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NOOSA TODAY

Council support

Queensland Councils have rallied behind a Noosa Council motion that could potentially save Noosa ratepayers millions of dollars.

For years, Noosa and other Queensland councils have been forced to foot much of the bill to defend development application appeals brought to the Planning and Environment Court that Council consider are in "significant" conflict with the planning scheme.

Noosa Council tabled a motion at this week's annual Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) Conference, seeking a review of who bears the costs of such actions.

Mayor Clare Stewart said Councils across Queensland supported the motion.

"This effectively means we've won the first major battle in reducing the huge cost to ratepayers in defending our planning decisions against claims by developers where an application is in significant conflict with our planning scheme," Mayor Clare Stewart said at the conference.

"This massive vote in support of our motion means the LGAQ can now lobby the Queensland Government to review how appeal costs are awarded where a development proposal is found to significantly conflict with a council's planning scheme."

Council's cost of appeals brought by developers had risen markedly in recent years, with one costing more than \$1 million on its own, even though the application was clearly in major conflict with the 2006 Noosa Plan.

"Council has a good track record before the Planning and Environment Court, but unless there are amendments to the Act, the costs will continue to spiral," she said.

"The Act as it stands provides for each party to pay its own costs, but it also allows for aggrieved parties to contest decisions even though there's no chance of success.

"These actions are a huge cost impost on ratepayers and what we want is to ensure costs are placed upon those who are bringing this type of action, rather than councils having to foot the bill." Cr Stewart said.

"The success of this motion is an important first step, and the large number of councils showing their support will surely be acknowledged," she said.

"I would like to thank all the councils who supported Noosa's motion

"Many of them have faced the same imbalanced costs to defend their sound planning decisions.

"We hope the LGAQ can successfully persuade the State Government to complete the review and reform local government planning," she said.