

# NE WASTE ANNUAL REPORT

..... 2020-21



DECEMBER 2021

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## FOREWORD

This report outlines the activities and outcomes of North East Waste (NE Waste) for the 2020-21 financial year. We are a group of seven Councils working towards regional solutions to effective waste management. Our member Councils are Ballina, Byron, Clarence Valley, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Tweed.

Despite the ongoing challenges of the Covid pandemic we have delivered a suite of projects this year, involving and engaging the community, schools, businesses and government. Our core projects focus on education, food waste reduction, business waste reduction and engagement, problem wastes, Community Recycling Centres, litter, asbestos disposal and illegal dumping. Other priorities included training, research, regional collaboration and fostering relationships with State Government and the broader waste community.

In developing and funding our programs and advising Councils on the changing waste regulatory landscape we have worked closely with the NSW EPA and are now operating under transitional funding until the Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy (WASM) is finalised.

NE Waste's vision, to achieve more sustainable waste management and better resource recovery through a proactive and collaborative approach

with our member Councils and community, is achieved because of our unique position and approach. Unlike other regional waste groups, our member Councils match our EPA operational funding, enabling a much more intensive engagement in the region. Our high level of success in securing additional grant funding also supports this vision. Our project co-ordinators and officers are long term, dedicated professionals whose knowledge and passion to improve resource recovery outcomes is well respected across the State, with our programs often duplicated by other Councils in both the metropolitan and regional areas.

2020-21 has continued to be a challenging year for many, including the waste sector. I have been proud of the efforts of our team in adapting to the constraints imposed by the pandemic and their innovation and persistence in continuing to support our Councils and the community. They have embraced and encouraged the move towards a more circular economy in our region and I look forward to where their efforts will take us in the coming year.

**Jeanie McKillop**, *NE Waste Coordinator*



## OUR TEAM



Jeanie McKillop  
Coordinator



Linda Tohver  
Education Coordinator



Karen Rudkin  
Project Coordinator



Kim Potter  
Business Waste  
Coordinator



Nicki Walker  
Organics Program



Joanne Hoy  
Asbestos Program



## REGIONAL PROJECTS AND ENGAGEMENT

In 2020-21 NE Waste coordinated 12 major projects and successfully secured 2 new grants. The following section outlines the key features, and highlights outcomes of each project.



# NE WASTE COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

## OVERVIEW

Each year NE Waste increases its communication collateral and expands the mechanisms and distribution of our key messages. We have aimed to build a diverse yet consistent brand that focuses on engaging and raising the awareness of our community around waste and resource recovery. Media campaigns remain a core component of many of our projects. Print, radio, television and electronic media are well utilised to maximise our reach, and our social media presence continues to expand through Facebook and Instagram, with our Councils closely linked to our programs, utilising the resources we provide for them.

Our communication collateral and networks have never been more important to ensure consistent messaging to our community through the uncertain times of Covid. This year allowed for ongoing media opportunities to be established – including with the Lennox Wave and ABC North Coast. Beginning in June 2021, with a regular weekly segment created by ABC's Bruce Mackenzie with guest Education Coordinator, Linda Tohver, "Talking Rubbish" on the ABC North Coast's morning breakfast program each Wednesday has proved to be hugely popular. The segment will be continuing through 2021, and the topic areas and questions reinforced in the weekly ABC newsletter.

Through the long-term delivery of our projects NE Waste has formed many partnerships across the region and State. In addition to long term relationships held with LGNSW, the NSW EPA and DPIE, this year partners included:

- Northern Rivers Area Health Service
- Southern Cross University
- Regional Development Australia
- Northern Rivers Foodzz
- Business NSW
- Mullum Cares
- Positive Change for Marine Life
- Northern Rivers Joint Organisation of Councils
- Richmond Tweed Regional Libraries; Upper Clarence Richmond Regional Libraries
- Social Media Influencers including Plastic Free Mermaid



“ Increase the awareness of waste reduction activities across the region and engage the community. ”



# MAIN ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGNS



**200K+**  
engagements

## SECOND HAND SATURDAY

**700+** Garage sale holders

**5644** App users

## CIRCULATE NORTHERN RIVERS PROJECT

**90** Businesses to divert **769**

Tonnes/year of high value resources from landfill

## ILLEGAL DUMPING

**1746** incidents reported

**13%** increase in online reporting

## #RecycleRight

Adopted by over

**30**

Councils in 3 States

## LOVE FOOD COMMUNITIES

**1300+** Food Smart sign-ups

**15** Your Business is Food sign-ups

## FOOD DONATION EDUCATION PROJECT

**25** new food donor businesses on board

## COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRES

**224,000 Kg** of household problem waste collected  
That's a 24% increase

## HOUSEHOLD ASBESTOS PROGRAM

**444 TESTS** **66.2%** POSITIVE RESULTS

ALL MEDIA

WEBSITES  
**64,930+**  
VIEWS



PRINT ADS  
**68**



AIRED ★  
**3800+**  
TV Commercials



**30+**  
EDITORIALS



**620**  
RADIO ADS



**28**  
Online WORKSHOPS



# REGIONAL COORDINATION AND STRATEGY

## OVERVIEW

NE Waste develops and delivers multiple projects, seeks funding and engages contractors to fulfill the objectives of our Regional Waste Strategy (2017-21), which have now been fulfilled. Over the past year we have faced a number of challenges related to the Covid pandemic and have adapted projects and timeframes, where practical, to continue our work. Additionally, internal changes in the NSW EPA and the development of their new 20 year waste strategy have resulted in some uncertainty around funding models and governance. We enter 2021-22 on transition funding and continue to collaborate with the State Government on the way forward under the Waste and Sustainable Material Strategy (WASM) 2022-27.

One of our primary functions is to act as a conduit between the State Government and our Councils and this will be particularly important in the planning phase for our next Regional Waste Strategy. We have been liaising on the proposed format of a new strategy and will continue to work in the coming year to align our Councils and communities' objectives with those of WASM through regular consultations and workshops.



## KEY OUTCOMES

- Delivered 12 major projects, and successfully secured 2 new grants.
- Facilitated 4 NEW meetings, and held multiple Council, team and online meetings.
- Attended and presented at the Waste Conference 2021 on Net Zero Emission Pathways for local government.
- Attended the Litter Congress 2021.
- Developed a case Study on our Councils emissions reductions through FOGO and landfill gas capture to LGNSW.
- Continued to work on and progress the North Coast Waste Investment Study to a point of seeking market EOI's on future pathways for waste disposal and resource recovery in our region.
- Provided data to consultants on a number of regional project investigations. Gave letters of support and assistance to Southern Cross University, MEME Productions (Dirtgirl) and several community groups in applying for funding.

*“To support regional initiatives, guide strategic direction, and administer North East Waste in its liaison with State Government and industry.”*

- Consulted with the State Government and provided submissions on the NSW EPA Plastics Plan and the Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy, the Right to Repair review, the Energy from Waste amendments, the Return and Earn scheme and the transition planning for regional waste groups.
- Met with industry representatives to investigate circular economy initiatives that could provide regional waste solutions.
- Fulfilled all reporting requirements to the NSW EPA.
- Assisted the NSW EPA on their Don't give a Scrap campaign when Covid restrictions prevented their organising and filming the TVC campaigns in Tweed.

# EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE: SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

## OVERVIEW

NE Waste's Education and Community Engagement Program drives behaviour change initiatives to achieve the region's waste diversion and recycling targets. This year there has also been an increased focus on education around circular economy – what it is and how we can get there. The program is delivered through a combination of community research/surveys; face to face engagement at events, schools, preschools; online activities and workshops; partnerships with other organisations; social media marketing and broader communication approaches.

