



NZ FOOD WASTE CHAMPIONS 12.3

Te Kawe i te haepapa para | Taking responsibility for our waste

Submission from: New Zealand Food Waste Champions 12.3

About us

New Zealand Food Waste Champions of 12.3 ('NZ Champions 12.3') are a coalition of representatives from across the food supply chain, propelling Aotearoa's progress towards halving food waste by 2030. They consist of executives from large retailers, small start-ups, food rescue charities, membership organisations and more. We also have the NZ Food Waste Citizens of 12.3, a group of everyday Kiwis who are grass-roots, community-oriented advocates for change who are working for New Zealand to halve food waste by 2030.

NZ Champions 12.3 have made the following commitment:

Championing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (UNSDG) 12.3, that *by 2030, halve per capita food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses*, in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Response to your discussion questions

NZ Champions 12.3 support the government's proposed national waste strategy to take responsibility for our waste, review and re-invest the waste levy, and transition Aotearoa to a low emission and circular economy. Our core focus is reducing food waste as a priority, supporting this with funding, increased infrastructure and investment in behaviour change.

Addressing food waste and prioritising investment in key areas will help New Zealand achieve the UNSDG 12.3 to halve food waste by 2030, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the sustainable use of resources. Simultaneously this will address the issue of existing food insecurity in our communities and the need for the Government to protect domestic food supply. It is of critical importance that human healthy, food security and the resilience of the New Zealand food system is at the heart of all discussions on food waste.

Our core comments and recommendations relate to the **three stages of the journey**, the **priority areas** and **questions 6, 7, 8 and 9**.

Food waste in general

Food waste is a major challenge around the world, and an issue of national significance for New Zealand. It has economic, environmental, and social consequences. Globally, one third of all food we produce is lost or wasted from farm to fork each year – that is 1.3 billion tonnes of food that is never eaten. As a nation, we waste an estimated \$872 million worth of food a year. That represents 122,500 tonnes of food sent to landfills—enough to feed everyone in Dunedin for two years¹.

A 2019 Ministry of Health study analysed household food insecurity among children in New Zealand

¹ WasteNot Consulting. (2015) New Zealand Food Waste Audits; <https://lovefoodhatewaste.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/New-Zealand-Food-Waste-Bin-Audit-Report-2015.pdf>

estimated that 174,000 (19%) of all children in New Zealand live in food-insecure households². Through this waste strategy, and the development of national food strategy that addresses the threats to long-term domestic food supply, there is an opportunity to rethink our food and waste systems. The New Zealand Champions 12.3 seek that the waste strategy is cognisant of food security – and the need for some redundancy in the food system to ensure a reliable and resilient supply of fresh, healthy and reasonably priced food, and the role that food packaging can play in increasing the shelf life and food safety.

As an export-orientated agricultural nation that relies heavily on our ‘clean green’ reputation, New Zealand has every reason to be at the forefront of efforts to reduce food waste. Food waste costs the economy and environment in production inputs, emissions, and waste disposal, and in lost economic opportunity to repurpose ‘waste’ products back into the supply chain.

Food waste is a health and safety challenge. COVID-19 has catapulted food waste as a priority for New Zealand by upending food supply chains, increasing food insecurity, and exacerbating the food waste challenge. An estimated 1 million Kiwis struggled to afford food during 2020³. Decision-makers need to pursue food waste reduction as part of our nation’s ongoing successful response to COVID-19 as well as adapting to and mitigating the risks of climate change.

This is a problem but also an opportunity, reducing foodwaste has been ranked as one of the top three actions to tackle climate change and meet obligations under the Paris Agreement by Project Drawdown⁴. 9% of NZ’s biogenic methane and 4% of our total greenhouse gas emissions are from food and organic waste⁵.

Our key recommendations

In 2020, NZ Champions 12.3 released the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap⁶. This report mapped out some potential solutions for food waste reduction at each stage of the food supply chain. The report also echoed key recommendations from the Miroso Report 2019 which recommended that New Zealand follow the internationally successful Target, Measure, Act framework to reduce food waste.⁷ The Miroso Report was appended to the recommendations of the Environment Select Committee’s Briefing to Investigate Food Waste in New Zealand⁸ in 2020 which were to:

- adopt a national definition of and measure of food waste, in line with international approaches, and to
- include a national food waste reduction target in line with UNSDG 12.3 as part of a national waste strategy and implementation plan.

