-Waste process," says Paul Taylor.

[ENDS]

AT A GLANCE

The advantages of Energy-from-Waste plants can include a number of additional areas to help mitigate the causes of Climate Change, namely -

- *Carbon dioxide transfer for use in horticulture, greenhouses etc.*
- *Assisting in the production of hydrogen by having available energy to enable an electrolysis plant to be operated.*
- *Reducing the use of coal fired boilers in industry.*
- *Enabling water recycling technology ensuring minimum impact upon the environment.*
- *Plasma treatments to capture toxic fly ash and aid in the reduction of toxins from other industries.*
- *After the bottom ash has been filtered and metal extracted for recycling, the plasma-treated fly and bottom ash can be used for road aggregate or concrete block manufacture.*

COMMUNITY DROP-IN TIMES: Wednesday, 22 September, 4-6pm.

Thursday, 23 September, 1-3pm. **Location:** Waimate Event Centre, 15 Paul Street, Waimate.



*SIRRL is a joint venture between Spanish company Urbaser SAU, New Zealand's Renew Energy Limited, and China Tianying Incorporated.

†Ministry for the Environment; Cabinet Paper: *Proposals for a more effective waste levy*; June 2020.

‡United States Environmental Protection Agency, *Landfill Outreach Methane Programme*.