

# Civic suffering impaired vision

## Retail plan should engage environmental image

By PETER GARDINER

The Noosa town planner who helped guide the vision for the Noosa business centre, Paul Summers, has added his voice to those casting doubts over the wisdom of creating a retailing giant out of Noosa Civic.

Mr Summers believes Noosa risks losing its way as a community if it fails to ensure that the stage three development by Stockwell is not primarily an employment node that looks to trade on Noosa's environmental savvy.

Mr Summers said the retail-dominated proposal put to council by Stockwell is clearly outside the Noosa Plan and not the sort of strategic planning that saw Noosa recognised as an official Biosphere.

"The Biosphere recognition was not only acknowledgement of what Noosa had done to get where it is today, but what it planned to do in the future," Mr Summers said.



Town planner Paul Summers.

He said the preferred way forward for the business centre was to include an educational component which could incorporate a strong environmental theme.

The area could also include some sort of conference facilities.

He said to successfully develop the sort of smart industries involved, quite a deal of effort and research was

needed, as well as involving a certain amount of risk.

"From my experience Stockwell is not into taking risks," Mr Summers said.

Maroochydore Chamber of Commerce, unlike its Noosa counterpart, is not in favour of the stage three retail expansion.

According to Maroochydore chamber president Myles McNamara, if Stockwell was granted its application, the shopping centre would be about the size of the Sunshine Plaza - "if not larger".

Mr McNamara said that would throw out the hierarchal retailing balance of the Sunshine Coast to the detriment of the overall community.

"I do believe that there should be some additional retailing at Noosa Civic if it is to properly fulfil its function," Mr McNamara said.

But he also said the scale of the proposed shopping centre expansion was way outside the intent of the Noosa Plan.