

## for tourism an alluring picture

Peter Gardiner | 27th October 2009

Market research has found that, far from running out of steam, Noosa's tourism juggernaut is going to become our billion-dollar baby over the next decade.

And one key to keeping the golden nest egg, without throttling the goose, will be to encourage longer stays rather than zeroing in on accommodation expansion.

As well, the report by respected economic firm EMDA, commissioned for Tourism Noosa, has helped show the way forward with the peak promotion body determined to become less reliant on day-trippers by encouraging more overnight stays.

Tourism Noosa chief executive Steve Cooper said the report provided a "positive outlook" with a forecast visitor spend of more than \$1 billion by the year 2020.

This is up from an already healthy \$765 million a year generated by Noosa's allure.

And this is even with factoring in such impacts as climate change and Noosa's population cap of 62,000, which is expected to be reached by 2016, according to this study.

"Our philosophy in managing tourism for Noosa is to minimise the impact of visitation while increasing benefits across the community," Mr Cooper said.

"We are focussing on growing visitor yield, through greater length of stay and strong product offerings, as opposed to simply developing Noosa as a mass tourism destination.

"We would also like to see an increase in overnight visitors as opposed to day-trippers, who tend to consume facilities and services while in town without spending nearly as much as multi-day visitors."

Mr Cooper said the Noosa forecasting study was based on macro-economic drivers as well as localised factors such as new accommodation developments and improved transport access.

He said the report highlighted predicted annual shifts in numbers, nights and spending from core domestic and international markets between 2010 and 2020.

Increased visitor numbers from Sydney are expected to continue to increase in years to come, while Melbourne will gradually "return to form".

Mr Cooper said in 10 years' time the annual expenditure from the Victorian capital should be level with Sydney at more than \$170 million.

"Brisbane will also continue to be an increasingly important domestic market for Noosa, with more than 350,000 visitors from the growing capital forecast to visit Noosa in 2020."

Another growth market will be Europe.

Mr Cooper said the United Kingdom, Noosa's largest inbound market, was forecast to grow consistently as its economy improves, while Noosa's other key markets of New Zealand, Germany and the Americas would also trend upwards.

The UK visitation to Noosa was showing little impact from the global recession with an increase of 6.4% for the year ending March 2009.

Mr Cooper said international visitors were a vital market for Noosa, filling traditional seasonal gaps and contributing to the diversity of the market.

“To ensure these forecast targets are successfully achieved, Tourism Noosa has recently appointed a sales manager for the important European market.

“The Noosa brand is already strong in the key markets of Germany and the UK,” said Mr Cooper, “and our aim is to drive this awareness further in these countries, as well as others such as Italy and France to build a substantial and resilient visitor-base for Noosa.”

The Europe manager will provide an on-the-ground face for Noosa across continental Europe, training travel agents, updating wholesale partners and profiling destination Noosa to trade and consumer media.

“With Noosa's current product offering, and new international ready accommodation being launched over the next 12 months, the timing is ideal to increase our efforts.”