NE WASTE ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22























The North East Waste acknowledges the funding contribution it receives from the

NSW Environmental Protection Agency.

[TABLE OF CONTENTS]

Foreword 4		
NE Waste Communication and Pa	rtnerships	6
Regional Coordination and Strateg	ју 8	
Education and Community Engage	ement Program	9
Circulate Northern Rivers 13	3	
Illegal Dumping 15		
Food Donation 16		
Community Recycling Centres	17	

RENEW	20			
Training	21			
The Better V	Vaste Recycling	g Fund	21	
Council Ach	ievements	22		
Waste Dispo	osal and Resou	rce Recover	-y	2
Northern Riv	ers FLOOD RE	SPONSE	30	
NE WASTE (Governance & F	inance	31	

Household Asbestos Testing Program



This report outlines the activities and outcomes of North East Waste (NE Waste) for the 21-22 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. The management of waste and resource recovery in our region has been severely challenged in the past few years - the pandemic, bushfires and more recently floods have all impacted on the way we operate and deliver our projects and programs. Despite this we have delivered and engaged our community, schools, businesses and government in many waste minimisation, avoidance and recovery activities.

Our core projects and achievements, and those of our member Councils, are the subject of this report. Our primary focus is on education, food waste reduction, business waste reduction, problem waste recycling, 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, who provide 50% of our operational funding. This year we

embark on a new era as this funding comes under the umbrella of the Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 (WaSM). In response to this Strategy NE Waste is developing a new regional waste strategy to guide our activities over the next 5 years. This is due for completion in Dec 2022.

NE Waste's vision remains to achieve more sustainable waste management and better resource recovery through a proactive and collaborative approach with our member Councils and community. The ongoing support of our member Councils and our success in securing grant funding allows us to engage our region in an innovative and proactive way, with our programs often duplicated by other Councils in both the metropolitan and regional areas. Our incredible team of project coordinators and educators continue to inspire and this year went beyond their remit to assist residents and businesses impacted by the floods with advice and information, in the communication vacuum that encased our region.

In the coming year we intend to explore new and innovative ways to encourage and engage our communities, aiming to support Councils in a move towards a more circular, lower emissions economy.

Jeanie McKillop, NE Waste Coordinator





Linda Tohver **Education Coordinator**





Kim Potter **Business Waste** Coordinator





Asbestos Program



REGIONAL PROJECTS AND ENGAGEMENT

In 2021-22 NE Waste coordinated 14 major projects focused on community engagement, reuse, business waste management, organics, training, illegal dumping, litter, and problem waste management. We also successfully secured 3 new grants. The following section outlines the key features, and highlights outcomes of each project.

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NE WASTE COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIPS



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

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. In the past year our education coordinator Linda Tohver has had 38 radio segments called 'Talking Rubbish' on the ABC and written 28 articles for their newsletter. We have had a regular monthly column in a local magazine and multiple media releases in print and online media.

This year the importance of communication took on a whole new level as flooding devastated our region and Covid continued to effect communities and businesses. Due to our continued regular presence in the media we were able to keep the community informed of State and local government responses to the natural disaster, in addition to fielding numerous requests for information and assistance from affected residents and businesses.

We also get our message out and share our experience beyond our region through networking, representation on steering committees and panels and through presentations at conferences.

Through networking and in the 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, this year partners included:

- Northern Rivers Area Health Service
- Southern Cross University
- · Regional Development Australia
- Northern Rivers Food
- Northern Rivers Food Donation Network
- Business NSW
- Richmond Waste
- 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
- Bunnings

We attended and presented at 3 conferences on regional cooperation (No Time To Waste), our successful business projects (Waste 2022) and our asbestos management experience (Asbestos Safety and Management Conference).



MAIN ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGNS



SECOND HAND SATURDAY

700+ Garage sale holders

5944 App users

CIRCULATE NORTHERN RIVERS PROJECT

200 new o

new contacts

800

business registered for the newsletter

ILLEGAL DUMPING

1600 incidents reported

170/ increase in public reporting

#RecycleRight

Adopted by over

30

Councils in 3 States

LOVE FOOD COMMUNITIES

1300+ Food Smart sign-ups

Your Business is Food sign-ups

FOOD DONATION EDUCATION PROJECT

food donation agencies and businesses newsletter subscribers

COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRES

216,000 Kg

of community awareness of CRCs

HOUSEHOLD ASBESTOS PROGRAM

404 TESTS

14%
REDUCTION
IN ILLEGAL
DUMPING

WEBSITES GENERAL VIEWS

PRINT ADS

64





RADIO INTERVIEWS





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, which is currently under revision. The past year was an arrangement of interim transition funding, bridging the gap between the Waste Less Recycle More program and the new 20 year Waste and Sustainable Material Strategy (WaSIM).

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 development of our next Regional Waste Strategy 2022-27. There has been extensive consultation with the EPA, Councils and other VRWGs to develop a framework for this Strategy which suits all parties. Consensus was reached and guidelines developed in May, with the new strategy rolling out in November 2022.



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

KEY OUTCOMES

- 8 contractors were engaged to deliver 14 regional projects, many adapted to pandemic and natural disaster events
- 5 meetings in person with waste managers, 4 with waste educators, additional consultations with both groups
- 3 new grants were secured a C&D waste pilot project that is focusing on diverting more builders waste from new builds and demo sites, the Scrap Together Campaign to encourage residents to use their FOGO bin and a Litter Own it and Act projects looking at mangroves as litter traps on the Clarence River

- Increased collaboration with both regional and State agencies on the flood response in February 2022
- Love Food communities, Bin Trim and Illegal Dumping grant programs were all completed
- All Councils recommitted funding to NEW for the year and were actively involved in project delivery
- Fulfilled all reporting requirements to the NSW EPA.
- 3 submissions, 8 consultations, ongoing consultations with EPA on Strategy development, natural disaster responses, program logic workshops

EDUCATION 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. 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 21-22, there were impacts to the delivery of our face to face programs – particularly the Wipe out Waste schools and community events with more than 90 events cancelled or postponed due to Floods and Covid, including our Second Hand Saturday program. Many of these were pivoted and adapted 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.

