

# How evaluation & community governance made a difference to planning and decision making in a small community

## *Evaluation - What is the use?*

AES International Conference  
New Zealand

17 September 2003

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**Ellen Vasiliauskas**  
**d-sipher pty ltd**



Ph: +64 7 5455 4207  
ellenv at d-sipher.com.au

# Overview

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- Global & local contexts
- What is community governance?
- The Noosa case study
- Use of evaluation & evidence based methods
- Who has benefited and who has not?

# Global context for community governance

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*"New forms of governance will be needed over the next few decades which will involve a much broader range of active players"*

Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development

# Overseas trends

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The key elements of shifts in rural policy in OECD countries overseas are around:

*“ - decentralisation of policy administration and, within limits, policy design to those levels;*

*- increased use of partnerships between public, private and voluntary sectors in the development and implementation of local and regional policies.”*

**The Future of Rural Policy Conference in Siena, Italy July 2002  
From sectoral to place-based policies in rural areas  
OECD 25-06-2003**

## Local context - Community participation placed on government reform agenda

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1980's:

- Government recognised it could not solve the increasingly complex social, economic, environmental & attitudinal factors when planning for a sustainable future.

1990's:

- Changing Australian policy with framework of federal, state & local govt. microeconomic reform.

2001:

- Local government IPA specifies areas of community consultation.

2002:

- Who will take care of the planning at the local level across all the other sectors? – Social, Environmental and Economic.

# Changing role of Local government

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## Local government:

- Closer to communities than other levels of government
- An emphasis on local implementation of federal & state policies
- Changing role from roads, rates & rubbish to facilitators (1980's).

The Public

Sector  
Federal  
State  
Regional  
Local

The Community

All members of  
the community



Local  
government as  
strategic facilitators  
of place based  
initiatives

The Private Sector

Private sector business  
Industry groups  
Education

The Community Sector

Third sector (not for profit)  
Voluntary organisations  
Local Services & Clubs

# What is community governance?

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*'Governance has to do with institutions, processes & traditions for dealing with issues of public interest.'*

Understanding Community Governance  
1999 Local Government NZ Conference



# Use of evaluation & community governance – The Noosa case study



# Some information about Noosa

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- Small regional coastal location on Sunshine Coast in Queensland – 1.5hrs North Brisbane
- Population of 44,000 (2003)
- Main industries: tourism, construction, property & agriculture
- Balance of built & natural environment – high % of national park
- Village atmosphere

# Why did Noosa Council undertake community governance?

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## *Council recognised*

- *'...the quality of life and wellbeing of the local Shire community relies on many sectoral interests,*
- *which are outside of Council and*
- *often driven by other competing priorities.'*

# Brief from Noosa Council for community governance project

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*Develop plans for the Noosa community to achieve sustainability & acceptable quality of life in:*

- Social*
- Arts & heritage*
- Environment &*
- Economic sectors.*

*A vision to the year 2015 but with recommendations on actions, responsibility for action and funding for the first 2-4 year increment.*

# Before the Community Governance Project

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- Noosa Council has a history of community consultation - 20 yrs ago Council meetings opened to the community
- Existing consultative methods:
  - Limited to conventional methods – ‘let’s hold a community workshop’
  - Consultation processes for development of Noosa Plan under Integrated Planning Act relied on community meetings, which had relatively low attendances
  - Multiple committees on minor issues
- Main responsibility for decision-making, prioritising and action rested with Council

**Involvement & influence of a few  
– the squeaky wheels, the power  
brokers**

**Conflict v consultation**

**Sectoral interest groups competing  
for resources, and priorities**

**Deals done and trade-offs made**

**Control by misinformation/selective  
information**



## Little understanding of local issues



In government & outside  
of Noosa

**Few facts, lots of commonly held myths**

'Rents here are high'

'It's the commercial fishermen that are doing the harm'

'The cost of living here is high'



**In the Community**



**'We need one of those, some of this, & more of that**

**We need a 500 seat auditorium**

**We need a University**

**Council should build a sustainable house**



**Focus on solution rather than issue, ad hoc approach**

**Limited consideration of regional or  
State level issues, directions and  
planning**



**Many datasets, reports & information held by Council & State government, & non-government sector**

**BUT these are generally poorly used, coordinated, or applied at the local level**

- Limited local level data for planning
- Data collection:
  - lack of quality data
  - lack of timely data (1996 ABS Census)
  - is a significant task





**Limited resources: financially & time**



# Development of Noosa Community Sector Boards

**Call for community nominations against set criteria**

**Criteria: Some experience with planning & taking a strategic overview, preparedness to make a long term commitment, willingness to look more broadly & across sectoral interests.**

