



Sustainability News

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PNZ have a range of activities in the pipeline for the end of the year – make sure you've got them in your calendar!

Farewell for Now!

Kia ora koutou,

I wanted to share a quick personal update; I'll be heading off on maternity leave at the end of July, with baby due to arrive in mid-August! I'm very excited to be becoming a first-time mum and am looking forward to this new adventure.

But don't worry, I'll only be away for six months and am already looking forward to jumping back in and helping to shape the Enviro Committee's 2026 programme when I return. In the meantime, we've planned ahead to keep things running smoothly. We've got a great line-up of content already prepared for upcoming Sustainability News editions, and our 'Lunch n Learn' webinar series is fully locked in for the rest of the year – check out the 'What's On' section at the end of this newsletter for more details!



While I'm away, I'm very pleased to let you know that Nikki Withington will be supporting the Enviro Committee and will be available to assist with any environmental enquiries. If you have anything you'd like to discuss, please don't hesitate to reach out via info@plastics.org.nz, and you'll be directed to Nikki.

Nikki brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in the sector, and many of you will already know her from her previous work with Plastics New Zealand... you're in excellent hands!

Thanks to everyone for your support, and yes, cute baby photos will be shared in due course!

Ngā mihi,
Katy Constance
Environmental Affairs Manager
Plastics New Zealand

Getting Swept Up!

Operation Clean Sweep Update: A Strong Relaunch and a Cleaner Future

Momentum is building as we roll out the refreshed Operation Clean Sweep NZ programme, and the response so far has been encouraging. All previously certified sites have been informed of their current status, whether they're due for a re-audit or a self-assessment this year. Those

with outstanding corrective actions have also received a timely reminder, with the goal of bringing everyone on board under the new certification framework.

Over a third of previously engaged sites have now returned a Site Details Form, allowing us to confirm their fee bracket and issue a Letter of Agreement. This step is essential to ensure sites are formally part of the new programme and can maintain (or gain) certification. So far, 24 sites have signed a Letter of Agreement, and several others have made great progress in completing their corrective actions to officially join.

What audited sites had to say...

"The audit process was smooth and the feedback was beneficial and authentic."

"It felt like the audit was there to help us rather than police us, which was refreshing."

"The checklist in the guide helped us to review our processes, and the posters are great to display."

If you haven't yet returned your Site Details Form - now's the time! This will ensure your certification doesn't lapse this year.

Why the Relaunch Matters Now

The timing of this relaunch couldn't be more critical. Pellet pollution has made headlines recently, with The New Zealand Herald drawing attention to microplastic and resin pellet contamination in the Hauraki Gulf. Meanwhile, Keep New Zealand Beautiful has reported similar concerns in Petone. These stories underline the very real need for action - and demonstrate why participation in Operation Clean Sweep is more than just good housekeeping. It's industry leadership.



Our industry is in the spotlight as pellets (or 'nurdles') such as these have been found on beaches across the country.

"From where we sit, there is no excuse. The mitigation measures are clear and easy to implement." – Rachel Barker, Plastics New Zealand CEO.

Certified companies are listed on the OCS NZ website, and are authorised to use the OCS NZ logo in their communications and on-site signage. It's a clear, public way of saying: "We're part of the solution." Participants also gain access to communications materials and other branded resources to help share their sustainability journey with staff, customers, and stakeholders.

Get Ready for Operation Clean Sweep Clean-Up Week 2025!

Mark your calendars! Operation Clean-Up Week 2025 is coming, and it's shaping up to be our biggest national effort yet.

Taking place from 3rd–7th November, we've confirmed six clean-up events across the motu, and we'd love your involvement!

Here's How You Can Be Part of It:

- Join a confirmed event: come for the litter, stay for a sausage sizzle and 'Weirdest Find' competition!
- Host your own event: PNZ will support with admin and supplies – you just need to be there on the day.
- Lend a hand with supplies: We're currently seeking donations of refreshments (ice blocks and soft drinks), litter pickers, or prizes for Weirdest Find winners!

Events Confirmed So Far:

- Rosebank (Auckland) – *Wednesday 5 November, 10 am – 12 pm*
- East Tamaki (Auckland) – *Thursday 6 November, 10 am – 12 pm*
- Hamilton – *Thursday 6 November, 2 pm – 4 pm*
- Hastings – *Thursday 6 November, 2 pm – 4 pm*
- Christchurch – EPL, Woolston – *Friday 7 November, 2 pm – 4 pm*
- Christchurch – 3R Group (TBC) – *Thursday 6 November, 2 pm – 4 pm*

Let's come together to show our industry's commitment to cleaner communities and responsible practice. For more details or to get involved, reach out to ocs@plastics.org.nz.



Contain Yourself: Reusables on Trial

Trial Launch: Bonson and Foodstuffs Team Up on Reusable Deli Containers

Reusable packaging is gaining momentum in New Zealand, and a new partnership between Bonson and Foodstuffs is set to take it further.

