

3. Sustainable Development

This text has been compiled from the proposal document submitted to UNESCO prior to Biosphere status being awarded. Therefore, please excuse any references made to the 'nominated area' and any out-dated terms (including reference to the former council) which might now appear confusing.

In order to limit the size of the document and make it easier for users to download, we have edited the original submission into sections.

This is one of eight (8) PDFs available to download from www.noosabiosphere.org.au :

1. **Describe & Define Noosa Biosphere**
2. **Cultural Heritage & Settlement**
3. **Sustainable Development**
4. **Conservation**
5. **Flora Species List**
6. **Fauna Species List**
7. **Research Activities**
8. **Supporting document – Acronyms, Bibliography, Glossary**

The content of all these documents is fairly scientific and designed to appeal to a more academic audience.

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1. ESTABLISHING THE SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

The terrestrial component of the nominated area corresponds to the area covered by the Noosa Council local government area. It is located at the northern end of the South East Queensland Region (SEQ) and provides a strategically important regional landscape frame element and inter-urban break between the highly urbanised area of SEQ and the urbanising area of the Mary/Burnett Region.

Noosa Shire has coastal areas of quite intensive urban development. This urban development comprises a long narrow strip following the coastal dunes system from Peregrin in the south of the Shire to Noosa Heads and along the lower Noosa River flood plain to the townships of Noosaville and Tewantin.

67 percent of the Shire's population live and work within this coastal area.

The coastal strip north of the Noosa River is very sparsely settled and over 93% (9240 hectares) of the lands in the North Shore area is managed for conservation and is either in public ownership or managed in trust. Overall 30% (24,280 Ha) of Noosa Shire is currently in protected area tenure under State Nature Conservation legislation.

Much of the hinterland area of the Shire has historically been a farming and forestry production area. It is dotted with small, well-defined towns and villages that are primarily located along the railway line that links Brisbane with Cairns.

For many years, the Noosa community has recognised that its planning decisions have major ramifications for both of the regions it straddles, as it is a key natural landscape buffer between them. Successive Noosa Councils have established a planning and development framework centred on people, the economy, and the environment that responds to identified limits to growth for the Shire. These limits to growth are based on an assessment of the sustainable carrying capacity of the landscape, the aspirations of the community, existing and supportable levels of infrastructure, and the need to maintain a vibrant and productive economy.

In the early 1990's, Noosa was experiencing population growth rates of 8%. In the mid 1990's, Council supported by conservation oriented community organizations initiated a major process of review and evaluation of the Shire's growth patterns. This involved the community in determining the kind of place that Noosa would be in the future. The process was supported by the completion of 34 planning studies which analysed issues as far ranging as economics, employment and industries, traffic and transport networks, vegetation management, flooding, bushfire hazard management, water supply, water quality in the Noosa River System, to name a few.

The process of developing these planning studies provided a comprehensive and detailed assessment of the characteristics of the Shire and the planning strategies needed to maintain those aspects of the Shire's lifestyle opportunities, aesthetic values, social values, culture, and environmental values that were identified by the community as being important.

The outcomes of the studies and the community engagement process that occurred at that time lead to the development of the 1997 Noosa Shire Strategic Plan, which controlled changes in land use in the Shire. This plan is seen as a landmark document in the shaping of the Shire's future. The plan drew on the findings and recommendations of the planning scheme studies and the community's aspirations to establish a limit to the Shire's population. This limit to population will be achieved by limiting the total number of freehold land titles (and therefore dwelling units) that can be created in the Shire. The limit to growth established in the plan is not intended to be an arbitrary matter or to create an elitist community, but rather to ensure that the overall levels of residential population within the

Shire are contained to a level that will not adversely impact on the communities chosen values in relation to lifestyle and livelihoods, social capital, and the environment.

