

NOVEMBER 2019

CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

In the 2014 Chair's Annual Report we acknowledged the ten (10) years anniversary of Sunshine Coast Business Council (SCBC/Business Council). In 2019 we celebrate fifteen (15) years of service and thank all our members – past and present - for their support and contribution to what has emerged as the region's leading economic and industry advocacy group.

Over the past five years, we have continued to broaden our membership base and advocacy agenda. However, we have remained faithful to the objectives outlined in the SCBC Constitution:

To encourage a membership which is representative of the various business types or industry sectors which are significant participants in the Sunshine Coast region's economy,

To promote the interests of the members of the Business Council through a unified audible and identifiable apolitical voice capable of:

- *Advocating its position to the three levels of government, and*
- *Providing leadership for the region's broader business community.*

To pursue regional economic development including supporting initiatives of other organisations provided that those initiatives are aligned with the objections of the Business Council.

According to our members, our independence and bi-partisan approach are the main reasons they choose to be a member of SCBC. As we move forward into our sixteenth year with new board members and a diverse membership base, we must continue to protect and reflect those attributes.

The year in review

SCBC's events, advocacy and research activities in 2019 continued to be focussed on:

- Jobs
- Regional strategies
- Leveraging investment in projects
- Next generation planning scheme

SCBC held six (6) events in 2019; two paid and four free. Topics ranged from:

- jobs and changing employment;
- Sunshine Coast International Broadband Cable and economic opportunities;

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BOARD MEMBERS 2019

Sandy Zubrinich, Chair
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Hayden Rudd, Treasurer
NCP

Tony Sowden - Secretary
Tony Sowden Lawyer

Adrian Allen, Director
Stockland Communities

Bridget Murphy, Director

Peter Pallot, Director
Maressa Pty. Ltd.

Ana Rodger, Director
TAFE Qld East Coast

Tony Vickers, Director
Midson Construction

Brad Williams, Chair PCA
Regional Sunshine Coast Chapter

- a digital workshop that focussed on the current and future growth industries, markets and services;
- transport funding;
- investment flow across industries;
- education; training and skills.

Brochures and select speaker presentations are available on the website <https://scbusinesscouncil.com.au/>

Events

SCBC Annual Strategy Workshop - held in March when over 40 members and stakeholders joined in presentations and discussion on the regional economy and Business Council's advocacy agenda for 2019.

Where the Jobs Will Be - lunch held in April 2019 with 80 attendees. Guest speaker Mr Ross Elliott.

Meet the Candidates Forum - held in May, 60 members and stakeholders took the opportunity to hear from regional candidates running for the 2019 Federal Election.

Digitalisation – Big Data – Fast Access - conference held in June 2019, attended by over 80 people with international, national and regional speakers who offered their insights into the opportunities that digitalisation and the incoming Submarine Cable can provide to the Sunshine Coast region.

Digitalisation Workshop - as a follow-on to the Digitalisation Conference - 75 members and participants from the business community identified regional growth potential from transformative digital technologies, particularly from mature industries such as health and education as well as the 'next wave' opportunities.

Annual Combined Government & Business Forum – held in October with 70 participants representing Federal, State and Local Government as well as SCBC members and stakeholders.

Lastly and importantly, SCBC in August 2019 again brought together approximately 20 members and stakeholders to sleep rough and fundraise for the homeless at the **Vinnies Corporate and Community Sleepout**.

Delivering on SCBC advocacy and research focus

SCBC undertook two studies:

1. **Sunshine Coast Infrastructure Overview between 2014 – 2023.** This work considered:
 - Key drivers of investment
 - Pipeline of key projects
 - The next wave of investment
 - How investment was spread across industries since 2014 and projected out to end 2023

The study found:

- Sunshine Coast population growth is solid, but other growth nodes in SEQ are competitive
- Mature families and downsizers are moving in but the youth continue to depart
- There is positive net migration across all age groups, except 18 – 24 year old's

- The proportion of children (0-19) are expected to decline, whilst the older population (65+) are expected to increase, posing the question who will drive the future economy of the Sunshine Coast?
- Infrastructure spend between 2014 – 2018 was driven by master planned communities, Bruce Highway upgrades and various residential developments
- 66% of investment was private sector funded
- Investment in REDS high value industries was mainly from Sunshine Coast University Hospital, various retirement and aged care developments and Sunshine Plaza Shopping Centre Redevelopment
- REDS contribution was dominated by development of master-plan communities, with traditional areas such as health, education and research making up 21% of investment
- There is a pipeline of \$24.7 billion including \$17 billion in projects under construction with \$12 billion of this spread over 15-20 years, approximately \$850 million committed investment and \$6.2 under investigation investment
- Unless projects under investigation actually occur, projects under construction will see declining investment levels from 2019 to 2023
- Overall high value industries will continue to see a low level of investment out to 2023
- There is \$3-4 billion in projects not yet being constructed, all with short-term economic impacts
- Projects need to occur:
 - To hit employment targets
 - To drive job attraction and retention
 - To broaden the economic base of the Sunshine Coast.

