

# NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH EAST WASTE FORUM

October 2002



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## **plastic bags – to levy or not**

There has been a lot of discussion lately about placing a levy on plastic bags in order to reduce the number used in Australia each year. Apparently, Australia uses about 6 billion plastic bags each year. The concern for councils is that many of them end up as litter – on beaches, in parks, or in the stormwater system. In addition, they can also end up in our recycling and garden organics collections as residents use them to store these items before collection night. Here they contaminate loads and make the sorting task difficult at the MRF.

So what is being done about this problem? Two federal parliamentarians – Independent MP Peter Andren and Greens Senator Bob Brown, will each introduce a bill into parliament that would see a levy of 25 cents on each bag used by customers.

In our own region a Byron Bay retailer has introduced a ten cent levy on plastic bags used by customers at his Five Star supermarket, raising money for town infrastructure. This action has spread and a group of Suffolk Park retailers are collecting a ten cent levy for each plastic bag used with the lucky recipients the Suffolk Park Progress Association.

## **‘don’t be a tosser’ \$15,000 to help spread the message**

The North East Waste Forum has been successful in obtaining a \$15,000 grant from the NSW EPA as part of its *Litter Prevention Education Program: Local Council Project Partnerships* program. A Litter Education program has been developed and can now begin in earnest with the announcement of the grant funding. Money will be spent on a range of activities, some of which include: larger than life litter characters, litter sculpture workshops, signage, cinema advertising, holiday activity booklet and puppet shows. The aim of the program is to highlight the damaging effects of littering during peak holiday periods, with holiday makers the prime target. The activities are designed to be as fun and interactive as possible. For more information contact Bernadette.

## NEW WAYS WITH LESS WASTE

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### **NEWF end of year celebration**

In order to celebrate the achievements of the NEWF, we are proposing to hold an end of year celebration in conjunction with the December meeting. This will give all NEWF members a chance to meet, recount the achievements of the past 12 months and look ahead to proposed activities.

The meeting date is Friday  
December 13.

### **Race Around Lismore Short Film Festival**

The North East Waste Forum, as part of its education program, was a sponsor for the Best Environmental Film award at the recently held Race Around Lismore Short Film Festival. The aim of the sponsorship was to raise the profile of waste as an environmental issue and to develop relationships with local film makers, environment groups and media. The winning entry was submitted by a group known as Nimbin Central School, and titled 'Poo Story' - a documentary about reducing waste through the use of composting toilets.

The NEWF was promoted in all advertising material running up to the event, and during the presentation evening.

### **Waste 2002 Coffs Harbour**

The annual Coffs Harbour Waste Conference was held at the Opal Cove Novatel on October 16 - 18. Many of the NEWF member councils were represented by staff or councillors. Highlights of the conference included: the movement towards waste avoidance by both Resource NSW and Ecorecycle Victoria, away from simple end of pipe solutions through their state strategies; presentations focusing on over-consumption and the needs of the community in relation to environmental issues. Feedback from council staff suggests that the technical tour was an experience not to be missed. The final day also gave the NEWF members and members of other regional waste groups a chance to provide feedback to Resource NSW about funding and issues that specifically affect regional and rural areas.

### **Resource NSW 3 year Sponsorship**

At the October 11 NEWF meeting at Ballina, the 3 year sponsorship submission was outlined to all in attendance. It was decided that extra time was needed to examine the document and provide feedback to Heather and Bernadette. The timetable for feedback is: October **25** - comments to Heather; November **1** - Heather to return final draft document to councils; **November 8** - extra NEWF meeting to discuss final document; November **15** - final document sent to RNSW. It is important that we all provide feedback about the document, so your attendance at the Nov 8 meeting is appreciated. If you have not received a copy please call Heather on 6685 5866.

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