



Sunshine Coast Region: Our Essence

Crystallising a regional story is necessary

- New Zealand is cited as one example of a regionally and culturally diverse country that has successfully implemented a unifying brand built around its story and values – a brand that has significantly benefited New Zealanders including their export and tourism industries. This journey took 16 years and several millions of dollars.
- Sunshine Coast is consistently recognised for its beautiful natural environment and unsurpassed quality of life. A regional story would sit outside of local government brands and strategies and would explain who we are as a regional community and reinforce our reputation as a great place to live, visit and invest.
- The region is advancing in terms of population and investment opportunities, a narrative to articulate regional values and identity will assist in preserving and enhancing regional values as the regions matures.
- In recent years, both government and private sector major projects have been dogged by comments such as “we don’t want to be like the Gold Coast”, rather than being able to clearly articulate what the values of the region are in order to align future investment. This is critical to address so that we are all responsible for preserving what makes this region great.

Background to this exercise

- In June 2016, Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) in collaboration with Visit Sunshine Coast (VSC) led a delegation of 20 leading Sunshine Coast business men and women on a three-day study tour of Auckland, New Zealand. The objective of the tour was to better understand why and how New Zealand had developed its country (tourism) brand and, how this was brand was being brought to life across all high value sectors of the New Zealand economy, including investment attraction. Hence, the 100% Pure NZ – ONE message that explains the culture and values of NZ.
- Whilst some of the lessons shared by New Zealand may have influenced local tourism marketing and investment attraction, the ONE message lesson - to explain the Sunshine Coast Region's values and identity – is yet to be achieved.
- Since 2016, SCBC has been building broad acceptance within business, industry and government to tell the Sunshine Coast regional story as an important step to forge a stronger and more unified image of the region.
- The lack of budget encouraged creativity and support was sought from councils, regional federal and state members and SCBC members - to access relevant regional research undertaken over the past decade - to provide the research base to inform the project.
- This project was not undertaken by commissioning new research and was not intended as a branding or investment attraction exercise.
- This project was designed as a desk top review of existing research assets – most which had significant community engagement – and from that research, identify repeatable threads that would go to weave a regional story explaining ***Sunshine Coast Region: Our Essence.***

Objective of the project

- This project is a step toward crystalising:
 - **Our Regional Values** (what we hold dear and want to protect, what is important in defining who we are and how we want to be perceived within and outside the region)
 - **Our Identity** (who we are as a people and as a region and who and what we want to be in the future).
- The audio-visual story is told through a collection of images and messages and is a valuable step in bringing clarity to our regional values which have emerged over the years and provides a description about the essence of what makes this Coast great.
- This foundation storyboard that can be drawn upon by others to explain regional attributes, values, and importantly, the energy of the Sunshine Coast Region and can be viewed on the SCBC website.

Aims and benefits

- Private and public sectors parties can represent the region through an authentic and consistent values-based positioning platform.
- The story, values and identity become part of the regional positioning framework. A ‘test’ that enables a unified approach to manage the ‘voice’ of the region and which will become culturally embedded over time.
- A “common language” will emerge so that issues of growth, infrastructure, investment and trade can be discussed, promoted and positioned universally. This work can and should feed into broader work by each council’s and tourism group around regional area identity.
- By articulating what is important to the region, with the community and through the words of the community, it becomes easier to discuss where big thinking change can, and need to occur.
- Lastly, it forms the basis upon which to take a second step – further work to explain and position the *Sunshine Coast Region* nationally and internationally as a great place to live, work and invest.

Repeatable threads & themes identified from the research

DRAMATIC OUTLINE, **INDIVIDUALITY**, **FREEDOM TO BE YOURSELF**,
DIVERSE, **REGION OF CHOICE**, ACTIVATION, **INNOVATIVE**, NON-
IMITATIVE, **PATTERNED AND RICH**, **SELF-SUFFICIENCY**, INCUBATES,
LOCAL, BOUTIQUE, INCLUSIVE, **GENEROSITY**, CLUSTERS,
COLLABORATES, **CONNECTS**, **ENGAGES**, **VIBRANT EXCHANGES**,
SANCTUARY, **SACRED GEOGRAPHIC SIGNATURE**, **HEALTH AND**
WELLNESS, **HOME AND COMMUNITY**, REAL, **AUTHENTIC**, PAST
MISTAKES LEADING TO DEEP KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM,
SOPHISTICATEDLY NATURAL, **NEXUS FOR CREATIVITY**, STEP OUT OF
THE BOX . . .

