

# **The Development of Xtreme Waste – A Community Recycling Project**

In 1998 the Raglan Landfill closed. No further landfill sites were available for our community. The alternative was to transport waste to the Horotiu Landfill in the Waikato 45 kms away.

Whaingaroa's community considered their options at public meetings and through the formation of an interest group. A local community Educational Trust supported the interest groups ideas and developed systems for dealing with our communities' organic garden waste. Additionally collections for paper and cardboard were initiated by the same Trust. These two recycling projects accounted for over 30% of Raglans total volume of solid waste.

While this was going on, the Trust supported a number of community members to investigate and research existing recycling centres, recycle industries, refuse transfer stations, landfills and sewage treatment stations around Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The information collected led to the decision to establish Xtreme Waste as an Incorporated Society. Whilst incorporation was underway the steering group set about drafting a Business Development Plan to guide the establishment and the first year of a community-recycling programme.

## **The vision described in the Business Plan is:**

*To establish a waste management system for Raglan community that is based on the principles of Zero Waste*

The draft plan was presented to a number of agencies and was reviewed by numerous people in other recycling centres, waste businesses and universities. The plan was shared with the community prior to being submitted to agencies and aid organisations for their support.

Sufficient support was granted to Xtreme Waste to enable the programme to begin in July 2000. The Raglan Community Board supported Raglan community becoming registered as a 'Zero Waste Community'.

## **Goals and Objectives**

### **Long-term programme goal:**

*To achieve zero waste to landfill by 2010*

### **Goals & Targets set for the first four years**

The following targets were set for Xtreme Waste in the May 2000 Business Development Plan:

#### ***1. Divert the volume of Raglan's waste stream disposed to landfill by 75%.***

Xtreme Waste is currently diverting approximately 74% by volume, from landfill. It is believed that further diversion is still achievable. At least 15% of what presently goes to landfill is recyclable and has an existing market. Although they are diverting 74% there is still a large volume of waste going to landfill. This reflects increases in full time residents, new dwellings and renovations, retail trade and visitors.

## ***2. Create a minimum of four full time sustainable employment positions***

Currently there are 26 part time employees of Xtreme Waste. This equates to approximately 13 full time positions. Financial predications are that the programme can support these positions with no employment grants or subsidies. Currently they receive financial support through Community Employment Group as they are registered as a 'Community Employment Organisation', although this will be the last year of CEO funding.

## ***3. Provide a comprehensive community-based waste management service for Raglan***

Prior to 2000 (beginning of the recycle programme) there were the following services for our community:

- Transfer station – for household and business waste
- Weekly kerbside collection of household waste to landfill
- Annual inorganic collection
- Employment for 1.5 people (full time equivalent)

### **Since then Xtreme Waste has developed the following services:**

- Establishment of a recycling centre
- Management of a transfer station
- Weekly kerbside collection of waste to landfill
- Weekly kerbside collection of recyclables
- Business Recycling Programme
- Special collections and deliveries from private homes
- Rural drop off centres at Te Uku and Te Mata with Waitetuna now in the planning
- Zero waste event capability
- An interactive education strategy that includes schools & community groups
- Recycle bins and bags at heavily discounted prices
- Sponsorship of the community radio station
- Organisation of numerous community events (recycled trolley race, raft race, waste to art and waste to fashion exhibitions)
- A waste network
- Employment of 26 part time persons, 13 people (full time equivalents)

## ***4. Ensure that no sector of the community receives any lesser standard of service than is currently available.***

For the first time quality information is being collected that allows to capture communities perspectives of how well Xtreme Waste is performing and what services they enjoy.

Although a few complaints were received over the last summer concerning the weekly kerbside collection of recyclables this represented less than 1% of the people collected from. There is now a second truck on the road . This will assist with the weekly collection by allowing Xtreme Waste to collect more volume and to finish the run within a reasonable time.

