



Case Study

2025

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Introduction

FillGood is a ground-breaking initiative based in Wellington, New Zealand, aimed at eliminating single-use waste at events through a city-wide reuse system. With a vision for regional expansion, FillGood provides a scalable solution to reduce event waste, improve resource efficiency, and normalise reuse behaviours.

This case study explores the collaborative journey that brought FillGood to life, highlighting the challenges, successes, and partnerships that have shaped its development.

Working Group Members

The FillGood project was made possible through the collaboration of a diverse group of stakeholders, including:



Ali Kirkpatrick
FillGood



Christie Kamphuis
Bettercup



Brandon Chik
Wellington Regional
Stadium Trust



Damien Gartner
Wellington NZ



Hamish Allen
Wellington Regional
Stadium Trust



Hannah Blumhardt
Reuse Aotearoa



Iain Bamber
Hospitality New Zealand



Jaedin McCartney
Wellington NZ



Joanna Langford
Wellington City Council



Karina McCallum
Nonstop Solutions



Polly Griffiths
Sustainability Trust



Renee Rushton
Wellington City Council

The Problem

Events contribute significantly to New Zealand's waste crisis, with an estimated [12.59 million tonnes of waste ending up in landfill each year](#).

While compostables were initially explored as a solution, they were not a long-term fix—many ended up in landfill due to contamination, collection system failures, and limited processing infrastructure.

A critical barrier to implementing reuse systems at events in Wellington was the lack of dedicated washing infrastructure and the supporting logistics service. Without facilities capable of efficiently cleaning and processing reusable items and the operational model to manage the ongoing collection, washing and redistribution of clean serviceware remained impractical.

Recognising this challenge, stakeholders from councils, venues, and sustainability organisations came together to develop a scalable, long-term solution—leading to the inception of FillGood.

The Genesis of FillGood

The conversation around reuse gained momentum as stakeholders recognised that compostables were not a satisfactory solution to single-use waste. However, for reuse to work, infrastructure, service and logistics gaps had to be filled.

In 2020, Wellington Regional Stadium Trust (WRST), the trust that was set up to own, operate and maintain the venue currently known as Sky Stadium. The began discussions with sustainability experts, reusable cup suppliers, and event organisers to explore a city-wide approach to reuse. The idea evolved into a broader vision: establishing shared infrastructure that could enable a seamless, scalable reuse system across Wellington's events, venues, and hospitality sector.



By April 2021, a pivotal hui (meeting)—organised by the Wellington Regional Stadium Trust and facilitated by Bettercup—brought together key stakeholders, including:

- Wellington City Council
- Venues Wellington
- Reuse Aotearoa (formerly Takeaway Throwaways)
- Sustainability Trust

This hui established a collective vision for FillGood, but stakeholders agreed that collaboration, infrastructure, and funding were essential for success.

To turn this vision into action:

- A **Working Group** was established to guide development, operating under an agreed Terms of Reference that outlined roles, responsibilities, and objectives. The group included representatives from Bettercup, Sustainability Trust, Reuse Aotearoa, Nonstop Solutions, Akina, Wellington Regional Stadium Trust, and Wellington City Council, ensuring a collaborative approach to designing the washing infrastructure and operational model for large-scale reuse.
- Sustainability Trust agreed to oversee and support the initiative.
- **Bettercup, Reuse Aotearoa, Nonstop Solutions, and Akina** conducted feasibility studies and technical research to design the washing infrastructure, operational model for large-scale reuse and support with decisions around fleet selection.

Through collaboration, research, and a commitment to waste reduction, **FillGood was created as a scalable reuse system to support event sustainability in Wellington.**

Collaboration and Partnerships

FillGood's success is built on strong partnerships and collective action, bringing together key stakeholders to drive a city-wide shift towards reuse.

