

JULY 2026



EVENT WASTE MINIMISATION AND MANAGEMENT GUIDE FOR ŌTEPOTI DUNEDIN



DUNEDIN | kaunihera
CITY COUNCIL | a-rohe o
Ōtepoti



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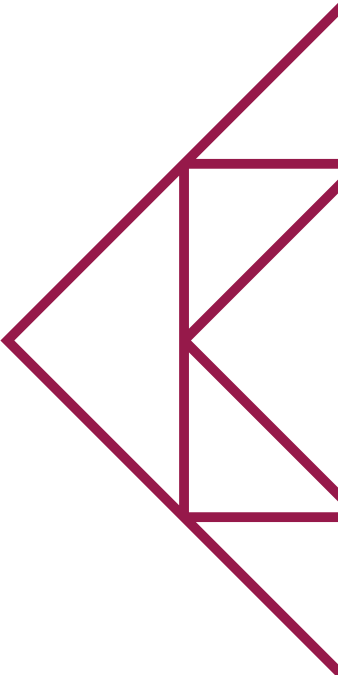
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This guide provides event organisers with practical steps to help minimise your event's waste and run cleaner, more sustainable events, big or small, in Ōtepoti Dunedin. It outlines how to identify your event's waste streams, set achievable waste reduction goals, work effectively with event stall holders, food vendors and attendees, and implement simple on site systems that reduce contamination and landfill waste.





WHY MINIMISE WASTE AT YOUR EVENT

Minimising waste at your event offers a range of positive benefits including:

- reduced environmental impacts by conserving resources and diverting waste from landfill (waste is a contributor to New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions).
- a cleaner, safer event site, enhancing the overall experience for attendees.
- lower costs due to reducing the need to dispose of waste to landfill.
- reduced post-event clean-up efforts.
- supporting Dunedin's circular economy and local businesses by prioritising local sourcing, reducing consumption, and encouraging reuse and recycling (as outlined in our Waste Management and Minimisation Plan 2025).
- stronger community connections, economic resilience, and sustainability outcomes.
- positive public image for your event due to visible environmental responsibility.





WHERE DO WE START?

The first step in minimising waste at your event is understanding what types of waste are being generated and where they come from. Work through the sections below to build a clear picture of your event's waste streams.

Where does your waste come from?

Event waste typically includes the following:

Front of house – this includes areas accessed by event attendees and is often where the highest volume of waste is produced. Common waste items include food and beverage packaging, items brought in by attendees, promotional materials from sponsors (such as brochures and giveaways), and waste from activities and entertainment.

Back of house – these areas are accessed by artists, staff, and contractors. Waste streams are similar to front-of-house waste but also includes contractor materials (such as cable ties, electrical tape, and damaged equipment), as well as event-specific waste.

Pack-in and pack-out – this waste is generated during event set-up and pack-down by staff and contractors. It typically includes contractor waste, food and beverage packaging, materials from event installations, and general packaging waste such as cardboard boxes.

Other considerations

When assessing your event waste, also consider the following:

- will food be served, and will beverages be provided in glass bottles or cans?
- how long does the event run and how many mealtimes does it cover?
- what types of stall holders and food vendors will be onsite and how many?
- what activities are sponsors and partners delivering?
- are attendees allowed to bring their own food and drinks?
- what are the expected number of attendees?

What are your waste streams?

Now that you understand where your waste is generated, the next step is to sort it into waste streams. As with household waste, event waste generally falls into three categories: recycling, general waste (rubbish) and organics. Identify what waste streams will be present at your event and think about how you're going to manage them.

Recyclable materials



Rigid plastic containers and plastic bottles (with recycling numbers 1, 2 and 5 only)

Milk bottles | drink bottles | shampoo bottles | ice cream containers | plastic meat trays | margarine containers | cleaning product bottles

Please do not flatten. Ensure they are all clean and rinsed. Put loose lids in the rubbish.



Steel and aluminium tins and cans

Please do not flatten. Ensure they are all clean and rinsed. Put loose lids in the rubbish.



Paper

Magazines | newspapers | junk mail

Flattened and clean.



Cardboard

Flattened and clean. Please remove plastic wrapping and adhesive tape.

