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Noosa Shire Council  
3 Pelican St Tewantin  
QLD 4565  
Date 03/07/2024

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## **Submission for the Noosaville Foreshore Infrastructure Master Plan and Concept Designs for Resilience**

### **To whom it may concern,**

The Noosa Shire Residents and Ratepayers Association Inc (NSRRA) thanks Noosa Shire Council (NSC) for this opportunity to provide feedback on the New Noosa Plan (NNP).

NSRRA is a community based not-for-profit voluntary organisation which exists for the benefit of residents and ratepayers within the Noosa Council area. We have a proud history of advocating on behalf of the community, hosting public forums, petitioning and lodging submissions on matters of importance to members and residents.

### **Summary:**

- NSRRA respects the need to consider the possible impacts of climate change on the long-term future of the foreshore, but considers the report fails to meet the desires of the community for look and feel, and for maintenance and improvements in the next 5-10 years.
- Some parts of the plan fail to, or only barely, meet current demand, while other parts present a structured, overbuilt scenario for the future.
- Planning to cope with sea level rise without data on possible flooding, overland flows and pumping provisions is risky.
- Walking paths must be separated from bike and scooter pathways.
- NSRRA would prefer to see more parking in the foreshore precinct and cannot support any loss of parking spaces or reliance on drop-off zones.
- NSRRA prefers to see Chaplin Park developed as a boating precinct with state of the art, purpose-built boat ramp facilities, trailer parking, washdown facilities, Noosa Outrigger storage, change rooms, toilets and showers, with the subsequent closure of the boat ramp on Gympie Terrace.

## Our Detailed Submission

*“The community did not express a desire for significant change to the ways they enjoy and experience the parklands.”*

The community said loud and clear that they loved the foreshore as it was, natural, relaxed, informal and quietly catering for a multitude of uses. They wanted a bit of a tart up, maintenance, and something done about the safety of shared pathways.

The draft plan resembles a Utopian dream; a manufactured, structured response that resembles a futuristic climate change ‘theme park’. It is not a response to what this community wanted. It is as if, having asked for a bit of a snack, maybe a bit more than cheese on toast, we’re being offered an eight-course gastronomic feast (far more than anyone can digest) that will not be offered for decades, if ever.

### Time Frame:

It is not adequately explained early in the document that it is intended that implementation will be incremental over decades and respond to sea level changes, rather than commence now in anticipation. The full dune system will not be needed or fully created for eight decades and may not even commence a decade from now.

**While it is admirable for Council to be considering the long-term future of the foreshore NSRRA considers too much emphasis has been placed on a future built form, theme park style for the long-term future and not enough on Council’s intentions in response to the immediate concerns of residents over the term of this Council and the next decade or so.**

Much of the important detail is missing from the staging of solutions. NSRRA doubts that the suggested priorities and timelines meet community expectations.

The plan applies 2024 priorities, understandings and technology to 2100 problems. We wonder if this is wise.

### Climate Change:

In 2024 climate change isn’t such an exact science that we can predict what the effects will be in specific locations. All we know is there’ll be change, and probably more extremes (of heat and cold, dry and wet, and weather events). So why are we now, in 2024 planning for a dark and shady foreshore as if we know too much heat is all we’ll care about next year or even in a decade or two?

### Planning for Tidal Rise Alone is Risky

*“This strategy retains an element of risk, including worsening flooding during significant storms courtesy of overland flow”.*

The draft plan appears to respond **only** to tidal inundations from sea rise projections into the next century. The closing statements indicate overland flows and river flood events and the need for sumps and pumping have not been adequately considered. These elements (which we believe are expected to be more frequent and severe with climate change) present a risk not covered in the proposals. This seems an unacceptable position on which to base a foreshore infrastructure plan beginning now and stretching into the next century.

**NSRRA considers that the solutions presented in this plan have the potential to further worsen inland flooding and result in costly, unforeseen consequences.**

The draft very lightly touches on the need for pumping but is exceptionally short of detailed information on how to deal with the potential flooding hazards.

This is a crucial point.

**Any plan that purports to be a long-term future solution needs more detailed, expert opinion, and should include data projections on riverine and inland flooding before any decisions are made about dunes, new infrastructure, boardwalks, plantings and such.**

### **Dune Formation**

Given the above comments it is unclear whether the proposed dune formation would present an adequate, long-term solution or impose further risk. The ecological effects on the river of pumping sand onto the foreshore to create the dunes is also unclear and needs to be investigated.

We note the proposal to vegetate the dunes but it is still unclear how they might cope with a cyclone or flooding event. Experience in the river mouth area and Main Beach has shown that while sand pumping can work it is at best a temporary solution.

### **Infrastructure and Built Form**

*“The community showed a strong desire to retain the current feel of the foreshore, with environmentally friendly infrastructure and improvements”*

The plan presents a significant departure from the current look and feel of the foreshore parklands, and in the way they can be enjoyed and experienced. In this respect it fails as a response to the community’s stated aspirations.

**The preponderance of concrete, boardwalk, steel, and overly built form in the concept designs is at odds with the community’s desire to retain the area as primarily ‘natural’.**

The use of what NSRRA considers inappropriate imagery as concept examples heightens the perception that the intention is to create a city park with massive built form and structured uses.

*“Issues with the public infrastructure predominantly highlighted concerns regarding toilet facilities, pathways and vehicles. These issues specifically pointed to inadequate maintenance, conflicts between pedestrians and other users, parking and showers/change room facilities.”*

The community was expecting a plan for the foreseeable future; a plan that responded to the needs of this community in this term of Council and perhaps the next; a plan that offered improvements to a park that is loved by all but needs some maintenance and upgrading. They had simple wishes, none of which appear to have been considered seriously in this draft plan.