**No positions allocated to existing sector groups**

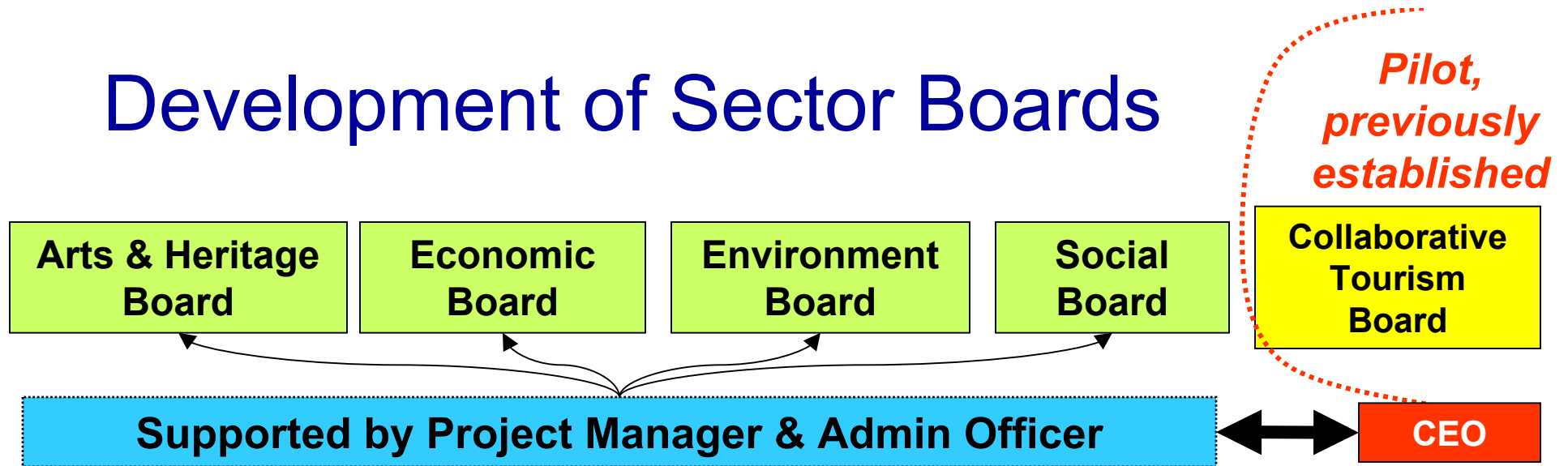
**Selection panel comprising Council, senior staff and some community members**

