



## NZ FOOD WASTE CHAMPIONS 12.3

### Te hau mārohi ki anamata | Transitioning to a low-emissions and climate-resilient future

#### Submission from: New Zealand Food Waste Champions of 12.3

##### About us

New Zealand's Food Waste Champions of 12.3 ('NZ Champions of 12.3') are a coalition of representatives from across the food supply chain, championing Aotearoa's progress towards halving food waste by 2030. The Champions consist of executives including from large retailers, small start-ups, food rescue charities, membership organisations.

NZ Champions of 12.3 have committed to: Championing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (UNSDG) 12.3, that *by 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses*, through:

1. SHOWCASING successful examples of food waste reduction;
2. ADVOCATING to the government to enable conditions for food waste reduction to achieve SDG 12.3; and
3. ACTION accelerating and aggregating action around food waste reduction, for example through a business voluntary agreement (as per the Kai Commitment discussed below).

NZ Champions of 12.3's main project under our action focus area to date has been the [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#), which maps out solutions for food waste reduction at each stage of the food value chain. Our next major project is the Kai Commitment – a voluntary industry agreement to reduce food waste from across the food value chain. We discuss the Kai Commitment in more detail in this submission.

##### Submission - summary

We appreciate the opportunity for NZ Champions of 12.3 to make the following submissions on 'Te hau mārohi ki anamata | Transitioning to a low-emissions and climate-resilient future' (draft ERP). Our submissions relate to the reduction of emissions from food waste - specifically in the Waste section (from p 101) and can be summarised as:

1. **We recommend that the *prevention* of food waste and the emissions from food waste should be a priority policy focus for the government as well as diversion activities.**
2. **We recommend that the New Zealand government partner with/fund existing and well-established food waste reduction initiatives such as NZ Champions 12.3 (the organisation), the Kai Commitment and the Love Food Hate Waste campaign to amplify their work and maximise their emissions abatement impact.**
3. **We recommend the Emissions Reduction Plan contains express support for and partnership in the NZ Champions of 12.3 Kai Commitment project as part of NZ's policy response to emissions from food waste from New Zealand businesses.**

## **Submission - discussion**

Question 89 - Do you support the target to reduce waste biogenic methane emissions by 40 per cent by 2035?

**Yes** – with two caveats: 1) We note that NZ Champions of 12.3 made a submission to the Climate Change Commission recommending a more ambitious target for food waste in line with the SDG12.3 – 50% reduction in food waste per capita by 2030; and 2) We recommend that **the Waste Section** from Page 101 expands its current focus on emissions from food waste that is disposed of in landfills, wastewater, compost, incineration or open burning. While the 4% of emissions from biogenic methane emissions is an important statistic, it overlooks the extent to which the whole food system contributes to global emissions. International research has established that emissions from the whole food system contribute 15-30% of annual global emissions.<sup>1</sup> So, when food is grown, produced, transported, packaged, distributed, cooked and not eaten – all of the emissions produced in that process are also wasted. This is without consideration of the carbon sequestration lost from land that is cleared to grow food. Food waste reduction has emerged as a significant action for both countries and businesses to reduce their emissions that contribute to climate change. Project Drawdown has ranked reducing food waste as the third-best action humankind can take to slow down climate change.<sup>2</sup>

It is also important to acknowledge that the further along the supply chain food waste occurs, the more emissions are embedded in the food from the supply chain. Some foods are particularly emission heavy (e.g. meat and bread contain high embodied emissions). Food waste reduction at the retail and consumer stages is therefore a high impact emission mitigation activity. **We recommend that the *prevention of food waste and the emissions from food waste should be a priority policy focus for the government as well as diversion activities.***

Question 90 - Do you support more funding for education and behaviour change initiatives to help households, communities and businesses reduce their organic waste (for example, food, cardboard, timber)?