**5. Ensure that there is no overall increase in the cost of waste management to the Raglan community.**

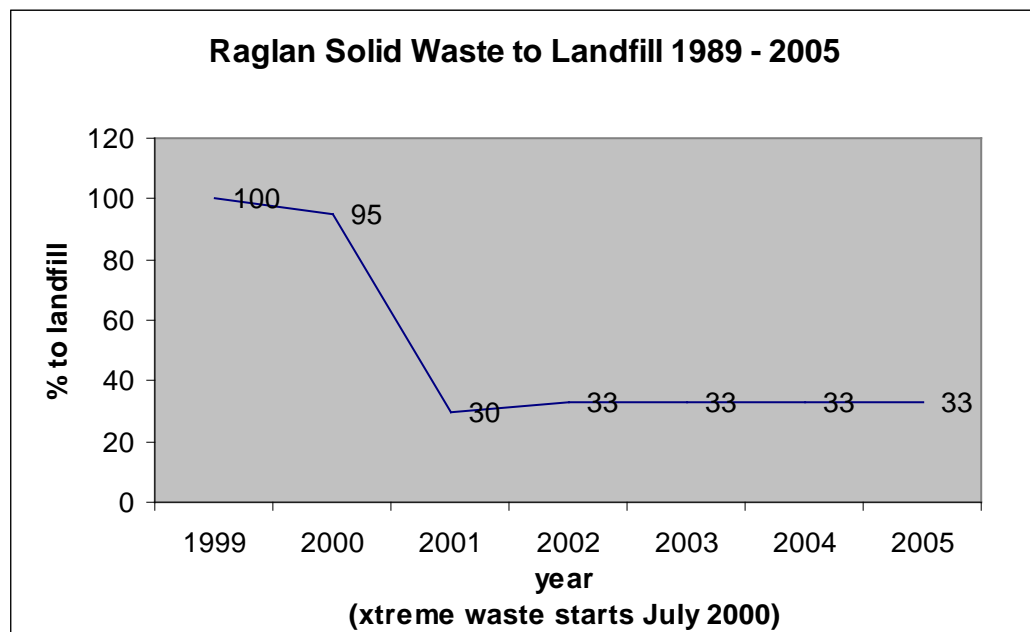
It is believed that they have achieved this. It's difficult to make comparisons across the District as the services being offered and the geography vary dramatically.

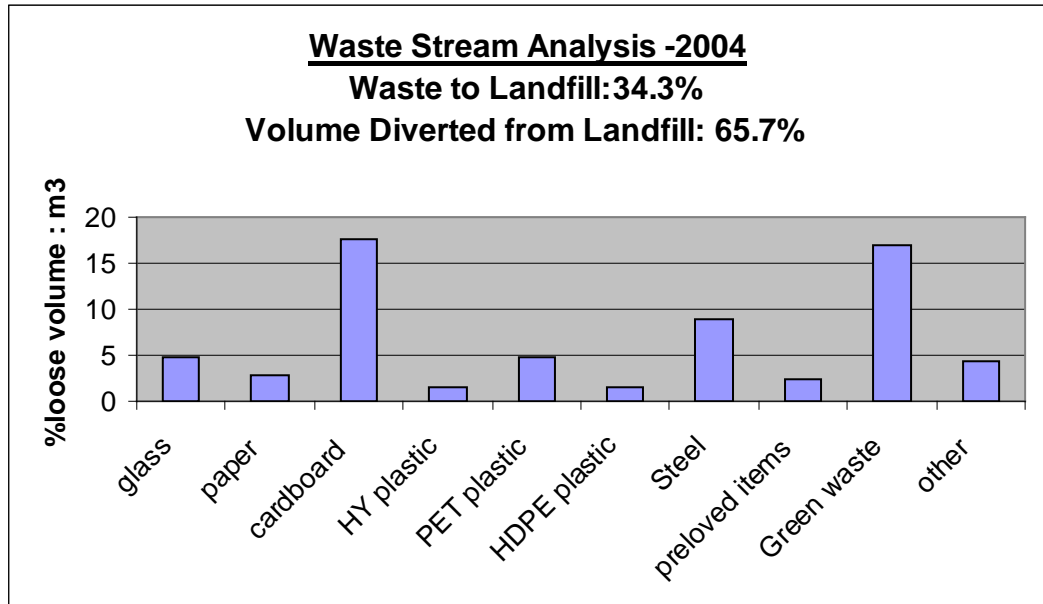
In 2000 the levy per house across the district was \$59 a year. This paid for the collection of up to 125 litres of waste at the kerb once a week. By 2004 the levy per house across the Waikato District increased to \$98 a year. In Raglan the rates dropped in 2000 from \$59 to \$30 to reflect the change in collection methods. The targeted rate has increased since then to \$38 per house to reflect the large volumes of recyclables collected. Currently ¼ of Raglan's recyclables comes from the weekly kerbside collection (approximately 1,425m<sup>3</sup> or 24 tandem trucks).