Please note that items with a plastic lining cannot be recycled.



Glass bottles and jars

Unbroken. Ensure they are all clean and rinsed. Put lids in the rubbish.

General waste (red bin)



Containers (including compostable)

All cups, trays, boxes, and pottles go to waste, including containers that are labelled 'compostable'.



Disposable cups

Disposable paper and plastic cups, and single use coffee cups should all go into the red waste bin.



Non-recyclable giveaways

Glow sticks | promotional pens | keychains | non-recyclable tote bags



Serviettes / tissue paper

Should go in the red bin.



Soft (non-rigid) plastic and wrapping

All soft plastic such as food wrappers, chips or bread bags, and bubble wrap should go to waste.



Lids, caps, pumps and trigger sprays

All loose lids (including those from recyclable materials or containers) should go to waste.

Organic material – please see note below



Food scraps

Leftover fruit and vegetables | bread, pastries and baked goods | coffee grounds | loose leaf tea (no tea bags) | cheese | eggs | butter



Meat and animal products

Leftover meat | bones | shellfish | fish

Please note that if you are collecting food waste at your event, ensure you have organised a way to compost the food scraps afterwards. Green Island landfill site does not accept food waste for composting.

REDUCING YOUR EVENT WASTE

Make a commitment

As a team, make a clear commitment to reducing waste at your event. This could be as simple as setting achievable goals (such as banning single-use plastics or providing water refill stations), or as detailed as developing a plan that includes a target percentage of waste to be diverted from landfill.

Create a vision statement for your event's waste minimisation goals and share this aspiration with your team, vendors and attendees.

Document your commitment and share it with all key stakeholders. From there, create a simple action plan outlining how each goal will be achieved. For example, if you plan to eliminate single-use cups, notify food vendors ahead of the event by making it a part of your exhibitor attendance agreement and carry out compliance checks on event day.

To ensure success, we recommend starting with small, realistic, and achievable waste reduction goals then build momentum.

Engage with exhibitors

Exhibitors include all groups selling or showcasing goods and services at your event, such as stallholders, food vendors, bars, sponsor activations, and amusement rides. Food vendors are typically the largest contributors to event waste, so it is important to place particular focus on this group.

Identify the types of waste exhibitors are likely to generate and clearly communicate any waste reduction requirements you have and include them in your exhibitor attendance agreement. The following tips can help.

- Ask exhibitors what products they plan to sell and restrict or prohibit single-use and high-waste items such as straws, glow sticks and bottled water.
- Prohibit or limit materials like balloons, glitter, promotional flyers, and single-use cups. Suggest alternatives, such as QR codes to online information instead of flyers.
- Consider hosting a workshop for food vendors to showcase sustainable packaging options and provide supporting resources.
- Require food vendors to use shared condiment dispensers (e.g. sauce bottles) instead of single-use sachets.
- Require food vendors to correctly sort and recycle their back-of-house waste using the event facilities or take responsibility for removing it themselves.

- Communicate expectations clearly, in writing, and well in advance to reduce the risk of non-compliance.
- During event set-up, check in with exhibitors to ensure requirements are being met, and confidently enforce standards where appropriate, provided adequate information and support have been given beforehand.

Engage with attendees

Bring attendees along on your waste minimisation journey by clearly sharing your commitment and initiatives. The following approaches can help spread the message effectively.

- Share your waste minimisation goals and actions before and after the event via social media, digital newsletters and event websites. Encourage partners and stakeholders to amplify the message through their own channels.
- Engage with local media and invite them to cover your waste minimisation efforts and progress.
- Include clear information about waste systems and how to use them in event brochures, programs or mobile apps.
- Ask the MC to highlight waste initiatives and provide reminders throughout the event.
- Use clear, engaging signage around the site to guide and encourage correct waste disposal on the day.

Waste reduction initiatives

There are many practical and effective ways to reduce waste at your event. The ideas below are a great place to start.

