

## Cleanfill Solution Proposal

RDC, MDC



McIntosh Excavators Ltd

Trading As

**Environmental**

**Cleanfill**

**Management**

### **Introduction**

As a ratepayer and an interested party with our company's involvement in the roading network for the Manawatu and Rangitikei Districts I have watched the evolution of cleanfill management closely over the last 20 years. Historically it used to go from the slip sight to straight over the edge, then it has gone to a bluff or drop-off area. Now with the evolution of horizons and environmental and waterway management it is designed to go to a few well managed sites around the network.

The downside of this is that the material is being transported significant distances. This increases the carbon footprint of dirt removal whether from slips or capital works significantly. It increases the cost of the material removal through trucking costs, increases damage to rural roads with the volume of heavy traffic over it. It also has the issue of timeliness with the slip material taking much longer to be cleared. This is often temporarily stockpiled for later removal as well. The maintenance contractor is often in a race to open the road so material is stacked in the water table or laybys. This then results

in blocked waterways and then two site visits to clear a slip and traffic management etc. This adds costs to clearing the material away.

I see this all just being a result of the system and environmental restrictions that have evolved that have significant consequences. Horizons and Iwi are partners to a lot of the work around our networks as consultation with them is required on a large number of projects. Cleanfill management is an issue that if poorly managed can have a negative impact which then affects the relationship. We have witnessed this with Higgins abatement notice over the last year or two which has recently been cleared but had significant cost implications to the management of cleanfill for the ratepayer.

I have been involved in rubbish management for a number of years and was the GM for the purchase of Bonney Glenn landfill and management for a number of years. I have a deep understanding of the environmental implications of runoff, leaching and water management around a deposited material. Our company can offer a solution to the current situation that will reduce the risk to Council, reduce the costs to ratepayers and offer longevity to a problem that is ongoing around a large rural area.

We propose to source, certify and run cleanfill sites at multiple locations around the network that comply with all requirements. We negotiate a gate fee for the material which makes it easier for the maintenance contractor to clear the material. Our company would have an agreement and maintain the relationship with the landowner, keep up with environmental compliance and have an agreement with the DC for the disposal of cleanfill material. We currently have a large number of sites on standby with landowners ready to implement asap. We are also setting up sites further afield to meet other network needs. Our view is to have a significant number of sites where they are required so that material only needs to be transported the minimal distance which will minimise the carbon footprint and cost of disposal. We would maintain the sites and the consents which reduces the liability of breaches. We know that this can often happen in a weather event where the focus is on clearing a road, not the full management of that material to its final resting place.

I have broken down the benefits of this proposal below but as I traverse the network I see hillsides on the move, roadside berms and water tables being filled up an urgent need to open up multiple sites to enable efficient maintenance of our network. We have worked closely with the environmental manager at Higgins in organizing these sites.

### **Attributes**

McIntosh Excavators Ltd Trading as Environmental Cleanfill Management has been operated by myself (Paul Keenan) since 2004. We began in the floods of 2004 and have worked around the network for a large number of years. We have property in the RDC and MDC and are known to a large number of landowners. I also established Manawatu Waste Ltd as the first GM involved in rubbish management, landfill operation and a

number of associated activities. McIntosh Excavators also successfully operated the RDC transfer stations from 2008-2013 when we sold to the contract to Smart Environmental. We have been involved in cleanfill management for a long time and understand all aspects of its management intimately. We pride ourselves on establishing and maintaining good working relationships in all of our activities. Our company has a number of machines that would suit the establishment and management of cleanfill sites. We have consented and operated a number of consents for quarries and other operations around the regions.



### **Liability**

The abatement notice that Higgins received from Horizons highlighted the real risk to cleanfill management across the networks. In an event or a large construction activity the focus is on the road but often the problem is the end location of the material. I believe the risk and the potential liability of such breaches has a significant impact on the Council and the contractor. If these sites were operated professionally by a third party, it ensures the legal liability on the maintenance contractor and the Council is minimal with means that their core responsibility to maintaining the network is not compromised or put at risk. The negative impact on a breach has ongoing consequences to the working relationship between Horizons, Iwi and Council. It is tough enough moving projects ahead currently without these issues affecting them.

### **Longevity**

We have lived and operated in the area for nearly 30 years and are well respected and trusted through our dealings over this period. Landowners want to be able to deal with the same person. With staff turnover currently amongst firms then this is impossible to

achieve through Council and Contractors. We have the existing relationships with landowners, Council and Contractors and have settled personal. I would be responsible for the relationship management which ensures that affected parties would be dealing with the same person well in to the future.

