

NOVEMBER 2023

CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR CY 2023

Global economies remained under the pump in 2023 and Australia was no different. Whilst supply chains slowly started to sort out, the cost of doing business remained high, largely driven by increasing material costs, energy, insurance and mortgage costs, Industrial Relations changes and rising wages, across many industries. Higher interest rates and inflation were burdens shouldered by business and families alike. Unemployment rates were arguably at all-time lows around Australia which although good for those seeking employment had a negative impact on many businesses, regardless of size.

Then there were mounting geopolitical instabilities that got more troubling the further we went through the year which not only helped keep pressures on cost of living but created unprecedented political and social issues around the world, including Australia.

All these widespread pressures have made it essential for state and local governments to respond quickly and expansively, taking real policy actions and pulling what economic levers are available to keep families in their homes and investment flowing into economic and social infrastructure and support this regional economy and its communities.

Sunshine Coast region is regularly named as one of the fastest growing regions by population in Australia and yet it is still not attracting the infrastructure investment (public and private) to appropriately service and support the demonstrated population growth.

Housing and rental availability are at all-time lows, housing affordability at all-time highs, and regional homelessness higher than ever experienced. We must see more immediate actions by State and Local Councils to address these housing issues. More demand requires more supply and land supply is one of the most obvious levers councils can and are being encouraged to address but appear reluctant to pull. This is having a real impact on people's lives as well as in attracting and retaining the talent we require on the Coast to support job growth.

Then there's the matter of transport. Now part of the Palaszczuk's government *Big Transport Build*, the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line project and the Sunshine Coast Public Transport project are still being planning but as each day goes by it gets harder to believe either will be in place by 2032 in spite of the Transport and Main Roads Minister Mark Bailey saying in July 2023 "*The Sunshine Coast is one of the fastest growing regions in our state, which means we need to build the infrastructure that is needed now and leading up to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games*". We agree so please make it happen.

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BOARD MEMBERS 2023

Sandy Zubrinich, Chair

Matt Byrne, Treasurer
Stockland Communities

Ana Rodger - Secretary
TAFE Qld East Coast
(Resigned August '23)

Andrew Brodie, Director
Chief Executive Officer
Sunshine Coast Airport
(Resigned May '23)

Matt Byrne, Director
Stockland Communities

Kevin Covey
Managing Director
Covey Association Pty Ltd

Nicola Scott
Regional Manager Master Builders

Will Shrapnel
Managing Director, Helimods

Prof Ross Young
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)

Brad Williams
General Manager, RPS Sunshine Coast

In March 2024 we have local government elections and then later in the year state elections - both critically important to this region particularly in terms of policy and investment funding. We now know there will be change at the top of both regional councils with Noosa Mayor Clare Stewart not seeking re-election at the local government level, running instead in the State election for the Noosa electorate. Sunshine Coast Mayor Mark Jamieson has recently indicated he will not be seeking re-election in 2024 after 12 years as Mayor. This is a time of reflection and decision for the region regarding how or if, it goes forward as a competitive, sustainable and modern region. Standing still is not an option which makes this an important local council election.

We would like to thank both Mayors for their service and contribution to the growth of the region. We acknowledge their individual achievements in making a difference and wish both all the best for the future.

At the state level, Premier Palaszczuk, the first Australian female premier to win three terms, has announced she will also stand for a 4th term. A big challenge for any politician and political party.

As we conclude this year, it is all about the *economy*, the *cost of living* and the *cost of doing business*. This will be forefront in the minds of businesses and individuals as they vote next year.

All tiers of government, particularly those facing elections in 2024, will need to demonstrate to voters they are investing wisely, spending wisely, and that their policies and decisions are having a real and positive impact on cost of living and not making things worse. They will also need to demonstrate they have the policies to set a believable path forward for future success and economic growth.

We will be a hard 'audience' to please.

The year in review for SCBC

Our objective is to deliver on our Charter - *to promote the interests of our members through a unified audible and identifiable apolitical voice – advocating to 3 tiers of government in support of a growing economy with a focus on Investment, Infrastructure and Jobs.*

Our events and advocacy activities are the way we deliver on the above Objective.

