



## EARTH CARER PROFILE: Di's Story

Edition 4, July 2009

"I first found out about the EC course through my friend Lyndall (the worm lady). She suggested I might find it interesting, and she was right!

I had always thought I was a reasonable, environmentally-considerate recycler but had my eyes opened to the enormity of the recycling and waste issue.

I also learnt it is a challenge to educate the general community. I started off a bit too enthusiastic and learnt that softly and gently was the way to go.

Although the amount of waste (problem) was actually quite scary, the number of people out there that I never knew were "on the job" was heartening.

Where I work we sell ink cartridges and used to throw away customers' used ones - I now collect them and recycle through most post offices or Dick Smith/Tandy's.

I have also re-educated my co-workers not to throw away clip seal coin bags as they can be returned to the bank and used again repeatedly.

When the course ended I wanted to give Peg a mostly recycled gift to thank her for making the course so enjoyable and interesting. I gave her a tray which I have made out of recycled wine corks, which had been cut in half and glued onto the base of a pine tray I purchased cheaply some years before, as it had a crack in it. I covered the corks with a sheet of perspex (the only new item).

**Reduce, Reuse,  
Recycle, and  
Dispose Wisely**



**Welcome to the winter edition of our Earth Carers newsletter. In this edition, we meet Earth Carers Di Ramsay (p.1) and Elaine Lewis (p. 2).**

**Di completed our second EC course and since then has been implementing change at her workplace as well as in her personal life. Elaine has been working on 'wastewise events'. She shares her research with us.**

**Remember when 2 or 3 are gathered together there will be waste'...!!!!**

**If you have any suggestions for future editions, contact Peg Davies (contact details below).**

When we receive our card & wrap order from a company at work they pack their order with discontinued/unsold wrap. *Continued page 3*



**Di working with students at Mt Hawthorn Primary School**

**For further information,  
please contact Peg Davies on  
9306 6303 or 0422 941 492**

## A TASTE OF WASTE: ORGANISING A COMMUNITY EVENT

Earth Carer Elaine is a member of the organising committee for a National Science Week event: *A Taste of Science*; a community fair at the Canning River Eco Education Centre (Kent Street, Cannington) on Sunday, 16 August, 11am – 2pm.

The Fair will showcase the science of native plants, bush food and medicinal plants from both Western and Indigenous perspectives. There will be guest speakers, stalls, plant give-aways and fun activities for all the family. Sounds great? Yes ... but how do you organise such an event in a waste wise manner? ... so that there is only a tiny *taste of waste*!

Elaine completed the first Earth Carers course in May 2008 and since then has been working to apply the ideas she learned. Some of her strategies to minimise waste at the forthcoming *Taste of Science* fair include:



**EC Elaine labelling boxes for feedback forms**

### Before the event

- Create a waste management action plan - set some achievable goals.
- Find out the types of waste expected at your event.
- Decide where you can avoid waste e.g. eliminate unnecessary packaging, ban plastic bags and use catering products that minimise waste.
- Model recycling e.g. involving *Junk Busters* and *Remida*, use recycled materials at art/craft stalls.
- Include a feedback form on the back of the event program so that the paper is used again and doesn't become rubbish.
- Include Waste Wise goals in event marketing e.g. a message on website and event program, ask patrons bring their own mugs for free tastes of kangaroo tail soup.

### During the event

- Set up effective bin systems e.g. adequate provision of bins, provide extra bins near catering stalls, bins for different types of rubbish clearly marked.
- Provide free reuseable fabric bags for fair goodies.
- Engage patrons e.g. promote your waste system through regular announcements and posters.
- Appoint volunteers to monitor the waste management at key times during the event.
- Provide clearly labelled boxes for completed feedback forms and prizes as an incentive for correct placement of forms.

### After the event

- Finalise the clean up e.g. take bins inside after the event, make sure you leave the site in the same (or better) condition.
- Record information on waste outcomes e.g. how much waste did the event generate? How much was recycled? What worked well? What didn't?
- Tell others how you went e.g. create a short Waste Wise report, use the report to seek sponsorship/funding and for making improvements at the next event.

You can find out more ways to reduce waste at the following websites:

[http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for\\_educators/waste\\_and\\_recycling\\_2016.html](http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for_educators/waste_and_recycling_2016.html)

<http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/About.mvc/PublicPlaceRecycling>

Careful waste planning for the *Taste of Science* fair will mean that participants will only have a *taste of waste* ... not a mountain of waste!

## The 'Landfill Levy': What is it?

The WA Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) collects an amount (levy) for every tonne of waste going to landfill.

This money is used to fund research and projects around waste (the MRC's first Earth Carers course was funded from the landfill levy).

This levy has been quite low at \$7 per tonne. Other states, such as NSW (\$57), are much higher.

