



Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation Limited  
 (“NBRF” / “The Foundation”)

**Quarterly Report to Council**

Quarter ended 30 September 2016  
 (Q1 FY 2017)

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## 1. Chairman's Introduction

I am pleased to present to the Noosa Council and the community the NBRF Directors' Report for the three months ended 30 September 2016 and for the year ended 30 June 2016. The NBRF was established in February 2015 and commenced operations in July of that year. While quarterly reports have previously been provided, this is the first all – encompassing financial and descriptive account of our activities during 2015/2016– as such, it is a notable Foundation milestone.

Noosa has a 50-year history as a leader in environmental conservation, and the community continues to be the driver for the Noosa Biosphere Reserve's evolution. The Foundation facilitates this process by providing supporting funds for significant programs. At present, five projects are being supported, the result of the Foundation's first call for 'big ideas' from the community. The Foundation has committed approximately \$600,000 to these programs, with an additional \$1.4 million contributed in cash and in –kind by other private and public institutions.

The Board is currently evaluating a number of emerging programs. We are aiming to maintain the high ratio of private / public funding set in the first round, particularly as private supporters come to understand the benefits of the Foundation's status as an ATO-registered Direct Gift Recipient.

This report also notes a community-initiative to encourage the academic chronicling, assessment and understanding of Noosa's path to achieving a balance between biodiversity and sustainable living. This will be important in defining 'Noosa's soft footprint', potentially leading to Noosa's recognition as a global leader in modern environmentally sustainable living.

As we approach 2017, a decade further on since Noosa first became a participant in the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere program, these considerations will be integral to our "story" to be submitted with our application to continue in the UNESCO program.

The report also notes that the Foundation has recently entered the world of policy debate and advocacy – registering its views on proposals contained in the State Government's Green Paper on Fisheries policy, and, in collaboration with the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC), submitting responses to an expert panel convened by the State Government Department of Environment seeking views on Koala conservation.

I congratulate the Noosa community on its continued far-sightedness in moving towards environmentally sustainable living. It is an honour for me and my fellow directors to be involved in these endeavours which we believe will continue to transform our community and the way in which we live. We also wish to pay tribute to the many people and supporting organisations who have been involved with the UNESCO program since its inception. It is their building blocks which makes the Foundation what it is today – we hope to build on their success.

I am pleased to present the following report of NBRF activities.

Campbell Corfe  
Chairman



## 2. Mission Statement

The NBRF Mission is to:

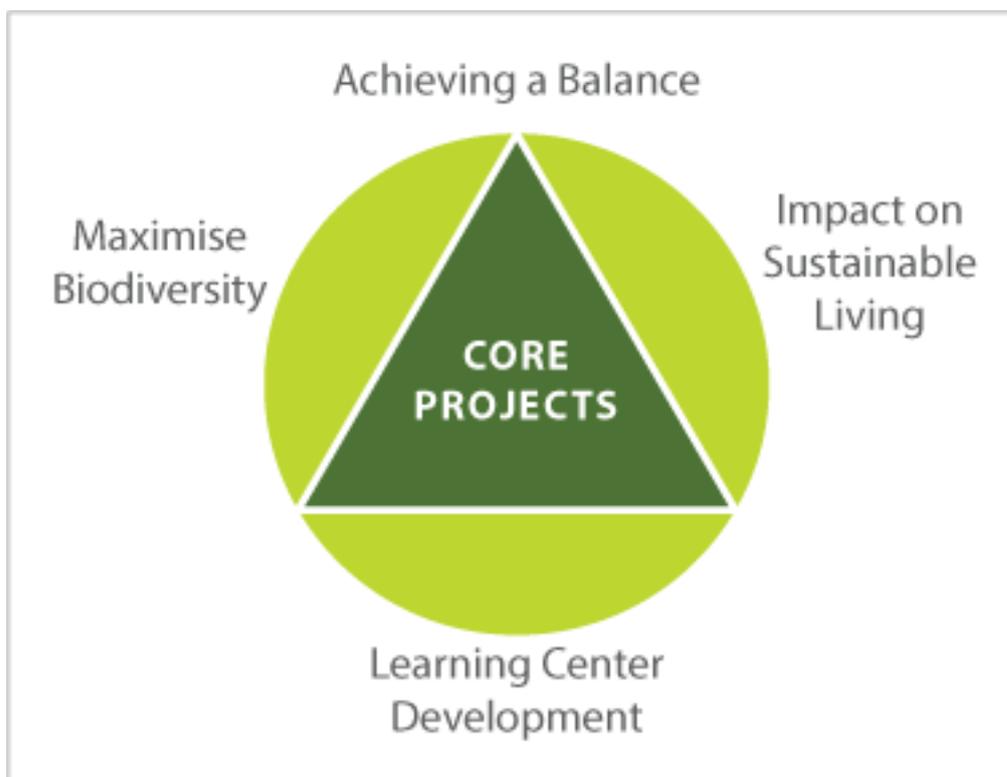
**Support projects and ideas that enhance biodiversity conservation and promote sustainable living in Noosa**

