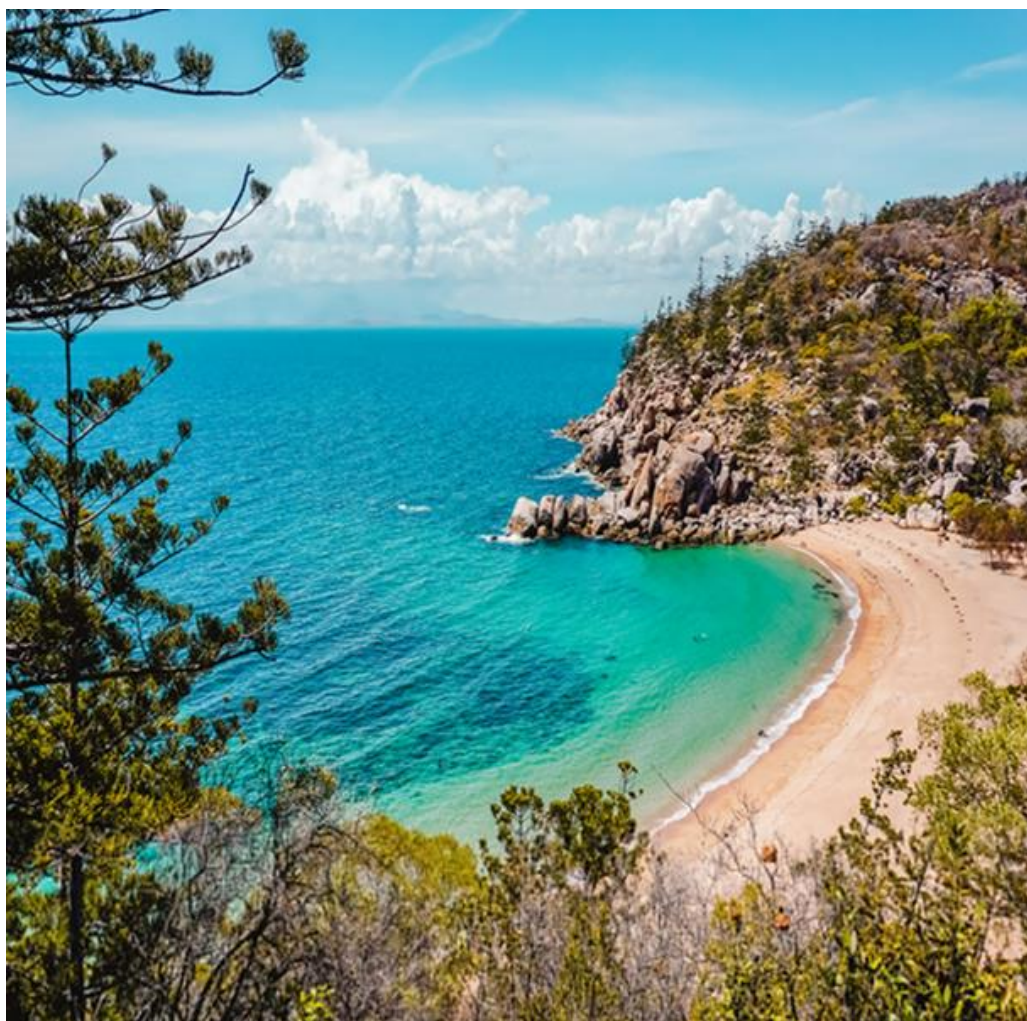


# Towards Zero Waste Strategy Magnetic Island (Yunbenun) 2025-2030

## Community Consultation and Survey 2025



Towards Net Zero Community Action Climate Project

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#### Magnetic Island (Yunbenun) - Wulgurukaba Country Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Wulgurukaba people as the traditional custodians of Magnetic Island (Yunbenun) and value our collaboration with them. We recognise their continuing connection to the land and waters and thank them for protecting this coastline and its ecosystems since time immemorial. We pay our respects to elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations people present today.

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## ACRONYMS

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| APC   | APC Waste Consultants                                |
| C4C   | Containers for Change                                |
| COEX  | Containers Exchange                                  |
| CRS   | Containers Refund Scheme                             |
| MI    | Magnetic Island                                      |
| MICDA | Magnetic Island Community Development Association    |
| MINT  | Magnetic Island Network for Turtles                  |
| MIRRA | Magnetic Island residents and ratepayers Association |
| NQROC | North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils   |
| TCC   | Townsville City Council                              |
| TMI   | Tourism Magnetic Island                              |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Magnetic Island Community Development Association (MICDA) obtained a Community Climate Action Grant from the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) for a *Towards Net Zero Magnetic Island (Yunbenun) Climate Action Project*. The goal of the grant is to develop a *Towards Zero Waste Magnetic Island Waste Strategy* to accelerate community climate action projects by reducing waste and greenhouse gas emissions across households, businesses and the tourism sector.

To gather background data and information a detailed waste audit of households, hospitality accommodation, litter bins, special events and transfer station users was undertaken in May 2024. Extensive community consultation and stakeholder engagement occurred on the island during November 2024 with nine focus groups, 12 stakeholder meetings and 456 surveys were completed, comprising 245 residents and 211 visitors.

The waste audit, community consultation, stakeholder engagement and research on best practice and what other communities and islands are achieving were combined into Options Discussion Paper which informed the development of the Draft Towards Zero Waste Strategy.