- Appoint a member of your event's team to be the Waste Manager (more on this below in the 'Assemble your waste team' section).
- Wherever possible, choose reusable service ware.
- Avoid single-use items such as cups, straws, and bags.
- Use digital solutions including e-tickets, digital programmes, and electronic signage to reduce paper waste.
- Use reusable systems such as a reusable cup scheme such as Again Again (againagain.co.nz)
- Provide water refill stations to reduce plastic bottle waste.
- Encourage positive attendee behaviour by offering incentives for actions such as bringing reusable containers, with discounts on entry or food and drink.
- Make your event free from glitter and confetti to reduce waste.
- Use Bin Ambassadors to help attendees dispose of waste correctly and reduce contamination.

- Run social media campaigns encouraging attendees to share photos of waste-smart actions, such as using the correct bins, bringing reusable containers or picking up litter. Reward participation with a waste-free prize.
- Choose low-waste alternatives such as stamps instead of wristbands, bubbles instead of balloons, and UV body paint instead of glow sticks.
- Engage event staff by appointing sustainability ambassadors to support and champion waste minimisation initiatives.

You may also consider applying for a DCC Waste Minimisation Community Grant to support your initiatives, such as funding reusable service ware or creating reusable event signage.

For tailored advice or to discuss a grant application, contact the Waste Minimisation Officer at Dunedin City Council at waste.environmental.solutions@oa.dcc.govt.nz

❖ All Blacks vs France 2025





MANAGING YOUR WASTE

What bins will I need?

Make sure you have enough bins for each of your waste streams, and that they're big enough and placed in convenient spots, such as places where people are likely to eat. Overflowing bins are a nightmare for clean-up.

Here are some standard bins:

140L wheelie bins – ideal for smaller events, such as school fairs with max. 100 attendees.

240L wheelie bins – the most common type of event bin and are visible to attendees.

660L & 1100L wheelie bins – larger wheelie bins often used in the event waste yard (an area providing storage for large equipment and space for waste sorting). These are best utilised for light weight waste streams (no glass!). Please note these bins are only available through private waste management providers.

Gantry skips – Used for larger events with multiple waste stream and housed in the waste yard. Please note these skips are only available through provide waste management providers.

You can hire some event bins and resources from Dunedin City Council (DCC) for free, see below for more information.

You can contact the Waste Minimisation Officer at Dunedin City Council for advice on what bins you might need for your event via waste.environmental.solutions@oa.dcc.govt.nz

Dunedin City Council event kit

DCC has an event kit of wheelie bins and flags that are free to use following a pre-booking acceptance process.

1. You must book a **minimum of one month's notice before the event** to secure the resources you require.
2. To book the kit, go to dunedin.govt.nz/event-kit-hire, read the terms and conditions and fill in the form provided. Please note we cannot always guarantee that all the components of the kit will be available.
3. Email your completed form to waste.environmental.solutions@oa.dcc.govt.nz
4. When we have received your form, it will be assessed. If accepted, and if the kit is available on the date you want it, we will let you know where and when the bins can be collected.



The DCC event kit contains the following resources:

Bins types and flags	Use
240 litre wheelie bin – mixed recycling (plastic and cans)	
240 litre wheelie bin – glass bottles and jars	
240 litre wheelie bin – general waste	
Event bin lids for 240 litre wheelie bins	To place on top of the 240 litre wheelie bins.
140 litre wheelie bin - mixed recycling (plastic and cans)	Suitable for smaller events (such as a school fair) max 100 attendees
140 litre wheelie bin – glass bottle and jars	Suitable for smaller events (such as a school fair) max 100 attendees
140 litre wheelie bin – general waste	Suitable for smaller events (such as a school fair) max 100 attendees
23 litre food scrap bin	Suitable for smaller events only. Bookings will be at the Council's discretion; you will need to show that you have a suitable pathway for composting the collected food scraps.
Recycling and waste flags	To display by your event's waste stations, so that event attendees can easily locate the waste stations.



Assemble a waste team

Establish a dedicated waste team to manage waste effectively before, during and after your event. These could be paid or volunteer roles. Consider collaborating with a group who are fund raising for their organisation.

Key waste team roles may include:

Waste Manager – responsible for overseeing all waste-related operations, including bin placement and servicing, waste yard set-up, team coordination, and waste sorting. This role may also involve liaising with the waste service provider and/or DCC regarding bin hire and completing relevant health and safety checks.

