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Anecdotes & Achievements on Planning in Noosa

A reflection on 23 years of planning in the former Noosa Shire



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Introduction

- o About eras of planning in Noosa
- o Anecdotal
- o Achievements of various Councils
- o Planners, planning, politics and pettiness
- o Snapshots only of 3-4 years period

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About the Presenter

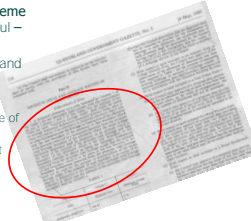
- o Raised on the Gold Coast
- o Witnessed firsthand the changes
- o Hills, swamps and creeks there one day, gone the next
- o Technical Officer (Planning) and Planning Officer on the Gold Coast 1981-1986
 - Principal responsibilities – development assessment
- o Move to Noosa 1987
- o Deputy Shire Planner and Manager Strategic Planning 1987-2002
 - Principal responsibilities – plan-making – drafting and implementing Noosa's various planning instruments
- o 2003- Paul Summers Planning Strategies
 - Queensland Folk Federation
 - Community organisations



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1982-85 Inheritance

- o 1982-85 Council was at one time working on 14 different planning instruments
- o In its 3-years it finalised just one legal instrument – **Noosa's 1985 Planning Scheme** (though there were a number of unlawful – read unenforceable instruments)
- o One of the worst documents in Queensland (not quite as bad as Pioneer though!)
- o Some examples:
 - Use definitions that were not in the Table of Zones
 - Uses in the Table of Zones that were not defined
 - **And the classic ...**



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Inheritance Scheme Extract

- o For the purpose of the Table the term "minimum average width" shall mean the mean or average horizontal dimension measured between those sides or other boundaries of an allotment or proposed allotment which side or other boundaries join the frontage or road access of the allotment with the rear boundary of the allotment or that boundary which is furthestmost removed in a horizontal direction from the principle road frontage boundary of the allotment where the mean average horizontal dimension shall be measured on an azimuth which is the mean of the azimuth of the principle road frontage and that boundary of the allotment which is the rear boundary or the boundary referred to above as being the boundary furthestmost removed from the principle road frontage except that the azimuth of that boundary which is to be taken as the rear boundary or the boundary furthestmost removed from the principle road frontage shall not be used for the purpose of determination of the mean average width if the azimuth of such boundary is in excess of 45 degrees in disposition to the azimuth of the principle road frontage boundary in which case the azimuth of the principle road frontage boundary shall be utilised

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1985-1988 Wilderness

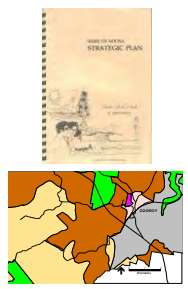
- o Council meetings and committee meetings usually ran for days with multiple staff in attendance throughout!
- o The approve anything, anywhere, anytime Council:
 - No 1 Hastings Street, Leisuremark, Settlers Cove, etc.
 - Shell Noosa
 - Shell Tewantin
- o The Council had a reputation across Queensland as a place where planners did not go
- o **So why go ...**
- o ... Raul Weychardt the man of principle



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1985-1988 Planning Achievements

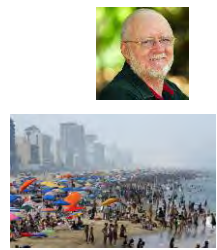
- Between 1982 and 1986 successive Council had attempted to complete a strategic plan – a whole of Shire land use strategy – without success
- The 1982-1985 Council's one major planning achievement - 1988 Strategic Plan
- Drafted February-June 1987, through the then Department of Local Government September 1987, advertised and gazetted by February 1988
- Absolutely impossible today
- Owed almost nothing to the preceding work
- Reason why it was so important later ...



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1988-1991 Finding the Way

- 1988-1991 Council elected with Noel Playford as Shire Chairman
 - The former Shire Chairman and the 6 other Councillors on the Planning & Development Committee were coincidentally (?) voted off
- Difficult early days – lack of trust on both sides
 - North Shore policy positions as initial Ice breaker
- Recognition of common goals:
 - Protection of character and place
 - Desire to carry out better and more detailed planning
 - What residents cherished or wanted, visitors loved
- Recognition that there were major problems with the base planning instruments and a looming boom with the tools to deal with it



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1988-1991 Planning Achievements

- Planning Scheme document replaced, leaving zoning framework in place – first and only time done in Queensland – draft in 1989 gazetted 1990
 - Duplex incentives, chewing up population capacity
- Absolute height controls introduced – removing the Council's power to approve buildings of over 4 storeys
 - Previous Councils had always retained a reserve power – similar to that exercised to get the 'no building, building' No 1 Hastings Street approved
- Noosa Hill Development Control Plan, draft 1989 gazetted 1991
 - Gave certainty where none existed previously
 - Previously subdivisible into 4 lots, now capable of 100-120 units along the valley floor