**Nine Community Board Members plus one elected Councillor & Senior Manager**

***ROLE:***

***“Develop plans to guide and direct the development of Noosa and its community to 2015”***

# Development of Sector Boards

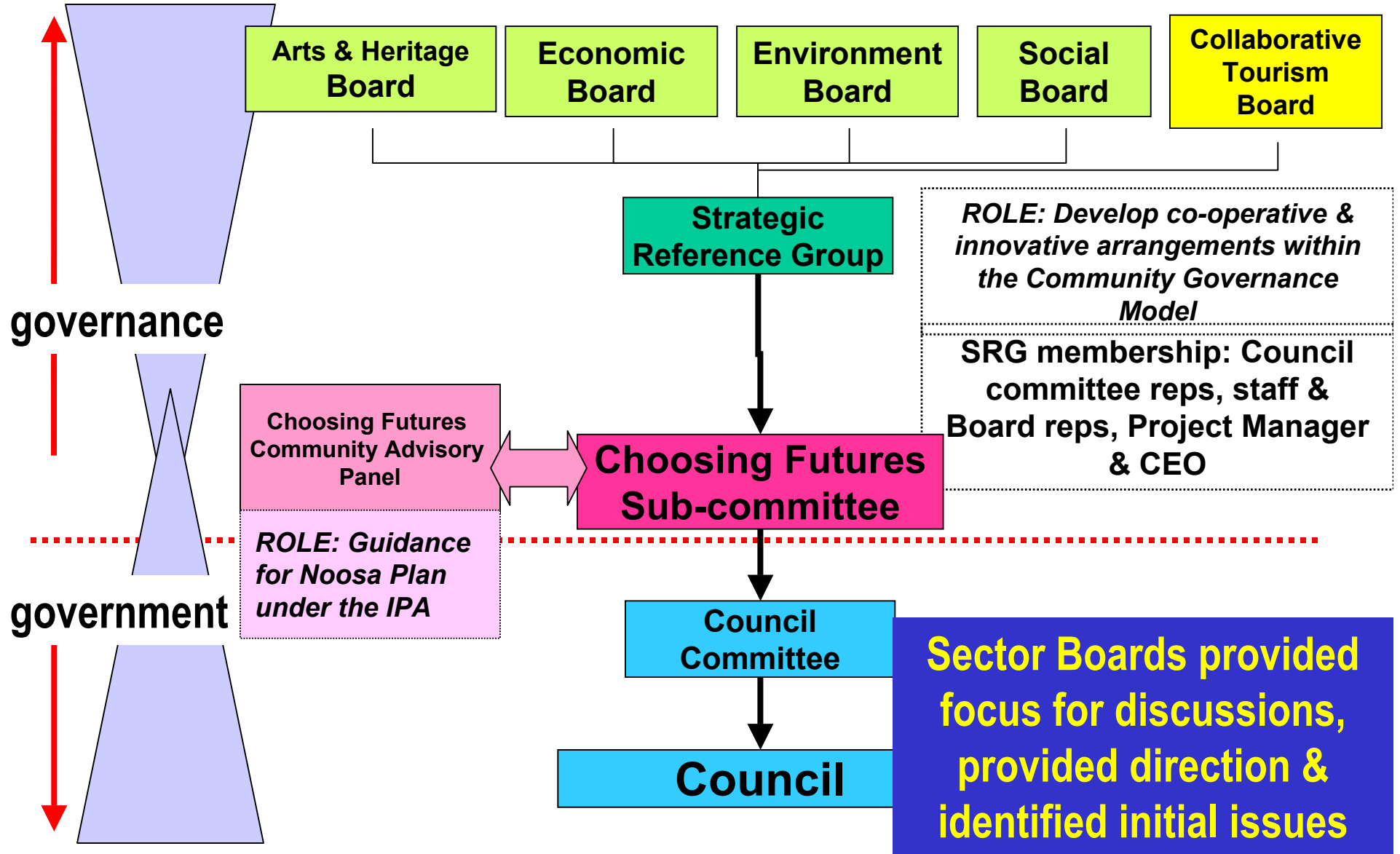


**Structure reflects TBL concepts**

**Pros: attracts experts and focuses interest & discussion**

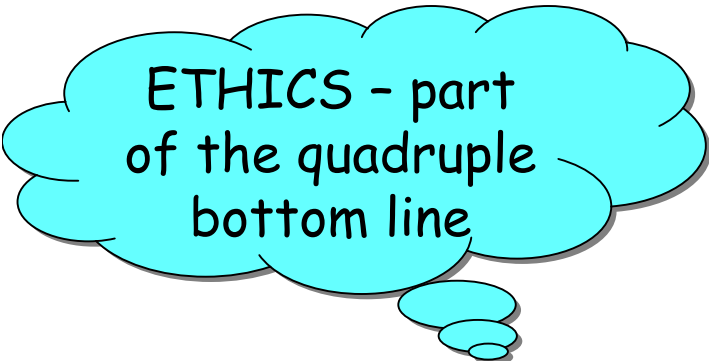
**Cons: needs integration to truly reflect TBL**

# Relationship between Sector Boards, Council & its committees



**Evaluation methods**  
**– The Noosa case study**





**ETHICS - part  
of the quadruple  
bottom line**

**Use values led processes**

Honesty, openness, equity & procedural justice

**Establish decision making processes**

**Values defined & agreed up front**

**Adherence to ethical practices**

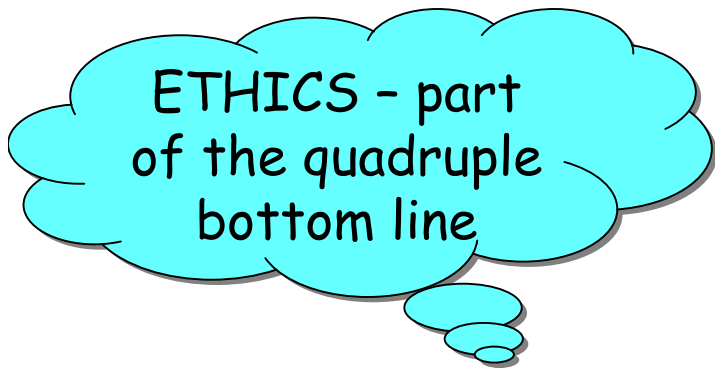
**Use processes that reflect agreed  
community values**

**Uphold procedural justice to ensure  
other voices are heard**

**Set the climate, build group identity**

**Identify & agree on principles up  
front – but remain flexible**

**Will it be by consensus or voting?**



**Use values led processes**

Honesty, openness, equity & procedural justice

**Establish decision making processes**



Values defined & agreed up front

Adherence to ethical practices

Use processes that reflect agreed community values

Uphold procedural justice to ensure other voices are heard

Set the climate, build group identity

Identify & agree on principles up front – but remain flexible

Will it be by consensus or voting?

**Provides protocols & guide for all stakeholders**

**Sectoral & factional interests increasingly disenfranchised**

**Limits effectiveness of power brokers**

**Allows representation of broader community opinion & balanced discussion**

**Use of evidence based  
methods  
Review & analysis of  
existing data & literature**

**Analysis of Australian Bureau of  
Statistics data**

**Analysis of existing government,  
community sector & Council data**

**Literature review to scope sectors & align  
with current theory**

**OUTCOMES**

**Broadens discussion across issues**

**Focus on the issue and not the myth**

**Raised level of community debate &  
discussion of issues**

**Provides supporting evidence to  
government agencies for local needs**

**Identifies where data is incomplete**

# Data & reference sources

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1. **Population & Australian Bureau of Statistics data (1996 & 2001);**
2. **Market Facts survey of Noosa Shire residents (2000);**
3. **Health indicators of SE Qld (2001);**
4. **Housing data (rental & bonds 2002);**
5. **Noosa Council Reports- Demographic Report 2002, Choosing Futures Report 2002;**
6. **Consultation with Council staff;**
7. **“A guideline for integrating community wellbeing in planning” (LGAQ, Dec 2001);**
8. **“Just, vibrant & sustainable communities” (A framework for progressing & measuring community wellbeing) LGCSAA Townsville 2001;**
9. **Anecdotal information and feedback from community service providers .**

