



The Lower Hutt City Council chose to dump thousands of litres of oil in its Silverstream tip because it would cost nothing. This was despite an Auckland oil refining company offering to take it – provided the council paid transport costs.



Oil and water do not mix – that's according to the Lower Hutt City Council which claims the 80,000 litres of oil recently dumped in the Silverstream tip will not find its way into the groundwater. Not necessarily so says Forest and Bird conservation officer Sean Weaver who has voiced concern over this disgraceful practice. Photo: Evening Post

Action Needed

If our ever-diminishing resources are to be conserved and serious pollution of our environment avoided, then much more satisfactory management of our waste is needed. We need firstly to look at ourselves and curb our own untidy and wasteful habits and the consumer drive which is behind such wastefulness. There must be more to life than shopping! We must then look to our political leaders to give some clear direction for sound waste management, with some practical initiatives which encourage maximum waste reduction and reuse, with environmentally sound disposal of wastes that cannot be reused.

Local authorities are in a good position to start waste reduction and recycling programmes. A catchy name for a programme that has been successfully tried overseas is the "4R Programme" – reduction, recycling, reuse, recovery. This would involve:

- Careful analysis of the waste stream to understand where reduction and reuse can be best practised.
- Careful and hard examination of ways to reduce waste.
- Identifying, publicising and promoting recycling opportunities.
- Promotion and establishment of collection systems.
- Examination of "separation at source methods", with door-to-door collection of different recyclables.
- Promotion of "waste reduction at source" in industry through such methods as better housekeeping, process modification and internal recycling.
- Provision of assistance to recycling industries.
- Setting up recycling centres.
- Establishing well-managed recycling at landfills with appropriate receptacles which are clearly marked.
- Setting up programmes in schools both for education and fundraising reasons.
- Production of a recycling handbook which is updated regularly.
- Establishment of a regional waste exchange.
- Giving awards for good waste reduction and reuse initiatives.
- Ensuring the region's local authorities and the regional authority reduce and recycle their own wastes responsibly.
- Lobbying central government to take much needed national initiatives such as the imposition of product charges, and mandatory deposits where appropriate, the provision of carefully-targeted subsidies and grants, and provision of advice and encouragement.

Only those wastes that cannot be dealt with by the 4Rs should then be sent for disposal. This disposal should be carried out in an environmentally sound fashion. 🐦