

**Unofficial notes taken by the Packaging Council from the speech given by  
Hon Dr Nick Smith, Minister for the Environment**

**Packaging Product Stewardship Scheme Meeting**

**26<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

Markets for recycled products are under threat.

The recession will put enormous pressure on what we do. We need to consider how those in the waste sector can generate more jobs.

The National Party was elected on the mandate set out in its Blue Green vision document.

We need good, smart economic policy to be married with good environmental policy.

Decisions must be underpinned by good science. We need to consider waste management policies which stack up well technically.

The new government believes in collaboration. We have done ourselves a disservice by not collaborating well in this country. If we are to find our way through these issues, we need to work collaboratively.

The government wants to see a collaborative approach and will be influenced by constructive dialogue rather than by organizations taking a lobbying view, polarized on particular sides.

The Packaging Council should be given full points for bringing a range of people together today.

The Packaging Accord 2004 has achieved some good results. Packaging is a highly visible waste stream and the drop in commodity prices will present challenges for meeting recovery targets. For the new packaging product stewardship scheme, the world is a different place to 2004. People are more aware. All the polling shows that recycling is important to people. Packaging is a very visible part of the waste stream. But we are in a tough economic climate so we have to be realistic about goals.

Everyone has to take responsibility. For the packaging product stewardship scheme, the goals must be ambitious but realistic.

The Accord focuses on recovery targets. You now need to look at the entire life cycle. From innovative design through to disposal. The Waste Act encourages the establishment of voluntary schemes and the government would strongly prefer not to regulate.

However, if industry fails to set up voluntary schemes and products are identified as having an environmental impact or environmental harm, then product stewardship will become mandatory. This is an opportunity to build your own scheme.

It is important to develop on-shore recycling. Stockpiling is not a long term option and landfilling materials is not an option. The credibility of recycling is based on materials being recycled. We need to ensure robust recovery schemes are in place.

The Accord is a good example of industry working collaboratively as we enter a new era for product stewardship.

I do favour a market based approach. I like price signals such as the waste levy. I am enthusiastic about supermarkets charging for plastic bags. I want to encourage pricing signals.

Councils and community recyclers need to be engaged.

The government encourages you to keep on track with developing a product stewardship scheme. There has previously been no leverage to deal with free riders. The new Act has ways of putting pressure on them. I expect the Packaging Council to lead the charge to get free riders on board.

I applaud the Packaging Council for taking this initial step and encourage collaboration. In conclusion this is an exciting challenge to implementing the new Waste Act.