In 2000 Xtreme Waste introduced a pre-paid bag system. The bags cost \$1.10 each and were 65 litres in size. This system replaced the rate system that you paid regardless of whether or not you put out 125 litres each week. Many of our smaller families, particularly our old people, were subsidising the larger families. The pre-paid bag system allows a user pay philosophy. The pre paid bags now cost \$1.50, but still represent good value for money as residents can put out as much recycling as they need kerbside or deliver to the site for no added charge, thus greatly reducing the need to use the pre paid bags.

## Performance Since July 1<sup>st</sup> 2000

Every year Xtreme Waste produces an annual report. Waikato District Council has collected statistics on tonnes of waste sent to landfill for the year previous to the Recycle Centre being established. When you examine the graph below you can see the sudden drop off in waste to landfill after the establishment of Xtreme Waste in July 2000.





## An Account of the Benefits for the Last Four Years

### Cultural

- Tikanga Maori, Permaculture principles and the Natural Step Programme
- Te Reo Maori
- Kaitiakitanga
- Care of the Earth
- Tiaki Papatuanuku

### Social

- Employment of 57 people over the four year period
- 18 people no longer claiming a work benefit
- A further 23 people came for work experience
- Currently twenty-six part time positions have been created. The majority of which are sustained from the WDC contract, sales of recyclables, fees received from gate takings, business community and a number of other grants.
- Local people finding local employment and not having to travel long distances
- Training of workers – drivers licenses, first aid, numeracy & literacy, waste industry
- Sponsorship of our community radio station and Tourism Raglan
- Community partnership koha to Raglan Area School, Trade Aid, Lions Club and local District Council office
- Tyres for Norm's pukeko and swans – art creations
- Various metals, computer parts and 2<sup>nd</sup> hand items for the 'Jet Collective'
- Resources for the Area School, Te Uku School, Kohanga and Kindergarten
- Resources for Te Mauri Tau – community group
- Resources for the Environment Centre and their various displays
- Resources for Community Youth Workers
- Resources for Kohanga Reo, Marae, Maori Wardens, Kindergarten, Community House, Play Centre, Rural Schools and many local people
- Raising the profile of waste issues and local solutions
- A place for Court Referrals to assist their community

### Economic

- Cheaper to recycle than landfill
- Reduction of waste means reduction in cost for home recyclers
- A new white-ware hire business established - Pryde Electronics
- Two new retail shops established ('Jet Collective', 'Thingys') – 80% of product from recycled materials
- \$200k spent on local wages (per year)
- \$60k spent in local shops (per year)
- \$60k spent on local contracts (per year)

