

Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study Byron Triathlon 2008

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 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.

Byron Triathlon 2008



The Byron Triathlon is a peak annual sporting event attracting over 200 competitors and 2000 spectators to Byron Shire. The event is held in May in the park adjacent to the Byron Surf Club. In previous years no waste management planning had occurred resulting in large clean up costs and time for event organisers. In 2008 the event participated in the Waste Wise Event Project and experienced a significant improvement in their waste management practices.

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 & 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 Waste Wise Management Plan (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:

- Competitor drink cups provided were made of PETE plastic (so they could be recycled)

Promotion of the recycling systems:

- Letter to Stallholder letter/guidelines outlining packaging requirements and recycling facilities available
- Pre event media releases in local papers.
- PA announcements every hour about how to use the recycling systems
- Advertisement in event program and on web page.
- Signage on bins designed specifically for event bins
- Council's Waste Wise Event banner displayed

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins: aluminium cans; plastic bottles; glass, (liquid) paper cups and PETE cups
- Cardboard placed in yellow lid bins at the end of the event

Equipment:

- 9 x 240L yellow lidded recycling bins with fitted rosette lids and locks
- 9 x 240L red lidded waste bins

Bin Plan and Management

- Bin stations comprising one recycling bin and one waste bin located at 15m intervals at finish line, food area, transition area and drink stations.
- Monitor stallholder waste and ensure they utilise facilities correctly
- Bin Placement Plan was prepared and distributed to organiser and waste management manager.



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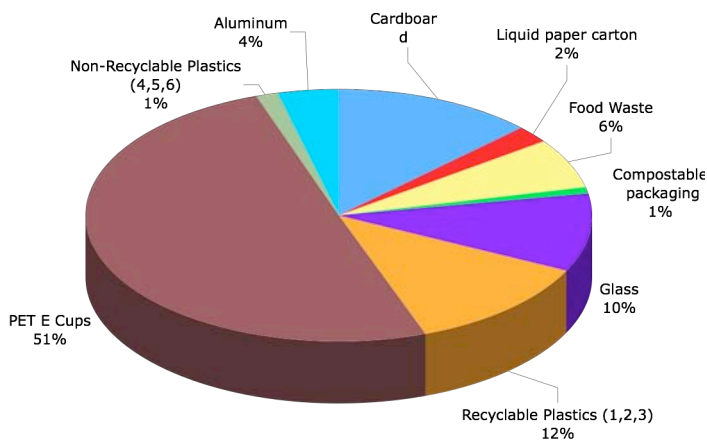
Results

All recycling bins (9) and four waste bins were audited at the end of the event. The total volume of waste produced by the event was 2400L (10x240L). The total volume of recycling recovered was 2160L (9x240L) or 67kg. The recycling accounted for 47% of the total event waste.

Recycling Bins

The recycling bins recovered 66kg of co-mingled drink containers and cardboard. The chart below presents a breakdown of the different materials recovered. The PETE cups represented 51% of the recycling, hence highlighting the importance of choosing this packaging choice for the competitors drink containers to assist in waste reduction and recovery of resources from this event. The contamination in the recycling bins averaged 9%. This is below the acceptable level of contamination.

Recycling Composition



Waste Bins

The waste bins contained 48% recyclable materials including cardboard 23%, PETE cups 11% and glass 11%. This high level of recyclables in the waste stream most likely resulted from a few key issues: waste bins positioned without a recycling bin adjacent; stallholders and food vendors were not informed of cardboard recycling; two waste bins were filled with PETE cups most likely collected at a drink station and wrongly placed in a waste bin rather than a recycling bin.

Costs

The cost for the waste and recycling service was \$150. This was easily manageable with the event budget.

Outcomes

Introducing a Waste Wise Plan for the Byron Triathlon resulted in a 47% reduction of waste to landfill. Other outcomes included:

- Event organiser and volunteers more familiar with the steps involved with staging a Waste Wise Event;
- All food and drinks were served on recyclable or biodegradable packaging;
- The use of PETE cups for competitors at drink stations resulted in a significant diversion of waste from landfill;
- Less litter and less clean up time for event organizers;
- Waste Wise PA announcements were consistent every hour, the MC was creative and consistent with the waste wise message;
- The Waste Wise Event banner was used on the day;
- Adequate numbers of bins were used which helped to reduce litter experienced at past events;
- Contamination in recycling bins was 9%, which highlights the need for minimal sorting at the end of next years event;
- Stallholders required instruction that cardboard was being recycled at the event;
- Bin Placement requires attention at future events to avoid contamination of recycling.

The event organisers and council were pleased with their achievement. The process of developing a WWMP resulted in less waste to landfill and a cleaner event site.

The Future

The Byron Triathlon demonstrated that recycling at sporting events can be achieved with minimal effort if the planning and preparation are put in place.

Recommendations for future events include:

- Ensure there is a dedicated waste manager for the event who can check bin positioning, talk with stallholders about recycling facilities and remove obvious contamination from recycling at the end of the event;
- Source t-shirts with less packaging;
- Designate an area for stallholders to leave their cardboard;
- Increase bin numbers to cater for event growth.

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