



Newsletter Enquires To:
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July 2007

Who is the North East Waste Forum?

The North East Waste Forum (NEWF) is a voluntary local government group that was formally established in 1996 to specifically address waste management issues on a regional level. The group's membership currently consists of five councils in the North East Region of New South Wales - Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Clarence Valley, Richmond Valley & Tweed Shire. The NEWF also has strong ties to the neighbouring councils of Kyogle & Lismore City. The NEWF member councils see significant benefits in belonging to the NEWF, working collaboratively and co-operatively to achieve local and regionally based solutions to waste management.

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The NEWF website is one of the most vital tools in spreading the messages of waste avoidance & resource recovery among the growing north coast community.

The website now holds an enormous amount of information about all the NEWF projects, & aims to be a 'one-stop-shop' for waste related information across the region, providing toolkits, *do-it-yourself* style resources & information & thus allowing interested organisations & individuals to participate in our programs. Our aim is to continue the user friendly nature of the website and to provide up to date links, ideas & results for those hard to answer waste questions. In 2006/2007 the website played host to over 4,000 unique visitors.

Resource Recovery Figures 2006/2007

| Waste Type | Resource Recovery Rates | Measure | Recycled or Reused? |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Batteries | 1,843 | units | recycle/disposal |
| Commercial & Industrial | 18,652 | tonnes | unknown |
| Construction & Demolition | 17,901 | tonnes | recycling/reuse |
| drumMUSTER | 1,984 | units | recycled |
| Gas bottles | 824 | units | recycled |
| Household Hazardous Waste | 19,934* | kgs | recycled/reuse/disposal |
| Illegal Dumping | 181 | incidents | disposal |
| Organic Waste (garden organics) | 22,306 | tonnes | composted |
| Recyclables (co-mingled) | 8,579 | tonnes | recycled |
| Recyclables (paper / cardboard) | 4,699 | tonnes | recycled |
| Scrap Metal | 2,357 | tonnes | recycled |
| Tyres | 3,085 | units | recycled/reuse |
| Waste Oil | 45,460 | litres | unknown |

Resource Recovery Figures

Councils have made a substantial contribution to the recovery of resources for reuse over the past twelve months. Regional contracts, improved services and systems and a more informed community have all played a part in returning greater volumes of materials to manufacturers for reprocessing or reuse. The NEWF councils will continue to strive to capture greater volumes and a wider range of materials for recycling and / or reuse in the future.

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH EAST WASTE FORUM

NEW WAYS WITH LESS WASTE

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Students Using Sustainable Strategies

More than 60 students and teachers from 11 High Schools in the NEWF region (excluding Clarence Valley Council) participated in the 2 day SUSS Forum aimed at motivating students to implement sustainable initiatives in their schools. This year the NEWF worked in partnership with a number of other agencies (National Parks Discovery Program; Rous Water; Dorrroughby Environmental Education Centre; Catchment Management Authority; Marine Parks Authority; Lismore City Council; Department of Primary Industries; Linnaeus Estate) to expand the opportunity for learning for students and teachers. Workshops over the two days included Sustainable Architecture; Waste and Water Auditing (hosted by the NEWF); Ecological Footprints and Catchment Management.

The Green House also made a number of appearances to the delight of many. Students from Alstonville High School conducted waste audits, after attending training at school in auditing and workshop facilitation. NEWF staff were active over the two days assisting with/conducting workshops and other sessions.

Evaluation of the Forum indicated that 98% of participants had a better or much better understanding of sustainability issues & when asked to list one environmental action they will be following up in their schools, 48% noted actions related to waste – including recycling and composting.

The NEWF was also a partner in a similar forum sponsored by the Catchment Management Authority in Grafton and coordinated by South Grafton High School. The NEWF conducted waste auditing workshops with students from South Grafton High School. Fourteen schools and 100 teachers and students participated in the one day Forum which focused on waste, water and energy auditing. The NEWF also presented prizes to the primary and high school who won the low waste lunch competition.

Landfill Operator Training

The training course for landfill operators was conducted in March this year & hosted by Clarence Valley Council, using the Grafton Landfill, Grafton Transfer Station & MI Organics Composting operations as the sites for the practical sessions. 14 staff from the NEWF region (as well as visitors from Dubbo, Broken Hill & Bourke) participated in the two day training. Once again, waste managers from NEWF councils facilitated many of the workshops with the remainder being facilitated by NEWF staff. This training course has earned a solid reputation amongst the regional waste groups of NSW & the NEWF has shared resources with a number of the groups this year.

Education Training

In June the NEWF worked with the DECC to present a training workshop for Environmental Education staff across the region aimed at *'Influencing and Motivating Others: a workshop about behaviour change for sustainability'*. 22 participants joined the facilitator Graeme Collier, to work through a series of activities that called on their experience & understanding of what motivates change within the community & how we can deal with that in the development & implementation of our education programs.

Organics Management

As part of the approach to improving the management of organic waste in the region, NEWF member councils are continuing to improve the management, process and quality control of their composting operations. The NEWF commissioned the development of a generic manual for open windrow composting, that allows for the production of various compost products and grades, and that ensures generated products comply with specifications outlined in the Australian Standard for Composts, Soil Conditioners and Mulches (AS 4454 -2003).

Councils now have a comprehensive operations manual for the effective management of organic waste (including food waste and biosolids) via a windrow composting process. The use of the manual will ensure that environmental harm or nuisance, i.e. odour and leachate run-off are managed appropriately, satisfying both the expectations of the community and regulatory guidelines.

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