During July 2025, the community and stakeholders were again engaged in relation to their opinion about the content of the draft Towards Zero Waste Strategy. This report details the findings of these activities:

- Focus groups - three sessions were attended by 41 interested persons – Refer Section 3
- Community survey - 28 responses representing 1% of population – Refer Section 4
- Stakeholder meetings – eight meetings held including Townsville City Council elected representatives and sustainability team, Traditional owners, Magnetic Island Residents and Ratepayers Association (MIRRA), Zero Waste MI, Containers for Change administrator (Coex) and network operator (Return It) and Eco Trilogy. Refer Section 5

The key survey responses are:

- The draft strategy is realistic and achievable - 64% agreed, 18% disagreed and 18% unsure.
- The five key materials considered most important ranked in descending order: Food waste, soft plastics, Containers for Change, garden waste and batteries
- To achieve the draft strategy vision of 80% diversion from landfill the following were the top five actions from a list of 9 rated in descending order:
  1. Reduce the amount of the wrong things we put in the recycling bin
  2. Make sure recyclables are in the recycling bin and not in the waste bin
  3. The island Tip Shop continues to resell a diverse range of materials
  4. A permanent Container for Change 10c refund machine located on the island
  5. All our events and markets should include Zero Waste principles
- The concept of an environmental levy of \$2 per return ferry trip for all tourists excluding Townsville City Council residents was supported by 82%.

Based on the feedback ten (10) modifications were made to the Draft *Towards Zero Waste Strategy* and include:

**Modified actions**

1. **Litter**
  - Install litter booms which reduce flood risks and lower maintenance and operating costs rather than litter nets and Gross Pollutant traps (GPT)
  - Add litter device to Horseshoe Bay Lagoon in addition to ocean stormwater outlets
2. **Community gardens** - Install multiple community gardens given the island is a group of villages around bays
3. **Container refund scheme** - Provide a permanent depot, home / business collection service to supplement drop-off pods.

**New target**

1. To recover 80% of all Containers for Change containers

**New actions**

1. **Garden waste reduction** - Develop a garden planting guide to assist residents identify preferred plantings to reduce garden waste generation.
2. **Plastic shopping bags** - That advocacy efforts be directed to local, regional and state offices of IGA and Foodworks to remove all plastic shopping bags from island stores to reduce threats to the marine environment and replace with paper or reusable options.
3. **Chemical waste storage** - That Council acquire a properly designed and constructed storage unit to be located at the Transfer Station for the storage of out of date and unwanted chemicals.
4. **Electrification of collection vehicle** - Investigate purchase of an electric garbage truck to service Magnetic Island
5. **Solar PV on transfer station roof** - Investigate installing solar panels on the roof of the TS with optional battery storage to both charge the electric collection vehicle and offset mains power for waste related site activities.

## 1. BACKGROUND

MICDA engaged APC Waste Consultants (APC) — industry experts with extensive experience and expertise in island and remote communities — to guide the development of the *a Towards Zero Waste Magnetic Island Waste Strategy, the proposed* new waste management strategy for Magnetic Island (the strategy). The strategy will provide a clear set of prioritised actions to steer the Magnetic Island community and Townsville City Council (TCC) toward improved waste management outcomes that are politically acceptable, socially responsible, economically viable and environmentally sustainable.

The following summary outlines the tasks APC is performing to develop the new waste strategy:

- Stage 1: Site visit
- Stage 2: Zero Waste (ZW) planning workgroup and stakeholder ID
- Stage 3: Waste audit
- Stage 4: Community consultation and stakeholder engagement
- Stage 5: Prepare discussion paper of options
- Stage 6: Prepare and present draft strategy
- Stage 7: **Community and stakeholder consultation on draft strategy**

This report details the method and results for Stage 7 of the project: *Community Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement on Draft Strategy*.



## 2. METHOD OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The aim of this phase of the project is to seek community opinion in relation to the draft Towards Zero Waste Strategy. Consultation consisted of both qualitative and quantitative methods to determine community opinions via focus groups, community survey and stakeholder presentations and meetings.

### 2.1 Focus groups

Three focus group meetings were held on weekend day, weekday morning and evening to cater to as many people as possible. A flyer (below) details the dates, times and locations and Table 1 shows the attendees at each. A total of 41 community members attended.

Figure 1: Community focus group posters

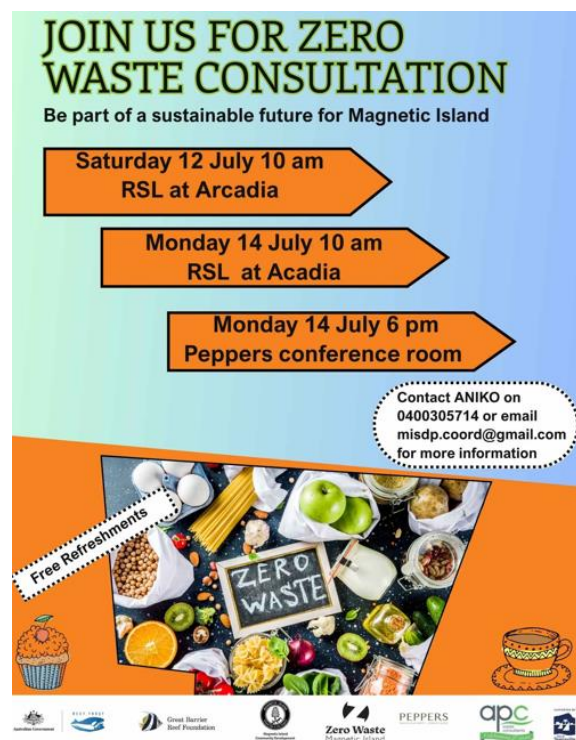


Table 1: Focus group locations and attendees

| Date              | Location            | Time     | Attendees |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------|
| 12 July 2025      | Arcadia - RSL       | 10.00 am | 18        |
| 14 July 2025 (AM) | Arcadia - RSL       | 10.00 am | 12        |
| 14 July 2025 (PM) | Nelly Bay - Peppers | 6.00 pm  | 11        |

Groups were led through a PowerPoint presentation providing context and rationale to the draft Towards Zero Waste Strategy with opportunities for discussion and questions.

A summary of the discussion at each focus group is provided in section 3 with the facilitator's responses noted as A – answers.