**Yes** – we believe many food waste prevention and reduction initiatives in New Zealand are doing good work but rely on small grants and private donations for their operating expenses. In many cases, these initiatives are based on internationally proven programmes, e.g. NZ Champions of 12.3 as an organisation, its Kai Commitment voluntary agreement project (discussed below) and WasteMINZ' Love Food Hate Waste Campaign. **We recommend that the New Zealand government partner with/fund existing and well-established food waste reduction initiatives such as NZ Champions of 12.3 (the organisation), the Kai Commitment and the Love Food Hate Waste campaign to amplify their work and maximise their emissions abatement impact.**

Question 91 - What other policies would support households, communities and businesses to manage the impacts of higher waste disposal costs?

We refer to page 104 of the draft ERP which states:

*“To date, there has been less focus on helping businesses reduce food waste. Australia and the UK have helped different business sectors measure and reduce their food waste, with proven success. For example, Your Business is Food (Australia) helps the hospitality sector and the Courtauld Commitment*

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<sup>1</sup> Garnett, T. (2011). Where are the best opportunities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the food system (including the food chain) Food Policy, 36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2010.10.010>

<sup>2</sup> Project drawdown (2017), Table of Solutions. <https://drawdown.org/solutions/reduced-food-waste>

*(UK) supports retailers and food manufacturers.*

*We could explore opportunities for New Zealand.”*

**We recommend this reference be converted to confirm the Ministry for Environment’s support (through its Strategic Partnerships division) of the NZ Champions of 12.3 Kai Commitment project, which is a public/private partnership to reduce food waste (and emissions from food waste) from New Zealand’s food business sector and emulates the Courtauld Commitment and international best practice.**

### **The Kai Commitment voluntary industry agreement on food waste reduction**

International best practice for encouraging food waste reduction and behaviour change across the food value chain is to establish an industry voluntary agreement for businesses in the food sector. Your Business is Food,<sup>3</sup> the Australian Food Pact<sup>4</sup> and the Courtauld Commitment<sup>5</sup> are both examples of industry voluntary agreements.

A voluntary industry agreement commits participants to follow a simple **Target, Measure, Act** process to set ambition, understand where and why their waste occurs, and set an action plan to reduce food waste and emissions from food waste. Signatory businesses **Collaborate** on industry-wide activities to ensure the proliferation of best practices and innovation on common food waste problems. Examples of action businesses can take are:

- Optimisation of the whole of the supply chain and identification of food waste hotspots in the industry;
- Encouraging innovative ways to repurpose surplus food;
- Embedding new criteria into designing, buying and sourcing; and
- Influencing consumer behaviour and business practices.

### ***The Kai Commitment – Design Phase***

NZ Champions of 12.3 is establishing a voluntary agreement in New Zealand – the Kai Commitment, which emulates the Courtauld Commitment and the Australian Food Pact. We have secured modest funding for the exploratory set-up phase of the Kai Commitment – the **Design Phase**. There are two key goals in the Design Phase:

- To design, through a collaborative engagement process, a food business agreement (Kai Commitment) with agreed targets, obligations, and accountability to take action to deliver food waste reduction and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- To attract a cohort of 10 ‘sector leaders’ who will sign up and participate in the Kai Commitment. This should evolve into a community of sharing best practices, partnerships, innovation, and enhanced sector capability.

The intention is for the Kai Commitment signatories to form a community of best practice, lead system-level change in the food sector and innovate on common waste streams across the whole supply chain.

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<sup>3</sup> Your Business is Food website <https://newaste.org.au/ybif/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.stopfoodwaste.com.au/australian-food-pact/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://wrap.org.uk/taking-action/food-drink/initiatives/courtauld-commitment>

The Ministry for the Environment is supporting this project through the Strategic Partnerships team and the Waste and Resources team. An Ministry for Environment representative sits on the Kai Commitment's Steering Committee as an observer. We have already confirmed participation from two large food sector businesses and will continue to recruit during 2021/2022.