The programs are researched and designed in conjunction with the regional waste educators group to optimise collaboration and ownership of the programs by our member Councils, ensuring they are useful and appropriate to each LGA. During 2020-21, there were impacts to the delivery of our face-to-face programs – particularly the Wipe Out Waste schools, Second Hand Saturday and community events program, as well as our community workshops. Many of these have been adapted for on-line content and the resource library expanded. The range of programs highlighted here includes:

**Wipe Out Waste Education** – our marquee and team of experts provide a range of school and community activities

from the newly developed Love Your Lunch program, recycle relays, drama based education, beeswax wrap making and audits. Our team has now developed a series of online content as well – from DIY beeswax wraps, composting and recycling.

**#RecycleRight** campaign – community and schools education on our #RecycleRight and Lift the Lid Campaign.

**Second Hand Saturday** – the biggest garage sale day on the North Coast. A massive community event promoting reuse, repair and circular economy. Due to Covid, we were unable to hold SHS 2020, delaying it until March 2021.

**Early Childhood Program** – includes staff training, parent and child education sessions as well as access to the Get Grubby Program with Dirtgirl.

**Special events** – including National Recycling Week, Compost Awareness Week, World Environment Day and Plastic Free July – NE Waste provide regional media and Council collaborative activities to support these special events.

**Regional Waste Educators** – driving force of collaboration and innovative best practice education program in our region.



“On behalf of our school I would like to express our deepest appreciation for having the opportunity to experience the Wipe Out Waste incursion with your team yesterday. It ticked all the boxes and more. The talk with admin staff and cleaners was also invaluable. They all got something out of it and it is so important to have a conversation and network with experts that are out there educating the community and providing us with the most updated information. So, we all got something out of it!”

Sathya Sai College

# KEY OUTCOMES

- Community education yearly reach was in excess of 20,000 householders who have directly participated in NE Waste education programs and 65,000 reached via social media and general media outlets.
- Our Wipe Out Waste education activities included 32 x online workshops and 50 x face-to-face events/workshops/activities.
- Online resources and videos developed and uploaded onto NE Waste YouTube channel, website and social media pages.
- Plastic Free July and National Recycling Week – media, social media and online workshops with special guests and member Councils involved.
- School's engagement program – we have worked closely with Councils, DET, NSW Health and other regional groups in delivering schools program, once able to enter schools grounds again. Despite access issues, we were able to work closely with 11 schools, reaching approx. 3,000 students. This included through Recycle Relays, our Wipe Out Waste show, waste audits and the newly developed Love Your Lunch Program (see further information on LYL in the Love Food Communities section of the Annual Report).
- Council staff engagement – a Food Smart workshop and NE Waste business programs workshop delivered to Council staff. Additionally some Councils elected to have Food Smart "Healthy Lunches" workshops held for their staff.
- Professional Development opportunities – Les Robinson Online Facilitation Skills and Odette Barry Media and PR training were designed with the waste education group and coordinated by NE Waste.
- Early Childhood services – was delivered via the online Get Grubby (Dirtgirl World) program, funded by NE Waste over a 3 year period. In total, there were 235 active centres (including family day care) subscribed in the region, utilising and engaging with the program's resources. Follow up education is also provided by NE Waste WOW team, directly to the Centres at their request, however, this was postponed in 2020-21 due to Covid.



## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Improvements to existing programs and new campaigns have been fostered through collaboration and partnerships. This in turn leads to further community reach and engagement, which has been crucial to ongoing community engagement at the time of Covid. Direct engagement is fundamental to change community behaviours, inform of changes to systems, and represent Council interests. The multifaceted NE Waste education team have been hugely successful in doing this via a variety of education activities, resources and tools for many years, but have also had to adapt in the face of Covid restrictions. The team have embraced development of on-line content, events and workshops, working closely with partners and Councils to maximise reach and promotional opportunities.

### Case study: Second Hand Saturday 2021

Due to Covid, the usual timing of this program was delayed from September/October 2020 to March 2021. We did hold a series of reuse and repair online workshops with the Bower House with over 200 participants registering for these. The SHS March 2021 event had 700 registered households holding garage sales over 2 weekends with approx. 3,000 shopping at these garage sales. Covid safe practices were promoted, and people, despite the uncertainty of Covid, embraced the opportunity to participate in this community event. Approximately 15% of participants, said they had not had a garage sale before, highlighting the value of this program in engaging people in a new reuse activity. The web and app were highly utilised with 44,436 website views; 5,644 app downloads; and 13,634 interactive map views.



# CIRCULATE NORTHERN RIVERS PROJECT



## OVERVIEW

NE Waste has been working with Northern Rivers business for over fifteen years and has seen the need for a different approach to dealing with end of pipe resource management. This combined with export waste bans, diminishing solutions for recyclable resources and growing consumer awareness, provides an opportunity to take a more strategic approach, based less on waste management and more on avoidance, innovation and connecting business with resources, knowledge and know how.

The collaboration between NE Waste Member Councils, the activities of the business program, and business and industry network connections throughout the region means NE Waste is ideally positioned to facilitate, develop and support Circular Economy activities across the Northern Rivers.

Taking this collaborative, connected approach will ensure that the Northern Rivers moves forward faster with Covid recovery, and future growth opportunities that are in line with a regenerative economic approach to growth in the Northern Rivers bio-region.

Circular Economy initiatives will not only meet the strategic objective of the NE Waste business program to divert waste from landfill, they will also support member Councils to transition towards a zero waste and lower carbon future for the Northern Rivers.



“Circulate Northern Rivers aims to inspire encourage and assist local businesses to participate in the Circular Economy. Fostering local connections and solutions, supporting the Northern Rivers shift to a prosperous, sustainable and healthy local economy.”

# KEY OUTCOMES

## **Circulate Cafes Project EPA Bintrim Funded**

Total Project Value \$157, 549

### **Harnessing business as a force for good**

Employing over 8000 people in the Northern Rivers region, food businesses are significant contributors to the regional economy and play an influential role in our communities' everyday lives.

Working as a powerful collective, food businesses in the Northern Rivers have a unique opportunity to influence how business is done in our region, and redefine the current business model, to one that reaps the benefits of a regenerative circular economy.

Circular Cafes provides the means to collectively move forward as an industry, shaping stronger supply chains, creating less wasted resources and connected, more resilient businesses.

- Ninety businesses.
- 769 tonnes of high value resources being diverted from landfill.

This was achieved through a precinct approach working specifically with food businesses in the Northern Rivers to provide effective food waste solutions, waste avoidance education, and improving circularity of resources supporting a substantial reduction of food waste to landfill in the Northern Rivers.

### **Presentations**

- Australian Waste and Recycling Expo
- Responsible Cafes Summit

### **Business Support**

- Additional businesses assessments, action plans, support
- Support for additional organisations including Waste Plant, Revolve Your World, Southern Cross University, Byron Rangers, The Diverter
- Regular, quality, educational electronic communications to business database (700 contacts)



## FACILITATING CONNECTIONS

Leveraging the Circular Cafes project, an exciting regenerative café to compost ecosystem is growing in the Clarence Valley. Food waste is being collected from targeted businesses that generate a significant amount of food waste, and is diverted into worm farms, chicken food and eventually new produce — all cycling back into the cafes and kitchens from where it came. This project support involved a collaboration between two different Bin Trim projects,

and a successful grant under the NSW EPA Circulate program, a regenerative farm, food co-op and strong on ground relationships and superstar changemakers.

For more information about Circulate Northern Rivers, please contact kim@newaste.org.au or 0406 996 988. Copies of the Circulate Northern Rivers Report are also available on request.

# LOVE FOOD COMMUNITIES PROGRAM



## OVERVIEW

NE Waste is one of four regions in NSW delivering Love Food Communities through the NSW EPA's Love Food Hate Waste Program. The program aims to:

- create social norms about food waste avoidance strategies across our regional community;
- improve the ability of targeted sectors in our region to reduce their food waste;
- instil a culture of partnership, innovation and cross-sector collaboration to find solutions to reduce food waste across our regional community and build the capacity of partners and stakeholders to deliver food waste avoidance messages and mechanisms.

