



**PLASTIC FREE**  
NOOSA



**Annual Highlights 2023-2024**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Plastic Free Noosa acknowledges the ongoing connection to country of the traditional custodians of this beautiful region, the Kabi Kabi people.

# 1.0 Executive summary

As we reflect on another transformative year at Plastic Free Noosa (PFN), we'd like to express our appreciation to all the individuals and businesses who have been instrumental in this inspiring journey. It is truly gratifying to see how many people in our community are not only open to collaboration but are also taking significant steps toward a more regenerative and single-use plastic-free future.

▮▮ This journey is ongoing, and your dedication and commitment are paving the way for positive change.

Our Annual Report allows us to reflect and celebrate some of the incredible achievements the community has achieved together, with highlights enclosed and a summary outlined below.

**Media Content and Reach:** Plastic Free Noosa (PFN) has successfully amplified its messaging and programming through diverse media channels including print, online, and social media. Total media value is estimated at \$220,136, with over 38,000 website views and a social media reach exceeding 13,000. Key topics included "Changing Habits," recycling, and local business spotlights, alongside the appointment of Ashley Sinclair as the Youth Ambassador, who contributed significantly to PFN's blog and media coverage.

**Clean-up Initiatives:** PFN organised nine community clean-ups, engaging 142 volunteers and removing 187kg of waste from local areas. These efforts underscore the community's growing commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility.

**Sustainable Events program:** PFN collaborated with event organisers to promote sustainability, including eliminating single-use plastics and achieving zero-waste goals. PFN's Waste Warriors supported waste diversion at events, and the organisation contributed to Tourism Noosa's '50 Shades of Green' guide.

**Member Engagement:** New members were welcomed, and after a database clean-up, membership remained steady at 188, including 68 champions. A review of membership processes was completed, and new audit templates were introduced to assist businesses in their sustainability efforts.

**Community Engagement:** PFN enhanced environmental consciousness through various touch-points, including pop-up stalls at major events and youth engagement initiatives. Ashley Sinclair's role as Youth Ambassador and her contributions to the blog exemplify PFN's commitment to inspiring future environmental leaders.

**Water Strategy:** PFN focused on reducing single-use plastic bottles by promoting aluminium alternatives and collaborating with local suppliers. The successful launch of the video "The Lifecycle of a Can" highlighted the benefits of aluminium recycling.

**Future Plans:** PFN plans to enhance member engagement with an updated website and new membership criteria. Upcoming projects include a "Precious Plastic" pilot program in partnership with Noosa Council, aimed at integrating circular economy principles into local schools and community practices.

Overall, PFN remains dedicated to driving sustainability, fostering community involvement and promoting environmental responsibility through innovative programs and strategic partnerships. I would particularly like to thank the Noosa Council for their commitment to the program and their ongoing support.

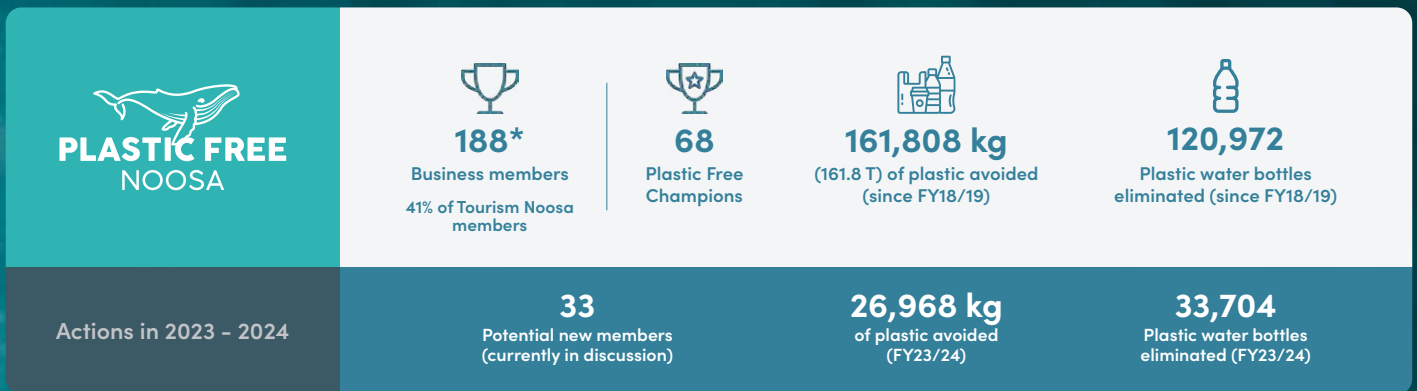
Here's to another year of progress and positive change with Plastic Free Noosa.



