

NBR Foundation Chairman welcomes Noosa Show

By Campbell Corfe, NBR Foundation Chairman

On Friday 9 September, I had the privilege of welcoming attendees to the Noosa Show for 2016 under this year's theme, living in the Noosa biosphere.

As part of my ticket of entry, I was asked to provide an overview of the Noosa Biosphere Reserve and what it means.

I started by addressing the word 'biosphere':

The word refers to all regions of the Earth occupied by living organisms. The first part of the word "bio" comes from the Greek word for life. Hence – life on Earth.

Decades ago, the United Nations and its daughter organisation, UNESCO, began to address the concern that human beings were having a negative impact on other lifeforms. There were wide spread extinctions, degradation and pollution.

In 1971, a program called "Man and the Biosphere" was developed to nominate areas, or reserves, to showcase where positive actions could be taken to allow mankind to live more harmoniously with the natural environment; and to maintain an appropriate balance between environment, biodiversity and living sustainably.

A key component of the program was to build on research and to share learnings.

Noosa, as a community, has for nearly 50 years dared to be different. It has maintained a wise balance between biodiversity conservation and a way of life.

As part of that journey, in 2007 Noosa successfully applied for recognition in the UNESCO program, *Man and the Biosphere*.

There are now more than 600 such areas or "reserves" with some 20 in Australia.

While the Noosa Biosphere Reserve conforms to the Shire boundary, we are contiguous to the Great Sandy reserve to our north, making us unique among the Biospheres.

Next year, the Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation will renew its engagement with the UN program. In its application, we will highlight our community's commitment to the following three interconnected objectives:

1. To conserve and repair biodiversity.

We have a number of core projects to address this, including:

- **Bring Back the Fish** – regaining greater aquatic biodiversity in the Noosa Estuary, river and lakes system. We are assisted in this work by the University of Queensland and the University of the Sunshine Coast. It includes land remediation work in the Kin Kin area and rebuilding prawn and oyster populations. [Read more](#)
- **Conservation corridors** – we seek to extend our Great Sandy/Cooloola, Tewantin and Noosa National Parks with perpetually protected, biodiversity conservation corridors.
- **Mapping koala health** – we are working with the University of the Sunshine Coast on a program to have more reliable records of koala locations and their health profile using scat sniffer dogs. [Read more](#)

2. To live sustainably.

Our core programs here include:

- **Zero Emissions Noosa** – working with community groups to establish ZEN to substantially reduce reliance on fossil fuels and build renewable capacity over the next decade.
- **Learning from others** – we are also closely reviewing activities in a sister Biosphere in Italy where they are exploring programs focussed on biosphere reserves branding through high quality food products and their use in gastronomy.

3. Using Research.

- All of our projects will be underpinned by a research-based approach, one that draws on and contributes back to scientific knowledge about wisely balancing biodiversity conservation and sustainable living. We have established relationships with a number of tertiary institutions and intend to extend this engagement. We see Noosa as a living laboratory.

These programs are long term in their scope.

Using the Noosa Biosphere Reserve as part of our armoury, we will, as a community, develop the core building blocks, the DNA, of a globally recognised brand – a *Noosa Soft Footprint*.

The Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation thanks the Noosa Show Society for inviting us to participate at the 2016 Noosa Show in Pomona.