REGIONAL VALUES

Individuality
Freedom to be yourself
Self-sufficiency
Generosity
Health and wellness
Home and community

REGIONAL IDENTITY THEME

Dramatic outline
Region of choice
Innovative
Patterned and rich
Connects, engages, vibrant exchange
Sacred geographic signature
Authentic
Sophisticatedly natural
Nexus for creativity

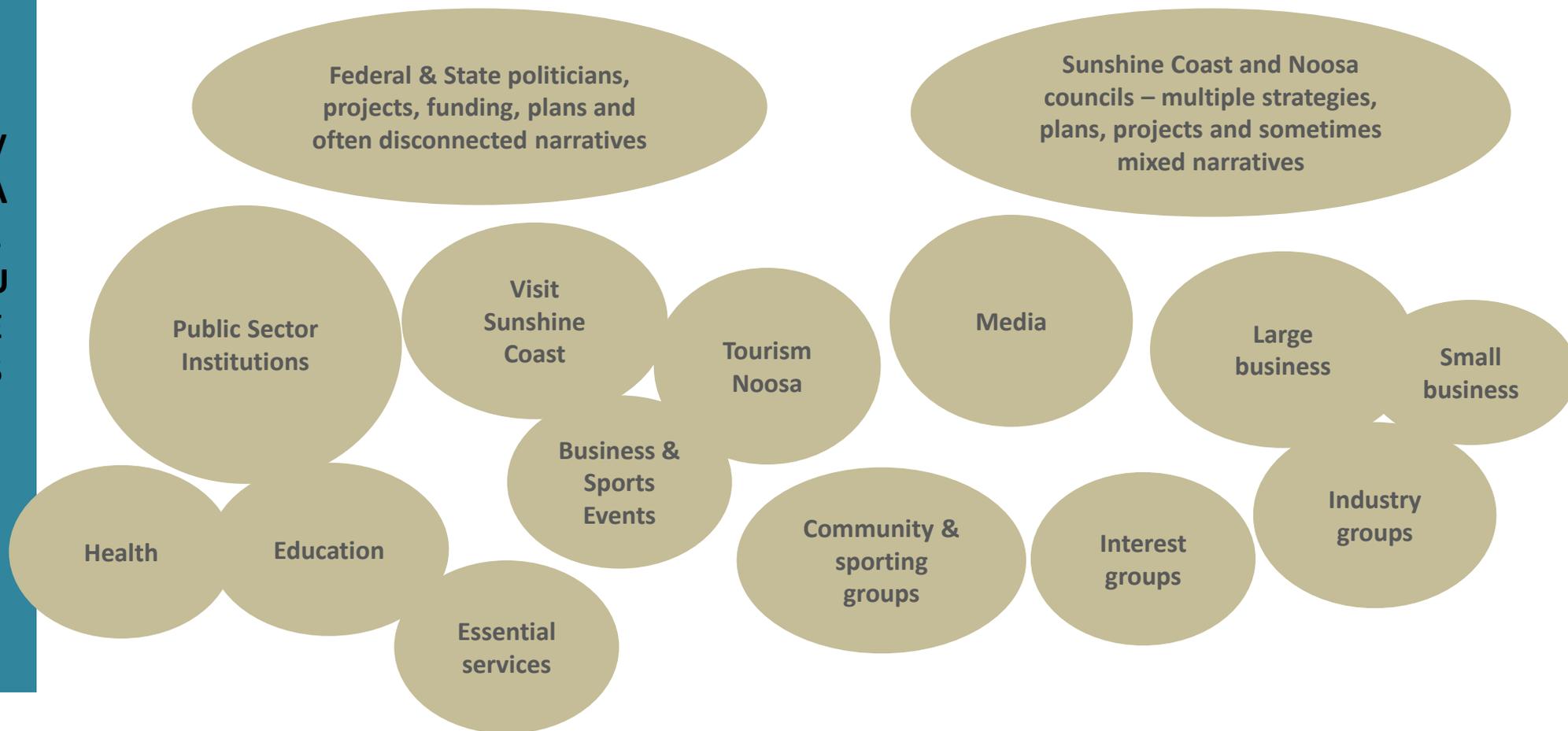
Current challenge in projecting a unified regional 'Story'

Separate regional bodies creating strategies that often reflect conflicting values and identity threads

'OUR STORY' WILL CREATE A REGIONAL NARRATIVE GROUNDED IN OUR HISTORY AND YET POINTING TO OUR FUTURE. ONE THAT REFLECTS OUR REGIONAL VALUES & IDENTITY. SOMETHING THE BROADER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES CAN SUPPORT.

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The process undertaken

1

An invitation was made by SCBC to both regional councils, regional federal and state members, tourism industry groups and SCBC members and stakeholders to join a collaborative funding effort to create the story of Sunshine Coast Region from existing research. A total of thirty separate (30) funders participated with contributions ranging from \$5k to \$500. All funders are treated the same.

2

Dr Carol Major was engaged to undertake a desktop review of diverse research, identify repeatable threads and themes that point to regional values and regional identity and to present that at the Combined Government & Business Forum (CGBF) in September 2018 for feedback (as outlined in the project brief circulated to funding partners).

3

Between 18 – 19 July 2018 three (3) workshops were conducted by Dr Major in Maroochydore, Caloundra and Tewantin sourcing feedback from fifty five (55) representatives from the funding partners, including the community. Dr Major considered the feedback from each workshop and used the input to create the next version of the presentation.

4

On 26 September 2018, Dr Major presented the evolving storyboard at the SCBC CGBF for further feedback prior to finalising an audio visual presentation. A further sixty (60) members and stakeholders provided their comments in a structured feedback session.

5

We've reached a point where we feel the audio visual presentation is an appropriate reflection of what the Sunshine Coast represents today and we are excited to share it with our members and beyond.