

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study Taste of Byron 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.

Taste of Byron



The Taste of Byron is Byron Bay's signature food event. It is held annually over a weekend in September and organised by the Lions Club of Byron Bay. Over 40 food and wine stalls participate in the event, which attracts up to 15 000 people. Local performers, celebrity cooking classes and a fashion parade add lots of fun to the event. NEWF worked with event organisers to introduce recycling for the first time in 2007.

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:

- Stallholders required to use biodegradable packaging for serving food.
- Bar to use PET plastic cups which will be recovered in recycling bins.

Promotion of the recycling systems:

- Pre and post event media releases in local papers.
- Letter to Stallholders outlining packaging requirements and recycling facilities available
- Attend stallholder meeting 2 weeks prior to event to give waste wise events briefing.
- PA announcements every hour.
- Advertisement in event program.
- Signage on bins designed specifically for event bins.
- Council's Waste Wise Event banner was displayed.
- Prepare additional signage for the bar to promote PET wine glasses as recyclable.

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins: aluminium cans; plastic bottles; glass and (liquid) paper cups.
- Waste cooking oil separated and reused by North Coast Biodiesel.
- Cardboard skip for stallholders.

Equipment:

- 40 x 240L yellow lidded recycling bins (including 12 from Byron Shire Council fitted with rosette lids/locks)
- 40 x 240L red lidded waste bins
- One x 2m3 skips for waste
- One x 2m3 skips for cardboard
- 1 x 44 gallon drum for used cooking oil
- 3 x 44 gallon drum for waste water

Bin Plan

- Bin stations comprising one recycling bin and one waste bin located at 10m intervals around the site.

NORTH EAST WASTE FORUM

NEW WAYS WITH LESS WASTE

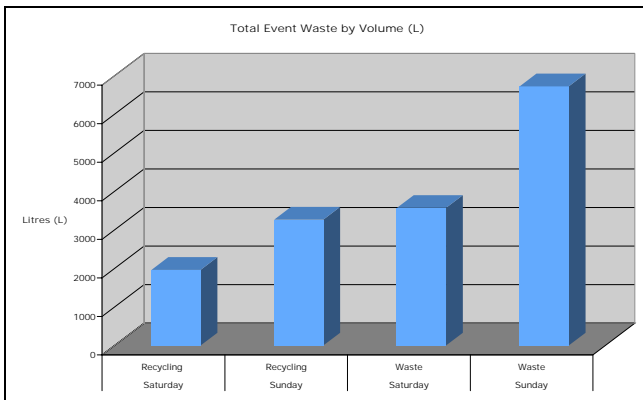


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Results

The Taste of Byron produced a significant volume of waste (15 500L), over the two day event. The graph below represents the volumes that were put into the bins. Unfortunately it does not represent the amount recycled as the waste contractor made a decision on both days of the event to place the recycling into the waste stream due to the visual contamination.



Recycling Bins

Based on volume, 17% (124kg) of the total waste generated at the event was actually recycled. Glass accounted for the majority 54%, cardboard 21%, recyclable plastic 9%, aluminium 6% and paper plates 6%. The average contamination was 5% by weight. The materials recycled were from the twelve bins that NEWF had audited and removed contamination. The major contaminants were food scraps (2%) and non recyclable plastics (2%). NEWF also managed to recover the cardboard separated by stallholders into one of the waste skips.

Waste Bins

The waste bins contained a reasonable amount of recyclable materials - around 36% in the sample audit. Of this, 17% was cardboard. The waste skips were under utilised. One skip was used by stallholders for cardboard (which NEWF removed and placed in the recycling bins) and the other skip was empty on Saturday and on Sunday, only one quarter full. Future events would not require two waste skips as bins were emptied by the contractor each day.

Oil Drums

Of the three waste water drums provided for stallholders, only one waste water drum was utilised. The waste oil drum was not used by stallholders. Stallholders who used deep fryers planned to take the oil back to their shops where they have waste oil recycling collection.

Costs

Based on an evaluation of the event in 2007 future costs for waste management will be reduced.

Outcomes

The Taste of Byron had all the planning in place for a Waste Wise Event but unforeseen events resulted in the loss of the majority of recycling to landfill. Other outcomes included:

- Bin stickers and rosette lid recycling bins proved to assist with recycling recovery and reducing contamination (<5%).
- The announcements over the PA were consistent and a great reminder for people to use the right bin.
- Certain bin locations were identified where bins overflowed (around bar & seated areas) and other areas where bins were empty (entrance & exits).
- The event organiser had not arranged the cardboard skip; however stallholders still separated their cardboard into one skip. At future events it would be worthwhile to use only one waste skip and one skip for cardboard.
- 70% of stallholders used biodegradable packaging.
- PET cups were used in the bar, resulting in significant volumes of plastic cups which potentially can be diverted from landfill.
- The waste contractor's recycling bins had different stickers to council bins. It would be better at future events to use consistent signage to avoid confusion.

The Taste of Byron organisers were pleased with their achievements and look forward to making the small changes which will result in a better outcome for recycling next year.

The Future

Valuable lessons were learnt by event organisers who aim to improve the outcomes next year by:

1. Including a clause in the waste contract specifying recycling contamination levels.
2. Removing contamination from recycling bins.
3. Greater communication with the waste contractor who is handling the event recycling.
4. Exclude involvement of stallholders who do not use biodegradable packaging.

Contacts

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