

Sustainable Businesses

When it comes to purchasing it can be difficult to determine which companies are really considering the environment and who is 'green washing', or claiming good environmental practice where none exists. A well informed consumer needs to ask questions of their suppliers if they wish to ensure that their choices are having a positive impact by favouring more sustainable businesses.

The printing industry is one area of the corporate sector where such choices can be made as more operators move towards environmentally sound practice. For example, the paper available to customers is increasingly diverse. It can be manufactured from plantations in Australia or from sugar cane byproducts, it can be recycled from post consumer paper or it can be a combination of virgin and recycled paper. However, its also worth considering where the paper comes from. Europe produces some excellent post consumer paper but the carbon miles produced from importing it can counter balance many of the benefits. Choices can also be made relating to the type and volume of chemicals used in the printing process. Ink is now available in less toxic, soy based form but the percentage of soy varies between printers from 30% to 100%. The chemicals used in processing can also have an impact and any reduction in this area should also be encouraged. If you can't choose a printer based on these criteria then have a look at the operational practices of the company – are they recycling, reducing power and water consumption?

Pristine Publishing in Ballina is one company in our region who have implemented a number of sustainable practices in their business. A relatively new operation, they have reduced their dependence on chemicals, use 100% soy based inks and have a range of recycled paper available from reputable distributors. They send their own paper waste directly to the paper mill to ensure it is recycled, use green power and are currently investigating options to offer their customers carbon offset opportunities.



Mark and Karen Ezzy have really invested time and effort into making their business more sustainable. Check out their website at www.pristinepublications.com.au

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 quarter the project went on the road as part of the Small Business Road Show. Starting in Grafton, the road show visited Yamba, Lismore, Ballina, Byron and the Tweed in order to make local companies aware of the range of services that were available to them across the region to help develop and sustain their businesses.

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

There were two **waste wise events** held this quarter, in Ballina and Byron Shires. In July the *Writers Festival* was held at the Becton Beach Resort in Byron Bay. The focus of the program is on Australian writing and more than 100 writers participate. A post event audit revealed that contamination rates were low and that over 60% of the total waste generated at the event was diverted from landfill through the recycling bins.

In September the annual *Teven-Tintenbar Public School Fair* attracted a good sized crowd with its produce, food, cooking, plant and book stalls. There were also games and activities held for the children and a band provided entertainment. All bins were assessed at the end of the event. More than 1700 litres of waste was produced, with 665 litres of co-mingled recyclables, 35 litres of organic waste and 2.5 cubic metres of cardboard recovered. Based on volume, approximately one third of the total waste generated at the event was recovered through the event's recycling bins.



New project businesses from Tweed Shire

Three Tweed Shire businesses have become involved in the BWR project in recent months.

Fins at Salt and Mantra on Salt Beach near Kingscliff are both investigating options to improve their waste management practices. The first site analysis is due in October and discussion regarding the areas that need to be targeted will take place.

Kingscliff TAFE has also requested assistance and a site analysis took place in early October. TAFE's face a range of waste management challenges – from paper reduction to public place recycling on their campuses. A waste audit on October 30th will identify the different components of their waste stream and help the TAFE determine areas that require improvement.

CAPACITY BUILDING and NETWORKS

This month the project focused on Brunswick Heads in the Byron Shire. With the help of the local Chamber of Commerce volunteers a survey of the most of the villages businesses was conducted.

Businesses were asked if they recycled, reused, composted or chose sustainable products. The amount of waste and recycling they produced was also recorded. Ideas for how waste management in the town could be improved were also sought.

The information gathered from the survey will be used to identify the business communities current waste management practices and quantify the amount of recycling and waste produced in the village. It will also collate ideas and opinions relating to existing services and future needs.

Thanks to

Brunswick Heads. Chamber of Commerce.

and Chris For providing assistance with the survey.

OUR WEBSITE

The Business Waste Reduction Project has 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. These tools are to help businesses embark on waste reduction activities at their own pace and in a way that is appropriate to their resources. 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 under business, and improve your businesses operations