Key Contributors:

- **Wellington City Council** – Advocated for reuse within its waste strategy, aligning FillGood with the city's zero-waste ambitions.
- **Wellington Regional Stadium Trust and the Sustainability Trust** – Provided operational insights, venue access, and sustainability expertise to shape the initiative.
- **Waste Free Welly** – Played a critical role in:
 - Identifying reuse culture as one of Wellington's three main waste priorities.
 - Advocating for council support to embed reuse and circular economy principles into city planning.
- **Sustainability Trust and Takeaway Throwaways (now Reuse Aotearoa):**
 - Sustaining momentum within the Working Group, ensuring continued collaboration.
 - Providing umbrella and legal entity for funding applications.
 - Providing staff time to deliver funding applications and manage feasibility studies.
- **Bettercup:**
 - Facilitated the 2021 hui, bringing key players together, setting objectives, and aligning stakeholders on a scalable reuse model.
 - Led technical research and feasibility study, designing the wash infrastructure operational model to enable large-scale reuse.
- **Nonstop Solutions** – Contributed knowledge in logistics and operational efficiencies, wash-trailer solution and supporting system implementation.

Funding & Support:

- **Ministry for the Environment's Plastics Innovation Fund** - Provided essential funding to build reuse infrastructure.
- **Manatū Taonga | Ministry for Culture & Heritage** - Provided funding that primarily supported the operational costs required to run the system
- **Wellington City Council** - Supported funding applications and incorporated reuse principles into its waste reduction strategy. Paid for initial feasibility study undertaken by Bettercup.
- **Wellington Regional Stadium Trust** - Provided funding and a space for infrastructure at no cost. Founding member of the Working Group.
- **Hospitality NZ** - Provided funding for Akina Feasibility Work.
- **Packaging Forum** - Provided a small grant to support the fit out of the wash trailer.
- **Akina** - Engaged to provide excerpt guidance on establishing the FillGood business model.
- **Takeaway Throwaway (now Reuse Aotearoa)** - Funded research into safe and sustainable fleet procurement options.

Key Outcomes of Collaboration:

- ✓ A unified Working Group to drive development and maintain momentum.
- ✓ A scalable reuse system, backed by feasibility studies, funding for operations and infrastructure investment.
- ✓ Integration with Wellington City Council's, broader strategic goals for zero waste, zero carbon, and economic well-being.
- ✓ The funding to make it all happen.



The Working Group Today

The Working Group (WG) remains active today, ensuring FillGood continues to evolve and expand. The WG meets monthly to track progress, address challenges, and ensure FillGood continues to grow and innovate. Its role includes:

- **Strategic oversight** – Guiding FillGood’s development and sustainability.
- **Collaboration & advocacy** – Engaging with councils, industry, and stakeholders to champion reuse and FillGood.
- **Business model development** – Supporting FillGood’s long-term viability.
- **Branding & public engagement** – Shaping communication strategies to drive adoption.
- **Operational efficiency** – Monitoring performance and refining logistics.

The Solution: A Collaborative Reuse Model

FillGood is a community-led initiative that embeds reuse into events, venues, and beyond through:

- **Consistent Branding Over Event-Specific Systems** – FillGood operates as a consistent reuse brand, ensuring reusables are recognised across different events rather than being event-branded.
- **Scalability & Growth** – FillGood is intended to grow into being a network of washing infrastructure and services across the city that expands reuse beyond events. This includes setting up new washing nodes for different types of reusable packaging and tapping into underutilised washing infrastructure (e.g. hospitality, commercial facilities) to increase efficiency.
- **Cultural Shift** – Normalising reuse by operating a well-run, visible reuse system at events across the city and reinforcing clear, simple behaviours through strong branding and public engagement

Key Milestones

● 2019:

- Wellington Regional Stadium Trust initiates discussions on waste reduction, initially exploring compostable packaging as an alternative to single-use plastics.
- Waste audits reveal significant contamination issues and gaps in compostable processing infrastructure, highlighting the need for a better solution.

● 2020:

- Wellington Regional Stadium Trust broadens its focus to reuse systems, consulting with sustainability and zero waste experts, including early discussions with Bettercup.

- Stakeholders recognise that reuse offers long-term environmental and economic benefits and aligns better with climate goals

● April 2021:

- Bettercup facilitates a hui, bringing together key players such as Wellington City Council, Venues Wellington, Reuse Aotearoa, and Sustainability Trust.
- The hui establishes a collective vision for FillGood, prioritising collaboration, infrastructure development, and scalable reuse solutions.

● 2021 - 2022:

Stakeholders begin groundwork for the reuse system:

- Validation and feasibility studies are conducted, including the design of wash infrastructure led by Bettercup.
- Sustainability Trust and Reuse Aotearoa, play a pivotal role in navigating the funding application process.
- Community engagement ramps up, with presentations at the Parliament Sustainability Expo and other key events to build awareness and stakeholder support.
- Initial funding applications are submitted to the Ministry for the Environment's Plastics Innovation Fund, with critical input from multiple stakeholders, including Bettercup, NonStop Solutions, Sustainability Trust, and Reuse Aotearoa.