JEN SHARPE

PLASTIC FREE NOOSA

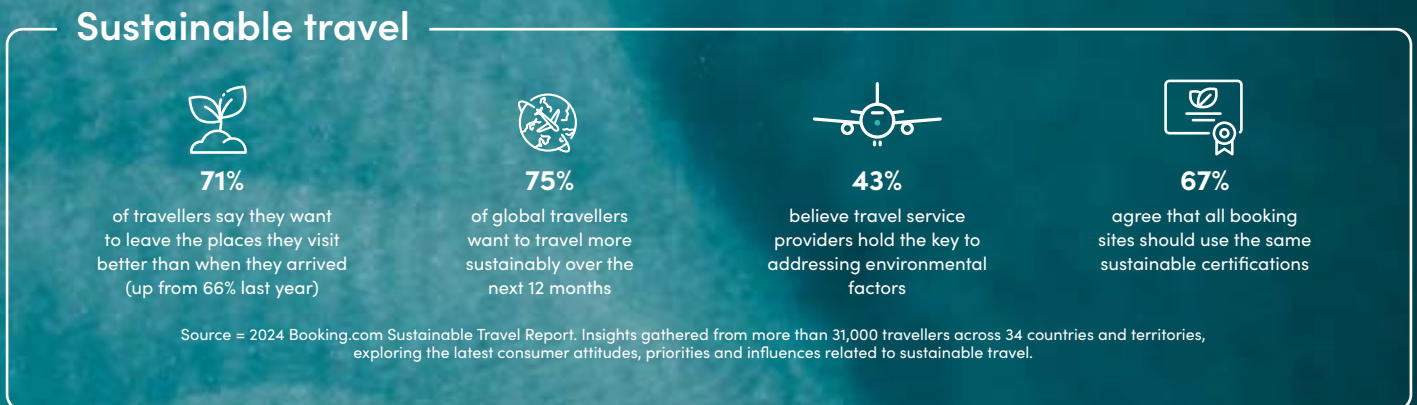
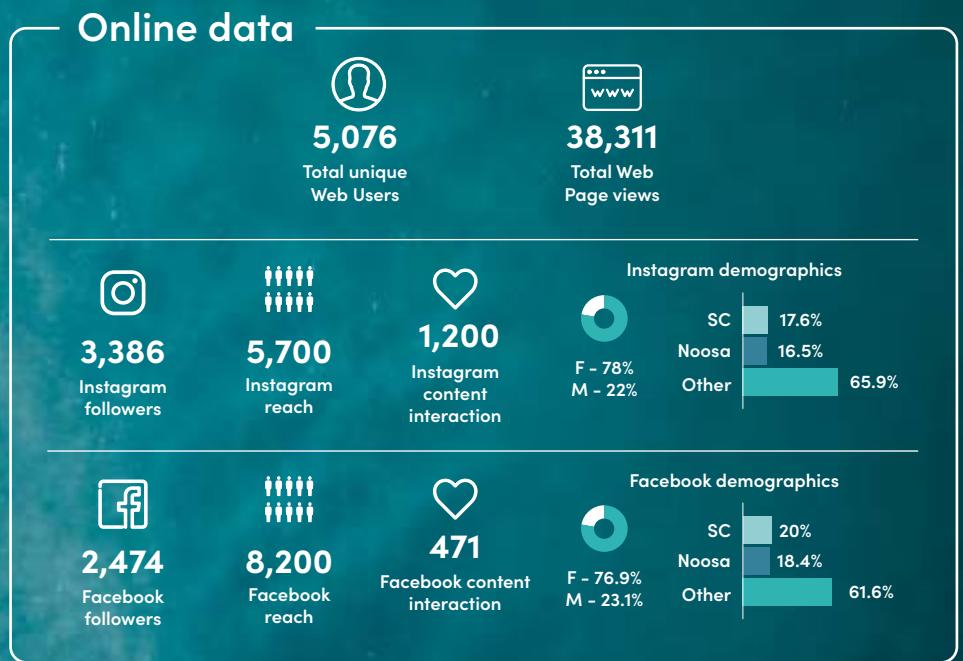
# 2.0 Plastic Free Noosa key stats snapshot



\* Major database clean-up done June 2024 removing closed businesses

\*\* Since program inception in 2018. Source = Biopak data for Noosa Shire.