The project works with community, Councils, schools, food hospitality businesses, food manufacturers and media in an effort to highlight food waste issues and provide skills and incentives to reduce food waste. There are also strong links with NE Waste's Food Donation Program and Circular Cafes. Partnerships have been established with NSW Health, Sustain Food Network, Northern Rivers Food, and the Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres along with our member Councils. These partnerships provide support in creating a collaborative approach to tackling food waste in the region. The impact of Covid cannot be underestimated for food businesses in our region. Some have flourished (eg. food manufacturers and retailers), whilst others have not survived (eg. in food hospitality). The 5 case studies NE Waste developed provided a snapshot of resilience in the Northern Rivers food businesses. Householders were also keen to learn how to reduce food waste at home through online workshops, and signing up to the Food Smart program with the incentive of a freezer as a prize. The project uses a multifaceted approach combining pop up events, audits, workshops, social media, TVC, online tutorials, across the sectors.



“Increase awareness about food waste avoidance issues, and increase skills and adoption of food waste avoidance behaviours in households and business communities.”



# KEY OUTCOMES

- Program has reached 50,000 people in the community through TVC and Social Media campaigns, and directly engaged with 10,200 people.
- 1,300 have signed up to the Food Smart householder program.
- 17 online workshops have been held from July 2020 – with 350 people registering to participate in the workshops, and approximately 170 appearing on-line. A further 450 people have attended pop up events across the region.
- The "Win a Freezer" campaign resulted in 350 people signing up to Food Smart with a completion rate of 90% for Survey 1 and 23% survey 2.
- Love Your Lunch program developed for schools and launched in Term 2 2021 – 7 schools and 2,000 students participated. Bookings for the rest of 2021 were cancelled due to Covid..
- Council staff workshops held with Ballina Shire, Byron Shire and Tweed Shire Councils.
- 40 Cafes and Restaurants have directly received information about Your Business is Food.
- 8 x radio interviews – including a weekly segment on ABC North Coast in the lead up to Christmas.
- 2 x TVC airings – 396 spots purchased and 1,530 spots received on NBN and Prime TV.
- Resource library developed including videos, online tutorials, A-Z of food, postcards, and social media clips.

## FOSTERING CHANGES IN FOOD WASTE ACROSS MULTI-SECTORS

### Case Study: Love Your Lunch Program

The parent school workshops component of the project had to be modified due to Covid restrictions, and in its place NE Waste designed the Love Your Lunch program – a combination of the research; work NE Waste had done for years with schools and in the early childhood sector; and the work Midwaste and Behaviour Works had recently completed. NE Waste utilised the feedback from schools to develop a Primary School program which had 4 steps:

- Audit of all school lunch-waste to develop a benchmark
- Workshop with students on how to make their own lunches
- Workshop with students to DIY beeswax wrap
- School to hold a make your own lunch day
- Audit of all school lunches to assess success

The support of Northern Rivers Area Health Service in menu design and promotion has been integral to the take-up of the program in our region. The demand was overwhelming with Terms 2, 3 and 4 booking out for 2021 (unfortunately Terms 3 and 4 had to be postponed due to Covid restrictions). The outcomes highlight the importance of the project in

- Auditing school lunches to show the amount of edible waste, home bought plastic waste, and store bought plastic waste.
- Providing easy solutions to make changes in children's lunchboxes which promote healthy eating and less waste
- Empowering the students to make active choices about their own lunches

The results of the program to date, indicate that the interventions of audits and workshops combined with a Make Your Own Lunch day do result in less avoidable food waste as well as less waste overall, particularly in smaller school environments.

# ILLEGAL DUMPING PROJECT

## OVERVIEW

The regional Illegal Dumping program continues to provide education and communication resources and coordinate networking and training opportunities to support member council's own prevention activities. In Feb 2021 Clean Up and Prevention (CUAP) Round 7 funding was secured for the next stage of the Northern Rivers Illegal Dumping Prevention Program, objectives of which include:

- Implementing a broad regional illegal dumping prevention education and awareness program targeting asbestos and household kerbside dumping;
- Increasing council capacity to identify and prevent commercial waste being dumped into public bins;
- A sustained increase in public reporting of illegal dumping.

Due to the Round 7 grant funding program beginning in Feb 21 and the impact of ongoing Covid restrictions throughout much of 2021 many of the communication activities are being delivered in 2021-22 including:

- Region wide asbestos awareness campaign to be launched in NAAW (Nov 21);
- RID campaign & promotion of Council services for unwanted items (Dec-Jan 22); and
- Develop an illegal dumping of commercial waste prevention and communication plan suitable for use across the region.



“To reduce illegal dumping across the North East Waste region and improve our member Council’s capacity to respond to illegal dumping.”

## KEY OUTCOMES

- Round 7 Clean Up and Prevention (CUAP) grant funding of \$68,000
- Assisted Kyogle Council in the submission of a successful application for CUAP funding to complete their ID Baseline Data Gathering Project
- 1746 Illegal dumping incidents were reported across the region in 2020/21 – an increase of 5% from the previous year and a similar trend since 2017-18
- 149 RID online reports submitted by the public – 13% increase on previous year
- Coordinated regional participation in the National Asbestos Awareness Week (NAAW) campaign (Nov 20)
- 24% reduction in reported asbestos dumping incidents since 2019-20 across 5 LGAs
- Assisted in the implementation of the Responsible Donating (charities) Campaign Trial and conducted a regional ‘Don’t Dump on Charities’ communication campaign (Dec 20 – Jan 21)
- The suite of regional and council specific illegal dumping communication resources has continued to evolve. New resources include: Household Asbestos Testing & Disposal Kit ‘instructional videos’; roadside billboard signage displays; Council RID signs & investigation tape
- Completion of a pilot ‘commercial waste dumping into public bins’ audit in the Ballina Shire. A report and prevention strategy to be delivered in early 2022
- NE Waste ID Project Coordinator actively contributed to the evaluation of the NSW ID Strategy 2017-21 and participated in the LGNSW Asbestos Networking monthly meetings

# FOOD DONATION PROJECT



## OVERVIEW

Funding was secured in 2020-21 for the Food Donation Education (Phase 2) project, to implement recommendations made by the Northern Rivers Food Donation Feasibility Study 2018-19 including:

- Building capacity in agencies for ongoing funding and support of existing work;
- Improving access to foods on a regular basis, particularly fresh and frozen produce;
- Promoting food donation, networking and collaboration to maximise efficiencies and share resources.

Food donation agencies are predominantly run by dedicated volunteers with very limited time and resources available to develop collaborative networking opportunities and source the funding, that will continue to successfully build the region's food security capacity. The intention of this project then, was to deliver a range of initiatives to assist in establishing networks, engage new donors and volunteers; and to assist in securing grant funding and taking up new technologies that help improve the rescue and donation of food to those in need.



“To reduce the quantity of surplus edible food going to waste across the Northern Rivers by supporting and improving activities, which are likely to lead to increased food rescue and donation.”

## KEY OUTCOMES

- An extensive regional food networking contact list of 235+ recipients
- Quarterly e-Newsletter distributed
- Northern Rivers Food Donation Toolkit – available online and 50 hard copies distributed to food relief agencies (FRA), businesses and other stakeholders
- Food Donation website launched Nov 2020
- Regional Community Grant Directory – to simplify and streamline searching for food donation funding
- ‘What can you donate?’ video clips and TV commercial
- Social media campaigns and paid Google ads: reach 16,097, Engagements 37,353
- 530+ TV commercials aired
- 313 radio ads plus fillers on 6 stations across the region
- 2,000 Food Donation Myth Buster postcards distributed
- 25+ new food donor businesses came on board across the region
- 7 Northern Rivers food businesses registered on the new Foodbank / Y Waste app to donate end of day meals directly to those in need via Food Relief Agencies
- Almost 70% of agencies reported use of one or more food donation reporting apps
- An increase in the number of agencies that regularly received donations of meat (11%) and frozen produce (7%) – previous project feedback indicated that these items were often in high demand but were rarely donated
- Increases ranging from 12% to 26%, in the number of agencies that regularly received donation of fresh fruit, vegetables, dairy and pantry items
- Regional Food Donation Networking Forum, attended by 30 participants from 16 FRAs and donor businesses
- Food waste online workshop for key Council staff - to improve their access to and sharing of NE Waste's, food waste & donation resources.