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

Early Childhood Program includes staff training, parent and child education sessions.

#RecycleRight campaign

 community and schools education on our #RecycleRight and Lift the Lid Campaign

External participation on committees, working groups:

Steering Committee Recycle Mate App, Behaviour Works/ Monash Uni participate in Reuse/repair program development

Conference/Workshop

Participation: Regional Waste Conference (speaker), Asbestos Awareness Conference (speaker and panel), NSW Waste Conference (participant), Northern Rivers Food (presentation)

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.





KEY OUTCOMES

- Community education yearly reach was in excess of 15,000 householders who have directly participated in NE Waste and partner education programs and 65,000 reached via social media and general media outlets.
- Our Wipe out Waste education activities included 5 x online workshops and 54 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, National Recycling Week, Sustainable Christmas,
 Compost Week and World Environment Day media packages
 developed for Councils, and community workshops held;
- School's engagement program delivered High School workshop
 to TAS teachers across the region. Worked with Recycle Relays,
 our Wipe out Waste show, waste audits and the Love your Lunch
 Program with 9 schools. Unfortunately 10 other schools had to
 be cancelled due to COVID and then floods. Through the Love
 your Lunch program, and average 46% reduction in edible food
 waste from children's lunchboxes was achieved, with one school
 achieving a 93% reduction.
- Council staff engagement beeswax wrapper workshops held at Councils and libraries during Plastic Free July.
- Professional Development opportunities Tour of the Materials Recycling Facility at Tweed Shire Council with the regional Waste educators group.
- 38 x ABC North Coast "Talking Rubbish" segments/interviews and newsletter articles written.





Wipe out Waste

59 community event days reaching 2,500 people directly. Over 90 events had to be cancelled or postponed due to Covid and Flood impacts.

Scrap Together

TV ads: Recycle Right, Love Food Hate Waste, SCRAP Together, CRCs – reaching over 65,000 people across the region

International/National Events:

World Environment Day, Plastic Free July, National Recycling Week, Christmas Campaign, International Compost Week – reach 65,000 community members

50,000+ reach & 10,200+ engagement from 1,500+ TV ads, 89 community events,

1323 sign ups to Food Smart, 40 businesses sign up to Your Business is Food.

20 x multimedia resources, 10 business case studies, 4 recipe cards, 4 x comms packages

DIVERTING FOOD FROM LANDFILL:

EDUCATION ABOUT ORGANICS **MANAGEMENT**



OVERVIEW

Diverting food from landfill, education about food waste avoidance, ensuring householders use and present their kerbside FOGO bins correctly, as well as looking at opportunities for organics management in rural communities are priority areas for NE Waste and member Councils. Three NE Waste projects are aiming to achieve organic waste diversion in the region: Scrap together, a rural compost project and Love Food Communities. NE Waste was successful in receiving funding for the newly developed "Scrap Together" education campaign from the NSW EPA. The campaign TVC was filmed in the Northern Rivers region, featuring NE Waste and Council staff as 'extras talent'. The funding received from the NSW EPA is to deliver the "Scrap Together" program from June - November 2022.

In order to provide some preliminary information around how householders in rural communities who do not have access to a kerbside FOGO service, were managing their organic waste, NE Waste developed a survey in conjunction with the Council waste educators group. The results of the survey are in the case study provided.

Education around food waste avoidance and the love food hate waste campaign has been delivered through the Love Food Communities Project since 2019/20. The project worked 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.



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



KEY OUTCOMES

- SCRAP Together resource library for Councils The campaign resources feature TVCs, radio ads, print and web resources which has been edited and/or developed for our Northern Rivers region and specific Councils.
- SCRAP Together program was launched on the 23rd June with Lismore and Ballina Shire Council mayors.
- SCRAP Together pop-up events, workshops, talks and demonstrations as well as media and social media packages have been developed and are being delivered to 30 November 2022.
- Love Food Communities Program reached 50,000 people in the community through TVC, Social Media campaign, workshops and pop up events.
- The team worked with 40 businesses (including 5 manufacturers)
 with 29 undertaking the final survey assessment, and over half
 reporting active changes they made to reduce food waste.
- Love your Lunch Schools Program was designed as part of LFC and the results are promising with an average reduction of 46% in edible food waste from children's lunchboxes (from 8 schools in Term 2 2021, with 1171 students), with one school achieving a 93% reduction.

CASE STUDY: RURAL COMPOST SURVEY PROVIDES INSIGHT

INTO FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT

Across the Northern Rivers, rural residents without access to a kerbside FOGO (Food Organics and Garden Organics) service were invited to complete a survey about home composting. The survey's aim was to provide some insight into how these properties currently manage their food waste, and explore future options for rural communities and households not currently serviced by a kerbside FOGO bin. The results of the survey included:

- A total of 377 responses were received from across the Northern Rivers.
- Most respondents (84%) felt strongly about keeping food out of landfill, and that the
 majority (65%) reported to be managing their food waste through home composting,
 while a further 26% gave food scraps to chickens, and other farm or domestic animals.
- Whilst 31% of respondents would like the option of having a FOGO kerbside bin service made available to them, the majority (45%) did not support an increase in rates to support it and additionally >70% preferred to home compost, rather than have a FOGO kerbside bin service.
- 50% of respondents reported they would not use a kerbside FOGO service even if it was provided to them.