## Use of modelling

Focuses, defines parameters of discussion

**OUTCOMES**

Provides structure & can elevate the discussion to the strategic level

Makes the discussion manageable

Makes communication easier & builds shared understanding



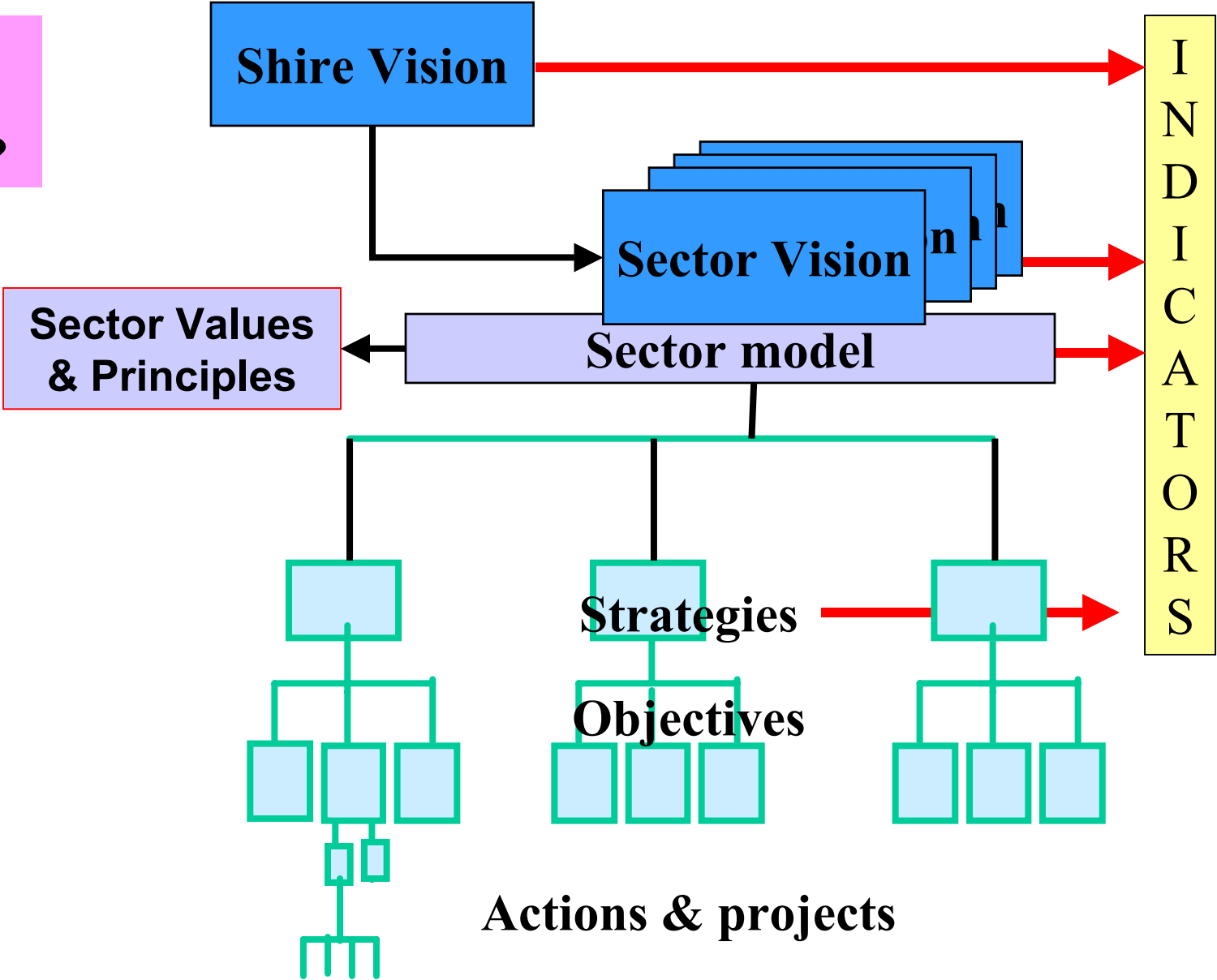
*'Model for progressing social cohesion & community wellbeing in Noosa Shire'*

Where are we now?

Where do we want to be in 2015?

How will we get there?

