



Business Waste Reduction Project Yamba Business Waste Survey Report

Introduction

The Business Waste Reduction Project, an initiative of the North East Waste Forum (NEWF) is aimed at assisting businesses within the region to reduce the quantity of waste they generate and send to landfill through more efficient waste management practices. The service is free to business and is supported by your local council. The waste practices and attitudes of businesses in the Yamba CBD were surveyed in October 2010 in order to assist local business and improve waste reduction outcomes where possible.

Benefits to Business

Implementing more efficient waste management and resource use practices has the potential to bring business and the wider community many benefits, including:

- Reduced waste collection and disposal costs;
- Improved operational efficiency, reduced production costs and improved staff morale;
- Improved environmental credentials & enhanced corporate image;
- Conserving natural resources, energy and water;
- Reduced pressure on local landfills and less impact on the environment from air and water pollution.

Existing Waste & Recycling Services

The waste and recycling service options currently available in Yamba include:

- i) Private Waste Contractors can provide
 - ✓ bulk trade bins for waste, cardboard/paper, or recyclable containers
 - ✓ 240L wheelie bins for cardboard/paper or recyclable containers.
- ii) Clarence Valley Council can provide
 - ✓ 240L wheelie bins for waste (twice weekly collection)
 - ✓ 240L wheelie bins for recyclables (once a week collection) including the following 3 options: Cardboard/paper only (blue lid); mixed recyclable containers only (orange lid); cardboard/paper & recyclable containers *in the same bin* divided by a separator (yellow lid).

Survey Summary

A total of 59 businesses in the Yamba CBD {Yamba St from Harbour St to Beach St including all cross streets in between} responded to the survey.

The graph at Figure 1 below illustrates business responses regarding participation in the recycling of cardboard/paper, mixed recyclable containers and organics. The positive response indicators are inclusive of those businesses that have a recycling collection service

as well as those who claimed they recycled via alternatives such as taking home, or where they reused items or gave them to others to reuse.

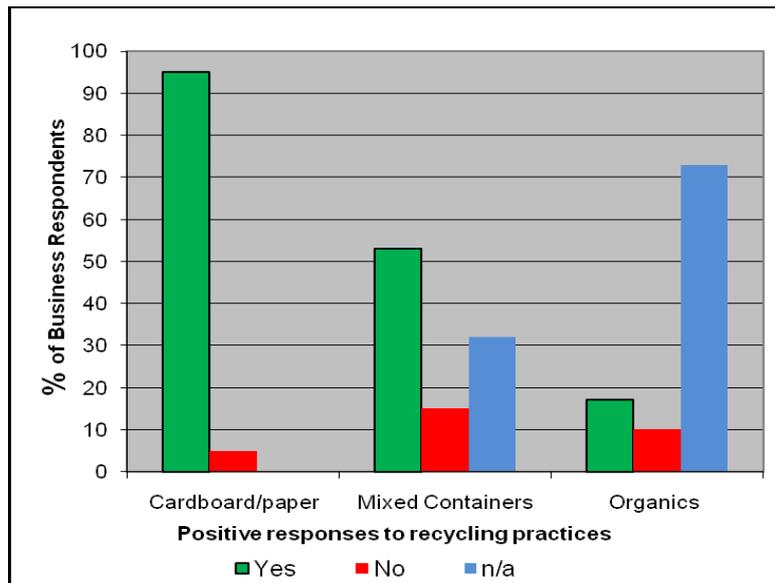


Figure 1. Positive Business Responses to Recycling Practices

The majority of businesses surveyed are already participating in recycling at some level. 95% of businesses are recycling or reusing cardboard/paper. 53% recycle or reuse recyclable containers and 25% produce a negligible amount, which leaves 22% that currently don't recycle containers. 27% of businesses surveyed produced a significant amount of organic (food) waste and of those businesses, 63% (10 of 16 businesses) were recycling some or all of their organics within the local community.

For those businesses currently not recycling, a lack of awareness regarding the low cost commercial recycling service and the lack of available space for bins appear to be the main barriers. The continuing promotion of recycling and its benefits, with an emphasis on the increasing cost differential between waste and recycling (due to the government waste levy) may encourage more businesses to take up a recycling service. Those businesses who expressed an interest in getting a recycling service during the survey were immediately provided with relevant information and advice to assist them in doing so.

Although there is no existing commercial organics collection service available in Yamba a high rate of organic recycling is already occurring, which may be a reflection of the strong community network and active local participation in composting practices. There is the potential for further diversion in the near future through the new Yamba Community Garden (contact the Yamba Community Centre for details). The prospect of a Council commercial organics service after June 2011 may be welcomed by some interested businesses, although the proposed frequency of collection has been raised as an issue of concern.

