



THE SUNSHINE COAST - IS IT PARADISE LOST?

The release of the 2006 census figures have sounded alarm bells for the State Member for Noosa, Glen Elmes, who claims that a 17% population growth rate, over a 5 year period, simply cannot be sustained. He is also the Parliamentary Secretary to the Shadow Minister for the Environment and Multiculturalism.

“When I first came to the Sunshine Coast in 1985, the population was approximately 94,000 and 20 years later we are well past the 250,000 mark. Everyone I speak to tells me that they don’t want the Sunshine Coast to become another Gold Coast, yet in just 15 years, at the present growth rates, we will have almost reached the current Gold Coast population figure of 472,279” Glen Elmes said.

“Unchecked population growth is an issue that the whole of South East Queensland has to face, and debate. The Government’s SEQ Plan still calls for 60,000 hectares of open space, bushland and farms be cleared so that 550,000 new homes can be built. This means that each year 75 square kilometers of bush and agricultural land is being converted into housing and other urban developments.

“I doubt there is anyone on the Sunshine Coast, or indeed in South East Queensland who wants to see the entire region looking like some huge, urbanised version of Los Angeles, yet most people feel that they are powerless to be able to have an effective say.

“Regardless of the outcome of council amalgamations, Sunshine Coast local authorities need to engage with their communities so that as a region we can decide at what point the ‘House Full’ sign should go up. Noosa has made the hard decisions, I just hope that the responsible planning, environmental protection and sustainability guidelines aren’t abandoned, otherwise the lifestyle reasons which all of us came here to enjoy, will be lost.

“The Beattie Government needs to encourage new arrivals to settle more evenly throughout Queensland. This Labor Government is hopelessly behind on the provision of infrastructure and if we are not careful it really will become a case of *Paradise Lost*” Glen Elmes said.

Glen Elmes will continue to outline his views at the Sunshine Coast Community Forum being held at the Lake Kawana Community Centre on Monday 2 July, 2007, at 6pm. **ENDS**

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