

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study Ballina Australia Day 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.

Ballina Australia Day



Australia Day celebrations are organised annually by Ballina Shire Council. The event features local entertainment, an award ceremony and fireworks. It attracts a crowd of up to 2000 people and is held in the afternoon and evening. The event produces minimal waste, with four stallholders providing food during the event. A Waste Wise Management Plan was developed collaboratively with the different sections of council involved in the event.

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 recycling and waste avoidance objectives into each stage of event planning, sets achievable targets and assigns roles and responsibilities. Targets set for this event included:

Packaging:

- All stalls to use biodegradable packaging for serving food and recyclable drink containers
- Event program and posters printed on 100% recycled paper
- Give away Australia flags to be made of paper

Promotion of the recycling systems:

- Letter to Stallholder letter/guidelines outlining packaging requirements and recycling facilities available
- Pre event media releases in local papers.
- PA announcements every hour about how to use the recycling systems
- Advertisement in event program.
- Signage on bins designed specifically for event bins
- Council's Waste Wise Event banner displayed

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins: aluminium cans; plastic bottles; glass and (liquid) paper cups
- Cardboard bins provided

Equipment:

- 6 x 240L yellow lidded recycling bins with fitted rosette lids and locks supplied by Ballina Shire Council.
- 6 x 240L red lidded waste bins supplied by Ballina Shire Council.
- 4 x 240L blue bins for cardboard

Bin Plan and Management

- Bin stations comprising one recycling bin and one waste bin located at 15m intervals through Fawcett Park
- Monitor stallholder waste and ensure they utilise facilities correctly

NORTH EAST WASTE FORUM

NEW WAYS WITH LESS WASTE



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Results

Results

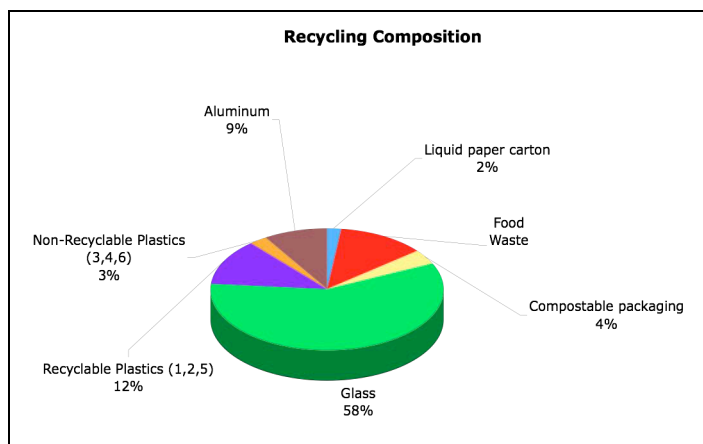
All bins were audited at the end of the event. The event generated only a small volume of waste (336L) and 168L of recycling. The recycling accounted for 33% of the total event waste.

Recycling Bins

The recycling bins recovered 11kg of co-mingled drink containers. The table below presents a breakdown of the different materials recovered.

Glass accounted for 59%, recyclable plastic 13%, aluminium 9% and liquid paper 2%.

No cardboard was collected. The average contamination was 19%. The major contaminants were food waste (12%), compostable packaging (4%) and non recyclable plastics (3%).



Waste Bins

Based on the two waste bins audited, there was 22% recyclables in the waste stream. Glass accounted for 12% and cardboard for 6%. Cardboard bins were not provided as per the waste plan.

Overall the event generated only a small volume of waste. Plastic accounted for only 14% of the waste which was likely a result of the use of biodegradable packaging by stallholders.

Costs

Ballina Shire Council provided the waste and recycling services in kind for the event. Waste charges were less than previous years where only waste bins were provided. This was due to the use of recycling bins which are subsidised for events.

Outcomes

Introducing a Waste Wise Plan for Australia Day resulted in a 33% reduction of waste to landfill. Other outcomes included:

- Council event staff more familiar with the steps involved with staging a Waste Wise Event.
- Council adopted the ideas of using recycled paper to print programs and posters and used paper flags over plastic for giveaways.
- 80% of food vans that participated in the event used recyclable or biodegradable packaging for serving food and drinks
- Waste Wise PA announcements were consistent every hour.
- The recycling bins were delivered on time to the event by very efficient Council staff.
- The Waste Wise Event banner was used on the day.
- Adequate numbers of bins were used which helped to reduce litter experienced at past events.
- Event organisers conducted competitions throughout the day to retrieve any littering, which proved to be effective.
- High contamination in recycling bins indicates a need to improve signage and promotion of recycling systems

The event organisers and council were pleased with their achievement. The process of developing a WWMP improved organisation and communication in council and resulted in improved waste reduction outcomes.

The Future

Ballina Shire Council is committed to improving waste management practices at events. Australia Day demonstrated that recycling at small events can be done and implemented easily.

Recommendations for future events include:

- Remove contamination to ensure recycling of materials
- Place additional signage on bins to help reduce contamination
- Include recycling advertisement in event program and council's event web page.

Contacts

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Ballina Australia Day

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