



De-amalgamation and a New Noosa Council

A couple of months back, the Noosa Independence Alliance (NIA) met with LNP leader Campbell Newman, Shadow Minister for Local Government David Gibson and our local member Glen Elmes. The NIA hope was to obtain a clear, unequivocal LNP commitment to the establishment of a New Noosa Council, should the LNP be successful at the next state election. Noosa was given the green light and Campbell Newman announced at a press conference:

1. Within 100 days of the LNP taking up office, a boundary commissioner will, after due consideration of communities of interest, determine the precise boundaries of the New Noosa Council.
2. The New Noosa Council will have to meet the full costs of de-amalgamation. This was expected and something already factored into the NIA financial workings.
3. A referendum will be held once the new shire boundary has been established. Only those residents falling within the new shire boundary will be called upon to vote.

This is a very positive outcome, as it has been reported in the media that the entire Sunshine Coast would need to be polled to establish whether or not Noosa should be allowed to stand alone. Campbell Newman rightly says that us locals should be responsible for our future and thus we alone should have a say in determining whether or not a new Noosa Shire is created.

NPA sees the need for a vote as a positive outcome - it will allow each and every local the time to become better informed as to the massive future benefits of breaking away, as well the ramifications of not doing so. It will also provide NIA with more time to deal with the poorly informed, often inflammatory opinions of the vocal minority opposed to de-amalgamation.

NPA has no doubt that the formation of a stand-alone new Noosa Shire is a necessity and sees the next 12 months as a very exciting time in our local history. If we can elect a visionary mayor and well-balanced councillors, ensure a well-researched, water-tight town plan is drawn up and overhaul the governance structure of the Noosa Biosphere Reserve (take it away from the SCRC and hand it back to the people of Noosa), the future of our special part of the world will look very rosy.

Ian Seels

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Cooloola World Heritage

In News Bulletin 113 of September 2010, it was reported that the State had advertised for public comment on proposed boundaries for an extended Fraser Island World Heritage Area that would include the Cooloola Section of the Great Sandy National Park.

Over the past year, little further progress has been made. It appears that the State has put preparation of the Cooloola bid well and truly on the back burner and is concentrating on trying to secure indigenous support for a World Heritage bid for Cape York.

Extensions to Cooloola

In March 2011, after decades of campaigning by Noosa Parks Association to have many small parcels of publicly-owned land on Noosa North Shore added to the Cooloola Section of the Great Sandy National Park, some 50 parcels were transferred.

Regrettably, the Sunshine Coast Regional Council is showing no signs of honouring long-standing undertakings to the State and QPWS by the former Noosa Council to transfer the Noosa North Shore Aerodrome Reserve and the Noosa North Shore Quarry Reserve to the National Park.

Noosa North Shore Aerodrome Reserve

In Newsbulletin 113, concern was expressed that the Sunshine Coast Regional Council was seeking to legitimise and escalate commercial helicopter training activities at the Noosa North Shore Landing Ground Reserve.

Over the past 12 months, commercial helicopter training using the Landing Ground Reserve has increased dramatically, with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council now allowing up to 20 commercial helicopter training visits per weekday. This is despite the fact that such commercial use is in violation of the Noosa Plan, and despite the fact, as noted above, that the former Noosa Council had given the State firm undertakings to transfer the Reserve to National Park.

The principal client of the helicopter training company is the defence force of a Middle Eastern country seeking training over sand dune landscapes. Where Cooloola once offered the opportunity for quiet contemplation of nature, that peace is now being shattered by dune-hugging helicopters. Canoeists in the upper Noosa River, or bush walkers on the newly opened Cooloola Great Walk which links Noosa North Shore to Rainbow Beach, now have to contend with incessant and invasive helicopter noise. Needless to say Teewah and other Noosa North Shore residents are also being disturbed.

It would appear that the only way to stop such Sunshine Coast Regional Council environmental vandalism is to persuade the State government to revoke Council's trusteeship of the Landing Ground Reserve and to transfer it into the surrounding National Park. Because the State is the owner of the reserve, and Council is the State's appointed trustee of the reserve, the State has the power to do so. The Association is pursuing this matter with the State.

Michael Gloster

Noosa River

Waterways Report Card

Noosa again had the best results for the waterways and catchments of South East Queensland on this year's Ecosystem Health Monitoring Program. The Freshwater improved in all indicators from a B to an A-, and the Estuary also remained good at B+, despite high concentrations of nitrogen at some sites and poor turbidity in both Lake Cooroibah and Lake Cootharaba.

The results were better than expected following the higher than average rainfall earlier in the year. The fact that the high water flows in the Noosa River had a positive effect points to the relatively healthy state of the catchment, and also underlines the ongoing importance of building on and maintaining that resilience into the future.

Australian National Riverprize 2011

This prize worth \$195,000 was awarded in late September to the Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative - a group of over 30 community groups and government agencies headed by the Sunshine Coast Council. This prestigious prize awarded during their 14th International River Symposium in Brisbane was in recognition of the work undertaken by the various partners, which include our local Community and Industry Advisory Committee to the Noosa River Plan, and who are all dedicated to protecting and improving the waterways of our region.

Shirley Williamson