The results of this survey are being used to develop a composting education program for rural householders in 2023.

CIRCULATE NORTHERN RIVERS

PROJECT



OVERVIEW

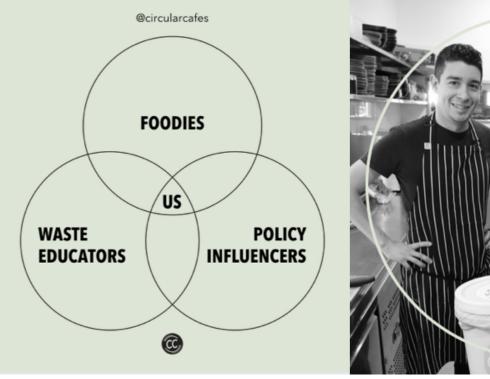
To utilise our unique position, working across the Northern Rivers to drive the Circular Economy, by delivering projects that actively harness existing networks, effective and innovative solutions, to create less wasted resources, and a stronger more resilient Northern Rivers.

The collaboration between North East 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.

Circular Economy initiatives meet the strategic objectives 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

Circular Cafes is an industry based approach to building and supporting the circular economy in the Northern Rivers. Our aim is to work as a powerful collective to significantly influence how business is done in our region. Helping to redefine the current business model, to one that reaps the benefits of a regenerative circular economy. The Circular Cafes project was funded by through the Bintrim program and continues to be available to business. See circularcafes.com.au for more information.

Business Support

- · Additional businesses- assessments, action plans, support.
- Flood Response: business support provided through Southern Cross University Business Hub
- Regular, quality, educational electronic communications to business database (700 contacts)

Presentations

- Waste 2022
- Circular Economy in Local Councils
- 2021 AWRE NSW EPA Circular Economy Panel

Farewell from Kim

It has been a pleasure to deliver the business project on behalf of North East Waste, in what has been a pretty exciting and interesting time in the waste industry. The Circular Economy Leaders Launch and Circular Cafes project were a highlight, and businesses should be very proud of the outcomes achieved through these projects. NE Waste will play a crucial role in our regions future around Circular Economy, and I know they will continue to do good things.

WE WORKED 100 food businesses



CAREN FROM SHINY BREW, HOLDING A REPURPOSED TETRAPAK AS A CUP TRAY WITH HER HUSKEE CUPS.





FACILITATING CONNECTIONS

We also delivered the Circulate 2021 Leaders launch where sixty regional business and local government leaders had the opportunity to get an understanding the Circular Economy and the opportunities for the Northern Rivers. Our speakers we guided to re-imagine business-as-usual, hear best practice examples. Learn how to turn circular economy concepts into

profitable and purposeful opportunities. The objective of the event was to deliver CE education to the regions decision makers and begin to develop a community of ambitious leaders working towards a resilient future for the Northern Rivers.

ILLEGAL DUMPING PROJECT

You can help stop illegal dumping.





OVERVIEW

The regional illegal dumping program continued to develop and deliver education resources and facilitate coordinated networking and knowledge sharing opportunities, to support council's own prevention initiatives.

In 2021-22 Clean up and Prevention (CUP) Rd 7 grant funding, supported the delivery of a region wide program with the objectives of reducing household kerbside and asbestos dumping incidents, establishing baseline data on commercial dumping into public bins and increasing public reporting.

The projects objectives were achieved in part, through the successful implementation of the project activities but were significantly influenced by the prevention initiatives of member councils, particularly Byron and Kyogle, who also completed their own CUP Rd 7 programs in 2021-22.



"To reduce illegal dumping across the North East Waste region and improve our member Council's capacity to prevent illegal dumping behaviour."

KEY OUTCOMES

- 1,603 Illegal dumping incidents were reported across the region – a reduction of 5% from 20-21 (18% reduction over 5 years)
- A sustained regional increase of 17% in public RID online reporting
- 10% of all dumping incidents reportedly cleaned up by perpetrators or landowners - mostly frequently in Byron and Ballina Shires
- 14% reduction in number of reported asbestos dumping incidents and a large estimated reduction in the quantity (tonnes) dumped
- 462 household asbestos test (HAT) kits distributed 154% increase indicating greater awareness and community participation in the safe management of household asbestos
- Expansion of the suite of illegal dumping collateral including radio ads, signage, press ads, social media, Youtube instructional videos for asbestos kits and QR codes

- Targeted communication and media scheduled strategically to support and leverage off other programs and campaigns e.g. Think Twice About Asbestos, Be Asbestos Ready, post flood clean up event
- Redevelopment of the Household Asbestos Scheme webpage resulting in a 3 fold increase in traffic
- Completion of the illegal dumping in public bins audit and report in Ballina Shire
- Audit data indicated 133 (37%) bins contained illegal dumping, which contributed significantly to overfilling and littering and impacted negatively on the surrounding environment and clean up costs
- Better practice guide for preventing dumping into public bins is in development and will be available to all member councils
- Active participation in the LGNSW Asbestos Network
- Presented on disaster response and household asbestos scheme at the annual NSW Asbestos Safety Conference

FOOD DONATION PROJECT





OVERVIEW

Following the successful completion of the 2020-21 Food Donation Education grant funded program, NE Waste continued to work in this space in 2021-22, to maintain the momentum gained particularly in regard to networking and collaboration between food relief agencies.



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 unavoidable surplus food.



