

Group rubbishes council's waste management proposal

By SCOTT MORGAN

Plans to revamp Auckland's waste management system are full of holes, one industry group says.

The Waste and Recycling Council is concerned the public hasn't been given enough information about the proposed "disposer pays" system.

And it wants the Auckland Council to reopen the submissions process and tell people about the actual costs involved.

The organisation represents large manufacturers like Fonterra and Carter Holt Harvey, along with some



Stephen Franks

waste management companies including Greenfingers Garden Bags and the Pink Bin Company.

About 55 percent of Aucklanders

pay for rubbish collection as part of their general rates.

But Waste and Recycling Council spokesman Stephen Franks says it's unclear how charging for each rubbish bin collected will change the situation.

"People can't work out whether it's good or bad. There's a whole lot of questions but the information is not there."

The only figure available from the Auckland Council so far is that a minimum \$2.50 collection charge for an 80-litre rubbish bin would be implemented.

There would be no direct

charge for collection of recycling and compost bins.

It's not known how much collecting a 140-litre or 240-litre bin would cost, Mr Franks says.

"They've talked about what the cost would be for the smallest bin but there's no information on what the average family uses."

Auckland Council estimates show each Aucklander produces 800kg of waste each year.

But Mr Franks says that doesn't tell the public much when putting together a submission on the issue.

The council should also make it clear whether rates

would decrease to compensate for user charges, he says.

The organisation is calling on the council to reopen the submissions process, which closed at the end of January – but this time with more information about the actual costs.

"We think the information is missing, not because they couldn't produce it but simply because they didn't like the answers."

Most private companies' rubbish is privately collected but Mr Franks is also concerned businesses' waste costs might go up if the plan regulates against disposing of waste in an uneconomic way.

A council spokeswoman says 1700 submissions have been received on the waste management plan.

The council focussed on the 80-litre example for simplicity's sake and since the changes won't occur until 2015, any costs provided now would only be indicative, she says.

And because households come in many different shapes and sizes "it would be difficult to arrive at a figure for the average family".

The 10-week consultation and public information campaign has been highly effective given the number of submissions, she says.