This September, New World supermarkets in Birkenhead and Wellington will begin trialling a returnable deli container system. The initiative allows customers to select deli items in a specially designed reusable container, which can be returned to the store after use. The containers will be commercially washed and returned into circulation – helping reduce reliance on single-use plastic packaging.



Shifting from recycling to reuse represents a meaningful step up the waste hierarchy - reducing the need to constantly produce and reprocess new materials by keeping packaging in circulation for longer. While both systems require infrastructure (reuse needs collection and commercial washing just as recycling needs sorting and remanufacturing) reuse typically uses fewer resources over time. By designing packaging for durability and repeated use, initiatives like this one help reduce demand for virgin materials, lower energy use, and minimise the overall volume of packaging entering waste and recycling streams.

Bonson, a New Zealand-based packaging manufacturer and Plastics NZ member, has collaborated with Food Stuffs to design the reusable containers, and their logistics and washing system. Their solution meets high food safety standards while being robust enough for multiple uses. The trial forms part of Foodstuffs’ broader packaging waste reduction targets.

This initiative demonstrates the role that local manufacturers can play in enabling circular systems, and highlights the importance of cross-sector collaboration in trialling new behaviours. If successful, this model could serve as a blueprint for reuse schemes across other fresh food categories and regions.

We’re excited to see such a bold step toward normalising reuse in New Zealand’s retail landscape!

Where: New World Birkenhead (Auckland) and New World Thorndon (Wellington)

Starts: September 2025

For more, check out:

- [Bonson announcement](#)
- [Foodstuffs press release](#)

An Interview with... Michael Basagre

Let's sit down with one of our committee members to learn a bit more about the people behind the work! This month, we spoke with **Michael Basagre**, NZ Sales and Sustainability Manager at Hi-Tech Packaging, and a valued member of the PNZ Enviro Committee.

Can you tell us a little about yourself and your role?

"I've been in the packaging industry for about 16 years now, wearing a few different hats across Sales, Commercial Management, Marketing, Operations, Servicing, and more recently, Sustainability. I've been fortunate to work across a range of companies involved in distribution, importing, and manufacturing of both flexible and rigid packaging products.

I've also worked across New Zealand, Australia, and the wider Asia Pacific region, collaborating with packaging peers from Europe and America as well.

Currently, I lead the Hi-Tech Packaging Sales & Marketing team and am also the lead for all things Sustainability within our business."

What motivated you to join the PNZ Enviro Committee?

"A few things, but I think Rach initially suggested I look into joining—especially given my recent focus on sustainable packaging and insights into the challenges many are facing in this space.

I also saw it as a great opportunity to contribute, while learning from my peers and gaining a broader understanding of how to make a positive impact."

What's one thing you wish everyone understood about your field of work?

"Packaging is a lot more complex and challenging than most think. But with that complexity comes great opportunity to solve problems and be part of the solution.

Too often, packaging—and in particular plastics—has had a negative image in the public eye. It can be difficult for those working in this area to defend or highlight the 'good and great' things that plastics offer, without sounding biased.

Ultimately, I think there's a real opportunity for everyone to understand the good, the bad, and the ugly when it comes to this industry—and that opportunity starts with having an open mind and a willingness to learn."

What's one sustainability trend or innovation that excites you right now?

"Great question. I think the concept of shifting more towards a circular economy is what excites me most.



It opens up opportunities for collaboration and meaningful conversation. While I do believe in innovating new materials, I think the foundation of a circular framework is still the most powerful change we can implement across the plastics and packaging space."

If you weren't working in this field, what would you be doing?

"Another great question! I think I'd be helping and coaching young people through their career paths—something I already do part-time—so I'd probably pursue that full-time.

And I'd definitely want to be involved in the travel sector in some shape or form, as I love to travel and experience new cultures and places!"

A huge thank you to Michael for answering our questions!

Michael Basagre brings a wealth of experience from across the packaging industry, spanning roles in sales, marketing, operations, and sustainability. His passion for creating positive change is clear, with a strong belief in the potential of circular economy models and the importance of open-minded collaboration. As a member of the PNZ Enviro Committee, Michael offers valuable insights into the complexity - and opportunity - within the plastics sector, while also championing the good that packaging, when designed and managed well, can do.

What's On?

August:

7th August: Waikato Branch Bowling Event

15th August: Auckland AGM and Warriors Game

TBC: Christchurch OCS NZ Audit Visit – contact ocs@plastics.org.nz to lock your visit in!

September

TBC: DDSP will take place in Christchurch – contact info@plastics.org.nz to register

16th September: Lunch n Learn – Solar Insights from Zen Energy and Uniplas

18th September: Auckland Branch Bowling Event

October

November

3rd – 7th November: Clean Up Week!

20th November: Lunch n Learn – LCA Panel Discussion from 3R Group, ThinkStep, and Fisher & Paykel

December