The project was closely linked to other NE Waste food waste programs including Love Food Communities, Your Business is FOOD and Circular Cafes. This continuing collaborative approach promotes food rescue, redistribution and donation as the primary sustainable options for food businesses to deal with un-avoidable surplus food.

# COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRES PROJECT



## OVERVIEW

In 20-21, the NE Waste Regional CRC Education and Communication Plan continued to progress opportunities and support member Councils to achieve 'year on year' improvements, in the delivery of the region's CRC program for the safe disposal and recycling of household problem waste (HPW).

Annual CRC Drop off data (reported by Councils into the EPA online system) confirmed that more HPW was collected via the region's network of 8 CRC's in 2020-21 than in the previous 4 years of operation. Most significantly in regards to behaviour change and correct disposal is that the data reflects a clear improvement in the quantity of targeted HPW dropped off by residents and a corresponding reduction in the incorrect drop off of by-catch (those materials that are not accepted at the CRC) e.g. pool chemicals.

These results have been achieved by:

- the ongoing, clear and consistent messaging communicated effectively across our region;
- increasing the available opportunities for residents to drop off small quantities of items, such as batteries via the expanded Community Recycling Station network;
- more targeted information to householders to correctly sort, store and drop off HPW when it's safe and convenient to do so.



“To deliver a communication and education program to maximise community participation in the correct use of the regions network of free and easily accessible Community Recycling Centres and ‘Community Recycling Stations’, for the recycling or safe disposal of household problem wastes.”

## KEY OUTCOMES

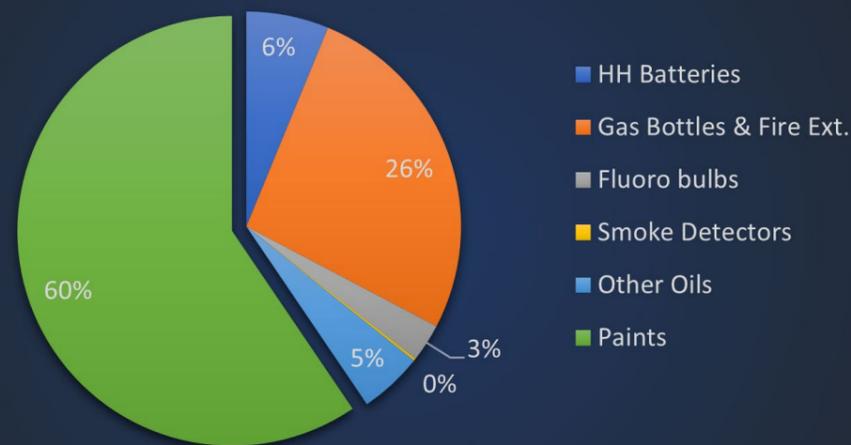
- Regionally, 224 tonnes of HPW collected – a 24% increase from the previous year
- An estimated annual cost savings of \$455,600 to councils and the community
- 31% increase in the collection of targeted HPW
- 26% reduction in By-Catch (non-targeted materials) - the lowest since the region's full CRC network began operating in 2016-17
- 216% increase (6.6 Tonnes) in the drop off of other oils (not including motor oil)
- Increases of between 28 – 46% in the drop off of smoke detectors, household batteries and paints
- 12 new Community Recycling Stations (CRS) manufactured locally and installed in public locations including at 3 participating Bunnings Stores, taking the total to 23 CRS across the region
- New education resources developed - Community Recycling brochure and poster; 3 promotional videos CRS webpage and location map
- Comprehensive communication program and media campaign bursts at peak times for home clean outs and DIY to maximise reach
- Recurring Covid restrictions were anticipated and accommodated by promoting 'HPW safe storage at home' activities to avoid unnecessary CRC/CRS visits, while encouraging best practice HPW disposal
- NE Waste was a key participant in the peer review of the proposed models for the future CRC Education and Communication program beginning in July 2022.

# COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRES PROJECT

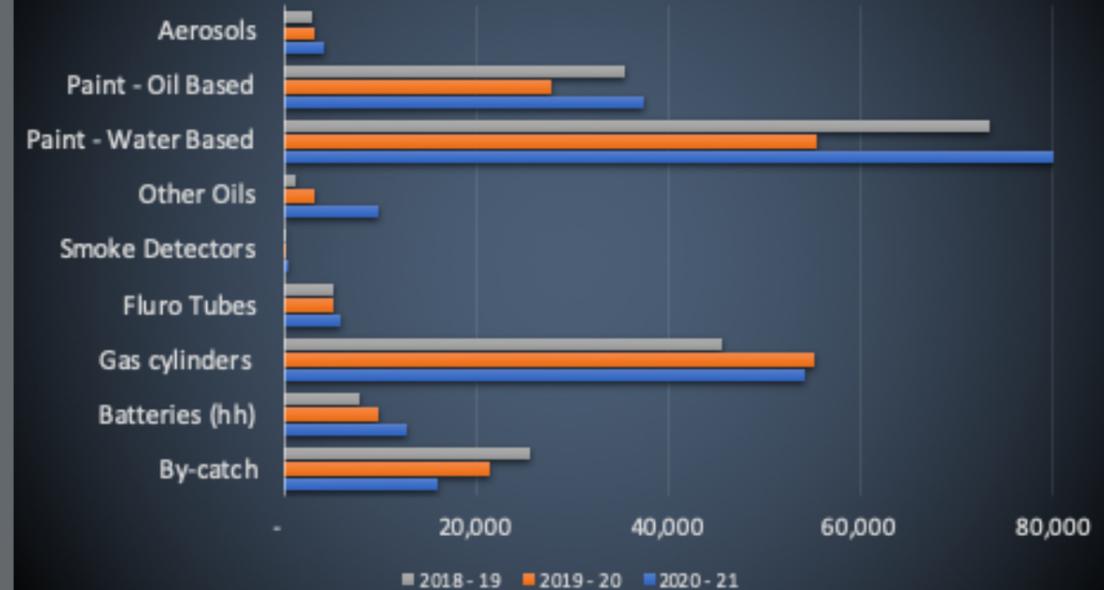


- CRC/CRS website – 3,102 views
- TV commercials aired – 1,330
- Radio ads – 300
- Facebook – 110k engagements
- YouTube – 407k impressions
- 2,000 battery boxes distributed
- 26 newspaper ads & 19 editorials

Regional CRC tonnages by category 2020-21



Comparison of HPW by type (kg)



## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON USING CRC AND CRS IN 2020-21:

- There was a 15% increase in those disposing of HPW correctly since 2018-19
- The most significant improvements were in the correct disposal of household batteries, fluoro bulbs and smoke detectors
- 12% increase in those who visited their CRC 3 times or more per annum
- Batteries, ink cartridges and mobile phones were the items most commonly dropped off at Community Recycling Stations (CRS)
- 50% of those who used a CRS did so 3 or more times



## OVERVIEW

# RENEW



“Providing training, professional development and networking opportunities for regional waste groups and personnel”

NE Waste is one of eight Voluntary Regional Waste Groups (VRWGs), which operate in rural and regional areas of NSW. All VRWGs are members of RENEW NSW, encompassing over 95 regional Councils. We work together to improve resource recovery and waste management in regional NSW and meet four times a year. This past year has meant meeting face-to-face has been a challenge, but we have managed to overcome these and stay connected.

