



# FRIDAY ENVIRONMENT FORUM

**NPA Environment Centre**

**June 1, 2018**

## Waste in the Tomato Industry

Researcher Tara McKenzie is this week's guest speaker at Friday Environment Forum on June 1, discussing waste in the tomato industry.

Up to 87% of undamaged, edible tomatoes harvested from a commercial Queensland farm were rejected and wasted based on appearance, a study has found, highlighting the problem of food wastage. Tara McKenzie, an environmental scientist at the University of the Sunshine Coast, said that at every point in the supply chain, edible tomatoes that were slightly odd-shaped or marked or deemed too small or too large were rejected because they didn't meet market standards for premium, unblemished product.

She found between 68.6% and 86.7% of the produce was rejected.



*Rejected tomatoes being dumped in a Bundaberg field.*

The research also found that between 70% and 84% of tomatoes grown were left in the field, because the cost of harvesting and supplying them to market was greater than any profit to be made.

Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers cooperated with the researchers and allowed them to follow the supply chain. The organisation's managing director, Bree Grima, said the level of waste was high, and was an issue growers had long been concerned about.

Friday Environment Forum on June 1 is held at the Noosa Parks Association Environment Centre 5 Wallace Drive, Noosaville. The forum starts at 10.30am and ends at 12.15pm. Arrive early as coffee and chat are on offer from 10am.



*Tara McKenzie with one of the rejected fruits*

You are invited to join Valda and the Interpretive Birding group at 8.30am. Meet in the car park. Everyone is welcome.