● October 2022:

- A successful MfE Plastics Innovation Fund application secures essential funding for infrastructure and operations.
- Match funding from Wellington City Council and Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH) plays a crucial role in enabling the project to move forward.

● 2023:

- Final funding deeds are signed, allowing FillGood to operationalise its reuse system.
- Ali, the Operations Manager, is hired, bringing dedicated expertise to drive project delivery and operational success.
- A branding exercise is undertaken by Strategy Creative, establishing a strong, recognisable identity for FillGood to support public engagement and adoption.

● 2024:

- Infrastructure is installed and bought, including high-capacity washing equipment and reusable item collection points for use across pilot venues.
- Vendor and staff training begins, focusing on integrating reusables into event operations seamlessly.

2024:

- The focus remains on scaling operations, refining logistics, and increasing public engagement.
- FillGood launches officially, providing reuse systems for events across Wellington.
- Initial data shows a reduction in single-use packaging waste at participating events, with strong vendor and attendee uptake. Ongoing tracking will further quantify FillGood's long-term impact.

2025 and Beyond:

- FillGood is fully operational in Wellington, with a view to expand across the entire region and potential to expand nationally.
- Work continues to tap into underutilised washing infrastructure and explore reuse opportunities beyond events, including hospitality and public spaces.

Impact as of March 2025

FillGood is already transforming event sustainability in Wellington, delivering measurable results:



Waste Reduction

Avoided 160,000 single-use items, preventing this event waste stream entirely through a circular reuse model.



Community Engagement

Partnered with 192 events run by multiple events, festivals venues, reaching 58,6714 attendees and increasing public awareness of reuse.



Infrastructure & Operations

Processed 142,409 reusable items through the system, with washing capacity of 800 cups per hour and 400 food items per hour. Additionally, a team of 15 regular casual staff collectively delivered an average of 250 hours of work per month.



Visibility & Advocacy

Presented at the Parliament Sustainability Expo and other events, strengthening industry and public support for reuse.

Looking Ahead.

FillGood's next steps are focused on growth, optimisation, and expanding access to reuse solutions.

Key Initiatives:

- **Expanding Event Coverage** - Partnering with additional venues and event organisers to extend the reach of the reuse system across Wellington and into neighboring regions.
- **Improving Logistics** - Enhancing the washing and return infrastructure to ensure seamless operations even during peak demand periods.
- **Equitable Access** - Ensuring flexibility in pricing models so that the service is accessible to a broad range of events, including community and kaupapa Māori events.
- **Infrastructure Growth** - Exploring opportunities to scale washing capacity, including establishing new washing infrastructure nodes, and tapping into underutilised washing infrastructure to expand FillGood's impact beyond events.

- **Knowledge Sharing:**

- Supporting other regions in adopting FillGood's model to build a national reuse network.
- Documenting key learnings, processes, and operational insights to create a playbook for reuse infrastructure.
- Engaging with networks of industry peers working to improve washing infrastructure and operational efficiencies.

- **Monitoring and evaluation of impact:**

- Tracking waste reduction metrics, system performance, and user engagement to refine operations and demonstrate impact.

These tangible actions position FillGood to deepen its impact while inspiring a broader shift towards sustainable event practices and reusable packaging systems.

Key Learnings

One of the most important lessons from the FillGood journey was the need to **think beyond “business as usual”** to get ambitious ideas off the ground. While the project was environmentally driven, securing funding required reframing its value through broader lenses—such as job creation, sector innovation, and public benefit.

**Manatū
Taonga**
Ministry
for Culture
& Heritage

A pivotal example of this was the funding received from **Manatū Taonga | Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH)**. Without this support, FillGood would not have progressed. The MCH's investment was tied not just to environmental outcomes, but also to improving the sustainability of the events sector, enabling new jobs and supporting local infrastructure.



This funding was only possible because the Working Group leveraged existing relationships, networks, and strategic storytelling to show that FillGood aligned with more than one agenda. It highlights a key learning for others: to secure funding for transformative change, you often need to look beyond your core mission and demonstrate cross-sector value.