RENEW provides an excellent platform to share ideas, resources and experience between the groups. Together we have built campaigns that provide a uniform message that extends beyond NE Wastes boundaries, saving duplication and harnessing a wide creative talent pool. Our meetings in regional NSW and the Sydney EPA offices enable groups to examine other facilities, share project ideas and resolve common issues with the State and at home.

The Chair of RENEW is Wes Knight (Tweed Council) and the groups also include Northern Inland Regional Waste, Netwaste, Midwaste, Riverina and Murray JO, Canberra Region JOC and RERROC.

This year the regional groups managed to meet twice online and twice face-to-face. The face-to-face meetings were held at Port Macquarie in February and at Coffs Harbour in May.

Between meetings NEW collaborated and shared resources with other RENEW members on a range of projects including Community Recycling Centres, Love Food Communities, Recycle Right, Food Donation and Illegal Dumping.

A significant focus of our meeting was on the end of the Waste Less Recycle More initiative on June 30, 2021. The funding attached to this initiative provides the main operational budgets and grant opportunities for the groups. The lack of information around the continuation of funding and the future role of regional waste groups created a high level of concern within RENEW. The positions of long-term contractors and

casual suppliers was dependent on continued funding, and a major concern was loss of experience, programs and knowledge developed over many years.

Groups, with the active support of our Chair and Councils, lobbied The NSW EPA over an extended period to confirm future funding or put interim funding in place. Interim funding was finally secured in November 2020 when an extension of the Waste Less recycle More program for 2021-22 was announced.

As a group, RENEW provided feedback on a number of NSW EPA and government initiatives including: The Right to Repair Inquiry, the Energy from Waste policy amendments, the 20-year Waste Strategy, the Return and Earn Scheme, and the role of regional waste groups. This involvement allows for regional perspectives to be heard and considered in the regulatory and planning process.



# FOOD ORGANICS AND GARDEN ORGANICS (FOGO) IN MULTI UNIT DWELLINGS (MUDS)

## OVERVIEW

This project was finally completed in June 2021 having stalled many times in the past 2 years as Covid impacted on our ability to audit the 5 properties (73 Multi Unit Dwellings) of Stage 1 in Lismore, Byron Bay and Tweed Heads. Different educational interventions were trialled at the properties and the results analysed to identify the most successful. The final survey showed that intervention of installing large permanent and eye-catching metal signs in bin bays was considered the most effective technique by residents. At the end of the trial the grant had not been fully expended and it was determined that this result could be tested with 2 new properties in Ballina.

**In Stage 1** 20 audits were conducted of the organics and residual waste bins. **Stage 2** in Ballina involved 10 audits. In addition to the audits bin monitoring took place providing additional data on participation, composition, and contamination.

## KEY OUTCOMES

- 42% of households responded to the Stage 1 survey with 43.3% of respondents recalling the intervention of signage. Only 13.5% of respondents recalled the other interventions of bin tags and postcards. The remaining residents did not recall the interventions. 67% of those surveyed said that the interventions had changed their behaviour in a positive way, with 33% saying it had not. Some of the residents who claimed it had not changed their behaviour felt they already had good practices or were home composting and had continued to do so throughout the trial.
- Stage 2 MUDs delivered mixed results. The first property had longer term residents, and individual yards. The signage had a definite impact as in the baseline audits, before it was introduced, there was no food waste in the FOGO bin. Post intervention food waste was present and increasing. Contamination also declined. At the second property there were minor improvements, but signage was removed on 2 separate occasions, despite been fixed to a wall. This indicated a lack of engagement by some residents.

Recommendations included:

- Form good relations with either the body corporate or a resident champion and foster a sense of pride and ownership.
- While we still feel signage is a key element to encouraging residents and assisting them to correctly use the FOGO bin, it should be used in conjunction with the above.
- Be aware of the limitations and difficulties of targeting residents who share bins, have very different socio-economic circumstances and storage/infrastructure scenarios when planning a FOGO in MUDS service.



“ To increase the use of organics collection in MUDS and reduce contamination”

# HOUSEHOLD ASBESTOS TESTING PROGRAM



“To increase public awareness about the disposal of asbestos and improve their ability to deal with asbestos disposal safely”

## OVERVIEW

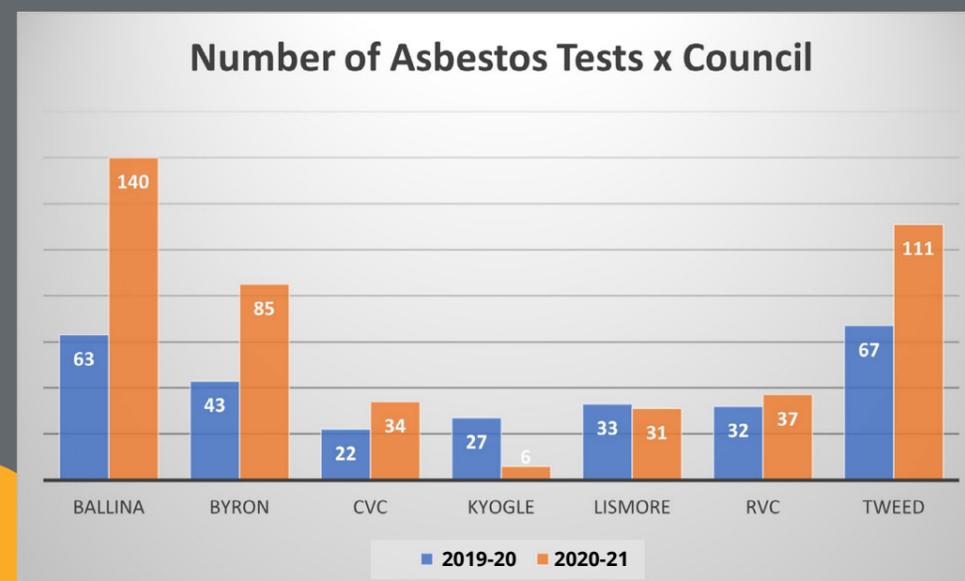
The Home Asbestos Testing Kit program has now been operational for six years. The program allows homeowners two free of charge tests to identify asbestos in their homes before undertaking renovations. Instructions and PPE are provided to the householders with a satchel to deliver the sample to the laboratory. Post a positive result the coordinator forwards advice from Safe Work and provides information about professional asbestos removal in the region to encourage residents to do the right thing.

In 2020-21 the program organised 444 tests for seven Northern Rivers Councils, issuing 267 kits to residents in the region.

**IN NOVEMBER 2020 NE WASTE PROMOTED NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS WEEK, THROUGH SOCIAL AND PRINT MEDIA, WHILE ALSO PROVIDING COUNCILS WITH THE RESOURCES TO DO SO THEMSELVES.**

## KEY OUTCOMES

There was a substantial increase in the number of tests carried out this year by all Councils.



### Test Results

COUNCIL	2020-21	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	H/HOLDS
BALLINA	140	95	45	88
BYRON	85	60	25	44
CVC	34	26	8	20
KYOGLE	6	4	2	5
LISMORE	31	17	14	21
RVC	37	22	15	20
TWEED	111	70	41	69
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>267</b>

# TRAINING



“Provide training, professional development and networking opportunities for landfill and education staff in the region.”

Training and professional development is an important part of making NE Waste a cohesive and collaborative entity. It enables contractors and Councils to build skills that contribute to an enhanced performance in their roles.

In 2020-21 the following training was provided:

- 25 Council staff were trained in Workplace Chemical Handling.
- 22 Council staff and 2 NE Waste staff were trained in Asbestos Awareness.
- 10 NE Waste staff and Council educators trained in Online Facilitation with Les Robinson.
- 18 staff and contractors attended Odette Barry’s PR and Media Training.
- 8 Council staff participated in a training session: NE Waste Tackling Food Waste In Business.