We believe that the Draft National Waste Strategy contains insufficient emphasis on **defining**, **measuring** and **setting targets** for New Zealand’s waste streams as a matter of urgency. We believe these steps (which are referred to under priority 1 on page 31 of the Draft) are foundational.

² Ministry of Health. (2019). Household food insecurity among children, New Zealand Health Survey

³ Stuff, Paul Mitchell “Protecting Aotearoa’s food supply in wake of Covid-19”, January 2021.

⁴Project drawdown (2017), Table of Solutions. <https://drawdown.org/solutions/reduced-food-waste>

⁵<https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/areas-of-work/waste/reducing-food-waste/>

⁶ <https://www.nzchampions123.org/resources>

⁷ Miroso, M. 2019. Briefing to investigate food waste in New Zealand – Appendix B.

https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10523/12348/Final-report-Briefing-to-investigate-food-waste-in-New-Zealand_edited.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

⁸ New Zealand Environment Committee (2020) “Briefing to investigate food waste”, New Zealand Parliamentary Committee for the Environment

Regarding food loss and waste, the absence of a definition of food loss and waste or adequate data on food loss and waste is currently limiting the activities of all actors who are working on food waste reduction in New Zealand. We believe base steps are critical to effective action in the government's subsequent priorities as set out in 2 – 6 on page 32.

We have framed our submission around three key recommendations:

1. **Recommendation 1:** Amend Figure 4 on page 31 of the National Waste Strategy consultation document to add initial stage in the 'Three stages of the strategy journey' by splitting Stage 1 into two; 1) Define & Measure and 2) Target & Strategy.
2. **Recommendation 2:** Develop a National Food Waste Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan to measure waste and actions to reduce it.
3. **Recommendation 3:** Identify the key players in the waste ecosystem and support their actions to implement waste reduction strategies.

Recommendation 1: Amend Figure 4 on page 31 of the National Waste Strategy consultation document to add initial stage in the 'Three stages of the strategy journey' by splitting Stage 1 into two; 1) Define & Measure and 2) Target & Strategy.

The draft National Waste Strategy needs clear **definitions** for each category of waste, and a national framework or standard to **measure, collect and evaluate** data to illustrate the proportions of each category and their contribution to the waste challenge, including emissions.

We recommend work is undertaken to develop a national definition of food loss and food waste, and that these definitions are used to inform targets within the strategy. The definitions need to be consulted on with key stakeholders across the food production and supply chains.

We recommend a National Food Loss and Waste Baseline is established, along the lines of what was completed in Australia in 2019⁹. The baseline will quantify food loss and waste in New Zealand at the country scale and across the full food supply and consumption chain, from primary production through to consumption and disposal or recovery.

Once definitions, targets and a baseline have been established, we recommend further assessment is undertaken to identify hotspots for waste and environmental impacts; including testing and costing scenarios to highlight where action such as industry led initiatives can provide a cost-effective approach to reducing food waste within a supportive policy framework.

This is an important first step as it will enable any National Waste Strategy to first identify New Zealand's most problematic waste streams and then prioritise policy, actions, investment, and infrastructure to effectively tackle the challenges that will support a circular economy solution.

We propose the following changes to Figure 4 - the 'Three stages of the strategy journey' diagram (page 31 of the National Waste Strategy consultation document).

A first stage 'Define & Measure' should include the following steps:

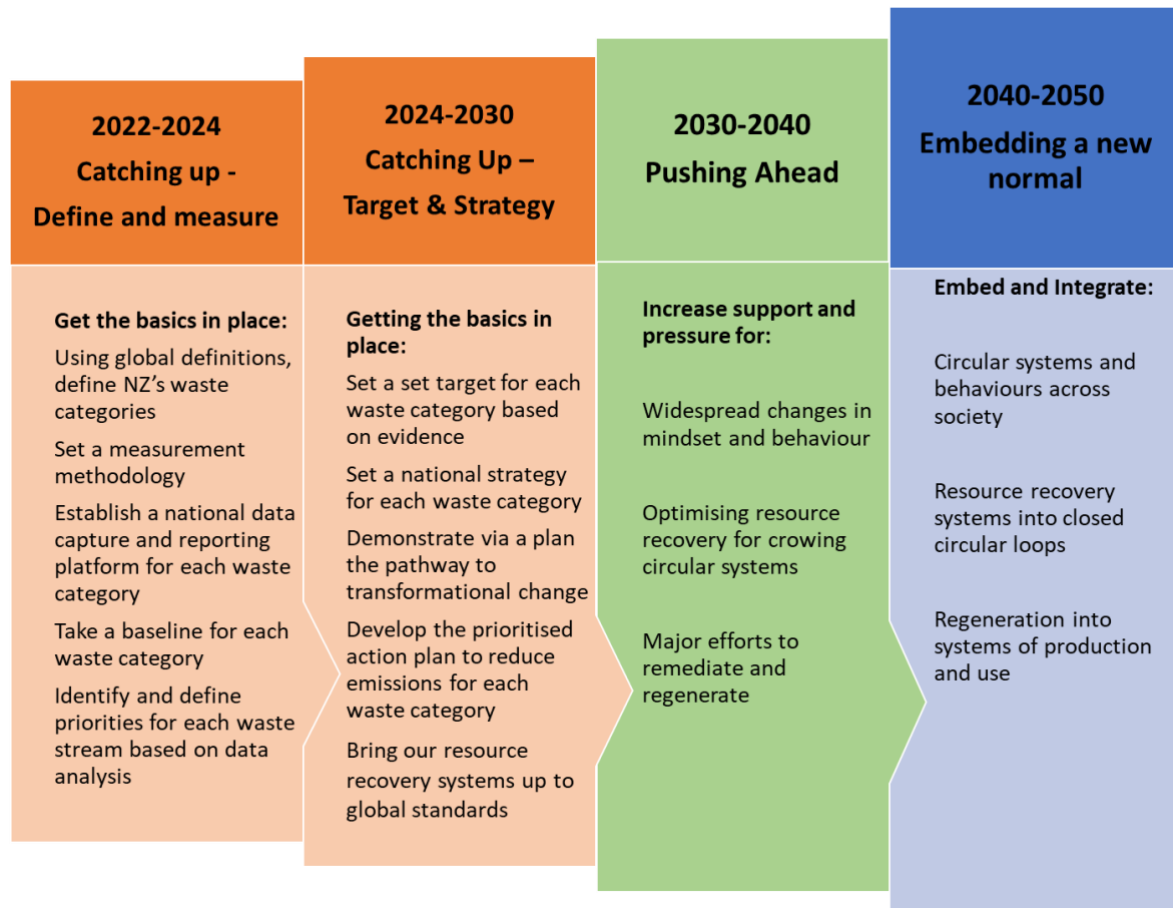
- Using global definitions, define NZ's waste categories, including Food Waste
- Set a measurement methodology, establish a national data capture and reporting platform for each waste category

⁹ <https://www.stopfoodwaste.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/PDF-1-national-food-waste-baseline-final-assessment.pdf>

- Take a baseline for each waste category
- Identify and define priorities for each waste stream based on data analysis

A second stage 'Target & Strategy' should include:

- Set a set target for each waste category based on evidence
- Set a national strategy for each waste category



The recommended expansion focuses the first two years (2022 – 2024) on defining food waste, and other waste categories, developing measurement and reporting frameworks and establishing baseline data as a fundamental and urgent priorities. This will set a strong foundation for enabling the remaining stages of the journey; to establish targets, strategy, map the waste system and flow of waste stream and all stakeholders, fill data gaps and develop and implement measurement tools to evaluate effectiveness and ensure successful establishment a circular system.

Regarding measurement, we are yet to see tangible progress on what steps need to be taken to create a national baseline for Aotearoa, NZ. To bring our system to global standards, set and achieve targets, we need to understand the magnitude of the problem so New Zealanders are motivated to work toward a solution. Internationally, the adoption of a national measurement and data capture framework for consistent measurement and a national baseline (even with known data gaps) has been the first step in a National Food Waste Strategy. NZ Champions 12.3 and other organisations, particularly the University of Otago, are keen to assist. WasteMINZ' Love Food Hate Waste have already done excellent work on measuring household food waste. However, we need support around funding measurement projects.

We have long advocated that Sustainable Development Goal Target 12.3 could also be adopted without waiting for a National Waste Strategy, since this is an internationally accepted target, particularly in relation to food waste. You can see a petition with over 1,100 signatures requesting New

Zealand adopt a national food waste reduction target [here](#). We understand the intention of the Ministry is to incorporate targets in the Waste Strategy, however the National Waste Strategy consultation document does not make any reference to food waste targets and we recommend this target is adopted in the first stage of the strategy journey.