### **Costs**

If we were to charge a gate fee per site then this would be negotiated. I estimate that the trucking cost is approximately 50cents per m<sup>3</sup> per kilometre. Currently we have material often going 10 kilometres and further. This is a large direct cost as well as indirect cost on the roading network. We are also double handling a lot of the material currently which also adds \$3-4/m<sup>3</sup> once you double handle. Our view would be to set up sites close to slip prone/capital work areas to suit the volume of material coming out. This saves significant direct and indirect cost and allows the job of maintaining the network to be much more efficient. I also believe the landowner should be compensated as it is an inconvenience to them through land loss and interruption. This is something I would negotiate directly with them to minimise but see it as important feature to reduce long term risk.

### **Management**

Cleanfill management is something we have been involved with for a long time. We have seen the slips off to waterways, truck accidents etc. We have shifted tens of thousands of meters of material on different projects. Once the sites are set up, we would work with the maintenance contractor to maintain the site to ensure truck access is easy and safe. At the end of the month the maintenance contractor would supply volume quantities to us and Council for invoicing. We would store road dig out metal to maintain the access requirement, signpost each site and secure it for access and maintain areas for wet and dry material as well as for logs. We would maintain the environmental controls regularly ensuring silt retention dams are cleaned regularly. Each site would get a site id that would be set up in Higgins and Councils systems. We have our own hay supplies and are in the process of getting a blower to distribute hay for these areas. We have the ability to utilise localised resources to help out in a major event. With our track record and experience we have all the skills to operate the sites to ensure they add value to the network and its partnerships.

### **Savings**

We believe the success of this proposal is saving ratepayer funds. By establishing multiple long-term sites in the best locations this will reduce the costs significantly. It also saves a large amount of time and energy by Higgins and Council staff trying to set these up and maintain them. We have seen this over the last few years with staff so busy on day-to-day operations that this area has lapsed. If new capital projects come up

requiring a site we can quickly and efficiently set a site up saving a lot of time and energy from Council.



## **Conclusion**

Over the last 20 years cleanfill management has changed significantly to the point where now it is not a core function to maintaining a network and is more a hindrance and a liability. Having a local company motivated to reduce costs to ratepayers involved with this has significant benefits as discussed. It will have direct cost savings with immediate effect by reducing cartage distances and times as well as reduce the risk of environmental incidents, especially as we are in the middle of a wet winter.

Environmental Cleanfill Management has the personal and resources to maintain excellent working relationships with all affected parties which will help turn the current problem into a solution. Council can still have its own facilities, and we would establish sites that work in with current areas, maximising the benefit to the network. We have worked closely with the environmental manager of Higgins in formulating our current planned sites. The saving on workload and network damage with the implementation of our proposal will lead to the easier and effective job of running the network.

In conclusion we think that this proposal will provide savings to the Councils while providing secure and long-term facilities for the timely maintenance and development of the network in an environmental and safe way.

## **Farmer Clearance**

During my time working around the network I have almost daily conversations around farmers clearing a tree, culvert or slip. They are frustrated and are inclined to do it less because they feel they pay for it in their rates. I understand the funding cycle and the system requirements faced by the maintenance contractor and the Council. Unfortunately, it will only get worse not better, and every dollar spent on our roads is achieving less and less.

The solution as I see it currently involves compensating farmers for road work done. Sounds simple but has a lot of issues around it. Health and safety, Traffic Management, proof of work, location etc.

I think all of these issues can be overcome. Farmers everywhere are enthusiastic about the idea. My thoughts are that farmers clear small slips, trees on the road, clear culverts. This would be on low volume roads and would occur straight away after it happened. This would help out the maintenance contractor to focus on high volume areas in an event. It should also reduce the culvert clearing component, a vital preventative measure. Often culverts block during an event and farmers are the ones who would do a quick check before an event. One farmer's comment last week was that he is always walking sheep along the road and it's nothing to flick some material out of the culvert as you are walking past. Minor slip clearing keeps the water table open and the farmer will use the dirt on a vulnerable piece of shoulder or where their fence is slipping away. Win win. Instead, the maintenance contractor has to put the material on a truck and cart it a significant distance. This adds cost, increased road maintenance and a much larger carbon footprint.

The benefit of this would be a significant cost saving in my view. My educated guess is that what a farmer would charge us \$500 for would equate to \$4-5000 for a roading crew to travel to site and do the same work. Ultimately if this would work I would set up an App for farmers that would enable them to photo the work before and after and this would date it and locate it.

Farmers would take pride in their stretch of road and that way the preventative maintenance will be high, the long term cost benefits will be significant. I have completed a number of retaining solutions around RDC and MDC this year alone that were caused by blocked waterways sending water to a vulnerable area and taking out the road and shoulder.

In Summary I think this idea will take some work but has the potential to become a nationwide solution. The environmental impact is significantly less, cost is reduced to the community, and we get some pride back into our rural community with their roads. I would be happy to front to Waka Kotahi with RDC if required.