

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study Surfing the Coldstream Festival 2008

The Event

'Surfing the Coldstream' is a two and a half day arts fringe festival, which was held for its third year in the Northern Rivers coastal town of Yamba from 24th to 26th October. An estimated 10 000 – 15 000 people attended the event. In previous years all waste has been sent to landfill but this year the event organisers Live Prawn Productions committed to working with the North East Waste Forum (NEWF) to deliver a 'Waste Wise' event for the community.



By developing a 'Waste Wise Management Plan'(WWMP) with the NEWF, the organisers were able to focus on reducing waste to landfill by encouraging stall holders to avoid unnecessary packaging and use more environmentally friendly products and by providing recycling facilities for all.

The Challenge

The amount of waste generated at community/public events can be significant (about 1 litre/person/day), creating an unpleasant mess and substantial clean up costs for event organisers and 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.

Outcomes & Opportunities

Introducing a Waste Wise Management Plan for the Festival resulted in a greater than 50% reduction of waste to landfill through the capture of recyclable materials. Other outcomes include:

- Promotion through pre-event media, information sent to stall holders, the Waste Wise Events banner and clear signage on bins and in the bar assisted in raising recycling awareness;
- Event organisers are now familiar with the Waste Wise Events process and are likely to implement it in future;
- Most stallholders who participated in the event used recyclable or biodegradable packaging for serving food and drinks, enhancing their likelihood of doing so at other events ;
- The number of bins was more than adequate for the event. This helped to reduce litter & contamination of the recycling stream. The mini skips were not necessary and the cost can be avoided in future;
- Good waste management by the event waste coordinator and volunteers helped to reduce litter, reduce contamination in the recycling bins and raise awareness of the waste reduction and recycling message;
- The provision of transparent plastic bags to the stall holders for the collection of recyclables worked well. They were checked for contamination by volunteers before placing in recycle bins

What Next with Waste?

The Surfing the Coldstream organisers are keen to implement recycling at future events.

Recommendations for next year's event include:

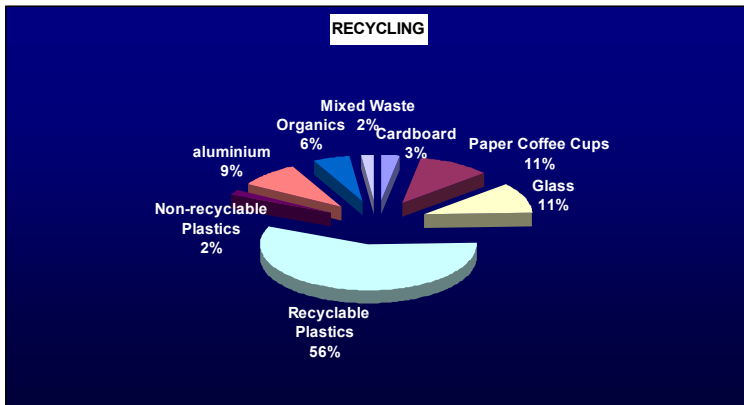
- If a similar number of bin stations are provided then recycling skips will not be necessary unless a significant increase in visitors and/or stall holders is anticipated.
- Install larger more visible signage particularly around food & drink stalls to inform consumers about the recyclable nature of their packaging, particularly the coffee cups
- Make regular 'Waste Wise' public announcements to remind festival visitors & stall holders to recycle right
- Consider the introduction of organic recycling.

Results

A waste audit was conducted at the end of the event. A total of 4 out of the 20 waste bins and 4 of the recycling bins were audited. This was 20% of the bins used at the event. An estimated 10 cubic meters or 792kgs of waste and recycling was produced. Of this total approximately 5.25m³ or 352kgs of recyclables were diverted from landfill. This equates to 45% by weight of the waste generated at the festival. The results of the waste audit are as follows:

Recycling Bins

Approximately 53% by volume of the total waste generated at the event was recovered for recycling. Not considering the bulk cardboard collection, the major component of the recycling bins was recyclable plastic drink containers (including plastic beer and wine glasses) at 57%. This was followed by paper coffee cups at 11%, glass at 11%, aluminium cans at 9% and other cardboard, which mainly comprised of liquid paper board cartons & food & drink containers was 3%.



Waste Bins

The waste bins contained an estimated 32% of recyclables including 11% plastics (mainly drink containers), 9% paper coffee cups, 7% other cardboard/paper and 5% aluminium and glass.

The largest component of the waste stream by far, was food and compostable packaging at 39%. An estimated 284kgs of 'potentially recyclable' food and compostable packaging was generated during the festival.

Waste Wise Management Plan

A Waste Wise Management Plan incorporates recycle & waste avoidance objectives into each stage of the event planning, sets achievable targets and assigns roles & responsibilities. Targets set for this event included:

Packaging:

- All stalls asked to minimise packaging and to use recyclable or biodegradable packaging for serving food and drink
- No glass, aluminium, plastic bags, poppers or polystyrene permitted;

Promotion of the recycling systems:

- Letter to Stallholders/guidelines outlining packaging requirements & recycling facilities
- PA announcements during event & monitoring stallholders to ensure correct use of the bin systems
- Signage on bins and in bar and at coffee stalls to assist in plastic drink and paper cup recycling
- Council's Waste Wise Event banner on displayed at the festival entrance

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins: plastic drink bottles; (liquid) paper coffee cups
- Cardboard bales provided for stall holders

Equipment & Bin Management

- 20 bin stations with 1 yellow lidded recycling bin with fitted rosette lid and lock & 1 waste bin located around the festival oval (more in food & bar areas)
- 2 x 1m³ cardboard bales
- Event volunteers monitor recycling bins & empty as necessary. Waste bins put out for collection on Sunday morning.



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.

Contacts

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