Recommendation 2: Develop a National Food Waste Strategy, Roadmap and National Food Waste Action Plan.

A National Food Waste Strategy provides a framework to support collective action towards halving Aotearoa NZ's food waste by 2030, contribute towards global action on reducing food waste in line with SDG 12.3, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions primarily through diversion of food waste from landfill. We acknowledge everyone has a role to play; government, consumers and businesses. This strategy should include the definition, measurement and data reporting framework, baseline data and a reduction target, as well as a map of actions to take, both mandatory and voluntarily, to achieve the common goal of reducing food waste.

The roadmap will ensure that a food waste reduction target will be achievable, which is the required motivation to turn our current state of inaction into collaborative action. We refer to Figure 1 of the Miroso Report (2019) which outlined the recommended key stakeholders across the supply and consumption chain that could be engaged to *“build support and consensus on an approach for a national food waste strategy that sets a target and an implementation plan for measuring waste and actions to reduce it”*.¹⁰

In particular, measuring food waste, including emissions from food waste is something that needs to be prioritised by government through a range of policies, including this proposed national waste strategy, research, new infrastructure investment, the emissions reduction plan, and future national food policy. We believe the following should be considered as policy priorities:

- Support for a **voluntary commitment** for businesses to reduce food waste across the food sector. A voluntary agreement engages leading food sector businesses in a coordinated effort to reduce food waste using a simple Target, Measure, Act framework pioneered in the United Kingdom and now being emulated globally. NZ Champions 12.3 is currently engaging with leading food sector businesses to establish the Kai Commitment – a voluntary agreement for New Zealand's retail and manufacturing businesses. The founding members are key, influential food businesses in New Zealand, their investment shows their appetite and expectation for a significant effort on food waste reduction in New Zealand. We recommend that the government should support this type of business initiative in the immediate term to capture the leadership and initiative shown by the food sector to make an immediate impact on commercial food waste.
- Consideration of policy levers to **incentivise business** food waste reduction e.g. investment in research and development, alternative markets and food donations;
- Consideration of opportunities to raise consumer awareness and education of **consumers on** food waste reduction e.g. reinvesting in consumer awareness campaign Love Food Hate Waste; and
- Earmark **funding for food loss and waste**. Where other waste streams such as plastic have adequate funding, food waste is being left behind. Funding into food recovery has focused on food donation. However, while recovery is important, preventing food waste in the first place

¹⁰ Miroso, M. 2019. Briefing to investigate food waste in New Zealand – p8.

should be a priority focus of government investment to prevent emissions from food waste, biodiversity loss and excessive water use. Accessible, ongoing and sustainable funding directed towards food waste prevention would enable those already working on food waste reduction, of which NZ Champions 12.3 is one, to progress their work while government activity under the National Waste Strategy is developing.

