



Case Study

Majura Primary School Spring Carnival

Profile

The Majura Primary School Spring Carnival is an annual event and the main fund raising focus for the Majura Primary School (MPS).

The Carnival is attended by over nine hundred patrons and like most fetes it hosts a wide variety of market type stalls from face painting and craft to curries, pancakes, plants, rides and clothes.

The MPS School already has a strong focus on recycling, driven by their development of an on-site vegetable garden, cooking school and thirty chooks in a chook yard. This enables the school to recycle all their organic waste and reuse it to grow vegetables for the kitchen.

The school also regularly collects and composts the organic waste from two cafes across the road at the Watson Shops. Therefore it was natural that the school wanted to extend this ethos to their Spring Carnival and chose to go with a three bin system including Waste to Landfill, Comingled Recycling and Organic Waste.

Venue

Majura is a public primary school situated in the north Canberra suburb of Watson, and is the local school for children from Watson, Downer and Hackett.

Planning

For 3 years the MPS fete had been lucky to have two very efficient volunteer coordinators who made the event extremely professional.

They documented the whole process and providing a detailed 'Stallholder Folder' to each stall, which includes advice and procedures for waste minimisation and recycling on the day.

In 2011 no-one volunteered to coordinate recycling until 2 weeks before the event, leaving little time for planning! By linking up with ACTSmart and borrowing the bin lids and gaining advice on where to take cardboard after the event, we still managed to recycle as much as possible despite little planning time!

Nicola Plunkett-Cole
Carnival Waste Coordinator.

Purchasing

Early on, the Carnival coordinators made the decision to purchase environmentally-friendly food containers including compostable plates/bowls/cups and cutlery. On the one hand this was a great planning decision which minimised the environmental impact of the purchases made for the event. However at the waste end it resulted in more than half the organic waste being made up of compostable containers! That's over five hundred plates, bowls and cups. Even with a garden and composting system as big as Majuras that is a lot of dry matter to compost!

This is one of the classic environmental decisions that we all face when planning for a large event, would it be better to purchase paper based bowls – which can go to recycling or compostable bowls that can be broken down on site. Facing decisions such as this it is great to have access to the advice and resources of the ACTSmart team, and it helped our volunteer coordinators weight up the options.

Nicola Plunkett-Cole
Carnival Waste Coordinator.

On the day

Bins were placed in stations with one recycling, one organics and one general waste.

Messages were placed over the loud speaker encouraging people to recycle at the event.

The recycling coordinator worked to ensure bins were exchanged and didn't over flow on the day.

Signage was given to food vendors to remind patrons that many of the catering utensils could be placed in the recycling bin. Bioware products (made from fibre) were purchased for all plates/bowls/cups and cutlery – these were all composted onsite.

We really valued the advice from ACTSmart, finding out about the 24-hr recycling depot at Mitchell and tips for placement of bins on the day. Also, the clearly labelled bin-lids made a big difference and assisted in diverting a lot more "recourses" away from landfill. People were talking about the bins on the day and afterwards so it got people thinking about their waste and seeing it more as a resource to be re-used.

Nicola Plunket-Cole

Carnival Waste Coordinator.



The Result

The Majura Primary School Spring Carnival produced:

- 3300L of comingled recycling (mainly leftover cardboard boxes)
- 300L of Organics material (mostly food scraps and compostable catering utensils)
- 2470L of Waste to landfill (from the bins, and a trailer of left-overs from the trash n treasure stall)

This means 60% of all waste from the event was recycled. This is a fabulous result and one of the best for any event participating in the 2011 ACTSmart Public Event Recycling Trial.

What would we do differently next time?

The amount of cardboard boxes that went to recycling after the event was huge - next time we hope to:

- reduce the number of boxes onsite
- send boxes home with people when they purchase lots of books/toys/plants etc so it is more likely the box is reused before it is recycled
- Borrow and return large packing boxes from parents to a greater extent than in 2011.

At an early stage in 2012 – we will look more closely at the food containers purchased – ideally they will be both compostable and recyclable.

Further Info

Majura school P&C is happy to share the environmental learning's from this event with other schools and fetes, please contact the School P&C and ask for contact details for recycling coordinator from 2011 Spring Carnival. http://www.majuraps.act.edu.au/contact_us



The ACTSmart *Public Event* team can provide a step-by-step best practice guide to waste management, tailored for your event. For further information, contact ACTSmart *Public Event*:

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