



Business Waste Reduction Project Tweed Heads (South) Business Waste Survey Report

Introduction

The Business Waste Reduction Project, an initiative of the North East Waste Forum (NEWF) is aimed at assisting businesses within the region to reduce the quantity of waste they generate and send to landfill through more efficient waste management practices. The service is free to business and is supported by your local council. The waste practices and attitudes of businesses in Tweed Heads South area were surveyed in March 2011 in order to assist local business and improve waste reduction outcomes where possible.

Benefits to Business

Implementing more efficient waste management and resource use practices has the potential to bring business and the wider community many benefits, including:

- Reduced waste collection and disposal costs;
- Improved operational efficiency, reduced production costs and improved staff morale;
- Improved environmental credentials & enhanced corporate image;
- Conserving natural resources, energy and water;
- Reduced pressure on local landfills and less impact on the environment from air and water pollution.

Existing Waste & Recycling Services

The waste and recycling service options currently available in the Tweed Heads area:

- i) Tweed Shire Council can provide
 - ✓ 240L/140L or 80L red lidded wheelie bins for waste (once weekly collection)
 - ✓ 240L yellow lidded wheelie bins for comingled recyclables (fortnightly or weekly collection)
 - ✓ 240L green lidded wheelie bins for green (garden only) waste (fortnightly collection)
- ii) Private Waste Contractors can provide
 - ✓ bulk bins for waste, cardboard/paper, recyclable containers
 - ✓ 240L wheelie bins for cardboard/paper or recyclable containers.

Survey Summary

A total of 32 businesses participated including: 25 businesses on Machinery Drive and a further 7 businesses (Chamber of Commerce members) 5 from the Tweed Heads South area, 1 in Kingscliff and 1 in Carool.

The graph at Figure 1 below illustrates business responses regarding participation in the recycling of cardboard/paper, comingled recyclables, green waste and food organics. The positive response indicators are inclusive of those businesses that have a recycling collection service as well as those who claimed they recycled via alternatives such as taking to the tip, or where they reused items or gave them to others to reuse.

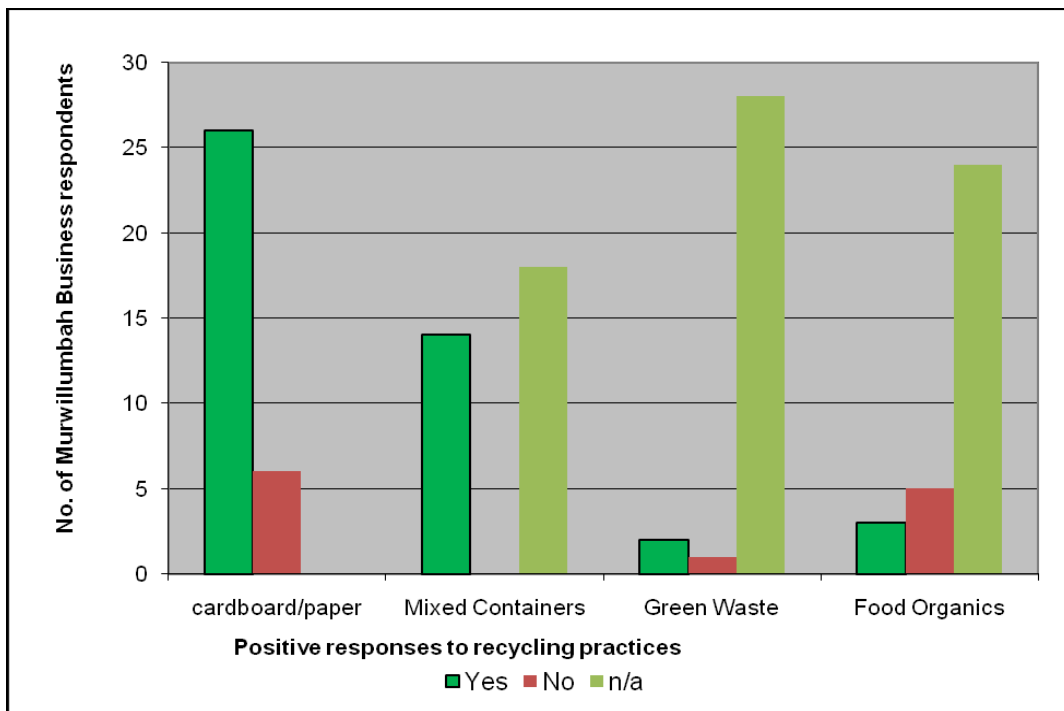


Figure 1. Positive Business Responses to Recycling Practices

The survey results indicate that approximately 81% of the surveyed businesses are recycling or reusing cardboard & paper and although 43% of the surveyed businesses are recycling or reusing comingled containers, amongst Machinery Drive businesses the rate is only 32%. Overall 19% or 6 businesses don't recycle any cardboard/paper or comingled containers.

Many of the businesses in Machinery Drive have waste specific to their industry e.g. automotive workshops have used oil, oil filters, auto parts, coolants etc and have collection arrangements in place to deal with them. Comingled container recycling is not a big issue amongst most of the businesses participating in the survey, as there are few food and hospitality type businesses, (which often generated high volumes of containers) on Machinery Drive. Of the 6 businesses that are not currently recycling cardboard/paper or comingled containers, only 1 was estimated to have a large quantity of cardboard and is in the process of arranging a collection service. There is some opportunity for improvements in the rate of recycling and diversion of waste from landfill amongst some of the businesses, through the provision of shared cardboard/paper and/or comingled recycling bins in addition to their existing waste bins.

