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NOOSA'S SHAME EXPOSED

The bushland area adjacent to businesses at Sunrise Beach and the nearby Uniting Church has been turned into a series of squalid campsites used for underage drinking, drug taking and other criminal activities, according to Member for Noosa, Glen Elmes.

"The entire area is just one large rubbish tip where young people in groups of between 20 and 50, some as young as 13, congregate at any time of day or night. Shops in the vicinity have been repeatedly broken into, the church has been vandalized as have nearby residences and the rate of hooning and other anti-social activity is completely out of control" said Glen Elmes.

"The presence of drug dealers and other adults who peddle alcohol makes the entire area extremely unsafe and I fear for the safety of not only the shopkeepers and residents but also for the children or young teenagers who are enticed into this particularly dangerous situation.

"I was taken on an inspection of the area two weeks ago and immediately wrote to the Mayor, Bob Abbott and alerted council to what is going on. Their proactive approach, and that of the Noosa Police, is to be congratulated. Council is going to conduct a thorough clean up of the area in question and I am calling for a controlled burn-off throughout the area to remove the vegetation cover which provides an incentive for young people and adults to congregate. In the longer term the construction of the Blue Care facility planned for the site should provide for a permanent solution.

"This is a side of Noosa I did not think I would ever see but it points out just how important it is to encourage a process that provides help and assistance to community groups and individuals who are working to provide worthwhile outlets for our young people, while at the same time increasing the penalties for wrongdoers from just a slap on the wrist."

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