

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study Lennox Head Community Market 2009

The Event

The Lennox Community Market is a fundraising activity for the Westpac Life Saver Helicopter with proceeds going directly to its full time operation. It has a relaxed atmosphere and is located behind the foredune of Seven Mile Beach, on the eastern foreshore of Lake Ainsworth. Stall holders are encouraged to protect the beautiful natural setting and efforts have been made to locate stalls away from fragile areas. It is a well patronised, regular event that attracts tourists and local people with its variety of regional products and produce.



In October 2008 the market coordinator, Joni Teal, approached the North East Waste Forum to help improve the existing waste management system at the markets, with the aim of making it a more sustainable 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 and 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.

Outcomes & Opportunities

In order to develop a Waste Wise Management Plan for the markets an audit was conducted in November 2008. The audit report recommended that 3 recycling stations were required to capture recycling and organics from the market. The first *Waste Wise* market was held in February 2009. A visual assessment of bins and give away of reusable bags was held in March. Outcomes included:

- 67.5% of the total waste generated was captured for recycling or reuse
- Collaboration with stallholders about the new system, signage and appropriate products for their stalls.
- The establishment of 3 waste stations to trial the capture of recycling, organics and waste
- Event organizers are aware of and are now practicing more sustainable operations
- Promotion of the market and NEWF through pre-event and post event media
- Public education and awareness raising through signage, banners and engagement of organizers and NEWF with bag give away
- The provision of reminder to recycle stickers to stallholders improved recycling rates

What Next with Waste?

The organizers of the Market intend to monitor the use and contamination of bins over the coming months. Bin positions will be adjusted according to need and additional bins will be provided at busy holiday periods.

The contamination of organics may be improved through increased signage or through changing the bin lid to lime green to differentiate it from standard dark green waste bins common to the shire.

Results

The introduction of recycling to the Lennox Market proved to be successful with 551 litres of recycling and 350 litres of organics effectively diverted from the waste stream. This means 67.5% of the total waste generated was captured for recycling or reuse.

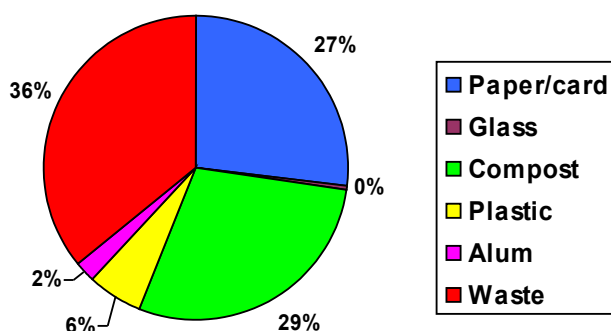
Table 1 Volumes for recycling, organics and waste

	RECYCLING	ORGANICS	WASTE
Recycling bins	551 litres (35 kg)	9.6 litres (3 kg)	4.3 litres (0.65 kg)
Waste bins	153 litres (15 kg)	125 litres (42 kg)	155 litres (23 kg)
Organics bin	15 litres* (1 kg)	350 litres (120 kg)	15 litres* (2.25 kg)

* Estimated 30 litres of contamination divided between waste and recycling

The level of contamination in the recycling bins was very low, averaging less than 2%. The major component of the recycling bins was paper and cardboard from cups, followed by plastic and aluminium cans. Contamination in the organics bins was higher than the recycling bins at 8.5%, but still within the margins for reuse.

Figure 1 Contents of Recycling Bins



Only 36% (155 litres) of the contents of the general waste bins was appropriate for disposal to landfill. Of the 433 litres generated 35% was recyclable and 29% was compostable. Most of the recyclable content of the bins was liquid paper board and coffee cups. There was very little recyclable plastic or aluminium in the waste bins. This imbalance may reflect that the public is unaware that the paper cup products are in fact recyclable. Most of the organic material in the waste bins consisted of soiled paper and paper towel, rather than food waste. Again, this may reflect a general lack of knowledge regarding compostable materials.

The bin station near the food vendors at the northern end of the market were at full capacity while the other stations only reached half of their capacity.

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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 the market included:

Packaging:

- All stalls asked to minimise packaging and to use recyclable or biodegradable packaging for serving food and drink
- Consumers to reduce plastic bag usage with complementary NEWF bags

Promotion of the recycling systems:

- Letter to Stallholders/guidelines outlining packaging requirements & recycling facilities
- Signage on bins and on stalls to assist in recycling and composting
- Council's Waste Wise Event banner on displayed at the Market entrance

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins: all plastics 1-5, metal cans, glass, cardboard and paper, (liquid) paper and coffee cups
- Organic Bins: Soiled paper and serviettes and all food scraps

Equipment & Bin Management

- 3 bin stations with 1 yellow lidded recycling bin with fitted rosette lid and lock, 1 waste bin and 1 organics bins
- Stations positioned evenly at entrance, food stalls and middle of market
- Event organisers monitor bins & empty as necessary or place additional 50 litre bins beside full bins.
- Recycling event bins collected from Ballina landfill and returned with recycling. Organic bins taken by market organizer for composting. Waste bins emptied into bulk bin on site.

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.