25% or 8 of the businesses surveyed produced significant amounts of food waste and 3 of these businesses were recycling some or all of their organics by taking them home or having them collected for composting or animal feed. Informal collection is not a feasible or long term solution for all businesses and 5 businesses stated that they would be interested in a Council commercial combined (food & green waste) organics collection service if one became available. Council is currently considering the viability of a combined organics service for the Tweed Shire.

During the survey it was suggested that business tenants discuss options with their property manager or landlord to provide or improve existing recycling facilities. The businesses that expressed an interest in a recycling service had their contact details forwarded to Tweed Shire Council's Waste unit and/or were given an information sheet on commercial recycling & waste services to assist them in doing so. Follow up advice and information on waste, recycling and broader sustainability issues was provided by the NEWF Project Officer on request to some of the surveyed businesses.

During the survey emphasis was placed on the potential savings for businesses in future by reducing waste to landfill costs, which could then offset the cost of recycling, whether through a commercial service or separation and self delivery to Stotts Creek. Currently the cost of bulk container recycling and bulk green waste recycling is prohibitive due primarily to low demand but this option will become more affordable as the State levy on waste to landfill increases disposal costs annually.

75% of surveyed businesses indicated that they also undertook other sustainable actions in their businesses the most popular practices being the use of energy efficient lighting, reduced paper use &/or reuse of paper, sustainable purchasing such as recycled content products and switching off appliances when not in use.

Conclusion

There are still many opportunities for businesses to further improve their sustainable waste practices through implementing a broad variety of waste minimisation and recycling strategies relevant to their particular business. Tweed Shire Council congratulates business on their recycling efforts so far, whilst the North East Waste Forum, on their behalf will continue to:

- provide assistance and support to interested businesses where possible;
- promote successful waste reducing businesses and the benefits they gain;
- continue business networking through the Chamber of Commerce; and
- increase the distribution of information via the NEWF's E newsletters.

Business Highlights

Promoting the sustainable waste practices of local businesses is an ideal way to share knowledge and success, strengthen local networks, engage others and reward those demonstrating leadership for their efforts. The following three Tweed Heads South businesses stood out from the crowd for their sustainable waste management practices.

❖ Red Neds



Management and staff at this family operated business are committed to playing their part in helping to protect the environment through their sustainable business practices. Business owner Maree Kelly said "we salvage reusable building materials from demolition sites and stop them from ending up as landfill, so saving valuable resources and reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions".

Red Ned's has over 2 acres of reclaimed building materials for sale at their Machinery Drive warehouse including doors, lighting fixtures, tiles, pavers, fireplaces, hot water systems, shop, office, kitchen and bathroom fittings, carports, fencing, roofing and a huge range of hardwood timber. The list goes on.....

"Our mission is to avoid waste and reclaim, reuse and recycle as much as we can. Anything that we can't sell is taken to Stotts Creek for recycling including untreated timber, which is recycled as green waste to make garden mulch" Maree said.

❖ **Tweed Fitness Centre**

Grace Sullivan owner of Tweed Fitness Centre on Machinery Drive manages the Centre's waste in order to minimise the impact on the environment and the cost to her business of generating and disposing of waste. All cardboard, paper and glass, plastic and metal cans and containers are recycled via Council's commercial comingled recycling service (240L yellow lidded bins). "To encourage staff and gym members to separate their recyclables correctly, small clearly labeled recycling bins are placed around the Centre next to the waste bins. At the end of the day the recycling is transferred into the yellow lidded wheelie bins so minimizing contamination" Grace said. Food scraps are also collected on a daily basis and taken home by Grace for composting. "This keeps the Fitness Centre's waste down to a minimum with only one wheelie bin or less of non recyclable waste per week going to landfill" she said.

The Centre also sources local fresh produce for the café, so supporting the local economy and reducing the impact associated with packaging and transporting food long distances. Other sustainable business practices such as: reduced paper use; energy saving through a policy of switching off appliances not in use; and the use of biodegradable cleaning products are all indications of the business's commitment to a more sustainable workplace and a healthier environment.

❖ **The Good Guys**

Rory Curtis's The Good Guys are leading the charge amongst NSW's Good Guys stores in order to improve their triple bottom line. They are committed to industry and business leadership in sustainable practices not just because it makes good environmental sense but because it makes good business sense. As retailers they have the ability to guide their clients towards more sustainable purchases such as energy and water efficient appliances but that's not the whole story. It's only by cleaning up their own act and that of their supply chain that they can really make a significant difference.



Store owner Rory Curtis said "around 75% of the waste generated at the store is expanded polystyrene (EPS), which is used as packaging on most electrical and white goods. The installation of a specialized shredding machine has resulted in the annual diversion of an estimated 1456m³ of EPS from landfill and savings of over \$9000.00 per year once equipment and ongoing operating costs have been accounted for". Some of the shredded polystyrene is sold on to a local business to be used as a filler and the rest is transported to Brisbane for reprocessing overseas. A large volume of cardboard is also recycled from the store each week and as a service to customers, old white goods are collected when new ones are delivered and passed on to dealers for salvaging of the useful parts and scrap metal recycling.

Further Information

The North East Waste Forum encourages businesses wishing to improve their waste management practices and sustainability to check out the business waste reduction DIY toolkit and other useful resources online at www.northeastwasteforum.org.au. The Business Waste Reduction Project Coordinator can be contacted for support on ph. 02 6687 4945 or business@northeastwasteforum.org.au