Forums

SCBC Annual Strategy Direction Workshop – held Tuesday 31 January when around 40 members and stakeholders came together to contribute to the direction of the Business Council in 2023. This workshop included presentations outlining the:

- SCBC *Regional Major Project Pipeline* and SCBC 2022 *Investor Market Survey (IMS)* - presented by Paul Riga, Director Urbis.
- Sunshine Coast Council proposal to identify the LGA's *Next Generation Projects* with a view out to 2050 – presented by Craig Matheson.
- *Sunshine Coast Biosphere* and how it will create economic benefit - presented by Will Shrapnel.

LIFE MEMBERS

David Oliver, Inaugural Life Member
2015

Tony Sowden, 2016

Sandy Zubrinich, 2022

Members then broke into several groups to discuss:

- The data, messages and recommendations from the major pipeline and IMS presentations.
- The draft key advocacy and focus areas for Business Council in 2023.

The SCBC Focus Areas for 2023 were confirmed at the strategy workshop as:

- Next generation planning scheme –
 - ensuring its ability to support Sunshine Coast economic growth strategies and inspire investor confidence to invest in the region
 - addresses infill development including the 'missing middle'
 - addresses expansion areas within the urban footprint
 - addresses new growth areas, consistent with land supply requirements and the South-East Queensland Regional Plan, *Shaping SEQ*.
- Integrated Regional Transport Strategy with heavy, faster rail between Brisbane and Maroochydore.
- Infrastructure required in the pre and post legacy phases of the 2032 Brisbane & Paralympic Games.
- Job creation across industries.
- Retention and attraction of talent across industries.
- Youth unemployment and creating awareness of the job and career opportunities digital transformation is creating for youths across industries.

Think Tank Series 7 - this year's Think Tank (TT) was centred on *Talent Attraction and Retention Strategies*. The Series comprised three x 4-hour sessions held between May – July 2023 and brought 22 participants together from industry, both councils, TAFE and UniSC to explore how current strategies supported the region's national and international competitiveness for talent and resources, identify gaps or what was not working and identify what needed to change.

Four areas were highlighted to be addressed in order to attract and retain talent:

1. Lack of available and affordable housing including rentals. (Led by SCBC).
2. Working with Dept TMR and both regional councils to provide input into the Northern Corridor Integrated Transport Strategy to (among other points) provide appropriate level of servicing frequency and connectivity between regional communities and major economic and employment precincts. (Led by SCBC and Caloundra Chamber).
3. Creating, within secondary school education curriculums, more education flexibility at local levels to enable more education and awareness (at parent, teacher, and student levels) around digital transformation and the career and job opportunities being created. (Led by Caloundra Chamber).
4. The need for both councils to come together and present a consistent and modern face of community, sustainability, progress, and innovation to the World. Important when promoting the Region's 'unique fabric' encompassing culture, health and lifestyle, housing, growth, change and opportunities, education, training and learning – for the purpose of attracting talent to the region. (Led by SCBC and UniSC).

TT participants will meet again in March 2024 to review progress on agreed advocacy actions and agree any next steps.

Combined Government & Business Forum (CGBF) – held on Tuesday 31 October at the Sunshine Coast Innovation Centre Auditorium. This annual event brings regional politicians representing 3-tiers of government together with business leaders, in the one room at the one-time to contest ideas and issues relating to the economy. This year 75 people were focussed on presentations and discussions on *Delivering Regional Infrastructure Priorities*.

Presenters included:

- Paul Riga from URBIS – updated the audience on the current SCBC Regional Pipeline of Major Projects highlighting the strengths, potential weaknesses and risks in investment and delivery of the \$20b pipeline. He also referenced the 2022 SCBC Investor Market Survey and again related feedback provided regarding how investors viewed the region as a place to invest.
- Sunshine Coast Mayor Mark Jamieson and Noosa Mayor Clare Stewart talked to their infrastructure record, aspirations and planned future investment.
- Debbie McNamara, General Manager, Economic Development Qld explained the expansive role EDQ plays in delivering major public and private sector projects in support of the State.
- James Tuma, Managing Partner, Urbis provided an inspiring presentation referencing multiple international examples where multi-levels of government partner together, and with the private sector, to successfully deliver major infrastructure.
- James then led a panel chat with– Andrew Wallace MP - Member for Fisher, Jarrod Bleijie MP - Member for Kawana, Sandy Bolton MP - Member for Noosa, and mayors Mark Jamieson and Clare Stewart – discussing *How 3-tiers of government can more effectively collaborate to deliver infrastructure?*

We believe this forum is an important annual event as we all strive to speak with one voice on our key regional issues and investment needs and opportunities and appreciate everyone's efforts involved.

