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Noosa 450 – a Noosa community campaign for affordable housing

Groups representing the Noosa business community have responded to the State Government’s call for consultation on the proposed Southeast Queensland Regional Plan with a new campaign, called Noosa 450, to support more affordable housing.

The Noosa 450 campaign is a call to all levels of government, during the consultation period, to facilitate pathways for investment in affordable housing that costs \$450 or less, a week to rent. It supports more affordable housing that is sustainable and that does not compromise Noosa’s community and environmental values.

Anyone wishing to support the campaign can do so, by signing a petition below:

[Noosa 450 | Noosa community Campaign for Affordable Housing \(aspirepropertymanagement.com.au\)](https://aspirepropertymanagement.com.au)

The urgent need is a framework to attract more private investment in sustainable housing projects with a view to accommodating Noosa residents that may not be able to afford more costly rental properties. The campaign aims to benefit Noosa workers such as in hospitality and health-related industries. However, it also aims to support the whole community including singles, young couples, retirees, and anyone in need of more affordable rental accommodation.

The Noosa 450 campaign has been put forward by local property management group, Aspire Property Management. CEO David Langdon said that property managers are at the coalface when it comes to helping to provide homes for Noosa residents to rent.

“While there are often plenty of available rentals over \$750 per week, we are continually frustrated by not being able to help those at the lower end of the market,” he said.

According to Langdon, having available rents of less than \$450pw is essential to accommodate Noosa workers.

“A lack of affordable rentals is the singular factor driving the current staff shortage in Noosa. We have seen within our team, and other local businesses, that people have left the shire to work elsewhere, and it is happening all over town.

“Noosa Council has progressively approved commercial facilities, such as the recent expansion to Noosa Civic. All these facilities and local businesses that rent or own them need staff, and it is no other shire’s responsibility to provide affordable housing for Noosa’s workforce.

“We need more properties that cost \$450 and preferably less, or we will continue to lose more of Noosa’s workforce to other shires.

“It is important to note that we are not talking about government funded social housing in this campaign. We appreciate that the government has a plan for more social housing.

“What this campaign is trying to achieve is a for more private investment in affordable housing for our workers and other members of the Noosa community.

“We want that principle to be recognised as a specific goal within the new regional plan. Then state and council town planners that have the expertise can put forward appropriate solutions. For example, we really need to have more commercially viable studio units, or one-bedroom apartments, at the volume in the shire that is required.

According to Noosa Chamber of Commerce President, Ralph Rogers, a lack of affordable housing is creating a critical staff shortage in Noosa. An issue that is being fueled by a perfect storm of influencing factors.

“The statistics speak for themselves,” said Rogers. For example, the total weekly household earnings in Noosa are \$208 or 14% below the State median, while at the same time, Noosa’s cost of living (rents especially) is above the State average.

“While 33.1% of properties in the whole of Queensland are available to rent, only 20.9% of occupied dwellings are available to rent in Noosa. Of Queensland’s local government areas, Noosa Shire has a Gross Regional Product 1.4% lower than other benchmarked Queensland LGAs.

A recent survey of Noosa Chamber of Commerce members identified affordable accommodation as one of the biggest inhibitors of economic growth for their businesses.

“Add to that the fact that the average cost of a house in Queensland is \$580,000 while in Noosa it is \$1,250,000, and there is no wonder why we have an affordable housing issue.

“We need to take a different approach to solving affordable housing, with properties being purpose built to meet the goal of the Noosa 450 campaign.

“Successive governments at local, state, and federal level have been ineffective in forecasting and dealing with this housing crisis and the need to act, fueled by population growth and immigration, is now.

“We need action now and there needs to be some flexibility offered by council planning. We need properties located, designed, and built to meet the needs of those that provide the goods and services that makes Noosa what it is today. Noosa’s lackluster economic growth will deteriorate further unless we can house our workforce,” he said.

Noosaville Business Association President, Tim Rook, said that the Association represented more than 12 diverse industry groups, and each one of them is experiencing pain from a lack of human resources.

“Our members find it immensely challenging to fill vacancies and often candidates from outside the area pull out of the recruitment process, once they realise that relocation isn’t possible due to the lack of affordable accommodation.

“The housing affordability crisis is affecting not only our hospitality sector but every sector from business to health and financing.

“Ours is a small business economy and business owners are used to trying to come up with innovative solutions to problems they face. In recent times our business community has shown it has what it takes to pivot.

“But this is a national issue that is simply too big to be solved by the business community itself. We need a broader vision if our kids and grandkids are to have meaningful jobs in the shire.

“On behalf of our members I strongly support the intention of the Noosa 450 campaign and hope all levels of government work seriously on innovative and sustainable solutions.” he said.

The Hastings Street Association also voiced its support for the Noosa 450 campaign goal of securing more affordable housing for Noosa.

“The Hastings Street economy is predominately based on service-based industries, such as tourism, said President Emma Hull.

“Housing affordability and its impact on availability of local staff, directly impacts the capacity to which service-based industries can operate and the level of service they can provide.

“A lack of affordable housing undermines the integrity of the tourism product offering and adds extra economic pressure on the small business sector,” she said.

Noosa Junction Association Vice President and Secretary, Chris Brinkley, said many Noosa Junction businesses continue to struggle due to the inability to hire and retain quality staff.

“In most instances, businesses report that this is due to potential staff being unable to find affordable housing within a reasonable distance from the workplace,” he said.

“The housing crisis urgently requires effective action, he said, and our Association supports the objectives of the Noosa 450 Campaign seeking to provide solutions which are lawful and do not put at risk the reasons people choose to live and visit Noosa.”

On commenting on the draft regional plan, David Langdon said that he did not want to see the goal of affordable housing get lost in a debate about population targets or high-rise.

“We are not the town planning experts when it comes to what the possible solutions are,” he said. In a tourism driven economy, we certainly don’t want any measures that might compromise the amenity and attractiveness of Noosa’s unique character.

“The campaign implies support in principle for the need for solutions to affordable housing to be delivered in an appropriate manner and locations. It recognises that Noosa business owners may not be the experts when it comes to the breath of potential solutions. What it is aiming to do is place an emphasis on creating opportunities for affordable housing to be developed to support the lower end of the rental and wage bracket.

“Until we have a situation where small business owners and their staff can afford to live in the Shire, we have an issue that we need to resolve.

“We need a balance around protecting important coastal and tourism areas and flexibility to create higher density residential solutions in other areas that may be appropriate,” he said.

For anyone that wants to add their voice to the principle of more affordable rental properties in Noosa, there are several ways their voice can be heard.

A petition has been created aiming to support policies to achieve more affordable housing in Noosa, costing less than \$450 per week. It is planned to present the petition as part of a response to the Southeast Queensland Regional Plan consultation process.

The petition can be viewed here:

[Noosa 450 | Noosa community Campaign for Affordable Housing \(aspirepropertymanagement.com.au\)](https://aspirepropertymanagement.com.au)

They can also review the state government’s draft plan and the engagement options available that include:

- Book an online talk-to-a-planner session.
- Attend an in-person community session in your local council area.
- Leave a comment on our comment board.
- Have your say by answering our quick poll questions.
- Provide a feedback submission.

<https://planning.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/planning-framework/plan-making/regional-planning/south-east-queensland-regional-plan>

Ends

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Additional Information

The average rent across Noosa now tops \$900 a week, and more than \$1,100 a week for a home in Noosa Heads (source ABC News).

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-27/noosa-rental-crisis-st-vinnies-helping-people-leave-tourist-town/102074548>