WM New Zealand to fast-track Redvale extension to protect regional waste resilience

WM New Zealand has confirmed it will apply for resource consent to extend the life of Redvale Landfill and Energy Park, using the Government's fast-track consenting pathway.

The application provides a time-limited solution to keep Auckland's waste network operating safely and affordably until the Auckland Regional Landfill (ARL) is operational.

A necessary solution to a critical timing gap

Redvale is Auckland's primary landfill and energy facility and receiving around half of the region's residual waste. Its existing landfilling consent expires on 31 December 2028.

Under normal circumstances, ARL would have been ready by then. However, legal appeals have significantly delayed its development, creating a timing gap that will deliver higher costs, emissions and congestion if Redvale were to close before ARL opens.

Extending the life of Redvale provides a temporary, 4 to 8-year solution for a 35-year-old facility that continues to operate to world-class standards.

"Redvale's role ensures continuity and protects Aucklanders from unnecessary disruption," says Evan Maehl, Managing Director of WM New Zealand.

"This short-term extension safeguards businesses, councils and households across the region from higher waste costs, more trucks on the road, and increased emissions from transporting waste long distances."

We've heard the community: clear end date and strengthened odour controls

WM acknowledges this is not the outcome many neighbours to Redvale wanted to hear.

The decision to seek a short-term extension is not taken lightly, but it reflects community feedback asking for certainty about when Redvale will stop landfilling and how impacts will be managed in the meantime.

"2036 is the absolute end date for landfilling. If ARL is consented and built sooner, landfilling at Redvale will cease sooner and the closure and post closure remediation period begins. If ARL progresses without further delay, the transition could be completed in as little as four years from December 2028," says Mr Maehl.

As part of the application, Redvale is proposing strengthened odour controls, including a smaller working face, thicker daily cover, and a 500-metre buffer where no odorous waste will be placed.

An automated complaint-logging system and environmental monitoring will provide faster response times and greater transparency.

Avoiding significant cost and environmental impacts

Independent assessments show that closing Redvale before ARL is operational would lead to:

- Based on an initial draft report, it suggests higher waste disposal costs – Aucklanders could pay between 10 – 83% more in disposal costs
- More traffic – around 200 extra truck movements daily on Auckland's southern motorway
- Higher emissions – up to 47,000 tCO_2e annually

"This is about safeguarding essential services, keeping costs manageable and minimising environmental impact," Mr Maehl says.

Redvale and Whitford Landfill & Energy Park, Auckland's two facilities licensed to accept Class 1 waste (general waste that can't be recycled, such as household rubbish and other putrescible material) together provide reliable disposal capacity on both sides of the Harbour Bridge.

Fast-tracking to meet critical timeframes

The Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 provides a transparent process for nationally and regionally significant projects that meet strong environmental and community standards. It includes decision-making by an independent panel, iwi and council input, and ministerial oversight.

Fast-tracking Redvale's consent application is the only realistic pathway to maintain continuity of essential waste services between 2029 and when ARL becomes operational.

"Redvale's proposed extension would provide a bridge to the, not a step backwards," Mr Maehl says.

"It allows us to maintain safety, affordability and environmental performance while Auckland transitions to its next-generation facility."

Air quality and water monitoring

In response to concerns raised by the local school community, WM will fund additional air quality monitoring using samplers placed at specific points around the boundary of the landfill, including one at the nearby school. This provides another

layer of assurance that any effects associated with the facility's operation are fully understood and that community concerns are properly addressed.

The monitoring will supplement the extensive modelling and sampling work already completed as part of technical studies, which have shown no detectable effects on the surrounding community.

In addition, independent testing of the school's drinking water, which is sourced from tank water, has confirmed it is safe to drink.

These measures reflect WM's ongoing commitment to transparency, continuous improvement, and maintaining the health and wellbeing of the community.

ENDS

Q&A: Redvale Landfill & Energy Park Extension

1. Why is WM applying to extend the life of Redvale?
Redvale's existing landfilling consent expires on 31 December 2028. Its planned replacement, Auckland Regional Landfill (ARL), has been significantly delayed by ongoing appeals. The extension (if consented) provides a temporary 4 to 8-year solution to maintain safe, local waste management until ARL is operational. Without it, Auckland would face higher waste costs, more transport emissions, and a loss of resilience across its waste network.

