

Four million plastic bottles a year to be recycled into plastic pipes

Auckland, XX January 2019:

Local company Iplex Pipelines has successfully used recycled plastic bottles to make drainage pipes at its Palmerston North manufacturing site – with the potential to use more than four million plastic bottles per year.

The innovative initiative comes at a time when the impact of China limiting plastic imports is starting to be felt within the recycling industry.

Iplex Palmerston North Manufacturing Manager Vaughn Bedser says, “Iplex had been looking for ways to integrate recycled material into its manufacturing and decided to look into recycled polyethylene after one of our people spoke with local supplier Aotearoa NZ Made.”

Aotearoa NZ Made is a major recycler of milk, cleaning and cosmetic product bottles is currently the only plastic recycler and manufacturer in the lower North Island. Like drainage pipes, these bottles are made from polyethylene (PE) plastic.

The two local companies made a deal – Iplex would commit to a purchase 25 tonnes per month of the recycled PE and work out how to incorporate it into its product line, if supply could be sustained.

In a three month trial, Iplex carefully worked out how to combine the PE into one of its bestselling products – a land drainage pipe commonly used on farms – without compromising the durability or strength of the product.

“Our trial using recycled plastic was a huge success. Our technician determined how to carefully combine the right amount of recycled PE into the line without any impact on pipe quality.

“We will be continuing to use recycled plastic for the foreseeable future. Through using at least 25 tonnes of recycled PE each month, it will reduce the production of new plastic, and recycle more than four million plastic bottles in the space of a year.

“We’re really pleased our initiative can make a difference to the growing problem of plastic waste in New Zealand,” says Vaughn.

Iplex has a zero plastic waste product to landfill process and is looking at other ways to use recycled material in its operations.

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About Iplex Pipelines

Iplex is New Zealand’s leading manufacturer and supplier of plastic pipelines offering a broad range of products and solutions supported by an experienced advisory team of pipeline engineers and technicians. Iplex employs more than 185 people throughout New Zealand and has manufacturing sites in Christchurch and Palmerston North.

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