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Media Release

Clearing the way for affordable housing for key workers

At a recent Sunset Drinks networking event at Alba by Kuruvita, fifty Noosa Chamber of Commerce members and guests stood rivetted, hearing about solutions to obstacles preventing affordable housing.

Rob McCready of Altum Property Group gave a sobering fact-based presentation urging ways to increase housing supply and build more affordable housing.

As context, McCready outlined the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conservative estimate of 1.3% per annum population growth, which would see Australia's population reaching at least 70 million by 2100.

Noosa's population in the 2021 census was 56,300 and the current SEQ Regional Plan forecasts 63,000 by 2041. The recent draft updated Plan projects the need for an additional 4,900 dwellings over the next 25 years, from 28,300 to 33,200.

McCready explained, "Noosa is the most expensive local government area (LGA) in the State. The median price of detached houses is \$1,295,000 and units \$960,000, and little is available for rent. Key workers, who are the backbone of our community, are unable to afford or find accommodation in Noosa Shire. Many employers face challenges attracting and retaining staff due to lack of affordable housing."

"Meanwhile, the possibly unpalatable solution to the housing supply crisis is simple. We must supply more housing. State Government mandates four years of approved supply and 15 years of adequately zoned land, but Noosa Council has only half a year of supply in the pipeline."

"Our housing supply industry continues to be frustrated with lengthy delays in approvals for land title, building applications, and occupation certificates. Shortage of land in the right places, high development taxes, charges and fees, and inflexible planning laws also restrict opportunities to meet the housing needs of our future. These long-term supply challenges are the responsibility of the State Government and local councils."

Rob McCready pointed out that constructing a new \$800,000 dwelling attracts over \$230,000 in government fees charges and taxes. "Without these levies, the developer could sell them for around \$570,000 making them much more affordable," said McCready.

So how can the critical affordable housing shortage be addressed to ensure Noosa remains a welcoming and inclusive community for all? Rob McCready offered a range of approaches:



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- Collaboration between government authorities, local chambers of commerce and developers
- A comprehensive approach to rezoning considering the practicality and viability of development and involving community engagement to protect local character
- Data-driven approaches to assess the viability of developable land
- Sustainable architecture and energy efficient designs
- Partnerships between local government, not-for-profits and developers to construct housing for low income families and individuals
- A range of actions by Council to facilitate affordable housing, such as making the planning scheme more flexible, providing development incentives, resourcing staff sufficiently, training planning staff in the rudiments of development finance, seeking industry feedback to determine viable affordable housing, and measuring affordable housing outcomes as a performance indicator.

Rob McCready's presentation gave plenty of food for thought for Sunset Drinks attendees who also enjoyed networking over drinks, canapes and gourmet pizzas, thanks to Peter Kuruvita and his Alba restaurant team.

Noosa Chamber management committee member Pat Rogers was the master of ceremonies and heralded upcoming Noosa Chamber events including Coffee Catch Ups in October and November and an educative Wellness Program on 26 October for fostering a mentally healthy and resilient business culture. Pat Rogers also thanked Noosa Chamber's major sponsors Bendigo Bank Tewantin-Noosa, MiQ Private Wealth, Harlequin Blinds and Security Sunshine Coast, Hot91, and Noosa Council.

Event bookings and joining Noosa Chamber can be on the Noosa Chamber of Commerce website www.noosachamberofcommerce.com.au