**NSRRA respects the need to consider the long-term effects of climate change, but there is also a need for Council to meet the expectations and needs of the current community in the shorter term.**

### **Shared Pathways:**

**This is an immediate a significant issue that is not adequately addressed.** If Noosa wants to be a leader in futuristic design it needs to anticipate the future, not design for today.

The draft plan points out that the use of powered personal mobility devices such as electric bikes and scooters is an emerging trend. NSRRA believes the use of these vehicles and others will become more widespread and more problematic if infrastructure is not specifically designed for their use.

The foreshore plan should recognise the conflicts and safety issues that already arise on shared pathways and provide innovative and realistic solutions for the future.

**We do not believe shared pathways are the way of the future, and we find it abhorrent that the community is being asked to choose between parking and separated pathways. Both should be possible.**

**With an expanding and ageing population and the considerable population changes that will occur in residential accommodation in the area via amendments to the Noosa Plan NSRRA believes separate pathways for bikes and scooters are essential.**

The draft plan also fails to recognise that as the uptake of these devices increases there will be a need for areas to park bikes and scooters.

### **Parking and Traffic:**

**Any proposal to reduce parking is seen by the community as a further limitation on access to the parklands for residents that do not live within walking distance, and can't be supported.**

This is particularly so because the plan has been devised in isolation from any up-to-date Shire-wide traffic and parking strategy, and without recognition of the impact mooted Noosa Plan changes will have on the area and traffic flows.

While a 'drop off and pick up point' might provide a partial solution it's hard to conjure up the phantom drivers that will navigate through the area to drop off aging retirees, the disabled or young families and then disappear into the ether until it's time to pick them up. It's also hard to imagine that parking some kilometre or more away will provide any realistic solution for most users, particularly the aged and disabled.

It should be noted that drop-off zones require twice the amount of traffic using access and egress roads.

**There is not enough disabled parking in the proposed plan.** It is noted that the proposal reduces the number of disabled parking spots, as well as reducing the spread throughout the area. A reliance on drop-off zones further reduces the independence of disabled drivers and wrongly assumes they have access to and are dependent on an abled driver.

**NSRRA supports the introduction of paid and timed parking.**

**The proposal to basically eliminate parking and access from Thomas St can't be supported in the foreseeable future.**

Thomas Street is a major access point to and from the precinct and the proposed changes will have significant impact on businesses and traffic in other areas of Noosaville, particularly on traffic flow from and onto Weyba Road, Noosa Drive, Gibson Road and Mary Street.

Without a comprehensive traffic and transport strategy that incorporates the changes mooted in this document, changes in the nature of the surrounding area being prosed in amendments to the Noosa Plan, and expected population and visitation increases it is difficult to comment meaningfully on this plan and it should not be considered or adopted without a more comprehensive traffic plan.

### **Boating Facilities:**

Given the community consultation response on priorities for the foreshore showed boating was not a significant issue for most users, the retention of the boat ramp within the foreshore precinct seems out of keeping with the overall plan and proposed future of the park. Additionally, the proposed facilities for boat ramp and trailer parking appear to be a solution that will be difficult, if not unworkable, for boat owners. Trailer parking in residential streets is not acceptable.

The need for upgraded boating facilities is already a major issue for some segments of the community, and will need to be addressed by Council in the near future. NSRRA would like to see Council work with MSQ and come up with a workable and realistic plan for boating facilities in another location rather than continue with a boat ramp and trailer parking in the midst of a community use area. In this regard **Council may reconsider the proposals for Chaplin Park, plan to close the existing ramp and develop a new, upgraded boating facility in Chaplin Park with up-to-date ramp design and more trailer parking.** This solution would add more useable parkland in the heart of the foreshore, minimise the safety risks inherent in a boating ramp in the

middle of shared community space, and should be used to add additional parking to offset reductions elsewhere.

### **The Yacht Club Precinct and Chaplin Park:**

NSRRA is not convinced the plan presents a workable solution for the future. At best it **may** provide for current use, but it is not clear how parking, storage and access to the water will operate for Noosa Outriggers or for other non-powered water craft. For non-powered craft, that are carried from vehicles to the water, parking is inadequate and a long way from boat launch areas.

**NSRRA would prefer to see Noosa Outriggers co-located with a new boat ramp in Chaplin Park, along with adequate storage, shared toilets, change rooms and showering facilities.** The future of the commercial slipway is unclear. Noosa needs a facility of this nature. Removal of the slipway cannot be decided in isolation from knowing where it will be located in the future. It may be in the best spot at the moment.

Generally, while development of Chaplin Park as a natural recreation area as desirable there are other recreational uses of the river that require infrastructure and parking.

**NSRRA believe the plan fails to achieve a balance between general recreational parkland and providing infrastructure for powered and un-powered boating activities and associated parking.** Chaplin Park provides an opportunity to redress this. NSRRA supports the retention of a dog off-leash area in Chaplin Park.

### **Children's Playground:**

**NSRRA considers one children's playground (located at Pirate Park) is sufficient for the foreshore.**

Given the aging population, the proposed increase in population in the coastal area, and increasing tourism, NSRRA considers provision of new recreational green space, including children's playgrounds, should be away from tourist zones, clearly targeted for residents, and easily accessed by car with sufficient parking provided.

### **Other Issues:**

NSRRA supports the provision of a new toilet block.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Kind Regards,



Adrian Williams  
President

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