### 2.2 Community and visitor surveys

A community survey was developed with a QR code for ease in completion. The survey was promoted by MICDA and at all the stakeholder meetings and focus groups.



Figure 2: Survey posters with QR code



Results from the surveys are provided in Section 4.

### 2.3 Stakeholder engagement

A number of face-to-face stakeholder meetings were held including:

- Townsville City Council elected representatives
- Magnetic Island Residents and Ratepayers Association (MIRRA)
- Council sustainability team
- Zero Waste MI
- Traditional owners
- Containers for Change administrator, Coex
- Containers for Change network operator, Return It
- Eco Trilogy providers of mobile wash station and reuseable crockery / cutlery

Refer to Section 5 for summary notes of these meetings.

### 3. FOCUS GROUP OUTCOMES

This section outlines the discussion at the three focus group sessions attended by 48 persons. While the majority in attendance were residents some local business and / or their managers attended.

#### 3.1.1 12<sup>th</sup> July 2025, RSL 10 am

1. Will council agree to 80% as previously deadlines have passed and nothing happened.  
A - 80% is both draft state and federal Govt. target.
2. Any compost educational opportunities?  
A - MICDA ran a recent successful compost training program with 30+ attendees and hope to do more subject to funding.
3. Is FOGO using Bio-Regen?  
A – Bio-Regen is good for hospitality venues as all food is loose but not all households as the volume will be too much and most will be bagged in bio-bags which would have to be decanted.  
Why is Bio-Regen limited by TCC?  
A - Neighbour complaints at current location. TCC may relocate to TS
4. Targets for island are focused on households not accommodation/ Airbnb and tourists which are “off the hook”?  
A – the target is relevant to whole of island with the greatest proportion being garden waste generated by households then food generated by households, hospitality and accommodation venues.
5. Webster packs are recycled at pharmacy!  
A – Yes this is referenced in the Discussion Paper and is a great new initiative by the pharmacy
6. What is the budget required for the proposed co-ordinator and resources?  
A – This will depend on amount of time required, job description, skill level and experience of candidates plus a reasonable budget for resources and support materials
7. Concern expressed about who and how to manage the proposed environmental levy monies with a suggestion to use a Trust Account managed by MICDA with dual signatures required for access or any money by MICDA and TCC. Concern that it should not be TCC only as there is a history of lack of credibility and transparency.  
A – To be determined but Trust Fund is a good idea.
8. Commonwealth govt funding support available for partnerships under the Precinct Planning projects where if all the island needs could be put into a masterplan there is funding opportunities over 18 months.  
A – noted
9. Education messages – visitors and locals needs are ongoing.  
A - multi-pronged and multi-faceted and ongoing is absolutely needed
10. Need to consider international visitors and multi-lingual resources and materials?  
A – preference is to use clear concise images not words
11. Need to consider growing number of Airbnb’s?  
A - The occupants of Air bnb units and houses are indistinguishable from residents and use same waste system. Information and infrastructure are needed in all accommodation premises.
12. Stormwater litter traps – nets and GPT require high maintenance, the island should consider use of booms which reduce flood risks and lower maintenance and operating costs.  
A – Noted and will highlight in Strategy

**3.1.2 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025, RSL 10 am**

1. Education - Use MI tourist book to promote message to visitors?  
A - ZWMI information and messages are in the book but located at the back and a bit lost, needs to be higher profile
2. IGA and Foodworks still provide plastic carry bags in accordance with new Qld govt policy but need to offer alternatives like paper or cloth bags similar to larger mainland supermarkets  
A – Advocacy is required and will add to Strategy
3. Community gardens – more than 1 needed as the island is a group of villages around bays.  
A - Will add “s” to garden in strategy
4. Environmental Levy
  - \$2 too low suggest start at \$4 / return trip
  - Must be indexed
  - Who can force implementation – Port authority, TCC or both?
  - How does Sealink know if local or visitor on App as no postcode required?
 A - Tourists buy single or return tickets and locals buy multi-pass. For Levy to be added a postcode field is required
5. Education – Take 3 for the Sea have great education and environmental programs.  
A- noted
6. Education - Clear marine litter bins serve a great educational role.  
A -The concept is not supported by marine working group
7. Litter – need more street sweeping.  
A - Noted
8. Recycling question - lids on or off containers?  
A - Recycle A - Z by TCC is silent on this
9. Implementation - Has council committed to plan?  
A - MICDA and APC presented to full council and will be meeting with sustainability team. Councils waste team have been deeply engaged in the development of the strategy over the past 18 months.
10. Reuse - Will green / food processing pay for itself?  
A – it will save an estimated \$300,000 in current barge and disposal costs. TCC will tender processing for green waste and need to build facility and plant to process the food waste. It would be great if it was cost neutral.
11. Bio-Regen – can this be adopted for large scale and will TCC expand it?  
A - Suitable for hospitality sector food but not households’ food waste as very labour intensive
12. Financial - variable bin sizes and costs has this been considered?  
A - Action 45 suggests increasing the cost differential between 140 L and 240 L general waste bin.

**3.1.3 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025, 6 pm Peppers conference room**

1. Another green bin will be too many bins for properties with narrow frontages, cul-de-sacs and units.  
A – the green bins are put out on the alternate week to the recycling bin so only ever 2 bins out for any collection at any one time. Units share bins as smaller amount of garden space so less than one bin per unit.

