

NOOSA PARKS ASSOCIATION Inc.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2015

During the past year, NPA has continued to invest significant time and effort into laying the foundations for increasing the health and biodiversity of our Noosa River and Lakes system.

NPA provided the leadership that led to significant studies being commissioned by Noosa Council and the Thomas Foundation, which were subsequently conducted by The Nature Conservancy.

The first established the feasibility of rebuilding shellfish reefs in the system – a powerful first step in recovering aquatic biodiversity. The second involved an historical analysis of the decline of fish stocks in the system since European settlement. This research confirmed the bountiful fish life that once existed in the Noosa river system and estuary and formed the springboard for NPA's Expression of Interest to the Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation (NBRF), to deploy Noosa Council granted funds to recover higher levels of aquatic biodiversity. The EOI sufficiently impressed Noosa council that in December Council gave its support for multi-year funding of this project – "Bringing Fish Life Back to the Noosa River, Lakes and Estuary". Over the next few years, we are confident that this project will facilitate many positive impacts on the health and biodiversity of our major waterway.

NPA submitted two other Expressions of Interest to NBRF and is currently in discussions with the Foundation. The first involves the restoration of biodiversity connectivity across the Noosa Shire by linking existing protected habitat.

The second involves seeking firstly, Australian National Heritage recognition and then UNESCO World Heritage recognition for Noosa on two fronts – the outstanding natural heritage values of the Noosa region, and the outstanding cultural achievements of the Noosa community in protecting these values.

NPA is becoming increasingly confident that the natural heritage values of all of the Cooloola section of the Great Sandy National Park, as well as the Noosa River and Lakes system upstream from Tewantin, will be National Heritage in the not too distant future. This is consistent with the Association's submission on this matter to the Australian Heritage Commission in 2008 and is a required step prior to World Heritage.

These are both big picture projects and will most likely take 20 years or more for Noosa to gain the cultural heritage recognitions sought. But, with 55 years of achievement against all odds already under our belt, and much experience in patience and perseverance, we're up for it!

The past year also saw the end of the Noosa on Weyba development application after the developer formally discontinued their Planning and Environment Appeal. NPA had joined with FOLW and SCEC to form a community alliance against this proposal for urban development on the shores of sensitive Lake Weyba. This was another great achievement by a community with a fierce determination to not have its pristine environment and lifestyle damaged.

We are very pleased to say that NPA's Land Acquisition Fund now has over \$250,000 in it, thanks to the efforts of our members who volunteer at the Noosa National Park Information Centre and at Double Island Point. We are hopeful that these funds can be utilised in the coming year to assist in purchasing land to improve connectivity between our national parks.

Once again, I would like to thank all of our members for their efforts and dedication to NPA this year. Our Committee, Project Officers and Group Leaders have put in an enormous amount of work and your Association thanks you. We now look forward to another busy year!

Darlene Gower
President