

New Zealand Government

Rethinking Plastics in Aotearoa New Zealand

Government response to the Rethinking Plastics report

2020

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The *Rethinking Plastics* report

In December 2019, the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor released *Rethinking Plastics in Aotearoa New Zealand*. The report laid out an aspirational vision for Aotearoa in 2030, whereby New Zealanders are innovative world leaders in reducing plastic use and limiting the amount of plastic found in our environment.

The report states that to achieve the vision, we need to change our relationship with plastics, treating it as a valuable resource that is reused and repaired as part of a circular economy, rather than as a cheap and disposable resource. The report recommends when prioritising action, it is important to reduce the generation of plastic waste at source, rather than focus all of our attention towards improving our recycling and recovery systems. Taking this approach will involve reimagining plastics, and will require innovation, creation of new materials and new ways of using them.

The report recommends the development of a national plastics action plan, to align action and investment. To inform the contents of the plan, the report makes 51 specific recommendations.

Government response

This document sets out the Government response to the report. In summary, the Government either agrees with, or agrees to investigate the majority of the recommendations. Many of the recommended actions are already underway (eg, the expanded waste disposal levy and regulated product stewardship) but in response to the report, the Government has agreed to undertake additional action, including work to:

- lead the development of a national plastics action plan and develop guidelines to inform the sustainable use of plastic in Government procurement
- improve the depth and accessibility of data on plastics, fill knowledge gaps and encourage innovation
- support action on plastics through education, engagement with sectors, support for innovative business, development of standards and guidelines, and considering positive incentives for change
- better co-ordinate and leverage international connections, fora and mechanisms to support our plastics agenda

Next steps

A draft action plan is being developed to drive action over seven separate work streams. The Ministry for the Environment will be engaging with iwi/Māori, local government, the waste sector, business, NGOs, communities and research institutions from September 2020 to develop a final action plan.

The recommendations in *Rethinking Plastics* are presented in six groups. We have regrouped them in seven groups to align better with the proposed Government work programme for plastics.

Government action

These recommendations set out the steps Government can take to lead and demonstrate action on plastics.

Report recommendation	Government response
<p>Recommendation 1a</p> <p>Implement a national plastics action plan, building on actions outlined in this report (including recommendations 2–6) that outlines a clear vision and timeline of actions and signals expectations for the transition to a circular economy for plastics.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>A draft action plan is being developed, setting out the Government’s response to the <i>Rethinking Plastics</i> report. Engagement with iwi/Māori and other actors in the system (eg, local government, business and industry, NGOs, research institutions) is needed to test and confirm a final action plan. A senior officials’ group will be set up to guide action in this phase. Following engagement, the final action plan will then be taken forward by a governance group. This work will be coordinated with work being undertaken to implement the expanded waste disposal levy.</p> <p>Priority: High Lead agency: Ministry for the Environment Timeline: Finalised National Plastics Action Plan to be developed by December 2020</p>
<p>Recommendation 3a</p> <p>Drive uptake of best-practice sustainable plastic use (eg reuse) through operational and funding levers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) adapt daily operations for government agencies and state owned enterprises ii) make best practice a requirement of funding or approval (eg, government-funded conferences). <p>Recommendation 3f (soon, building on 3a)</p> <p>Change government procurement to reflect sustainable use of plastic in all agencies and state-owned enterprises.</p> <p>Recommendation 3k (later, building on 3a and 3f)</p> <p>Promote government-wide adoption of circular economy.</p>	<p>Agree with the intent of this family of recommendations.</p> <p>Government agencies bound by the government procurement rules are required to support the procurement of low-waste goods, services and works, and encourage innovation to significantly reduce waste impacts from goods and services (Rule 20). For designated contracts, agencies must support low waste procurement as above. Agencies must have regard to guidance published by Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) on the procurement of low waste goods and services.</p> <p>New Zealand Government procurement is currently designing a strategy for the new generation of an All-of-Government office supplies solution, supporting agencies to purchase items that produce low amounts of waste and/or are recyclable.</p> <p>New Zealand Government Procurement, with support from the Ministry for the Environment will develop guidelines relating to the sustainable use of plastic in specific areas of government procurement, based on an assessment of volumes and risk. Objectives will encourage a shift to reduce use of plastics, and shift away from use of unrecyclable plastics and single-use items. New Zealand Government Procurement will consider how plastic and other types of waste can be reduced in government building and construction procurements.</p> <p>In relation to 3a(i), (daily operations) and 3a (ii), (conditions of funding), the Ministry for the Environment will undertake additional scoping work to consider the feasibility of implementing these recommendations.</p>

