

A scenic landscape featuring a range of green, forested mountains under a bright blue sky filled with large, white, fluffy clouds. The foreground shows a dense forest of green trees, with some rocky outcrops visible. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

# The Global Story of Plastic Recycling

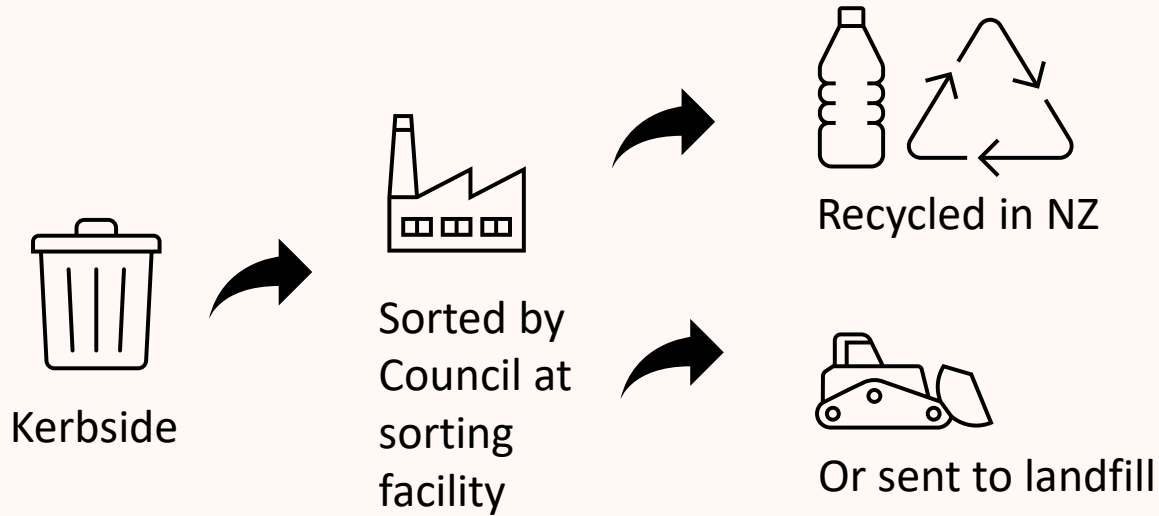
Lydia Chai



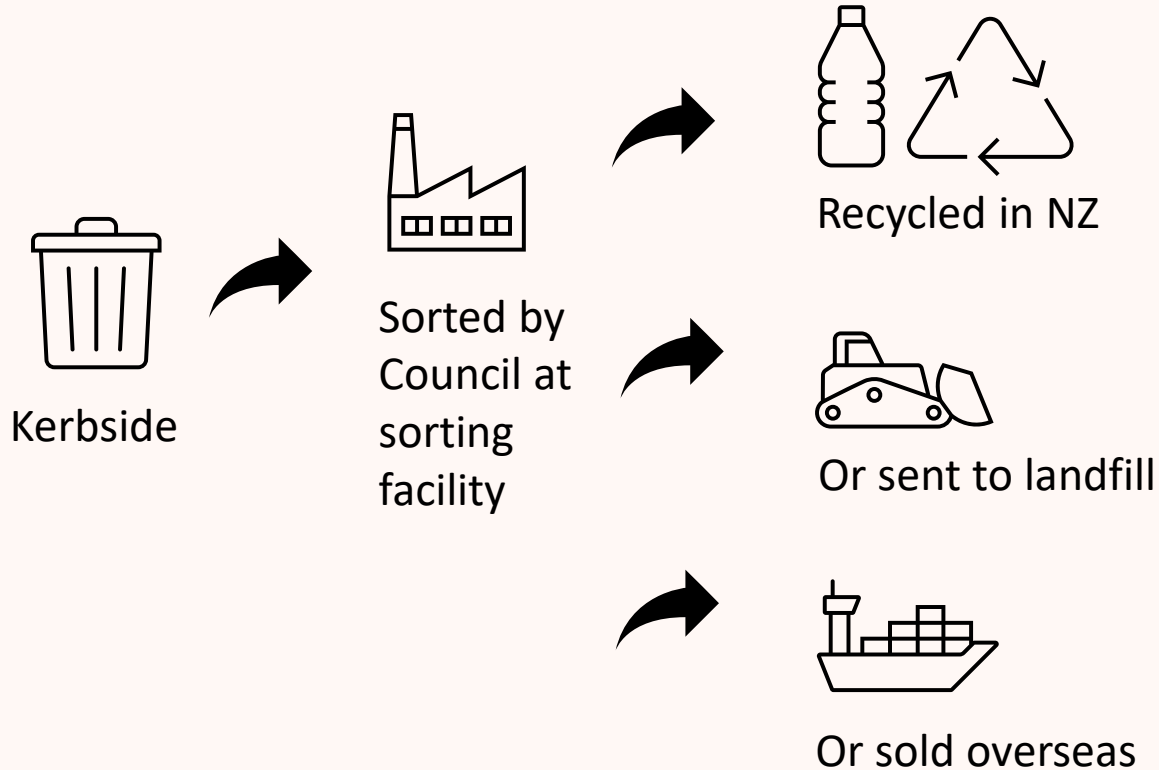
## About me and what I do

- I come from Selangor, Malaysia
- Start of my advocacy journey
- Petition to NZ Government
- 11,103 signatures delivered to Parliament in July 2022