2. How to manage green waste before the green bins arrive?  
A – Chris Sampson from Reef assist discussed chipping larger material, breaking down with inoculant and composting.
3. When will the green bin arrive?  
A – Funding has been included in this year’s budget cycle for introduction after July 2025
4. At Hamilton Island, Kangaroo Island and Rottneest Island the prime mover stays on island and more compactor bins fit per barge trip whereas at MI the prime mover goes over and back?  
A – will discuss with TCC
5. To reduce garden waste we need to remove palms, minimise lawns and revert to natives!  
A -need community information on what to plant and what NOT to plant
6. Businesses doing the right thing need a star system as recognition?  
A - the ZWMI website has a list of waste free businesses.
7. Food waste processing - Pigs shouldn’t eat food waste.  
A -Pigs should not eat meat by-products due to risk of foot and mouth disease. All food waste will be processed and used as a soil conditioner and / or blended with the shredded and mulched garden waste for gardens.
8. Support the glass crusher for island as multiple uses and saves importing raw materials!  
A - Also saves GHG on barge movements, less raw material extraction and avoids potential bio-security issues with fire ants etc coming onto island.
9. Soft plastics - what to do now?  
A – new recycling facilities are being built and in various stages of implementation nationally to process soft plastics. Need to check status of situation for Northern Qld. Trials are underway in some councils, allowing residents to put all the soft plastics in a bag in the recycling bin which is then recovered at the recycling plant. This may become the standard approach over time in addition to the supermarket return bins.
10. Too much plastic at supermarkets – need to talk about reducing and using only compostable bags that can be reused.  
A – a project for ZWMI
11. What happens with cardboard from supermarkets?  
A – MI Skips collect waste from large producers including cardboard which is taken to the TS for recycling. Reef Assist use some cardboard as a weed barrier.
12. Commercial operators who take household garden waste to TS should not be charged more as many households have no way of disposing of garden waste?  
A – the issue of fees for recycling from commercial operators has been raised previously.

## 4. SURVEY RESULTS

Twenty-eight (28) residents responded to the survey on the draft strategy. Details of the demographics of survey respondents and their opinions are contained in this section.

### 4.1 Demographics

Based on ABS census data of a population of 2475 the 28 responses represent a 1% response rate. A comparison between the survey participants and the 2021 ABS data is provided in Table 2 below.

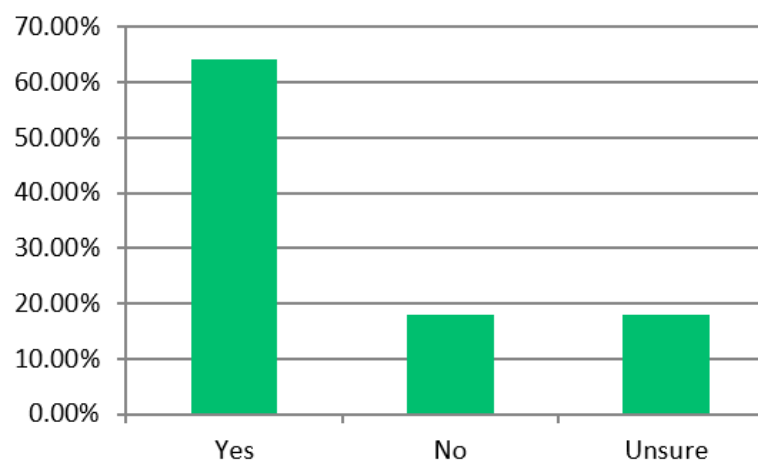
**Table 2: Household survey respondents and ABS census data comparison**

| Criteria             | Survey      |     | Census 2021 |     |
|----------------------|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|
|                      | Number      | %   | Number      | %   |
| Responses            | 28          |     | 2,475       |     |
| <b>Response rate</b> | <b>1.1%</b> |     |             |     |
| Female               | 20          | 71% | 1,207       | 49% |
| Male                 | 5           | 18% | 1,265       | 51% |
| Prefer not to say    | 3           | 11% |             |     |
| <b>Age</b>           |             |     |             |     |
| 55 years and over    | 22          | 79% |             | 57% |
| 35 – 55 yrs          | 6           | 21% |             | 21% |
| < 35 yr              | 0           | 0   |             | 22% |
| Permanent resident   | 23          | 82% |             |     |
| Holiday home owner   | 3           | 11% |             |     |
| Holiday frequently   | 2           | 7%  |             |     |

#### Q1. Do you think the draft Towards Zero Waste Magnetic Island Strategy is realistic and achievable?

The majority of responses, 64% thought the strategy was realistic and achievable, 18% disagreed and 18% were unsure.

**Figure 3 Is the Towards Zero Waste Magnetic Island Strategy realistic and achievable?**



## Q2 Why do you think that?

**Table 3 Response to why respondents answered in Question grouped by like response**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b><u>Positive responses</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The strong emphasis for education is important</li> <li>2. We have a plan. We have the community to do it. It's been done in other locales; it can be done on Magnetic Island.</li> <li>3. It will take a cultural change to get the whole island interested in waste reduction</li> <li>4. Because there are enough community members willing to participate to make it happen.</li> <li>5. The actions are well considered in the island specific context.</li> <li>6. Because I wish for it to be true, but it can only be so if the MI Community engages. Is the level of engagement to this survey sufficient?</li> <li>7. Well thought through.</li> <li>8. Caring like-minded Community</li> <li>9. It's been created by experts and the community, so I think it is a realistic and achievable plan.</li> <li>10. Because it is laid out clearly with evidence.</li> <li>11. Building on existing strategies. The Island population has shown that it is supportive of schemes such as biogen food waste processing and tip-shop large waste recycling.</li> <li>12. I'm optimistic generally and if you keep pushing this should work.</li> <li>13. Very organised.</li> <li>14. As there's so much waste, it should be possible to reduce that amount. Green (i.e. organic) waste bins would be a good start.</li> <li>15. The intention to tackle the hospitality section gives me more confidence in the strategy. The Strategy focuses on the most problematic areas.</li> <li>16. It is time to take charge of our island</li> <li>17. It sets goals. Have steps in place to achieve these goals. And there is always ongoing reviews.</li> <li>18. The steps are clear, well laid out with achievable steps. Great work!!!</li> </ol> | <p><b><u>Negative</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Too much effort for no trustworthy outcome. The end result must be seen to be working before any trust from the community can be given.</li> <li>2. Zero waste aims are unrealistic and unachievable. They are too extreme. Recommending additional waste bins and reducing general waste collections in a hot humid environment like FNQ will create lots of issues around flies, maggots and smells. Households will just start illegal using commercial bins. Additional bins mean additional costs which will be passed onto ratepayers. A hard pill to swallow in the current economic climate.</li> <li>3. You want to take single use utensils, plastics, cups, etc out of the environment and What are you replacing this all with should be good into coles with Tupperware containers (made from plastic) to get our meat. Very hygienic. And people with keep cups don't wash them it becomes very unhygienic. Most of the single use in hospitality is biodegradable or made from recycling.</li> <li>4. I think the added cost to implement this will not be accepted by the wider community. I also think as in item 49, it would be much easier and more cost effective to teach people how to do this at home, there is ongoing concern with the community of Magnetic Island and TCC with the communication, to add more regulations to a community with trust issues with TCC, I feel, is not wise. Cost effective alternatives for all businesses with single use would be useful.</li> <li>5. Clearer priority setting seems needed, including differentiating wins by costs (green waste, bottles) vs wins for environment (plastics).</li> <li>6. Holiday rentals/ visitors need to come to the party!</li> </ol> |
| <p><b><u>Unsure</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not familiar with all aspects</li> <li>2. Good public consultation</li> <li>3. I haven't read it.</li> </ol>   |   |