"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

- Maintenance of the Food Donation website and food networking contact list of 235+ recipients
- Website downloads Toolkit (149), Food donation agency contact list (450)
- Sourcing and sharing/promotion of regional food donation stories of interest
- Quarterly 'Food for Thought' e-Newsletter distributed high opening rates ~40%
- Regional Community Grant Directory updated to simplify and stream-line searching for funding
- Post floods (Mar 22) available financial assistance and grant information was collated and distributed to assist our network of food relief agencies
- Collaborated with another regional waste group (CRJO) in the development of their food donation toolkit



COMMUNITY RECYCLING **CENTRES PROJECT**





OVERVIEW

2021-22 saw sustained improvements in use of the region's Community Recycling Centre (CRC) and small drop of cabinet (CRS) network. Improved outcomes have been achieved progressively over the 6 years that the 8 CRCs have been in operation but most particularly in the last two years.

The commitment of NE Waste member councils and the ongoing collaboration with other NSW regional waste groups (RWG), have been key factors in the successful development and delivery of progressive NE Waste Education and Communication Plans.

In 2021-22 the significant improvements in target material collection were due, most specifically to:

- targeted education around correct disposal, particularly of handheld batteries and x-rays
- promotion of the regions small drop off network of 30 CRS
- rapid response to unfolding crisis (C-19 lockdown & flood disasters) to successfully communicate with residents on changes to HPW disposal.



"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 small 'Community Recycling Stations', for the recycling or safe disposal of targeted household problem wastes."

KEY OUTCOMES

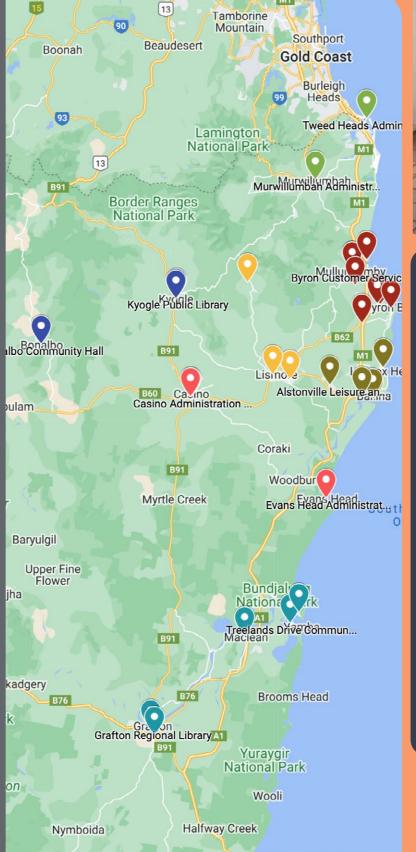


- Regionally, 216 tonnes of household problem waste (HPW) was dropped off for free
- An estimated annual cost saving of \$438,664 to councils and the community
- A sustained increase in the collection of targeted HPW and sustained reduction in bycatch (non targeted household chemical waste)
- Paint continued to be the most common HPW item collected at 128 tonnes (65% of all HPW)
- X-ray collection increased to 2.5 tonnes more than double the previous year following the installation of collection bins at all CRCs
- Resource library continued to be expanded including 3 new info-graphic videos, press ads, social media for CRS and a postcard/fridge magnet
- CRC refresher training arranged for 30+ council staff at 6 CRC locations
- HouseholdchemicalcleanouteventatBallina-wasattendedby60householders,diverted 1047 kgs of chemical waste and was a key opportunity to promote the CRC/CRS network

KEY OUTCOMES CONT..

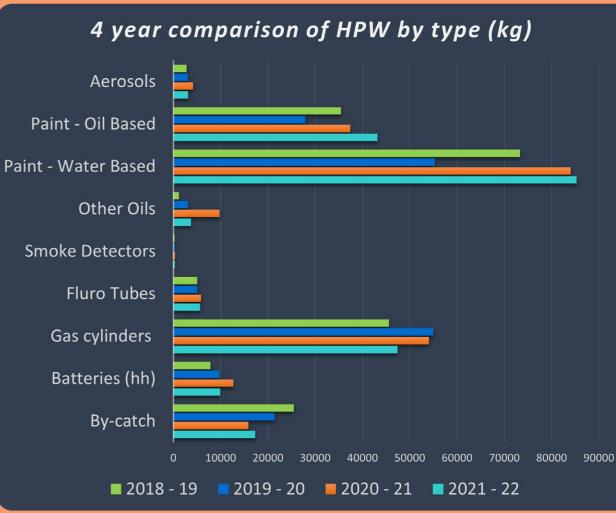
- Comprehensive communication program and media campaign bursts at peak times (amended to support COVID lockdown and post flood clean up) - TV ads (1,536), radio ads (280+), press ads & stories(22), social media posts (44), public engagement events (7)
- An independent survey of 506 regional households was completed and indicated:
 - 89% of respondents were aware of CRC and 57% of CRS (small drop off stations)
 - 80% knew the location of their nearest CRC and 68% of had visited in the previous 12 months
 - Correct disposal rates for HPW: gas bottles 82%, car batteries 725, motor oil 70%, paint 47%, handheld batteries 39%, other oils 35%, smoke detectors 30%, light bulbs 17%

CRS LOCATIONS MAP









HOUSEHOLD ASBESTOS **TESTING PROGRAM**



OVERVIEW

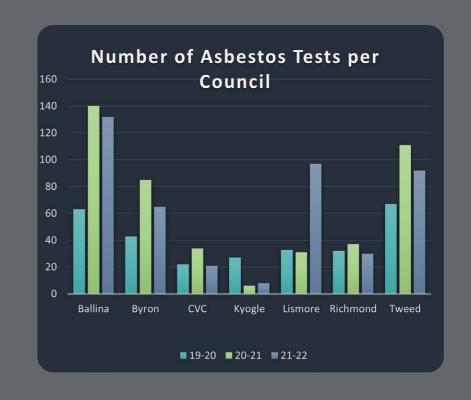
The Home Asbestos Testing Kit program has now been operational for seven years. The program allows homeowners two free of charge tests to identify asbestos in their homes before undertaking renovations. Instructions and PPE are provided to the householders with a satchel to deliver the sample to the 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 2021-22 the program organised 445 tests for seven Northern Rivers Councils.