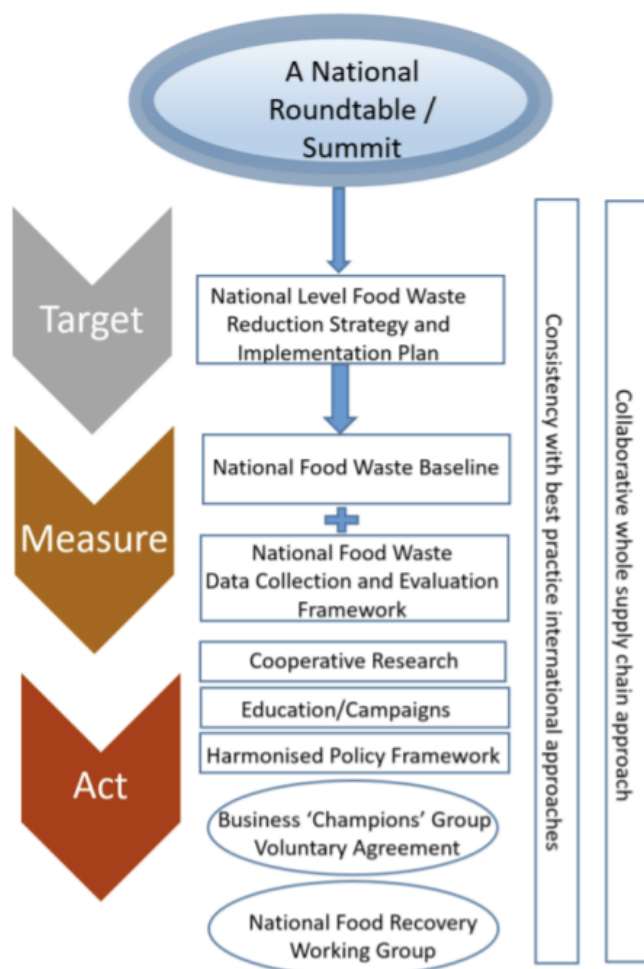


Figure 1 Organisational process chart highlighting key priorities, work groups and actions

Note that the recommendation of developing a National Food Recovery Working Group has been recognized through the Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance (AFRA).

Our recommendations align with Australia's approach to tackling food waste. Australia is about five years ahead of New Zealand on food waste and has undertaken a significant amount of work to target food waste at local, regional and national levels. Key actions undertaken by Australia, mostly led by Stop Food Waste Australia¹¹ include:

1. Adoption of a national target (2015)

Australia pledged to halve food waste by 2030 in line with the UN SDG 12.3.

2. National Food Waste Strategy (2017)

Australia established their national strategy to achieve the target, supported by substantial government investment and included national definitions for food loss and food waste.

3. National Food Waste Baseline (2019)

The baseline established a consistent framework to quantify food waste generation across the supply and consumption chain, track progress and provide a benchmark for measuring national performance against the reduction target.

¹¹ <https://www.stopfoodwaste.com.au>

4. A Roadmap and Resources for implementing the Strategy (2020)

The roadmap provides a clear path forward for all levels of government, industry and key stakeholders, documenting the main steps and initiatives required to meet the target.

5. Voluntary Commitment Program – Australian Food Pact (2021)

This voluntary agreement brings together Australia’s biggest food businesses in pre-competitive collaboration to make the food system more sustainable, resilient and circular. NZ Champions 12.3 Kai Commitment seeks to produce a similar program in New Zealand.

6. National Food Waste Strategy Feasibility Study (2021)

This paper identified scenarios that would achieve the food waste reduction target, identifying the most cost-effective and impactful way forward with policy, industry and consumer level interventions.

NZ Champions 12.3 have a collaborative relationship with Stop Food Waste Australia to gather learnings and share resources. We are well positioned to strengthen the understanding of the problem and map the possible solutions here in Aotearoa New Zealand using learnings from this relationship, with the support of the New Zealand Government in identifying this as a priority and putting a supporting policy framework in place.

Recommendation 3: Identify the key players in the Waste Ecosystem and support their actions to implement waste reduction strategies.

Currently there are many groups across New Zealand working on various parts of the waste ecosystem, including the NZ Champions 12.3 who are focusing accelerating progress towards achieving SDG 12.3 in New Zealand through action, advocacy and showcasing. Mapping who these groups are, and the areas of their focus will support the critical implementation of the National Waste Strategy. Working with these groups to identify the support they need both at a policy and funding level will enable the National Waste Strategy to leverage deep skills and expertise across the waste ecosystem to deliver the desired waste reduction outcomes and ensure that funding isn’t unnecessarily used to create new initiatives that currently exist.

Note, the NZ Champions 12.3 have submitted on the He Tuapapa ki te ora | Infrastructure for a Better Future and Te hau mārohi ki anamata | Transitioning to a low-emissions and climate-resilient future and made key recommendations that are also relevant to the National Waste Strategy.

Champions of 12.3

Deborah Manning – KiwiHarvest and New Zealand Food Network (Co-Chair)

Miranda Miroso – Otago University (Co-Chair)

James Griffin – Sustainable Business Network

Kate Porter – Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance

Susan Goodfellow – Leftfield Innovation

Nick Loosley – Everybody Eats

Andrew Fisher – EcoStock and EcoGas

Angela Clifford – Eat New Zealand

Ailsa Robertson – Horticulture New Zealand

Paul Harvey – Fonterra Co-operative Group

Catherine Langabeer – Countdown

Sarah Pritchett – WasteMINZ

Thank you for considering our submission. You can get in touch with New Zealand Food Waste Champions 12.3 Coordinator through: kaitlin@nzchampions123.org.
