5 April 2018

Community Composting Initiative – Update

In April 2017, The Headwaters presented a proposal to install a continuous flow, automated composting facility (the Earth Flow^{TM} composter) on their site on Oban Street for processing compostable waste produced by Mrs Woolly's General Store and Camp Glenorchy, with the view to opening it up to the community, if there was sufficient interest. The Headwaters requested feedback on the proposal from the Glenorchy community through a presentation to the Glenorchy Community Association on 6 April 2017, followed by information on the Glenorchy Community website and interviews with local businesses and local residents *(apologies if we didn't get around to you all!).*

Thank you for everyone who provided input. The findings indicate we have a very environmentally conscious community, with the majority of respondents already undertaking home composting or providing food waste as animal feed. Whilst most local businesses were in favour of a community composting program in Glenorchy, quite a few of these were already committed to providing their compostable waste as a resource to other parties. Whilst most of the residents interviewed indicated they were in favour of a composting program in Glenorchy in general, only about one-third indicated they would participate. The key reasons given were that compostable waste was seen as a resource for animal feed and replenishing the soil, and also home composting was considered more convenient.

However, waste audits of The Headwaters operations during the off-peak and peak seasons, and discussions with interested local businesses, indicate that there is likely to be sufficient compostable material available to warrant installation of an Earth Flow composter in Glenorchy. The Headwaters is preparing an application to seek funding for the project, from the Ministry for Environment Waste Minimisation Fund. Applications must be submitted before 14 May 2018, with successful applicants notified in October 2018 and funding provided from March 2019. The project would also need to obtain the necessary consents prior to construction and operation.

The Intermodal Earth Flow composter that The Headwaters is considering, is made by Green Mountain Technologies (compostingtechnology.com/earth-flow), and designed to fit inside a 20 foot shipping container. The unit can process up to 0.5 tonne of organic matter per day using aerobic 'hot' (50 – 65 degrees Celsius) composting. Organic matter is added to the load end, and a travelling auger mixes the compost and moves the compost slowly towards the discharge end of the vessel producing a high-quality compost in two to three weeks.

The unit has the following engineering controls:

- Fully enclosed insulated system – provides control over process air, limits noise, and prevents pests.
- Mixing auger – oxygenates the compost, breaks up anaerobic pockets, and evenly distributes moisture. The auger can be programmed to mix 2-4 times per day, or used manually.
- Positive aeration system – to boost oxygen in the pile.
- Bulking agent – provides carbon for the composting process, absorbs moisture, and provides air space in the pile to maintain optimum composting conditions. The Headwaters is looking at shredded cardboard and dry garden waste as key bulking agents.
- Biofiltration – all process air passes through a biofilter to remove odour, before being released outside of the container.

The composter would be located at The Headwaters site on Oban Street. Whilst the details of the proposal have not been finalised, it is expected that the Earth Flow unit will be located behind the existing General Store away from the site boundary. Collection of compostable waste from the community is likely to be at a central drop-off point on site and any excess compost produced would made available to the community.

If you would like further information on the project, or have any comments or questions, please email The Headwaters at info@TheHeadwaters.co.nz, or drop a written comment in to the General Store, before 1 May 2018.

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