



## Discussion

Through community engagement and research, the Rural Enterprise Program has been successful in building a more informed picture of current land use activities, challenges and opportunities for landowners in the Noosa hinterland.

## Collaboration

**Community collaboration** was a recurring theme of all the community workshops. This desire for improved local community resilience was called for particularly in the areas of resource sharing, group farming, equipment and labour sharing, carbon farming research, marketing and distribution and in general the spreading of best practices throughout the community. Stronger alliances were called for between local businesses to form networks, in an attempt to leverage strength in numbers, to provide both quality tourism experiences year-round and also to reduce costs for distribution of produce. There was discussion around collaboration between farms and hospitality businesses to form paddock to plate ventures which could form an additional revenue stream in the Noosa hinterland.

Country Noosa is perfectly poised to improve community collaboration and help build resilience. An initial approach would be the development of a register of landowners that are interested in resource sharing. The register would allow landowners to convey interest in resource sharing and also specify interest area whether it be group farming, land sharing, sustainable grazing, equipment sharing, labour sharing, land regeneration, ecotourism network (recreational trails and paddock to plate ventures), distribution network and participation in carbon farming research. Country Noosa could use this register to determine what type of collaboration might be feasible. Focus groups could then be established to drive a range of initiatives. For improving Marketing and Distribution a Noosa Hinterland Product Brand could be considered. For example food miles and eco-labelling could further leverage Noosa Biosphere values with carbon footprint of farm activities considered along with distance travelled by produce to market or local store.

A key finding of the land use surveys are that landowners are well-positioned to build on Noosa Biosphere Reserve values. The vast majority are interested in sustainable production, land regeneration and conservation. Compared to the past, Noosa hinterland is mainly comprised of smaller parcels of land mainly 20 to 60 hectares in size. The REP land use survey results and GIS mapping spatial tool are both particularly useful in identifying clusters of land activity. This spatial tool could be used in conjunction with landowner register for targeted project planning. For example areas identified as tourism and horticulture could be grouped together for forming networks for paddock to plate ventures.

An additional outcome of Round 2 Workshops was an interest for further research into new sustainable revenue streams for the Noosa hinterland. For example discussions around Carbon Farming highlighted the need for the development of a repeatable carbon soil testing method. To execute this in the Noosa hinterland, a pilot study could be conducted on existing parcels of cleared and unused land, several of which have already been identified in the REP Noosa Hinterland Land Use Survey. An aggregation approach would assist with the economic viability of such a study. The

research could lead to a carbon credit revenue stream under the Australian Government's Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF).

## Further Learning

**Further learning** was another area that was highly prioritised at the community workshops. There is an opportunity for Country Noosa to take the lead in holding training events, speaker sessions and facilitating one on one mentoring. The Country Noosa website can include an e-learning hub with links to concept papers, links to local industry groups, training courses, keynote speaker presentations and include ways for newcomers to connect with existing landowners that have volunteered for one on one mentoring in specific areas.

The REP identified knowledge gaps and the need for training in the following areas:

- Small Crop Farming (Horticulture, grower information and economics);
- Permaculture;
- Pest and Weed Control;
- Marketing and Distribution (accreditation, product branding, where to sell) and
- Business Mentoring and Business Planning including financial planning.

Further learning events could involve keynote speakers, examples could be Noosa and District Landcare, Noosa Council, Food and Agribusiness Network, Sunfresh, Mary Valley Co-operative and Food Connect. An additional benefit of these activities would be to help build links with those outside of the Noosa hinterland area.

The REP has been successful in understanding current land use activities, challenges and the appetite of landowners for future sustainable development in the Noosa hinterland. Overall there is a strong desire for community collaboration and further learning in all areas of conservation, and sustainable development, all in keeping with Noosa Biosphere values.

## Recommendations

### Collaboration

To help improve community collaboration, it is recommended:

- that Country Noosa develop a **register** of landowners who are interested in being involved in opportunities for **resource sharing**;
- that the register clearly outline interest in the following **resource sharing** opportunities: group farming, land sharing, sustainable grazing, equipment sharing, labour sharing, land regeneration, ecotourism network (recreational trails and paddock to plate ventures), distribution network and participation in carbon farming research;
- that information collated in the register be used to form **focus groups** aimed at driving these opportunities and tasked with developing specific action plans;
- that REP **land use GIS mapping** be used in conjunction with the register for **specific project planning workshops**;
- that a pilot study be conducted to investigate the use of **green waste** (compost) to improve soil quality and enhance carbon sequestration, while also developing robust carbon soil testing methodology. The overall aim would be to develop a viable carbon market opportunity under the Emissions Reduction Fund;
- that ways of improving **distribution and marketing** of produce be investigated. One such improvement could be development of branding for Noosa hinterland produce, a type of eco-labelling including calculation of food miles (carbon footprint) and another option would be the development of a produce distribution network; and
- that a **centralised information hub** be developed as part of Country Noosa website which would provide information links to the register, focus groups, collaboration initiatives and relevant funding opportunities in local government, state and federal.

### Further Learning

Further learning is needed for:

- Small Crop Farming;
- Permaculture;
- Pest and Weed Control;
- Marketing and Distribution and
- Business Mentoring and Business Planning including financial planning.