# Background and discussion in each Sector Plan



## **Benchmarking**

**Benchmark local area to broaden understanding & provide national & global context**

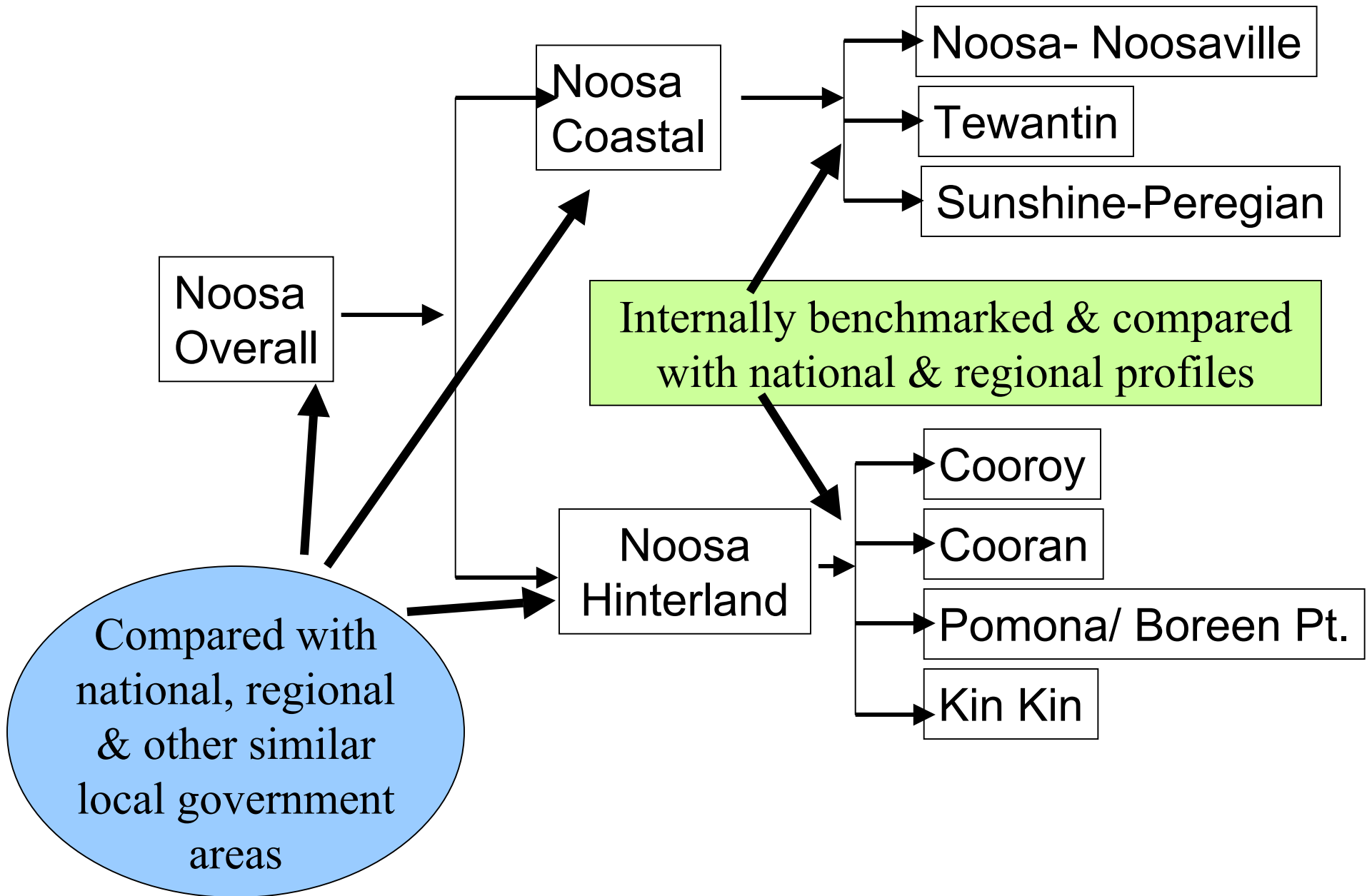


### **OUTCOMES**

**Provides a relative & 'realistic' picture of situation & performance**

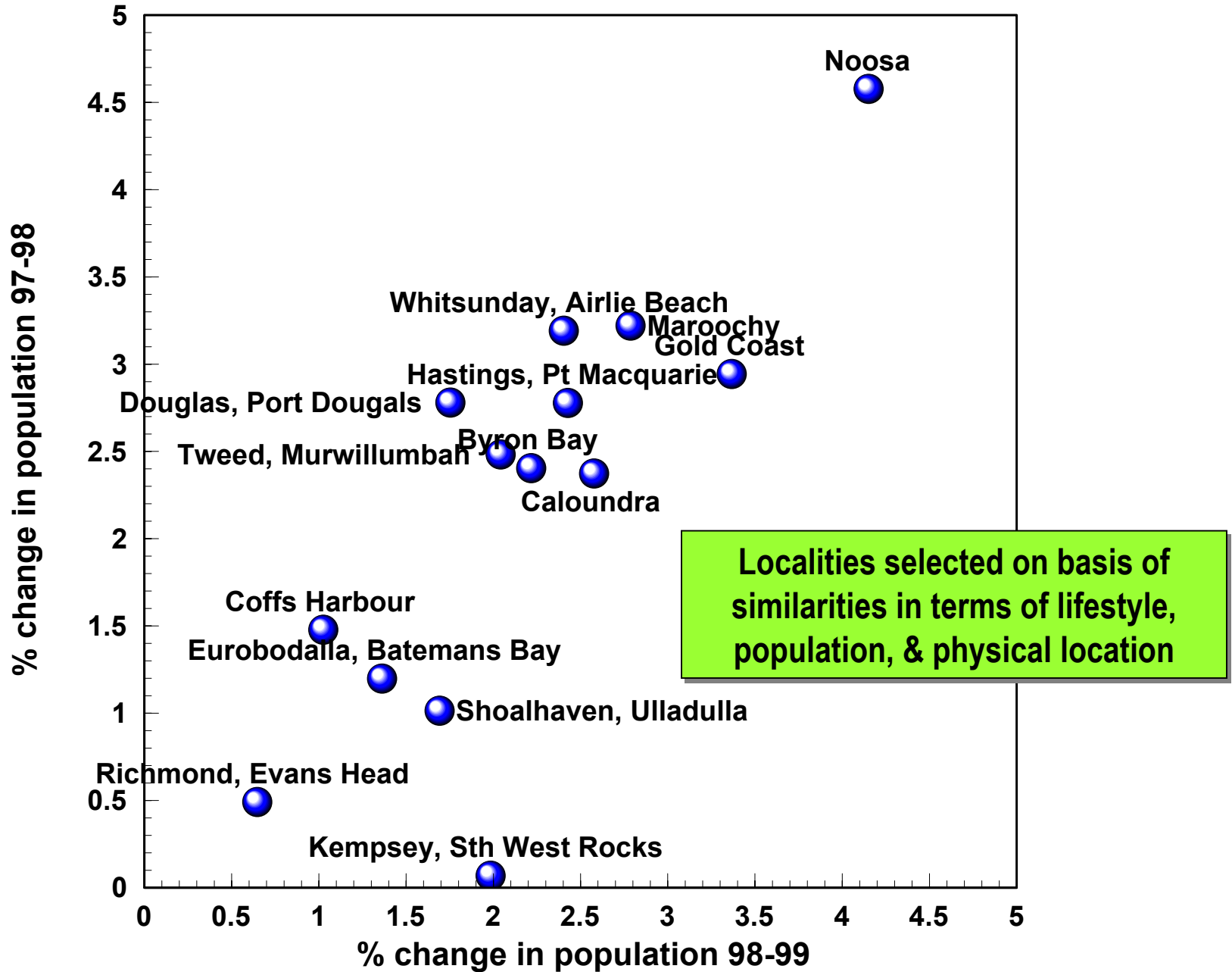
**Acknowledgement of regional, national & global influences**