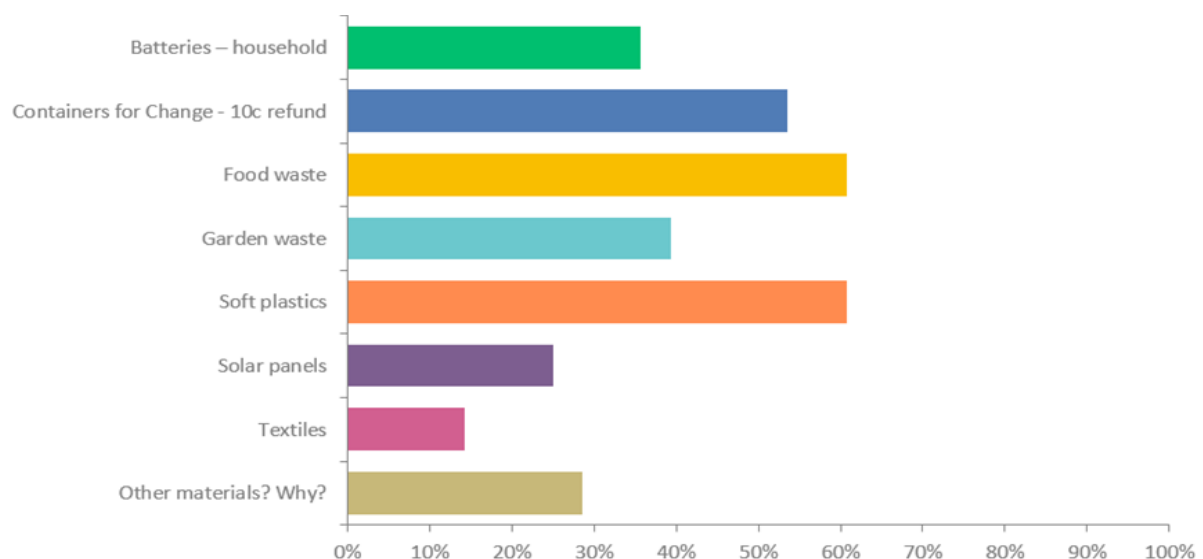


**Q3. The draft *Towards Zero Waste Strategy* identifies a number of priority actions to better manage waste streams in the future. From the list below, which do you think are the three most important materials to focus on?**

- Batteries – household
- Containers for change – 10C refund
- Food waste
- Garden waste
- Soft plastics
- Solar panels
- Textiles

The top five materials considered most important are: food waste and soft plastics (64%), Containers for Change (51%), garden waste (39%) and batteries (37%).

**Figure 4 Which materials do you think are the three most important materials to focus on?**



**Q 4 Are there any materials that you think are missing from the above list and if so please specify what materials and why is it important to be considered**

**Table 4 Specify what materials are missing from the strategy and why they should be considered**

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. | <b>Chemical /hazardous waste</b> - domestic and commercial because these have significant impact on the natural and social values and there is little to know knowledge and understanding about safe disposal. We now countless harmful chemicals are sold on the island (e.g. pesticides at Mitre 10 - they are used domestically to kill whatever pest in their garden and them what happens to the rest of the bottle when people move house for example). Some of these chemicals are forever chemicals (and banned in other countries). People need greater understanding of the impacts and if they have them how to safely dispose of them. |
| 2. | ALL waste must be recognised worldwide as RECYCLABLES.   |
| 3. | Garden pot recycling   |
| 4. | There is nothing to manage. The world is forever growing and it's population not products that are the problem   |
| 5. | They're all important, but money earnt from 10c exchange could help fund the other priorities.   |
| 6. | They are most pressing & common to all households.   |

**Q 5. To achieve the Strategy vision of 80% diversion from landfill we need to do several things better together. Please rate how important each of the following statements are to you:**