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1991-1994 Boom-time

- Noel Playford re-elected as mayor
- All Councillors that could be re-elected were
- Significant change to planning legislation commenced
- Changes in State government
- Major development boom:
 - Noosa North Shore - 4 resorts, two golf courses, public marina, town centre, 1400 units, 600 hotel suites, 300 staff accommodation, airstrip to jet standard, bridge, navigable connector via Lake Coorabah to river
- Multiple court cases
 - Major Noosa North Shore Leisuremark court case won by Council, but on one ground only – lack of compliance with the 1988 Strategic Plan
 - Owner of the 'banana plantation' who had objected to the Noosa Hill DCP in 1989/90:
 - Objected to his rates valuation of \$1,000,000 (or max. \$10,000 per unit under the DCP)
 - Claimed compensation for loss of value to the tune of \$10,000,000
 - Later sold the land for \$27,000,000
 - But continued the compensation claim until it was decided in 2007 – favourably for the Council



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1991-1994 Planning Achievements

- Major and multiple changes to rural subdivision provisions
- Review of all planning scheme policies
- Pomona Streetscape
- Cooroy DCP
- Marcus DCP
- Noosa North Shore DCP
 - Prepared by consultants
 - Policy content was fine
 - Drafting rigour and integrity was dreadful
 - A story not told publicly before:
 - Monday: Flawed document recommended to Council by a Committee-of-the-whole
 - Wednesday: Rewritten in its entirety in 24 hours
 - Thursday: Adopted by the Council



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1994-1997 Giving the 'Population Cap' Life

- Noel Playford re-elected as mayor
- Once again, all Councillors that could be re-elected were
- Boom period continues, the old 7-year boom-bust cycle, had turned into a 14-year boom cycle
- Embarked on a major planning undertaking to prepare a new planning scheme:
 - All previous exercises were based on the 1985 zoning framework
 - Planning with one armed tied behind your back

1994-1997 Planning Achievements

- Noosa Junction Streetscape
- Strategic Plan + its 34 planning studies
- Very fine level analysis and outcomes
- The expression 'population cap' does not appear in:
 - The Strategic Plan or
 - Any of its supporting studies
- In fact, throughout the process the expression was not used until the plan went to advertising
- The first time the expression was used was:
 - By Mayor Playford, without notice to staff
 - 2 days before the release of the plan to the public; and
 - At its media release on 11 December 1996
- A population cap does not exist and cannot exist under a Westminster system of government

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1997-2001 Coping with Change

- Noel Playford stood down as mayor, Bob Abbot elected
- Once again, all Councillors that could be re-elected were
- Major upheaval with the introduction of the *Integrated Planning Act* heralding completely different theories and implementation methods for undertaking plan-making and development assessment
- The start of the State Government in Queensland dominating planning – something that both sides of politics had sworn would never happen
- These two elements dramatically changed planning in Queensland:
 - Removing the ability for plans to have strategic elements
 - Embedding State agencies as integral parts of plan-making and development assessment
 - Indirect and direct guidance and incentives to regulate everything
- ... the beginning of the end for delivery of good planning in Queensland

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1997-2001 Planning Achievements

- Implementing major changes to density controls and subdivision provisions to give effect to the 1997 Strategic Plan
- Noosaville Foreshore Concept Plan
- Major road planning with the Coastal Major Road Network and its associated Infrastructure Charges Plan – the first in Queensland and still one of the only such fully operational plans in the State
- Introduced community governance as a tool to deliver outcomes that planning schemes couldn't
 - The Biosphere is the child of the community governance model
 - It has never delivered anywhere near its full potential
 - Councils have been afraid of giving the community power – something which is crucial to the governance model's success

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Today

- Noosa Plan commenced in 2006
- Policy framework that was prepared in for the 1997 Strategic Plan still underpins the Noosa Plan
- The Noosa Plan however:
 - Broke no new ground
 - Has no character
 - Has no rigour
 - Is littered with problems
 - Is weak
- Amalgamation has brought, is bringing or will bring:
 - Maroochification – a dominance of policy influence from the former largest player
 - A watering down of planning controls, where integration and consistency dominate over responses to community and place
 - Phony consultation
- A sad end to the former cutting edge approaches ...

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Questions & More Information

- Questions?
- Visit: www.paulsummersplanning.com.au
 - For a copy of the paper go to the web page and click Presentations & Publications in the menu

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