Report recommendation	Government response
[See previous page]	<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Lead agency: The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment with support from the Ministry for the Environment.</p> <p>Timeline: The areas for development of guidelines relating to the sustainable use of plastic (including those relating to building and construction procurements) will be identified by June 2021. Scoping by the Ministry for the Environment in relation to 3a(i) (daily operations) and 3a(ii), (conditions of funding) to be undertaken by June 2021.</p>

Data and information

This set of recommendations relates to collecting data, reporting on data collected, and presenting the data for actionable insights.

Report recommendation	Government response
<p>Recommendation 2a</p> <p>Commission projects to audit and quantify known data gaps for plastics, including use, collection, reuse, recycling, disposal and leakage in NZ to fill.</p> <p>Recommendation 2d</p> <p>Mandate ongoing data collection at product level and establish an open data framework with a centralised database that includes measures for material type, weight, colour, recycled content, contamination, reuse, industry, source and end market (local or overseas), location, and average product lifetime of all plastic used in NZ.</p> <p>Recommendation 2e</p> <p>Review data policy settings of 2d in light of technological developments and incorporate more difficult-to-acquire data in collection frameworks including, but not limited to, additives in plastic materials.</p> <p>Recommendation 3i</p> <p>Incorporate indicators of plastic use, waste management and pollution, including a tier 1 indicator for litter, into existing national frameworks and processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Environmental Reporting Programme ii. Indicators Aotearoa iii. Living Standards (wellbeing) Framework v. Environmental–economic accounts v. Just Transitions initiatives. <p>Recommendation 6a</p> <p>Quantify environmental leakage of plastics, building on existing research.</p>	<p>Agree that New Zealand’s data collection on plastics (and waste more generally) needs improvement.</p> <p>Work to improve data is underway as part of the implementation of the expanded waste disposal levy, covering all waste streams. In addition, the Waste Minimisation Fund supports a number of litter projects (which contribute to data on plastic waste). Under the Environmental Reporting Act 2015, the Government Statistician and the Secretary for the Environment have responsibility for environmental reporting.</p> <p>In response to recommendation 2a, the Ministry for the Environment (with Stats NZ support) will work to identify and quantify data gaps about current activity, and will then consider fulfilling data needs as new activity is undertaken. Additional recommendations (2d and 2e) will then be considered, and will be subject to feasibility and funding. This work will be coordinated with work streams complete and underway including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the response to the Parliamentary Commissioner or the Environment’s report, focusing Aotearoa New Zealand’s environmental reporting system • the work to capture a long-term view of the information the government needs in the data investment plan • the environmental domain plan and the environmental reporting plan. <p>The parties will also be cognisant of international data standards and the need to balance plastics data with general waste data. Consideration of incorporating available data into the five frameworks listed in recommendation 3i can only be done once initial exploration work is complete and the ‘plugging of gaps’ is well advanced.</p> <p>We note that the Just Transitions component (3i(v)) is a community driven partnership approach, so identification of indicators would need to be led by the local community. MBIE can suggest but not commit them to including these indicators. The development and use of indicators would also need to be fit for purpose for the objectives being considered.</p> <div style="background-color: #e0f0f0; padding: 10px; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>Priority: High</p> <p>Lead agencies: The Ministry for the Environment and Stats NZ</p> <p>Timeline: Establishment of a project and resources in place by January 2021. Initial scoping work to understand the data gaps for plastic to be undertaken by January 2022. Further work programme conditional on initial scoping, feasibility and decisions.</p> </div>

Research and innovation

This set of recommendations proposes research and citizen science projects that could be undertaken, with the findings disseminated for the public good.