Waste Removers – manage bin placement during event set-up and empty bins throughout the event. Do litter collection across the site.

Waste Sorters – sort waste into the appropriate waste streams as it arrives at the waste yard, where back-of-house sorting is in place.

Bin Ambassadors – engage with attendees at bin stations, guide correct disposal and remove incorrect items from bins to prevent contamination of the waste streams.

Waste sorting

Waste sorting is one of the most effective ways to maximise landfill diversion and to understand waste streams generated at the event. It involves a team manually separating waste into individual streams, removing contamination, and preparing it for removal off-site.

There are two main approaches to waste sorting.

1. **Bin station (sorting at source):** Bin Ambassadors are positioned at waste stations throughout the event. Their role is to engage with attendees, ensure items are placed in the correct bins and remove any contamination using litter-picking tools. For smaller events, crates can be placed on a table for each waste stream, allowing attendees to place items directly into the appropriate crate. A Bin Ambassador then empties the crates into the corresponding wheelie bins.

This approach significantly reduces contamination; however, it is resource-intensive, as it requires a Bin Ambassador to continuously engage with attendees to ensure items are placed in the correct crate.

2. **Back-of-house waste sorting:** waste is collected from bin stations by Waste Removers and transported to a central waste yard. There, Waste Sorters separate it into the appropriate waste streams.

To sort waste effectively, the following equipment and resources are essential.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** including cut-resistant gloves, hi-vis vests, face masks, and safety glasses.
- **Bin liners and event bin lids** for containing and managing waste.
- **Sorting tables** to work efficiently and safely.
- **Litter-picking tools** for handling loose or contaminated waste.
- **Waste infrastructure:** such as wheelie bins or larger gantry skips for separating waste streams.
- **Signage** to clearly communicate what type of waste goes where.
- **General event production supplies:** cable ties, gaffer tape, first aid kits, cleaning products, etc.
- **Job responsibility lists** so each team member understands their role.
- **Relevant health and safety documentation** to ensure compliance and safety.
- **DCC waste audit kit** containing tools and resources to help you carry out a waste audit.

Avoiding recycling contamination

Recyclable waste can easily become contaminated with non-recyclable items such as coffee cups, incorrect plastics or general waste. Excessive contamination may result in your recycling being rejected and despite your team's efforts it will go to the landfill.

To minimise contamination, consider the following steps:

- **Deploy Bin Ambassadors** at waste stations to guide attendees on which bin to use.
- **Restrict certain food packaging:** Avoid plastic containers that cannot be cleaned on-site, as these will likely end up in landfill. Instead, provide reusable options. Smoothies should also be avoided as the cups cause contamination due to attendees not being able to rinse them out.
- **Hand-sort recyclables** before they leave the event site. Volunteers can help ensure materials are correctly separated.
- **Use clear signage** on bins to make it easy for attendees to dispose of waste correctly.

