

Noosa River Estuary Rubbish Audit 2025 Results

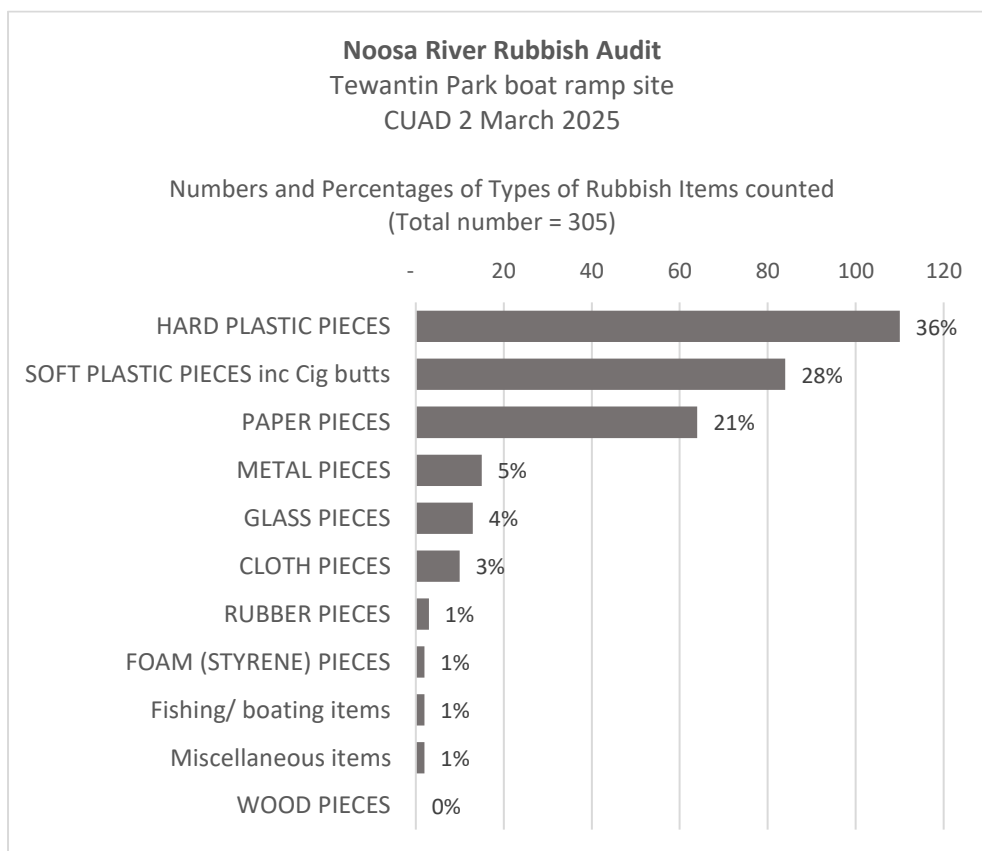
As part of the 2025 CleanUp Australia Day in Noosa on Sunday 2 March 2025, an audit was made of the litter and rubbish items collected along the Noosa River foreshore at Tewantin.

As in previous years, all items of rubbish seen along the foreshore at Tewantin Park and RSL Memorial Park in the centre of Tewantin township were picked up by volunteers searching on foot and brought to the sorting area.

Total collecting effort in 2025 was approximately 4 person hours, and a total of 3 sackfuls of rubbish items were collected and subsequently sorted and counted.

Numbers of volunteers-collectors were lower generally across Noosa compared to previous years, due probably to a reduced level of promotion of CUAD generally this year and particularly of the rubbish collection and audit focused on Noosa River and foreshore; and to the weather conditions (gusty wind and clouds in advance of possible Cyclone Alfred reaching the region). The coincidence of foreshore rubbish collecting with heightened High Tide levels in Noosa Estuary also deterred and hindered collection.

The results are shown in the following Chart and attached Table, and discussed below.