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

KEY OUTCOMES

There was a substantial increase in the number of tests carried this year in Lismore, potentially as a result of the floods. All other Councils remained consistent, with Ballina residents utilising the program the most.





OVERVIEW

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. 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.







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

This year the regional groups met in November in Tamworth and May in Coffs Harbour as well as online in February and October. The RWG's have been under transitional funding for the past year as we transition to the new Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy (WaSIM) so much of the discussion with the EPA has been around securing ongoing funding under the new model, and this has now eventuated. There were also many conversations around our past reporting regimes and ways for this to be improved, which is ongoing.

Our previous Regional Waste Strategy 2017-21 is now under redevelopment and review in response to WaSIM and is expected to be completed in November 2022.

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 2021- 22 the NEW Training budget was used to allow 3 contractors and 7 Council Staff to attend the Waste 2022 Conference in Coffs harbour. This conference, over 3 days, showcases innovation, learnings and developments in waste management and is a great opportunity to learn and share experiences. Kim Potter from the NEW Business program presented her highly regarded Circular Economy initiatives at the conference.

THE BETTER WASTE RECYCLING FUND



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

In 2021-22 the Better Waste Recycling Fund continued to support the delivery of new and existing programs. The Business Program was further resourced to expand the development of the Circulate Northern Rivers, which fosters circular economy initiatives in the region.

The Household Asbestos Testing Program and the #Recycleright campaign were also continued under this funding.

The Waste Wise Events trial resulted in signage that was collaboratively developed with Councils and audits and surveys were conducted at Markets. This resulted in us going back to the drawing board as patrons reported that signage was still too confusing. Designs were refined and simplified and then made available to councils.

The BWRF ended as a non-contestable fund this year but NEW applied to extend its support of the above programs until funding is exhausted later this year.

BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL



LLOYD ISAACSON

MANAGER RESOURCE RECOVERY @ BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL

INNOVATIONS AND **ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Completed a masterplan for the Ballina waste management facility to plan for future infrastructure requirements and to maximise resource recovery, customer experience and environmental performance for the facility.
- Commenced new 7-10 year kerbside FOGO organics collection contract
- Commenced new 3-5 year FOGO processing contract with SoilCo at their new Stotts Creek facility
- · A comprehensive resource recovery education and communication guide was designed and distributed to over 16,000 Ballina shire properties with a 3 bin service;
- Upgrade of transfer station signage to promote clarity and simplify site for increased resource recovery
- · Let's Get It Sorted (LGIS) kerbside support program targeting all households within a low socio-economic street with known contamination issues. A activities have included a face-toface needs surveys in collaboration with Housing NSW, kerbside bins fixed and bins stickered and resource recovery packs provided (kitchen organics caddies, Recycle Right magnet, compostable liners, education resources);
- LGIS MUDs support program commenced, providing advice, resources, resident letter, caddies, liners, bin bay signage, posters, magnets;
- Wardell area provided with 50 resource recovery packs for flood affected homes;
- 9 schools visited/supported or remotely supported, 3 community events attended, 2 community group presentations;
- Huskeeswap reusable coffee cup program was expanded to include cafes within the Ballina CBD
- Reusable party kits provided for loan by the community across the shire in collaboration with three LGA libraries and a community hub;
- Upgraded bin systems in our 3 LGA libraries with clear signage to promote and allow access to recycling for both staff and visitors.







Reusable party kits

KEY CHALLENGES

- Clean-up and management of waste generated from the March flood events
- Collaborating with the state government to establish, operate and decommission a temporary regional waste transfer station at the Tuckombil quarry in Alstonville to manage over 30,000 tonnes of waste generated from the Feb-Mar flood event.
- Maintaining environmental compliance at the waste management centre and landfill during a period of unprecedented rainfall volumes brought about by an intense la nina weather pattern.
- On-going challenges to effectively resource and deliver an essential waste service in climate of labour shortage

BYRON SHIRE



DANIELLE HANIGAN TEAM LEADER RESOURCE RECOVERY @ BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

INNOVATIONS AND **ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Successful in obtaining \$75,000 NSW EPA On Ground litter prevention grant to implement a small scale local takeaway container reuse system, Bring it Back Bruns in Brunswick Heads
- Successful in obtaining \$50,000 NSW EPA Own It and Act prevention grant to monitor litter entering into our waterways and trial stormwater infrastructure as a prevention mechanism
- Conducted a public place bin audit to determine how public place bins are being used and the contents within the bins.
- Implemented a uniform textile recycling program, Worn Up in 7 local primary schools.
- Completed Illegal dumping prevention project (funded by NSW EPA grant of \$119,000) which achieved the following:
- 23.4% reduction in illegal dumping incidents
- 30% increase in public reports
- 20% of incidents cleaned up by offenders following Council response.
- · Installation of new security system at the resource recovery centre. This system currently monitors all major traffic areas within the facility including a load inspection camera at the weighbridge.
- · Stormwater diversion works completed at mulch pasteurisation area. This will assist with the reduction of stormwater infiltration into existing leachate system.
- BRRC efficiency workshop completed May This has assisted with improving site processes
- The Resource Recovery Team was divided from Open Spaces at BSC in recognition of the growth and importance of Resource Recovery and Circular Economy by Council Executive. The department now has a Manager dedicated to this team as well as a Project Officer to assist with the delivery of Major Projects over the next two years which include upgrade of the leachate management and storage system, capping of the Southern Landfill expansion and implementation of the Stormwater Management Plan
- · Kerbside Collections Contract for waste, recycling and FOGO extended for a 3 year period. This includes processing of FOGO for the first 2 years of the 3 year extension period.