Setting up your site

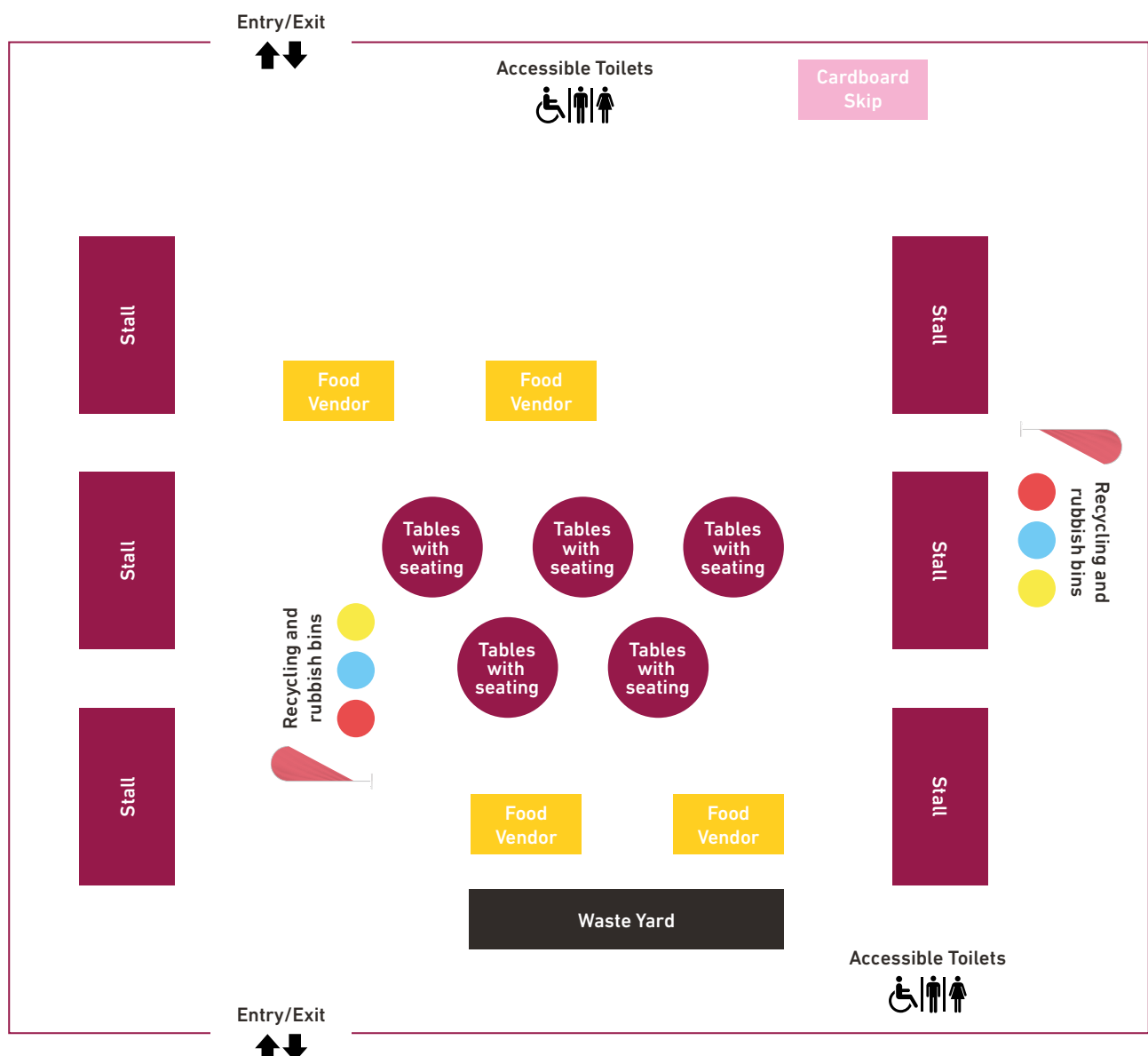
Once your equipment and waste team are in place, the next step is planning how to position everything across your event site. (See our example site plan below.)

Key considerations

- **Create bin stations:** group bins together to include one from each waste stream (recycling (rigid plastics and cans), glass and general waste. Standalone bins often attract items from other streams, leading to contamination.
- **Plan bin station locations:** mark the positions on your site map, ensuring they are evenly distributed and easily accessible. Focus on high-traffic areas such as food zones, entrances and exits, toilets, and back-of-house areas like catering marquees, stages, and artist areas.

- **Set up back-of-house waste yards for larger events:** these central areas store large equipment and provide space for waste sorting. Ensure they are contained, have vehicle access for waste removal, protection from weather (e.g. gazebos), and adequate lighting for evening events.
- **Consider external litter from alcohol-based events:** place bins in nearby streets and neighbourhoods and schedule your waste team to service them throughout the event.
- **Cover permanent bins:** use large bin liners to prevent overflow. Place bin stations in front of permanent bins as attendees often leave waste around them even when covered.

Ensure your waste team knows the location of all bin stations, waste yards, emergency exits, and external bins. Provide them with a handout of this information for easy reference.



Systems for success

To ensure everything runs smoothly on event day, it is important to establish clear, easy-to-follow systems. The following on-site systems are key to a well-managed event.

