



# ZERO EMISSIONS NOOSA

## Village runs green

Noosa Village shopping centre, in the heart of the Noosaville residential and tourist precinct, is a favourite for locals and went green two years ago by installing a huge 250kW rooftop solar power generation system, the largest in Noosa's coastal region.

The 15 stores now get a significant portion of their electricity needs met from the sun that shines on their roofs. The Awesome Little Fruit Shop, BWS, Gazman, Gusto coffee, J1Sushi, LiveLife Pharmacy, Noosa House of Flowers, Noosa Village Meats, Noosa Village Newsagency, Noosaville Post Office, Ocean Spa Nails, Tobacco Station Group, The Bakehouse, the Reject Shop and anchor Woolworths are all beneficiaries of the system.

We caught up with Waqar Qureshi, who manages the sustainability initiatives for owner Fort Street Real Estate, to see how the benefits are stacking up. Waqar said that each year 336 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> pollution is avoided by not using electricity generated from burning coal.

Savings are in line with expectations, and it's being very well received by the community. The centre provides power to retailers through a single connection to Energex (known as an embedded network) which realises savings in energy costs, meaning tenants don't have to pay a high premium to get clean power. Waqar says 40 percent of the total usage is being supplied by the solar system and he expects payback to be reached in another three years.

"On top of the obvious environmental benefits, the solar system is a big benefit for both ourselves and our tenants at Noosa Village. The clean energy generated onsite is sold on to our tenants in line or below rates from large energy retailers, and substantially below the premium rates that they'd pay for clean energy. It's a win-win-win scenario for our tenants, ourselves, and the environment."

Owners Fort Street Real Estate have recently completed energy efficiency upgrades across all their 13 properties, resulting in more than 200 percent reduction on common area



Noosa Village solar system.

Picture: SUPPLIED

electricity usage across the upgraded assets. Said Waqar: "Fort Street has installed rooftop solar systems at 10 of our 13 assets, totalling 1.81MW. Across the portfolio, we forecast to generate approximately 2.61 gigawatt hours of clean energy per annum, reducing our carbon footprint by approximately 2,135 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year.

"At a local level, we are also integrating our

sustainability initiatives into the individual retail spaces by providing tools to educate and encourage retailers to adopt best practice' as well as negating the use of single use bags by creating a Noosa Village shopping bag designed by one of our young community members. Future plans include creating reusable coffee cups, and we have a water refill station to discourage use of single use plastic bottles."

## Postcode emissions

Zero Emissions Noosa is profiling how different postcode localities are tracking towards the goal of zero community emissions for Noosa by 2026. This week the spotlight is on Noosaville postcode 4566.

Around one in six people in Noosa Shire call postcode 4566 their home. Local resident and Noosa Mayor Clare Stewart praised Noosaville residents for their take-up of rooftop solar.

"My family and I have switched on to the benefits of solar and I'm pleased to see so many of our fellow Noosaville residents have done the same," she said. "By generating your own energy when the sun's up and not drawing it from the power grid, you're not only helping the household budget, but reducing your emissions. That's great news for our environment and it's giving our shared community goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2026 a boost."

Total solar installed is around 11.7MW which, if laid out, would cover 10 soccer fields. 40 percent of residential dwellings have solar, and 15 percent of businesses have made the solar investment. But there's plenty of room for improvement, as only about 9 percent of potential roof space is being used.

Electricity consumption reduced by almost 10 percent over the two years to July 2020, according to Energex data for the large Noosaville Zone Substation, and over a 10 year period, average residential daily usage is down almost a quarter.

Next time we'll look at postcode 4567 which takes in Noosa Heads and Sunshine, Sunrise and Castaways Beach.