Source = OK Boocha Still Water + Bluesky Beverages data for Noosa Shire.



## Key partnerships

Sustainability initiatives within the tourism industry not only benefit the environment, but also enhance the overall appeal of Noosa as a responsible and conscious travel destination. This holistic approach reflects the understanding that preserving the area's natural beauty is not just the responsibility of the community but also an asset that sustains the local economy.



# 3.0 Media content and highlights

Extended reach of Plastic Free Noosa (PFN) messaging and programming was achieved through print and online media, PFN social media channels, and re-sharing of content across digital platforms.

Isentia media monitoring has valued total PFN mentions at \$220,136, the Plastic Free Noosa website totalled over 38,000 page views, and Instagram + Facebook social media reach was upwards of 13,000.

Key inclusions are highlighted below and included messaging around “Changing Habits”, recycling and containers for change awareness, volunteer call-outs, and spotlights on businesses and events providing real life examples of more sustainable ways of operating to help inspire others.

Fostering young local talent, year 12 Noosa Steiner graduate and author of ‘Earth & Us’ Ashley Sinclair was excited to come on board as this year’s Plastic Free Noosa Youth Ambassador. Part of her role was to write feature articles and content for the Plastic Free Noosa Blog which also extended reach and media coverage through Noosa Today.



# 4.0 Plastic Free Noosa clean-ups

Nine grassroots community clean-ups were held over the last year with **142 volunteers** taking part and **187 kg of rubbish** removed from our beaches, river foreshore and parks.

Community involvement, especially from local groups, clubs, businesses, and corporate organisations, is crucial in driving awareness and action towards a more sustainable and plastic-free future.

Efforts such as these are not only about cleaning up the mess but also about fostering a sense of responsibility and ownership among the community for the environment they live in. The willingness of community members, businesses, and organisations to participate in such initiatives indicates a growing recognition of the need to address plastic pollution.

## Plastic Free July clean-ups

- 8 July 2023 – Peregrine Beach
- 13 July 2023 – Sunshine Beach
- 20 July 2023 – Noosa Main Beach
- 27 July 2023 – Noosa River Foreshore
- 28 July 2023 – Noosa Junction



**103kg**  
Total litter removed



**57**  
Total volunteers



**5**  
Sites

## Clean-up for the turtle hatchlings

3 February 2024

**226.5kg**

Total litter removed

**643**

Total volunteers  
20 at Peregrine

## Clean-up Australia Day

3 March 2024

Thanks to Ben & Jerry's for a huge turn out!

**71.5kg**

Total litter removed

**35**

Total volunteers

## Noosa Festival of Surfing

14 March 2024

**12.5kg**

Total litter removed

**15**

Total volunteers

## World Environment Day

5 June 2024 –  
(Big Scrub Nature Play)

**15** Total volunteers





## 5.0 Sustainable Events program



The chance for early discussions with event organisers to assist with supplier recommendations and waste contractors is crucial in helping Noosa events become more sustainable.

These controlled environments are the perfect place to completely eliminate single-use plastics, and work towards a goal of zero-waste.

Plastic Free Noosa Waste Warriors were on site at Tourism Noosa sponsored events to help divert waste from landfill and educate event-goers on choosing the right bins. Bin covers were used to help people easily identify waste streams and reduce contamination.

Partnership with Tourism Noosa's events team helped Plastic Free Noosa to connect with event organisers to provide one-on-one mentoring to encourage them to become more environmentally sustainable in their practices including monitoring their energy, water and waste as identified in the Sustainable Events Criteria.

Plastic Free Noosa has also been a key consultant and contributor for Tourism Noosa's '50 Shades of Green' – a creative guide for sustainable event management. This project commenced in 2019 and was launched June 13, 2024.





# 6.0 Member engagement

The entire premise of the Plastic Free Noosa program is to work directly with local businesses and community to help eliminate single-use plastic and work towards zero-waste.