- **Site logistics:** plan how equipment, waste, and your team will move around the site. Create schedules for bin servicing, organise back-of-house access passes, and train Waste Removers on safely transporting waste to the event waste yard. Share this information with your team before the event so everyone understands their responsibilities. Signage is also an effective way to communicate on-site systems.
- **Waste sorting processes:** reduce contamination and streamline sorting by developing a clear process. Decide where Waste Removers will place waste for sorting, what waste streams go in each bin type and how full bins or skips will be managed. Provide on-site training for Waste Sorters to ensure they understand the process.
- **Site clean-up plan:** make post-event clean-up simpler by using a systematic approach. Start by removing all bins and large waste items, then clear remaining infrastructure (marquees, stages, food stalls, etc.). Conduct a thorough litter sweep across the site, ideally moving in straight lines for best results. High-attendance, alcohol-based, or concert-style events may require additional detailed sweeps. Some waste providers offer specialised equipment to assist with clean-up, which is useful for larger sites.
- **Health and safety considerations:** conduct a health and safety briefing for your waste team, covering emergency evacuation procedures, hazard management (how to identify hazards and report them), and incident management (how to respond and where to access first aid). Consider creating a risk register for recording and managing workplace hazards, specifically for the waste yard and any waste-handling equipment, so that your team are aware of any potential hazards and how to mitigate and manage them.







❖ Mid Winter Carnival 2021

AFTER THE EVENT

Share the results of your waste minimisation efforts with attendees and the wider public through social media. Consider conducting a waste audit to establish a baseline of the waste generated at your event as this can help inform improvements for future events. For guidance on conducting a waste audit and to book a free waste audit kit, visit the Waste Audit page on the DCC website.

We'd love to hear about your waste diversion results and your waste minimisation initiatives, what worked well and what didn't. Phone us on 03 477 4000 or send an email to: waste.environmental.solutions@oa.dcc.govt.nz

For any further help, contact the Waste Minimisation Officer at Dunedin City Council for advice and support via waste.environmental.solutions@oa.dcc.govt.nz.

CHECKLIST

Here's an easy-to-follow checklist summarising the key actions from this guide:

Key task	Individual steps	Tick
Establish your commitment	Engage with your team and establish your waste commitments and waste initiatives	
	Write an action plan to help meet your waste minimisation commitments	
	Carry out the action plan	
	Communicate your waste commitments to stakeholders, well in advance	
Identify equipment needs	Identify waste that will be generated by engaging with exhibitors, vendors and sponsors	
	Decide on waste streams and waste sorting options	
	Finalise equipment needs	
Apply for funding and/or sponsorship	Investigate local and national funding/grant opportunities and apply	
	Write a sponsorship proposal and approach suitable corporate sponsors	
Source waste management equipment	Choose a waste management provider or hire gear from the DCC events kit	
	Plan 'pack in and pack out' logistics	
Exhibitors management	Communicate food packaging requirements in writing	
	Run a food vendor packaging workshop (where applicable)	
	On event day conduct a pre-event exhibitors check to ensure they comply with any requirements, e.g., product and packaging types	
Site set-up	Organise waste yard set up and purchase any equipment required e.g. first aid kits, PPE	
	Plan front and back of house bin placement and plot on site map	
	Identify signage needs, arrange design, manufacture and installation	
	Plan pack in and pack out equipment	
Staff and volunteers	Identify roles and numbers required	
	Create schedules and supporting documentation (e.g. info sheets, H&S docs)	
	Recruit	
	Plan and carry out training	

USEFUL INFORMATION

Green Island landfill site resource recovery park	Rubbish and recycling drop off for smaller event loads. Also, where the DCC event bins are stored and collected from.	Rummage shop phone 03 488 2467 DCC Customer Service 03 477 4000
Waikouaiti transfer station	Rubbish and some recycling drop off for smaller event loads	All enquiries please contact DCC Customer Services 03 477 4000
Middlemarch transfer station	Rubbish, no recycling drop off	All enquiries please contact DCC Customer Services 03 477 4000

Search the internet for up-to-date local Dunedin waste service providers.

Talk to us via waste.environmental.solutions@oa.dcc.govt.nz about appropriate waste diversion options, e.g. surplus food waste collections, waste audit services or other that might be operating.



For advice or information

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