



2024 State Election Priorities for Noosa Shire

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SUMMARY OF KEY PRIORITIES

Local planning authority

1. Commitment from Queensland Government and political parties:
 - Retain local authority over planning decisions that align with local planning schemes.
 - Avoid a one-size-fits-all approach to development and planning across SEQ (South East Queensland).
 - Ensure planning and development decisions align with local characteristics, community values, and infrastructure capacity.
2. Legislative changes:
 - Amend recent legislation that allows certain developments to bypass local planning processes.
 - Ensure local context and values and planning schemes are considered, and not overridden by state-imposed decisions or targets.

Public transport

1. Increased investment in public transport:
 - Enhance frequency and reach of bus services throughout Noosa.
 - More electric buses on existing routes.
 - Improve connectivity to regional destinations like Sunshine Coast Airport and Maroochydore CBD.
2. Queensland Government funding for on-demand transport:
 - Provide equitable funding for a local on-demand transport system during peak times.
 - Support through funding the existing Go Noosa program, including on-demand bus and cab services.
 - Address insufficient services to hinterland towns and villages.

Tewantin Bypass

1. Commitment to complete the Tewantin Bypass:
 - Immediate investment of \$1.4 million for the business case.
 - Ongoing commitment to project delivery.
 - Address congestion and improve traffic flow, safety, and regional growth.

Short-term accommodation data

1. Mandate implementation of a state-coordinated registration system:
 - Registration system for STA booking data and real property addresses through a data-sharing agreement.
 - Enables improved and consistent oversight of STA activities by local government.
 - Support local councils with accurate data for policy and regulatory purposes.
2. Statewide code of conduct:
 - Uniform code of conduct standards across Queensland but still allow councils to develop local responses to compliance.

Adopt-a-Worker program

1. Funding for pilot program:
 - Seek \$235,000 to trial the 'Adopt-a-Worker' program.
 - Utilise under-occupied dwellings to provide affordable workforce accommodation.
2. Address housing crisis:
 - Provide affordable accommodation for workers and mitigate the impact on local businesses and services.

Crisis accommodation

1. Increase funding for crisis accommodation facilities:
 - Build and operate fit-for-purpose facilities for vulnerable sectors, families escaping domestic violence and single older people.
 - Address the severe shortage of suitable crisis and emergency accommodation in Noosa and the Sunshine Coast region.

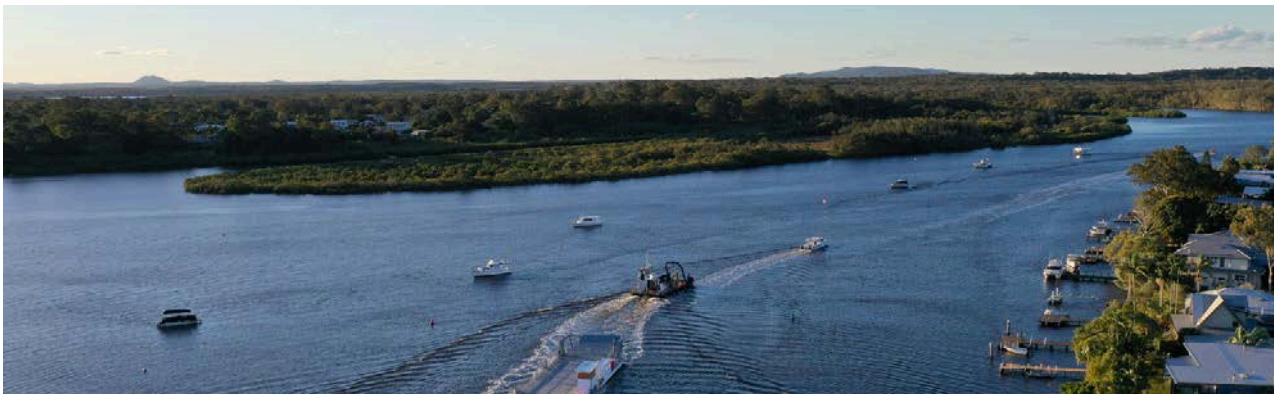
Youth mental health services

1. Expansion of Queensland health services:
 - Increase funding for local, non-governmental youth mental health services.
 - Focus on crisis intervention, support and early intervention.
2. Address service gaps:
 - Establish Queensland Health mental health services in Noosa, including for children and adolescents.
 - Improve access to mental health services and reduce wait times for local youth.

NOOSA TO RETAIN LOCAL PLANNING

Noosa Council calls for a commitment from the Queensland Government and all political parties that councils retain authority over local planning decisions. Noosa Council seeks assurances, and for changes to be made to recent legislation, to avoid a one-size fits all approach across the SEQ region, and that local planning is undertaken at the fine-grained local scale.