2. Funding arrangements for Sunshine Coast transport projects. This work sought to identify the committed and funded projects and funding arrangements across the 3-tiers of government, within the Sunshine Coast Council LGA. It concluded:

- The current significant investment in road infrastructure is limited to a couple of significant projects that in some respects are simply playing “catch up”
- There are a number of headline transport projects identified that will underpin investment in the region and can be seen as catalytic infrastructure, however, until these are delivered the transport system won’t keep pace with growth
- Extensive planning and investigations are being undertaken however at this stage this activity is not translating to projects on the ground
- There is a ‘missing middle’ of investment on the Sunshine Coast e.g. connect between major highways and local roads
- Local investment is occurring by Sunshine Coast Council through LGIP and other sources however, these projects are not region shaping projects.

Both research reports will be used for ongoing advocacy work.

Enabling Projects of Regional Significance (2018 research)

In addition to the two new studies, SCBC maintained our interest in regional economic benefit delivered from projects of regional significance. In 2018 we co-funded research undertaken by Dr Steven Boyd from the University of Sunshine Coast (USC). In 2019 Dr Boyd presented that research at several events including the RDA National Forum held in Canberra on 27 November 2019.

SCBC invited several esteemed state and regional business partners to contribute their experience during a testing phase of the framework designed as

part of the 2018 research. We maintain a watching brief on that project.

Media

SCBC worked again with Fresh PR to consistently to take our messages to the broader community with:

- Around 111 relevant mentions in media
- 15 media distributions
- 7 on-site TV interviews and more radio interviews
- Media coverage included:
 - Economic outlook
 - Work/Life Balance
 - Women in business
 - Sunshine Plaza redevelopment
 - Unemployment
 - Job creation
 - Federal Budget
 - Federal Election
 - Submarine Broadband Cable
 - State Budget
 - Maroochydore CBD
 - Digitalisation
 - Evolution of the Sunshine Coast
 - Infrastructure
 - Homelessness/Vinnies Sleepout
 - Education/University
 - Sunshine Coast University Hospital
 - Unified vision and collaboration amongst business, government and community leaders
 - Population growth

Focus in 2020

We commenced the year with a Federal Election looming and in May 2019 SCBC held a 'Meet the Candidates' function to hear from federal candidates. As we draw to years close, we are again planning for a 'Meet the Candidates' function – this time for local government. With elections being held on Saturday 28 March 2020 we don't have a lot of time to get across what candidates have to offer, but it is critical that we do.

Sunshine Coast LGA will have a 'new' Council after March 2020. This Council will be confronted with responsibility for guiding the formulation and critical timing of the new Planning Scheme and how it chooses to address the growth projections via that new Scheme. Noosa has its new Planning Scheme in place so will not be faced with the same issue.

This is shaping as an important local government election with several high-profile candidates retiring in the two LGAs and Mayor Jamieson yet to declare his position. We hope he decides soon, to give other potential mayoral candidates who may be sitting on the side time to explain their vision and ideas to the voting community, should he decide not to run.

This region has achieved a lot but there is still a lot to be done. Securing investors to realise the plans for developments such as the Maroochydore City Centre, maturing the region's digital capabilities, retaining and attracting skilled people, addressing issues of youth unemployment and health and maintaining the lifestyle our communities expect, are just some of the challenges still ahead.

We need well informed and experienced councillors prepared to work with business, and the community, to continue the regional economic evolution experienced over the past several years. We need the best people stepping up and we need to do all we can to encourage and support them to do so.

During 2020 the Business Council will continue to prosecute the case for:

- Job creation across industries
- Delivering on regional strategies
- Leveraging investment in projects to maximise economic benefit
- Next generation planning scheme and ability to support REDS.

Summary

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following:

- Our members for their continued and active support during the year.
- Patron Sponsor - TAFE Queensland East Coast for their continued sponsorship in 2019.
- Business partners – Lend Lease, Sekisui House, Stockland and Sunshine Coast Airport who provide significant support throughout the year.
- Event and research sponsors - Caloundra Chamber of Commerce Inc., RDA Sunshine Coast Inc., Stockland, Sunshine Coast Council and University of the Sunshine Coast.
- In-kind members for their contributions which lessens the financial burden on the Business Council: BDO, Life Digital, Telstra and Fresh PR.
- Kerrie Bryant-Adams and Barrie Adams who work tirelessly as a team to make a difference.

I would also like to thank the regional Federal and State members and Local Government councillors who have supported the Business Council throughout the year.

I warmly acknowledge our Board Members who give of their time, energy and experience to prosecute the Business Council's agenda and work to make the Sunshine Coast a stronger economy and good place to live and invest.

Special thanks to retired board members Hayden Rudd, Tony Vickers, Adrian Allen and Peter Pallot. We have appreciated their active contribution and intend to keep them engaged as a support to the Board. Lastly, a big welcome to incoming board members Andrew Brodie, Matthew Byrne, Tim Wess and Will Wilson.

Merry Christmas and all the best for a prosperous and successful 2020.