



JENKINS  
FRESHPAC SYSTEMS

Understanding and  
responding to the  
Government's new  
**Waste Strategy**



# With the release of the Government's Waste Strategy, how can we best align our future packaging decisions and research and development of new packaging solutions?

**At Jenkins Freshpac we've been at the forefront of an industry led drive for a government owned strategy on New Zealand's waste system, including recycling and disposal of waste. The release of this strategy is the start of the clarity we have been calling for. Now that we have the framework, we need to leverage industry wide alignment, research and development, and investment.**

Providing innovative, latest technology end-to-end packaging solutions for New Zealand's fresh produce industry remains the core focus of Jenkins Freshpac. Whilst the full details of the new Government strategy won't be finalised until June 2024, we welcome the progress made to this point and it allows all of us to start lining up with durable decisions about how we package and present our products in the future – something that has been seriously lacking until now.

So, let's take a look at what the new strategy means for the industry, the obstacles we need to mitigate and the opportunities in front of us.

## What's it all about?

**This new Government strategy and legislation seeks to achieve a low-emissions, low-waste society, built upon a circular economy by 2050.**

Signalled as a new era for New Zealand's waste system, the strategy and legislation calls for a shift away from the wasteful 'take-make-dispose' system. The three phases, with goals building on those from the previous phase, are intended to create momentum over time and achieve better waste management in New Zealand, more in keeping with other developed countries.

The new Waste Strategy, committing to New Zealand becoming a low-emissions, low-waste circular economy by 2050, calls for a shift away from the wasteful 'take-make-dispose' system.

**The strategy sets about reform in the following ways:**

- A new waste strategy to set New Zealand's direction on waste for the next three decades
- New and more comprehensive waste legislation
- Improved household recycling and food scrap collections, making it easier for people to recycle and divert food scraps from landfills.

"We've been beating this drum for years. We've engaged with ministers and ministries and sit on various industry boards calling for strategy and leadership around packaging and waste management, including sitting on the boards of the soft plastics scheme and Packaging New Zealand which are key parts of the future of packaging and recycling."

**Ann Cameron, Sales Manager, Consumables,  
Jenkins Freshpac**

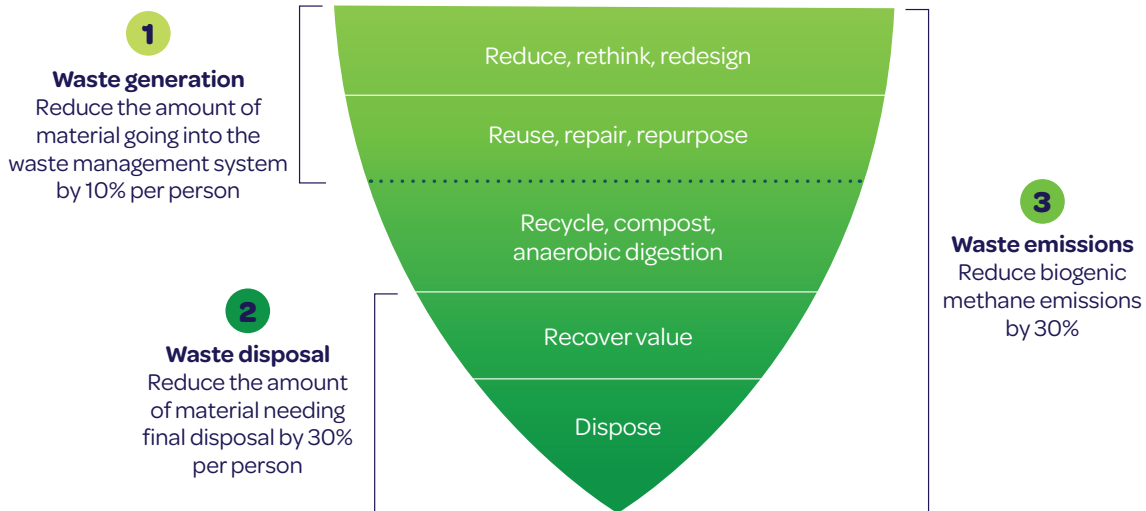
Implementation will be phased over 3 decades with phase 1 defined here:

## IMPLEMENTATION PHASES



Source: Ministry for the Environment – Manatū Mō Te Taiao

## TARGETS: PHASE ONE



Source: Ministry for the Environment – Manatū Mō Te Taiao

## TIMELINE FOR DEVELOPING THE ACTION AND INVESTMENT PLAN



Source: Ministry for the Environment – Manatū Mō Te Taiao

## As an industry, how do we need to respond?

The absence of a strategy we can all adopt, until now, has hindered the ability of the industry to accelerate research and development and new technologies that are in alignment. Now we have a strategy to wrap around and whilst we still need some detail around some of the framework, it has the potential to be a **landmark moment** for our industry and stakeholders.

### At Jenkins Freshpac we will continue to lead the drive for a joined-up approach.

To fully support this strategy the industry needs to maintain a consolidated position with a clear and conjoined roadmap to enable a transition to a circular economy with planning, investment, infrastructure, systems and regulatory compliance. To do this effectively we need closer collaboration and alignment across the packaging sector.

At Jenkins, we continually trawl the world looking for best of breed innovations for the unique challenges faced in NZ and our proximity to our export markets. We will continue to lead on this front and to ensure there is a shared responsibility to onboard new technologies, packaging formats and best practices to meet the goals of the Waste Strategy both in terms of the industry and the consumer.

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“As leaders in the sector Jenkins Freshpac has worked hard to bring together a united message that considers all stakeholders from raw material manufacturers to packers and the end user consumer.”

**Ann Cameron**

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### Achieving the strategy goals will require systemic change.

To ensure we all play an active and formative part in the strategy, we need to understand all its facets. We need to ensure we have a robust balance of alignment with a clear focus on continuing to push our sector to explore new and better ways of packaging. We do this through strong investment in new technologies that deliver better outcomes.

Without a strategy or clear intent from government, it was very challenging to have deep discussions with the industry on the evolution of the packaging formats best suited to their produce and application. We were all too scared to back a horse, in case that horse was not in favour with any centralised long term vision.

### Currently, no two regions support the same recycling initiatives and systems.

This means that while a Jenkins customer may have an environmentally friendly and easily recyclable pack format in say, Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin, it may not be kerbside recyclable in other regions. This has **stalled progress and investment** by the industry for fear of backing the wrong horse and needing to retrench or reinvest once a strategy became clear.

### The post-harvest industry can now invest with confidence in new packaging formats that will be durable over time and able to be recycled nationally.

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“Ultimately, we need to increase the depth of understanding and awareness around what is best practice in packaging, if we are to truly shift the dial.”

**Ann Cameron**

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It’s about putting collective words into action with a need for the industry continuing to explore new materials, packaging designs, automation and recycling technologies, to deliver tangible outcomes to meet the goals set. Ultimately, we need to increase the depth of understanding and awareness around what is best practice in packaging, if we are to truly **shift the dial**.

## The role of the Soft Plastics scheme

The Soft Plastics scheme plays a critical role in our move to a circular economy and while soft plastics do not feature in the strategy, soft plastics are not going anywhere in a hurry, and are in fact part of the solution in terms of reducing plastic consumption by weight. The Soft Plastics Scheme is well resourced, nationally available and growing, and is incredibly well supported by industry, retailers and brand owners.

### Representing approximately 80% of the post-consumer soft plastic packaging market the focus is on:

- An increase in tonnes of soft plastic processed in New Zealand or in near shore markets by >> the processing of soft plastic rather than collection volumes
- Increasing the accessibility of the scheme to New Zealanders by >> increasing the number of regions offering collection facilities
- Improving the quality of collected materials by >> Increasing education and awareness to reduce contamination
- Increasing engagement in minimising plastic consumption to close the gap between consumption and recycling by >> reporting on tonnes of soft plastic packaging consumed
- Building stakeholder support by >> building the membership, communications and number of councils promoting the scheme



## What we need now is discussion on whose job it is to invest in the education process with consumers.

It's excellent to see the Government taking the lead role in setting the strategy for the industry but we must ensure consumer adoption lines up with it. The question we continue to ask at Jenkins is, who should take responsibility for influencing and changing consumer behaviour at kerbside? As industry leaders we see a responsibility to lead an initiative to drive investment in an education process that dispels consumer myths and creates behavioural change to align with the new strategy.