This ensures that development aligns with the specific characteristics, community values, and infrastructure capacity of the local area. Council is advocating for planning decisions that reflect the distinct needs and values of the Noosa community.



The Queensland Government is increasingly encroaching on the local planning jurisdiction with the introduction of legislation that allows certain development proposals to bypass local government development assessment processes and planning schemes, by directing councils to amend planning schemes to meet SEQRP growth targets. Recent state legislation increasingly overrides local government planning processes in Noosa Shire. This includes allowing state-facilitated developments, particularly affordable housing under HAAPOLA, to bypass local planning schemes. Additionally, state-directed consultants are determining how local dwelling targets are met, ignoring local

context, community values, and infrastructure capacities. This encroachment undermines local governance, disempowers local councils and potentially degrades the unique character and community values of Noosa Shire.

This issue is crucial for preserving Noosa's unique characteristics, such as its low-rise, compact settlement pattern and infrastructure capacity. State-imposed planning changes threaten to alter Noosa's distinct sense of place. These changes lead to significant community backlash, potentially damaging the reputations of both the State Government and Noosa Council.

TRANSPORT

Frequency of bus services

Council seeks increased investment in public transport to enhance frequency and reach of bus services throughout Noosa. Council is strongly committed to increasing public transport usage, offering different options and reducing traffic congestion in key locations. Increased frequency and reach of bus services across Noosa and to regional destinations such as Sunshine Coast Airport and Maroochydore CBD are urgently required.

Vehicle traffic congestion in Noosa and carparking availability during peak times is a critical issue due to the absence of a reliable, accessible public transport network and cannot be resolved with more private vehicle road infrastructure.

Council seeks more electric buses in Noosa for existing bus routes.

Improved public transport is seen as the most effective solution to support Noosa residents, visitors and bolster the regional economy. Connecting communities to important regional infrastructure and services such as Sunshine Coast Airport and Maroochydore CBD is a crucial investment in our overall economy.

Improvements should consider enhanced bus routes, increased frequency, accessibility, connectivity and integration with other transport modes to better service the connecting bus services to the Cooroy and Nambour Railway Stations.

Council wants the current trial of 50-cent bus and rail fares to be made permanent alongside the introduction of EFTPOS tap and go payments.





State Government funding for on-demand transport

Council seeks to secure equitable funding from the Queensland Government for a local on-demand transport system that operates during peak times across Noosa. This aligns with funding support provided to other regional areas such as Toowoomba, Hervey Bay, Ipswich and the Gold Coast.

Noosa Council currently provides significant funding for its Go Noosa program, which provides on-demand bus and Council Cab services during peak times. This program is funded by a \$900,000 annual levy on property rates.

Specific public transport issues are the insufficient services to Noosa's hinterland towns and villages such as Pomona, Kin Kin, Cooran, Boreen Point, Cootharaba, Cooroibah, Doonan and Tinbeerwah. Ideally Noosa Council would like to provide a smaller, agile bus fleet which can better navigate local destinations such as the Noosa Spit and Noosa National Park, with high frequency service that responds to resident and visitor demands. A demand orientated public transport system is considered the best solution to reduce traffic congestion, increase mobility for residents and reduce energy consumption and emissions.

TEWANTIN BYPASS



Council seeks Queensland Government’s commitment to complete the next stages of the Tewantin Bypass under the Noosa Demanding Agreement (April 2000). This will significantly improve traffic flow, enhance safety, support regional growth, and boost economic activity.

Council seeks an immediate investment of \$1.4 million for the business case with an ongoing commitment to project delivery to begin within the next two years.

Beckmans Road serves as the current Tewantin bypass route to ease traffic congestion through Tewantin. It is also the primary access route to Noosaville State School and St Teresa’s Secondary College and experiences significant congestion between Cooroy-Noosa Road and Eumundi-Noosa Road during peak periods. Tackling this congestion is essential to enhancing travel efficiency, reducing accident risks, and managing increased traffic due to population growth.

Council appreciates and acknowledges the current government’s completion of Stage 1, which involved a roundabout at the Cooroy-Noosa Road and Beckmans Road intersection.

However additional funding is required to progress future stages beyond planning. The future link must strike a balance between providing an efficient regional transport link that enhances Beckmans Road compared with travelling through Tewantin and offering a safe, accessible route that meets local community needs.

SHORT TERM ACCOMMODATION

Council seeks the Queensland Government to mandate the implementation of a registration system for validated short-term accommodation (STA) booking data, including real property addresses through a data-sharing agreement.

This is crucial to allow local councils to effectively manage STA activity in their communities and better facilitate regulatory activity.

