


ENVIRONMENT

Noosa's oyster reef hopes stack up at local dump




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Noosa landfill workers Matt Curtis and Russell Ping with Craig Bohm of The Nature Conservancy oversee the oyster shell recovery and recycling project.

Noosa's landlocked landfill on Eumundi-Noosa Rd has emerged as an unlikely key link to in an ambitious \$2.4 million river oyster restoration project.

Combined efforts to help increase marine biodiversity in the Noosa River are literally starting to pile up at the tip thanks to the efforts of The Nature Conservancy, Noosa Council and its landfill waste recovery operator Resource Recovery Australia.

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Discarded oyster shells supplied by Mooloolaba River Fisheries recently began arriving to be dried and cured before being mixed with local rock to form the base of natural oyster beds.

"Oysters take a lot of the nutrients out of the water and put it back into the sediment where it belongs, which helps fight algal blooms and stabilise the aquatic ecosystem," The Nature Conservancy project co-ordinator Craig Bohm said.

"The oyster beds provide a diversity of places for animals to aggregate, grow and live, which adds to the complexity of life in the river.

"That complexity adds to the resilience of the river and helps restore important habitats."

Marine ecologist Dr Simon Walker, who oversaw the river's first year-long oyster reef trials, said the natural substrate would help oyster reefs recover.



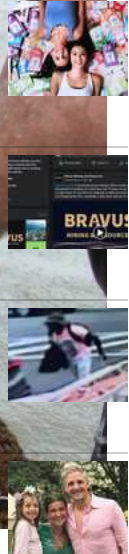
Oyster reefs being prepared for trial on the Noosa River.

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"It is time that we focus attention on supporting the river to ensure it is as healthy as it can be, so it can continue to support Noosa."

The shells were one of many waste materials Resource Recovery Australia's Noosa team was stopping from entering landfill.

"The oyster shell recycling project is a worthy project to be a part of, we are happy to see the Noosa community embrace the project, supporting real change to the local environment," Resource Recovery Australia general manager Matt Curtis said.

Mr Curtis said Noosa waste recovery workers diverted 512 tonnes of waste from landfill for reuse and recycling last financial year.

"It's been a challenging year for Resource Recovery Australia with fires threatening three of our sites, Noosa, Moss Vale and Tuncurry, and COVID-19 shutdowns," Mr Curtis said.

"Our people remained in high spirits under the testing conditions that 2020 has thrown at us.

"Noosa Shire Council supported our team providing additional shifts as weighbridge relief and continuing mattress recycling throughout the COVID closure."

Mr Curtis said the additional work allowed some of his team to maintain a sense of normality in their lives at the height of the pandemic.

"The team looked forward to coming into work," he said.

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