

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout 2008

Background

The North East Waste Forum (NEWF) is a collective of local councils that have come together to share resources to help avoid and reduce waste going to landfill in the Northern NSW region. The NEWF collective not only provides support for participating local Councils in managing waste, but also provides support and advice to various commercial sectors on how best to implement sustainable practices that reduce waste generation, wastes landfilled, and promote the recovery of recyclable resources.

An initiative of NEWF, The Waste Wise Events (WWE) Project, began in October 2006 and focused on reducing waste to landfill by implementing Waste Wise Management Plans (WWMP's) for seven events across the NEWF region. A variety of events were chosen with participant numbers ranging from 2,000 to 25,000 people. Events covered agricultural, sporting, family, food & music festivals.

Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout

The annual Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout Carnival is now in its 38th year. The 4 day competition includes men, women and junior league teams from across New South Wales. The 2007 carnival was in Lismore and was won by the Wollumbin Warriors, consequently the 2008 event was held at the winner's home ground at Cudgen Leagues in Kingscliff.



A waste management action plan was developed between the carnival organisers and hosts of the event, the Wollumbin Warriors, and the North East Waste Forum.

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 & 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.

Waste Wise Management Plan

A Waste Wise Management Plan (WWMP) incorporates recycle & waste avoidance objectives into each stage of the event planning, sets achievable targets and assigns roles & responsibilities. Targets for the event included

Packaging:

- All stalls asked to minimise packaging and to use recyclable packaging for serving food and drink
- No glass, aluminium or tetrapaks were permitted

Promotion of the recycling systems:

- Letter to Stallholders/guidelines outlining packaging requirements & recycling facilities
- PA announcements during event & monitoring stallholders about how to use the bin systems
- Signage on bins & recycling skips to assist in the correct separation of waste and recyclables
- Council's Waste Wise Event banner displayed at the entrance to the venue

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins: plastic drink bottles; (liquid) paper coffee cups & a separate cardboard bin was provided for stall holders

Equipment (all supplied by Solo Resource Recovery):

- 21 x 240L yellow lidded recycling bins
- 21 x 240L blue lidded waste bins
- 1 x 15m³ recycling skip; 1 x 3.5m³ cardboard skip; 1 x 15m³ skip for waste (supplied on request during event to deal with excess waste)

Bin Plan and Management

- 21 bin stations comprising 1 recycling bin & 1 waste bin located strategically around the site
- Event organisers & volunteers to monitor recycling bins & empty as necessary. Waste bins assembled for collection at the end of day and returned to their position next morning
- Audit to be conducted by the NEWF after the event to evaluate the effectiveness of recycling

Results

The waste management efforts at the ARL Knockout Carnival were compromised by the unexpected doubling of the anticipated crowd numbers. Consequently contamination levels were high due to a shortage of bins to cope with the volume of waste and recycling generated. A lack of available volunteers to assist with bin management may also have been a limiting factor.

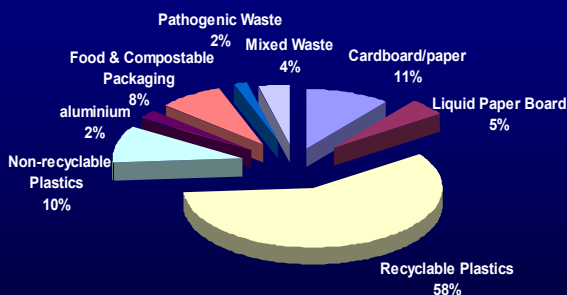
Recycling Bins

In total an estimated 71.5 cubic meters or 4.2 tonnes of waste and recycling was produced, of which only around 4m³ or 400kgs of cardboard was diverted from landfill. This was only 6% of the total waste generated at the event.

Based on volume, around 70% of the total waste generated at the event was potentially recoverable but due to high contamination levels of 24% in the recycling bins it was sent to landfill.

The chart below, presents a breakdown of the 1013 litres from recycling bins, which was audited into the different waste streams. The major component of the recycling bins was recyclable plastic drink bottles (58%). This was followed by cardboard/paper at 11%, which was mainly packaging boxes from the soft drinks. Disposable paper coffee cups were 5% of the waste stream and aluminium cans were 2%.

RECYCLING



Waste Bins

More than half the content of the waste bins was found to be recyclable materials (56%), with recyclable plastic and cardboard comprising up to 47% and 9% being coffee cups and aluminium cans.

Outcomes

The 38th Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout Carnival provided some valuable lessons which will be useful when organising waste systems at future similar events.

Whilst it was significant that 400kgs of cardboard was recycled, this was less than 10% by weight of the total waste generated.

Some of the waste management outcomes from this event are included below:

- Event organisers are now familiar with the process of Waste Wise Events Management Planning and what can go wrong and will be better prepared or able to pass on this information to those organising future events;
- Most stallholders who participated in the event minimised the packaging they used and used recyclable or biodegradable packaging for serving food and drinks, enhancing their likelihood of doing so at other events;
- The cardboard skip was located appropriately and was utilised to its full capacity. A larger skip would have resulted in the diversion of a considerably greater volume of cardboard.
- Promotion of the Waste Wise Events Project through the Waste Wise Events banner, PA announcements and clear signage all assisted in raising awareness of recycling with stall holders, competitors and event visitors;
- Banning the sale of glass and aluminium drink containers (for safety reasons at a sporting venue) made the emptying of recycling bins easier and safer for volunteers.

The Future

Recommendations for future events which will assist in the successful diversion of a large volume of recyclable materials from landfill include:

- More pre-event media to get the message across to event competitors and visitors including info in the event brochure and in registration documents;
- Contingency plan to ensure that recycling and waste facilities can cope effectively with larger than expected crowd numbers
- Confirmation of a committed team of volunteers to assist with the monitoring of bins and stall holders throughout the event;
- Introduction of a return system for the collection of recyclable drink bottles to a central location to avoid contamination of the recycling stream and assist in reducing litter.

Contacts

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