

Noosa Shire Council
Pelican St Tewantin
Q 4565

Date: 11 September 2025

By email: dmp@noosa.qld.gov.au

RE: Public Consultation for Noosa Council's Draft Destination Management Plan (DMP)

To whom it may concern,

Noosa Shire Residents and Ratepayers Association Inc (NSRRA) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Destination Management Plan. Particularly as many of the issues covered go directly to concerns our group have raised with Council over several years.

Executive Summary

NSRRA supports the premise of the DMP, which correctly identifies the community's opinion that the tourism sector has unsustainably expanded at the expense of residents' interests. However, we are concerned Council's response fails to outline how this imbalance will be effectively addressed.

Many of the proposed DMP initiatives seem designed to raise further revenue for Council from the tourism industry, yet it remains unclear how this will control tourist numbers or mitigate the impacts of 'overtourism'.

Council funding of Tourism Noosa (TN)

NSRRA has long held concerns with Council's role in the compulsory acquisition of rates funds on behalf of an industry body, whose sole purpose is to expand the capacity and profitability of the tourism sector.

With Council expending considerable resources as it attempts to mitigate tourism impacts, it seems counterintuitive to also raise funds for tourism marketing, which obviously exacerbates the impacts of the sector.

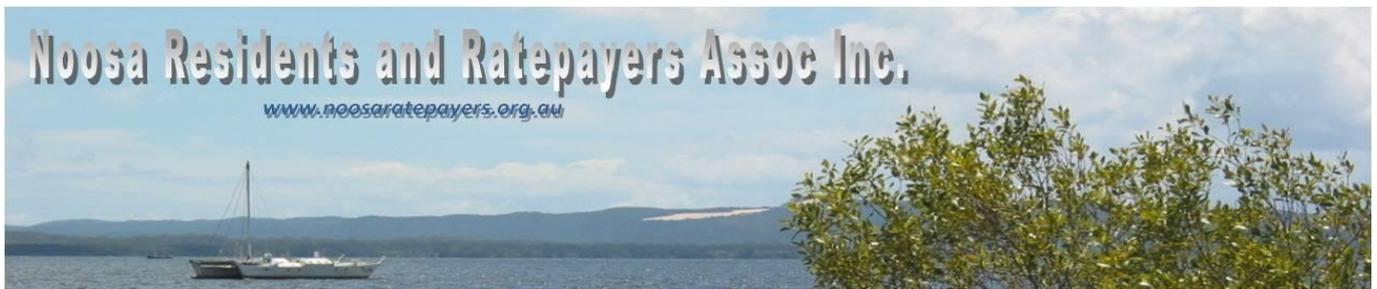
NSRRA notes Council's justification for this funding model is based on the theory that Tourism Noosa supports Council's 'Quality over Quantity' policy.

This approach supposedly aims to achieve a high value, low-impact tourism sector which encourages more affluent international guests and less day trippers, who are blamed for traffic congestion during peak periods.

Tourism Noosa's own data confirms their 'Quality over Quantity' marketing strategy has failed to limit tourism numbers. Their 2015/16 financial report stated the industry was valued at \$940 Million, however by 2023, the TN financial report boasts tourism's 'value' to Noosa Shire had boomed to \$1.74 Billion. This illustrates how TN oversaw a tourism sector increase of 46% in just six years.

These figures indicate international; domestic and drive tourist numbers are increasing overall. NSRRA notes much of the increased capacity for tourism in Noosa was accommodated by expansion of Short Term-Accommodation (STA) into coastal suburbs.

It's remarkable that Council continues to fund an industry lobby group who proactively supported STA expansion, which decimated rental availability, adversely impacted residential amenity and required significant Council resources to address, including new policy development.



Short Term Accommodation

NSRRA supports Council endeavouring to curb the proliferation of Short Stay Accommodation into residential areas and the attempt to limit its impact with introduction of Local Laws. Considering these efforts equate to 'shutting the gate after the horse has bolted', Council must continue to pursue mechanisms which facilitate the return of STA premises to the long-term rental market.

Visitor Carrying Capacity

Establishing a metric for measuring the sustainability of tourist numbers may be a useful tool for developing policy. Although many in the community would contend Noosa has already exceeded its 'Sustainable Visitor Carrying Capacity', when the major expansion of the tourism sector in recent years is considered.

Which again begs the question; why would Council continue funding a marketing strategy with a record of exponentially expanding the tourism sector, at the community's expense?

Congestion Charging/Dynamic Paid Parking

The NSRRA provides in principle support for paid parking and investigating the feasibility of a congestion tax. That said, this support is given on the proviso that any such measures are designed to exclude or limit any financial impost on Noosa Shire residents and our workforce.

Visitor Charge/Bed Tax

While NSRRA doesn't necessarily oppose introduction of a Visitor Charge/Bed Tax, we strongly object to any revenue raised being used to fund tourism marketing. We note this possibility is raised in DMP Fact Sheet 5:

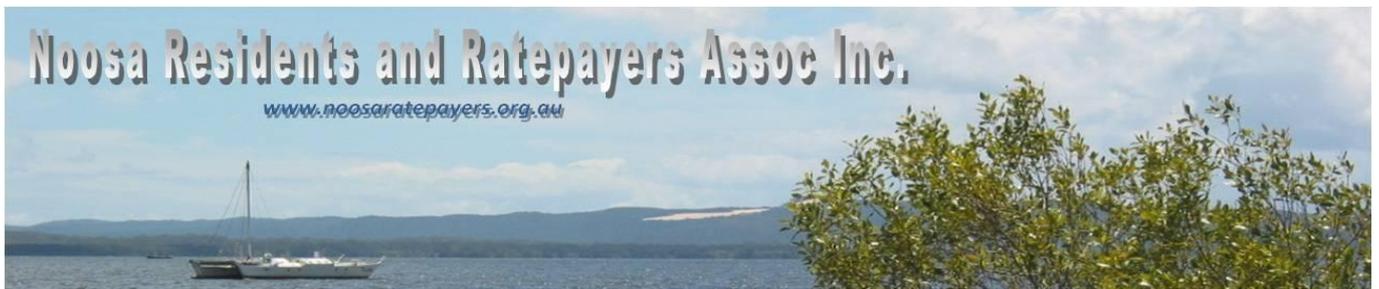
"In Noosa, the proceeds could go into a Community & Environment Benefit Fund and quarantined for use across community and environmental projects that matter to the community. It could also be used to fund tourism marketing and resilience initiatives"

Regenerative Tourism

Whilst the NSRRA supports the concept of 'regenerative tourism' to protect and theoretically improve the local environment, such a strategy brings into question the sustainability and wider environmental impact of the 'Quality over Quantity' tourism policy.

This strategy may protect or enhance the local environment; however, it disregards the environmental impact of international travel.

Taking this into account, it may be worth considering allocating a portion of revenue raised from a 'bed tax' to carbon sequestration projects which counter the significant environmental impact of international travel, and tourism in general.



Conclusion

NSRRA supports Council's pursuit of measures to mitigate the impact of overtourism on the community, yet as noted above, we are concerned the Destination Management Plan is too heavily focussed on simply raising revenue.

NSRRA believes this strategy is unlikely to considerably relieve congestion, control tourist numbers or lessen environmental impacts, particularly when Council continues to actively facilitate marketing, which can only increase tourism pressure.

Yours Sincerely,

President - Mr Adrian Williams