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West Coast recycles

SUZELLE FOURIE

JOE PUBLIC, that notorious creator of waste, is to become recycle-conscious. "Waste not, want not" could take on a whole new meaning along the West Coast.

The new split-bag waste collection system, to be introduced from 1 November in Melkbosstrand, Parklands and Bloubergstrand, heralds a long overdue strategy of many hands making lighter work for the ecology.

Waste separation education is to start immediately, says Bertie Lourens of Wasteplan on-site waste management services, to whom the City of Cape Town has awarded this pilot project.

"If we want to slow down the development of new landfill sites, the people's environmental behaviour has to change," he said in his presentation to the Blaauwberg Subcouncil last Thursday.

Public participation will be of paramount importance to the success of the project, which is still voluntary at this early stage. On the first day of October an information campaign will be launched to generate enthusiasm for the double bag removal system.

The area involved – the suburbs where waste is currently not picked up by the municipality, but by a contractor – is actually to perform as a model for the rest of Cape Town. "We will be refining a model to roll out to the rest of the city," said Lourens.

Householders within the collection areas will be given recycled, clear white plastic bags to gather dry, clean recyclable materials such as paper, bottles, glass, cans and most plastics.

Each week on refuse collection day, this bag is to be placed in the wheelie-bin on top of the usual black plastic bag containing wet, food-contaminated and other non-recyclable waste. The recycling truck will arrive first to collect the clear bags before the normal refuse removal. The recyclables are taken separately to a sorting facility in Maitland, from where it will be recycled back into the market or the materials used for manufacturing other products.

Only waste placed inside the wheelie-bins will be collected.

To set the recycling wheels rolling, starter packs containing four clear plastic bags, information leaflets with full details of what should and should not be recycled, a reminder card and fridge magnet will be distributed in the designated areas.

All kinds of clean, dry and flat paper – from office paper to newspapers and magazines – are recyclable, as are the carton containers for milk and fruit juices.

Plastic bottles and containers for margarine, ice-cream, yoghurt, shampoo, household detergents and beverages are suitable.

Householders are asked to remove tops, to rinse and flatten plastic containers and cans and flatten paper and cardboard.

"People have been crying out for this," said DA council member Heather Brenner at the meeting. "I am sure most of the public will support the project."

Any inquiries about project may be directed to: Marthinus Waste (area refuse removal contractor) – 086 045 6786; Bertie Lourens (WastePlan recycling collections sub-contractor) – 083 229 7332; Tony Truter (City Council area waste manager) – 021 442 8103.

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