Events

Corporate Lunch with Steven Miles - Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and, Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure – headed the first Business Council lunch in April 2023.

Around 100 people attended to hear the DP talk on how State Government was working with Local Governments to get better planning outcomes and facilitate the delivery of the SEQ Regional Plan (Shaping SEQ) and the 2032 Games.

Sunshine Coast Infrastructure Summit – Sunshine Coast Council (SCC) partnered with SCBC and Infrastructure Association of Queensland (IAQ) to undertake a series of roundtables and meetings to deliver this event with the outcome contributing to the preparation of the Sunshine Coast Council Infrastructure Plan.

Planning for the Sunshine Coast Infrastructure Summit commenced in March 2023 and included three roundtables comprising around 30 people from industry, council, and students - two held in March (1) to explore innovative concepts beyond the standard infrastructure classes and (2) to provide the underlying information for a larger Infrastructure Summit.

Around 175 industry leaders, council staff and students attended the 2nd June Summit at which:

- Mayor Jamieson opened the Summit talking to *Shaping Our Future*.
- Federal and State representatives provided their perspectives on *Getting Ready for 2032 and Beyond*.
- Commissioner Jerry Dobrovolny from Metro Vancouver provided Vancouver's experiencing as host of the 2010 Winter Olympic in *Infrastructure Delivery – Beyond legacy planning*.
- Emma Thomas, CEO Sunshine Coast Council hosted a panel discussion with high school students - *The future Sunshine Coast – a youth perspective*.
- Kate Meyrick, Director, Urbis provided the keynote presentation on *What Makes a Region Great* and facilitated the afternoon workshop involving all participants regarding their views on *Sunshine Coast Future infrastructure needs*.

The third, and last, roundtable held in August, presented the output (infrastructure projects, ideas, and trends) compiled from the Summit, and sought agreement on what ideas were to be taken forward by SCC. We understand the Sunshine Coast Infrastructure Plan is anticipated to be completed by June next year, taking into consideration the March 2024 local government elections and the caretaker period which commences at the end of January.

Conference - Importance of Transport to Regional Urban & Economic Growth – held in August this conference tackled transport from the perspective of 3 regionally significant economic and employment drivers – Maroochydore City Centre (MCC), Aura and Sunshine Coast Airport. This conference attracted over 120 people to hear from the following speakers:

- Professor Matthew Burke Deputy Director for Griffith University's Cities Research Institute opened the conference with a keynote presentation on - *The transport / economic development nexus and what it means for the Sunshine Coast*.
- Paul Riga, Director of Urbis followed with an update on the SCBC Regional Major Project Pipeline, highlighting the economic importance of the 3 regionally significant projects and importance of transport and heavy rail between Brisbane and MCC as economic drivers.
- Peter Saba, Group Executive, Developments, Walker Corporation and Amanda Yeates, CEO SunCentral, talked to the MCC long term development project.
- David Laner, Regional Manager – Residential, Stockland Development talked to the Stockland projects.
- Scott Norris, General Manager Aviation and Commercial, Sunshine Coast Airport provided the Sunshine Coast Airport perspective.

This was the only SCBC conference for 2023 due to the Business Council's involvement with the SCC's Infrastructure Summit's program - work that spanned over 8 months.

Regional Councils CEO Lunch – around 85 people attended this lunch held in September - to hear from the Sunshine Coast Council CEO, Emma Thomas and Noosa Council Acting CEO, Larry Sengstock regarding their recently released regional housing and homeless strategies.

The lunch was moderated by Jen Williams, Queensland Executive Director of the Property Council of Australia who provided a high-level overview of the property and housing sector across Queensland and the Sunshine Coast Region and

then facilitated the panel conversation and took probing questions from the floor. The audience was keen to hear the CEOs' thoughts on how they were addressing the crucial housing and rental shortages and how population growth was outpacing housing development.

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

Delivering on SCBC advocacy and research agenda

Sunshine Coast Council - New Planning Scheme (NPS)

SCBC continued to talk regularly with Sunshine Coast Council CEO Emma Thomas and Group Executive for Customer and Planning Services, Debra Robinson on matters relating to submissions previously made to SCC on, among other topics, the direction and detail of the proposed new planning scheme for the Sunshine Coast, covering points such as -

- Rezoning and unlocking a new supply of land for housing to assist with affordability.
- Planning Scheme structure and useability.