Conclusion

The FillGood project shows what's possible when the right people come together to solve a problem. By bringing stakeholders, venues, and councils on board, it has proven that city-wide reuse systems can work at scale—reducing waste and making reusable alternatives practical and accessible. With Wellington as the foundation, the goal is to expand region-wide, ensuring more events, venues, and industries can ditch single-use for good.



From early discussions to a fully operational reuse model, FillGood has tackled the biggest barriers to reuse—lack of washing infrastructure, logistics, and stakeholder buy-in—by embedding practical systems that work in real-world event settings. The result? Less waste, smarter resource use, and a clear pathway for others to follow.

FillGood proves that large-scale reuse isn't just an idea—it's a practical, working solution. As it continues to expand, it sets the stage for a broader shift toward reuse across Aotearoa.

How can others do it?

For cities or organisations looking to replicate FillGood, consider these detailed steps:

Engaged Stakeholders.	
	Identify key partners such as local councils, event organisers, sustainability experts, and community groups.
	Host workshops to align on a shared vision and goals and get buy-in.
	Establish clear roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder to ensure accountability.
	Confirm commitment from key venues and events to use the reuse system once live.
Assess Feasibility.	
	Conduct waste audits at events to understand the current waste stream and identify key challenges.
	Evaluate the infrastructure and logistics needed for washing, storage, and distribution of reusable items.
	Perform a cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate the long-term savings and environmental impact.
Secure Funding.	
	Research and apply for grants, such as government sustainability funds or private sponsorships.
	Explore partnerships with businesses that can provide financial or in-kind support.
	Present a compelling business case to potential funders, emphasizing the environmental and economic benefits.
Design and Implement Infrastructure and Supporting System.	
	Invest in modular, scalable washing systems that are fit-for-purpose based on local event needs.
	Develop a robust logistics plan for the collection, cleaning, and redistribution of reusable items.
	Branding and marketing are critical—collaborate with MarComms professionals to invest in a strong identity, signage, and public messaging.
Branding and Public Identity.	
	Have a stronger, recognisable brand, not just an operational system. Ensure event attendees instantly know where to return items through clear, consistent branding and messaging.

	Collaborate with MarComms professionals to create a strong identity, signage, and public messaging.
	A clear and consistent reuse brand builds trust, drives participation, and makes return systems easy to navigate.
Build Public Engagement.	
	Leverage existing networks—environmental groups, sustainability hubs, and council-led initiatives—to spread the message.
	Partner with advocacy groups to increase visibility and engagement.
Secure Funding.	
	Track key impact metrics, such as waste diversion rates, system efficiency, and user feedback.
	Use data to refine logistics, improve uptake, and address challenges.
	Share lessons learned with other cities and organisations to inspire broader adoption.
Plan for Scalability.	
	Document best practices to create a replicable model for other regions.
	Work with regional councils, national organisations, and sustainability networks to expand reach.
	Tap into existing sustainability networks like Environment Hubs Aotearoa and Zero Waste Network, which have been critical in providing support and advocacy.

Bettercup's Contribution



Bettercup has played a pivotal role in the inception and success of FillGood. As the facilitator of the foundational workshop in 2021, Bettercup brought together key stakeholders—including Wellington City Council, Venues Wellington, Reuse Aotearoa, and Sustainability Trust—to establish a shared vision for a city-wide reuse system. This gathering marked the beginning of a collaborative effort to reduce event waste through an innovative, scalable reuse system.

Leveraging expertise in reuse infrastructure and system design, Bettercup provided an initial feasibility study, critical insights into operational logistics, fleet requirements, and implementation strategies. This guidance was instrumental in shaping early funding applications, including the successful submission to the Ministry for the Environment's Plastics Innovation Fund, securing essential financial support for FillGood's development.



Christie Kamphuis, representing [Bettercup](#), became a founding Working Group member, ensuring continuity, alignment, and integration of best practices as the project evolved from concept to execution. Today, she continues to mentor the FillGood team, providing strategic insights and guidance on scaling FillGood's impact.

Bettercup remains a key partner of FillGood, offering strategic direction and expert advice as FillGood adapts to new challenges and opportunities.

This ongoing commitment to sustainability and innovation has helped set a benchmark for reuse initiatives, inspiring similar projects in Australia and internationally.



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