

Case Study -Durrumbul Public School

Background

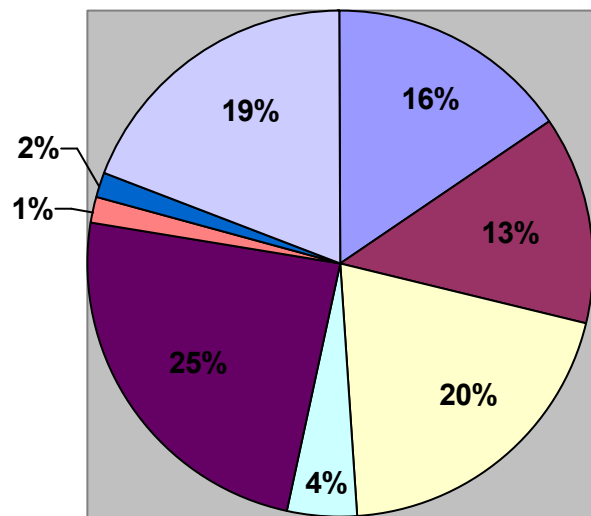
The North East Waste Forum (NEWF) is a collective of local councils that have come together to share resources to help avoid and reduce waste disposed of to landfill in the Northern NSW region.

The Forum provides a range of waste education projects, resources and support for the community, schools and businesses of the north coast. The aim is to promote simple and practical ways of adopting waste-less lifestyles.

The Durrumbul School, with the support of Byron Shire Council and Solo Resources, has recently undertaken a number of initiatives to raise environmental awareness and reduce their waste to landfill. Included in these was a waste audit to identify the schools waste stream and highlight areas for improvement.

Waste Characterisation

A waste audit was conducted of the schools waste for one day, a Monday. The different waste categories are shown in the graph below.



- single sided copy paper
- double sided copy paper
- other paper
- food waste
- compostable packaging
- recyclable plastics
- metal
- waste

Durrumbul Public School



Durrumbul is a small school of 87 students in a beautiful rural setting which has been servicing the community since 1900. Its students come from a diverse range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The school provides students with a wide variety of activities within a balanced curriculum to ensure each student finds school a fun place to be, including an emphasis on caring for the environment.

In line with results from other schools, nearly half of the waste produced at Durrumbul is paper. Of this, nearly one third is single sided copy paper. Food waste and compostable packaging comprises 29% of the waste stream. The compostable packaging included paper towel, serviettes and contaminated food containers of paper or cardboard. There was a small percentage of recyclable plastics and metals (3% in total). The remaining 19% of the waste stream was not recyclable or compostable. It was made up mostly of plastic film, wrappers and non-recyclable plastic containers.



Outcomes to date

The school audit was both a data gathering exercise and a means of raising awareness among the students. Six students participated in the audit to learn the basic steps in conducting a waste audit and enable them to continue to monitor the schools progress.



Students learning to conduct a waste audit

The day after the audit the school held a "litter free" lunch. It was a great success with minimal waste. 'Spot checks' to monitor the litter-free lunch message will be conducted in Term 4. School Principal, Anne Reichart, (pictured below) was very proud of her students and parents for taking on board this important initiative. The school also held a 'waste as art' sculpture competition, with 30 entries. Students used plastic bottles, cardboard and a variety of materials to produce some excellent sculptures



Recommendations

The efforts of Durrumbul School are to be congratulated. The following recommendations are made as a guide to encourage continued best practice.

- Ensure one sided copy paper is reused by both teachers and students for draft work or for notepads
- Separate paper from mainstream waste for recycling
- Continue to encourage and monitor litter free lunches
- Reinforce the waste reduction message with newsletter articles, in class activities and competitions
- Hold a 'green' day where children wear green, pay a coin donation and raise funds for environmental initiatives
- Promote the separation of food waste for composting or animal feed
- Discourage the unnecessary use of paper towel
- Continue to incorporate sustainability into all curriculum areas
- Investigate opportunities to further enhance the schools sustainability

Contacts

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