### ***Building a strong value proposition***

NZ Champions of 12.3's primary role will be the convenor and facilitator of the group to foster collaboration and momentum. However, international experience tells us that a strong value proposition is necessary for businesses to fully engage with the programme and for there to be a significant impact on food waste and emissions. With government support through additional funding (as happens overseas), the Kai Commitment could offer businesses additional support such as:

- **Best practice tools** to measure and report on food waste and emissions from food waste.
- **Build industry capability** access to webinars, circulating best practices and case studies.
- **Technical support** for setting action plans and implementing waste reduction initiatives.
- **Insights from international advisers** and industry-level analysis for widespread impact.
- **Active consumer** and business-facing awareness to promote food waste reduction.
- **A platform for connection across the industry** – to collaborate, share ideas and problem solve.
- **Advocacy** and advice to the government through (i.e. as a key stakeholder on infrastructure planning, regulatory changes).

For clarity, we set out the reasons why we believe the Kai Commitment represents the best policy option for New Zealand to achieve emissions abatement from commercial food waste:

- Central to The Kai Commitment is the **business case for reducing food waste**. CSR goals are also important to businesses but the attraction of the Kai Commitment is in its alignment with a business' **profitability imperative**. One global study of 700 businesses across 17 countries showed that half of the businesses that invested in food waste prevention programmes achieved a return on investment of 14:1.<sup>6</sup> Research has also established that the economic value to businesses of prevention activities is also much greater than recycling or disposal.<sup>7</sup>
- **Return on investment for government** - The Global Champions 12.3 examined the cost/benefit ratio for the UK government for a nationwide initiative to reduce food waste between 2007 to 2012 – including a voluntary agreement – the Courtauld Commitment. The collaboration stimulated innovations in food packaging, labelling changes, portion sizes and consumer education around storage and food preparation (including the Love Food Hate Waste campaign). The cost of the suite of initiatives estimated at £26m was borne by central and local government, community groups, and participating businesses. The benefits were estimated at £6.6bn - a return of more than 250 to 1.<sup>8</sup>
- A voluntary agreement is an **internationally recommended policy instrument** (by the World Resources Institute)<sup>9</sup> adopted in **over 30 countries** including Japan, Germany, China, the US,

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<sup>6</sup> Global Champions 12.3 (2017) The Business Case for Reducing Food Loss and Waste. <https://champions123.org/publication/business-case-reducing-food-loss-and-waste>

<sup>7</sup> ReFED (2016) A Roadmap to Reduce US Food Waste By 20%. [https://refed.com/downloads/ReFED\\_Report\\_2016.pdf](https://refed.com/downloads/ReFED_Report_2016.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Global Champions 12.3 (2017) The Business Case for Reducing Food Loss and Waste. <https://champions123.org/publication/business-case-reducing-food-loss-and-waste>

<sup>9</sup> World Resources Institute Global Action Agenda (2020) <https://www.wri.org/research/reducing-food-loss-and-waste-setting-global->

Germany, The Netherlands, Canada, Norway, Australia, Mexico, Spain, Hungary and South Africa. The simple **Target, Measure, Act** collaborative framework was pioneered by the UK's highly successful Courtauld Commitment, which achieved a 28% reduction in food waste in its first 10 years.<sup>10</sup> The Courtauld Commitment is now a significant contributor to the UK being on track to meet its target under the United SDG 12.3 to halve food waste by 2030. Other results include:

