

## Clean Up Australia Day in Noosa 2023 – Wrap up

Although only 225 volunteers signed up across the Noosa region, a notable drop post Covid, we still managed to Clean Up around 4 tonnes of other people's rubbish as part of Clean Up Australia Day on Sunday March 5th, organised once again by the Noosa Integrated Catchment Association (NICA). There were 21 sites where community groups and volunteers searched the lengths and breadths of Noosa's bushland, parklands, roadsides, beaches, creeks and rivers to Clean Up their patch of Noosa.

The general feeling was that there was less rubbish than in previous years at some locations, but the overall volume and weight collected remained fairly consistent with previous years. Plastic and cardboard food packaging was again prolific in the rubbish collected, cigarette butts, other hard plastic items and numerous other household items continue to be discarded rather than binned. Glass and plastic bottles were a notable reduction most likely due to the introduction of the container deposit scheme in Qld.

NICA volunteer Peter Hunnam, as part of a project on Noosa Wetlands, was joined by 84 volunteers at the 8 sites on the Noosa River, in boats on the river or on foot along the banks. Around 25 sacks with an estimated 3500 pieces of litter plus a number of bulky items were collected from sections of the river, riverfront and islands. Of these, a dedicated team of volunteers audited 18 sacks containing 2716 items with well over half the items collected being soft or hard plastic.

Peter highlighted the following Lessons that can be drawn from the River component of CUAD in 2023. *'Noosa Estuary is a ready sink for large amounts and diverse types of rubbish materials. Most is blown, washed or thrown in from the surrounding urban areas, via hard urban surfaces of riverside roads, parks and drains which have degraded the natural filtering function of the estuary foreshore. Significant amounts of rubbish also get into the river directly from people in boats, on the water or at boat ramps and jetties.'*

*"Clean Up activities by volunteers, combing sections of the shore and shallows on foot, small boats or kayaks, is the most effective and efficient method, removing a significant proportion of solid waste items from the margins of the Estuary. Clean Ups need to be continued on a regular basis. An important motivation for public participation is knowing that their efforts are worthwhile in improving the estuary's amenity and ecological values."*

*"To complement Clean Ups, stronger actions are needed, especially by local businesses and local government, to significantly reduce would-be rubbish materials from arriving, being used and being disposed of in Noosa. Greater recognition is also needed of the equally serious problems of micro particles and dissolved waste materials and pollutants including fuels and oils being deliberately washed into the Estuary in urban run-off or directly from boats."*

The entire Noosa community was once again engaged in Clean Up Australia Day with clean ups taking place at Kin Kin, Cooroy, Cooran, Federal, Pomona, Tinbeerwah, Boreen Point, in the hinterland along with sites at Noosa North Shore, Peregian, Sunrise, and Sunshine Beaches, Tewantin, and Gympie Tce well supported by volunteers keen to keep their towns and surrounds clean.

Volunteers were ably supported by as always by Noosa Council, as well as local businesses Cleanaway and Allcott Hire to help dispose of the all the rubbish collected. Peppers Noosa Resort and The Sofitel resorts once again generously donated vouchers for a prize draw for volunteers taking part.

Some of the bulkier items collected included white goods and metal items that are free to dispose of, around 20 tyres, car parts, and plastic chairs all of which have no place being dumped in our environment.

Thank you to everyone that took part and supported our community in Cleaning Up Noosa.

Regards

Joe Jurisevic

NICA volunteer co-ordinator

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