Our goal is to engage and educate the community, inspire individuals, and elevate businesses doing good.

After a database clean up, this year we are pleased to have 188 members, and 68 champions with another 33 potential new members having sent enquiries through our web form for follow up, which we have commenced liaising with.

A full review of the 'new member sign up journey' was completed in 2024 to coincide with the release of the updated member and champion criteria. Alongside this, a new audit template was created to run through with each business as part of their free consultation.

Examples of these new key foundational documents for Plastic Free Noosa can be seen below and right;

## Plastic Free Noosa Audit

Criteria	PFN Member Requirements	Site Visit Notes	Action Items, Opportunities & Recommendations	Suppliers / Resource Links
Eliminate single-use plastic bottles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All new deliveries to plastic water bottles</li> <li>• Stock more sustainable alternatives based on minimum conditions on glass</li> <li>• PFN Champions cannot sell plastic water bottles at all times</li> <li>• Best - Reusable bottles accepted only - provide water refill station</li> <li>• Better - Reusable Aluminium Bottles &amp; Reusable Glass bottles</li> <li>• Good - Single Use Aluminium Cans</li> <li>• OK - Water (tap/bottled water)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently trading the PFN Champion (No Sell) and Pump 50/50. A LOT of plastic water bottles still on shelf.</li> <li>• <b>Status - Needs re-evaluation/re-requirements</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our recommendation is to assess to ensure they have bottles on shelf</li> <li>Please look at stocking more sustainable alternatives for the 50/50 bottles to replace the plastic - we will circle back in 3 months to check on this. PFN will help you updated on ALC alternative products as they are released.</li> <li>2. Reusable Water Station on site which is great - consider additional locations of these</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Reusable Bottles (PFN Champion)</b> - Reusable aluminium bottles of water (\$1.50 per unit - cost \$1.20 for 24) <a href="#">Glass - Best - 600ml/750ml of Reusable 750 ml</a> <a href="#">Or email bottles@plasticfree.com.au</a> <a href="#">Or contact@plasticfree.com.au</a></li> <li><b>OK - Single Use Aluminium Cans</b> - <a href="#">Aluminium cans with BODIP are other branding on the can.</a></li> <li><b>Water Refill / Sippy Cup Water</b> - In aluminium can - infinitely recyclable (such bins for unit cost - will be under the \$1.50 but these are not reusable)</li> <li><b>Water Station</b> - <a href="#">E. Sales@plasticfree.com.au</a> <a href="#">M. Sales@plasticfree.com.au</a> <a href="#">E. Sales@plasticfree.com.au</a> <a href="#">M. Sales@plasticfree.com.au</a></li> <li><b>Water Bin</b> - <a href="#">www.plasticfree.com.au</a></li> </ul>
Eliminate takeaway coffee cups and lids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must accept reusable &amp; encourage not to take lid</li> <li>• If possible, single-use hot/cold coffee from Compostable AS 5810 - 2020 or Compostable AS 5810 - 2021</li> <li>• Compostable / Plug Library</li> <li>• Compostable / Plug Library</li> <li>• Best - Only accept reusable &amp; have a Plug Library</li> <li>• Better - <a href="#">www.plasticfree.com.au</a> / Cafe / Hospitality site</li> <li>• Good - Home Compostable</li> <li>• OK - Compostable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently using Dr Adair's compostable compostable alternative. Accept reusable and on signage or promotion, pushing this. Operating for van based water bottles and coffee cups</li> <li>• <b>Status - Working Towards</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compostable when not managed in up and coming to work in 'Home Compostable' coffee cups as these will be able to take your on-site compost and</li> <li>2. Encourage customer not to take a lid</li> <li>3. Compostable / Plug Library - could have an out of town return bin for people who have gone up the beach.</li> <li>Unfortunately Compostable/Compostable Cups are not eligible to be used as they are not in the Noosa State (this is in planning)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>PFN Recommended Packaging Suppliers</b> <a href="#">www.plasticfree.com.au</a></li> <li>If switching need Home Compostable Certification - AS 5810 - 2020 to be used in your on-site compost.</li> <li><b>Plugging for the Plug Library</b> - See attached \$110 for 20 compostable bottom cups - please call/ask. Contact Bin Labels - <a href="#">www.plasticfree.com.au</a></li> </ul>
