

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study **Tweed River Festival 2009**

The Event

The Tweed River Festival is a week long annual festival, which aims to raise awareness about the importance of local waterways through the sharing of information and a celebration of river life.

The highlights take place on the festival Saturday, with a day of celebrations that includes a paddle craft competition on the harbour, festival art and entertainment, kid's activities, food, drink and information stalls. The festival culminates in the lantern parade and firework display on Jack Evans Boat Harbour in the early evening.

The opportunity was taken to raise community awareness about the new council multi-bin system (begins 01 Dec 09) by integrating it into the program of festival entertainment.



The Challenge

The amount of waste generated at community/public events can be significant (about 1 litre/person/day), creating an unpleasant mess and substantial clean up costs for event organisers and councils. The north coast is host to approximately 300 events and 23 regular monthly markets each year. With many events attracting visitor numbers from the thousands to the tens of thousands the disposal of waste constitutes a major problem for councils. Many events in the region present unique challenges by attracting many visitors from outside the region. Communicating about waste & recycling systems must be simple and easy.

Outcomes & Opportunities

The festival organisers committed to the development and implementation of a Waste Wise Management Plan which focused primarily on the minimisation of packaging and the capture of recycling. Outcomes and opportunities from this commitment included:

- 1000 litres of materials or 20% of the total waste generated was diverted from landfill for recycling;
- Greater awareness by stall holders of the imperative to minimise waste, increase the rate of recycling and reduce contamination;
- Event organisers gained more knowledge & experience in how to run a waste wise event particularly regarding 'back of house' set up & monitoring;
- WWE signage was available but could not be used due to the high winds experienced on the day;
- Improved public awareness as a result of the recycling facilities provided, the inclusion of the waste message in festival entertainment program, the information provided by council and the support of the NEWF Green House mobile waste education unit;
- The opportunity to divert from landfill, 50% or more of the total waste generated at future similar festivals

The event organisers said that the process of developing a WWMP had provided a step by step process, that had the benefit of including lessons learnt at other events.

What Next with Waste?

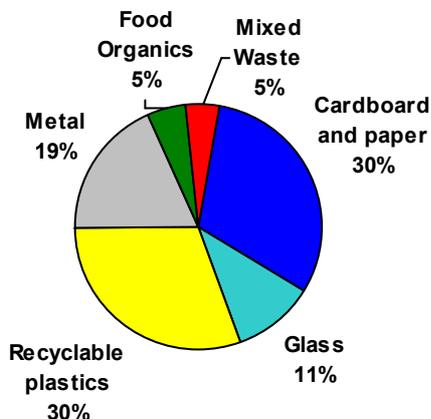
Recommendations for future similar events:

- Communicate early with waste contractors to ensure that the equipment provided is located in the most suitable location to maximize its effective use;
- Include the Waste Wise message in all pre-event advertising, brochures and electronic media and promote widely during the event with WWE signage and regular announcements via the PA system;
- Improve the correct use of bins by putting suitable signage on the lids and locking rosette bin lids to reduce contamination and prevent the dumping of materials such as cardboard;
- Improve communication with stall holders at all stages from application to pack up to ensure they participate in all waste minimisation and recycling initiatives;
- Develop and implement a council Event Policy which incorporates Waste Wise objectives.

Results

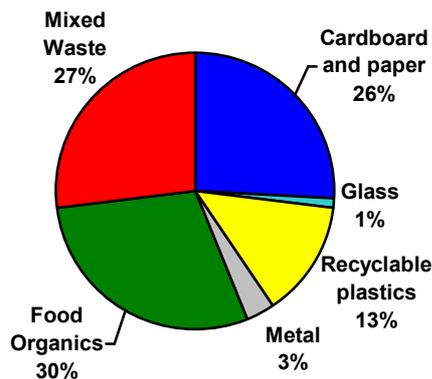
The festival produced an estimated 4940 litres of materials of which 1000 litres or 20% was diverted from landfill for recycling. Only the 240L event bins were audited as the bulk recycling bin was taken to a different location and due to contamination the contents were sent to landfill. The results of the audit are shown below:

Recycling Bins



Contamination with food organics (food & compostable paper) and mixed waste was just less than 10% and so was successfully diverted from landfill for recycling.

Waste Bins



Potentially recyclable materials comprised 44% of the waste stream. Cardboard was deposited by stall holders because the bulk bin was already full. Some of these recyclables were separated out during the audit and put into the correct bin to ensure diversion from landfill.

Background

The North East Waste Forum (NEWF) is a collective of local councils working together to help avoid and reduce waste going to landfill in the Northern NSW region. The forum provides support for participating local Councils, as well as advice and information to businesses and the general community in managing waste and how best to implement the sustainable practices that reduce waste generation and promote the recovery of recyclable resources. The Waste Wise Events (WWE) Project was initiated by NEWF in Oct 06 and focuses on reducing waste to landfill by implementing Waste Wise Management Plans (WWMP's). So far over 20 Waste Wise events have been organised across the region, including agricultural, sporting, family, food & music festivals with crowds ranging from 2,000 to 38,000.

Waste Wise Management Plan

The Waste Wise Management Plan incorporates recycle and waste avoidance objectives into each stage of the event planning, sets achievable targets & assigns roles & responsibilities. Targets set for this event included:

Packaging:

- All stall holders were asked to minimise packaging and to avoid non recyclable packaging for serving food & drink;

Promotion of the recycling systems:

- A letter was provided to the stall holders during the application process, outlining suitable packaging & recycling facilities;
- New event bins used (consistent with the new multi-bin system) and appropriately labeled;
- NEWF Waste Wise Event banner and signage to be displayed and PA announcements made;
- Council's Green House Education Unit attended the event to help increase community awareness & promote the new bin system.

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins (240L- for public use): all plastics, aluminum, glass containers;
- Bulk bin (3 cubic meters- for stallholder use): commingled recyclables including cardboard.

Equipment & Bin Management

- 8 bin stations (1 recycling bin & 1 waste bin) located around Chris Cunningham Park with the majority around the food/drink stalls,
- Monitor bin stations, empty before full and ensure bins stay together in their stations
- Monitor stallholders to ensure they are aware of the recycling facilities and use correctly.



Contacts

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