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50% CHALLENGE @2011 Unity FESTIVAL

The UNITY festival 2011 is aiming for a 50% diversion of festival waste from landfill. The festival, now in its third year is being held at the historic Murwillumbah Showground on Saturday 22 October.

As waste wise event, organisers are focused on waste reduction with all market stallholders and food vendors being encouraged to minimise packaging, use refillable containers and to only use products that are biodegradable or recyclable.

This year, UNITY festival organisers are committed to improving on their 2010 waste strategy where 43% of waste was diverted from landfill. Project Manager, Kerry Turner believes a 50% or higher result will be achievable. "Last year was our first attempt at a 4 bin waste strategy. We had recycling educators at each station to assist members of the community to use the right bin for their waste" she said.

Tweed Shire Council and Solo Resource Recovery are providing the bins and will assist with weighing each bin on collection. However, to determine if the 50% challenge is met, the waste wise team need to empty, sort and measure contamination levels. "It is a rather dirty job, but it means we can accurately measure the effectiveness of our waste wise strategy" said Kerry Turner.

Festival organisers are hoping to establish the UNITY festival as a model for other waste wise events in the region. "There are a vast range of products available now for stall holders at events and markets to use, that have less impact on the planet by reducing what ends up in landfill, saving valuable energy and resources and reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions" Ms Turner said.

Unity FESTIVAL celebrates diversity through world music and dance and culturally infused cuisine. Tickets to the event are now on sale at www.unityfesitval.com.au or call (02) 66723063.

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