Recycle waste and reduce with Containers for Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members to collect &amp; recycle eligible containers for the Containers for Change scheme</li> <li>• Check a scheme number and organise an onsite Containers for Change collection bin or organise own return to depot.</li> <li>• Compostable / Plug Library</li> <li>• Best - Only accept reusable &amp; have a Plug Library</li> <li>• Better - <a href="#">www.plasticfree.com.au</a> / Cafe / Hospitality site</li> <li>• Good - Home Compostable</li> <li>• OK - Compostable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently have containers for change bins throughout the entire grounds (camping and cabins). Moving glass bottles and water has been a great success. A Challenge printing recycling and moving the challenge (current used for cardboard. An on-ongoing recycling and water bin and coffee container for change and the coffee bin. I got to CDEA are available going to landfill.</li> <li>• <b>Status - Needs Requirements</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opportunity for waste stream reducing include the scheme.</li> <li>2. Currently using your own branded Coffee Cups and Drink Bottles performance issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Containers for change Water Guide</b> - good resource detailing what can and can't go in their bin <a href="#">www.plasticfree.com.au</a></li> <li>Anything that can go in CDEA can usually go in the on-ongoing recycling bin.</li> <li><b>Recycle Mail App</b> - useful to use when unsure of what bin to put items in <a href="#">www.plasticfree.com.au</a></li> </ul>
Accept reusable foodware and drinkware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage customer to bring reusable</li> <li>• If it's food or product, provide in reusable containers</li> <li>• For food - If you do need disposable alternatives, consider uncoated paper, bamboo, wood or sugarcane paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All necessities of the cafe not currently providing.</li> <li>• <b>Status - Needs Requirements</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opportunity for waste stream reducing include the scheme.</li> <li>2. Currently using your own branded Coffee Cups and Drink Bottles performance issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Yes! Although PFN's primary products attached to this item.</b></li> </ul>
Source wholesale products to reduce the use of unsustainable packaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review supply chain and where possible source wholesale products to bulk using and get products featuring plastic free, recyclable or reusable packaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing a great job of reusing cardboard into bins collected from CDEA. Consider of supplier packaging and moving an opportunity to work with more sustainable alternatives.</li> <li>• <b>Status - Working Towards</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opportunity for waste stream reducing include the scheme.</li> <li>2. Currently using your own branded Coffee Cups and Drink Bottles performance issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay conscious of supply chain and packaging used</li> </ul>
Compost organic waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small kitchen waste and food scraps from both staff and compost organic to site.</li> <li>• Collaborate with a community organisation or business in need of compost organic for their permaculture garden or farm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a plan in place for their composting (working on site - right down to education with the school camp group and signage were made up. Need assistance setting up and implementing the on-site composting program.</li> <li>• <b>Status - Working Towards</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opportunity for waste stream reducing include the scheme.</li> <li>2. Currently using your own branded Coffee Cups and Drink Bottles performance issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging - PFN to have an access to their back</li> </ul>
Use and promote refillable alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce unnecessary waste created by excessive use of disposable coffee cups</li> <li>• Choose local where possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently have one single use sippy cup with plastic lid and one coffee cup.</li> <li>• <b>Status - Working Towards</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Source Refillable &amp; Plug Libraries - <a href="#">www.plasticfree.com.au</a></li> <li>2. Include a stock in high-end cabins/communities and consider using refillable cups that are not plastic but are stainless steel or glass. Sippy dispensers but could suit high end catering events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Refillable Bottles Suppliers</b> <a href="#">www.plasticfree.com.au</a></li> <li><b>Option/Example of alternatives rack for high end cabins</b> <a href="#">www.plasticfree.com.au</a></li> <li><b>Sippy Sips Care</b> <a href="#">www.sippy.sips.com.au</a></li> </ul>
<b>Additional site visit notes</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site visit</li> <li>• In a plastic bag a huge issue for single use - beachside and across road and along ground up the beach</li> <li>• See Signage - Water stations used for pools &amp; toilets</li> </ul>		