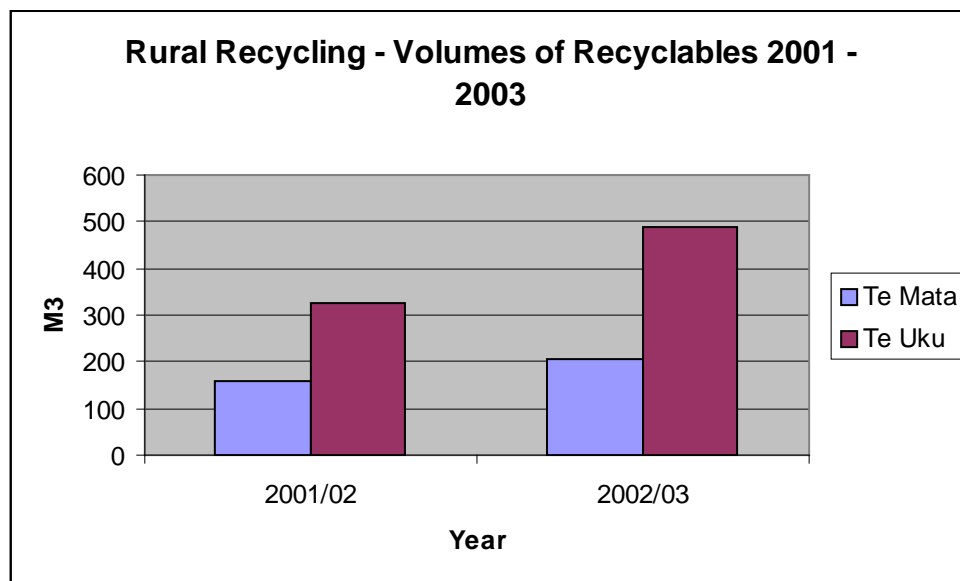
### Environmental

- Major reduction of waste to landfill
- Reduction in transportation of waste to landfill
- Diversion of toxic waste from landfill and finding a safe home for it
- Reuse of items previously landfilled
- Local sustainable industry based on use of recycled products - less need to make new products when people buy from the Recycle Centre
- Local employment reduces transport costs

## Monitoring Details of How Each of our Services is Performing

Implementation of our Monitoring Strategy identifies priority areas for monitoring. Environment Waikato, Waikato District Council and Zero Waste Trust all participated by offering financial and technical support for our education and monitoring strategies.

### Rural Recycle Depots



### Weekly kerbside recyclable collection

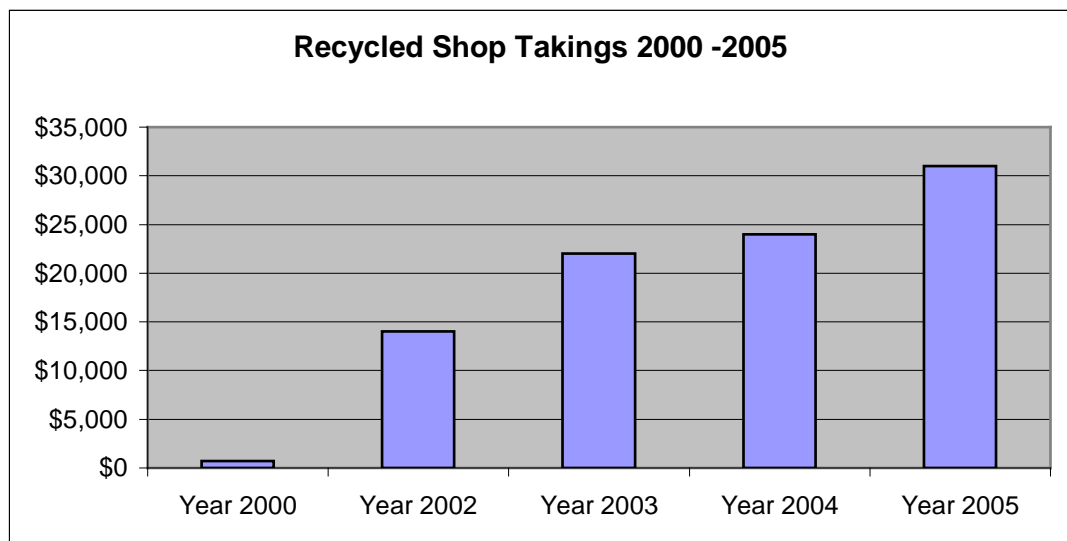
The weekly kerbside collection began on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2000 and was supported immediately by 200 houses. It has now increased to 1545. The total resident population is approximately 1700 houses.

