

## Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study Primex 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.

### Primex



Primex is the premier agricultural field day and largest commercial exhibition in northern New South Wales, covering almost every aspect of primary industry in Australia. Primex is held in Casino every June over three days. It is centrally located to all major business districts on the North Coast of N.S.W. providing easy access to all visitors specifically from N.S.W. and Queensland. Richmond Valley Council nominated this event for the project as it was the largest event in its region. Due to the limited access to recycling in the region, it was decided to target aluminium cans and cardboard for recovery from the 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 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:

#### Recovery Targets:

- Aluminium cans from the public.
- Cardboard from stallholders.

#### Promotion of the recycling systems:

- Pre and post event media releases in local papers.
- Letter and email to stallholders to advertise the availability of cardboard recycling skips.
- PA announcements every hour.
- Advertisement in event program.
- Signage on bins and skips designed specifically for event bins.
- NEWF *The Green House* Education trailer and two performers were present over the weekend.

#### Equipment:

- 12 x 240L yellow lidded recycling bins with fitted rosette lids and locks supplied and serviced by Richmond Valley Council.
- 3 x 15m<sup>3</sup> skips supplied and serviced by Richmond Valley Council.
- 100 x 240L waste bins provided and serviced by private contractor.

#### Bin Plan:

- The aluminium bins were placed near the bar and food areas and adjacent to a waste bin.
- The 3 skips were located behind the stalls in the showground. Event staff met council on site the day before the event to position skips.



# NORTH EAST WASTE FORUM

NEW WAYS WITH LESS WASTE



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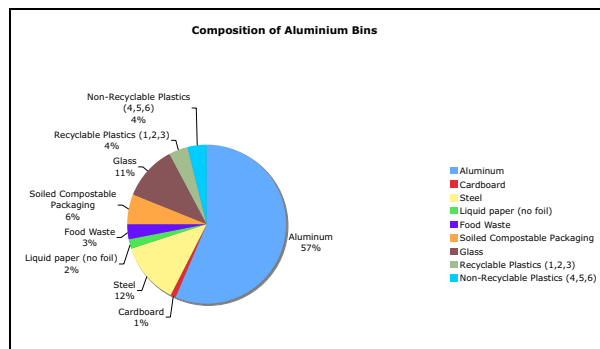
## Results

A waste audit was conducted at the end of the event on the cardboard skips and bins used to collect aluminium cans. The results of the waste audit follow.

### Aluminium Bins

The composition of the aluminium bins can be seen in the graph below. Aluminium made up the majority, 25.6kg (57%) of the weight, steel 5.6kg (12%), glass 5kg (11%) and soiled compostable packaging 2.7kg (6%). Whilst the contamination was 57% by weight it was only 20% by volume.

One of the recycling bins was badly contaminated by steel waste from one stall holder at the end of the event. It was a third full of nuts and bolts and cheap tools which weighed 5kg on its own, hence skewing the results.



### Cardboard Skips

The cardboard skips included magazines 625kg (80%) and cardboard 113kg (15%).

The 5% contamination was comprised mostly of food waste 4kg (1%), non-recyclable plastics 15.6kg (2%), steel packaging straps 4.6kg (1%), timber 6kg (1%).

Only a small percentage of cardboard ended up in skips. Only one of the skips actually contained any cardboard.

## The Future

The Primex organisers have not responded to the evaluation and feedback provided on the Waste Wise Event. Richmond Valley Council has expressed interest in assisting next year, aiming to improve on this year's results and drawing on the lessons from 2007.

Communication with stallholders could be improved by:

- 1) Advertising the recycling facilities on the Primex website
- 2) Adding the placement of the cardboard skips to the event site map that stallholders are given and that is able to be downloaded from the web.
- 3) Remind stallholders in the covering letter they receive on payment of their stall fees (eg include a brochure reminding them about how to use the recycling skips correctly).

The North East Waste forum acknowledges the assistance of the Packaging Stewardship Forum with the purchase of bins and stickers and advice on implementation of this project.

## Outcomes

Primex provided some valuable lessons that only come through making mistakes! Whilst it was significant to recover the 725kg of paper and cardboard it didn't match the anticipated volume. Other outcomes included:

- The cardboard skips contained a majority of Primex Event Catalogues which had been over-printed and were not the target of the recycling project. Based on the weight of each magazine being 110grams, it is estimated there were approximately 5680 overprinted programs.
- The event organiser printed the recycling add in the event program.
- It seemed that most stallholders were either unaware there was cardboard recycling at the event or did not know where the skips were located.
- Waste bins or skips needed to be positioned beside cardboard skips to avoid dumping of steel strapping and plastic packaging in with the cardboard.
- The announcements over the PA to advertise the recycling at the event were not made.
- The 3 x 10m<sup>3</sup> cardboard skip were not placed in convenient locations for stallholders who produced the majority of cardboard.
- Communication with event organisers was difficult and gaining a commitment to the Waste Wise Event Planning process was not easy.
- To improve aluminium can recovery at the event more recycling bins need to be provided (particularly near the food and drink areas). Ideally every waste bin should be matched by a recycling bin. However, this may not be cost effective for this event (where there are 100 waste bins on site).

## Costs

The council invested seven hours of labour to implement the recycling at the event. The event organisers incurred no additional costs to their waste management.

## Contacts

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### Primex

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