



Sustainable Businesses

In December a number of Lennox Head businesses competed for the new “Green Business Award”, sponsored by the North East Waste Forum, at the Chamber of Commerce Businesses Awards Dinner. Attendance was excellent and the winning business for environmental excellence was Zoom Coffee of Lennox Head. The proprietor, Mark Nancarrow, is justifiably proud of the manner in which this business operates.

Minimising waste is integral to the company’s environmental aims. Green coffee beans are sun-dried and supplied in hessian bags that are refilled. Natural gas is used to power the coffee roaster. All coffee packaging is single packed using reusable coffee bags. Paper and cardboard are recycled while wholesale customers order online, accounts are paid online, and invoices emailed.

“From ‘coffee bean to cup’ means nurturing close working relationships with growers to guarantee excellence throughout every part of the production process - and the customer” is Marks claim.

The company uses coffee grown in the region near Casino and fair-trade coffee from Ethiopia, grown wild and hand picked, thereby addressing social as well as environmental concerns in their business.

There are many other businesses in Lennox Head who have sound environmental credentials – lets hope their efforts can be rewarded next year. And for those who want to work towards a better local environment, the new year is a good time to start.



Business Waste Reduction Project News

The Business Waste Reduction Project (BWRP) is a NEWF project that offers local businesses across 6 council areas the opportunity to implement sustainable practices and minimize the waste they send to landfill.

Participating businesses are given a site analysis, a waste assessment or audit; advice regarding waste minimisation and sustainable purchasing and on going support – all for free.

The project also provides advice and training to business, Chambers of Commerce, industry groups and educational facilities.

This year the project is working with restaurants, TAFE, clubs, cafes, schools, office based businesses, a youth centre and van parks.

Each business is unique and requires a different approach to waste management. The BWRP approach is flexible and allows for variation in individual operations.

If your business would like to be involved in this project or needs advice on waste management issues please contact Jeanie McKillop at business@northeastwasteforum.org.au

Waste Wise Events

In the last quarter of 2008 three waste wise events were held across the region.

The 38th Annual Aboriginal Ruby League Knock Out was held in October in Kingscliff. The larger than anticipated crowd made this a difficult event to manage but provided a great learning experience for all involved.

The Surfing the Coldstream Festival in the Clarence Valley was a much cleaner and more sustainable event. More than 40 bins were provided by Clarence Valley Council to encourage the separation of waste from recycling. It was estimated that 5250 litres of recycling (approx 352 kg), predominately plastic drink containers, cardboard and paper coffee cups were recovered and so diverted from landfill.

New Project Businesses

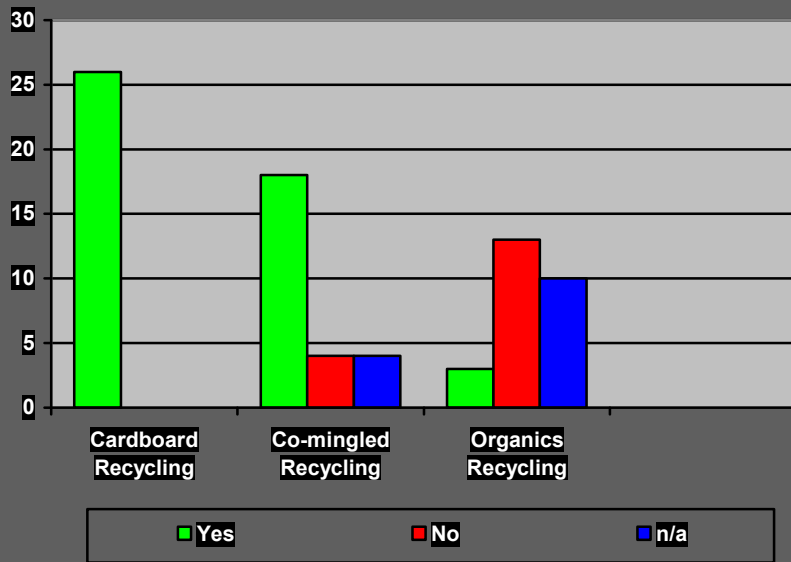
Several new businesses have made a commitment to the environment by joining the Business Waste Reduction project in the last quarter.

Westlawn Finance in Grafton will be audited in January and are looking at ways to reduce or recycle the waste they are currently producing. With many other branches across the Northern Rivers this is an ideal opportunity to pass on lessons they may learn in the process.

The Ballina RSL, who already recycle much of the glass and packaging generated at the Club, are also investigating ways to improve their performance and examine areas where their purchasing can be more sustainable.

CAPACITY BUILDING and NETWORKS

The results of the recent Brunswick Heads Business Survey were pleasing. The survey asked simple questions about recycling, composting and sustainable purchasing. It also gave businesses an opportunity to give Council feedback, with a question about how the towns sustainability could be improved. The results for recycling are shown in the graph below.



All of the businesses interviewed separate cardboard from the waste stream for recycling and 69% of businesses recycle comingled material such as plastics, metals, paper and cardboard..

One area where the town, like most, could improve in is the treatment of organic waste. Only 11.5% of businesses composted or reused their organic materials with 38% of the businesses surveyed not producing any organics. Composting and worm farming are more challenging than using a recycling bin but the rewards are many. With Council and the Chamber both investigating opportunities for organics collection, these results may soon improve.

Other capacity building for the community included assisting two regional school to conduct waste audits. This helps them to identify areas of concern and provides them with the baseline information they need to plan adequate recycling and composting systems.

OUR WEBSITE

We have many useful resources on the NEWF website. On average 150 visitors per month visit the site and download information on waste auditing, what other businesses are doing and our self help toolkit. Any questions that arise from visiting the site can be discussed by contacting the project co-ordinator, Jeanie McKillop on 6687 4945 Mob: 0421888686 or email on business@northeastwasteforum.org.au . So visit our site at www.northeastwasteforum.org.au click the link to *Business*, and improve your businesses operations.