Local governments currently obtain data on STAs by accessing various data scraped platforms.

Recent research conducted by the University of Queensland (UQ), commissioned by the Queensland Government, highlighted that the lack of accurate STA data hampers the ability to verify claims regarding geographical location, and makes it difficult to accurately evaluate the economic impacts of STA in a meaningful way.

A mandatory STA register would enable local governments, such as Noosa, to more effectively undertake regulation, enforcement and ongoing policy development.

Validated data would provide a clearer understanding of the impact of STA on housing supply, and better support economic development and tourism efforts. Noosa supports the Queensland Government taking a greater and more consistent approach to STA, however it is critical that local governments retain their ability to levy so they can fund their management and regulation of STA activities and any associated impacts in their local communities. A statewide code of conduct would help set uniform standards across Queensland, however, this should not prevent councils from developing their own local policy response and enforcing their own codes of conduct.



ADOPT-A-WORKER



To address Noosa Shire’s number one economic and social challenge - a lack of affordable worker accommodation - Noosa Council, in partnership with Noosa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tourism Noosa, and the Hastings Street Association, seeks support from State Government to trial a comprehensive ‘Adopt-a-Worker’ program.

Council seeks a \$235,000 funding commitment to pilot this innovative program which if successful could be rolled out across Queensland.

The initiative provides an innovative, centrally managed program to utilise existing under-occupied accommodation dwellings and provide a service for employees of businesses struggling due to staffing issues relating to the lack of available and affordable housing.

This program looks to maximise the use of existing housing stock that may be under occupied by one or two people in a 3- 4 bedroom home. It offers the assurance, process and controls that many homeowners are seeking when considering sharing their homes.

ADDRESSING NOOSA'S LACK OF AFFORDABLE WORKER ACCOMMODATION

Noosa Shire's economic growth and resilience are at risk due to a severe lack of affordable workforce housing, affecting the ability of its 7770 businesses to offer competitively priced products and services.

Originally impacting service industries such as tourism and retail, the housing crisis now impacts essential workers, including nurses, doctors, and teachers. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Noosa has experienced nearly a 60% jump in house prices. The arrival of online booking platforms have resulted in a significant increase in short-stay accommodation. This has had a major impact on residential amenity and the availability of long-term rentals.

Since 2019, Noosa has lost over 606 retail businesses and 324 accommodation and food service establishments, primarily due to staff shortages from the housing crisis. Noosa Council proposes to utilise the estimated 10,000 private dwellings with latent room capacity, to provide affordable workforce accommodation to resident workers.

The Adopt-a-Worker program offers a viable short to medium-term solution to Noosa's worker attraction and retention issues, allowing time for longer-term affordable housing solutions to be developed by local and state authorities.



CRISIS ACCOMMODATION

Council seeks an increase in funding to build and operate fit-for-purpose crisis/emergency accommodation facilities in Noosa for vulnerable sectors such as families leaving domestic violence and single older people. This would allow the shire to safely and appropriately support these people.



Currently, the Sunshine Coast faces a severe shortage of suitable crisis and emergency accommodation – a situation exacerbated by recent funding changes and increased demands on existing housing stock.

There is an excessive reliance on temporary solutions like hotels and motels, which has been exacerbated by the Queensland Government’s Immediate Housing Response initiative. This style of accommodation often falls short in quality, especially during peak seasons, and is unsuitable for extended stays. This dependency can add additional financial strain and exacerbate trauma.

Furthermore, the availability of comprehensive support services is limited, and the transition to long-term housing stability is often ineffective. As a result, individuals facing imminent homelessness or exiting a crisis situation frequently end up sleeping rough, leading to a downward spiral into long-term homelessness.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



Council is seeking the expansion of Queensland Health services into Noosa and an increase in funding for non-governmental organisations to deliver locally based youth mental health services, with a strong focus on crisis intervention support.

The Queensland Mental Health Commission has highlighted the challenges facing youth mental health services, including the need for early intervention, more targeted, youth-friendly initiatives and improved availability and sufficiency of these services, particularly in regional areas like the Sunshine Coast.

Currently, there are no Queensland Health mental health services available in Noosa, and specifically, no services for children and adolescents. Young people in need of government-funded mental health services must travel to Maroochydore or Gympie.

Given the extensive regional coverage of these services and high demand, accessing these services in a timely manner can be challenging, especially during a crisis. Transportation issues further complicate access due to limited public transport options or the availability or willingness of someone to assist.

Local services are frequently overwhelmed, leading to long wait times and limited availability, which can worsen mental health issues among adolescents. This situation has raised concerns among healthcare providers and the community, highlighting the urgent need for expanded resources and improved service delivery models in Noosa.



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