The limits to growth established in Noosa Shire are therefore founded on consideration of a diverse range of interrelated factors including:

- ⇒ Physical infrastructure – the quality and capacity of existing infrastructure within the Shire and the implications for the Shire’s economy, communities and environment if significant changes to the physical infrastructure of the Shire is required as a result of increasing population or change in land use;
- ⇒ Amenity – the lifestyle qualities and opportunities that are currently available and valued by the community, and the implications for those qualities and opportunities as a result of population growth or change in land use;
- ⇒ Environmental values – water quality in the catchments, rivers, lakes and Noosa beaches, biodiversity conservation and key threatening processes, waste management, maintenance of networks of conservation lands and open spaces based on scenic amenity, landform, open space and conservation values. Consideration has been given to the level of population growth and land use change that can be accommodated within the Shire without compromising the Shire’s outstanding environmental values;
- ⇒ Social capital – availability of social infrastructure, skills, networks, and associations that currently exists within the Shire and the implications of change in land use or population growth for further development of social infrastructure; and
- ⇒ Economic Base – economic activity based around the traditional industries of tourism, primary production, building, commerce, retail and light industry, giving consideration to the need to consolidate the contribution of these industries to the shire economy, while adapting to economic development opportunities resulting from emerging technologies and social trends.

The planning process undertaken at Noosa has been a vehicle for both the local government and the community to evaluate the social, environmental, economic, cultural and aesthetic aspects of Noosa and crystallise the essence of the communities’ values and aspirations for Noosa Shire.

This holistic approach has produced a very strong and clear vision for the Shire that provides the blue print from which all future planning, development, implementation and management of the Noosa community’s resources will be directed. This includes the physical resources like roads, drainage systems, water and waste water infrastructure, waste management facilities, community buildings, information technology resources, libraries, parks, reserves, sporting facilities and natural assets.

The consideration of all of these collective issues has resulted in the establishment of many detailed and inter-related plans, all of which include consideration of the underlying philosophy that the achievement of the Shire’s vision is underpinned by. That is a limit to growth and a sustainable pattern of land use.

In 2000, Noosa Council commenced a review of planning controls. A public consultation process called “Choosing Futures”, was initiated to engage the community in the process of re-evaluation of the vision, goals, objectives and outcomes of the 1997 Strategic Plan. Through “Choosing Futures”, the community confirmed the blueprint established in 1997 and again articulated its support for firm limits to both population growth and changes in land use in the Shire.

In February 2006, the new Planning Scheme for the Shire of Noosa (the Noosa Plan) came into force.

As part of the 'Choosing Futures' process the community articulated a general desire to be more involved in Council's decision making processes. In September 2001, Noosa Council established four Community Sector Boards as part of a Community Governance thrust to engage members of our community in the planning and delivery of environmental and quality of life outcomes to which the community aspires.

Based on the conclusion that a sustainable future and an acceptable quality of life for our community required a balance and integration between social wellbeing, cultural and heritage values, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability, the Council established four Boards:

The Arts & Heritage Sector Board (now renamed Cultural Board) – this deals with people, the cultural values they hold in relation to places, community, entertainment and heritage, etc.

The Economic Sector Board – this Board's focus is economic sustainability and equity, communities meeting present needs whilst not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

The Environment Sector Board – concentrates on places, the life supporting capabilities of the land and what it comprises, what is on it or above it and the ecological process and systems that exist in those places.

The Social Sector Board – concentrates on people, the social well-being of communities and the way people interact.

Each Board is comprised of nine members of the community, one Councillor and one senior member of staff. Service by the community representatives on the four Boards is voluntary (NSC, June 2004).

In December 2002, the four Sector Boards provided Plans to the Council that detailed their vision for the Sector theme to the year 2015, the strategies and actions that need to be put in place to achieve that vision as well as nominating which organisation within the community (Council, State Government Departments, private sector, not for profit organisations, or individuals) who should have the responsibility for undertaking that action (Lead Agent). These plans have subsequently been brought together to form the Noosa Community Sector Plan 2003 (NSC, June 2004).

Across the four Sector Boards, 631 initiatives were identified, of which 457 have nominated the Council as the lead agent. Whilst many of these initiatives are part and parcel of the day to day operations and actions by Noosa Council, there were also a range of key initiatives that were new.

In its first years of operation, Noosa's Community Governance has been based on a co-operative model of shared power. Whilst the Boards have no legal status, the guidance and advice they provide carry significant weight in Council's deliberations.

Community Governance and the Noosa Community Sector Board process has been embedded into Council's Corporate Plan and the Noosa Plan as an ongoing process for the Noosa community. Noosa Council has partnered strongly with its community to deliver the vision for the Shire sought by its residents and appreciated by its visitors.

A number of independent reviews of the Community Sector Boards project have been undertaken with the aim of further improving its effectiveness.