Report recommendation	Government response
<p>Recommendation 4l Monitor for innovative ways to manage plastic waste and scale-up infrastructure to reduce reliance on, or phase out use of, landfill for plastic waste (including from 5a).</p> <p>Recommendation 6b Identify knowledge gaps and develop research agenda related to hazards, impacts and remediation of plastics, aligning to international conventions and pacts and connecting with international research efforts, with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impacts on local communities, taonga species and sites of significance to mana whenua • microplastics • environmental and food safety of recycled plastic and new materials • developing methods for monitoring nanoplastics and potential toxic effects of plastics. <p>Recommendation 6e Working with mana whenua, roll out nationwide microplastic monitoring for marine, terrestrial and air environments, and wastewater and landfill leachate.</p> <p>Recommendation 6h Support and regularly review local and international research into the environmental and health impacts of plastics, including those from 6b, and ensure international connectivity (supports 6j).</p> <p>Recommendation 6j Support and regularly review long-term studies of environmental and health impacts of plastics.</p>	<p>Agree with the intent of this family of recommendations but prioritisation will be required.</p> <p>We are aware there is relevant work underway already on plastics. Relevant existing projects (led by the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI)) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Continuous Plankton Recorder programme samples microplastics in ocean surface waters • using seabed camera footage to look at the abundance and distribution of plastics across benthic environments throughout the Exclusive Economic Zone. This work is in conjunction with plastic captures at sea reported by MPI observers on fishing boats. • working with the Department of Conservation on ways to mitigate and reduce the impact of fishing gear lost at sea on protected marine life (eg, entanglement). • a risk profiling exercise to identify the data gaps preventing risk assessment of microplastics in the diet • funding a PhD to survey microplastics in the New Zealand diet and the bioavailability of plastics and contaminants. This research incorporates aspects of mātauranga Māori. <p>The Ministry for the Environment (supported by other agencies as required) will coordinate a statement of priorities for plastics, that identifies the research needs, gaps, actors, and priorities. Following identification of priorities, agencies will consider options and available funding to support research, citizen science, mana whenua and community involvement, hazard identification and reduction, and innovation to rethink, refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle plastics, as funding allows.</p> <p>For 6h and 6j, the Ministry for the Environment will consult MPI and the Ministry of Health as required following the initial scoping work</p> <div style="background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Lead agency: The Ministry for the Environment, coordinating with other agencies as necessary</p> <p>Timeline: Initial scoping work to establish a process to determine a statement of priorities as above by July 2021 Further work programme building on the initial scoping work to consider addressing the other recommendations to be developed by July 2022</p> </div>
<p>Recommendation 4i Facilitate access for organisations to life cycle assessment-based decision support tools, supported by NZ-specific datasets.</p>	<p>Agree with the intent.</p> <p>The Ministry for the Environment will consider the role for Government and assess the demand and scope for tools of this nature before taking any additional action. This</p>

Report recommendation	Government response
	<p>recommendation was intended to be implemented by 2025 and supported by recommendation 2d. Therefore, this response can be progressed on a longer timeframe while higher priority work is progressed.</p> <p>Priority: Low Lead agency: The Ministry for the Environment Timeline: The Ministry for the Environment to undertake scoping to ascertain scope and feasibility, and anticipated end users for such products. It will do this by July 2021 and to determine next steps.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2b Support standardisation and national roll-out for citizen science litter monitoring projects, including kaupapa Māori projects, ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alignment with international best practice methodologies • an open data policy, in line with the government-wide approach to increase openness and transparency. <p>Recommendation 5b Share community initiatives and citizen science programmes and support their uptake in new contexts</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>Citizen science is funded by the Ministry for the Environment, MBIE and others.</p> <p>In relation to 2b, existing projects are underway to standardise collection methods. For example, working in collaboration with Statistics New Zealand and the Department of Conservation, Sustainable Coastlines provides training, equipment and technology to assist community groups to collect data in accordance with international standards.</p> <p>The Ministry for the Environment, in consultation with Stats NZ and other agencies as required, will consider options for developing expanded or similar initiatives.</p> <p>In relation to 5b, MBIE and the Ministry for the Environment will consider building on the action areas and integrating action <i>in A Nation of Curious Minds: A National Strategic Plan for Science in Society</i>, for example, by considering the upscaling of relevant existing citizen science projects.</p> <p>Priority: Low to Medium Lead agencies: The Ministry for the Environment, MBIE, and Stats NZ Timeline: Initial scoping work to understand the opportunities, challenges, and funding available across agencies to be initiated by January 2021. Further work to be planned following that scoping work.</p>

Behaviour change

These recommendations relate to the government’s education and regulatory levers for instigating behaviour change.