- In the US the Pacific Waste Reduction Alliance is (2019) has reported a 6% reduction in economic loss from food waste,<sup>11</sup> and
- In Norway, the Industry Agreement on Food Waste (2017) has 42 signatories and is decreased food waste by 5% achieving an emissions reduction of 11%.<sup>12</sup>
- The World Resources Institute has produced a '**road map**' for implementing a voluntary agreement so NZ does not have to reinvent the wheel.<sup>13</sup>
- **Urgent action is needed** – a collaborative, joined-up, sector effort is required. No other policy vehicle sparks **industry-led action, collaboration and innovation** to improve the sector as a whole. Private businesses can act more quickly and flexibly than government regulation on food waste and can make large scale changes to their food waste and influence the food waste of their consumers.
- A voluntary agreement is endorsed by NZ's leading experts on food waste ([Mirosa Report](#)) and our Champions, who are all senior leaders in the food sector.<sup>14</sup>
- A voluntary agreement supports the **principles of Te Ao Māori**. For Māori, food is a precious taonga – yet NZ is wasting food within our predominantly take-make-waste culture.
- A voluntary agreement enables businesses to drive change 'at source' but also influence staff the supply chain and consumers in making a **cultural shift towards valuing food** and practising food waste reduction activities.
- The Kai Commitment supports the government's planned transition to the more **circular food system** as set out in the consultation document for a new Waste Strategy.
- **Data is critical**: A voluntary agreement contributes to the collection of food waste data for a national baseline. It allows for the government to have visibility on data gaps and allows sector-wide insights and the identification of food waste hotspots.
- Collaborative partnerships bring **innovation**. A powerful example is the [ReFED insights engine](#) in the US, where government and private sector funding has funded the development of a comprehensive online resource providing industry data and insights and the cost/benefit analysis for a suite of solutions for businesses to access when considering their food waste reduction plans.

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[action-agenda](#)

<sup>10</sup> WRAP, History of the Courtauld Commitment. <https://wrap.org.uk/taking-action/food-drink/initiatives/courtauld-commitment/history-courtauld-commitment>

<sup>11</sup> Pacific Coast Collective Agreement to Reduce Food Waste (2019). <https://pacificcoastcollaborative.org/food-waste>

<sup>12</sup> Norway - Agreement to Reduce Food Waste (2017). <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/agreement-to-reduce-food-waste/id2558931>

<sup>13</sup> World Resources Institute Global Action Agenda (2020) <https://www.wri.org/research/reducing-food-loss-and-waste-setting-global-action-agenda>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.nzchampions123.org/champions-of-12-3>

### ***The Kai Commitment without government funding***

- Evaluations on voluntary agreements within the US and EU have found that adequacy and longevity of funding support is the most critical success factor.<sup>15</sup> For instance, we note Australia has invested \$4 million in establishing the Australian Food Pact.<sup>16</sup> It is common for governments to assist voluntary industry agreements the first few years until the model is established. This funding enables the work of the independent coordinator and technical expertise on commercial food waste reduction. If we do not receive government funding it is less likely that the Kai Commitment project will be able to achieve its full potential impact (including scale and pace of change) on food waste in New Zealand.

Note, the NZ Champions 12.3 have submitted on the He Tuapapa ki te ora / Infrastructure for a Better Future and will submit on the Te Kawe i te haepapa para | Taking responsibility for our waste and made key recommendations that are also relevant to the Emissions Reduction Plan.

#### **Kai Commitment Steering Committee**

Miranda Miroso – Otago University (*also a Champion*)  
James Griffin – Sustainable Business Network (*also a Champion*)  
Kate Porter – Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance (*also a Champion*)  
Charlotte Haycock – Countdown (*founding partner representative*)  
Jenny Marshall – Ministry for the Environment (*observer*)

#### **Remaining Champions of 12.3**

Deborah Manning – KiwiHarvest and New Zealand Food Network  
Susan Goodfellow – Leftfield Innovation  
Nick Loosley – Everybody Eats  
Andrew Fisher – EcoStock and EcoGas  
Angela Clifford – Eat New Zealand  
Ailsa Robertson – Horticulture New Zealand

#### **Champions joining in 2022**

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 Coordinator through: [kaitlin@nzchampions123.org](mailto:kaitlin@nzchampions123.org).

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<sup>15</sup> REFRESH (2018) <https://www.eu-refresh.org/refresh-policy-working-group-voluntary-agreements.html>

<sup>16</sup>Joint Media Release: New body to cut Australia's food waste in half (2020) <https://minister.awe.gov.au/evans/media-releases/new-body-cut-australias-food-waste-half>