**Figure 5 How important each of the following statements are to you? All responses**



**Table 5 How important each of the following statements are to you – all responses**

|  | Essential | Important | Neutral | Low Importance | Not Important |
|--|-----------|-----------|---------|----------------|---------------|
| Make sure recyclables are in the recycling bin and not in the waste bin.   | 76.92%    | 19.23%    | 3.85%   | 0.00%          | 0.00%         |
| Reduce the amount of the wrong things we put in the recycling bin.   | 80.00%    | 16.00%    | 4.00%   | 0.00%          | 0.00%         |
| Third wheelie bin to collect garden waste fortnightly (material will be processed on island).  | 55.56%    | 14.81%    | 0.00%   | 7.41%          | 22.22%        |
| Food waste recovery program, in the new garden waste bin or a separate food bin (material processed on the island).                            | 53.85%    | 15.38%    | 7.69%   | 7.69%          | 15.38%        |
| A permanent Container for Change 10c refund machine located in the island  | 57.69%    | 15.38%    | 15.38%  | 3.85%          | 7.69%         |
| Ban single use plastics from the island, including coffee cups and balloons.   | 51.85%    | 29.63%    | 11.11%  | 0.00%          | 7.41%         |
| All our events and markets should include Zero Waste principles.   | 57.69%    | 23.08%    | 19.23%  | 0.00%          | 0.00%         |
| The island Tip Shop continues to resell a diverse range of materials.  | 59.26%    | 25.93%    | 14.81%  | 0.00%          | 0.00%         |
| Increase the cost between the 140L bin and 240L general waste bin (currently only \$15 difference), to encourage people to produce less waste. | 18.52%    | 37.04%    | 29.63%  | 3.70%          | 11.11%        |

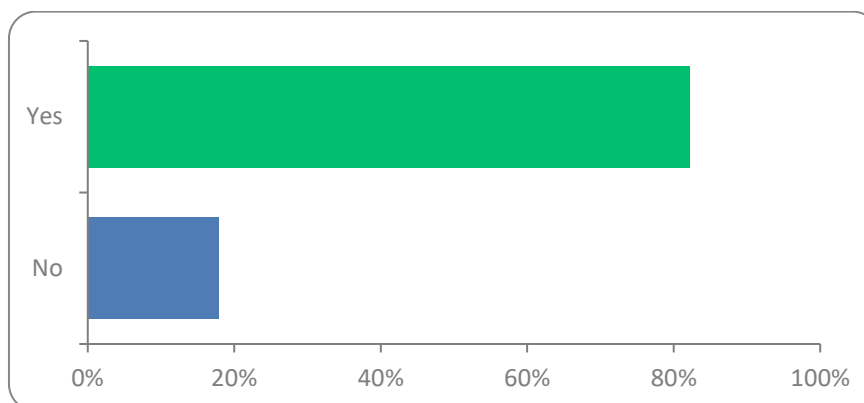
Shown in descending order by the essential rating:

1. Reduce the amount of the wrong things we put in the recycling bin. 80%
2. Make sure recyclables are in the recycling bin and not in the waste bin. 77%
3. The island Tip Shop continues to resell a diverse range of materials. 59%
4. A permanent Container for Change 10c refund machine located in the island. 58%
5. All our events and markets should include Zero Waste principles. 58%
6. Third wheelie bin to collect garden waste fortnightly (material will be processed on island). 56%
7. Food waste recovery program, in the new garden waste bin or a separate food bin (material processed on the island). 54%
8. Ban single use plastics from the island, including coffee cups and balloons. 52%
9. Increase the cost between the 140L bin and 240L general waste bin (currently only. \$15 difference), to encourage people to produce less waste. 18%

**Q6 To help pay for the implementation the Strategy suggests an environmental levy of \$2 per return ferry trip be added to all tourists who are not Townsville City Council residents.**

The overwhelming majority of respondents, 82%, agreed with this concept and 18% disagreed

**Figure 6 Do you support the concept of an environmental levy on tourists?**



**Q7 Please tell us anything else you think should be added or removed from the draft strategy?**

**Table 6 Open comments in relation to strategy?**

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | The top of the waste hierarchy should include 'rethink'. An important aspect for any process.   |
| 2. | I think the vision statement should be direct in its language and read 'Magnetic Island is a global leader...' and remove the words 'and achieve' at the end of the statement. Also I'm not sure we can claim to improve the Great Barrier Reef from magnetic island....but certainly '...helping protect our precious island and Great Barrier Reef for generations to come.' With respect to 2030 targets: second point should read 'recycle 65% of waste' - not bins |
| 3. | All tourists/guests to Magnetic Island need encouragement to openly and freely enjoy the Magnetic Island ambience and not be bothered with the trivialities of local business. These are operational costs of the area and should be shouldered in part by the State not the guests or ratepayers.  |
| 4. | Consult with SeaLink ferries about informing all visitors/commuters how to effectively dispense of waste into the different bins available on the island - to raise awareness to  |

- minimize waste to landfill and maximize receiving deposits for recyclables - in an engaging, humorous manner (with a catchy jingle) that sticks in the mind
5. Super impressed that you've done an audit and have a plan
  6. The \$2 Levy is ridiculous. Accommodation providers already pay a levy via their Pedestal Charges. Townsville businesses are charged \$945 per pedestal annually. An accommodation provider with 25 pedestals will pay \$23,600 annually in additional tax. This is asking for another tax on top of that. This will never happen without a change in state legislation. Queensland state law currently does not allow councils or tourist areas to unilaterally impose a new tourist levy or "bed tax" on visitors unless the legislation is amended. As of mid-2025, Queensland does not have a statewide tourism tax—and the state government has explicitly ruled out introducing one statewide or authorising local bed taxes under existing powers. A tourist area or tourism business in QLD cannot unilaterally charge additional levies to tourists beyond standard accommodation charges unless the council has passed new powers—under legislation approved by the State Parliament. For example, as a tourism business on Magnetic Island, you're not legally able to tack on an extra "tourist surcharge" to guests unless it's built into a legally approved levy scheme by a local council under new legislative authority. How will it be managed? Who bears the burden of the administration? How do we ensure that Levy is used correctly and not just to fund other MICDA initiatives and 'consultants'? Or to create 'jobs for the boys'? What oversights will exist?
  7. I like the idea of the environmental levy but have real concerns about its practicality. I also fear that it will effectively become part of TCC's normal budget for the island - it will be spent on things that TCC would end up doing anyway. And that is really difficult to audit or avoid.
  8. The island is a suburb of Townsville we are not a high-end holiday destination you can kill business just to line your own pockets again. We are a residential island we are not that special
  9. Community Garden is a vital part of the zero-waste strategy as it can show the public how recycled organic waste can provide more food for the island, improve environmental outcomes by reducing erosion and soil degradation, build community trade and share schemes
  10. If in fact this is about helping to protect the Great Barrier Reef, then there are many other things that are as much, if not more important. For example, council spraying toxic chemicals around water ways. I hope the views of all residents are considered here, as I feel MICDA and ZWMI do not represent a high percentage of residents and ratepayers on Magnetic Island
  11. Will TCC help implement your strategy? They're not currently much use for anything requiring planning and commitment.
  12. Thanks enormously to Zero Waste volunteers for making great progress on this vexing issue. A paid Co-ordinator on the Island should be essential to make further inroads into waste reduction.
  13. The Levy should be more than \$2 - at least \$5
  14. AirBNB levy with \$\$\$ spent on the Island
  15. Food recycling biggest win is from commercial operators, so need to make this very easy for them and customers Beiderbecke processing all that via existing bio-regen, rather than new composting facility.

