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MEDIA RELEASE

Industry Unites to take up Food Fight



Noosa's food and drink industry has joined forces with the digital sector to create a free online platform where locals can search and connect with Noosa businesses that are still operating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

EatLocalNoosa.com.au is a virtual marketplace that offers access to local food and drink producers, as well as grocery stores and retailers offering heat-and-eat and takeaway or delivered meals.

Project manager, Alesha Gooderham, said the concept began when she was asked to look at a solution for the local seafood wholesalers faced with an oversupply of stock, wasted food, and potential job losses after the closure of restaurants due to Coronavirus.

"But it quickly became clear that our entire local and food and drink industry faced similar challenges. So we found a solution to meet the needs for the local food and drink businesses whilst also providing an invaluable marketplace for our entire Noosa community. There was a plethora of information in varying locations, and the true power of this project is in the partnerships. The other key factor is that eatlocalnoosa has a value beyond the COVID-19 era," she said.

More than 70 businesses listed in the day of registrations being open with listings continuing to come in.

Land & Sea and Fortune Distillery owner Tim Crabtree said the online hub was a great idea.

"A lot of businesses don't have the money or skills to do mass marketing to let existing customers know what they are doing, let alone trying to attract new ones," he said.

"This takes a lot of pressure off by providing a central point of reference that is free and easy to be part of."

Peter Seghers from Noosa Reds in Doonan said the closure of restaurants had cost his business about 80% of its customers, while market sales were down 30%.

"We aren't very active on social media and we don't have a website so a free listing on Eat Local Noosa is great for us – not only for customers to find us but hopefully other grocers and restaurants who would like to order direct."

Alesha acknowledged the work of the team from Social Tap for building the website and social platforms, plus the industry groups that spread the word to their members.

Supporting the project alongside Noosa Council are Tourism Noosa; Food and Agribusiness Network (FAN); Slow Food Noosa; Noosa Eat & Drink Festival and Country Noosa who bring a combined network of more 308,000 supporters and have been collaborating for some time as a working group. The initiative also has the support of Sandy Bolton MP and the region's Business Associations.

Mayor Clare Stewart thanked the many organisations who helped expedite the project, acknowledging the support of the organisations involved in the working group that is focused on strengthening the Agribusiness and Food and Beverage sectors.

"Without their support, we wouldn't be able to get to the industry so quickly, to then promote the initiative to the broader community," she said.

"It's a great example of a connected industry that values collaboration."

Member for Noosa, Sandy Bolton MP said it was encouraging to see local businesses signing up to this initiative to get our local products out to market.

"The economic effects of the coronavirus over the coming weeks and months are still unknown, however what is known, is that with our Noosa community supporting each other and our businesses, we will come through this time much stronger and connected.

"It was wonderful to be involved in this project, and I send a hearty congratulations to the Eat Local Noosa team and all involved for mobilizing resources to connect supply and demand. This will be invaluable, as are other initiatives that support local businesses, not just now, but into the future post-COVID, as part of strengthening our local economy and creating jobs," Ms Bolton said.

Tourism Noosa CEO Melanie Anderson said Eat Local Noosa was a brilliant initiative.

"We are seeing amazing things come from our community during this challenging time and it is heartwarming to see so many fantastic local groups working together to help the food and beverage businesses connect with each other and consumers," she said. "This is the Noosa spirit that we know and love!"

Businesses from outside the region can also list on Eat Local Noosa as long as they directly supply goods and services within the local region.

Listing categories include takeaway; heat-and-eat; drink; grocery; and fresh and frozen produce, plus seafood; meat; fruit and veg; bakery; eggs and dairy.

To find a local business or register and update your business details, visit www.eatlocalnoosa.com.au

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For more information, images or to set up an interview please contact:

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