# How Noosa's indicators were benchmarked





# Growth rates - Benchmarked



# Average annual income - 1999

NOOSA  
LOCATIONS

Sunshine  
Coast avge

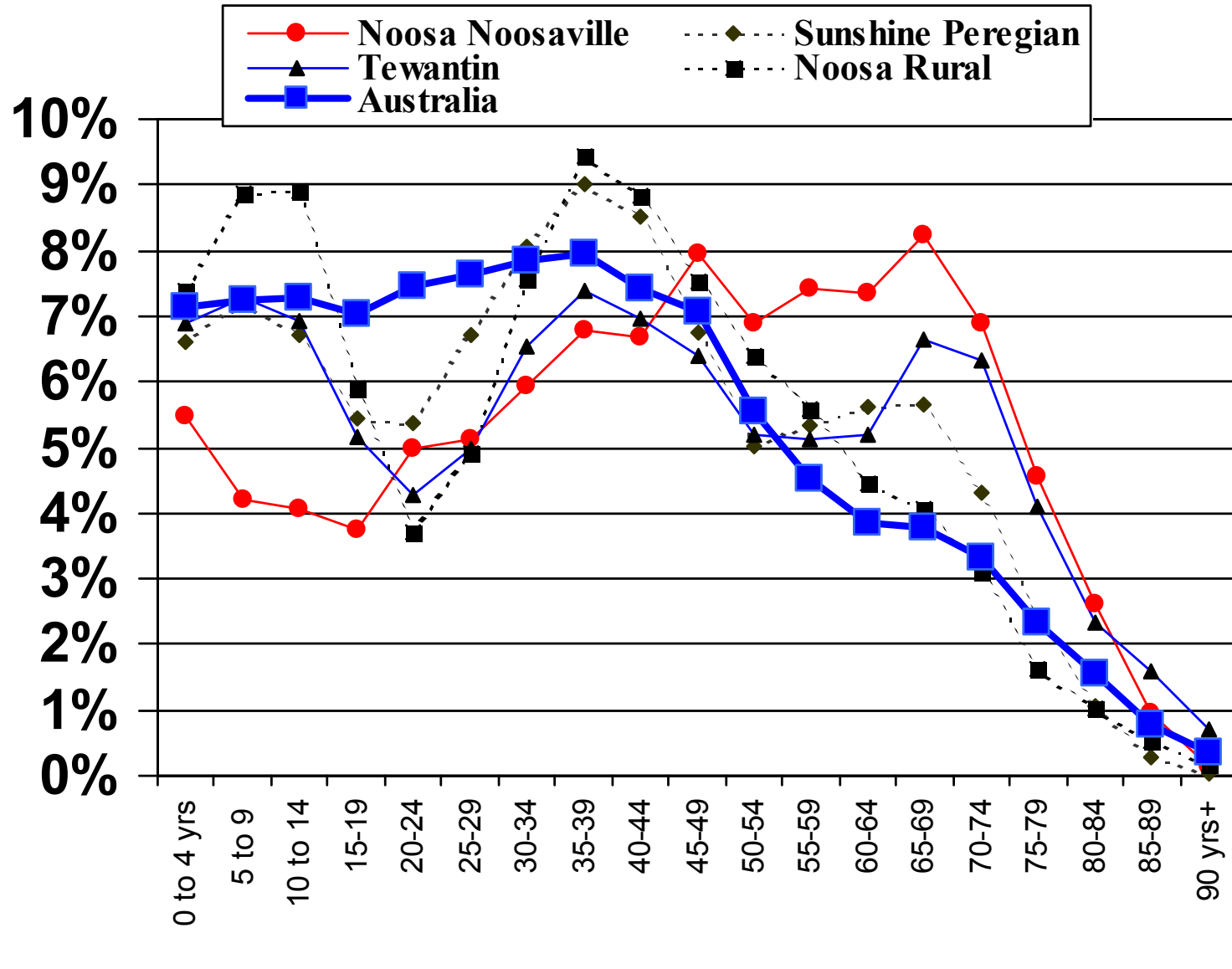
Brisbane = \$32,406  
Gold Coast = \$28,375  
Sunshine Coast = \$26,251