2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON A REGIONAL SCALE

Within the East Coast ecoregions of Australia the Noosa Biosphere Reserve area has very high international biodiversity and landscape values and contributes greatly to the overall significance of

the ecoregion. The nominated area is one of the few locations left within a rapidly urbanizing South East Queensland bioregion that has the potential to develop in a sustainable manner that maintains its landscape and biodiversity values.

Noosa has iconic status nationally and internationally for its natural values and as a tourist destination. This popularity coupled with the relative proximity of major transport hubs, means that the Noosa Biosphere is well placed to set a benchmark in planned and compatible ecotourism development and a showcase for ecotourism elsewhere. It is often said that people visit Noosa for its natural values and return to immerse themselves in its culture and lifestyle.

The international biodiversity and landscape values of the Noosa Biosphere Reserve will sustain a developed ecotourism industry, which will provide for sustainable employment, excellence in service delivery and the reinforcement of the values that have guided Noosa's development to date. The establishment of the Noosa Biosphere Reserve will provide an increased incentive to broaden government, community and business partnerships and increase the number of activities focused on the practical application of sustainable development principles.

The Biosphere Reserve will also provide an opportunity to enhance the quality of core areas by negotiating agreements with property owners to expand buffer zones and voluntarily transition some lands from buffer zone to core. The local government for the nominated area currently undertakes an extension service to engage private landholders in voluntary conservation programs. This extension service provides for voluntary conservation at two levels of participation. The base level is called the "Land for Wildlife Program". All Land for Wildlife properties are included in the buffer area of the proposed Biosphere Reserve.

Participation at this level is not legally binding. At the next level of participation landholder's voluntarily enter into agreements that are legally binding and pass forward with the land title to bind successive landholders.

The higher level of participation, Nature Refuge, utilizes legislative mechanisms that exist under Queensland State Government legislation, which allow for private land holders to voluntarily enter into legally binding agreements with the State to preserve the conservation values of their property. The agreements provide for the establishment of a legislative tenure over the properties that are recognized under the State's Nature Conservation Act 1992. The resulting Nature Refuge Agreement establishes legal protection for the conservation values of the land along with binding obligations on the property owner to actively manage the land's conservation values.

There are currently six Nature Refuges established in the Nominated Area. Of these, two are on lands owned by private residents and four are parcels of land that have been acquired as freehold by the local government for nature conservation purposes. There are also a further three Nature Refuge agreements currently under development in the Nominated Area.

Voluntary conservation agreements are an important feature of conservation in the Australian context. The Noosa Biosphere will provide an opportunity to evaluate the barriers and opportunities to extending this conservation program further across Australia and internationally. It will also provide an opportunity to pursue the development of best practice approaches to voluntary conservation on private lands.

This process of facilitated voluntary expansion of the Biosphere Reserve core areas will help to minimise adverse environmental impacts on the core areas, and improve their sustainability for future generations. It will also allow for a gradual increase in biodiversity conservation across the landscape as the sustainable development becomes more deeply incorporated into the culture of the local community.

The Noosa community has developed an understanding of the importance of carefully planning and managing this area's unique resources. Most of the proposed Biosphere Reserve is within 90 minutes' drive of the centre of Brisbane city, which is the State capital. This coupled Noosa's high profile as a destination regionally, nationally and internationally gives Noosa enormous potential to further promote sustainable development at all scales.

The attributes that contribute to this potential include:

- ⇒ An informed and aware community consisting of numerous volunteer groups with a long history of active engagement in environmental and conservation programs;
- ⇒ A comprehensive system of existing and proposed support facilities (as outlined in section 3.3 above) to increase public awareness about opportunities to develop models to promote sustainable practices;
- ⇒ Potential for eventual use of visual catchment boundaries as the outer limits of the Biosphere;
- ⇒ Extensive occurrence and diversity of several ecosystems, so that models have wider relevance to promote regional sustainability;
- ⇒ Very low levels of human disturbance over the majority of the core areas (and buffer areas to a lesser extent), that provide excellent benchmarks for identifying and moderating human impacts in transition areas;
- ⇒ Extensive rural and urban areas that create opportunities for building strong links between the producers and the consumers in the Biosphere Reserve;
- ⇒ The considerable public infrastructure within the area, which has the ability to enhance opportunities for sustainable economic development;
- ⇒ Important fisheries which provide significant resources for both the local and export markets;
- ⇒ High levels of community engagement in local government decision making;
- ⇒ Well articulated and documented ESD aspirations developed through community participation and incorporated into relevant local and regional statutory planning instruments; and
- ⇒ Active and capable community and industry representatives who are and willing to participate in programs that enhance sustainable outcomes.