KEY CHALLENGES

The February and March floods in the region have significantly challenged the Resource Recovery Department, with clean up of half of the Shire being led by the Team. As of June 30, requests are still being received from residents for assistance with flood waste as some areas have been inaccessible, or delayed insurance process has meant that they have been unable to clear flood damaged materials until now. The Team has facilitated waste removal from residents cut off by significant landslides via helicopter, dealt with a significant amount of waste within the Byron Resource Recovery Centre transfer Station, taking a normal monthly volume within the first week following the February flood.

CLARENCE VALLEY

COUNCIL



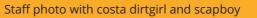
KEN WILSON

WASTE AND SUSTAINABILITY CO-ORDINATOR @ CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL

INNOVATIONS AND **ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 10 year Waste Collection, Recycling and Organics Processing Contracts- This tender was released in late March 2022. The tender assessment process was undertaken (up till 30th June 2022) and the contracts for all three parts were awarded to JR Richards (August 2022) Council Meeting- after this financial year reporting period).
- Tender of new landfill Cell 4C A tender was prepared for the construction of the next landfill cell (Cell 4C - 220,000 m3) at the Grafton Regional landfill. Tenders were assessed and Council awarded the tender to a local construction firm, Valley Earthworks in June 2022. Construction will commence in the 2022/23 financial year with work expected to be completed in early 2023. This cell is expected to last 4-5 years.
- Record amount of FOGO There was a record amount of domestic FOGO processed in 2021/22 with 9700T of FOGO processed through the organics recovery facility (ORF). This was likely due to the extremely wet summer and perfect growing season.
- Rural FOGO Review As part of the preparation for Council's new domestic waste collection contract, Council wrote to all rural residents who have a two (2) bin service (residual/recycling) and asked if they would like a weekly organics service in line with urban residents who receive a three (3) bin service. The letters went to 3,743 rural property owners and there were 1054 responses (28% response rate). Of these responses 91% did not want the organics service and 9% wanted a service. From this result Council did not offer FOGO to rural properties.
- Grafton and Maclean Waste Transfer Station Redevelopment Concept Design Council called for tenders to undertake a concept design for the redevelopment for the Grafton and Maclean Waste Transfer Stations. This was awarded to Talis Consulting and they are expected to finalise these concept designs in late 2022.
- · Council prepared a feasibility study for a mid-scale solar and gas energy generation project at the Grafton Landfill. This project should be able to offset all CVC energy use. The feasibility study will be assessed by Council towards the end of 2022.







Landfill cell 4c due for completion in 2023

KEY CHALLENGES

Major Flood Events February / March 2022 -Flood Waste Cleanup - The flood and storm events in February/ March caused significant damaged to many properties in the Clarence Valley. There was over 1500 tonnes of flood waste collected for disposal at the Grafton landfill. To assist impacted households and businesses Council undertook a kerbside flood waste collection. Residents were also able to take flood and storm damaged waste to the Landfill and other Waste Transfer stations for free disposal. Council assisted other flood affected LGA's to the north by accepting some flood waste at the Grafton Landfill. Council has applied to Public Works to be reimbursed for eligible flood related costs.

KYOGLE COUNCIL



AMANDA CLARK MANAGER DEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY SERVICES @ KYOGLE COUNCIL

INNOVATIONS AND **ACHIEVEMENTS**

In 2021/22 Kyogle Council progressed a number of projects and initiatives to modernise Council's waste management services and provide further opportunities for the community to reduce their environmental impact by recycling more and diverting more waste from landfill.

- In September 2021 the EPA approved use of the new Stage 2 Cell for landfilling waste. The new cell provides necessary capacity to meet community needs for landfilling residual waste in the short-medium term.
- In June 2022, Council unanimously approved a proposal to implement a three-bin kerbside waste collection service consisting of separate bins for general/residual waste, comingled recyclables and food and garden organics (FOGO) to commence in 2023/24. The decision means Council's kerbside waste collection service will be commensurate with the service provided by all other North East Waste Region Councils. It will also ensure that Council meets the State Government's mandate to provide all households and selected businesses (e.g. supermarkets, hospitality businesses and other businesses that generate large amounts of food waste) with a FOGO collection service by 2030.
- Council was successful in securing a \$500,000 grant under the EPA's Organics Infrastructure Fund to assist Council with implementation of the FOGO collection service. The grant will also allow Council to offer rural residents without a kerbside collection service a small portable FOGO bin to enable them to collect FOGO waste for disposal at Council's waste facilities or to compost on their own property.
- In March 2022, Council completed our Illegal Dumping Baseline Data Project, funded by a grant under the EPA's Combatting Illegal Dumping: Clean-up and Prevention Program. The project enabled Council to collect historic dumping data and establish a good understanding of illegal dumping behaviour in the Kyogle LGA. Council prepared a Draft Illegal Dumping and Litter



Community Recycling Centre

Prevention Strategy to help reduce the adverse impacts of illegal dumping and littering. The Draft Strategy outlines several key actions Council will endeavour to implement over the next five years in an effort to address illegal dumping behaviour across the Kyogle LGA.