OESR, 2001

	av ge personal
Buderim	30466
Yandina	30234
Noosa Hds	28804
Alex Hds	28050
Kaw ana	27968
ivooooraba	27510
Nambour	27252
Noosaville	26991
Caloundra	26805
Cooroy	26788
Woomby e	26622
Glass House Mtns	26368
Mooloolah	26164
Coolum Beach	26084
Maleny	26059
Eumundi	25883
Landsborough	25750
Palmw oods	25676
Maroochy dore	25629
Gy mpie	25595
Beerburrum	25557
Eudlo	25268
Beerw ah	25124
T ew antin	24960
Kenilw orth	24945
Pomona	24680
Cooran	24544
Marcoola	23443
Kin Kin	22263

# Age distribution profile

*Noosa Shire Segments Vs Australian Average*



## **Development of indicators**

**Initially limited as based on available data**

**Reflected key themes in model or main strategy areas**



**OUTCOMES**

**Provides initial benchmarks to measure comparative performance over time**

<b>Social Component</b>	<b>Initial indicators</b>
<b>Wellness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age of population</li> <li>• Community health index</li> <li>• Hospitalisation rates</li> <li>• Welfare index</li> <li>• Average annual income</li> </ul>
<b>Social capital</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population mix, growth &amp; stability (length of residence)</li> <li>• Housing affordability</li> <li>• Number of volunteer groups</li> <li>• Crime rates</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> </ul>
<b>Community governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in Council elections</li> <li>• Community perceptions of Council</li> <li>• Evaluation of participant satisfaction with community governance</li> </ul>
<b>Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dropout rates in schools</li> <li>• Levels of literacy</li> <li>• Council staff survey</li> <li>• Cultural change – how would we measure this?</li> </ul>

## Our Say

# Sector boards help to map our shire's future direction

A MULTITUDE of brilliant ideas have been buzzing around the shire.

These ideas have been presented through workshops over the last three weeks at the Noosa Shire Community Sector boards.

The social workshop, to be held tonight and tomorrow, completes the round of meetings which have included the economic, arts, heritage and environment boards (the tourism board has finished its consultations and is now implementing the plans).

The boards are made up of nine community members, a council representative and senior staff member.

Their overall focus is to develop plans for how we want to be in 2015.

The groups were formed last September when council, through a classified ad, called for the participation of interested volunteers.

Since then, the groups have researched and developed discussion papers and draft plans.

At these latest meetings, the boards presented draft plans of their strategies and options.

Like the numbers and type of people attending these meetings, the response has been diverse and lively.

I attended the economic board meeting at Cooroy and the Arts meeting at Noosaville.

The economic board painted a picture of our present circumstances through a detailed and broad range of social and busi-

ness night could keep at least 100 people away from the arts meeting. The meeting ran to the prescribed format and many voices added their opinions to the draft plan.

No doubt, the social board meetings will be just as vigorous.

As far as it is known, these council-initiated sector boards are the first of their kind in Australia.

The expertise and work of the boards have provided us with the information to engage in informed debate.

The community consultation process has given us the means to participate in shaping our future.

The presentations and range of community debate have been extraordinarily stimulating and at times provocative.

Undoubtedly, this process leads to immeasurable community benefits both now and towards 2015.

■ ONE of the things I noticed in these meetings was a proliferation of a new style of jargon: for example, buzzwords like "community governance", "social capital", "branding" and "sustainability".

The community sector boards project manager, Ellen Vasillauskas, has agreed to help our understanding of this terminology, by providing the meaning to at least one of these new words each week.

Look on this page next Friday and see the brave new world of new-word meanings.

Council News

# Your chance to help Noosa thrive

Community governance will help guide Noosa's future

Last September, council sponsored five community sector boards, each made up of at least nine volunteer community members, plus an elected councillor and a senior staff member.

The boards have been researching and discussing how to develop a sustainable economic, social, environmental, arts and heritage and tourism future.

Imagine if Noosa had taken no action to protect its natural assets, had not restricted the height of building development 20 or so years ago and had not introduced innovative planning and management strategies.

We may well have ended up with Club Med on the Spit, high-rise on Hastings Street and roads

through National Parks.

Council is continuing its innovative approach to planning and managing the shire by initiating a "community governance" project to provide the community with a greater say and a further opportunity to consciously shape Noosa for future generations.

Boards are now seeking more community and stakeholder input through a series of workshop discussions.

Register to attend online at [www.noosa.qld.gov.au/noosa-communityboards](http://www.noosa.qld.gov.au/noosa-communityboards) or phone 5449 6380.

For information phone Helen Gregory on 5474 0522.

— ELLEN VASILLAUSKAS

Business News

# Community consults on the future

Business and community have a voice

By ELLEN VASILLAUSKAS

Project manager of Noosa Community Sector Boards

THE Noosa community went one step further in driving the planning and direction of Noosa's economic future this week.

More than 70 community and business representatives participated in consultations on the draft Community Economic Plan developed by Noosa's Community Economic Board.

Representatives included the Cooroy and Noosa Chambers of

Commerce and Industry. Jim Berardo from the Hastings Street Association emphasised the need for the Economic Board to maintain a strong focus on Noosa's core and most successful business – the hospitality and tourism industry and that this be added to the Board's tactics.

