

Responsible Recycling for Lighting

The recent public and media activity surrounding single-use plastic bags in supermarkets shows us that the business issue of waste and recycling in NZ is tangible and real.

The lighting industry worldwide is going to great lengths to minimise the use of materials and to better recycle waste, and some NZ lighting companies are offering superior waste impact management.

LIGHTING HAZARDOUS WASTE

The market dominance of LED has largely eliminated the use of mercury containing lamps in new applications, however safe disposal of old fluorescent and HID lamps by users and contractors remains a problem, and illegal dumping is a common occurrence.

Emergency lighting batteries that contain lead or cadmium need specialised waste treatment.

All commercial and municipal construction contracts should require evidence of safe disposal of hazwaste via approved recycling contractors, and explicitly allow for the cost.

LIGHTING CONSTRUCTION WASTE

Construction site waste is a large proportion of NZ's landfill volume and this is an ever-increasing direct cost for building developers. This comprises the disposal cost of product packaging, and the disposal cost of end-of-life lamps and luminaires.

For packaging waste, prevention is better than cure, and savvy lighting suppliers are reducing the need for packaging and making better material choices. On some larger scale lighting

projects smart suppliers can save the client large sums in avoided landfill costs.

For replaced product, the separation and recycling of component materials can generate revenue rather than cost.

THE COMING CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The European Commission Single Lighting Regulation (SLR) is an impending new waste regulation, mandatory from 2020 for luminaires on sale in the European Union. The SLR supersedes the three current lighting waste regulations:

- WEEE – Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment
- RoHS – Restriction of Hazardous Substances
- REACH – Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals

The SLR also includes major new requirements for product design. The Circular Economy approach mandates the facility to customise, service, upgrade, or recycle luminaire parts over the product lifecycle. At end-of-life the product must be able to be dismantled and components separated, and for scrap to be reused as raw material.

WHERE TO FOR NZ INDUSTRY?

As luminaires are now world-products, it is inevitable that the SLR will change rest-of-world markets. The pressure for better



waste management in NZ is not going to diminish, and for progressive construction contractors and suppliers this is an opportunity to differentiate and excel. However, there is also an implicit onus for buyers to exhibit a purchasing preference for responsible suppliers.

Dealing with responsible suppliers and the selection of quality luminaires with extended-life performance is the cornerstone of reducing overall waste impacts.

LCNZ is the industry association for lighting manufacturing and importing companies in New Zealand.

www.lightingcouncil.org.nz

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