



Expert warns: it could get ugly

By PETER GARDINER

NOOSA'S population restrictions do not have a place in the future of the greater Sunshine Coast, a local academic has claimed.

Professor Scott Prasser, convenor of this week's Sunshine Coast State of the Region Summit, believes what worked for Noosa prior to amalgamation will soon prove unworkable.

Prof Prasser prefers to call Noosa's attempt to hold back urban floodgates a "development cap" rather than a "population cap".

"The cap was workable in Noosa while you had Maroochy Shire to take all the families coming into the area – but when you are one region as we are now, you can no

longer do that," he said.

The state government would not allow the Sunshine Coast council to impose a similar regional cap on new development. He said it will be interesting to see it handle infill population.

"While most of the population pressure will come in the southern areas of the Coast – Noosa's hinterland is an area that will be at risk," Prof Prasser said.

One of the keynote speakers is Dr Alison Taylor of the Queensland department of infrastructure and planning.

He said her data showed the Coast was the equal fastest growing major population region in Australia outside the capital cities.

"The other issue is that the rest of south-east Queensland is also growing almost as fast and the urban expansion or creep puts the Sunshine Coast under such external pressure," he said.

Southern Coast developments that are of concern to Coast mayor Bob Abbot did not have to spell the ruination of Pumicestone Passage.

"There are larger populations in similar locations around the world have not had the same impacts on the waterways – you just have to start getting creative in the sort of developments you are doing.

"The Sunshine Coast has the potential to become a very ugly place to live ... I say

look at the Gold Coast and see the Sunshine Coast in 20 years if you don't start doing things differently."

The State of the Region Summit will be at the University of the Sunshine Coast this Friday.



CAP WON'T WORK: Professor Scott Prasser.