## Membership

188\*  
Business members

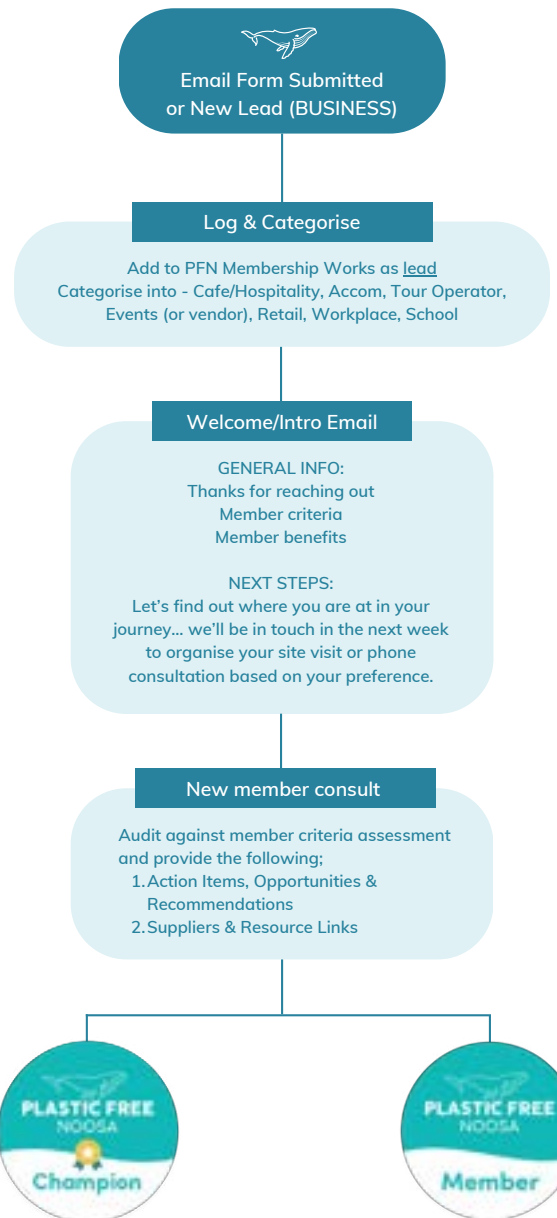


68  
Plastic Free Champions

+33  
Potential new members (currently in discussion)

41%  
are Tourism Noosa Members

## New member sign up journey



Email Form Submitted or New Lead (BUSINESS)

Log & Categorise

Add to PFN Membership Works as Lead  
Categorise into - Cafe/Hospitality, Accom, Tour Operator, Events (or vendor), Retail, Workplace, School

Welcome/Intro Email

GENERAL INFO:  
Thanks for reaching out  
Member criteria  
Member benefits

NEXT STEPS:  
Let's find out where you are in your journey... we'll be in touch in the next week to organise your site visit or phone consultation based on your preference.

New member consult

Audit against member criteria assessment and provide the following:  
1. Action Items, Opportunities & Recommendations  
2. Suppliers & Resource Links



# 7.0 Community engagement

Plastic Free Noosa (PFN) is at the forefront of driving sustainability initiatives within the Noosa community.

This report showcases our engagement with many local community groups and individuals which helps elevate environmental consciousness. Various touchpoints including volunteer opportunities, event activations, social media and educational talks help reach a wider audience to continually promote the message that small changes can have big impact.

Fostering and mentoring future generations has always been a core pillar of Plastic Free Noosa, and this year we were thrilled to bring on board year 12 Noosa Steiner graduate Ashley Sinclair as our Youth Ambassador. Speaking at the 2024 Youth Climate Conference, Ash is a talented writer who produced the book 'Earth & Us', and is also a part of the Noosa Environmental Education Hub's Youth Advocacy Group. Not only one of our key waste warriors, Ash has been brought on to write feature articles for the Plastic Free Noosa Blog and gained extended reach and media coverage through her engaging content pieces.

Key activations throughout the year included pop-up Plastic Free Noosa stalls at the Noosa Enduro, Noosa Festival of Surfing and Noosa Youth Climate Conference.



# 8.0 Plastic Free July

Plastic Free July is our annual showcase for the program and July 2023 saw Plastic Free Noosa execute and deliver on multiple campaigns and community engagement projects.

Engagement with the local business associations saw Plastic Free Noosa touch base in person with approximately 120 businesses across all villages to discuss upcoming campaigns and confirm our commitment to the local community and the environment.