Report recommendation	Government response
<p>Recommendation 2c</p> <p>Incentivise labelling of plastic type by manufacturers (resin ID code).</p>	<p>Agree with the intent of the recommendation. The Ministry for the Environment is actively considering the requirements for recyclability labelling and undertaking work to consider options for standardising kerbside recycling.</p> <div data-bbox="700 584 1367 857" style="background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 10px;"> <p>Priority: High</p> <p>Lead agency: The Ministry for the Environment</p> <p>Timeline: Recommendations on next steps for recyclability labelling and standardisation of kerbside recycling to be made to Cabinet in late 2020/early 2021.</p> </div>
<p>Recommendation 3d</p> <p>Increase support for teachers to access resources where plastics is used as the context for teaching science, technology, social studies, sustainability and mātauranga Māori, and to utilise them in integrated, student-centred pedagogies.</p>	<p>Agree with the intent. The existing <i>Curious Minds</i> programme provides a vehicle for advancing support for teachers, but is not specifically focussed on plastics. Action area 1 under A Nation of Curious Minds: A National Strategic Plan for Science in Society includes the following objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve initial teacher education through increased science and technology teaching competencies, leading to increased confidence. • Better in-service professional learning and development for science and technology teachers. • Build stronger links between science and technology educators, learners, technologists and scientists, in the classroom and in the community. <p>If additional targeted resources are required, the Ministry for the Environment and MBIE could work together to consider the levers and funding available to respond to this recommendation. When designing the resources, supports, or initiatives as part of this response, the Ministry for the Environment and MBIE will consider how these can be connected to broader concepts and big ideas of sustainability and the environment.</p> <p>There is also potential to leverage initiatives under the Environmental Education for Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan, which sets out priority areas for government agencies to focus on, towards the goal that all New Zealanders value a connection to our environment by actively working together for a sustainable future. The Ministry for the Environment will consider whether this initiative is relevant when developing this response.</p> <div data-bbox="700 1845 1367 2049" style="background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 10px;"> <p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Lead agencies: The Ministry for the Environment and MBIE. The Ministry of Education will be consulted on action taken as part of this response</p> </div>

Report recommendation	Government response
	<p>Timeline: Initial scoping work to be undertaken by the Ministry and MBIE in 2021</p>
<p>Recommendation 3e</p> <p>Run national public awareness initiatives on plastic pollution, recycling and biodegradable or compostable plastics</p>	<p>Agree with the recommendation.</p> <p>Subject to scoping and agreement on funding, the Ministry for the Environment will explore the potential of public awareness campaigns about plastic pollution, recycling and biodegradable or compostable plastics, with a particular focus on supporting the implementation of other work underway relating to Rethinking Plastics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a container return scheme • a new system for recyclability labelling • a mandatory phase out of hard to recycle plastic packaging (subject to decisions) • a mandatory phase out of single use plastic items (subject to decisions) • changes to the waste disposal levy • standardised kerbside recycling. <p>Priority: High priority Lead agency: The Ministry for the Environment Timeframe: Determined by other work streams</p>
<p>Recommendation 4c</p> <p>Mandate product stewardship for priority products that contain plastic currently under consultation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packaging: include incentives to increase use of recycled plastic to strengthen markets for recycled plastic in NZ • Tyres: include approaches to reduce microplastics leakage • Farm plastics • Agrichemicals • E-waste 	<p>Agree</p> <p>In July 2020, the Government declared six priority products for regulated product stewardship under the Waste Minimisation Act (WMA): tyres, electrical and electronic products, agrichemicals and their containers, refrigerants and other synthetic greenhouse gases, farm plastics, and plastic packaging.</p> <p>Priority: High Lead agency: The Ministry for the Environment Timeline: Proposed regulations to enable mandated product stewardship for tyres and agrichemicals will be taken to public consultation in 2020/21 and final policy decisions will follow. Co-design processes for mandated product stewardship schemes (including proposed regulations) will conclude for farm plastics and progress for e-waste and plastic packaging after that.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4d</p> <p>Implement an industry-informed fit-for-purpose container deposit scheme (CDS).</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>A project to co-design a Container Return Scheme is underway, funded through the Waste Minimisation Fund. The project is jointly led by Auckland Council and Marlborough District Council with stakeholder representation through a Design Working Group, overseen by a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of relevant subject area experts.</p>