# THE BETTER WASTE RECYCLING FUND



“To support voluntary waste groups with regional coordination and infrastructure planning.”



In 2020-21 the Better Waste Recycling Fund supported the delivery of new and existing programs. The Business Program was resourced with additional funding to allow for the development of the Circulate Northern Rivers platform, which fosters circular economy initiatives in the region.

The Household Asbestos Testing Program and the #Recycleright campaign were also continued under this funding. The Fund continued to support the office/workshop and meeting space in Ballina.

New this year was the Waste Wise Events trial. New signage was collaboratively developed with Councils and audits were conducted at Markets to create a baseline against which improvements could be measured once new signage was introduced. Market patrons and stallholders were interviewed to identify the barriers to effective bin use and to inform any future changes.

The project will continue into next year and make use of the learnings to help increase separation of recycling and food organics from the waste stream at their source.



# BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL



**LLOYD ISAACSON**  
MANAGER RESOURCE RECOVERY  
@ BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL

## INNOVATIONS AND *ACHIEVEMENTS*

### Ballina Council community engagement activities included:

- Trialled a swap cup system in Lennox Head by partnering with HuskeeSwap. 75% of eligible Lennox Head cafes signed up with 161 swaps taking place over launch week with good coverage and positive feedback from the community.
- Partnered with Bunnings Ballina to offer a fifth Community Recycling Station (CRS) for residents. 2020/21 data confirms strong use of the cabinet.
- Facilitated Return and Earn Fundraising at Council-owned Pools between Council-run pools (Ballina Memorial Pool and Alstonville Aquatic Centre) and local Lions Clubs (Ballina and Alstonville Lions Clubs respectively) to implement a CDS system.
- Purchased new kitchen caddies with tailored Council-specific label designs highlighting what can go in them. Caddies are provided to all new homes as part of their new bin service and available for purchase to all residents.

### Operationally, Council investigated a number of options around waste, recycling and organics collection and processing. As a result:

- SOILCO OPF located within the Tweed Shire Resource Recovery Facility, was awarded the contract to process Councils Organic Waste Material from July 2022 and provision for FOGO Kerbside Collection Services was awarded to Solo Resource Recovery.
- Utilisation of shed at the Ballina waste management centre was awarded to Cleanaway Operations. The proposed shed use includes installation and operation of bailing plant to process light CDS material, cardboard and polystyrene and soft plastics.
- Provision for Collection and Disposal of Waste and Recycling for Council Facilities of bulk bin waste services was awarded to Richmond Waste from September 2020.



Alstonville lions at pool with new bins



Resident using kitchen caddy

## KEY CHALLENGES

Covid related QLD border impacts / transport delays-wait times was one of the biggest challenges faced by Council. It had significant impact on kerbside organics, who transport direct from the kerbside to Queensland with an average transport time 4.5 hour return trip.

# BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL



**DANIELLE HANIGAN**  
TEAM LEADER RESOURCE RECOVERY  
@ BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

## INNOVATIONS AND *ACHIEVEMENTS*

- Byron Loves BYO: a campaign to reduce single-use packaging and promote reuse systems and waste stations. We launched at Byron Farmers Market and have so far had 12 businesses sign up for Huskee cup swap systems and the Farmers Market take on a wash station.
- Byron Binfluencer: an educational Instagram account to highlight waste behaviour in the shire, the good, the bad and the confusing. This platform has been used to engage visitors, residents, businesses and local community groups.
- Illegal Dumping Prevention project: Council received \$119,000 worth of funding from NSW EPA for a targeted Illegal Dumping Prevention project. The project will focus on improving surveillance and infrastructure throughout the shire and developing targeted educational materials for new residents and key businesses.
- Internal litter and waste education: Council undertook and completed an internal litter and waste education NSW EPA 'Own it and Act' grant funded project which successfully improved staffs awareness (according to surveys) and understanding of these issues and how they can take part in prevention strategies.
- Butt Free Byron Phase 2 achieved a 40.8% reduction in litter volume and 58.6% in litter items throughout the entire shire. The project focussed on educating the community, local businesses and our visitors on the impacts of litter to the Cape Byron Marine Park. Targeted video resources were developed and distributed to communicate these key messages along with 'The Litter Journey' artwork – designed by environmental illustrator 'Eco with Em'. No smoking signage was updated and enforcement blitzes were undertaken to increase awareness of the no smoking ban on beaches and decrease litter.
- Continuation and expansion of the Make the Switch Program - helping businesses switch away from the top 6 single use plastics. This project came to a close in July 2021.
- The Re-think tank networking forum introduced for community groups working in the waste space to connect and share ideas, learnings and resources.
- Worked with community organisations to establish waste management infrastructure such as wash stations and improved signage for markets and events.
- Delivered incursions to Primary, early Childhood and High schools including waste audits.
- Provided submissions on discussion papers in the development of the NSW 20 Year Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy, NSW Plastics Plan, NSW Plastics Ban legislation.



## MAJOR PROJECTS

- Progression of Southern Landfill closure and rehabilitation design with materials testing and Stability Risk assessment work due for completion early 2021-22 FY.
- The Bioenergy Facility Project is advancing, having lodged its DA and completed Public Exhibition. Grant funding applications are in progress with Commonwealth agencies, and the Project will soon complete the scope of work and technical specifications for the design, construction, operations and maintenance of the asset. Council remains hopeful that, with viable capital cost support from the Commonwealth, this project will soon be a reality.
- Improvement and enhancement works at the Byron Resource Recovery Centre have included the concreting of the putrescible waste receival bay, improving operational efficiency and safety, with the floor of the bay suffering extensively from over use of heavy plant. 350m of litter fencing was installed around the public drop off areas, improvements to staff amenities and the installation of public toilet facilities were completed.

Several new Contracts awarded including;

- Transport and disposal of waste, recycling and transport and processing of cardboard in November 2020
- Processing, recovery and recycling of polystyrene - March 2021 with upgraded machinery hire arrangement at the BRRC
- Monitoring, collection and recycling of cigarette butts – April 2021

Implementation of staff restructure which saw three permanent operational staff engaged which had been long term casual positions. Other staff changes saw the engagement of a new Contracts Management Officer, Education Projects Officer, Waste Education and Compliance Officer and Environmental Programs Officer.

# CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL



**KEN WILSON**

**WASTE AND SUSTAINABILITY  
CO-ORDINATOR @ CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL**

## INNOVATIONS AND *ACHIEVEMENTS*

- Preparation started for a new domestic waste collection, recycling and organics processing contracts due to commence in 2023. This included updating Council's data on domestic waste services, contract maps and a review of possible bulky waste service options.
- The Minnie Water Waste Transfer Station was completed and opened in March 2021. This transfer station provides a waste and recycling drop off point for residents in the Sandon River, Minnie Water, Wooli, Diggers Camp and surrounding areas.
- Education – With funding and support from the DPIE, CVC undertook a pilot project to determine the impact of a three month intensive campaign around FOGO. The campaign involved 220 (matched pair) pre and post audits of green and red bins at households across the Valley; radio, tv and newspaper advertising; advertising on bus sides, on our web page and on Facebook. Results were impressive, with households in all 3 Councils areas showing evidence of behavior change in regards to food waste presentation in general waste and FOGO bins. The FOGO bin recovery rates for food waste in the Clarence increased 59% to 70%.
- Design of a new Grafton Landfill cell (4C) commenced in 2020-21. It is expected this will be completed and go to tender in 2021-22.
- A mid-scale solar farm concept at the Grafton Landfill was endorsed by Council with approval to move to the planning phase.



Yamba-Grafton buses during FOGO campaign



Pacific Valley Christian School tour the ORF

## KEY CHALLENGES

Complying with Covid restrictions made delivering waste services and face-to-face education more challenging.