Case Study: Conservation acquisition of the Riley Properties at Cooroibah

Through the process of developing the 1995 Planning Scheme the Local Government identified the need to maintain an inter-urban break between the two riverside townships of Tewantin and Cooroibah. At that time a large area of native vegetation had been preserved in near pristine condition between the two settlements. This area had been designated for small acreage lots under a previous land use planning scheme, but had not been developed. It contained intact communities of scribbly gum forests with she oaks and grass trees; closed wet eucalypt forests; coastal lowland rainforests, teatree forests; and bluegum flats. The land was made up of 4 lots owned by a family called Riley and another lot (a private air strip) owned separately. The airstrip land was not zoned for small lot rural residential uses.

The Riley lands effectively provided a strategic urban break between the two townships and also provided an important major wildlife corridor between the Noosa River and lakes, and the Tewantin Forest Reserve. Tewantin Forest Reserve is a large and ecologically diverse forest estate that provides a major link between the coastal lowlands and the coastal uplands of the Tinbeerwah escarpment. Tewantin Forest Reserve also links to Ringtail Forest to the north and Noosa River National Park to the south.

The 1995 Strategic Land Use Plan changed the previous designation for the Riley family lands to limit any further development. The decision to restrict development of this land was based on the recognition of the values of this area as a buffer between two growing urban areas and also as a strategically important conservation corridor.

The decision to restrict development on the site has come at a cost to the Noosa community. The lowering of the allowable development yield from these lots has prompted the commencement of a compensation claim against the Noosa Local Government. In order to settle the matter the local government and the Riley family have negotiated an agreement whereby the local government can acquire the land at an agreed market value (taking into account the previous development yield) and the claim will be withdrawn. The land is valued in the several millions of dollars. As such the local government has sought funding from the Commonwealth Government's National Reserve System program to assist with this acquisition.

The Commonwealth Government has offered Noosa Council \$1.5 million towards the acquisition and the State Government is considering also providing funding to support the acquisition. The Riley properties collectively contain approximately 169 Ha, of land all of which support ecosystems listed under State legislation as endangered. It also provides habitat for several rare and threatened species such as the Glossy Black Cockatoo and acid adapted frogs.

3. ECONOMIC AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

A number of key industry sectors are identified as critical to the future positioning, development and diversity of the Noosa economy, and are incorporated in the Noosa Council Corporate Plan 2003–2007, the Noosa Community Economic Sector Plan 2002-2015, and a range of ongoing research into the Noosa economy.

'New rural industries' and 'green industries' are identified as key areas of emerging industry opportunity, offering value-adding alternatives and a means of establishing competitive and economically sustainable business activity in traditional industry areas.

Noosa's emerging industry development strategies focus on:

- ⇒ Knowledge industry sector;
- ⇒ Health & Lifestyle industry sector;
- ⇒ Creative industry sector; and
- ⇒ Sustainable Rural industry sector.

Noosa Council recognises the importance of environmentally sustainable development in the Noosa economy and continues to support sustainable development as the way forward and has identified clean, green, light and environmentally friendly sustainable industries and agriculture to develop in the region.

Noosa Shire has a focus on sustainable environmental and socially responsible development, as evidenced through their focus on the above industry sectors. The fundamental basis of Noosa's economic strategies is high value-low impact economic growth in a lifestyle economy where the quality of the natural environment is fundamental to the future economic prosperity of the region.

The quality, diversity and beauty of Noosa Shire's environment are fundamental to Noosa's economic well-being and the rural hinterland makes up a significant part (approximately 59%) of Noosa Shire's land area.

Noosa Shire Council continues to promote sustainable development of the region by developing new areas of the economy. Examples of this include:

- ⇒ The knowledge economy: a natural fit for Noosa Shire, offering the high-value, low-impact industrial growth needed to complement the ecologically sustainable strategies of the Noosa Shire community; and
- ⇒ The sustainable rural sector: developed through education and a competitive and economically sustainable value added wood production and associated timber industry.