72% of those surveyed undertake other sustainable actions in their businesses, the most popular being offering alternatives to plastic bags &/or encouraging minimal plastic bag use; the installation of energy efficient lighting; turning off appliances when not in use; minimising air conditioner use; and purchasing local fresh produce.

Feedback from 32% of respondents is that they are supporting the Chamber lead 'Plastic Bag Free' campaign by offering alternatives or encouraging minimal plastic bag use. Yamba is still a long way from being 'plastic bag free', but this data indicates that the message does seem to be getting through and the level of awareness and participation is growing.

Conclusion

There are still many opportunities for businesses to further improve their sustainable waste practices through implementing a broad variety of waste minimisation and recycling strategies relevant to their particular business. Clarence Valley Council congratulates business on their recycling efforts whilst the North East Waste Forum, on their behalf will continue to:

- provide assistance and support to interested businesses where possible;
- promote successful waste reducing businesses and the benefits they gain;
- continue business networking through the Chamber of Commerce; and
- increase the distribution of information via the NEWF's E newsletters.

Business Highlights

Promoting the sustainable waste practices of local businesses is an ideal way to share knowledge and success, strengthen local networks, engage others and reward those demonstrating leadership for their efforts. The following three Yamba businesses stood out from the crowd for their efforts in sustainable waste management.

❖ Yamba Photo Shop

Tania Williams at the Yamba Photo Shop is committed to reducing the waste generated by her business. As well as using Council's services to recycle all used cardboard and containers she assists her customers to deal responsibly with their defunct cameras and accessories through an Australian take back scheme. Over 90% of the plastics and metals in the cameras and accessories can be recovered and used as raw materials to make new products. Unwanted working cameras are collected and sent off to an African school camera reuse program.



Tania Williams from Yamba Photo Shop with her camera recycling box and reusable shopping bags.

Digital photography has significantly reduced the volume of materials needed and waste generated from developing and printing photographs. Developing is now done more cost effectively at a centralized location in Coffs Harbour. Printing at the shop is minimal with all extracts from the process collected to avoid discharge to the environment and to allow recovery of the silver content. The business is aiming to be plastic bag free and offers paper and reusable bags if required. Other sustainable practices include having an energy audit completed and then replacing the old air conditioner with a more efficient one to reduce energy use and save money into the bargain.

❖ Yam Com Computer Sales & Services



*Rob Becker from Yam Com
on his 'E waste' throne*

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics electronic or E waste is growing at three times the rate of general waste. Local computer repair technicians Rob Becker and staff at Yam Com see firsthand the large volumes of E waste generated within the Yamba community. To help deal with the ever growing E waste issue Yam Com have initiated a drop off service to help stop electronic items getting dumped into regular landfill and contaminating our environment. The Clarence Valley Council waste transfer stations located at Maclean and Grafton both accept E waste for recycling but are too far away for some people in Yamba. Yam Com's drop-off service will ensure that E waste items are delivered safely to the transfer station from where they will be transported in bulk to a suitable recycling facility.

This service not only reduces the negative impacts associated with E waste going to landfill but also reduces the carbon emissions involved in getting the items to the collection point and demonstrates commitment to sustainable business practices as well as raising community awareness of the E waste issue.

❖ Beachwood Café

Café owner Sevtap Yuce is using Council's recycling services to divert all her café's recyclable containers and cardboard from landfill, as well as placing food waste into a separate container, which is picked up by locals for chook food. In this way, the café's waste is kept to a minimum, which will result in significant future savings as the cost of waste to landfill increases each year. Used cooking oil is collected by a local contractor for biodiesel production and any extra cardboard is returned to the supplier. The café even has its own little garden around the outdoor eating area where herbs and greens can be picked daily for use in the kitchen. Other sustainable practices at the café include purchasing as much local fresh produce as possible (up to 80% of the menu is local), minimizing the use of serviettes and other disposable items and turning off appliances when not in use to reduce energy consumption and save on electricity bills.



*Beachwood Café owner Sevtap Yuce
with local fresh produce used in her cooking*

Further Information

The North East Waste Forum encourages businesses wishing to improve their waste management practices and sustainability to check out the business waste reduction DIY toolkit and other useful resources online at www.northeastwasteforum.org.au .

The Business Waste Reduction Project Officer Karen Rudkin can be contacted for support on 0401 941 330 or karen@northeastwasteforum.org.au