Report recommendation	Government response
	<p>The project will finalise its report and recommendations for the design of a New Zealand scheme by the end of October 2020.</p> <p>Priority: High Lead agency: The Ministry for the Environment Timeline: Policy decisions expected in late-2020 regarding whether to implement a scheme, with implementation thereafter.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4f</p> <p>Increase recycling rates and quality by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving source separation (e.g. at kerbside; store drop-off; community recycling centres; new tech; CDS), with H&S in mind Standardising national recycling practice and ensuring equitable access Implementing the Australasian Recycling Label (ARL) to make it easy for individuals to act. 	<p>Agree with the intent</p> <p>The Ministry for the Environment already has the following work streams underway to increase recycling rates, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a project aimed at standardising kerbside recycling a container return scheme a project to consider options for implementing a recyclability labelling scheme implementation of regulated product stewardship for certain priority items (including plastic packaging) increased investment through the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and waste disposal levy funds. <p>These work streams will be continued with boosted resourcing in FY21.</p> <p>Priority: High Lead agency: The Ministry for the Environment Timelines: Initial policy decisions for improving kerbside consistency and recycling labelling expected in late 2020/early 2021</p>
<p>Recommendation 4h</p> <p>Develop and implement biodegradable and compostable plastics standards</p> <p>Recommendation 4m</p> <p>Develop and implement recycling standard(s)</p> <p>Recommendation 6c</p> <p>Develop and implement manufacturing and pre-production plastic pellet handling standards and regulations</p>	<p>Agree with the intent of this family of recommendations.</p> <p>In the first instance, the Ministry for the Environment will assess demand for these proposed standards and the likely impact on industries. Should one or more official New Zealand Standards be developed, the Ministry for the Environment will engage with Standards New Zealand to scope the project(s) and undertake the established standards development process. A standard has no legal weight unless incorporated in regulations, although a standard can become a mainstream approach within an industry without legal compulsion. The Standards and Accreditation Act 2015 requires international standards to be considered for adoption in the first instance.</p> <p>Priority: Medium priority Lead agency: The Ministry for the Environment Timeline: Initial scoping work to be complete by July 2021.</p>

Report recommendation	Government response
<p>Recommendation 4k</p> <p>Use all regulatory and non-regulatory levers necessary to implement the best-practice expectations signalled in 4a</p>	<p>Agree with the intent.</p> <p>This recommendation was marked for implementation ‘later’, ie, after 2025. It is contingent on the work done to address recommendation 4a. The Ministry for the Environment will need to respond to recommendation 4a before this can be considered.</p> <p>At the first instance, the Ministry for the Environment will consider policy approaches that provide positive incentives for change to complement the regulatory regime in place.</p> <div data-bbox="699 519 1364 757" style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 10px;"> <p>Priority: Low</p> <p>Lead agency: The Ministry for the Environment</p> <p>Timeline: Initial scoping work to be conducted after the completion of the response to recommendation 4a.</p> </div>

Sector engagement

These recommendations relate to sectors, innovation, and business.

