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Committee **Environment Committee**
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WREA Update

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the Wellington Regional Environmental Agency (WREA) meeting held on 21 May 2004 at Upper Hutt City Council.

2. Discussion

This report provides a summary of the issues discussed at the meeting.

2.1 Enviromart

2.1.1 Expanded Polystyrene Project (EPS)

Richard Moore, the Enviromart Co-ordinator, gave an up date on the EPS project. For the last year Richard has been working on a solution to recycle post consumer polystyrene. The result has been hugely successful. Richard has now developed a plant which takes waste consumer packaging and processes it into polystyrene pods for underfloor insulation. This is the first plant of its type in New Zealand, and is currently located at Porirua City Council's Trash Palace. Polystyrene pods have been used in the building industry for some time now, but only new polystyrene, along with some post industry waste has been used.

Richard has been collecting polystyrene packaging waste from The Warehouse for the last year. In nine days approximately 400 cubic metres (half a kilometre of polystyrene) was processed and turned into pods. The long term economic impact of the nine days processing is at least an \$80,000 saving in energy and health cost for the Wellington Region.

The project is now going to be taken over by Mana Community Enterprises. They hope that all of Wellington's polystyrene waste will be recycled and diverted from landfill. The plant offers a solution for the whole of the lower half of the North Island. The project is going to be formally launched in the next couple of months.

2.2 Tyres

As outlined in previous WREA reports to the Committee, tyres are one of New Zealand's largest special waste streams. New Zealand disposes of approximately 3-4 million tyres every year. Since the ban of tyres from landfill illegal dumping of tyres has increased. Dumping of tyres has potential health and fire risks.

Darryl Mudgway from Tyre Reclaim NZ was invited to give a presentation to the Committee on a new tyre recycling plant currently based in Auckland. This plant became operational in June and is the only one of its kind in New Zealand. The plant can process both car and truck tyres to produce clean tyre buffings and crumb rubber.

The recovery rate of good rubber per tyre is 60-70% and metal cord and steel can be recycled after separation. Stage 1 capacity is approximately 1.5 tonnes per hour. Tyre Reclaim NZ expects to be able to recover approximately 30% of the tyres from Taupo to Auckland in stage 1 of its operation. Stage 2 will cover the lower North Island, tying in with existing shredding businesses in the region.

The end product will be exported to established markets in Australia to be used for matting, rubber compounds and equestrian rings. Transit NZ is also currently running a trial on the use of rubber mesh in roading, potentially extending the life of road surface by 10 years.

Alison Handley from the Ministry for the Environment also gave an update on "Tyre Track" which takes effect from 1 July 2004. The Ministry for the Environment, in conjunction with the Motor Trade Association and the Tyre Industry, is working on a co-ordinated collection system for tyres. The collection concept is voluntary registration, with delivery to approved site collection points. The Ministry will provide funding for the first two years to allow the system to get established. A public campaign will raise awareness of the new system. It will aim to encourage the public to 'do the right thing' and show that the new system is easy to use.

2.3 Be The Difference

Andrew Cutler and Helen Wood gave an update on the 'Be The Difference' campaign. The concept of the upcoming mailout on waste was well received, although it was only creative content at this stage.

I raised that the point that the waste programme would be even more effective if it was assisted at a Local Council level. Tapping into Territorial Authorities and their networks can only benefit the programme.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. receive the report; and*
- 2. note the contents*

Report prepared by:

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