## 5. STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

### 5.1 Townsville City Council (TCC)

#### 5.1.1 Officers

Detailed and ongoing discussions with the Resource Recovery Infrastructure and Operations team including Resource Recovery Projects and Education Officer – Amelia Chaplin and former Senior Strategy Co-ordinator and now Regional Waste & Recycling Manager for North Queensland Regional organisation of Councils (NQROC) - Haley Page.

TCC staff confirmed the current waste disposal and recycling processing fees are much higher for the island than the mainland. The actual island costs for barge plus land transport to and from the barge and disposal at landfill or processing fee for recycling are around 1.261M per annum or \$652 / rateable island property. This amount excludes transfer station operation, waste truck, fuel for collection, bin replacements, litter, education and staff costs. The costs are calculated as follows.

#### General waste to landfill for Magnetic Island residents

- 2026 - \$981,000 or \$584 / tonne
- 2030 (3.5% CPI pa) - \$1.115M or \$665 / tonne

#### Recycling for processing for Magnetic Island residents

- 2026 - \$280,400 or \$320 / tonne
- 2030 (3.5% CPI) - \$319,200 or \$364 / tonne

If we do not change our practices and with the expected CPI increases of 3.5% per annum, by 2030 the comparable budget to transport and dispose / reprocess our two-bin system of general waste and recycling will be \$1.4 million or \$742 / ratepayer.

#### 5.1.2 Elected representatives

A joint one-hour presentation by MICDA and APC to full Council occurred on 9 July, 2025 at Council Chambers, Townsville on the background to the Strategy development and its content focusing on the areas relying on council support and action. The Council was very impressed that MICDA & ZWMI identified what was wanted by our community, sought a grant and were provided with the funds to create a grassroots strategy which reflected the island needs.

Councillors had several questions of clarification in relation to various aspects of the proposed action plan particularly, the transferability of the FOGO trial outcomes to the island. APC emphasised that the residents at MI have less than half the recycling contamination rate of the mainland residents and are more connected to their environment and their community and that FOGO was the key to achieving their aspirational target.

#### 5.1.3 Council Sustainability team

A further one-hour presentation by MICDA and APC was undertaken on the 15 July to Council Sustainability team resulting in an in-depth discussion about the action plan and a good exchange of ideas. The Sustainability Team budget contributes to the staff wages of the Reef Assist Bio-Regen project of which they are very supportive.

## 5.2 Traditional owners

MICDA and APC met separately with Brian and Troy Johnson as representatives of the traditional owners seeking their input. Their comments included:

- Changing resident's habits in relation to garden plantings to reduce palms and revert to native vegetation which attracts wildlife and doesn't produce as much garden waste to be managed by TCC.
- Installing litter traps at the stormwater interfaces with the Horseshoe Bay lagoon
- Supporting reusing glass on island to reduce biosecurity risks bringing mainland sand and aggregates to the island i.e. fire ants

## 5.3 Magnetic Island Residents and Ratepayers Association (MIRRA)

MICDA presented a short summary of the strategy background, method and actions to the regular monthly meeting held on 5 July at the Arcadia RSL Club. Attendees were invited to attend one of the in-depth community consultations and provide online feedback. Overall, the attendees seemed generally supportive of the strategy outcomes noting feedback that:

- most attendees were surprised by the large barge costs to move all non-garden waste to the mainland when provided with information around specific waste fees and charges and the amount of waste generated by the tourism sector
- positive reaction to an environmental levy on all non-island and Townsville residents to offset costs of sustainability actions including managing waste on the understanding any environmental levy funds raised must be co-managed jointly by island non-for-profit/s and Council
- was positive to the introduction of a garden organics (GO) and food organics and garden organics (FOGO).

## 5.4 Zero Waste MI

The committee met with the consultants with the key issues addressed being:

- the need for an island-based co-ordinator to oversee implementation
- The need for a resources budget for the co-ordinator
- Funding of the position including the introduction of the environmental levy on all non TCC resident tourists visiting the island.

## 5.5 Containers for Change

Both the administrators of the Containers for Change scheme (COEX) and the operators of the scheme, Return It, have been consulted throughout the development of the strategy as a number of unresolved issues have arisen for the community that require resolution.

The operators, Return It, have experienced ongoing challenges of a logistical nature due to the lack of a permanent redemption site on the island with no depot site on the island, hence it is serviced by mobile collection points with a hired large Pantech coming to the island twice per week. Staff and residents are observed lifting very heavy bags as the Pantech appears not to have a tailgate lifter.



When wine and spirit containers were added to the scheme in November 2023 service issues exacerbated as the barge operator has strict weight limits and these additional containers as glass and weigh considerably more than the plastic and aluminium cans. As a result, at times not all deliveries can be accepted due to weight constraints. Also, the barge operator needs to change sailing times due to tides which means Return It change collection times. Islanders have found these situations challenging and is impacting the collections as the some of the community become disenfranchised with the program.