Please visit our website at [www.noosabiosphere.org.au](http://www.noosabiosphere.org.au)

It is the NBRF Vision that overtime the Noosa community will achieve national and international recognition for its relationship with its environment by

- Preserving and enhancing biodiversity
- Encouraging and supporting sustainable living; and
- Increasing understanding of the Noosa Biosphere Reserve through communication and education.

The Foundation has identified specific objectives to achieve these goals and aligned the community projects it is supporting with these objectives. This alignment is expressed in an evaluation hierarchy which we have termed Striking the Balance. These aims and objectives will be continuously reviewed by the Foundation as circumstances evolve.



3.



## Key Performance Indicators

The Foundation will track and report on the following indicators – it is acknowledged that this area of work remains as somewhat of a work in progress.

Activity	Measure of Success	Status ● ● ●	Reference Section Below
PROGRAMS	Prosper >5 and <8 strategic programs	●	4
FUNDING	Noosa Council Applications plus DGR Trust Funding	●	5
UNESCO	2017 Renewal	●	6
GOVERNANCE	Compliance with required regulations; Maintain transparency of operations.	●	7

Status:

- **Red – needs urgent review**
- **Amber – needs monitoring**
- **Green – meeting expectations**

## 4. Programs

### 4.1. Current Core Projects

The Foundation has agreed to support five projects to date, two of which have now been funded in full; and three have ongoing funding commitments. The total value of these projects exceeds \$2m, to which the NBRF has committed approximately \$600,000 from the funds allocated to it by the Noosa Council.

The balance of \$1.4m has been contributed from private sources, the majority going to the exemplary Bring Back the Fish program with significant contributions from the Noosa Parks Association, the Thomas Foundation, the Sunshine Coast University and the University of Queensland.

It is important to note that in this first project funding round, for every \$1 of community funds invested in these projects, a further \$3 was contributed from private sources. This private/public funding ratio is a standard the foundation would like maintained in the future. It's a challenging ambition and we will be encouraging community associations to explore all available private funding opportunities prior to seeking NBRF funding support in the future.



We have KPI and reporting protocols applied to each project; our FY 2017 plan calls for some resource allocation to improve project management.

An overview of each project follows.

### 4.1.1 UNDERSTAND OUR BIOSPHERE

#### **Engaging the Noosa Community to better understand our Biosphere Reserve and its biodiversity.**



This is a community engagement and educational program initiated by the Noosa Community Biosphere Association (NCBA). The program includes a video and support material being used to engage and inform community organisations of the UNESCO MAB program and its implications for Noosa.

Using this material, and by other direct means, links are being established with other organisations including NPA, NICA, Landcare, Country Noosa, Tourism Noosa and many others. We believe that more needs to be done in this area of public engagement; the NBRF will continue to work with and encourage NCBA’s initiatives in this regard.

The Foundation will also allocate some resources in FY 2017 to enhanced community engagement activities.

NBRF Commitment -	\$20,000
Total Project Value -	\$39,000
Lead Organisation -	NCBA - Noosa Community Biosphere Association
KPI Status -	● Amber – needs monitoring



## 4.1.2. BOTANICAL FIELD GUIDE

**Publish and market a botanical field guide.**



The purpose of this project was to create a credible educational resource that promotes the Noosa Biosphere Reserve as a place that values its environment.

The project aims to better inform botany practitioners, create responsible human behavior and vegetation management through enhanced knowledge and awareness, improve wetland and riparian zone health and improve habitat in Noosa River catchment.

We worked on this with the Noosa Integrated Catchment Association (NICA) who has the guide almost ready for distribution.

NBRF Commitment -	\$13,580
Other Commitments -	\$40,000
Total Value -	\$53,580
Lead Partner -	NICA
KPI Status -	● Green – meeting expectations



### 4.1.3. KOALA HEALTH

**Mapping koala health across the Noosa Biosphere Reserve to inform better management.**



Koalas - our icon animal and major tourism attraction – are very vulnerable in our Shire.

