

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study Byron Writers Festival 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.

Byron Writers Festival

The Byron Bay Writers Festival began in 1997 with an audience of 200. It has grown to fill large marquees and venues around the town and over 45,000 individual tickets are now sold. The focus of the program is on Australian writing and more than 100 writers participate.



The waste generated at this event reflects the products purchased during the day from coffee and food vendors. A waste management action plan was developed with the festival organiser, the Becton Beach Resort who hosted the event 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 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 asked to use biodegradable packaging for serving food and recyclable drink containers
- No plastic bags or polystyrene permitted

Promotion of the recycling systems:

- Letter to Stallholder letter/guidelines outlining packaging requirements and recycling facilities available
- PA announcements about how to use the recycling systems
- Signage on bins and caps for recycling
- Council's Waste Wise Event banner displayed

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins: aluminum cans; plastic bottles; glass and paper coffee cups
- Cardboard bin provided

Equipment:

- 16 x 240L yellow lidded recycling bins (some with recycling lids) supplied by Byron Shire Council.
- 16 x 240L waste bins supplied by Byron Shire Council.
- 1x 3 cubic metre cardboard skip

Bin Plan and Management

- Bin stations comprising one recycling bin and one waste bin located at intervals around the site
- Housekeeping staff monitor waste bins and empty as necessary. Recycling bins assembled for collection at the end of day and returned to position next morning.



Enquiries to:
Jeanie McKillop
 Business Waste Reduction
 Project Co-ordinator
 P: 6687 4945 M: 0421 888 686

PO Box 340
 LENNOX HEAD NSW 2478
business@northeastwasteforum.org.au
www.northeastwasteforum.org.au

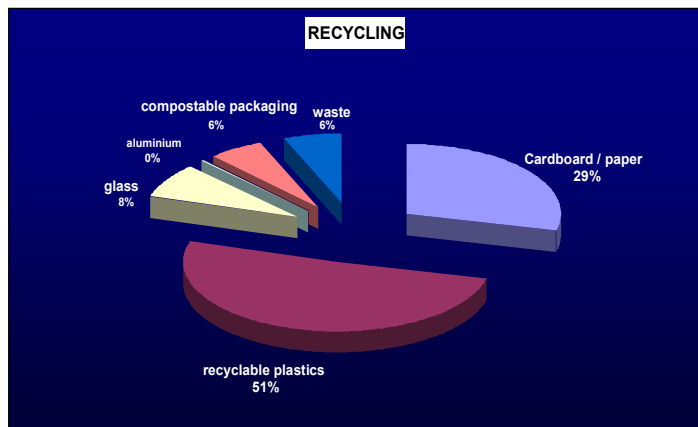
Results

All bins were audited at the end of the event. Over 3704 litres (384kg) of waste was collected and 5640 litres (392kg) of co-mingled recycling. In addition 3.5 cubic metres (350 kg) of cardboard was recovered.

Recycling Bins

Based on volume, more than 60% of the total waste generated at the event was recovered through the event's recycling bins. Figure 2 below, presents a breakdown of the 705 litres audited on Sunday, into the different waste streams.

Not considering the bulk cardboard collection, the major component of the recycling bins was recyclable plastic, such as 2 litre milk containers (51%). This was followed by cardboard/paper at 29%. This stream was mainly disposable coffee cups. 8% of the waste stream was glass and 6% compostable packaging. The majority of cardboard generated from the event was placed in a 3 cubic metre skip and is not represented in the graph below.



Waste Bins

The waste bins contained a reasonable amount of recyclable materials, particularly coffee cups and milk containers. Cardboard accounted for 40% and recyclable plastics 16%.

Contacts

North East Waste Forum
 Jeanie McKillop
 Business Waste Reduction Co-coordinator
 Ph 07 66874945
business@northeastwasteforum.org.au
www.northeastwasteforum.org.au

Byron Writers Festival
 Byron Writers Centre
 Jenni Cannin

Outcomes

Introducing a Waste Wise Plan for the Byron Writers Festival resulted in a greater than 60% reduction of waste to landfill through the capture of recyclable materials.

Other outcomes included:

- Promotion of the Waste Wise Events Project through the Waste Wise Events banner and PA announcements.
- Event organizers are now familiar with the Waste Wise Events process and are likely to implement it in future.
- Stallholders who participated in the event used recyclable or biodegradable packaging for serving food and drinks, enhancing their likelihood to do so at other events
- The number of bins were adequate for the event and this helped to reduce litter.
- Clear signage was used helping to raise awareness of recycling in and beyond the Shire.
- Low contamination in recycling bins indicates that most participants clearly understood the recycling message.

Event organizers and the Byron Council were pleased with the outcomes of this event. The encouragement of waste minimization in the local and visiting population will continue to be a high priority for both.

The Future

Despite inclement weather and the cancellation of one day the Byron Writers Festival proved to be a very successful waste wise event.

Recommendations for future events include:

- Provide signage to stall holders or make announcements that inform consumers about the recyclable nature of their packaging, particularly the coffee cups.
- Inform stallholders that tetra pak or foil lined liquid paper containers are not able to be recycled in Byron Shire