Further learning can be promoted through:

- **knowledge sharing workshop** allowing experienced landowners to connect with newcomers;
- **site visits** and farm tours building on existing Cooloola Trail;
- Permaculture training in partnership with Permaculture Noosa;



- **information sessions** involving keynote speakers from Country Noosa, Noosa & District Landcare, FAN, Mary Valley Country Harvest and Sunfresh, Organic certification bodies;
- **providing links** to business planning, Financial planning course information including Holistic Management training information; and
- collation of all further learning information as an **e-learning hub** as part of the Country Noosa website. The e-learning hub would provide links to concept papers, links to local industry groups, training courses, Country Noosa keynote speaker presentations and ways for newcomers to connect with existing landowners that have volunteered for one on one mentoring in specific areas.

## Appendix 1: Media and communications

Communication	Responsibility	Description	Distribution
<b>Communications Strategic Plan</b>	Deb Caruso and CN committee members, Alison Jane and Nicole	Deb Caruso from Glue PR was engaged to develop a communications plan for Country Noosa including the Rural Enterprise Program. The workshop was held on Friday 13 April 2018 (9-1 pm) and the report is attached. Significant stakeholder analysis was undertaken in the workshop to assist in the roll out of the REP	Draft submitted to Country Noosa Committee 1 June 2018
<b>Press Release</b>	Alison Jane Consulting and Nicole	A press release was developed for the REP by Alison and distributed to various news outlets including Noosa News, Noosa Today and Cooroy Rag	The article was run by Noosa News (2 May 2018) and Cooroy Rag (25 April 2018)  See link below for article
<b>Press Release</b>	The Social Deck	A press release was developed to promote the second round of workshops and distributed to various news outlets including Noosa News, Noosa Today and Cooroy Rag	The article was run by Noosa News (1 December 2018), Cooroy Rag (29 November 2018) and Noosa Today (29 November 2018).
<b>ABC Radio interview</b>	Nicole	Nicole completed an interview with Jennifer Nicholls from ABC radio	Went to air 26/04/18
<b>CN Facebook</b>	Martin Duncan	Martin regularly updates Facebook with articles/blogs to promote REP	12 posts promoting the workshops were posted.
<b>Website</b>	Maureen, Nicole, The Social Deck	The CN website was updated with a REP page and links to the survey and workshops.	Emails have been sent to all CN membership informing them of the REP workshops and survey.  Follow up emails have been sent to CN membership reminding them of the survey.
<b>Key partners</b>	Maureen and Nicole	Key partners including Landcare, Noosa Biosphere, FAN, Kin Kin Community group were all provided information about the workshops and survey.	Follow up information has been sent to partners reminding them about the survey.



Communication	Responsibility	Description	Distribution
<b>Cooroy Fusion Festival 12 May 2018</b>	Country Noosa committee and Nicole	Students from USC attended the festival to promote the survey.	REP survey flyers were distributed at the festival.
<b>Newsletter</b>	Nicole	Edition 1 - June 2018	Distributed to CN members and key partners data base
<b>Newsletter</b>	The Social Deck	Edition 2 - August 2018. Edition 3 – December 2018	Distributed to CN members and key partners data base
<b>Eventbrite</b>	Maureen Nicole	Invitations to the workshops were sent out by the Secretary of CN via Eventbrite.	
<b>Press release: Open Day</b>	Maureen Nicole	Press release promoting the Country Noosa Open Day.	Noosa News, Noosa Today, Cooroy Rag
<b>Press release: USC</b>	Claudia Baldwin	Press release	USC website, My Sunshine Coast
<b>Eventbrite</b>	Maureen	Tickets for the Country Noosa Open day  Invitations to the second round of workshops were sent out by the Secretary of CN via Eventbrite. Information supplied by The Social Deck	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/country-noosa-farm-machinery-segment-open-day-tickets-47706854486">https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/country-noosa-farm-machinery-segment-open-day-tickets-47706854486</a>  Emails have been sent to all CN membership informing them of the second round of REP workshops.

## Appendix 2: Budget

Organisation	Description of expenditure	Cash Contribution From NBR	In-kind Contribution	Total
<b>Country Noosa</b>	Project manager	\$30,000		\$30,000
	Project support	-	\$24,000	\$24,000
	Expert help	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$30,000
<b>USC</b>	Research Assistance	\$20,000	\$30,000(GIS)	\$50,000
<b>Healthy Land and Water</b>	Access to GIS database	\$5,000	\$200,000	\$205,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$65,000</b>	<b>\$274,000</b>	<b>\$339,000</b>

\*As at 28/06/19, final USC, project management and Final report invoices yet to be paid

\*See full budget for details.



## *References*

Noosa Council 2015, Noosa Shire Local Economic Plan. Tewantin: Noosa Council.

Noosa Council 2016, Agriculture and Agricultural Land in Noosa Shire 2016. Tewantin: Noosa Council.

Baldwin C and Hamerlinck J. 2018, Noosa Shire Hinterland Rural Enterprise Plan Research Study. Final Report. University of Sunshine Coast.