

# MARTY HOFFART'S WASTE CRUSADE



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On an uncharacteristically bleak day in Tauranga, Marty Hoffart is a bright ray of sunshine in our office. An enthusiastic recycler and waste minimiser, he provides insight into living a more sustainable life. He is passionate about rubbish, especially in measuring and reducing the amount that ends up in landfill!

**W**ASTE IS A HOT TOPIC presently — China has banned imports of plastic packaging and 23 other types of waste. No longer can China be the world's dumping ground and this will have major implications for waste and recycling in New Zealand.

Marty Hoffart wears many hats with the various organisations he currently heads or is involved with. Organisations ranging from Paper4trees, which incentivises schools to recycle, rewarding that recycling with native trees, through to his commercial focus with Waste Watchers Ltd. He also heads the National Board of Zero Waste Network, which coordinates local recycling networks in New Zealand. Marty is determined to make a difference and when he finds a gap, he fills it. He noted Tauranga was missing a branch from the Keep New Zealand Beautiful campaign and helped set this up. Last year his work was recognised in the Kiwibank Local Hero award.

Waste Watchers' slogan is "*We'll Slim your Bin*". Through this company, Marty assists businesses and industry groups to minimise waste and implement zero waste principles. It can work as simply as looking in your rubbish bin and finding out where it ends up. Marty details an example where one of his client's staff members were diligently separating recycling into three bins, only to have all that good work undone when the commercial cleaners added the contents of each bin into the same rubbish bag, which meant everything ended up in landfill!

Waste Watchers has worked alongside many local body councils with different projects to measure, reduce and re-use waste. On average "eighty percent of all waste ending up in landfill has been generated from business". With this in mind, many councils have started assisting businesses to undertake their processes in a more sustainable way and are actively involved in helping businesses reduce waste. The Western Bay of Plenty District Council initiated a project that Waste Watchers were involved in studying the Kiwifruit Industry and waste from packhouse operations. Tauranga City Council has many case studies on their website of exemplary businesses, with examples including the Mount Maunganui Beachside Holiday Park and Devan Plastics, a water tank manufacturer. In the case of Devan Plastics, they implemented a comprehensive recycling programme including recycling toner cartridges, obsolete computers, and plastic from factory offcuts, packaging, copper wire and shrink-wrap, resulting in a reduction to landfill of 80%. Mount Maunganui Holiday Park initiated a trial diverting food scraps from landfill, and now compost five tonnes of green waste annually and has a commercial worm farm on site. They also recycle 20 tonnes of paper, cardboard, plastics, glass and metal containers each year. For these businesses, as well as operating more sustainably, they are also making savings to their bottom line.



Marty Hoffart of Waste Watchers

Waste Watchers is involved in many aspects of minimising use and conservation of resources. They help businesses with waste audits; cleaner production processes; water and energy conservation; and reviews of business systems. Marty says that it is about providing an independent eye over the operation — sometimes it takes someone from outside the business to see where resources can be saved from going to landfill.

With the Labour/Green/NZ First coalition government in place we may see a more concerted effort to encourage more sustainable business practices. Currently the government-imposed waste levy, a charge placed on rubbish taken to landfill, is set at \$10 per tonne. It has been in place for a decade without any increase. Raising the levy to be more in line with Australia's \$140 a tonne would encourage more recycling. A 2017 report found that a similar increase by 2025 would slash NZ waste by at least 3 million tonnes per year. The report, "A Wasted Opportunity" also says raising the levy would create a net benefit of \$500 million to the economy annually and create an additional 9,000 jobs. The current cheap landfill rates do not make a business case for setting up new recycling ventures.

Marty is a strong advocate for such change and is an active voice for zero waste. Where possible he meets with Ministers and local authorities, and is active in the media. He has even presented these ideas in a TED Talk! Marty can see that people will recycle when it is easy and there is encouragement. Part of the government's role is to create the climate and conditions for this change. With 80% of the landfill coming from businesses, it isn't the home recycler that we should be the most concerned about. For businesses that don't know where to begin his suggestion is to start with your local council — they can point you in the right direction, or he is happy to be contacted through the Waste Watchers website — [www.wastewatchers.co.nz](http://www.wastewatchers.co.nz).