**Plastic Free Events/Markets**

**Template pre-event letter to staff & volunteers**

*Communicating to your staff and volunteers is a priority. They are directly affected and may need some guidance to help them participate. Information should be provided from the start explaining what you're doing, why you're doing it and how they can be involved. Most people are very willing to be involved once they have been included and understand the process.*

*Ensure they understand your waste system and what goes into each bin. You will also want to ensure they know what to do to prepare for the day. For e.g. if you would like them to bring their own water bottles. Use our template letter below to communicate to your staff/volunteers that outlines your practices, how you would like them to be involved and FAQ's- just edit and send.*

*For those staff and volunteers that are directly involved with your waste (e.g waste warriors who will be standing with your bin stations), you will need to ensure they have adequate training.*

**ATTENTION ALL STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**

**[Event Name] has joined Plastic Free Noosa and is a Plastic Free and Zero Waste event.**

Thank you for being a part of our team this year. This letter is to let you know about our new practices and how you can be involved. Staff and volunteers are often the frontline of events and we ask that you help spread the message to the public so they also understand why we are implementing these initiatives.

**Plastic Free/Zero Waste Initiatives.**

This year we have included the following initiatives into our event policy *(you can also include a copy of your event policy if appropriate)*

* Using only reusable or compostable packaging and food-ware
* Banning single-use plastic water bottles from being sold or provided
* Banning plastic carry bags of any kind
* Eliminating soft plastic wrapping where possible
* Banning helium balloons *OR (delete as appropriate)*

Banning balloons (helium and regular)

* Banning plastic-based glitter, glitter paint and confetti
* A composting stream
* A back of-house soft plastic recycling stream
* A collection under the container refund scheme

To assist with a successful event, we will also be providing the following services:

* Reusable food-ware (cups, plates, cutlery) for vendors to use.
* A wash up station which will be staffed by volunteers. They will collect used food-ware, wash, dry and restock vendors.
* A condiments station which will contain sauces, salt, sugar and napkins.
* A reusable cup system which patrons can access through a deposit and refund system.
* A water station and a sale point for reusable water bottles.

**Why are we doing this?**

After understanding the negative impacts that single-use plastics are having on the planet, we are working to minimise our own to make sure that the waste from our event will not sit in landfills for thousands of years, float in our oceans or be eaten by our wildlife. We believe the waste we make should be a resource, not a problem left to others. We want to help educate the people who come to our event to think about their impact and encourage better practices that will last after the event is over. We aim to make an overall positive impact from this event.

**How you can be involved**

We hope that you will be involved to help make this as successful as possible. You do all play a very important role and with you on board we know we can do this! Here is how you can help:

* Let everyone you know about the event and how this year we are going plastic free/zero waste. Ask them if they plan to come, to BYO water bottles and reusable bags.
* Make sure you also remember to BYO your own reusable items.
* Ensure you take opportunities to minimise your waste (e.g. do you really need a straw or a lid on your coffee cup?).
* Ensure you use our bins correctly for your waste. Bin stations will have signage and our ‘Waste warriors’ positioned to chat to people and help them choose the right bin.
* Educate yourself about our initiatives through reading the FAQ’s below so that you are able to answer questions from the public.
* Take the opportunity to chat to people at the event. The more we can talk about this, the better!

Should you require any clarification, please contact [Event Organiser] on [Phone No./ email]

Thank you, and we look forward to having you on board this year. We can make a difference in our local environment by working together!

Thank you

[Name]

[Event Coordinator]

**FAQ’s**

***What is a plastic-free / zero-waste event.***

A plastic-free event is one that eliminates single-use plastic and replaces these items with reusable or compostable items, or eliminates the need for the item in the first place. A zero-waste event is one that takes the plastic-free event further and implements systems that eliminate (or drastically reduces) waste to landfill, instead sending any waste through the recycling or composting streams. We are working with Plastic Free Noosa to help deliver these outcomes.

***What are the advantages to doing this?***

Firstly, we are taking responsibility for our actions and ensuring that our event does not have a negative effect on the environment. We are also providing educational outcomes for our vendors, staff, volunteers, and the public. We are also able to promote the event as being environmentally responsible. Lastly, we can save money from reduced waste costs which can be used to fund our environmental initiatives. Win-win!

***What does all the ‘waste’ go?***

We like to think of ‘waste’ as a resource! Our organics stream (the green bin) will be going to Earthborn, a commercial composting facility in Chevallum on the Sunshine Coast. There it will be turned into a rich organic compost which can then be brought back into the Noosa shire to be used on our green spaces or sold to our farmers to naturally enrich the soil for our crops.

Our recycling (yellow bin) will be taken to the same recycling centre that your kerbside bins are taken and will be recycled into new products. We also have a container collection at this event, all the containers from this will be sent to a refund point and then recycled.

Lastly, anything put in the waste bins (red bin) will be sent to landfill. We have worked hard to ensure there will be very little going there!

***How does the Container Refund Scheme work at this event***

We are collecting empty beverage containers at the event – there are worth 10c each under the container refund scheme and we will be using the funds to help fund our plastic free/zero waste initiatives AND/OR donating it to [insert name of charity].

***Don't they just stockpile recycling and never use it?***

Recyclable materials are a desirable and marketable resource – so as long as the recycle stream is uncontaminated, they are definitely used. For instance, it’s much cheaper for drink companies to recycle plastic for bottles or aluminium for cans than to make them from raw materials.

***How does the reusable cup system work?***

As people come into the event, they are able to ‘purchase’ a reusable cup for a refundable deposit of [insert amount]. They are able to return the cup after the event and claim their deposit back. They will use this cup throughout the event and when not in use it sits in a lanyard around their neck. They can choose to keep the cup as a memento and forfeit their deposit. Vendors are instructed to only provide beverages in one of these cups. The cups can be washed at the event at one of the washing stations or swapped for a new one when ordering a drink. Cups must NOT be placed in the recycling bins. After the event, the cups are taken back and reused at other events.

***How do the mobile washing stations work?***

To help our food vendors use reusable food items such as cutlery and plates, we are providing a mobile washing station. Vendors provide food on the reusable plates and patrons can access the cutlery from the condiments station (which also provides sauce and sugar etc in reusable bottles). The used items can then be left at the tables or taken to the station where our team of volunteers will wash them, dry them and return them to the vendors/condiments station for reuse. Our volunteers are from [Insert name of club e.g. Lions] and will be collecting gold coin donations in exchange for their services.