Report recommendation	Government response
<p>Recommendation 3h</p> <p>Undertake analyses to model the economic, socioeconomic and environmental benefits of changing to more sustainable plastic use on different sectors, e.g. Fisheries, Aquaculture, Construction, Agriculture, Exports and Tourism</p> <p>Recommendation 4a</p> <p>Co-design sector-specific best practice guidance on plastic use to signal how to align to a future NZ plastics system, accounting for impacts of the Basel Convention amendment</p> <p>Recommendation 4j</p> <p>Facilitate an active dialogue around rethinking plastics by setting targets and identifying opportunities to keep plastics in circulation or shift to more sustainable alternatives with individual sectors, including: Fisheries, Construction, Agriculture, Textile and fashion retail and Tourism</p> <p>Recommendation 4n</p> <p>Evaluate sector progress and build on learnings to support development of other sector-specific action plans (e.g. healthcare, transport) (learning from 4j)</p>	<p>Agree with the intent of this family of recommendations.</p> <p>The Ministry for the Environment already has existing work underway as part of its work on Regulated Product Stewardship for agrichemicals and farm plastics, and on farm dumps as part of the implementation of the waste disposal levy.</p> <p>The Ministry for the Environment will work with a sector (and the relevant agency) on a pilot project to consider the analysis and guidance that would be useful for achieving a step change in the way plastic is used. The Ministry for the Environment will work with MBIE and MPI to ensure coordination with any relevant industry transformation plans and/or sector strategies. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) can provide support and input as needed on trade law obligations.</p> <p>Depending on the sector(s) to be involved, work that progresses must be cognisant of, and responsive to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work relating to waste reduction included in the Building for Climate Change programme (Construction) the requirements of export destinations around packaging (Exports) sector strategies and industry transformation plans other reports the government is responding to, eg, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment’s report <i>Pristine, popular... imperilled? The environmental consequences of projected tourism growth</i> Existing industry commitments, eg, the New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Commitment, and the Sustainable Business Network (SBN) Masterclass Series (designed to create a circular economy for plastic packaging that works in New Zealand by 2025). <p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Lead agencies: The Ministry for the Environment, MBIE and MPI</p> <p>Timeline: Initial scoping work and sector engagement to commence by January 2020. Additional work to be mapped after initial scoping work and sector engagement.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5a</p> <p>Attract research and innovation by offering a specific innovation fund to ‘reimagine plastics’, focusing on the areas of, Infrastructure, Material science, Product design, Sustainability and International connectivity</p> <p>Emphasising multidisciplinary approaches and drawing on areas such as:</p>	<p>Agree with the intent but note that science, research and innovation funding opportunities exist for plastics already. The report cites a wide variety of innovative ideas and research coming out of New Zealand companies, Universities and Crown Research Institutes in its scan of material innovations and their potential application in Aotearoa. This demonstrates a real strength in ideas and innovations being generated in this area. Much of this research has been supported directly and in-directly by government funding mechanisms. Existing channels for funding include the Strategic Science Investment Fund, Endeavour</p>

Report recommendation	Government response
i) Mātauranga Māori ii) Engineering iii) Social sciences iv) Biophysical sciences v) Economics	<p>Fund, R&D project grants, R&D tax incentive, the Waste Minimisation Fund, NZ Product Accelerator and the Bio-resource Processing Alliance.</p> <p>We agree with the report that connections between businesses and researchers to develop innovative solutions will be very important and that Callaghan Innovation has an important role to play in facilitating this. The Product Accelerator and the Bio-resource Processing Alliance are good examples of where government, through Callaghan Innovation, is supporting networks which bring together industry and researchers to develop innovative solutions in this and similar areas. Finally, we note that identification of research priorities is likely to encourage high impact plastics research and innovation. The research agenda for plastics intended to address recommendations 4l, 6b, 6e, 6h, and 6j could consider some of the areas suggested by recommendation 5a.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5c Build on successful innovative products and business models, eg, those championed by the Sustainable Business Network</p> <p>Recommendation 5d Make best practice standard practice by hosting expos (or a regional roadshow) to highlight and bring together innovative ideas from around the world related to plastics, including new technology, new materials, products, business models, design thinking, community initiatives and research, to drive further innovation and inspire others (including those funded through 5a; supports 5f, 5g)</p> <p>Recommendation 5f Hold expo(s) every few years (pending 5d)</p> <p>Recommendation 5g Monitor projects, ensure 'fail-fast' culture, and scale-up successful ones (based on 5a, 5d)</p>	<p>Agree with the intent of this family of recommendations.</p> <p>We interpret these recommendations as seeking to create an ecosystem for plastics and innovation where ideas are shared to scale up successful, innovative business models that drive greater waste reduction and re-use.</p> <p>We note that the business community has commercial incentive to scale up successful innovations. Further, business.govt.nz (part of MBIE) already draw on SBN expertise to inform advice for businesses through business.govt.nz channels, including publication of specific sustainability content to support businesses. As noted above, SBN has also run the Masterclasses Series. Business.govt.nz suggests these type of interventions can be more useful for small businesses and have greater reach than expos, given how busy small businesses are.</p> <p>Through programmes like the product accelerator the government already supports networks of industry innovation through existing channels. Recommendation 5c is intended for immediate implementation while 5d is for implementation by 2025 and 5f and 5g are for implementation after that.</p> <p>The Ministry for the Environment will explore how it can support the broader ecosystem for plastics innovation through funding or other means, either by addressing the recommendations directly or in alternative ways.</p> <div data-bbox="710 1563 1374 1874" style="background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Priority: Low priority</p> <p>Lead agencies: The Ministry for the Environment, working with the science and innovation community, including MBIE and Callaghan Innovation</p> <p>Timeline: Initial scoping work to identify additional actions to begin in January 2021</p> </div>
<p>Recommendation 5e Ensure rigorous testing of new materials and products made from recycled plastic before application</p>	<p>Agree with the intent of this recommendation.</p> <p>We are aware there are strong laws protecting consumers. However, the Ministry for the Environment will work with relevant agencies to consider if there are weaknesses in the</p>