- Council also purchased 13 new recycling collection bins for the Kyogle Main Street. Once installed, the bins will allow the community to recycle when using public spaces, rather than disposing of recyclable items in general waste bins.
- In May 2022, residents of the Kyogle LGA also reached a significant milestone recycling 7 million containers via our Reverse Vending Machine under the Return and Earn Scheme. The RVM commenced operations at the Kyogle Landfill Facility in November 2020.
- Council, with the assistance of North East Waste, also conducted audits of both our kerbside waste collection bins and public street bins, in an effort to learn more about our community's behaviour. Further audits will also be conducted after the introduction of new waste services and infrastructure to measure the effectiveness of the initiatives in changing behaviour and reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.

LISMORE CITY



KEVIN TRUSTUM

COMMERCIAL SERVICES BUSINESS MANAGER @ LISMORE CITY COUNCIL

INNOVATIONS AND **ACHIEVEMENTS**

In July 2021, a mattress recycling program commenced. With Council receiving on average more than 4000 mattresses annually at the Lismore Recycling and Recovery Centre (LRRC), 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. The cost is \$25 per mattress (any size).

After a 2-year hiatus, Council started selling BIOcycle compost again in September 2021. The compost was produced onsite at Lismore Recycling & Recovery Centre and sold in bulk quantities or for \$14/20L bag. These are the last batches made by Council as this material will be processed off-site from next FY.

In October, Council started operating its new polystyrene processing machine. Council recycles around 30 tonne of polystyrene every year which saves around 550 cubic metres of landfill space. The machine cost \$191,000 and was made possible by the NSW EPA's Better Waste and Recycling Fund.

Council is in the early concept design phase for our new landfill cell. Council has engaged an external consultant to undertake a Landfill Expansion Due Diligence Study including financial modelling and residual waste strategy. This work will be completed in FY22/23.

Over December to February, a 'Lift the Lid' bin inspection program was carried out with NE Waste to provide direct feedback to residents regarding recycling behaviour and compliance in the home. The program had to be put on hold until 2023 due to the floods.

In June 2022, Lismore's Resource Recovery and Residual Waste Strategy 2022-2032 was adopted by Council. This new strategy really focuses on transitioning Lismore to a circular economy over the next 10 years.





Flood waste at Lismore Art Gallery

KEY CHALLENGES

July 2021 – June 2022 was a year of adversity for Lismore City Council and its community.

With COVID restrictions continuing into 2021 and then several lockdowns between August and October, this created significant challenges and delays in operating essential waste services and all waste-related programs & projects.

The declared natural disaster on 28 February 2022 caused the most severe flooding on record for Lismore at 14.4m and significantly affected every aspect of life including services, facilities and business as well as households. This in emergency response and then initial recovery to these events with significant support from NSW Public Works Advisory and the Australian Defence Force. The LRRC continues to be utilised by NSW Public Works Advisory for Queensland following significant damage to our landfill cell.

Resource Recovery Coordinator, Resource Recovery Operations Manager, and Resource Recovery Program Manager roles. Council has filled some key roles with highly skilled and experienced staff and is actively recruiting to fill the remaining vacancies.

Council is currently reviewing and refocusing our core resource recovery operations and education programs following significant challenges in FY21/22. Lismore City Council is also committed to leading the region in the creation of a circular economy in alignment with our Resource Recovery and Residual Waste Strategy 2022-2032.

RICHMOND VALLEY



CARLA DZENDOLET

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

INNOVATIONS AND **ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Council provided continual waste services during and following the floods. Services to the community were maintained while dealing with flood waste.
- · Council facilitated the use of Petersen's Quarry at Coraki as a temporary waste transfer station. This helped manage flood waste from across the northern rivers.
- Solo Resource Recovery and Richmond Waste were awarded a contract for transporting and disposing of Council's bulk residual waste.
- A tender was released for the construction of a new landfill cell at the Nammoona Waste & Resource Recovery Facility. Construction will be completed in 2023.
- Three new trucks joined the collection fleet. The trucks are equipped with GPS technology and software to improve collection routes and monitor contamination.
- A manager was recruited for the Waste & Resource Recovery Team to lead the development of Council's resource recovery initiatives.







Our crew and the new collection trucks

KEY CHALLENGES

- Contamination in kerbside and public place bins is an ongoing issue requiring a dedicated public education campaign.
- The lack of regulation regarding compostable bags and logos creates confusion about which bags are appropriate for kitchen waste. This increases FOGO contamination. alternative products to single use plastics.
- With limited and costly regional FOGO processing facilities available, an options appraisal is underway to determine the best composting route for Council.
- The tight labour market is creating difficulties recruiting experienced and skilled staff.
- The community rebuilding after the floods will see increased volumes of C&D waste over the next 18 months. This will add to the demands on an already strained workforce.

TWEED SHIRE



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

INNOVATIONS AND **ACHIEVEMENTS**

In August we completed the first year of our processing of organics on site in the new processing facility. In the 12-month period we received 16,395 tonnes of household organics with a contamination rate of less than 1%.

The tip shop JUNKtion, was extremely popular taking over 400 customer per week between Wednesday and Saturday. We have included new measures in the new collection contract to ensure that recoverable items in the kerbside bulk waste collection can get a second chance through the tip shop.

The final Cell at the Stotts Creek site will be finished in January 2023 with significant time lost to this year's wet weather, and we have awarded a contract to upgrade the entry to the site including a new weighbridge, site office and roads network.

We also received grant money which allowed us to purchase a new excavator, to install a cardboard compactor and to double the size of the undercover area at the tip shop.