Summary Results

- 1. Collection and Analysis:** The collectors walked slowly across the foreshore site and picked up all visible and readily carried items of litter and man-made rubbish. Types of rubbish not collected included very small fragments and large or part-buried items such as building rubble. All the collected rubbish items were sorted into their main types of material – Plastics, Rubber, Foam, Paper and card, Metal, Wood, Glass; and counts made of the numbers of identifiable items and the number of unidentifiable fragments. Other mixed material items were recorded separately, including Fishing & boating items and Miscellaneous. A total of nearly 30 different types of identifiable items were recorded – refer to Table. The weights and volumes of rubbish collected were not measured.
- 2. Total Amount of Foreshore Rubbish:** A total of 305 pieces of rubbish were collected from the relatively small length of shoreline (450m) and area of foreshore land at Tewantin Park and RSL Memorial Park.
This is roughly 1% of the estimated 38 kilometres¹ of tidal foreshore land, along just the southern shore of Noosa Estuary (i.e. downstream and excluding the shorelines of both Lake Cooriobah and Lake Weyba as well as Noosa North Shore).
- 3. Types of Material:** 64% of all items and fragments were made of a great diversity of **Plastics**: identified roughly as 36% Hard Plastics; 28% Soft Plastics. **Paper & Card** pieces were the next most common (21%).
The other main types of material were much less common: **Metal** (5%); **Glass** (4%); **Cloth** (3%); **Rubber** (1%) and **Foam** items and fragments (1%). Fishing & boating items were 1%; and Miscellaneous 1%.
- 4. Rubbish-Litter Sources and Fates:** It is apparent that litter or rubbish items arrive at the foreshore audit site by being dropped directly or left there by a person – on foot, boat landing, bike or car – or by being washed or blown to the site from the adjacent water or land.
Large numbers of people visit or pass by the site and some leave litter, accidentally, carelessly or deliberately. The main Tewantin boat ramp and its carpark are on the south side, and the site is bordered on the landward side by roadways, pathways and buildings, all of which drain surface water, carrying litter and other contaminants, onto the site or via stormwater gutters and drains directly onto the Estuary shore from where it can wash or blow back onto the foreshore.
The site attracts or traps and concentrates different types of litter, which vary widely in their mobility, durability and fate, especially in the dynamic foreshore-riparian environment.
Some items are clearly fresh, recent arrivals at the site while others are weathered or waterlogged and broken into smaller fragments.
Rubbish items carried in the river by tidal currents and wind can wash or blow onto and across the shore, becoming buried over time or being carried elsewhere.
Denser vegetation along the narrow shoreline and around the parkland and pathways trap items of rubbish dropped, blown or washed onto or into the adjacent land and waterway.
The main maintenance activity of mowing the large areas of grass across the site (parkland and ‘nature strips’) fragments and spreads out any litter (and weed plants) that lie among the grass.

¹ Reference from 2022 Survey of Pressures on Noosa Estuary for NICA.

CUAD 2 March 2025		
Noosa Estuary Rubbish Audit (Tewantin Foreshore)		
	No. sackfuls counted = 3	
	% of total	No. items
TOTAL No. RUBBISH ITEMS	100	305
HARD PLASTIC PIECES	36	110
SOFT PLASTIC PIECES inc Cig butts	28	84
FOAM (STYRENE) PIECES	1	2
RUBBER PIECES	1	3
FISHING/ BOATING ITEMS	1	2
GLASS PIECES	4	13
CLOTH PIECES	3	10
METAL PIECES	5	15
PAPER PIECES	21	64
WOOD PIECES	-	-
MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS	1	2
No. RUBBISH ITEMS COUNTED/ SITE		
HARD PLASTIC ITEMS + REMNANTS		110
Hard plastic fragments		38
Cigarette lighters		0
Cigarette packets		2
Pens, markers & other plastic stationary		0
Straws (plastic) + lolly sticks		11
Unknown plastic straws + powder		20
Cups		0
Plates, cutlery, etc		0
Plastic bottles		3
Large plastic bottles, drums, jerrycans & buckets >4l		1
Lids & tops		9
Fibreglass fragments		0
Plastic containers non-food		0
Plastic packaging food		13
Plastic straps, cable ties, bands, tape		5
Plastic mesh bags, fencing, shade cloth bits		1
Plastic sheeting, tarps		1
Plastic PVC, tubes, hose, pipe		0
Carpet, lino, material		0
Personal care, pharmacy (inc tampons)		6
Recreation, outdoor equipment		0
Plastic furniture		0
SOFT PLASTIC ITEMS + REMNANTS		84
Soft plastic fragments		63
Cigarette butts & filters		21
Plastic bags		0
Plastic first aid material bits		0
FOAM PLASTIC (POLYSTYRENE)		2
Foam buoys		1
Foam cups, food trays		0
Foam insulation & packaging		1
RUBBER ITEMS		3
thongs, shoes		3
tyres		0
rubber bits, remnants		0
FISHING & BOATING ITEMS		2
ropes, short pieces		1
fishing floats		1
fishing lines lengths		0
fishing weights		0
crab pots and ropes		0
fishing net, pieces		0
lures, hooks		0
GLASS ITEMS		13
drink bottles, jars		3
glass, ceramic, pottery pieces		10
CLOTH, CLOTHING ITEMS		10
pieces of cloth, clothing (inc face masks)		10
METAL ITEMS		15
drink cans (aluminium)		8
metal bottle tops, pulls		5
Wire, stakes, pipes		0
al foil, bladders, packets, wrappers, bits		0
metal tins, small		2
aerosol cans		0
drums, cans, buckets		0
metal remnants, steel		0
PAPER ITEMS		64
paper, card items, pieces		56
coffee/ drink cups		8
Papers, magazines		0
Straws paper		1
WOOD ITEMS		0
bits of timber		0
Lolly sticks, pencils, wood/ bamboo cutlery		0
MISCELLANEOUS		2
balls, tennis, beach, golf		1
Paddle board		1