

# FRESHCHOICE OMOKOROA

**“We’re diverting 90 percent of our waste from landfill but we’re not really content with that. Thanks to the waste audit, we have more ideas on how to attack that last 10 percent.”**

Steve Ling - FreshChoice Omokoroa - Owner/Operator.



## ABOUT FRESHCHOICE OMOKOROA

Husband and wife team Steve and Chantal Ling left their Canterbury supermarket to open the FreshChoice Omokoroa store in 2016.

The owner-operated business opens seven days a week, 7am to 9pm, and employs 30 people in the coastal community.

The FreshChoice franchise is managed by a division of Progressive Enterprises Ltd, which is in turn owned by Australasian supermarket giant Woolworths Ltd.

## A SIGNIFICANT SAVING

When the Lings arrived in Omokoroa, Chantal was determined to continue with the extensive waste minimisation efforts she had initiated in their Methven store.

“We struggled a bit at the start because Omokoroa had no recycling facility so we called the Council for help and they offered us a free waste audit,” Steve says.

“We were a bit cynical, but when the waste audit team turned up it was a pleasant surprise. They were independent and thorough and gave us really good insight into what we were doing well and what opportunities we had to improve. We are genuinely determined to help the environment but reviewing systems is also healthy in business.”

Consequently, the Lings are improving sorting systems, increasing recycling rates and have purchased a compactor that should slash their landfill waste volumes by 700 percent.

“Instead of filling a skip each week, we hope to end up with a wheelie bin and that will be a significant cost saving.”

“More importantly, Omokoroa is so beautiful and we want to leave it as good as it is now, or better, for future generations.”

## EXISTING WASTE MINIMISATION SOLUTIONS

FreshChoice embraces waste minimisation in multiple ways, including:

- A dedicated recycling area - having the right space and systems is key to good sorting and storage of materials
- Staff training to correctly implement and utilise recycling systems
- Tracking and recording the return of materials such as polystyrene boxes, produce crates and pallets to provide good data
- Turning empty cardboard boxes into resources, providing a financial incentive to carefully separate this material from landfill waste
- Replacing polystyrene meat trays with recyclable trays in the butchery
- Continually seeking new opportunities to minimise waste, ensuring ongoing focus on high diversion rates.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

FreshChoice employees have taken the waste reduction message to heart and several have installed recycling bins in their own homes as a result of their education at work. Steve says the Council audit included advice on ways to tell customers about their recycling systems, and the Lings also hope to share their experience - and information from their waste audit - with other supermarket owners.

“I think we have a great opportunity to influence our community and our industry in a positive way.”



## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

*The waste audit found that, each year, FreshChoice Omokoroa:*

- Carefully sorts and recycles more than 40 tonnes of cardboard. Thanks to investing in a baler, this cardboard can be sold
- Gives away about 25 tonnes of food scraps to pigs and chooks
- Donates a tonne of edible food to a local charity group
- Presses 12 tonnes of clear shrink wrap for recycling
- Returns about 52 tonnes of packaging to suppliers for reuse
- Returns hundreds of polystyrene boxes and almost 14 tonnes of plastic produce crates for reuse
- Sorts almost three tonnes of beverage containers and office paper for recycling
- Ensures staff members are well trained to sort materials carefully and only landfill items that cannot be reused or recycled
- Recovers more than 150 tonnes of waste for reuse or recycling while sending just 16 tonnes to landfill each year.



## AWARDS

- Runner up - retail excellence, Westpac Tauranga Business Awards 2017
- Winner - customer service, Westpac Tauranga Business Awards 2016
- Winner - customer service, New Zealand Super Value / Fresh Choice 'mystery shopper' award 2017.

