

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study Dragon Boat Family Fun Day 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.

Dragon Boat Family Fun Day



The Dragon Boat Family Fun Day is an annual community event held during the Jacaranda Festival in Memorial Park in Grafton. The one day event attracts around 6000 competitors and spectators. The event is organised by Clarence Community Events (CCE) in collaboration with Clarence Valley Council (CVC). In previous years, the event had experienced a lack of bins to manage the waste generated from the event. Littering was also a problem. The event introduced recycling for the first time in 2007, with the assistance of 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 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. 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 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.

Promotion of the recycling systems:

- Stallholder letter/guidelines outlining packaging requirements and recycling facilities available.
- NEWF Greenhouse Performance Trailer and performers set up during event.
- Pre event media releases in local papers.
- PA announcements every hour.
- Advertisement in event program.
- Signage on bins designed specifically for event bins.
- Council's Waste Wise Event banner was displayed.

Recovery Targets:

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

Equipment:

- 20 x 240L yellow lidded recycling bins with fitted rosette lids and locks supplied by Clarence Valley Council.
- 20 x 240L red lidded waste bins supplied by Clarence Valley Council.
- One 7 x 5 foot trailer for cardboard.

Bin Plan:

- Bin stations comprising one recycling bin and one waste bin located around the site. More densely near food stalls and seating.
- Clarence Valley Council to provide training for CCE Waste Volunteer in bin handling.
- Volunteer waste manager to check bins at lunch and empty if required.
- CVC to provide staff to empty bins at the end of the event into 2 separate trucks.



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Results

The Dragon Boat Family Fun Day produced less waste than expected. This was primarily due an attendance of around 6000 people compares to the anticipated 15 000. Overall, the participants used the bins well and litter was not an issue for the council staff who cleaned up the site after the event. Contamination levels in the recycling bins is probably the biggest issue to work on at next year's event.

Recycling Bins

Based on volume, 26% (48kg) of the total waste generated at the event was recovered through the event's recycling bins. Recyclable plastics accounted for 34%, aluminium 24% and glass 19%. The average contamination was 18% which is above the acceptable level (<10%) to be received for processing and recycling. The major contaminants were food waste (10%), compostable packaging (4%) and non recyclable plastics (4%). Polystyrene cups, plastic straws and plastic cups were the most obvious contaminants. There were adequate numbers of recycling bins used on the site. The twenty bins covered the area effectively and did not require emptying during the event.

Cardboard Trailer

Twenty five kilograms of cardboard was separated by stallholders and placed in the trailer provided. However, the trailer was very under utilised. At future events a woosack would suffice.

Waste Bins

An audit was not conducted on the waste bins. However, on a visual inspection there was a small of amount of recyclables in the waste stream. There were adequate numbers of waste bins on the site. The twenty bins covered the area effectively and did not require emptying during the event. Only two of the five 120L park bins positioned on stands required emptying at 1pm. The majority of stallholders did not use biodegradable packaging. There were significant volumes of polystyrene cups and clam shells and plastic folks, plates and cups. Stallholders were requested to avoid these packaging items in the stallholder guidelines.

The Future

The Dragon Boat Family Fun Day organisers are keen to implement recycling at future events. Recommendations for next year's event include:

- Reducing polystyrene and plastic packaging used by stallholders.
- Reduce contamination in recycling bins.

The NEWF acknowledges the support of the Packaging Stewardship Forum who assisted with purchasing bins and stickers and advice on implementation of the project.

Outcomes

Introducing a Waste wise Plan for the Dragon Boat Family Fun Day produced a mixed result. On a positive note 35% of the event waste was diverted from landfill. Other outcomes included:

- Bin stickers and rosette lid recycling bins proved to assist with recycling recovery.
- Contamination levels were high at an average of 18%. Yet the bins on the river where you could hear the recycling messages on the PA, had significantly less contamination (8%), than around the food areas.
- Two articles were printed in the Clarence Valley Review about the recycling initiative at the event.
- Providing sufficient number of bins helped to reduce littering and resulted in an overall better waste management outcome for the event.
- The Greenhouse Waste Education Performance Trailer proved to be successful. Over 100 people engaged with the performers to learn about recycling and waste reduction.
- The cardboard skip was not utilised to its full capacity and a cheaper option could be sought.
- There was no volunteer waste co-ordinator on the day as previously planned.
- Only 20% of stalls used biodegradable packaging as requested.

The event organisers and council were pleased with their achievement. The process of developing a Waste Management Plan for the event resulted in a better understanding of waste management by event organisers and an improved waste reduction outcome.

Costs

Clarence Valley Council provided the waste and recycling services in kind for the event. The council could reduce costs at next years event by employing staff to set bins up in the morning and then not return until the end of the event to empty bins. They could also save costs with the transport of a trailer by using the local woosack cardboard collection service.

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The Dragon Boat Family Fun Day

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