



# The Big Banana Fun Park

## Coffs Harbour, NSW

The Big Banana Fun Park is an iconic tourist destination on the Northern NSW Coast. Stretching across 45 acres of land, it is a tourist attraction, café and fun park – resulting in multiple sources and types of waste. Huge crowds of up to 1.5 million people visit each year, increasing the importance of sustainable waste management practices.

General Manager Michael Lockman has taken the tourist attraction from minimal environmental initiatives to a Big Banana that is Big on Recycling.

### Recycling & Green Initiatives

#### Vision

When Michael Lockman became General Manager of The Big Banana Fun Park in 2013 there was no recycling, cardboard was being incinerated onsite and all food was served as takeaway orders.

“There was very little recycling in place, so I brought the park up to speed to reduce waste across the park,” he says.

“Everything used to be served in disposable, takeaway packaging. That was one of the first things we changed, every thing comes out on a plate now with stainless steel cutlery.”

Michael’s sustainability vision was not limited to waste and recycling, he also had a dream of running the park on cleaner energy sources.

#### Planning

Part of his waste shake up included comparing waste contractors, ensuring their service included separated recycling pick-ups, which were not in place.

Securing a contract with Handybin Waste Services was key for The Big Banana Fun Park’s recycling overhaul as the waste contractors introduced Michael to the NSW Environmental Protection Authority’s Bin Trim program.



Cr Mark Troy, Cr Rhonda Hoban & Cr Denise Knight at The Big Banana.

“Bin Trim came across our desk and it was in line with what we were trying to do at the park,” he said. “The Bin Trim program helped us get money for signage and it was a catalyst to take recycling to the rest of the park.”

#### Implementation

The Big Banana Fun Park’s plan to roll out their recycling initiatives was two fold; stage 1 for staff initiatives behind the scenes, and stage 2 for customer involvement. Stage 1 was able to occur through conversations between management and staff, but it wasn’t until appropriate signage was available that stage 2 was achievable.

The Big Banana's green initiatives involved:

- △ Replacing high wattage lighting with LED's
- △ Installing a 50kw solar power system
- △ Contracting with Handybin and rolling out their Bin Trim action plan
- △ Installing recycling bins around the car park to increase waste collection points and make the process easier for customers
- △ Only serving food in takeaway containers when requested
- △ Signage around the fun park to educate customers and make recycling easier
- △ Upgrading from a 240L recycling bin to 360L – for free through Bin Trim

## Results and Benefits

Staff at The Big Banana have embraced the green initiatives, giving Michael positive feedback about recycling and being proactive with their own behaviour.

Peak season for The Big Banana Fun Park is during school holidays, so there is a vast difference between the amount of waste during the school term and school holidays. During school term time 5 x 360L commingled recycling bins are collected 3 times per week, and during school holidays this doubles to six collections per week.

This equates to **22.4 tonnes of waste diverted from landfill every year**, at a volume of 356.4m<sup>3</sup> – the equivalent of 36 medium-sized cars. Previously, this amount of waste as well as the takeaway food waste generated by the café, would have gone straight to landfill.

## Challenges & the Future

While there are easily accessible recycling bins around the park, the next step is for recycling bins inside the café that are aesthetically pleasing and don't encroach the seating area. This will further increase access to recycling bins across the park, so that it's easier for visitors to dispose of their waste appropriately.

Foundation  
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Planet Ark's BusinessRecycling.com.au is a partnership program that has been funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

The information included here has been provided to Planet Ark by the named business for the purpose of encouraging other businesses to recycle and 'green' their workplaces. Although we strongly applaud the actions outlined, Planet Ark does not necessarily endorse them or the specific business.

*"It's all positive – a lot of it moulds in together – setting up recycling around the park was good, but the signage made it really clear."*

**Michael Lockman**  
General Manager



Michael Lockman and Lia Purves at The Big Banana

Make recycling at work easy! Visit [BusinessRecycling.com.au](https://www.BusinessRecycling.com.au) to check out reuse and recycling options for around 90 different materials, find out how to choose the right recycler, download signage to help with recycling, and learn what other workplaces are doing to manage waste and improve sustainability.

