

CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION WASTE – BEST PRACTICE AND COST SAVING

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Construction and Demolition (C & D) Waste is one of the largest global waste streams and makes up and estimated 50% of all waste in New Zealand¹. Yet for all its environmental impact it is often overlooked in the sustainable building process. This is despite the fact that much of it can be easily reduced, reused and recycled. This presentation will show that by incorporating simple waste minimization practices during the design, construction and demolition stages you can save money and increase the sustainability of your building.

The Ministry for the Environment, in collaboration with local government and industry, has developed a set of best practice guides on how to reduce C & D Waste. The Resource Efficiency in Building and Related Industries (REBRI) project developed a set of practical guides that reduces waste through improved resource efficiency. The guidelines look at the whole life of a building, from design and construction through to deconstruction/demolition. The guidelines are designed to be practically applicable ranging from 2 page 'Easy-guides' through to 20-30 page reports.

Once the guidelines were published work began on a number of cases studies. One example is the new Meridian Building being built on the Wellington Waterfront (expected to be completed by August 2007 in time for the final case study to be presented at the conference). This case study involved the Ministry for the Environment contracting a consultant to provide assistance in implementing the guidelines on the construction site. Results from the project so far include an on-site sorting system, material recycling, waste volume monitoring, staff education and material re-use. All this has led to the diversion so far of 5m³ paper, 4m³ mixed recycling, 2m³ metal and 200m³ of timber². Indeed the project has been so successful that Fletcher Construction is looking to expand the resource efficiency and waste minimization practices to other sites in Wellington.

References:

1. <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/waste/construction-demo/index.html>
2. Interim information from URS on progress of the Meridian Building Case Study.