A jam-packed activation schedule included the following;

## 5 x Community Clean-ups

- 57 volunteers attend over 5 events with over 103kgs of rubbish removed from the local environment.
- Locations included Peregian Beach, Sunshine Beach, Noosa Main Beach, Noosa River and Noosa Junction.
- An average of 20.6kgs of rubbish per event and just over 1.8kgs per volunteer.
- Partners included Tourism Noosa and Noosa Council plus Plastic Free Noosa members: Noosa Heads Surf Life Saving Club, Sunshine Beach Surf Life Saving Club, Heads of Noosa Brewery, 4 Pines Noosa, GT's Bar & Restaurant, Noosa Junction Association, Lexis English College and Bounce Noosa Resort.



## We Welcome Reusables Campaign

- 130 x A4 posters were distributed to café and restaurants that sell takeaway coffee and drinks.
- Printed locally by Sunprint on 100% recycled and recyclable paper, with environmentally friendly ink.



## Keep Cup Monday

- Social media focus promoting reusables with 5 x posts throughout the month and running in line with the 'we welcome reusables' campaign.



## Noosa Enduro

- Pop-up stall and brand awareness campaign for Plastic Free Noosa, incorporating waste education and 200 bottles of aluminium bottled NOOSA Water handed out at the event.
- Reach to 1,400+ participants plus family and friends in the finish line precinct.



# 9.0 Water strategy



## Noosa Water Local Event Supply



**200 bottles**  
Regional Architecture  
Conference



**140 bottles**  
Youth Climate  
Conference



**200 bottles**  
Noosa Enduro



The elimination of single-use plastic water bottles is a continued focus for Plastic Free Noosa, and we are pleased to have worked through distribution challenges with Bluesky Beverages to secure a local distribution company for their NOOSA branded aluminium bottles.

Whilst our #1 priority is promoting reusables, we pass on details for aluminium supplier alternatives such as Bluesky Beverages and local Sunny Coast water by Ok Boochoa in an effort to stop more single-use plastics entering the environment. The Unitywater van was out of action for a period of time but was back for the Noosa Eat & Drink Festival where attendees were able to refill their water bottles on site in the festival village.

Aluminium can be recycled infinitely with 70% of aluminium water bottles in Australia recycled (compared to only 21% of plastic bottles). It also uses less energy to chill than both glass and plastic bottles. In conjunction with OK Boochoa and Express Recycling we were proud to launch the short video “The Lifecycle of a Can” which is a great visual representation of the benefits of aluminium over plastic.

# 10.0 Visit Noosa: Travel for Good + Tread Lightly

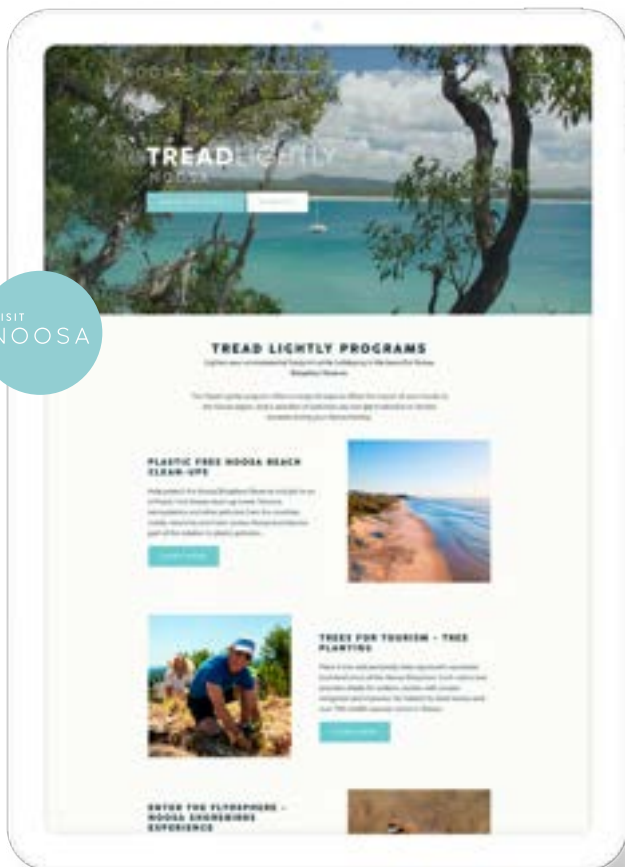
Extended reach of the Plastic Free Noosa program is achieved through Visit Noosa's Travel for Good and Tread Lightly pages of the visitnoosa.com.au website. In addition, the program has regular inclusions in the Tourism Noosa Member emails and social media channels promoting campaigns and activities.

