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MEDIA RELEASE

Recycling efforts at Wadeye storm past 1,000,000 milestone

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The people of Wadeye recently stormed past 1,000,000 beverage containers being recycled through the local collection point, removing a significant volume of rubbish from the town and surrounding country. In addition, over 1,000 old car batteries have been recycled, equivalent to 10,000 kg of lead and acid removed from country.

The recycling program at Wadeye was established by the Thamarrurr Rangers in 2016, following years of collecting marine debris from the vast 250 km coastline of the Thamarrurr Region. The Rangers looked at ways of reducing the source of this rubbish, and found that ~70% consisted of plastic bottles, cans and other beverage containers. This led to the decision to start a Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) collection point in the community.

The Wadeye Community has been highly receptive to the recycling program, and have earned over \$100,000 in refunds from beverage containers, and over \$4,000 from old car batteries. In addition, Rangers have worked on increasing community awareness about the harmful impacts of rubbish on the land, sea and wildlife, and promoted opportunities for re-use and recycling.

"The most important thing about recycling the bottles and cans is that it helps keep the country and community clean", Senior Ranger Maureen Girindilil Simon said. Ranger Manager Peter Sheldon said that, "the container deposit scheme has become embedded in the Wadeye community as an important part of the solution to the rubbish problem. Its value has also reached beyond Wadeye, with Rangers regularly receiving calls from people wanting to bring in their bottles, etc from Palumpa, Peppimenarti and outstations in the Region. Remote communities are responsive to finding solutions to the problems of rubbish that affect them. Innovation is required to overcome the challenges of distance, but I believe there is enthusiasm from our end."

The local recycling program has been supported by Thamarrurr Development Corporation (TDC), Murin Association Incorporated and Bevcon Recycling, to maintain the collection point, transport recyclable materials from Wadeye to Darwin, and establish a system for refunds. Northern Territory Government has also supported the initiative through funding for basic infrastructure at the CDS collection point, and recently to undertake an environmental audit of the organisation.

The future for recycling and environmental sustainability is exciting at Wadeye. TDC has recently completed an environmental audit of its operations, looking at waste management and recycling opportunities more broadly across the organisation and community, as well as energy efficiency. This work has identified opportunities for reduction of waste and energy use, and innovative ideas for small business creation are being explored as a result of the focus on improving habits and practices.

For queries or further information please contact the TDC Office on 08 89781305.