To ensure the protection of koalas for generations to come, it is imperative that we accurately and efficiently expand our evidence based knowledge about koala distribution, genetics and disease to population outside the urban footprint.

So our desired outcome here is to have one GIS (geographical information system) database collating all koala information available; hopefully we can extend this project over time so that we have a longitudinal view of different koala populations.

The NBRF is working closely with the USC to utilise innovative, non-invasive methodologies in the form of conservation detection dogs, to produce the first field based fine-scale distribution and population health study of koalas across the Noosa Biosphere Reserve.

We will be able to identify where koala populations are; how connected they are; and how healthy they are.

The project will identify areas of high potential for habitat rehabilitation, offsets, protection (e.g. refuges, reserves, voluntary conservation agreements) and land to buy for increase koala core habitat.

The sniffer dogs will be in the Shire over coming months, firstly to identify where populations are – and where they are not – and then to collect scat samples for evaluation.

We are keeping Council and other groups (like the Makepeace Island Conservancy) in the loop; we have recently tendered a joint response to a Survey request from State



Government whereby we hope to inform legislation.

NBRF Commitment -	\$59,472
Other Commitments -	\$200,000
Total Value -	\$259,472
Lead Partner -	USC
KPI Status -	● Green – meeting expectations

#### 4.1.4. KEEPING IT IN KIN KIN

**A Noosa catchment priority erosion remediation program.**



The catchment component of the Bring Back the Fish (see 4.1.5 below) project is known as ‘Keeping it in Kin Kin’. It recognises that keeping land and waterways productive and healthy is necessary for food production, employment, social wellbeing and environmental preservation. It also recognises that land practices and management are critical for soil, water and vegetation systems, not just in Kin Kin, but also downstream to Noosa.

This particular project is a good example of our quest for a long term, holistic approach to sustainable living. It employs sophisticated survey techniques, using Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) equipment, to identify areas most in need of better management through initiatives such as tree planting, fencing and weed eradication.

The project was developed in collaboration with NPA and is being run by Noosa and District Landcare with peer review of both the technical methodology being employed and the on-ground prioritisation and implementation of remedial processes. We are maintaining close oversight of these aspects to ensure the best possible outcomes for all stakeholders. With LIDAR results currently being evaluated and peer reviewed; Country Noosa and the Kin Kin Community Group has run several sessions with Landowners to develop a collaborative



approach to remedial actions; there is also a community round table planned to discuss issues pertinent to training.

NBRF Commitment -	\$74,212
Other Commitments -	\$125,780
Total Value -	\$200,00
Lead Partner –	NDLC
KPI Status -	● Green – meeting expectations

### 4.1.5. BRING BACK THE FISH

#### Restoring fish abundance.



The Noosa River and Lakes system and Laguna Bay was once a ‘phenomenally rich’ marine system, according to Dr. Ruth Thurstan, who undertook a study to determine the ‘base line’ of diversity, prevalence and size of species in the system. In the past recreational and commercial fishing flourished with many extraordinary catches reported. ([www.noosa.qld.gov.au](http://www.noosa.qld.gov.au), media release 23 Nov 2015)

The Thurstan study also found that the oyster industry collapsed 80 years ago after up to 3m oysters a year were taken from the river and lakes. Oyster reefs are an important part of a healthy aquatic ecosystem, providing habitat and a rich source of food for fish and other marine life. Their disappearance adversely impacted the system.

Prawns too were once abundant. The Thurstan study found that some 400,000kg of prawns were dredged from the system in 1961. By 1969 the reported catch had halved, and in 2014 it was just 35,00kgs. Prawns are also an important part of a healthy aquatic system; but their current abundance is not known and The University of Queensland is initiating a study to determine both numbers and the cause of this apparent dramatic decline.



The fishery is a public asset, and the community wants its benefits optimised and shared now and with future generations. The “Bring Back the Fish” projects aims to progressively restore the system, and develop the resilience of its re-established marine species.

The program has three components:

- Re-establishing oyster reefs and associated aquatic communities in the Noosa Estuary and River up to Tewantin
- Restoring prawn stocks in the Noosa River and Lakes; and
- Modifying and improving land use practices in the Kin Kin catchment to reduce sediment runoff into the River and lakes system

This is a long-term project with a major initial funding commitment by the NBRF. To protect both the community and private investments we will be closely monitoring progress to ensure projected performance targets are achieved.

A key long term objective is to balance the rehabilitated marine biodiversity with sustainable recreational and commercial fishing.

