

# The Biosphere Idea

## A retrospective on the past 10 years for the Noosa Biosphere Reserve and the future for the Foundation.

Noosa is universally regarded as a special place to live and to visit. We have a very special environment, both natural and man-made. Man's engagement with this environment goes back millennia; in our modern era, we have seen more than 50 years of community-initiated, active environmental engagement. During this time, Noosa residents have carried a strong voice against proposals for excessive incursions on the region's outstanding natural assets.

Since the 1980's, the community and the Noosa Council have shared a closely aligned vision for an urban planning framework that balances Noosa's development, environment and lifestyle.

As a result, the Noosa Shire as a region is distinct from other, more developed urban areas and has achieved global recognition for the high values of its natural environment. It has continued to attract residents and visitors who appreciate this uniqueness.

In 2007, this exceptionalism was internationally recognised with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) consenting to the designation of our Shire as the Noosa Biosphere Reserve under its Man and the Biosphere program (**MaB**).

The **MaB** program was established in 1977 to promote an interdisciplinary approach to research, training and communications in ecosystem conservation and rational use of natural resources.

It recognises those places in the world that are actively addressing the many challenges resulting from human development. The aim is to help us all determine what it means to live in a conscious, healthy and sustainable way.

There are more than 550 biosphere reserves in more than 100 countries.

While there is a huge range of different environments covered by the term Biosphere Reserve, generally every biosphere reserve will have at least three (3) objectives:

- conservation – in terms of genetic resources, species and ecosystems
- sustainable development – economic, environmental, human and cultural
- learning – research, monitoring, environmental education and training.

Since 2007, the Shire has seen a number of iterations in the way the UNESCO designation has been managed, primarily because of amalgamation with and then, de-amalgamation from, the Sunshine Coast Council. In 2014 / 2015 the new Noosa Council entrusted the "Idea" of the Biosphere Reserve and its associated Intellectual Property to a newly formed Foundation to manage, nurture and enhance Noosa's special relationship with its environment over the long term.