

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study **Cancer Council NSW Relay for Life (Grafton) 2010**

The Event

Relay for Life is a unique, overnight fundraising event that brings communities together in the fight against cancer. It is an event for cancer survivors, carers, supporting friends and loved ones to celebrate, remember and fight back. Beginning at 3pm the relay continues until 9am the following morning and involves teams of 10-15 people taking turns to walk or run around the track. Each Relay for Life event is organised by a local volunteer organising committee on behalf of the Cancer Council.



Launch of the 2010 Grafton Relay for Life'

The 2010 Grafton Relay took place at McKittrick Park in South Grafton on 27th and 28th March. Fifty three teams participated.

The Challenge

The amount of waste generated at community/public events can be significant (1 litre/person/day but much greater at a 'Relay' type event), creating an unpleasant mess and substantial clean up costs for event organisers and councils. The north coast is host to over 300 annual events and more than 40 regular weekly & monthly markets. 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.

Outcomes & Opportunities

A Waste Wise Management Plan was developed which focused primarily on the reduction of non-recyclable packaging and the capture of recyclables and some organics. Outcomes for the event included:

- 49% of the total waste generated was recycled;
- Contamination in the recycling stream was low at only 3% indicating that most people placed the correct materials in the recycling bins;
- Stall holders and those providing food and drinks were informed about waste minimisation & avoiding non recyclable packaging and most cooperated;
- Event organisers are now aware of the procedures required to conduct a waste wise event and can implement at events across the region and beyond;
- Community education and increased awareness through signage, banners, public announcements & media promotion;
- The collection & composting of ceremonial paper candle bags in a memorial garden, is both a heartfelt symbolic gesture & an innovative waste minimisation idea.



Event Organisers Rory Janssens & Rosemary Munroe

What Next with Waste?

Recommendations for future events include:

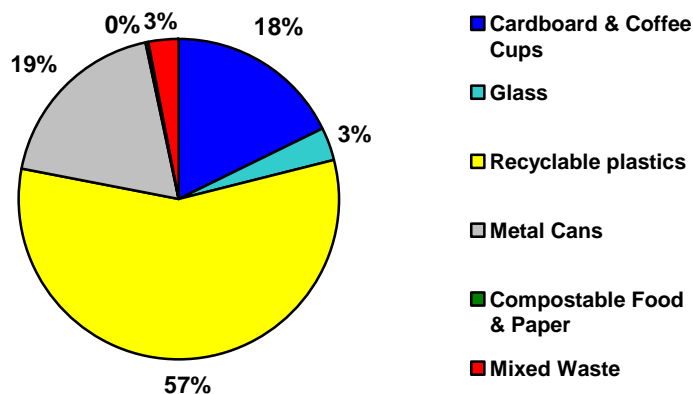
- Providing information on reducing waste and recycling to the teams participating in the 'Relay' when they register;
- Ensure the commitment of volunteers at all stages of the event planning and particularly during the event to coordinate the management of bins and signage;
- Continue to encourage stall holders to minimise packaging and only use packaging that is recyclable or reusable;
- Make it easier for the teams to separate recycling from garbage at their tents by providing them with a suitable recycling containers;
- Provide water refill stations to reduce the volume of discarded plastic water bottles;
- Continue to compost candle bags and make it a standard practice at all Relay for Life events.

Results

A total of **5052 litres** of waste and recyclables was generated at the Grafton Relay for Life. An estimated **49%** of this total, which equates to **2460 L** or **128 Kgs** of recyclable materials were diverted from landfill.

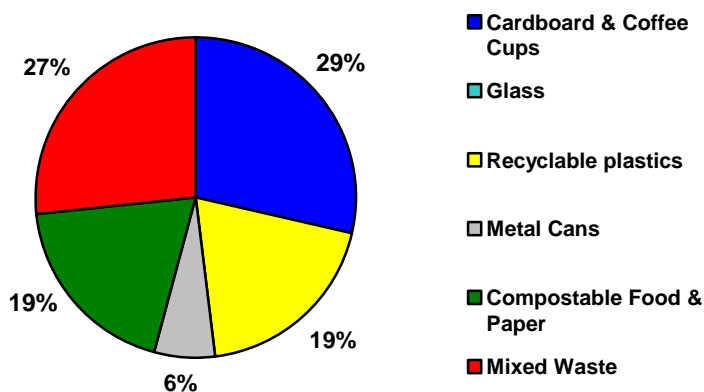
Recycling Bins

Recyclable plastic drink bottles were the major component of the recycling stream. Aluminium drink cans and paper coffee cups & cardboard made up most of the remainder. The contamination level, at 3% was very low and was mostly non recyclable plastic food packaging.



Waste Bins

Recyclable materials comprised 54% of the waste stream. Potentially 76% of the waste generated at the Relay could have been recycled if it had been placed in the correct bin.



Background

The North East Waste Forum (NEWF) is a collective of local councils working together to help avoid and reduce waste going to landfill in the Northern NSW region. The forum provides support for participating local Councils, as well as advice and information to businesses and the general community in managing waste and how best to implement the sustainable practices that reduce waste generation and promote the recovery of recyclable resources.

The Waste Wise Events (WWE) Project was initiated by NEWF in Oct 06 and focuses on reducing waste to landfill by implementing Waste Wise Management Plans (WWMP's). So far over 20 Waste Wise events have been organised across the region, including agricultural, sporting, family, food & music festivals with crowds ranging from 2,000 to 38,000.

Waste Wise Management Plan

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

Packaging:

- All stall holders and participating community organizations, asked to minimise packaging; & use only recyclable packaging for food/drink.

Promotion of the waste & recycling systems:

- Guidelines outlining packaging requirements & recycling facilities provided to all involved;
- Promotion via flyers, program & in media;
- Signage on all bins;
- Council's Waste Wise Event banner & signs displayed in a highly visible area;
- Reminder to the team captains before the start;
- PA announcements at the beginning and during event to encourage correct use of the bins.

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins: plastic & glass bottles, aluminum cans, milk and juice cartons; paper & cardboard
- Organics: stall holder food scraps and candle bags (with sand) from the Hope Ceremony.

Equipment & Bin Management

- 12 bin stations (24 bins) with 1 yellow lidded recycling bin and 1 red lidded waste bin;
- Stall holders were asked to bring their own container to collect food scraps from their stall;
- Monitor stall holders and teams at start of event to ensure they are aware of the recycling facilities and how to use correctly.



Relay for Life 'Waste Champion'

Alison Bathgate. Team Leader of Grafton Line Dancers

Contacts

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