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Committee Environment
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Majestic Centre Recycling & Composting Trial

1. Purpose

To inform the committee of the results of a recycling and composting trial at the Majestic Centre, Wellington.

2. Background

Although domestic recycling is well established in Wellington, most of the commercial sector is not recycling. Wellington contains a large number of government offices which are working to better their waste management practices through the GOVT 3 programme; however, there are still large numbers of other non-governmental organisations occupying large amounts of office space that are not improving their waste management practices.

Greater Wellington has been assisting office based businesses to improve their recycling and waste reduction for several years (e.g., Westpac Bank). This followed the surge of interest from CBD businesses after Greater Wellington's own recycling initiatives were made public. There is a clear demand for this kind of business environmental education.

Results from recent Wellington City Council (WCC) solid waste audits show that 20-30% of the waste entering the city's landfills is made up of paper – approximately 20,000 tonnes per year. Based on qualitative analysis, a large proportion of this paper waste originates from the office buildings in Wellington's CBD. Recycling slows the growth of landfills by diverting waste to materials recovery facilities and it is the primary waste minimisation tool for most local authorities. It also allows materials to be reintroduced in the economy.

The Majestic Centre was the *1st multi-tenanted (non-government) building* to undertake whole building recycling and composting in the Wellington CBD. The type and size of businesses was very diverse and ranged from hairdressers, to corporate big businesses, to coffee shops. Each business had a very different work environment and culture. To implement recycling & composting effectively, each one required a unique and personalised approach.

3. Discussion

3.1 Objectives

The objectives of the trial were to:

- Implement recycling and composting for the whole of the Majestic Centre.
- Show how recycling and composting can reduce waste to landfill.
- Develop effective educational tools and equipment so that we can be more effective in helping commercial building managers and occupiers become aware of their waste and reduce it through recycling and composting.
- Find out what the main barriers are to CBD buildings effectively recycling and composting.
- Acknowledge businesses effectively shifting to recycling and composting

The trial was intended not only to reduce waste to landfill but to make the participating businesses aware of the volume of waste they were producing. This is essential to achieve a change in their practices.

3.2 What was involved?

Before the trial began, the Majestic Centre disposed of two full 3 cubic metre bins of waste to landfill on a daily basis. An analysis of this waste at the start of the trial revealed that most of it was recyclable and compostable. Therefore it appeared that there was a lot of potential to reduce it by recycling and composting. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the waste.

Table 1: Majestic Centre Waste

Items	Weight (kg/day)	%
Paper/Cardboard	193	52
Plastics/Glass/Tin	68	18
Food	69	19
Non-recyclable	42	11
TOTAL	373	100

Greater Wellington worked to make the transition to recycling and composting as easy as possible for the tenants. This was done by making individual contact with each business, walking through every floor to determine the work environment, and then supplying each business with the necessary equipment and education to implement the new system. The main contact for each business was regularly contacted and we were always on hand to be of assistance.

Recycling company Full Circle worked with Greater Wellington on the trial. Full Circle provided all the necessary equipment to recycle the paper and mixed recyclables (plastics, glass, tin and aluminium). This included about 25 paper recycling bins and 12 mixed recycling bins. Full Circle collected these bins on a weekly basis and took the material to their Seaview premises for recycling. Jims Mowers was contracted to take the food waste to Living Earth, where it was composted onsite. One bin (240L) of organic material was collected from the building on a weekly basis.

As can be seen in the Table below, a variety of businesses participated in the trial

Table 2: Participating Businesses

Name	Type	Staff #	What they recycled?
BOXO	Coffee shop	5	Mixed
Buoy Hairdressing	Hairdressers	20	Paper & Mixed
NZ Financial Planning	Office	30	Paper
IBM	Office	100	Food
Sweeney Vesty	" "	25	Food
NZ Trade & Enterprise	" "	210	Paper, Mixed & Food
Embassy of Japan	" "	30	Paper, Mixed & Food
Earthquake Commission	" "	20	Paper, Mixed & Food
Ernst & Young	" "	200	Paper, Mixed & Food
Art2Print	" "	3	Paper
Fusion5	" "	15	Paper
Cigna Life Insurance	" "	60	Mixed & Food
OMV	" "	25	Paper, Mixed & Food
Majestic Suites	" "	50	Paper, Mixed & Food

3.3 Results of the trial

The trial began in November 2005 and went for 3 months. Although many of the businesses took a break over the Christmas holidays, a total of 23.58 tonnes of recyclable material was collected (15.1 tonnes was paper and 8.4 tonnes was mixed, which includes plastics, tin, aluminium, glass). As well, a total of 1630L food waste was collected and taken to the local composting facility.

During the trial one of the general waste bins was locked. All tenants were notified of this and the building manager was allowed to take the lock off if there was too much rubbish for one bin. In the end, it appeared that the building was producing a little over one bin of rubbish a day. Therefore, it was decided that the best solution was to swap the two bins for one larger bin.

Through recycling and composting, the Majestic Centre was able to substantially reduce its general waste. This substantially reduced its waste disposal costs and allowed for recycling and composting for all of the tenants. Overall, including recycling and composting, the Majestic Centre was able to reduce its waste management costs by 48%.

4. Future Plans

We will be working in partnership with Wellington City Council on three more recycling and composting trials at buildings in central Wellington this year. Funding for this has come from a successful joint bid to the Ministry for the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund.

5. Communication

An article was published in Elements earlier this year on the trial and its objectives. A further article will be published with the summarised results and comments from participants. The results will also be put in the Sustainable Business section of Greater Wellington's website as a case study to assist other similar businesses..

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the report, and*
- 2. Note the contents.*

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