Our annual bulky waste collection which was cancelled the previous year due to Covid, had a record amount of bulky waste collected for 2020-21 with nearly 1900T collected. This included a substantial amount of illegally dumped waste which is put out during the cleanup.

# KYOGLE COUNCIL



**AMANDA CLARK**  
**MANAGER DEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY SERVICES**  
**@ KYOGLE COUNCIL**

## INNOVATIONS AND *ACHIEVEMENTS*

**In 2020-21 Kyogle Council** focused on initiatives to increase recycling within the community and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. To this end, the Better Waste and Recycling Fund supported a mattress recycling trial, provided tarps for recycling skips at Transfer Stations and allowed for improvements to take place to the Tip Shop. As a result of the trial, mattress recycling will continue into the future.

The three Community Recycling Stations (CRS) have been well utilised by the community as has the expanded Kyogle Community Recycling Centre (CRC). Both allow the community to recycle problem wastes. An extension of the agreement with Paintback will see it continue. The Reverse Vending Machine for the Return and Earn Scheme at the Kyogle Landfill Facility has been well utilised by the community.

### Also in 2020-21:

- The construction of stage two of the landfill cell at the Kyogle Landfill Facility was a major focus during 2021 to ensure Council has capacity to landfill waste generated within the Kyogle local government area in the future.
- Kyogle Council has been capturing and reporting on all illegal dumping incidents across the region under an 'Establishing Illegal Dumping Baseline Data for Kyogle LGA' project, that has been funded by NSW EPA, as a Waste Less, Recycle More initiative. Council has signed up to RID Online as an important tool to record and report on all illegal dumping within its' LGA. The project has seen the employment of a Project Officer along with a targeted focus on and communication regarding illegal dumping.



Kyogle Landfill Facility



Community Recycling Centre

## KEY CHALLENGES

The Covid pandemic continued to pose challenges for Council during 2020-21.

Contamination issues associated with the split bin system currently used by Kyogle Council for domestic kerbside collection of recycling and landfill material is another key challenge.

# LISMORE CITY COUNCIL



**KEVIN TRUSTUM**  
COMMERCIAL SERVICES BUSINESS MANAGER  
@ LISMORE CITY COUNCIL

## INNOVATIONS AND *ACHIEVEMENTS*

### Lismore Council had a busy 2020-21 year.

- Reopened its Materials Recovery Facility after fire damaged the building earlier in the year. Repairs to the MRF and composting facility have meant that Council is producing bales again and selling to its markets, it's also meant that we are processing compost which will be ready for sale to the public again in September 2021.
- Since late 2020 Lismore City Council has been trialling a program to recycle mattresses and keep them out of landfill. The program aims to minimise the amount of waste sent to landfill, reduce methane gases being produced from decomposing mattresses and recycle end-of-life waste products by turning them into a resource.
- As part of the development of Council's new waste strategy, we conducted comprehensive community engagement over October 2020 and April 2021 including an online community and business survey, focus group workshops, a Councillor workshop and tour at the Lismore Recycling & Recovery Centre as well as targeted phone calls of certain business types with varying waste streams and waste management needs. With some more work to be done on the inputs into the strategy, including the release of the NSW Government's 20-year Waste Sustainable Materials Strategy, it is planned for Lismore Waste Strategy to be completed by early-mid 2022.
- After a 12 month vacancy, a new full time Waste & Services Education Officer was employed in February 2021 – priorities have included planning media and communications for the year to address specific waste issues and events, re-invigorating networks with NE Waste, local schools, community groups and other government agencies, running face-to-face workshops and events. One such event in June 2021 was a World Environment Day program of activities at



Mattress recycling trial station



Community Recycling Stations

the Lismore Recycling & Recovery Centre in partnership with NE Waste, Friends of the Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens and Dorrroughby Environmental Education Centre.

- Installation of 3 mobile Community Recycling Stations as drop-off points for certain types of problem household waste at various facilities – Council's Corporate Centre, Lismore Library and Nimbin Transfer Station.
- Council was successful in attracting funding for trials integrating glass sand into concrete.
- A new polystyrene processing machine was purchased that can process over 300 kilograms per hour.
- An existing waste sorting facility was converted into an organics contamination removal facility to improve compost.

# RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL



**CARLA DZENOLET**  
COORDINATOR  
WASTE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY  
@ RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL

## INNOVATIONS AND *ACHIEVEMENTS*

- After previously capping the Bora Ridge Landfill it was officially closed and the environmental licence surrendered to complete that project and receive the final funds from the Environmental Trust.
- The design of the proposed new landfill cell at the Nammoona Waste & Resource Recovery Facility was completed and was approved by the NSW EPA.
- A capping plan for the older landfill cells at Nammoona was approved by the NSW EPA.
- FOGO collections began being sent to a processing facility within the region instead of the previous facility in Queensland, providing cost savings for Council and keeping the economic benefits within the region.
- A new collection truck joined the fleet, the first including GPS technology and software to map routes, plan collection runs and monitor locations with contamination issues.
- A focused education program was delivered to all households receiving a kerbside collection service, providing them with a comprehensive waste and recycling information booklet that promotes waste avoidance messaging, details on Resource Recovery & Waste facilities, 'how to' pack your trailer information, an A-Z guide and much more. The booklet also provided a voucher to receive two produce bags fabricated from post-consumer textiles with over 1,000 produce bags already given away.
- Upgrading of public place bins continued in Broadwater and Coraki, including 'double bin surrounds which sees more public place recycling bins throughout the LGA.
- New contactless refill water stations have been installed in Evans Head and Casino to help promote avoidance of single use plastic water bottles, and to help reduce litter.
- As part of a Council restructure the Waste & Resource Recovery Section successfully transitioned into a new 'Business Development' directorate, recognising that a complex service area such as waste requires a business minded approach.



FOGO Garden



New contactless refill water stations

## KEY CHALLENGES

- There were challenges in developing a design for the new Nammoona landfill cell that was acceptable to the EPA. A challenge for the coming year could be building the cell if specialised contractors and materials are hindered by Covid restrictions.
- Contamination in kerbside bins and public place bins has been an ongoing issue, particularly in recycle bins, and is an ongoing challenge that will require ongoing education and intervention programs.
- With more options beginning to appear and re-emerge locally for processing organics Council will have to review the benefits of proceeding with the construction of an in-house processing facility and decide on the most cost-effective approach for both the medium term and the longer term.
- The State Government's phasing out of single use plastics is seeing the emergence and proliferation of products fabricated from alternate materials. This can confuse some of the public and will require education programs targeting those specific products and materials.

# TWEED SHIRE COUNCIL



**ROD DAWSON**  
UNIT COORDINATOR  
RESOURCE RECOVERY, WASTE MANAGEMENT  
@ TWEED SHIRE COUNCIL

## INNOVATIONS AND *ACHIEVEMENTS*

**In 2020-21 Tweed Shire Council's Resource Recovery unit has accomplished two major goals which will help to support and direct the next stage in our resource recovery journey.**

The Towards Zero Waste Strategy was adopted by Council and the construction of the Tweed Organics Processing Facility in which food and organics in resident's green bins will now be turned into nutrient rich compost locally, was completed. These were two major wins in establishing the ground works for the establishment of the circular economy.