The project’s genesis lies with the Noosa Parks Association (NPA) which in 2014, together with The Thomas Foundation (TTF), arranged for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to convene a scientific workshop to consider the possibility and means of enhancing Noosa’s river and lakes system. TNC, established in the USA in the 1950s, is the world’s premier science-based conservation organisation. Encouraged by TTF, it has established an Australian chapter, which at The Thomas Foundation’s initiative has commenced the Great Southern Seascapes program. This program is focussed on bays and estuaries in southern and western Australia and involves the re-establishment of oyster reefs and seagrass beds as a first step in the rehabilitation of marine eco-systems.

The program is based on similar projects TNC has managed in the USA and which have attracted enthusiastic support from associated communities and recreational fishers. Recreational fishers in Melbourne are enthusiastic supporters of the Port Phillip reef restoration. Noosa’s Bring Back the Fish has grown out of this broader program.

Permits for the re-establishment of the oyster reefs, generally on sites where they existed in the past, are being sought. The NBRF is grateful for the assistance being provided in this regard by the Noosa Council. In addition to the NPA and TTF, key private supporters of the Bring Back the Fish program are the University of Queensland, the University of the Sunshine Coast and Ecological Services Professionals.

NBRF Commitment -	\$441,304
Other Commitments -	\$1,032,251
Total Value -	\$1,473,555
KPI Status -	● Amber – needs monitoring (in relation to the current application for permits)



## 4.2 Emerging Programs – being built into FY 2017 Plans

**Funding currently to hand for consideration in FY 2017:**

Net Grant surplus available (after ongoing commitments) as at 1 July 2016	80,000	
FY 2017 Grant Funding received Q1 2016	<u>250,000</u>	
<b>Funding currently available</b>		<b><u>\$320,000</u></b>

### Long Term Community Engagement

NBRF Directors are aware that for success and longevity the activities it supports need to be in the community and be community driven. Experience has shown that driving projects with a ‘top-down’ approach tends to have a higher casualty rate. Recognising the community’s history and achievements in driving its conservation objectives, we see the Foundation as primarily a funding facilitator and we will align our objectives with community aspirations.

### Advocacy

We also see the NBRF as having an advocacy role on behalf of the community and community associations.

In this ‘advocacy role’ we responded to the State Government’s Green Paper on fisheries management reform outlining the objectives we believe the community would seek to achieve through reform, including:

- Encouraging indigenous engagement;
- Restoring and securing Fish abundance in the Noosa River and lakes;
- improving viability for commercial fishers in the river and lakes system and in Laguna Bay;
- establishing the right conditions for higher catch rates for recreational fishers; and
- engendering community pride in its rehabilitated river and lakes system.

### Population Pressures

We are conscious too of the pressures that will develop on the natural environment from projected population increases in the SE Queensland region. Careful management will be essential if repeat over-exploitation of the rehabilitated river and lakes system is to be avoided.

### Sanctuaries and Corridors

These population increases will also have implications for terrestrial wildlife biodiversity in the Noosa Biosphere Reserve, and the Foundation is considering initiatives generated in



the community that could be pursued to develop appropriate sanctuaries and corridors to optimise wildlife protection.

These challenges to Noosa’s ‘special’ environmental attributes are significant and demand careful and inventive responses.

### **Hinterland Management Plan**

Country Noosa is developing an integrated land management plan for the hinterland that will embrace an holistic approach to farming production, carbon sequestration and environmental restoration and protection.

### **ZEN**

The NBRF is supportive of the ZEN initiative, kick-started by the Council and now enthusiastically embraced by the community. The life-style changes to which the concept aspires are complex and several NBRF Directors are deeply engaged in development of the initiative, particularly in the challenges of the electricity sector. It is apparent some aspects will need funding support to bring them to a better state of understanding and resolution, and the NBRF is looking to where its resources might best be directed to help in this process.

### **Koala**

It is anticipated that we will be able to extend the life of the current Koala program as we develop a greater understanding of our Koala population, health and distribution.

### **Global Change Institute (GCI)**

The Noosa community over 50 years has pursued achievement of a wise balance between biodiversity conservation and sustainable living. The Noosa Parks Association, the oldest of Noosa’s community environmental associations, has proposed independent academic validation of this history and achievements, and the further initiatives now being pursued. The NBRF supports this proposal which we regard as fundamental to the development and legitimisation of a ‘Noosa soft footprint’ brand. A preliminary plan to achieve this through collaboration with the University of Queensland’s prestigious Global Change Institute is being developed. The material produced will be useful to others wishing to replicate Noosa’s achievements, and in satisfying some of the information and educational expectations associated with UNESCO’s Man and Biosphere program.