Tourism Noosa (TN) promotes Plastic Free Noosa beach clean-up activities for visitors and locals to participate in. A calendar of up-and-coming activities are visible via the Tread Lightly microsite for direct bookings. TN's International Trade Manager promotes these 'give-back' style activities to travel agents and wholesalers to promote to their clients. 23 x High School students from Shalom College Bundaberg participated in our PFN Beach clean-up for Tread Lightly this year.

## Visitors to visitnoosa.com.au/tread-lightly 2023-24

**594**  
Approximate unique visitors

 **741**  
Total visitors



# 11.0 Coming soon: 2024-25 program focus

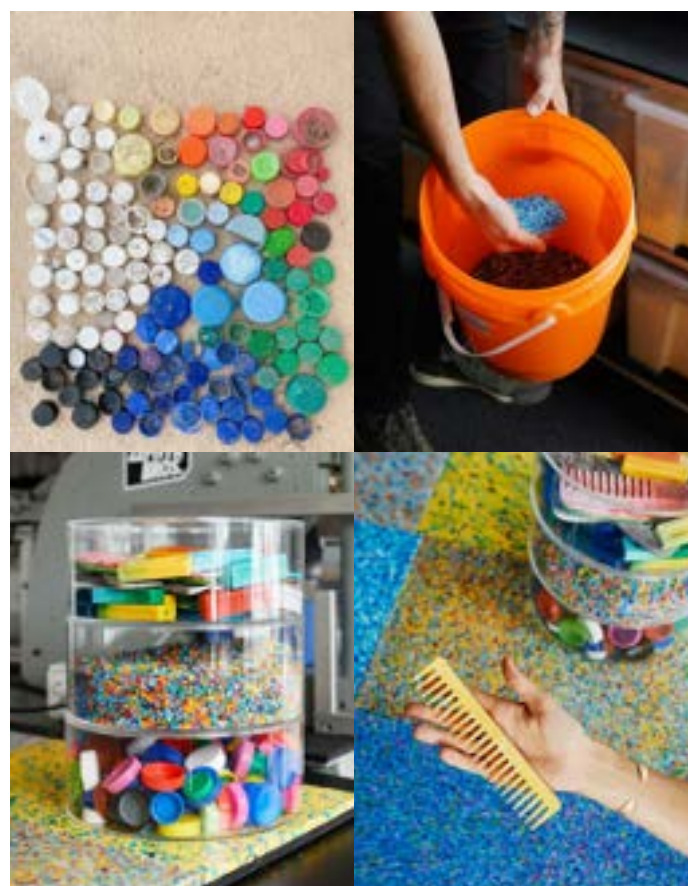
Plastic Free Noosa looks forward to the next 12 months of engaging and educating the community, inspiring individuals, and elevating businesses doing good.

We have some exciting projects in the works, including the official launch of the updated member and champion criteria in July 2024, complemented by a refreshed website with enhanced usability and messaging.

After launching the updated website, our focus turns to consulting new members on the revised criteria, guiding them to make sustainable choices and become proud members and champions of Plastic Free Noosa. We will be launching our “Meet the Champions” series on the blog and updating our member packs and certificates, and look at strategic ways to keep our Plastic Free Noosa members engaged.

We will continue to work with our Tourism Noosa sponsored events to help divert waste from landfill through pre-event consultation and waste contractor recommendations, supporting with Waste Warriors where required.

Discussions have also started with Noosa Council to partner on a “Precious Plastic” pilot program. In collaboration with local schools and Plastic Free Noosa, this initiative integrates circular economy principles into education and community practices. The program aims to transform recycling by empowering communities to repurpose plastic bottle caps, preventing them from ending up in landfills. Through micro-recycling units, it offers a hands-on learning experience for youth in circular economy practices, nurturing a new generation of environmental leaders.







[plasticfreenoosa.org](http://plasticfreenoosa.org)

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