### Pickup service for the business community

Approx. 80% of the Raglan businesses that generate a significant amount of waste use Xtreme Wastes tailored recycle collection services. Records are kept for each Business so that they can detail the composition and volume over time. It is unfortunate there is no information about the volume of waste from businesses prior to the recycle programme to compare results. After the completion of several full years of operation we have been able to gather detailed information about waste production from businesses and develop strategies to encourage waste reduction in the future.

### Recycle Shop

Sales through the shop show a steady increase. This is a reflection of community support. The shop now has a number of regular clients. However it should be noted that the recycle shop's success is not based on profit rather than on number of items diverted from landfill. The financial summary does however show an increase in use. The vast majority of items sold through the shop are sold for a gold coin to necessitate a steady flow of stock through the shop.

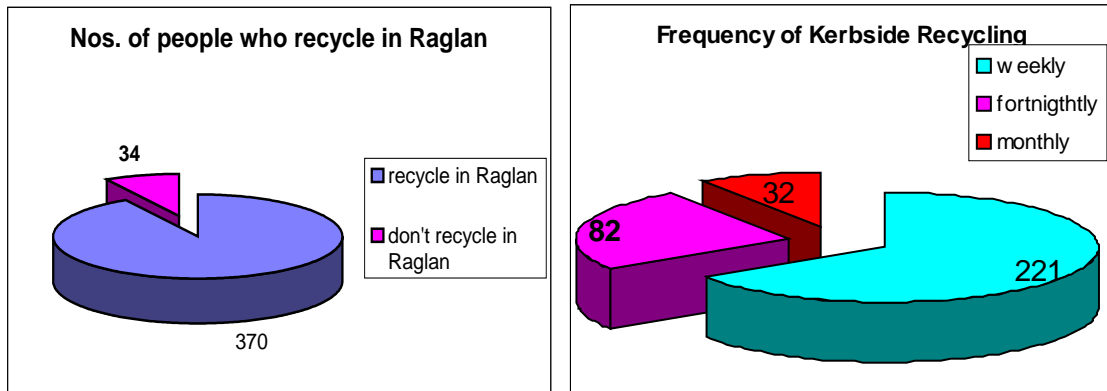


### Information Delivery

A recent customer satisfaction survey carried out by the Waikato district Council in 2005 found that in the whole district 50% of residents are satisfied with the recycling service. This rating is below both the peer (60%) and national (76%) averages. **Raglan has the greatest level of satisfaction (84%), which is nearly 20% higher than in other wards.**

As part of the monitoring of attitudes to zero waste principles, the 'perceptions survey' was conducted in 2002 to provide more information on how much the community understands the service being provided by Xtreme Waste. However we know already that the success to date could not have been achieved without the understanding and support of the community.

404 responses were received. 283 women and 131 men.



There was an opportunity to include other comments. These can be summarised as follows:

- Strong support for current recycle facilities and services
- Strong support to introduce user pays philosophy
- Support for recycle bins to be installed in town and reserves

## Community Partnerships

Xtreme Waste Incorporated Society was formed by the Raglan community through a series of meetings and consultative processes in 1999 and 2000. The Society has been mandated with the responsibility to provide waste management services for our community based on the principles of zero waste to landfill. Since set up, communication with local community is maintained through weekly articles in the local paper and an active education service. At the end of each year Xtreme Waste produces a free annual report in a fun and user friendly format.

The community is involved in the planning and activities of Xtreme Waste through; this includes the team all being local people (currently 26), weekly management meetings, talk back radio shows, public meetings, information prepared for our Community Board, regular features in the local paper, becoming an associate member.

Xtreme Waste is currently working with numerous other organisations including; other local community groups such as Whaingaroa Environment Centre, Community Recycling centres across the country, councils and are involved currently in setting up community recycling network.

## Personnel involved in the management of Xtreme Waste

### Members and clients associated with the organisation

Xtreme Waste currently provides services for:

- 1,500 urban houses per week
- 300 rural houses
- 14,000 visitors
- 45 local businesses
- 2-5 international events per year (eg Rally NZ, World Surf Champs, Jazz or Reggae festivals)
- Local and Regional Schools

### Number of paid staff

Currently they have 26 part time staff or the equivalent of 13 full time positions.

