

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study **Multicultural Festival of the Five Senses 2010**

The Event

The Multicultural Festival of the Five Senses is funded by the Community Relations Commission for Multicultural NSW and supported by Clarence Valley Council. The festival was a celebration of the region's rich cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and included traditional dance, song, art, food and information. The purpose of the festival was to strengthen the local community, build community networks, encourage community participation and improve understanding of the value of cultural diversity.



The 2010 Multicultural Festival of the Five Senses took place at Market Square, Grafton on Saturday 22nd May.

The Challenge

The amount of waste generated at community / public events can be significant (1 L/ per/day), 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 food organics. Outcomes for the event included:

- An estimated 47% of the total waste was recycled;
- Contamination in the recycling stream was very low at less than 1%. A great result indicating that most people placed the correct materials in the recycling bins;
- The commitment to recycling food organics for animal feed resulted in a significant diversion from landfill;
- The organising committee was committed to waste minimisation & provided mostly biodegradable or recyclable packaging for serving food & drinks;
- Event organisers are now aware of the procedures required to conduct a waste wise event and can implement at future events in the region;
- Community education and increased awareness through signage, banners, public announcements & media promotion.



Multicultural Festival of the Five Senses - A Waste Wise Event

What Next with Waste?

Recommendations for future events include:

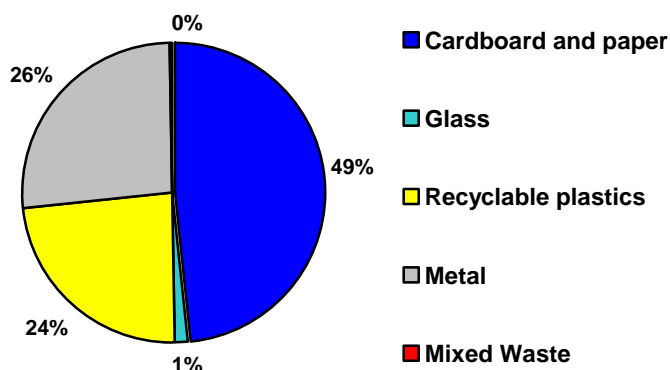
- Promote 'waste wise' initiatives in all event flyers & advertising;
- Consider a reusable or recyclable alternative to the aluminium foil food trays, which had to be disposed of due to food contamination;
- Provide option of food tickets without a drink (bottled water or can) included & provide water refills instead;
- Ensure the commitment of volunteers particularly during the event to coordinate the management of bins and signage (someone has to take responsibility on the day);
- Continue to encourage those involved to minimise packaging, only use packaging that is biodegradable, recyclable or reusable;
- Consider collecting food & biodegradables (sugar cane plates, serviettes etc) during the festival for composting.

Results

A total of 1563L of waste and recyclables was generated at the Multicultural Festival of the 5 Senses. An estimated **50%** of this total, which equates to **783 L** of recyclable materials was diverted from landfill.

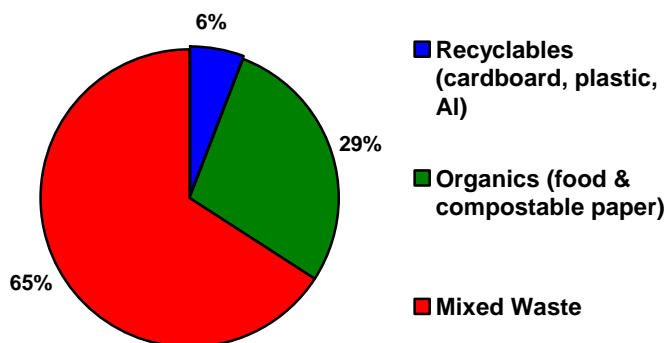
Recycling Bins

Only a trace of contamination was found in the recycle bins (<1%). Most of the cardboard was from packaged soft drinks (plastic wrap removed) and paper coffee/tea cups. Plastic water bottles and aluminium soft drink cans were 50% of the recycle stream (a choice of water or soft drink was included with each \$6.00 meal ticket).



Waste Bins

The waste was mostly food contaminated aluminium foil food trays. There was only a small amount of other non recyclable waste, mostly plastic wrap and polystyrene meat trays. Organics, mainly compostable paper and sugar cane plates, were 30% of the waste stream. Only a relatively small amount of recyclables were in the waste bins.



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 waste avoidance & recycling objectives into each stage of the event planning, sets achievable targets and assigns roles & responsibilities.

Targets set for this event included:

Packaging:

- All those providing food and drinks were asked to minimise packaging for serving food & to use only recyclable or biodegradable packaging

Promotion of the waste & recycling initiatives:

- Guidelines outlining packaging requirements & recycling facilities provided to all involved;
- Promotion via PA announcements, Council's Waste Wise Event banner & signage, signage on all bins & post event media;

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins: plastic & glass bottles, aluminum cans, milk and juice cartons; paper & cardboard
- Organics: all food scraps from the food preparation at the Community Centre (taken for committee member's animals).

Equipment & Bin Management

- 4 bin stations (8 bins) with 1 yellow lidded recycling bin and 1 red lidded waste bin;
- Separate comingled recycling, cardboard & paper and waste bins were available for use at the Community Centre (CC);
- Committee members used separate collection containers for food scraps at the CC;
- Monitor all those involved at start of event of the event to ensure they are aware of the recycling facilities and how to use correctly.



Event Organising Committee Member Emma Ocholla

Contacts

North East Waste Forum

Co-ordinator
coordinator@northeastwasteforum.org.au
www.northeastwasteforum.org.au

Event Organiser (Contact via)

Tim Shearman- Community Development Officer
 Clarence Valley Council
 P: (02) 6645 0232
www.clarence.nsw.gov.au