At Jenkins, we believe a change in consumer mindsets and behaviours will be a defining point for the industry's ability to meet the goalposts on the Governments waste minimisation strategy.

Consumer misconceptions around compostables is one example of where thinking needs to change and the packaging industry and Government must not only continue to lead and drive change but also actively educate and influence consumer behaviour.

**There is a lost opportunity for education around compostables in the strategy, as it is almost silent on the topic instead of calling out that compostables are not the future on their own, and while they certainly have their place for the likes of bin liners, compostable plastics run the risk of contaminating the circular waste strategy for highly desirable and useful recyclables.**

We constantly hear the call from consumers for more sustainable packaging solutions but then their wallets influence their purchasing behaviours. Add to that the misconceptions around packaging options and their impact on the environment and we all recognise there is plenty of work to do in this space.

### **A big piece of the puzzle sits with changing the consumers mindset**

Misinformed consumer led demand hinders the introduction of better packaging options, rendering them commercially unviable for producers. With better education we can influence a change in mindset and the adoption of best practices by consumers and in turn enable our producers to align with the new strategy. It's a big piece of the puzzle.

Consumers often incorrectly believe compostable products break down when littered, but when thrown away or lost to waterways or the sea, they're not designed to degrade in these environments, and they become contaminants. They often end up in landfill due to consumer confusion on how to dispose of them. They look similar to conventional plastic and end up in recycling bins and our domestic soft plastic collection scheme with the misguided belief by consumers that they are recyclable. With our limited sorting and processing infrastructure in New Zealand to properly manage compostable packaging, the problem is exacerbated.

### **Compostables absolutely have their place, but it is dependent on their application.**

We need to consider their value in the circular economy, and we need to better educate the consumer on the facts. A key challenge with compostables is that they can have different composting triggers – some are triggered by time, while others are triggered by moisture or temperature.

For those requiring the best packaging solutions, Jenkins remains the best shot to being a part of a more sustainable future and on the right trajectory to a circular economy. We are a solutions provider and agnostic to packaging formats meaning we only seek out the best solution for the application, as we are not tied to a dedicated single format manufacturing plant.

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“By continuing to invest in research and development around new materials, packaging designs and advancements in recycling technology Jenkins will continue to ensure they play their part in the industry's progress towards the Governments targets around waste minimisation and a circular economy.”

**Ann Cameron**

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## **Enabling an effective transition to a circular economy**

**We are way behind other countries in the way we create and manage waste. Partly because our progress has been hindered through a lack of an aligned strategy.**

**The Government's new waste strategy now sets a roadmap.**

**For us to enable an effective transition to a circular economy we need solid planning, investing, infrastructure, systems, regulatory requirements and behavioural change.**

**How our work and actions deliver to the strategy will be key and we all have a part to play in that.**





## About Jenkins Freshpac

### **Providing total packaging solutions across the whole industry**

At Jenkins Freshpac Systems we provide innovative end-to-end packaging solutions for New Zealand's fresh produce industry.

Our progressive packhouse solutions cover everything from labels and tags, to automation and machinery, packaging and consumables, and technical service and support. With unparalleled service and products that seamlessly integrate, you get peace of mind that we will keep your packhouse running no matter what.

As leaders in the sector we continually trawl the world looking for best of breed innovations for the unique challenges faced in NZ and our proximity to our export markets. At each stage we focus on adding value, with pioneering technology and world-class products and service solutions only available through Jenkins Freshpac Systems.

**Find out more about our innovative end-to-end packaging solutions.**

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