



## RECYCLING

# Packagers object to new waste definition

by Jacqueline Smith

Local councils could compete for the recycling industry's profits if a new waste bill is approved, says the Packaging Council of New Zealand.

A new clause in the Waste Minimisation Amendment Bill, due for its next hearing on May 21, allows local government to pass a bylaw requesting confidential information from the companies who process waste and recyclable material.

The bill, introduced by Green Party MP Nandor Tanczos, gives a broad definition of waste which could include recyclable material.

Packaging Council executive director Paul Curtis said waste should be defined as material that has been discarded or abandoned by its owner.

Recyclable material was used by many New Zealand manufacturers as raw material in their products, he said.

"It is material the council doesn't own, has no jurisdiction over and

would never end up in landfill."

The Packaging Council has been giving the Government figures since 1994 on how much packaging is consumed and recycled.

Mr Curtis said he did not understand why companies should have to pass confidential information on how much recyclable material they collected and processed to the council, rather than the Government.

"Councils do set up companies, they do enter the market, and if they chose to do so in this area they would be armed with extremely sensitive information."

Some recycling companies would have to spend extra money to provide the information should the local council call for it.

"In the waste industry you tend to work on a volume basis – how many truck movements have been made or bales taken.

"If councils start asking for that information to be provided in weight, then the company would have to

invest in weighing facilities they may not already have."

That expenditure would be on top of a levy of \$10 a tonne of residual waste from recycling.

Mr Curtis said that if the bill went ahead, some companies would question the profitability of continuing to recycle materials, such as whiteware, for their products.

"There's a possibility [the whiteware] will have to go to landfill. Recycling is a business, and like anything else it's got to stand up economically."

The Packaging Council and its 130 members found out about the amended clause on April 9.

It was not included in the bill or the supplementary order paper which invited submissions.

"If we had seen that definition when we had been submitting we would have brought all those concerns to the floor. We now feel that our hands are somewhat tied."



**DOUBTS:** If the bill goes through some companies would question the profitability of continuing to recycle, says the Packaging Council.



# Green scene coming to town

Used billboards will become reusable shopping bags and Greytown will next month become Greentown.

The bags, crafted from advertising billboards, will be distributed to Greytown households and businesses on June 5 as part of a campaign to make the region more environmentally and economically sustainable, Greater Wellington Regional Council environmental education manager Geoff Skene said.

**"It's a way of walking together as a community."**

Low-wattage light bulbs, a kowhai

tree and leaflets containing tips on how to lower carbon emissions will be distributed along with the bags.

A Greytown-based regional council staff member had raised the idea after talking with people in the town about it and a proposal put to the Ministry for the Environment secured \$30,000 of funding to make it happen, Mr Skene said.

"It's a way of walking together as a community to create a more sustainable environment and reduce the carbon footprint in Greytown," he said.

The Greentown campaign launch was planned for World

Environmental Day and runs for the entire month to conclude on Arbor Day on July 3, the latter made more special for Greytown residents as it began in their town in 1890.

World Environment Day is led by the United Nations annually and is this year being hosted by Wellington.

Other ideas touted as part of the Greentown campaign include a children's biathlon, run in conjunction with the Greytown Sports Association and Kuranui College, and businesses have suggested the idea of concluding with a ball, Mr Skene said.