In the 2009 State Budget, the Government announced a 300% increase in the levy to \$28/tonne. While this is still comparatively low, the proposal caused huge concern for the following reasons:

1. The increase would have come into effect on 1st July 2009, giving councils no chance to revise budgets to accommodate the dramatic increase in tipping fees.
2. No time to allow other businesses to arrange alternatives to landfill.
3. Increased risk of 'illegal dumping' on public open space, bush sites and vacant blocks. The cost of clean up often then comes back to local councils and the State.
4. Announcement that the revenue would be for general use in DEC rather than 'waste specific' projects making the levy just another tax. Concern that waste issues will not be prioritised in this process.

**The current status is that the introduction of the levy has been deferred until January 2010, when the new Waste Avoidance and Recovery Act is finalised. We will keep you posted.**

## Di's Story *Continued from page 1*

I collect, fold and iron it and reuse it. Also, when we return our unsold newspapers at the end of every week, we use nylon twine. The offcuts used to go in the bin but I now collect them for veggie ties in my garden. These are the wrap and ribbon I used for Peg's gift!

I continue, as most of you who have done the courses do, to try and contribute in a small way by volunteering when I can and I do it because it gives 'ME' a sense of fulfilment. and hope for the future to do so.



**Peg's gift!**

## E-Waste Collection 6-7 June

During the weekend 6-7 June, 205 tonnes of computer and electrical goods were collected throughout Perth in a special effort to recycle electronic waste.

The event was sponsored by Apple Pty Ltd, with the material to be recycled by Sim E-Waste in the Eastern States.

If you missed this collection there are permanent facilities available at Recycling Centre Balcatta and Tamala Park to take e-waste free of charge.

Please remember if you place this waste in a skip, household or recycle bin it will go to landfill.

Very few councils collect this waste for recycling in the verge pick-ups. City of Stirling is currently trialling a separate e-waste pick up during verge collections (also plastics and metals) and City of Joondalup is investigating the viability of such a collection.

## NEXT EARTH CARERS COURSE

**The next Earth Carers course will begin on Wed, 26 August with subsequent sessions held on 29 August and 2, 5 and 9 September.**

**Contact Peg to register your interest on 9306 6303 or 0422 941 492. If any of your friends would be interested, let them know about the next course too!**

## **YEW LI'S SWAP PARTY EXPERIENCE**

*Swap Parties are becoming a popular way of 'reusing' items between friends and work mates and/or raising money for a cause. Fleur (EC group 2) had a fundraiser earlier this year where people could swap clothes and Yew Li (EC group 3) had an auction in her work place. She describes the process below:*

### **"Trash to Treasure" Auction**

#### **Objectives are:**

- 1) Raise funds for a charity of choice - good for society.
- 2) Reuse household stuff instead of throwing away - good for the environment.
- 3) Improve communication across departments in the office - good for the company.
- 4) Fun in the office - good for office morale.

#### **How it works:**

- 1) Auction date and time are set and communicated to all staff. This is usually at lunch-time and the company puts on a light bite-to-eat.
- 2) A day or two before auction, staff bring in their stuff which they are planning to throw away. It must be in working order and if it is not, this must be declared upfront so that the person who bids for it is prepared to repair it.

Examples of items in auctions that I have organised include coffee bean grinder, rice cooker, slow cooker, photo frames, perfume, books, whisky, electric guitar, camera, weighing machine, lego, leather jacket, a 14 inch TV and a pram.

3) All items are numbered and a "sale list" is produced. This is handed out at the auction. People who have contributed items can donate 100% of the bid to charity, or keep 50% with the remainder going to charity. Most elect for profits to go to charity (because they are selling stuff that they are planning to throw away anyway).

4) Pick a fun auctioneer and you're on your way to achieving the objectives above and everyone should come out happy, including the boss!

Other points to note:

- Clothes and shoes are usually hard to auction as they are size specific.
- If you have too many items for a lunchtime slot, consider bundling them together so they can get sold faster. For example, we put children's books with a pram, and we bundled up five books to be sold in one bid.
- Encourage electronic goods as these are cumbersome to recycle for councils. Old computer screens, TVs and mobiles are good for kids or as spares.

### **Also watch out for events in Recycling Week 9-13 November 2009**

#### **EVENTS COMING UP that you might like to get involved in:**

- **Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Day in City Beach, Town of Cambridge 9am-1pm on Saturday, 15 August.**
- **Earth Carers Training Course, Wed, 26 August for 5 sessions over 3 weeks. Feel free to attend if you missed out on any sessions.**
- **Conscious Living Expo on 3-6 September from 10am to 7pm.**
- **Smoke Free Perth Royal Show 2009 on 26 September to 3 October.**
- **During October, Earth Carers is planning several sessions with Greg Miller on woodworking with old and discarded wood. Participants will create some beautiful objects from waste materials. Dates and venues to be advised. Let Peg know if you are interested.**

***\*For these events we will supply passes and ask if you can staff the display for some time during 3 days during the day.***