### Number of volunteers

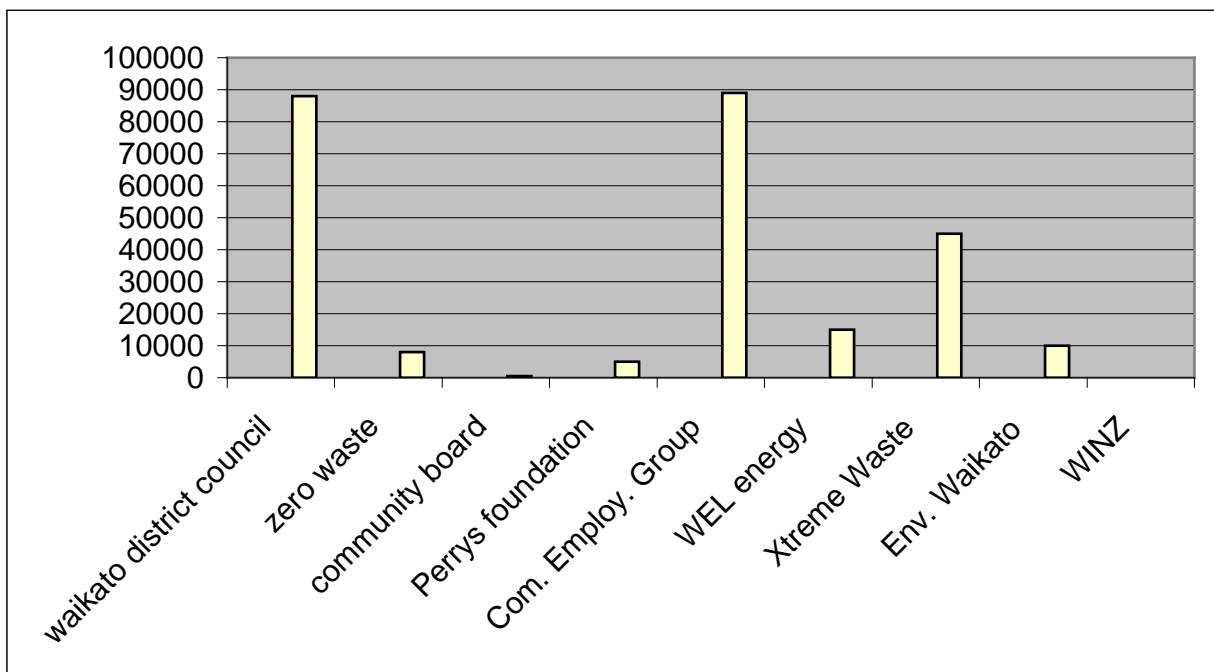
There is no exact records of all volunteer hours. However the following support is shown through:

- Staff and families (unpaid overtime, family members coming to work with staff, assisting at community events),
- Community (assisting at the recycle centre or at events, working in their homes - separating and cleaning recyclables)
- Visitors (assisting at the recycle centre and with education programme)

Associates (offering skills and other resources, promoting our model and the larger national scene)

## Organizational Support and Commitment

### Summary of support provided for developing a Zero Waste policy for Raglan



Note input from community & community groups. The above figures for 2005

### The following is a description of the services offered to the local communities.

#### • Rural recycle depots

Two rural recycle depots – one at Te Mata and one at Te Uku. There is soon to be another one placed in Waitetuna. These depots are for the collection of recyclable materials from the rural communities. Prior to the depots being installed many people buried or burnt their waste on their property. Waste management in the rural area is a particular concern to the Waikato Regional Council who have assisted Xtreme Waste by providing the funding for the establishment of both of our depots through a grant from the Environmental Initiatives Fund. The depots were



installed in September and November 2000 and are managed by Xtreme Waste as one of its core community services.



### Rural Recycling Facility

- **Weekly kerbside recyclable collection**

Every Tuesday Xtreme Waste collects recyclables from the kerb in the Raglan urban area and the coastal communities at Manu and Whale Bays. Usually 3 truckloads are picked up each week for household collections and a further 5 for the businesses, totally 8 per week – approximately 80 m3 of recyclables.



