

Sun Shining on Kin Kin

Zero Emissions Noosa (ZEN) has been tracking how different postcodes are moving towards the goal of zero community emissions for Noosa by 2026.

We drove (in an electric vehicle, of course) to Kin Kin, postcode 4573, to talk with Jodie Williams, owner of the renowned Black Ant Gourmet café and general store. Kin Kin is the Kabi Kabi word for the black ants in the area.

The solar on the roof provides over 50 percent of their power consumption and was paid off in four years. They've built a big barn area which gives them the ability to install extra solar, and LED lights are everywhere.

Jodie says, "Once we put more panels up then batteries will make sense and we can harvest and store energy, so that's exciting". Jodie exudes her passion for sustainability and talks about dealing directly with local suppliers because, "It's fresher, tastes better, and keeps the money locally."

From their garden they harvest spinach, garnishes, herbs and flowers, while they recycle coffee grinds and food scraps from the café to use as compost, and the ducks and chickens eat some too.

Customers get keep cup discounts, and story cards in the bathrooms make people aware of water use, not just while they're there, and Jodie's confident they take the message with them when they leave.

Jodie says they're always looking at ways to save power, whether it's finding a recipe that needs less cook time or using a raw product. She's seen the business grow and in spite of COVID, they're back on track as if nothing had happened, and are thankful for the great support from their customers, who obviously like what they're doing.

Because of COVID they turned their home into short term letting. Mayan Luxe Villas is a holiday place for people who would normally

be going overseas but want something that is a little bit different.

Jodie says, "It's a sustainable home, made from rammed earth and recycled timber. My partner, Brett Gowley, designed and built it. No heating is needed, no air conditioning, no paint, no insulation, no plasterboard anywhere in the place. It shows that you can be sustainable, and you can still have luxury."

The 30kW system was installed in 2017, and their new one will be three times the size, and she's getting some for the farm too, as well as batteries. Before solar her power bill was about \$9,500 a quarter. Now it's around \$4,000. Repayments were \$800 a month and now that she's getting busier and it's paid off, it's time to upgrade.

We asked Jodie about her message for others, and she told us, "Look into it, research it, do the figures, crunch the numbers. You'll be surprised. It's amazing. You save money as well as doing better for the planet. It's been a great decision for this business. It was a commitment. I had to borrow for it, but there were a lot of people putting their hand up to finance it, so that's not really a hurdle, in my opinion. The extra solar will be financed too, but the money that I'm saving is going to pay for the new system. It's a no-brainer".

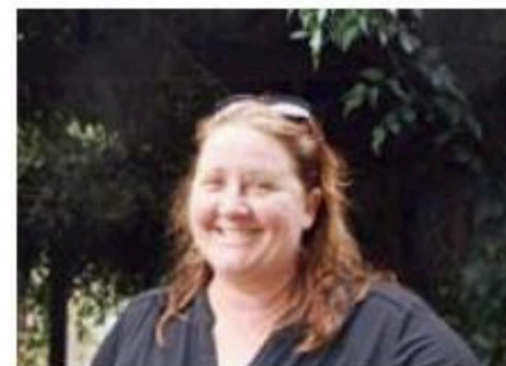
In Kin Kin over 40 percent of residential dwellings have solar, and it's estimated that 43.6 percent of electricity used comes from renewable sources. Kin Kin folk are frugal energy users. There's been a 26 percent reduction in household consumption over 10 years, and they now have the lowest in the Noosa area by a considerable margin.

Further details can be found at zeroemissionsnoosa.com.au/4571

Next time we'll visit the Peregian and Marcus Beach parts of postcode 4573.

Kin Kin & Como - Postcode 4571	
% residents dwellings with solar	41.7 %
Total PV solar installed	0.9 MW
Potential roofspace used	8.4 %
Annual tonnes of CO2-e saved	1,087
Daily residential grid usage over 10 years	Reduced by 26%
% electricity from renewables	43.6 %

Kin Kin at a glance.



Black Ant Gourmet at Kin Kin.



Black Ant Gourmet at Kin Kin.

Pictures: SUPPLIED