# Recycling: What we think it is



# Recycling: What it really is



# Recycling: What it really is

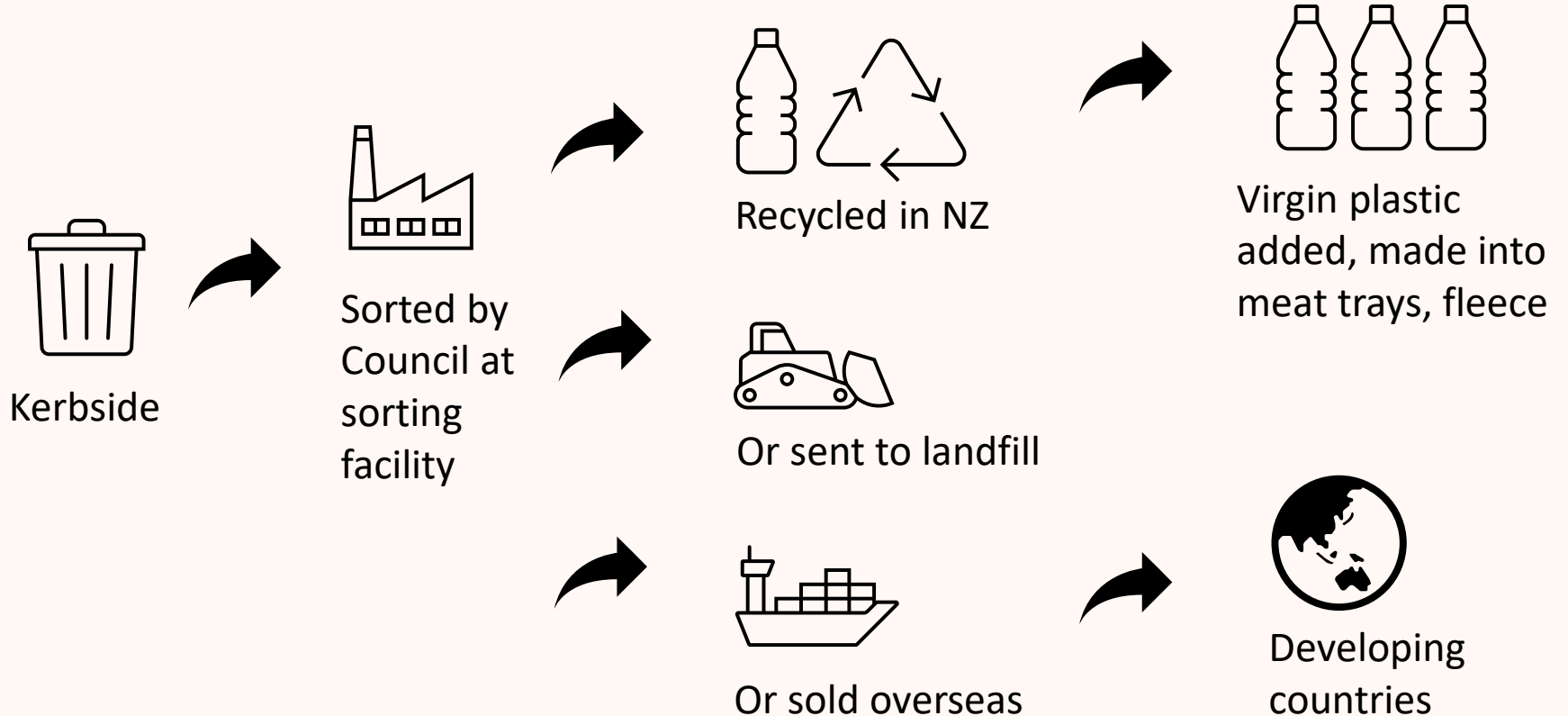




Image source: RNZ













Recycling plant fire in Perak, Malaysia in 2021



New Zealand waste in Malaysia

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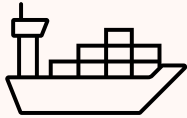


Illegal waste operator with no company signage on the street or vehicles



Recycling plant in Indonesia

# Why is it a problem?



Sold overseas



Developing  
countries

- All bales contain contamination
- Contamination leads to bales dumped, buried, onsold – avoids disposal costs
- Lax environmental laws
- Poor enforcement / crackdowns
- Corruption



**In my home state alone, there  
are 332 recycling plants!**

## Why is it a problem?

- Most NZ plastic is recycled
- **HOWEVER:**
- We are sending eye-watering amounts of waste to Southeast Asia
- In last 6 years, NZ sent 200 million kilograms
- Processing plastic waste is an inherently toxic process – leaching is inevitable



# What happened after my petition?

- Petition process
- Select Committee is considering a licensing system
- Does not solve the problem
- It is up to us to put the pressure on leaders (politicians and markets): We want less plastic!



"Truly, it's the most impressive nonfiction I've read in quite some time."

— MARY ROACH, author of *Stiff* and *Fuzz*

The Secret World of Waste and  
the Urgent Search for a Cleaner Future

# WASTELAND

OLIVER FRANKLIN-WALLIS



**Conclusion &  
Thank you**