Report recommendation	Government response
	<p data-bbox="715 208 1289 266">regime for ensuring new materials and products are fit for purpose before going to market.</p> <div data-bbox="715 288 1374 562" style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 10px;"> <p data-bbox="751 342 884 369">Priority: Low</p> <p data-bbox="751 378 1326 443">Lead agencies: The Ministry for the Environment, working with relevant agencies across government</p> <p data-bbox="751 452 1310 517">Timeline: Initial scoping work to be complete by 30 June 2021.</p> </div>

Infrastructure

These recommendations relate to improvements to infrastructure.

Report recommendation	Government response
<p>Recommendation 3c</p> <p>Adapt the Waste Minimisation Fund process to be more user-friendly and aligned to a national plastics action plan.</p>	<p>Agree. The Ministry for the Environment has work underway to improve the accessibility of the Waste Minimisation Fund. The 2020 Waste Minimisation Funding Round was focussed on complementing COVID-19 economic response packages. The fund should continue to evolve in response to the expansion of the waste disposal levy including through process improvements and engagement with the sector. Improvements will be aligned to the broader Waste Strategy, under development in the latter half of 2020.</p> <p>Priority: High</p> <p>Lead agency: the Ministry for the Environment</p> <p>Timeline: Some Improvements to be made for the next funding round, with other to reflect and align with the expansion of the waste disposal levy</p>
<p>Recommendation 4b</p> <p>Expand the waste levy to all landfill types and increase tonnage cost to discourage landfilling of recyclable waste plastic and the use of single-use plastics.</p>	<p>Agree. Cabinet approved an expansion of the waste disposal levy in June 2020.</p> <div style="background-color: #e0f0f0; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Priority: High</p> <p>Lead agency: MfE</p> <p>Timeline: Implementation timing will be confirmed when levy regulations are considered, and implementation will be progressively phased in.</p> </div>
<p>Recommendation 4e</p> <p>Strategically invest in or incentivise development of systems and infrastructure to deal with our own plastic waste onshore, to support the best practice outlined in 4a and new schemes developed through 4c, including but not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) onshore recycling of PET, HDPE, PP and possibly LDPE ii) segregation of industrially compostable plastics. <p>Recommendation 4g</p> <p>Manage non-recyclable, non-compostable and non-biodegradable waste plastic in modern landfills.</p> <p>Recommendation 4o</p> <p>Invest in equipment and technology to support the plastics manufacturing industry to manufacture bio-based plastics, including both biodegradable plastics and recyclable bio-based plastics at appropriate scale (learning from 5a).</p>	<p>Agree with the intent behind these recommendations, noting that required investment will come from a range of sources, including central and local government and the private sector.</p> <p>4e, 4g, and 6f all require significant investment. The Ministry for the Environment will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forecast funding available from the waste disposal levy • consider funding investment in plastics infrastructure projects in accordance with the New Zealand Waste Strategy, Waste Sector Infrastructure Plan, and Action & Investment Plan (expected to be developed by July 2021). <p>All current investment of waste disposal levy funds needs to be consistent with the provisions of the Waste Minimisation Act; it is proposed to review the Act in 2020/21, which will allow consideration of how levy funds can be invested. This review will consider whether investment in actions of the type set out at 6g and 6l should be included within the scope of the Act.</p> <p>Investment as per 4o and 6d will depend on agreed priorities, as per the statement of priorities for science and innovation undertaken in response to the research and innovation recommendations (page 8). Consideration of 6d and 6l will be based on the response to 6d and following the review of the Act, as detailed above.</p>