The natural environment is diverse, for example the Noosa river system is recognised internationally for the natural, recreational, scenic, cultural and economic values flowing from the River's rich biodiversity and habitat. It is managed within an effective, coordinated framework that strives for sustainability and best practice in nature-based recreation and ecotourism. It is also valued by government, industry and community, who take an active role in protecting and rehabilitating riparian areas and ensuring that development and activities in and on the River system and on tidal lands are sustainable.

The commitment of Noosa Council to sustainable economic and human development enables the many visitors to the region to experience the regions natural areas. Visitor surveys also show that visitors are impressed with the natural areas of Noosa Shire (See Table 14).

The region's National Parks, beaches and the natural appeal/atmosphere ranked among the top five satisfaction items with Noosa's visitors. This clearly shows the potential for Noosa to serve as a pilot site for the promotion of sustainable development of the region. Noosa National Park's proximity to surrounding townships presents a valuable opportunity to display the intrinsic values of these natural coastal areas to the broader community and encourage a respect for and a desire to conserve the area in its natural state.

TABLE: Top Five Satisfaction Items – Noosa Shire

	% Satisfied
National Parks	96
Beaches (ex Main Beach)	95
Natural Appeal / atmosphere	94
Availability of tourist information for Noosa	93
Restaurant/ cafes – atmosphere	92

Source: Tourism Queensland Jan 2006

4. TOURISM

The proposed Biosphere Reserve area encompasses the entire Noosa Shire. The national and international visitor surveys can therefore be used to estimate the numbers of visitors to the proposed Biosphere Reserve each year.

Domestic Overnight visitors have been increasing over the last six years and international visitors are also growing.

In 2004 there were **1,610,700** total visitors to the Noosa region. Figures 1, 2 and 3 indicate visitor numbers for 2000-2005.

FIGURE 1 Domestic Visitors to Noosa – Day Trip ('000)

FIGURE 2 Domestic Overnight Visitors ('000)

FIGURE 3 International Visitors to Noosa ('000)

Source: International Visitor Survey and National Visitor Survey

Types of tourism in the Noosa Shire include

- ⇒ Camping
- ⇒ Surfing
- ⇒ Fishing
- ⇒ Camel Treks
- ⇒ Horse Rides
- ⇒ 4WD tours and tracks
- ⇒ Ferry Cruises
- ⇒ Canoes/Kayaks
- ⇒ Golf
- ⇒ Scuba Diving
- ⇒ Hiking
- ⇒ Wildlife Spotting
- ⇒ Bushwalking
- ⇒ Sailing
- ⇒ Kite Surfing
- ⇒ Bird Watching
- ⇒ Photography
- ⇒ Swimming
- ⇒ Guided River tours

- ⇒ Whale Watching Cruises
- ⇒ Skydiving
- ⇒ Ballooning
- ⇒ Indoor Rock-climbing
- ⇒ Para flying

General Tourist Facilities accessible in the proposed Biosphere Reserve include:

- ⇒ Parking;
- ⇒ Lookout points;
- ⇒ Public toilets;
- ⇒ Showers;
- ⇒ Picnic Areas;
- ⇒ Telephones;
- ⇒ Barbeques;
- ⇒ Horse Trails;
- ⇒ Water;
- ⇒ Cafes;
- ⇒ Bird Trails;
- ⇒ Heritage Town walk;
- ⇒ Markets; and
- ⇒ Art Galleries. As the zone of the proposed Biosphere Reserve encompasses the urban areas of Noosa, many tourist facilities are located within these areas. In natural areas, these facilities may be limited. The following Maps provide a location of facilities in the Noosa National Park headland section and along the Noosa Trail Network:

MAP: Noosa National Park Headland Section Facilities

MAP: Noosa Trail Network Facilities

A sample of some of the well recognised and quality accommodation facilities within Noosa Shire include:

- ⇒ "Jabiru" Australian Bush Camp (1015 Cootharaba Road, Cootharaba) - a working horse and cattle farm with horse and rider training sessions.
- ⇒ Lake Weyba Cottages (79 Clarendon Road, Peregrine Beach) – bed and breakfast accommodation offering eco tours and use of recreation equipment;
- ⇒ Noosa North Shore Resort & Tourist Park (Beach Road, Noosa North Shore) – accommodation in a bushland setting. Offers nature-based activities including horse riding, bushwalking, canoeing and flora and fauna identification;
- ⇒ Halse Lodge Guesthouse (2 Halse Lane - Noosa Heads) - Set in 2 acres of rainforest, it is a fully restored 1880's building, listed by the National Trust with backpacker style accommodation;
- ⇒ Parkshores Sunshine (2 Park Crescent, Sunshine Beach) – apartment accommodation with ocean views; and
- ⇒ Eumarella Shores (251 Eumarella Road - Lake Weyba, Noosa) - self-catering cottages with absolute water frontage to Lake Weyba. They offer a range of activities including canoeing, fishing, horse riding and bushwalking.

There are a number of positive impacts of tourism at the present or foreseen in the Biosphere Reserve area:

- ⇒ Increased awareness of the environment;
- ⇒ Education about sustainable practices;
- ⇒ Recognition of the beauty of natural areas;
- ⇒ Economic benefits from visitor dollars;
- ⇒ Protection and management of natural areas to maintain visitor appeal; and
- ⇒ Increased recognition of the Noosa Shire as a tourism region.

The impact of tourism may also be negative and could include:

- ⇒ Expansion of coastal towns and proposals for land development;
- ⇒ Encroachment on coastal native vegetation and the landscape by development;
- ⇒ Physical impact on dune areas from trespass;
- ⇒ Other possible impacts highlighted in the Noosa National Park Management Plan include:
- ⇒ Trampling and vehicle damage;
- ⇒ Invasion by non-native plant species;
- ⇒ Clearing and development on surrounding land for residential purposes isolating areas from other remnant vegetation;
- ⇒ Nutrient pollution and increased pH levels of water and soils;
- ⇒ Development of roads, which fragment these communities; and

⇒ Altered drainage patterns from residential and road development.

5. BENEFITS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES TO LOCAL PEOPLE

The tourism industry has been the driver of much of the economic growth within Noosa Shire and the Sunshine Coast in recent years and continues to be an extremely important part of the economy. Tourism is estimated to add \$654million directly to the Noosa economy each year and to account for approximately 5,346 jobs in Noosa Shire (31.6% of employment).

Tourism within Noosa is predominantly experience based, with a strong reliance on eco-tourism. All tourism activities and supporting facilities that operate within Noosa Shire would benefit from the recognition of the region as a biosphere region (with the interaction of man and the environment). The development of recognition of biosphere status would elevate the attractiveness of the region for both domestic and international visitors.

The Noosa Tourism industry recognises that there are significant opportunities for improvements in the ecotourism experiences provided in Noosa Shire. The establishment of the Noosa Biosphere Reserve will enhance these opportunities considerably. In order to ensure that the ecotourism opportunities provided in the area achieve their true potential the Noosa Local Government has commissioned the development of an Ecotourism Strategy. The strategy is currently in draft form and an attachment to this submission as a supporting document.

In addition to tourism the Nominated Area has a number of other industries which included service provision to the resident and visitor populations, small scale manufacturing, commercial industries and wholesale/ retail trading. The local commercial sector has begun to embrace the opportunities for the development of competitive advantage that go along with cleaner production programs. In 2006 the Local and State Governments developed a partnership to provide extension services to local business to develop sustainable production practices. 17 local businesses have signed up to the EcoBiz program, which aims to build skills and capacity in environmental auditing and innovation.

It is envisaged that in future the Noosa commercial sector will increase its profile as a hub for sustainable business enterprise. Based on feedback-received to date from the business community and various other community groups, there is strong interest in the notion that the Noosa Biosphere can become a learning center to showcase a range of innovative sustainable commercial development projects. In late 2006 a new organization was founded in Noosa "Noosa Institute for Socio-economic Research" (NISR). The organization has as its goal to "advance the understanding and exploration of socio-economic phenomena across a broad range of disciplines; and to apply that understanding and exploration for the betterment of humankind". This group is currently developing a proposal for establishment of a 'business development incubator' for Noosa using the model developed by the Sirolli Institute International.

The creation of a Biosphere Reserve over the nominated area is seen as a significant positive step forwards in the continued development of an innovative, sustainable and productive commercial base for the local community.