COEX estimate using their data that there are around 4 million 10C containers being generated on the island and while up to 1.5 million containers are redeemed annually it is considered that this may be less than half of all containers available. However, the numbers of containers redeemed is difficult to gauge as Return It do not track the 10c collections from postcode 4819 Magnetic Island separately but count the island returns with mainland redemptions from Townsville, so the true figure is unknown.

Current issues can be summarised as

- collection times on the island change as barge times change with the sea tides & with Return its own logistical issues
- lack of regular servicing of drop-off pods due to vehicle load capacity and barge weight limits
- lack of regular service provision to Horseshoe Bay residents linked to truck capacity and barge weight
- unacceptable delays in residents receiving refunds post mainland processing

These issues could be resolved by:

- the establishment of a permanent processing and redemption site on island
- wire cages added to high profile litter bins to enable separation of containers by the public
- mobile service to high generators including residents, hospitality and accommodation venues.

## 5.6 Eco-Trilogy

MICDA and APC met with Alex Newberry and Shannan Russell founders of Eco – Trilogy seeking to provide both a mobile wash and hydration station for sale or hire along with the supply of reuseable washable crockery, glassware and cutlery for events as an alternative to single use. The team are currently developing new and modifying designs for wash and hydration stations built with commercial dishwashers for sale. They offer a range of reusables to suit all catering options.

MICDA are very keen to access a grant to purchase a wash and hydration station and reusables for use by community groups on the island as a commercial hire is prohibitive for small non-for-profit organisations holding non ticketed events. The wash and reuse model are currently costing around 80c- \$1 per item on a commercial fee basis. Not for profit groups can use their own volunteers to staff such as wash-station.

Large events, like the Sealink Festival with over 2500 attendees, require a commercial solution and operation due to scale.

## 6. SUMMARY

Based on the consultation feedback the following modifications were made to the draft strategy. Red font indicates where words have been removed and green font where words are added.

### 1. Modify vision statement

- From: *Magnetic Island to become a global leader in sustainability and a Zero Waste community – protecting our precious Great Barrier Reef and natural environment for generations to come* **and achieve.**
- To: *Magnetic Island to become is a global leader in sustainability and a Zero Waste community – protecting our precious Great Barrier Reef and natural environment for generations to come.*

### 2. Modify Targets

- From: Recycle 65% of **bins**
- To: Recycle 65% of **waste**
- Add: **Recover 80% of all Containers for Change containers**

### 3. Modify Action Item 7 - Stormwater litter traps

- TCC consider the use of litter booms which reduce flood risks and lower maintenance and operating costs rather than litter nets and Gross Pollutant traps (GPT)
- Provide stormwater litter devices at all entrances to Horseshoe Bay lagoon
- From Action Item 7: Install and maintain litter **traps** to reduce litter and debris entering the Great Barrier Reef waterways.
- New Action Item 7: Install and maintain litter **booms** to reduce litter and debris entering the Great Barrier Reef **and Horseshoe Bay Lagoon** waterways.

### 4. Modify Action Plan Item 17 - Community gardens

- More than 1 community garden is needed as the island is a group of villages around bays.
- From Action Item 17: Establish a community garden as a demonstration site and hub for community training and outreach activities with TCC support.
- New action 17: Establish community gardens **as** a demonstration site and hub for community training and outreach activities with TCC support.

### 5. Modify Action Plan Items 27 – 32 – Container Refund Scheme (CRS)

From Actions Items 27 – 32:

27. Install a reverse vending machine (RVM) at the Transfer Station.
28. Install wire cages to high-profile litter bins across the island for container donations.
29. Monitor wire cages to ensure they do not overflow, preventing adverse impacts on the environment.
30. Seek support of COEX to provide a permanent pod or bag drop at Horseshoe Bay.
31. Seek support of COEX to provide a dedicated trailer or mobile service to hospitality, accommodation, pubs and clubs across the island.
32. Engage with COEX to increase participation in Partners Program on the Island
  - Merge actions 27 / 30 / 31 /32 and Action 28 and 29 remain unchanged
  - New Actions items 27-29

27. Work with current or new operator to provide a permanent on-island solution (depot) and a full solution for households and commercial operators i.e. Container Home / Partner Program to collect containers from source.
6. **New action item under Reduce – garden waste**
- To reduce garden waste generation residents should consider removing palms, minimising lawns and planting more natives that require less maintenance and are wildlife friendly.
  - New action item: Develop a garden planting guide to assist residents identify preferred plantings to reduce garden waste generation.
7. **New action item under Avoid – plastic shopping bags**
- IGA and Foodworks provide plastic carry bags in accordance with new Qld govt policy but need to cease and only provide cheap alternatives like paper or reuseable cloth bags similar to larger mainland supermarkets as plastic bags are littered and a threat to the marine environment
  - New action item: That advocacy efforts be directed to local, regional and state offices of IGA and Foodworks to remove all plastic shopping bags from island stores to reduce threats to the marine environment and replace with paper or reusable options.
8. **New action item – Chemical waste storage**
- Chemicals and hazardous waste used in domestic and commercial premises can have a significant impact on the natural environment. There appears to be little community knowledge and opportunity for safe disposal of unused or out of date chemicals
  - The community need a greater understanding of the impacts of poor management and options to safely dispose of them.
  - Currently there is nowhere on the Island to store unwanted household chemicals in a safe location.
  - Other councils have installed purpose-built fully enclosed and ventilated storage sheds at their waste facilities to facilitate collection, storage and processing.

**Image 1 Hazardous goods storage unit**



- New action item: That Council acquire a properly designed and constructed storage unit to be located at the Transfer Station for the storage of out of date and unwanted chemicals.