Further Sector Board consultations are being held in the coming weeks: Arts, Wednesday June 5, 6 to 9pm, Christian Outreach Centre, Childrens Church; Heritage, Thursday June 6, 9am to noon, Pomona School of Arts Hall; Environment, Thursday June 13, 6 to 9pm Christian Outreach Centre,

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Page 14. NOOSA NEWS, Tues

**Local media drew on issues raised by governance process to encourage a *balanced* discussion on the population cap, housing, the knowledge economy etc.**

## **Conducted community consultations**

**Partnered with Arts QLD policy consultations – used Minister, attracted largest number of community participants, >200 local participants, media attention**

**Development of issues papers for informed community discussion**



### **OUTCOMES**

**Synchronise limited resources - link with other projects, sources & outputs**

**Focused discussion, built on existing knowledge**

**Community added, affirmed/rejected issues & directions**

**Evaluation used to provide  
Boards with community  
feedback on issues papers**

**Community evaluated each Sector Board's  
issues paper**

**Community commented on each Sector  
Board's issues paper**

**Builds accountability**

**OUTCOMES**

**Identifies & highlights broader community  
opinion & enables balanced discussion**

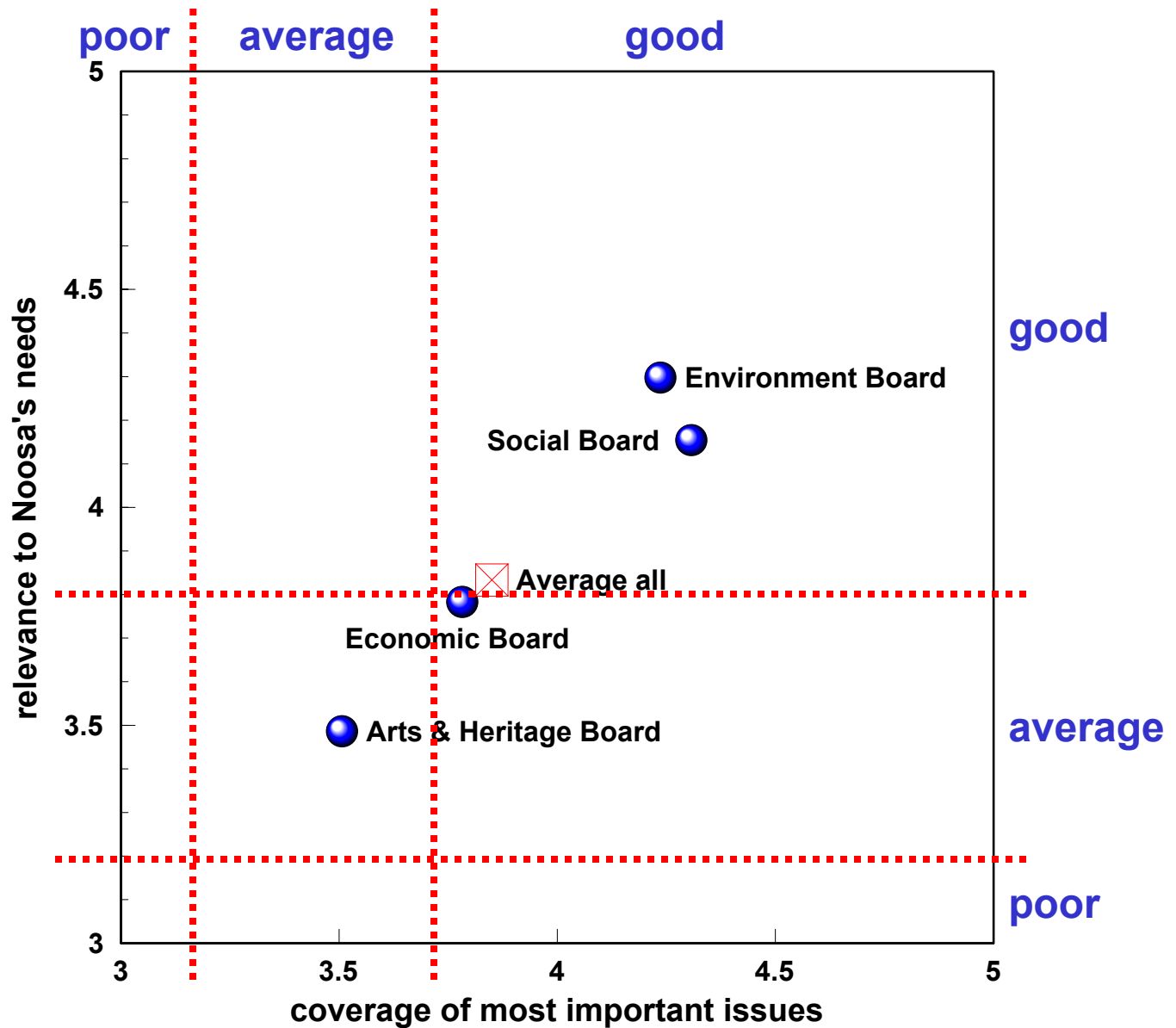
**Builds community trust & confidence in  
process**

**Sectoral interests increasingly  
disenfranchised**

**Builds transparency, limits 'personalised  
opinions'**



# Relevance & coverage of Sector Board proposals



# Conclusion

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*Evaluation & evidence based methods provide powerful tools for use in community engagement & planning processes.*

*They complement deliberative methods such as committees & workshops, providing a sound foundation for ethical, values-led planning, policy and economic development.*

**How evaluation & community  
governance made a difference to  
planning and decision making in  
a small community**

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***THANK YOU***

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