



ZERO WASTE

**New Zealand
Masters Games
2013
– another
highly successful
Zero Waste
event for
Whanganui**

Hadi Gurton (Sustainable Whanganui Trust) and Nelson Lebo (The ECO School) provided support and advice which helped the New Zealand Masters Games staff member Simon Watson come up with a win/win game plan that saved his organisation money and diverted over 90% of the waste from landfill!

Bringing over 20 years of experience in waste management, recycling and composting to Whanganui two years ago, Nelson ran the first successful low waste event as a volunteer effort at the 2011 YMCA Connecting Families Day. Hadi, who also takes the role of Zero Waste Educator for our region's schools, thought it was a good idea and suggested the two apply for funding to replicate the programme at other events. With financial support from the Taranaki-based Positive Futures Trust, Hadi and Nelson have worked with two local Children's Days, another YMCA Connecting Families Day, and Wanganui District Council's Picnic in the Park.

Those successes encouraged them to approach the Masters Games organisers, suggesting that a huge proportion of the "waste" that participants and staff would generate in the NZCT Games Village could be compostable or recyclable. Mike Cronin, games manager, was open to the idea and Simon took on the task of researching biodegradable products. It turned out buying biodegradable products from local firm Edengreen Enterprises was a money saver, as well as ensuring any extras could be quickly sourced if required. Simon noted that even the wine glasses for the Games village bar were made from biodegradable cornstarch!

In addition to an estimated 40,000 biodegradable items used in the NZCT Games Village, aluminium cans, glass bottles (colour sorted each morning), plastic bottles and cardboard from catering staff, organisers and retailers were recycled. This reduced the general waste stream significantly, again a major saving for the Games organisers.



Throughout the Games village were clusters of five bins all suitably labelled, and these were cleared daily. SWT volunteers visited the Games village on occasion to oversee quality control, and talk to attendees about the Zero Waste concept. The recyclables were sorted in about an hour each morning by three volunteers, although a team of five worked a little longer on the final Sunday morning to clear the many bins of glass and cans resulting from a very social night!



Simon is hoping the concept can be extended to all the Masters Games sporting venues when the Games return to Whanganui in 2015. While Hadi and Nelson are expecting other local event organisers to grasp the win/win opportunity that going Zero Waste offers.

