

History wars

Reply to Tony Wellington (NN, October 23) and Paul Summers (NN, October 27).

These correspondents have taken significant poetic licence in their claims about my original letter outlining the origin of Noosa's population cap (NN, October 20).

Despite their apparent preoccupation with heroes and villains, thankfully, in amongst their invective, Tony and Paul both confirm my original proposition.

These are the historical facts:

1) The idea of a planning scheme based on ecological carrying capacity originated in Noosa Council's 1984 Draft Strategic Plan. In the absence of sophisticated technology and modern planning legislation, the then town planner estimated the carrying capacity of the coastal areas of Noosa ("the population cap") at 40,000 people;

(2) In the 1997 Noosa Strategic Plan, planning tools were finessed and the figure was calculated against that plan and found to be 39,450;

(3) In January 2004 Paul Summers revised the approach and calculated the figure and found it to be 40,150;

(4) Credit for the idea for an ecological model to underpin the Noosa planning strategy goes back to the 1982 to 1985 Noosa Council and then planning staff;

(5) Credit for its confirmation, consolidation and realisation is shared across a wide range of people since then.

Ironically, and despite the vagaries of the 1980s and the sophistication of recent times, the carrying capacity of Noosa's coastal zone has been confirmed at a figure surprisingly close to the original calculation (150 people more than estimated in 1984).

I have not been so brazen to suggest that any one individual deserves the overall credit.

There are many, including specific councillors, specific planning consultants, specific planning staff, specific mayors and the often overlooked members of the community who, behind the scenes and often thanklessly, have fought the real battles for Noosa.

PETER BYCROFT
Sunshine Beach