Education projects included:

- Waste Wizard an inquiry based system available to the public on the Council internet which allows residents and customers to search their type of waste and to be able to determine how to manage the material.
- Way to grow compost The provision of bags of compost made from our organics that can be distributed at events to promote the organics collection service and the benefits
- National Recycling Week, Asbestos Awareness and Clean up Australia Day
- · Redesign of the signage and livery on the new collection service vehicles to promote our services, and
- The circular cafes program targeting commercial organics at restaurants and cafes was continued with the service now offered beyond the trial.



KEY CHALLENGES

This year was another year full of challenges with Covid 19 persisting to be part of life in general and the pressure of trying to manage yet another flood of epic proportions. Despite this we continued to provide service and have succeeded in achieving important milestones for both Council and the community. The flood provided us with a unique set of circumstances that impacted every part of the community and our operations and which lead to the generation of over 20,000 tonnes of additional waste including over 2,750 tonnes of asbestos containing material. All of this material was transported to the Stotts Creek landfill with the majority of it then bulk hauled to Queensland.

Tweed put their hand up to help the region with all other waste facilities in the northern rivers being decimated by the floods. Many of those facilities were inundated with infrastructure destroyed and we have been the only site north of Grafton able to accept asbestos. In the period since the flood, we have set up a cell for the asbestos with the approval of the EPA and will continue to operate this until full.

The flood meant the closure of the JUNKtion tip shop for several months as all waste being brought in was potentially contaminated, however we have reopened and our customers in turn flooded back in.

WASTE DISPOSAL AND RESOURCE RECOVERY

Reporting From July 1st 2021 To 30th June 2022

2021-22 has been a challenging year for NE Waste Councils. Effective resource recovery in our region continued to be impacted by the pandemic and this was added to by the February floods. There was an increase in the amount of FOGO in kerbside bin's but recycling and waste remained much the same as the previous year. The increase in residual waste dropped at transfer stations and landfills may have been a result of the floods.

59.4% REGIONAL RECYCLING RATE



NORTHERN RIVERS FLOOD RESPONSE



OVERVIEW

The 2022 February floods left many communities in the Northern Rivers devastated. Lismore suffered such extensive damage that 8 months post the event, many residents are still homeless, businesses still closed and waste facilities remain impacted.

Across the region the dissemination of clear advice on a range of waste issues, including asbestos and hazardous waste disposal, was fragmented. Our own response was ill prepared, and this has led to a commitment to develop a regional disaster management plan as soon as possible.

Notwithstanding, we did what we could under the circumstances and NE Waste coordinators were assisting and engaged with Public Works Advisory, the EPA and Councils throughout the aftermath.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Provide clear communications on where and how to dispose of waste
- Relay Council and EPA/PWA messages though our social media and other channels
- · Collect what data we could on recovery vs disposal tons
- Support evacuation and distribution centres
- Support local businesses through the established hubs
- Communicate experiences conferences and other networking event and seek collaboration on future preparedness for natural disasters

WASTE VOLUMES

- Byron 10,000

- CVC 2,500
- Ballina 5,200
- Richmond 3,022
- Tweed 18,000 and 1,700 asbestos

Carpark (Lismore CBD)

110 FTE staff worked for 45 days to receive approximately 79,127 ton of waste, of which 32,000 ton was disposed of in Queensland

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.

This year was the final year that we were hosted by Clarence Valley and we would like to acknowledge their commitment to the group and amazing support to our operations for the past 5 years. From June 2022 Tweed Shire Council will take on the role of host Council.

Member Councils meet in person at least four times per year. In addition, NE Waste contractors meetings are held on alternative quarters to allow updates to the Coordinator, resource sharing and support across projects. The waste educators also meet with the NEW team on a regular basis to ensure regional and consistent communications reach our community.

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.



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 under the Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy, the Environment Trust and the other initiatives for specific projects.

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 2021-22 they included:

Peter Notley, Nicki Walker, Sascha Piotrkowski, Joanne Hoy, Flavio Stankievich, Danielle Davidson, Sandra Signorini, Jenna Jackson 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	7,448.01	\$	18,926.55
ASBESTOS HOUSEHOLD	\$ 26	5,132.71	\$	34,434.13
BETTER WASTE RECYCLING FUND (BWRF)	\$ 82	2,877.60	\$	59,974.30
BINTRIM	\$ 53	3,310.52	\$	41,729.06
BUSINESS WASTE REDUCTION PROJECT	\$ 65	5,000.00	\$	61,856.57
COMMUNICATION	\$ 38	3,000.00	\$	34,922.41
COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRES (CRC)	\$ 66	5,459.40	\$	61,362.34
CO-ORD AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT	\$ 100),000.00	\$	101,579.64
EDUCATION CO-ORD & MANAGEMENT	\$ 70),000.00	\$	63,774.11
FOOD DONATION	\$ 11	,875.40	\$	12,804.73
HOST COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION	\$ 7	7,000.00	\$	7,000.00
ILLEGAL DUMPING PROJECT	\$ 72	2,329.99	\$	70,647.97
LITTER	\$ 14	1,468.81	\$	5,820.10
LOVE FOOD COMMUNITIES	\$ 115	5,887.43	\$	71,798.84
LOVE FOOD HATE WASTE/SCRAP TOGETHER	\$ 22	2,000.00	\$	21,386.55
RENEW	\$ 10),000.00	\$	8,478.20
RESERVE PROJECTS	\$ 70),000.00	\$	27,016.45
SCRAP TOGETHER	\$ 50),500.00	\$	4,327.72
TRAINING	\$ 7	7,000.00	\$	6,524.54
WASTE EDUCATION	\$ 100),000.00	\$	109,687.31
TOTAL	\$ 1,010),289.87	\$	810,051.51

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



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