Report recommendation	Government response
<p>Recommendation 6f</p> <p>Invest in prevention of landfill disasters, building on the national audit of at-risk landfills, to remediate issues or establish new facilities (coordinate with 4g).</p> <p>Recommendation 6d</p> <p>Commission a project to evaluate effectiveness, economics, and behavioural implications of different preventative measures for stopping macro and microplastic entering the environment to determine future efforts for NZ, eg, public bins, washing machine filters, wastewater filtering processes, stormwater drain pipes, capturing at river mouth.</p> <p>Recommendation 6g</p> <p>Invest in systems to prevent macro and microplastics entering the environment, take baseline data (based on findings from 6d; supports 6l).</p> <p>Recommendation 6l</p> <p>Evaluate effectiveness of preventing environmental leakage, scale and adapt accordingly (following from 6g).</p>	<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Lead agency: The Ministry for the Environment</p> <p>Timeline: Waste disposal levy implementation timing will be confirmed when levy regulations are considered, and implementation will be progressively phased in.</p>

International

This group of recommendations tackles plastics issues through our relationships with the international community, including through trade, international organisations, and development spending. It seeks international solutions to help achieve government goals regarding plastics.

Report recommendation	Government response
<p>Recommendation 3b</p> <p>Undertake a scoping exercise to determine the best ways to connect internationally to drive alignment around sustainable materials and consistent product stewardship for plastics eg, using New Zealand membership of international trade agreements such as the CPTPP, PACER Plus, Trans-Tasman agreements and AANZFTA.</p> <p>Recommendation 3g</p> <p>Begin implementation of plastics action in international agreements.</p> <p>Recommendation 3j</p> <p>Ensure trade policy is kept up to date with evidence-based best practice on plastic import and export; advocate for international product stewardship principles.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>A whole-of-government response is required to ensure our actions offshore continue to align with our priorities onshore. MFAT and the Ministry for the Environment will co-lead the response with support from other agencies as necessary.</p> <p>MFAT and the Ministry for the Environment will identify existing international mechanisms (eg, environmental agreements, trade agreements, forums / organisations that New Zealand is part of) to best drive alignment around sustainable materials and consistent product stewardship.</p> <p>Future work, including work to implement plastics action through the mechanisms identified in the scoping exercise, will depend on the outcomes of the actions above.</p> <p>MFAT and the Ministry for the Environment will also work together to ensure trade policy is kept up to date. The Ministry for the Environment and MFAT will involve MBIE in this work.</p> <div style="background-color: #e0f2f1; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Lead agencies: The Ministry for the Environment, MFAT, with support from MBIE</p> <p>Timeline: The Ministry for the Environment to appoint resource to this work by January 2021, and work with MFAT to undertake initial scoping by June 2021 with future work to be determined after that.</p> </div>
<p>Recommendation 6i</p> <p>Identify areas where NZ development spending could help mitigate environmental and health impacts related to plastics, particularly for Pacific Island nations .</p> <p>Recommendation 6k</p> <p>Support remediation efforts (building on 6i)</p>	<p>Agree. MFAT currently addresses some of these recommendations through official development assistance (ODA) and will continue to assess new opportunities in line with Pacific Island countries' priorities. Currently New Zealand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives core funding to the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, which leads regional coordination and delivery of waste management and pollution control action, and which uses the region's strategic management framework, Cleaner Pacific 2025, as its guide • supports the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility to help Pacific Island countries plan and maintain infrastructure, including for recycling, waste and pollution • supports countries bilaterally, eg, Kiribati where we support improved waste management practices • has previously supported remediation bilaterally, eg, Tuvalu Borrow Pits

Report recommendation	Government response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> actively encourages multilateral environment funds to invest in the fight against plastic pollution. <p>MFAT will seek technical advice from the Ministry for the Environment, particularly where potential investments align with its priorities eg, Circular Economy Summit outcomes. MFAT will also continue to monitor remediation opportunities in the Pacific. As per above, the Ministry for the Environment’s dedicated policy staff and/or funding can support where appropriate.</p> <p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Lead agencies: The Ministry for the Environment and MFAT</p> <p>Timeline: The Ministry for the Environment to appoint resource by January 2021</p>