

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study **PRIMEX (Primary Industry Exhibition) 2010**

The Event

PRIMEX is a leading Australian Primary Industry Trade Exhibition now in its 26th year. The annual three day event takes place in the rural town of Casino in the Northern Rivers region of NSW. In June 2010 the event welcomed investment from around 1000 companies with 400 Exhibitors onsite and in excess of 50,000 regional, national and international visitors in attendance.



PRIMEX provides a forum for exhibitors, customers and visitors to meet, do business and network for the ongoing benefit of agribusiness and associated industries and communities.

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 on improving: the reduction of waste; the separation of recyclables; and increasing the awareness and participation of Exhibitors/Stallholders regarding waste and recycling initiatives.

Outcomes for the 2010 event included:

- An estimated 15m³ or 22% of total waste was recycled. (a sizable increase with further potential for improvement);
- A great improvement in the provision and location of waste/recycling facilities including high visibility bin stations, signage and banners;
- Increased awareness of participants & visitors through inclusion of waste/recycling information and site plan into Exhibitors/Stallholder registration packs, promotion via PRIMEX website and program, published media release and public announcements during the event;
- Closer collaboration and communication between the Event Organisers and the waste & sustainability partners in the implementation of the waste management plan;
- Inclusion of improved waste minimisation and recycling initiatives into the PRIMEX Sustainability Strategy;
- The commitment of Event Organisers to continue progressively improving waste management.

What Next with Waste?

Recommendations to improve future event waste outcomes:

- Provide a waste/recycling information sheet and site plan to Exhibitors/Stallholders on arrival at the event;
- The main waste/recycling points & cardboard skips need to be more clearly highlighted on the Site Plan;
- Nominate a Waste Co-ordinator/s to take responsibility for implementing future waste management plans;
- Use single bins that are consistent in colour and signage with the waste station bins (red lids & red 'garbage stickers) and phase out the use of single waste bins in favour of more waste / recycle bin stations;
- Provide clear guidelines to food & drink vendors requiring them to use recyclable or biodegradable packaging only;
- Provide more smaller cardboard skips and/or a daily cardboard pick up service for Exhibitors/Stallholders;
- Ensure that skips are not removed until after the final cardboard run and cleanup is completed;
- Improve bin planning to ensure an optimal distribution of bin stations/bins across the site;
- Further clustering of high waste producers & provision of additional 'back of house' waste/recycling services.

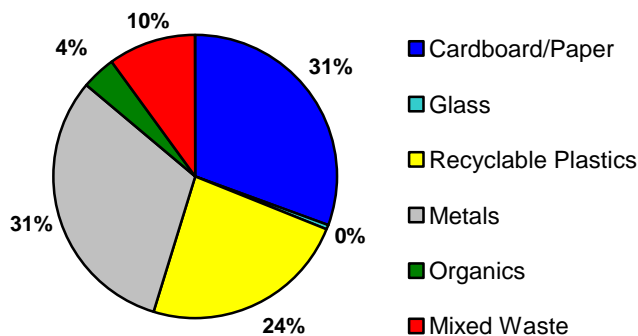
Results

The data collected from waste auditing, assessment and onsite observations at PRIMEX resulted in the following overall *estimates*:

- ❖ The total waste/recycling generated was around **83,380L**;
- ❖ **14,967L** of this total was collected and sent for recycling (**79%** of this was cardboard);
- ❖ The volume recycled equated to **22%** of total event waste being diverted from landfill;
- ❖ A contamination level of **14%** was found in the recycling bins (>10% is normally considered too high to recycle);
- ❖ A potential diversion of **>55%** of total event waste could have been achieved if all recyclables were successfully separated;
- ❖ An unquantified volume of animal organics (sawdust & cow manure) from the stock area, if not removed by the exhibitors was mulched into the ground, avoiding landfill disposal costs & associated environmental impacts while improving the soil.

Recycling Bin Stations

60% of the recycling bins were audited over the 3 days and the results are summarised below:



Cardboard (mainly food packaging & coffee cup) and aluminium drink cans were the main component of the recycling bins, followed by recyclable plastic drink bottles. There was very little glass (Hotel bars provided drinks in cans or plastic cups). The main contamination was non recyclable mixed waste, mainly polystyrene cups and hot food clams, plastic wrap and food packaging. There was also a small amount of organic contamination (food & food contaminated paper waste).

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:

- Letter included in the registration pack requesting Exhibitors/Stallholders to minimise packaging and avoid non recyclable packaging and informing them of recycling facilities;

Promotion of Waste Minimisation & Recycling:

- Inclusion in the PRIMEX Sustainability Strategy;
- Promotion on website, & news release published;
- Use of Richmond Valley Council's event bins, high visibility signage and banners;
- Public announcements during event;
- Face to face contact and survey of Stallholders by SCU students.

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins: plastic, glass, aluminium & cardboard/paper drink containers;
- Recycle skips: cardboard boxes;

Equipment & Bin Management

- 3 main waste/recycling points each with 1x 30m3 cardboard skip & 2x240L waste/recycle stations;
- 25 bin stations (including those above) located in high use spots such as eating areas, by food stalls, bars, entrances & toilets;
- Each waste/recycling station included 1 x 240L red lid/skirted waste bin & 1 x 240L yellow lid/skirted recycling bin (all labeled);
- 92 additional waste bins (green with no labeling) located across the site;
- All bins were emptied once per day & removed the day after the event;
- Skips were removed two days after the event.



SCU Student Volunteers at a Waste/Recycle Station

Contacts

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