

## **Inquiry into Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Democratic Plebiscites) Bill 2007**

**Submission** by Mr Barry Lazarus  
21 August 2007

### **SUMMARY**

Unlike the Maroochy and Caloundra shires, Noosa Heads and the Shire of Noosa have been carefully developed into the iconic green low rise coastal town that it now is. It is such a place because it is the will of the ratepayers. That will has been astutely managed by a council that is truly representative of the community. The Council has fought many, many battles (against developers and others) on behalf of the town and has enjoyed the full support, financial backing and encouragement of a broad conservation push not found in other Sunshine Coast Shires. All of these attributes are reflected in the high property values the shire enjoys.

**Noosa Shire is the world recognised place it is because of a lot of hard work, tough decisions, lobbying, commitment and a search for "world's best practice" in sustainability, ecological protection, lifestyle and liveability. Everyone in the shire feels a little bit of ownership in our beautiful town. We strongly reject the attempt by this government to "dumb it down" to an "also ran" and second rate part of a coastal metropolis. The Beattie Government is trying to undemocratically bulldoze Noosa into something it doesn't want to be! We deserve and demand the right to vote on this matter as the will of the people is not being carried out.**

### **BODY OF SUBMISSION**

#### **To the Chairperson.**

I moved to Noosa from Melbourne with my young family in 1980. I did so having visited it a number of times and being impressed with the low key, eco friendly uncrowded and unspoiled feel of the town. The population then was in the order of 8000 people across the shire.

The Shire had had great foundations put in place. Dr Arthur Harrold a retired Melbourne doctor had secured land from government for the Noosa National Park. This became a series of interlinked wilderness areas complete with walkways covering many hundreds of acres. As you will see later these parks have been hugely expanded with ratepayers support and funding.

In the 80's the pressure built from development bodies to radically change the shape of Noosa. This pressure included moves to

- Develop Noosa National Park into beachfront blocks (defeated by Noosa parks assn.)
- Build high rise in all of Hastings St (defeated by local action group and R.Hinze)
- Build high rise in much of shire area (defeated by Council)
- Build a tourist centre in Nat'l Park(def. Noosa parks assn)
- Build a huge resort/jetport on Nth Shore(def. Court/Council)
- Build ecologically unsustainable Marina (def. Council)
- Build 6 story hotel Hastings St. (won. Bjelke Petersen & friends)
- Build high density on Noosa/Hastings st Hill(def Court/Council)
- Build Club Med on Spit (def. local action group) etc. etc. etc. etc. etc. etc. etc.etc.etc. The list could be pages longer!!

As a sign of the community's agreement with a "greening of Noosa" approach taken by the community's council, ratepayers agreed by vote to have a "green levy" added to their rates. This money is used to acquire more land for national parks in an ongoing attempt to increase the green buffers in the shire.

Also during the 80's other pro conservation plans were put in place. Amongst them were

- Tree planting working bees
- A policy of NO TRAFFIC LIGHTS
- Encouragement of roundabouts and green median areas on roads
- A shire wide signage policy
- Shire wide vegetation protection policies
- A river plan
- Noosa Future Directions...an organisation driving ecologically sustainable economic growth
- A population cap limiting the developable land.
- Conversion of caravan parks into rain forests.
- Pumping of sand on to the main beach
- Continual extension of national parks.
- Cultural and sporting functions and events
- The world recognised and world class Noosa Long Weekend culture celebration etc. etc. etc. etc. etc. Pages of initiatives have been omitted for brevity

To put balance to my stated perspective on Noosa I am both a citizen of the shire and am involved in the development industry in the same environment. I believe that the strictures put on developers by the Noosa Shire add quality to the developments and add value to the shire and it's amenity. I fully support the stand they have taken in the past and sincerely hope it continues in the future.

By comparison, we have seen other Sunshine Coast shires allow incredibly high densities of residential development. They also seem to have a policy that says, "if it isn't neon, and doesn't move.....concrete it!" There appears to be absolutely no regard for the pollution, crime, traffic levels, stress and user unfriendliness that high density living is recognized for globally.

Probably nothing speaks louder for Noosa than the fact that people from all walks of life aspire to live in the environment that we proudly call our town. As I have said previously.....everyone in the Noosa community feels a little bit of ownership in our wonderful community....I know that they, like me feel outrage at the undemocratic bulldozing that the robots, bureaucrats, power seekers and doppelgangers of the Beattie government are trying foist upon us. We deserve and demand the right to a vote on this matter as our needs are not being considered or canvassed.

I look forward to the opportunity to speak to the Senate Committee and ask that should an opportunity to address or discuss these matters with you arise, I be considered.

Barry Lazarus