### Xtreme Waste Recycling Truck

- **Tailored pickup service to the local business community**

Raglan has a range of businesses in the service area with many servicing the growing visitor population. These are high waste producing sectors with strongly seasonal peaks of waste production. Xtreme Waste offers the local business community a range of pickup services. Over 80% of the Raglan businesses, that create a significant amount of the waste, currently use Xtreme Waste to collect their recyclables. This ranges from a weekly pickup to four pickups a week for some.

**Waste exchange**

Xtreme Waste has established a 'waste exchange' based on the Waikato-Bay of Plenty Regional Waste Exchange. The exchange offers the community an opportunity to sell barter or buy anything they have or need. The idea is to further divert possible volume to landfill. The exchange has a number of additional advantages including diversion of waste from Transfer Station, linking wastes with uses and community participation.

- **Recycle shop**

The Recycle Centre has a very wide range of items for sale. The more popular items include clothes and bric-a-brac, books, electrical goods, plumbing and building supplies, car parts and white-ware. It is not possible to describe the massive range that is resaleable – you must visit!



- **Mulch and compost sales**

On site green waste is processed and turned into mulch and compost. Compost is sold from the Recycle Centre by the trailer load or delivered in the truck. Green waste recycling is the only 'closed loop' waste management system currently available in the catchment. It is also the highest volume form of waste for this community (approx. 40% of total volume). From the operation so far, demand appears adequate to sell this product through a range of customers.

- **Education**

Xtreme Waste provides an education service to the community about how they can participate in the programme, minimise their waste and what's happening on a regional, national and international level. It provides weekly Raglan Chronicle articles and radio shows. Many of the radio shows have included live interviews with other waste management people from other areas either in the studio or on the phone. **Information flow** has also included profiles on two websites ([www.xtremewaste.org.nz](http://www.xtremewaste.org.nz) and [www.zerowaste.co.nz](http://www.zerowaste.co.nz)), newsletters and newspaper articles, pamphlets, radio advertisements, displays, information days, community discussion paper, information packs to business community and presentations. **Guided tours** of the operation are available to a wide range of visitors from politicians, community groups, schools and councils. **Workshops** such as Composting and Wormfarming, Making Recycled Xmas Presents, Building your own Green house and Cloches are just a few of what was available during 2005.

- **Schools Education Program**

The education department also offers a schools education program and has been working successfully with a number of local schools developing zero waste principles and teaching units. They are currently preparing to deliver the Sustainable Households Program this year. Environment Waikato, Waikato District Council and Zero Waste Trust all participate by offering financial and technical support for the education and monitoring strategies.



- **Sponsorship of our community radio station**

Xtreme Waste sponsors the Raglan Community Radio Station in recognition of its importance to our community. The sponsorship allows Xtreme Waste to have a dedicated session on waste management for 2 hrs a week on a Friday afternoon.

- **Involvement in the national 'Enviro Schools' programme**

Two of Xtreme Wastes managers are also involved in the national pilot 'Enviro Schools' programme. The pilot is being trailed at Raglan Area School. Zero Waste is a major focus of the programme.

- **Organising fun community events**

For the Zero Waste campaign to work for Raglan we need a lot of community support and understanding. “*Fun community events*” was recommended to our community by a facilitator while speaking to a crowded Raglan town hall at a Sustainable Community workshop in 2000 “*You need to build a sense of community before you can expect it to act like one*”

To date Xtreme Waste has organised two recycled trolley derby days and four recycled raft races, which were each attended by over 1000 people. Last year and again in 2006 Xtreme Waste joined forces with Whaingaroa Environment Centre to combine the recycled raft race with the Maui dolphin festival. The days included; music, recycling games, beach clean up, quizzes. Other events include – a recycled fashion show, art from waste and various competitions. The aim is to continue to plan at least two events per year.



RECYCLED RAFT RACE

**Overall ..... a community that should be proud of itself.**