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## Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study Rivafest 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.

### Rivafest



The Rivafest is an annual event organised by Ballina Shire Council. The event features local entertainment, circus, rides, a duck race, fireworks and water sports. Attracting a crowd of 10 000 people over the day and evening the event has the potential to create a reasonable volume of waste. Twelve stallholders provided food during the event. In previous years, the event has experienced a lack of organisation in regards to waste management. This year the NEWF co-ordinated a Waste Wise Management Plan for the event, which was developed collaboratively with the different sections of council involved in 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:

#### Packaging:

- ✎ All stalls to use biodegradable packaging

#### Promotion of the recycling systems:

- ✎ Letter to Stallholder letter/guidelines outlining packaging requirements and recycling facilities available
- ✎ Pre event media releases in local papers.
- ✎ PA announcements every hour.
- ✎ Advertisement in event program.
- ✎ Signage on bins designed specifically for event bins
- ✎ Council's Waste Wise Event banner
- ✎ The Greenhouse Waste Education trailer and performers attended the event.
- ✎ Waste Wise performances were scheduled on the main stage.

#### Recovery Targets:

- ✎ Recycle bins: aluminium cans; plastic bottles; glass and (liquid) paper cups
- ✎ Cardboard in skips provided

#### Equipment:

- ✎ 12 x 240L yellow lidded recycling bins with fitted rosette lids and locks supplied by Ballina Shire Council.
- ✎ 12 x 240L red lidded waste bins supplied by Ballina Shire Council.

#### Bin Plan and Management:

- ✎ Bin stations comprising one recycling bin and one waste bin located at 15m intervals through Fawcett Park
- ✎ Monitor bin stations, remove if full and ensure bins stay together in their stations
- ✎ Monitor stallholder waste and ensure they utilise facilities correctly



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## Results

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The waste management at Rivafest was greatly improved on previous years. Overall, the participants used the bins well and litter was not a big issue. Contamination levels in the recycling bins and getting the equipment onsite earlier are the most important issues to work on at next years event.

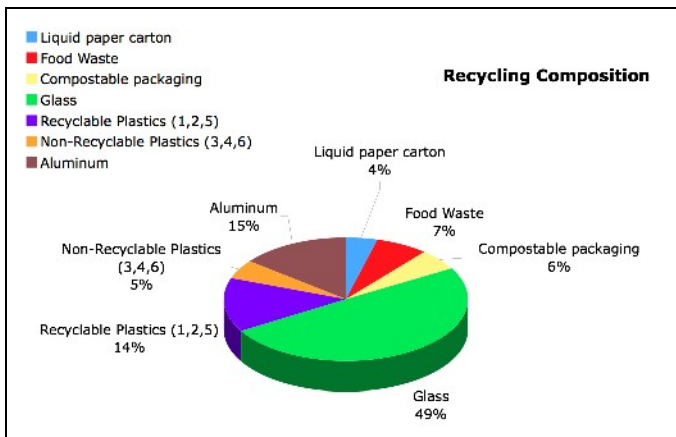
### Recycling Bins

The recycling bins recovered 720L or 39.5kg of co-mingled drink containers. The table below presents a breakdown of the different materials recovered.

Glass accounted for 49%, aluminium 15%, recyclable plastic 14% and liquid paper 4%. The average contamination was 17% which is above the acceptable level (<10%) to be received for processing and recycling.

The major contaminants were food waste, compostable packaging and non recyclable plastics. Polystyrene cups, plastic straws and plastic cups were the most obvious contaminants.

There were adequate numbers of recycling bins used on the site. The twelve bins covered Fawcett Park effectively and did not require emptying during the event.



### Cardboard Skips

An estimated 4m<sup>3</sup> of cardboard was separated by stallholders and placed in the skips provided. Two clearly signed skips were provided for the event. On a visual inspection during the event, contamination was low in the skip.

## Costs

Ballina Shire Council provided the waste and recycling services in kind for the event. Waste charges were \$260 for the event, which was a \$40 increase on previous years that did not include recycling. Reducing unnecessary cardboard skip would help reduce costs at future events

## Outcomes

Introducing a Waste Wise Plan for Rivafest resulted in a 40% reduction of waste to landfill. Other outcomes included:

- ✎ 60% of food vans that participated in the event used recyclable or biodegradable packaging for serving food and drinks
- ✎ The stallholders utilised the cardboard skips effectively at the end of the event.
- ✎ Waste Wise PA announcements were consistent every hour.
- ✎ The Greenhouse Education Trailer attended the event and performers engaged with event participants to educate on waste and recycling issues.
- ✎ The Northern Star ran a story on the recycling initiatives at Rivafest in the week preceding the event.
- ✎ Four Waste Wise Performances were scheduled on the main stage during the day.
- ✎ The recycling bins were delivered late to the site, reducing the volume of potential recycling recovered.
- ✎ Event organisers conducted competitions throughout the day to retrieve littering, which proved to be effective.

The event organisers and council were pleased with their achievement. The process of developing a WWMP improved organisation and communication in council and resulted in improved waste reduction outcomes.

## The Future

Ballina Shire Council is committed to improving waste management practices at events. Rivafest was a good trial and the results provide positive feedback into future event planning.

Recommendations for future events include:

- ✎ Reducing polystyrene and non-recyclable plastic packaging
- ✎ Consider targeting the reduction of disposal toys marketed at the event
- ✎ Remove contamination to ensure recycling of materials
- ✎ Ensure bins are located on site before the event begins.

## Contacts

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### Rivafest

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