

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study Bangalow Market 2007

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.

Bangalow Market



The Bangalow Market is held on the fourth Sunday of every month in the Bangalow Show grounds in Byron Shire. It attracts up to 4,000 people each month and is the second biggest market on the North coast. The event is organised by the Bangalow Parks Trust. There are up to 40 regular food and/or drink and 70 other market stalls. For the past 25 years the event has sent all waste to landfill. A waste audit was conducted in February 2007 to establish the waste profile. The audit identified 62% of the total waste was compostable, 28% recyclable and 10% waste. NEWF proposed a number of options to the Parks Trust for how to recover the organics and recycling from the waste stream. The new waste plan was first implemented in May 2007.

The Challenge

The amount of waste generated at community/public events can be significant (about 1 litre/person/day), creating an unpleasant mess and large 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.

Waste Wise Management Plan

A 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 stallholders to use biodegradable packaging for serving food.
- Avoid the use of polystyrene and non recyclable plastic.
- Packaging audit completed with each stallholder.

Promotion of the recycling systems:

- Pre event media releases in local papers.
- Letter to stallholders outlining packaging requirements and introducing recycling scheme.
- Advertisement on web page.
- NEWF *Green House* waste education trailer with two performers during the market.
- Signage on bins designed specifically for event bins.
- Banners at two entries to promote the market as a Waste Wise Event.

Recovery targets:

- Recycle bins: aluminium cans; plastic bottles; glass and liquid paper cups; cardboard; steel cans.
- Organics bins: biodegradable plates and cutlery; food scraps; serviettes and soiled paper.
- Stallholders to separate organics and recycling from waste and bring to recycling sorting area at end of market.

Equipment:

- 12 x 240L yellow lidded recycling bins with fitted rosette lids and locks.
- 12 x 120L red lidded waste bins.
- 12 x 120L green lidded organic bins.
- One 2m³ skip to empty general waste.
- 5 x 7 foot trailer with sides to empty and transport organics.

Bin Plan:

- 12 Bin stations comprising one recycling, one waste and one organics bin located near food areas and stage.
- Skip locked to avoid stallholders dumping recycling.

NORTH EAST WASTE FORUM

NEW WAYS WITH LESS WASTE



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Results

A waste audit was conducted at the end of the June 2007 market. A total of 4 out of the 12 of each recycling, organics and waste bins were audited. The results of the waste audit follow.

Bangalow Market has achieved a reduction of waste to landfill of 65-70% at the May and June markets. The market has reduced three waste skips to one skip immediately following the introduction of the separation of waste into organics, recycling and waste.

Recycling Bins

The average contamination was 22%. The major contaminants were food scraps (6%) and compostable packaging (8%), with smaller amounts of non recyclable packaging (3%). Whilst these are significant by weight they did not represent a significant volume compared to the volume of liquid paper cups and plastic bottles. Recycling bins are sorted at the end of each market by the waste team. The waste team removes aluminium which they keep and at the same time removes the contamination. It takes on average of 45 minutes for one person to sort the recycling. For the May, June and July markets the recycling was condensed into 4 x 240L bins.

Waste Bins

A comparison of the different wastes across the three bins identifies clearly that the waste bins are being used equally by participants for the disposal of food waste and food packaging.

However, the waste bins are collecting the majority of non-recyclable plastics and pathogenic waste as targeted by the waste bins

Organics Bins

The organics bins are the least contaminated of the three bins with only 7% contamination. The contamination comprises liquid paper cups (5%), non-recyclable plastics (1%) and pathogenic waste (1%). The materials from the organics bins are emptied into a trailer that is picked up by a local farmer who shreds and composts the materials to use on his macadamia farm.

The Future

The Parks Trust are pleased with the impact they have made on reducing waste to landfill. Reducing contamination in the recycling and organics bins will be the main focus over the next 6 months. They aim to achieve this through improved signage on bins and stalls and regular feedback to stallholders on the recycling results.

At their own initiative they will implement recycling at the Bangalow Agricultural Show utilising their recycling equipment.

The North East Waste forum acknowledges the assistance of the Packaging Stewardship Forum with the purchase of bins and stickers and advice on implementation of this project.

Outcomes

The Bangalow Market proved to be a successful Waste Wise Event by reducing waste to landfill by 68%. Other outcomes included:

- The local newspaper ran a story "Bangalow Markets go green and save waste".
- The event organisers received positive feedback from the public about the recycling systems.
- The stallholders have been very co-operative with the new packaging guidelines. All food is being served on biodegradable packaging or re-usable plates. All cutlery is wooden or cornstarch and only a handful of plastic straws appeared in the audit.
- The market co-ordinator has been very responsive - communicating with stall holders who are not complying with the guidelines.
- Waste Wise Event Banners, located at both entries to the market make a clear statement to market participants to Recycle and Use the Right Bin.
- Bin stations are located well. There are an adequate number of stations, if bins are emptied or compacted at lunch time in the two main food areas.
- Based on the results of the audit, the materials the market participants are most confused about (i.e. what bin to use) are food scraps, compostable packaging and liquid paper cups. To recover more of the organics materials from the waste and recycle bins it will require more education of the market participants on how to use the bins correctly.
- As contamination levels in the recycling bins are high (22%) it is important to manually remove contamination at this stage, to ensure that the materials will be recycled.

Costs

The ongoing running costs for the event waste and recycling recovery have increased by \$13 per market. This is comprised of an increase in wages of \$100 per month and a decrease in waste disposal costs of \$87 per month.

The initial investment of equipment was jointly funded by Byron Shire Council and the Packaging Stewardship Forum and the Bangalow Parks Trust.

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Bangalow Market

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