

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study Salt Carols Under the Stars 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.

Salt Carols Under the Stars



The Salt Carols Under the Stars is an annual event organised by Salt Events in Kingscliff in the Tweed Shire Council. Families are invited to bring a picnic dinner to share on the lawn in front of the outdoor stage. Fifteen hundred people were expected to attend the carols. An unexpected crowd of up to 2500 people showed up for the event, exceeding the capacity of the waste facilities provided.

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:

- Communication with stallholders about recycling facilities and packaging guidelines.
- PA announcements every hour.
- Advertisement in event program.
- Signage on bins designed specifically for event bins
- Council's Waste Wise Event banner
- Promotion of waste wise initiatives at event in the SALT email newsletter

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins: aluminium cans; plastic bottles; glass and (liquid) paper cups, cardboard

Equipment:

- 12 x 240L purple lidded split bins with square opening for waste and round opening for recycling.
- 3 x 240L general waste bins existing on site.

Bin Plan and Management:

- Salt Events staff to determine appropriate location for bins on the day of the event.
- Monitor stallholders as they set up. Ensure they are aware of recycling facilities and are complying with the packaging guidelines
- Install banner and signage
- Monitor bins... empty when full and ensure bins stay in their positions
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- Audit to be conducted by North East Waste Forum to evaluate the effectiveness of the recycling.

NORTH EAST WASTE FORUM

NEW WAYS WITH LESS WASTE



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Results

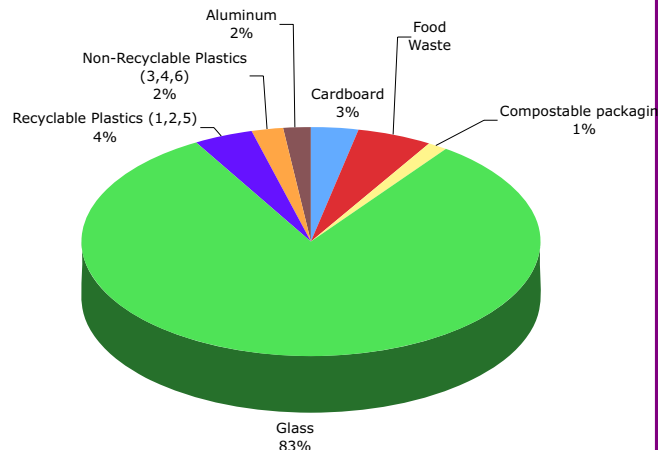
The waste management at SALT Carols was compromised by the increased participation of 60% on previous years. Contamination levels were high due to a lack of bins to cope with the volume of waste and recycling.

Recycling

The recycling bins recovered 155kg of co-mingled drink containers and cardboard. The chart below presents a breakdown of the different materials recovered.

Glass accounted for the majority of the weight (125kg). Contamination was 9%. The major contaminants were food waste (5%), compostable packaging (1%) and non recyclable plastics (2%). The majority of contamination was bags of mixed waste that was placed in the bins or on top of the bins at the end of the event.

Recycling Composition



Waste Bins

Based on the bins audited, there was 48% recyclables in the waste stream. Glass accounted for 32% of the contamination.

As suggested above, there were not enough waste bins to cope with the amount of waste generated.

There was a reasonable volume of plastic plates, plastic cutlery and cups disposed of. In addition, there were significant numbers of neon arm bands and plastic candles in the waste. These were sold at the event.

Costs

Tweed Shire Council provides the split bins for waste and recycling in kind, for the use at community events. The council aims to encourage events to recycle by offering the bins for free. Twelve split bins are available through this service. Additional bins need to be arranged through a private contractor or waste management in council.

Outcomes

Introducing a Waste Wise Plan for Salt Carols Under the Stars resulted in a 30% reduction of waste to landfill. Other outcomes included:

- The two food vans that participated in the event used recyclable or biodegradable packaging for serving food and drinks
- The recycling and waste avoidance targets were included in the event program but did not make it into the earlier email promotions.
- Waste Wise PA announcements were not mentioned consistently during the evening.
- Basically not enough bins to handle the volume of recycling and waste produced at the event.
- Signage on the spilt bins was clear and holes in the lids appeared to assist the recovery of recycling at the beginning of the event. Once bins were full, bins were contaminated with plastic bags full of mixed rubbish.

The event organisers and council were pleased with their achievement. The process of developing a Waste Management Plan improved the organisation and implementation of the waste and recycling systems.

The Future

Salt Events hold a number of events over a year which will benefit from the findings from the Carols evening. Recommendations for future events include:

- Consider avoiding the sale of disposable, plastic lights and neon arm bands.
- Double the number of split bins for recovering recycling and waste
- Remove contamination to ensure recycling of materials
- Inform participants prior to and during the event about recycling and waste avoidance targets of the event.
- Educate participants about how to bring a Waste Wise Picnic Eg. Use re-useable plates and cutlery, bring juice in plastic rather than poppers etc.

Contacts

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