



Plastic Free Avoca Beach
Annual report 2021-22
July 2022



Our group

Plastic Free Avoca Beach was established in late 2019. We aim to share information and ideas on environmentally conscious and sustainable initiatives and to support each other in reducing our use of single-use plastics. We have organised beach clean ups, clothing swaps, photo and art competitions, and kid's craft sessions to raise awareness around single-use plastics and their impact on the marine environment. We use social media to share information and ideas about environmentally conscious and sustainable initiatives.

Our mission

Our mission is to inspire and support local businesses and individuals in the Avoca Beach community to reduce single-use plastics to create a more sustainable future for our children.

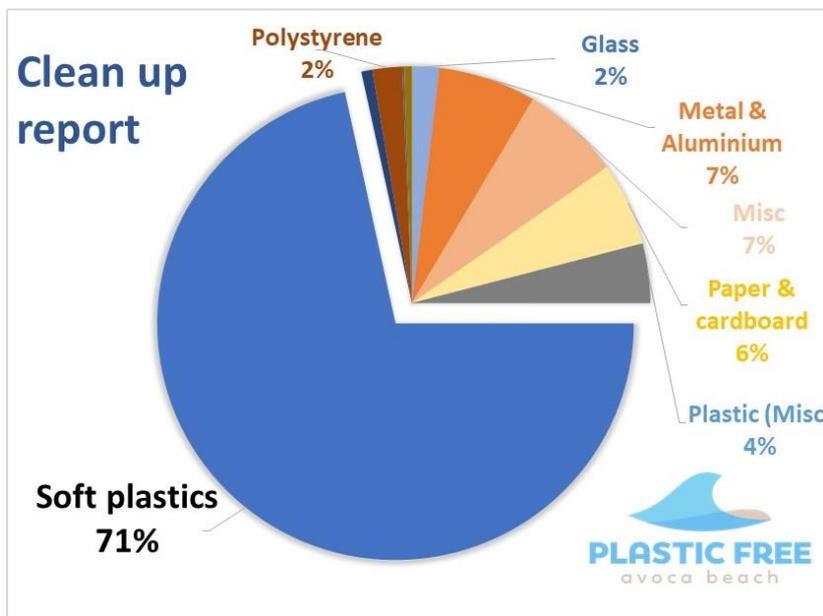
Our goals for 2021-22

Project goals	Progress in 2021-22
Develop partnerships with existing groups and initiatives	We supported and promoted Ocean & Coastal Care Initiatives (OCCI) and Sea Shepherd clean up events.
Run 2 single-use plastic campaigns to encourage Avoca Beach businesses to reduce single-use plastic straws and bags.	We developed promotional materials including reusable bag posters displayed by Avoca Beachside markets. The first phase of the NSW single-use plastic ban in June 2022 was a huge win for the environment with the phasing out of single-use plastic bags. Phase 2 planned for November 2022 will include a ban on plastic straws.
Run 4 successful community events including beach clean ups for Clean Up Australia Day and World Ocean Day.	We organised 2 community events including beach clean ups at Avoca Beach in December 2021 and June 2022. Our December clean up was featured in the Coast Community News: https://coastcommunitynews.com.au/central-coast/news/2021/12/clean-up-event-at-avoca/
Support improvements in waste management at Avoca Beach Public School (APBS) by assisting with collection of soft plastic recycling and compost waste.	We sourced quotes from independent waste audit providers and gained the support of the ABPS P&C to pursue a waste audit, soft plastics and compost collections (but put on hold in 21/22 due to covid-19 restrictions). This is an ongoing item for 2022-23.
Communicate effectively to the wider community through our dedicated Plastic Free Avoca Beach Facebook Page, Facebook Group, and Instagram. Develop a website to provide resources to support individuals and local businesses in our area.	We shared information and initiatives through our dedicated social media pages. Our Plastic Free Avoca Beach website was completed in June 2022. We plan to further add resources and other information to the website in 2022-23.

Our achievements in 2021-22

This year continued to be challenging with an extended covid-19 lockdown from July-October 2021. Despite these challenges we were able to run two beach clean ups in the second half of the year and continue to grow public awareness through our dedicated Facebook page, Facebook group (237 members) and Instagram page. We also launched a website in June 2022 (www.plasticfreeavocabeach.org).

- **December 2021:** We organised a community beach clean-up in with Sea Shepherd-Central Coast where we had 31 volunteers in total who collected 8 large bags of rubbish from Avoca Beach. Soft plastics dominated the items we collected (see the results of our litter survey below).
- **March 2022:** We supported local Ocean & Coastal Care Initiative (OCCI) and Aquafun with their annual Clean Up Australia Day clean up at Avoca Lagoon.
- **April 2022:** We established Plastic Free Avoca Beach as an incorporated NSW community association.
- **June 2022:** We organised a community beach clean up to raise awareness for World Ocean Day. This was a successful clean up event at Avoca Beach where 42 volunteers collected 48kg of rubbish.



Pieces of soft plastics formed the bulk of the items (by number not weight) we collected at our clean-up at Avoca Beach in December 2021. We also recycled 2 bags of bottles and cans. Large numbers of cigarette butts have featured in all of our clean ups. We registered with Clean up Australia for all of our beach clean ups and submit the litter data so that it can contribute to the national Australian Marine Debris Initiative Database.

Our thanks

We acknowledge that we operate on the lands of the Darkinjung people. We pay our respects their Elders, past, present and emerging. A huge thanks to all of our hard-working volunteers who assisted with our beach clean ups and supported our group during 2021-22. We are also grateful for all the support we have received from Ocean & Coastal Care Initiative (OCCI), Sea Shepherd-Central Coast and Green Caffein. We also thank all the local businesses who have supported Plastic Free Avoca Beach including Avoca Beachside Markets, Like Minds Avoca, Avoca Sands Café, Aussie Bread Bags, Shady Palm's Restaurant, Avoca Beach Theatre, Glamazon Beauty, Central Coast Surf School, Aquafun Avoca Lake, George's Fruit Barn and North Avoca General Store.