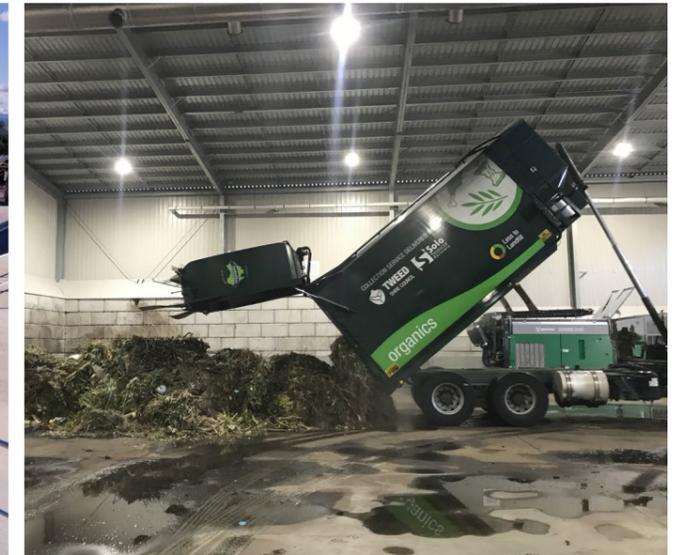
The Towards Zero Waste Strategy is a major accomplishment as it lays the foundation of resource recovery for years to come. It is the starting point for Council's commitment to eliminating waste through the development of actions that support the objectives of demonstrating leadership, and supporting the community and Council to pursue zero waste targets.

Another major accomplishment of the year, also connected to Council's towards zero waste goal, was delivery of the Tweed Organics Processing Facility at the Tweed Recycling and Landfill Centre. The facility is the largest of its type in the Northern Rivers, with the capacity to process up to 25,000 tonnes of food and garden organics annually.

There are also some good indicators that Council and the community are heading in the right direction, such as the reduction in contamination in the green bin. It is now at 1%, compared to last year where it was above 3%. This is a significant improvement and we thank our community for this. The benefit of this will be felt by the community as it will assist in keeping processing costs down whilst ensuring the quality of the reusable compost remains high for the community. We also reinstated our Bin Inspection Officer in the last part of the financial year, and this will continue to provide feedback to residents to address contamination in both the green and yellow bins.



Soilco Operations Manager Michael Emery and Acting Project and Operations Officer Wes Knight



Organics Processing Facility

## KEY CHALLENGES

Covid's changing landscape, issues due to the QLD/NSW border closure, and the safety of staff has continued to be a priority, and has provided a challenging year.

This has led to the staff establishing a close network to check on the welfare of each other. In these times of difficulty the team has become closer than ever and have provided a great safety network to look after each other.



# WASTE DISPOSAL AND RESOURCE RECOVERY

Reporting From  
July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 To 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**2020-21 has been a challenging year for NE Waste Councils.** Effective resource recovery in our region continued to be impacted by the pandemic. There was a reduction in the amount of waste, recycling and organics dropped off at waste and resource recovery facilities and for residual waste an increase in kerbside generation approximately 20%.



**RESIDUAL WASTE  
DROPPED OFF**  
**17,252**  
TONNES



**RECYCLING  
DROPPED OFF**  
**3,319**  
TONNES



**GARDEN ORGANICS  
DROPPED OFF**  
**12,368**  
TONNES



**53%** REGIONAL  
RECYCLING  
RATE

**E-waste**  
**305**  
TONNES



**Batteries**  
**182**  
TONNES



**Metal**  
**5,305**  
TONNES



**Community Recycling Centres**  
**321**  
TONNES



# NE WASTE GOVERNANCE & FINANCE

## GOVERNANCE OF THE *GROUP*

NE Waste is governed under a Memorandum of Understanding between the 7 member Councils, that outlines the role and obligations of Councils and the Coordinator. A host Council administers our financial obligations and ensures our operations under their own policies and procedures. For the past five years Clarence Valley Council has hosted NE Waste. Member Councils meet in person at least four times per year. Each Council is entitled to a single vote, with decisions carried by majority vote.

This past year we have operated under transitional funding while the details of the new 20 year Waste and Sustainable Material Strategy have been finalised. Regional Waste Groups used to meet with the NSW EPA quarterly in Sydney and regional areas under the banner of RENEW NSW. These meetings include an update of each Group's projects and achievements, as well as encouraging discussion of issues that challenge the regional areas. These meetings have been held on a virtual platform during the Covid pandemic and have increased in frequency as the new Waste and Sustainable Material Strategy has involved more consultations. In addition, NE Waste contractors meetings are held on alternative quarters to allow updates to the Coordinator, resource sharing and support across projects. Reporting to the EPA by the Waste Group is annual and is currently undergoing a review. Once reporting is complete, funding is allocated for projects and administration.



THE NORTH EAST WASTE TEAM

# FINANCES AND PROCUREMENT

The NSW EPA provides funding to develop and implement our projects and NE Waste reports on our outcomes, achievements and resource recovery on an annual basis. In addition, each member Council contributes between \$0.80 to \$1.00 per head of population towards operations, project development and implementation. This is capped at maximum of 50,000 residents. This means each Council shares in decision-making and contributes a proportionate share of running costs and project expenses.

Not all waste groups are fortunate enough to operate under this model and NE Waste appreciates that this combined expenditure allows us to develop and deliver high quality programs. Additional funding is sought from grant programs such as the Environment Trust and the Waste Less Recycle More initiative for specific projects. In 2020 NE Waste was again very successful in securing additional funds from the EPA and Environment Trust, increasing our budget from \$440,000 to over 1 million dollars.

NE Waste can authorise expenditure for works or services by resolution at a meeting of the Working Group. Unless otherwise directed by the Working Group, procurement is undertaken in accordance with the procedures of the Host Council. The Host Council is responsible for the calling of and awarding tenders. The coordinator and group assist the Host Council by preparing any technical specifications and tender documents, assessing

tenders, and making a recommendation to the Host Council regarding the preferred tenderer.

NE Waste delivers its projects through the engagement of contractors and consultants. This engagement is made under the procurement policies of the Host Council. In addition to the primary project coordinators a number of long term and experienced casual staff support NE Wastes education program. These contractors are vital to the ongoing delivery of projects and some have been fulfilling this role for more than 10 years. In 2020-21 they included:

Peter Notley, Nicki Walker, Sascha Piotrkowski, Joanne Hoy, Flavio Stankievich, Danielle Davidson, Sandra Signorini and Danae Elarde.

In our operational and procurement decisions NE Waste strives to minimise our footprint by choosing to:

- Offset air travel
- Carpool when possible
- Purchase local or Australian made products
- Adopt, reuse and repair where possible
- Minimise waste, compost and recycle
- Use energy and water efficiently
- Make socially and environmentally ethical choices when operating for NE Waste

## PROJECT EXPENDITURE AND BUDGET 2020-21

PROJECT	BUDGET ALLOCATED	EXPENDITURE
ABORIGINAL & OTHER PROJECTS	\$ 27,448.01	\$ -
ASBESTOS HOUSEHOLD	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 18,182.73
BETTER WASTE RECYCLING FUND (BWRP)	\$ 82,777.66	\$ 65,942.06
BINTRIM	\$ 98,824.32	\$ 58,449.80
BUSINESS WASTE REDUCTION PROJECT	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 60,732.83
CO-ORD AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 97,584.05
COMMUNICATION	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 40,872.94
COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRES (CRC)	\$ 93,045.15	\$ 94,085.80
EDUCATION CO-ORD & MANAGEMENT	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 64,204.35
FOGO IN MUDS	\$ 10,625.00	\$ 10,613.50
FOOD DONATION	\$ 45,963.50	\$ 48,281.10
HOST COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00
ILLEGAL DUMPING PROJECT	\$ 69,929.14	\$ 42,999.15
LITTER	\$ 22,311.56	\$ 20,692.75
LOVE FOOD COMMUNITIES	\$ 177,125.86	\$ 61,238.43
LOVE FOOD HATE WASTE (LFHW)	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,531.44
RENEW	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 2,278.33
TRAINING	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 6,235.01
WASTE EDUCATION	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 87,113.44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,057,050.20</b>	<b>\$ 807,037.70</b>

**NB: FUNDS NOT EXPENDED ARE ROLLED OVER TO NEXT YEAR OR RETURNED TO OUR RESERVE.**



The North East Waste acknowledges the funding contribution it receives from the NSW Environmental Protection Agency.



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2019 -2020

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