

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH EAST WASTE FORUM

NEW WAYS WITH LESS WASTE



Newsletter Enquires To:
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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, Lismore City and Richmond Valley. The NEWF also has strong ties to the neighbouring councils of Kyogle and Tweed Shire. 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.

Northern Region Group of Environmental Educators

The NEWF has initiated and co-ordinates the NRGeE - a group of environmental educators on the north coast who come together to facilitate enhanced local and regional co-ordination and collaboration of environmental education programs. The group has a membership of 32 and has a strong email exchange and meets on a bi-monthly basis. A newsletter is being produced on a regular basis and training opportunities are being investigated.

NRGeE group members include NEWF, Rous Water, Southern Cross University, North Coast Water, Richmond Landcare Services, TAFE NSW, EnviTE, NSW DPI, National Parks and Wildlife, QLD University of Technology, Northern Rivers CMA, Shearwater Steiner School, Ballina, Byron, Tweed Shires, Clarence Valley, Lismore City Councils & Dorrroughby Environmental Education Centre.

Construction & Demolition Operations

The aim of the Construction & Demolition (C&D) Operations project is to improve the resource recovery of C&D waste across the region. The project has built on a previous study conducted by the NEWF in 2004 in relation to quantifying C&D and Commercial and Industrial wastes across the region and from which many of the recommendations have been implemented. The focus of this project is to develop a strategic framework across the region to plan, collect precise data and review policy. A Regional C&D Network has been established with NEWF, Councils and major representatives from the construction, demolition, transport and raw materials parts of the C&D Industry. It is hoped that through the development of voluntary collaborative partnerships more effective management of C&D waste will result.

Landfill Open Day

The Landfill Open Day was held at the Nammoona Landfill at Casino on Friday 2nd June 2006 to provide the opportunity for students from the Richmond Valley Council area to experience resource recovery and waste management first hand and to provide them with an insight into the facilities and waste minimisation activities carried out in their local area. Four Primary Schools participated on the day: Casino West, Rappville, Ellangowan and Manifold.

Each session included a "walking tour" of the gatehouse, domestic recycling, green waste, building waste and scrap metal areas and a demonstration of the waste trucks and other equipment; a "bus tour" to the tip face to see the compactor in action, the old cells, irrigation pipes and leachate pond; a performance of The Green House with a focus on waste free lunches and how to divert food / organic waste from landfill; a Smart Shopping display and worm farm demonstration. Each school group made a 'pledge' to reduce waste and live more sustainably. A photograph was taken and the pledge attached and entered into the Pledge Book. Resource folders and reusable bags provided by Richmond Valley Council were handed out to all students and teachers for them to take to home / school.

Regional Contracts

Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Clarence Valley and Richmond Valley Councils entered into a Regional Tyre Waste Disposal Contract for the first time in 2005/2006, servicing 5 sites across the 4 council areas. The collective tendering of services allows the Councils to gain a cost competitive price for services at different sites and a regular service of their sites. As a part of the contract, over 90% of the tyre waste will be either recycled or reused. The Green Waste Shredding Contract between 3 NEWF councils continues to allow councils to shred and reuse or on-sell garden organics from around the region.

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Eco-friendly Youth Project

The first year of the Environmental Trust funded Eco-friendly Youth Project has seen many successful outcomes for Byron Youth Service & the Youth Activities Centre, who have been piloting the first year of the project. BYS & the YAC have undergone a 6-step process to becoming an Eco-friendly Youth Centre, which has involved commitment through the development of an environmental policy; waste, water & energy audits; a focus group & surveys with young people; developing and implementing an environmental action plan; & integrating waste, water & energy reduction activities into the Centre & into the Centre programs (such as the Video Production Course & the Events Management Course).

To date the BYS & YAC have reported a number of waste reduction & avoidance measures including a potential increase of 15% in mixed recyclables being collected; increased organics composting; reported reduction in paper purchasing; & use of 100% post-consumer recycled paper.

This 6-step process is adaptable for other Youth Centres (year 2 of the project) & will be promoted using the "6 Steps to an Eco-friendly Youth Centre" poster, DVD & interactive CD-ROM.

Education and Communication

The NEWF participated in two national communication programs – National Recycling Week and World Environment Day.

National Recycling Week provides councils with an opportunity to promote best practice recycling to the community & to send a co-ordinated message about recycling through advertising and promotion in local and regional media. The project is co-ordinated each year by Planet Ark.

NEWF Councils aim to increase the commitment to reducing recycling contamination in the home; raise awareness of Council recycling operations and the type of products that can be recycled in each Council area.

Promotional material appeared in local printed media including a special recycling week supplement in 3 local papers; community announcements on local radio with specific coverage on ABC north coast.

World Environment Day provides a similar opportunity to provide a co-ordinated message on waste avoidance and resource recovery to the community. This year advertisements were placed in 3 local papers as part of the World Environment Day supplement. In addition, The Green House attended a schools day co-ordinated by Lismore City Council.

Household Hazardous Waste Collections

Byron and Tweed Shire Councils conducted Hazardous Waste Collection days in June/July 2006 as a service to their communities and as a solution to the issue of responsible and environmentally friendly hazardous waste disposal

Site reports indicated that the usual collection of paints and pesticides as well as some banned organochlorine pesticides were collected. Over 130 people attended and 3.6 tonnes of material was collected. The NEWF received \$23,000 from the DEC for Hazardous Waste Disposal.

Youth Environment Forum

'Students Undertaking Sustainable Strategies'

In 2004 the NEWF co-ordinated a highly successful Youth Environment Day for secondary school students and teachers at the Dorrroughby Environmental Education Centre. This year the NEWF has teamed up with a much larger regional group of environmental education providers (National Parks, Rous Water, DET, DEEC, Ballina Marine Discovery Centre, North Coast Water and students and teachers from Alstonville High School) and they are in the process of planning for an event in March 2007.

For more information on any of these projects please contact:

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