2. Isn't Redvale already more than 30 years old?
Yes, Redvale has been operating since August 1993. It remains one of New Zealand's most advanced engineered landfills, with an engineered liner system, leachate collection, gas capture/destruction and electricity generation systems. The proposed extension does not increase waste volumes, it simply allows continued use of existing infrastructure while ARL is completed.

3. What is "Class 1 waste"?
Class 1 waste refers to general waste that cannot be recycled or recovered, including household rubbish and other putrescible materials. It must be disposed of in a fully engineered landfill designed to safely manage emissions, odour and leachate. Both Redvale and Whitford Landfill & Energy Park are licensed to accept Class 1 waste, giving Auckland disposal capacity on both sides of the Harbour Bridge.

4. Why can't Auckland use other landfills instead?
There are no other viable options that can take Auckland's volumes within the scope of current consent limits. Hampton Downs is in the Waikato region, and we understand that new consents are being applied for in anticipation of the current consents expiring in 2030. Whitford has limited space and cannot absorb the

region's full waste stream. Sending waste to the Waikato would mean hundreds of extra truck journeys each day, higher costs and emissions, and greater risk from traffic or weather disruptions.

5. Why use the fast-track process?
The Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 was created to progress nationally and regionally significant projects more efficiently, while still protecting environmental and community interests. Fast-track involves decision-making by an independent panel, iwi and council input, and ministerial oversight. It's the only realistic pathway to ensure approvals are secured before Redvale's current consent expires.

6. How long would the extension last?
The extension would allow landfilling at Redvale for up to 2036, but landfilling would cease earlier if ARL is ready sooner. After landfilling ceases at Redvale, the closure and post closure remediation period begins. The extension simply ensures an orderly transition from Redvale to ARL and WM will not operate both facilities in parallel for any significant period of time. The community has been clear that they want a definitive end to landfilling at Redvale and WM agrees. If ARL progresses without further delay, landfilling could stop in as little as four years post December 2028.

7. What environmental improvements are being made?
The extension proposal locks in stronger environmental controls, including:

- Smaller working area (900 m²)
- Double-thick daily cover (300 mm)
- 500 m buffer from residential properties
- Automated odour complaint logging and faster response times
- Continued monitoring of air, water and gas systems
- New air quality monitoring at the school and other key locations around the site
- Independent testing of the school's tank water supply confirming it is safe to drink
- Redvale's gas-to-energy system already captures about 95% of landfill gas, which is used to generate renewable electricity.

8. How does this affect nearby residents and the local school?
WM acknowledges the community's concerns and is committed to minimising impacts.

The smaller working area, thicker cover, and 500m buffer are designed specifically to reduce odour. Air quality monitoring now includes sampling at the nearby school to provide additional assurance, and independent testing of the school's drinking water

has confirmed it is safe. Regular communication with the Community Liaison Committee and a new automated complaints system will make it easier for residents to raise issues and track responses.

9. How will this impact costs for ratepayers and businesses?
Based on the initial work of independent modelling by NZIER and NERAshows that without Redvale, Auckland's waste transport costs could rise by up to $21.6 million annually, and disposal charges could increase between 10% and 83%. Keeping Redvale available prevents those costs from being passed on to ratepayers and businesses.

10. Does this extension conflict with local development plans for Dairy Flat?
No. Auckland Council's Future Development Strategy identifies Dairy Flat as an area not expected to urbanise until after 2050, well beyond Redvale's proposed landfilling closure date. The extension stays entirely within WM's existing property and will end years before residential development is planned by Auckland Council to begin.

11. Is this setting a precedent for future extensions?
No. WM's commitment is clear: Redvale will stop accepting waste for landfilling once ARL is fully operational, and no later than 2036. This is a one-off, time-bound transition, not an expansion or a permanent change in direction.

12. How is WM engaging with the community?
WM continues to meet regularly with the Redvale Community Liaison Committee, iwi representatives and local residents. All fast-track application materials will be shared publicly, and community feedback will inform the conditions WM seeks.

13. What happens next?
WM will lodge a fast-track referral application informed by community feedback and detailed technical analysis. If the project is accepted for fast-track consideration, an independent expert panel will determine the proposal, including setting appropriate conditions.