### **Science Symposium**

The Nature Conservancy has agreed to undertake its annual review of the Great South Seascapes Australian program in Noosa in early 2017. The review involves Australian and American marine scientists.

The opportunity will be taken for a high-level science symposium to evaluate all three elements of the Bring Back the Fish program to be conducted in association with the GSS review. The Australian team implementing the GSS and the Australian and American experts working in the same field here and in the USA will be engaged in this validation process.



## 5. Funding

### Management Accounts Year ended 30 June 2016 DRAFT

	\$	\$	\$	\$	
<b>Noosa Council Grants received</b>					
Re Sustainability		80,000			
Re Environment					
First transfer	250,000				
Multi year	360,000				
		610,000	690,000		
<b>Less Program Disbursements</b>					
NICA Sedge		13,518			
NCBA Awareness		20,000			
USC Koala Mapping		59,472			
NDLC Keep it in Kin Kin		48,290			
			(141,280)		
<b>Surplus from grant funding</b>				<b>548,720</b>	Note 1
<b>Operations</b>					
Start up funding		40,000			
Contribution 2016		140,000			
			180,000		
<b>Less</b>					
<b>Cash operating expenses</b>					
Accounting		690			
Bank Fees and Charges		72			
Meeting expenses		830			
Computer		2200			
Donations		260			
Insurances		4800			
Office Support		2600			
Postage		250			
Printing and Stationery		840			
Repairs & Maintenance		300			
Subscriptions/ Filings		1200			
Telephone		1400			
Web Site		7200			
Legals		430			
Wages - Executive Officer		47,875			
Consultants		3500			
			74447		
Surplus from Operations				105,553	Note 2
<b>Total</b>				<b>654,273</b>	Note 3
<b>Less Commitments</b>				<b>470,000</b>	Note 1
Reserves available carry forward				<b>\$184,273</b>	



**Note 1: Surplus from Grant Funding**

As at June 30 2016, further commitments of approximately \$470,000 had been made by the Foundation to be paid over a number of years to various institutions for execution of our programs. In essence, the \$80,000 sustainability grant has not been committed.

**Note 2: Surplus from Operations – approximately \$100,000.**

The Foundation commenced operations July 2015; on ground activities in connection with programs were delayed through a variety of reasons until early Q3 FY 2016. The appointed Executive Officer did not resume duties in Quarters 3 and 4; accordingly, operations were well below forecast.

**Note 3: Total Surplus 30 June 2016**

Surplus shown in these statements of approximately \$654,000 is comparable to cash balances 30 June 2016 of approximately \$660,000.

**Note 4: Accounting for Grant Funding**

Financial statements presented to the auditor recognise grants as revenue only when funds are dispersed to recipient programs.

**6. UNESCO**

Next year will be our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary since enrolling in the UNESCO MaB (Man and Biosphere) Program. We will develop a plan to re-engage with UNESCO for a reapplication next year.

Board member David Dique has volunteered some time to be applied to this endeavour. Professor Karin Hussey at the GCI is well connected with UNESCO personnel and has agreed to assist.

It is generally seen we should leverage this connection more appropriately.

**7. Governance**

The Board held a General Meeting on July 15 and confirmed new Board membership as:

- David Dique
- Dick Barnes
- Michael Gloster

Adding to appointments in the prior period:

- Campbell Corfe
- Clare Cartwright
- Tony Wellington

It is expected that Mr. Rowland Hill will agree to a continuing role with the Board and this will be confirmed at the AGM to be held December 2016.



We are currently reviewing further appointments.

The Board will also consider in the New Year whether an independent review of certain aspects of our Constitution may be appropriate; including Board appointments.

The Board approved a Charter which incorporates most aspects of our Governance regime; we will use that as a basis for an overview of our policies and procedures to ensure they are still relevant and that we are compliant. This would include, for example, policies on Conflicts of Interest, Work Place Health and Safety, etc.

The position of Executive Officer established in July 2015 is still under review. Contracted administrative assistance is appropriate for our current circumstances.

## 8. Conclusion

The NBRF board is grateful for the ongoing support of the Noosa Council – we appreciate that your support for our activities places us in a unique position of demonstrative success in terms of Biosphere Reserves globally.

We would welcome the opportunity to present to Council should your schedule permit.

On behalf of  
The Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation Limited

Chairman

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C. Corfe  
November 24 2016