In addition to the submission, SCBC continued to raise matters relating to lack of progress on hotel developments, member development applications and the need to find ways to progress applications expediently to maintain development momentum and investment flow into the region.

Pipeline of Regional Major Projects

SCBC maintained the currency of the pipeline and continued to share key messages derived from the pipeline data with members and stakeholders at relevant events and forums and in discussions with Sunshine Coast Council.

Key observations -

- \$20b private and public projects under construction with \$17b spread over 10-20 years.
- The last 5 years has seen positive investment across a range of areas but driven primarily by master plan residential, mixed-use commercial/health precincts, and transport infrastructure (roads).
- Potential decline in the next 5 years despite significant project base under construction, as limited new major projects added to pipeline.
- Commitment on key projects is needed - \$9 billion in short to medium term projects either approved or mooted represent an opportunity.
- These projects are integral to the growth of the region – transport and connectivity, housing supply, sports investment, and tourism/accommodation.

Investor Market Survey

SCBC continued to raise the findings and recommendations made in the 2022 Investor Market Survey (IMS) conducted by URBIS on behalf of SCBC. The IMS tested Investors' sentiments in terms of the Sunshine Coast region as a place to invest. This formed part of the CGBF agenda again this year and informs ongoing discussions with councils' regarding investment attraction into the region.

Media

Summary of activity

This was another successful year working with Fresh PR & Marketing in securing media attention to promote our messages to the broader community, resulting in:

- **21** media distributions (media releases and opinion pieces)
- **5** onsite media opportunities hosted
- **84** relevant mentions across print, online, TV and radio valued at \$129,156 and with an audience reach of almost 1 million (968,910)
- **4** Vinnies Sleepout videos planned, shot, edited distributed via Facebook
- **36** Facebook posts
- **223** total hours completed by Fresh PR (121 hours delivered pro-bono)
- **\$9,600** value of annual media monitoring via iSentia (pro-bono by Fresh PR)
- **\$129,156** generated in Advertising Space Rate (ASR)
- **968,910** total audience reach
- **15** TV stories
- **21** radio stories

Facebook

- 36 posts (including shared content from news outlets)
- 2,630 total people reached
- 189 post interactions
- 634 page likes
- 1,056 page followers
- 3 advertising campaigns/boosted posts on Facebook

SCBC media coverage included subject and event areas such as:

- Economic growth, economic outlook and population growth
- Cost of living
- Housing availability and affordability
- Regional housing strategies
- Aura South
- Homelessness/Vinnies Sleepout
- Talent attraction and employment
- Federal Election
- Federal Budget
- 2032 Olympic Games
- Infrastructure
- Transport
- Draft South-East Queensland Regional Plan
- Sunshine Coast Airport
- Unified vision and collaboration amongst business, government & community leaders
- Think Tank Series
- Evolution of the Sunshine Coast

IN CONCLUSION

It is always a pleasure at the end of the year to express our appreciation and thanks to the following:

- Our members for their continued and active support during the year.
- Patron Sponsor - TAFE Queensland East Coast for their continued sponsorship in 2022.
- Business partners – Aria, Lend Lease, Stockland, Sunshine Coast Airport and UniSC who provide valued support and advice.
- Event and forum sponsors during 2023 - RDA Sunshine Coast Inc., Maroochydore City Centre, PCA, RPS, Stockland, Sunshine Coast Airport and UniSC.
- In-kind members for their contributions and professionalism, which lessen our operational financial costs: BDO and Fresh PR & Marketing.
- Kerrie Bryant-Adams and Barrie Adams who work tirelessly for SCBC. Board and members alike appreciate their experience, commitment, cheer and efforts to make this a professional organisation.

I also thank the Region's Federal and State members and Local Government mayors, councillors and staff who have supported SCBC throughout the year.

I warmly acknowledge our Board Members who give their time, wit, and experience to prosecute the SCBC's agenda. They make it worthwhile for me.

On behalf of the Board, I thank those board members who have resigned during the year or who are not standing for re-election for 2024.

- Andrew Brodie and Ana Rodger who both resigned during the year.
- Matt Byrne for his 4-year contribution as a board member and as Treasurer.
- Will Shrapnel, MD of HeliMods for his contribution during 2023. Both Matt and Will are not seeking re-election for 2024 but we hope may join the Board again in the future.
- Ross Young from UniSC, a board member during 2023, will not be seeking re-election for 2024.

The Board took a decision to introduce two Board advisory roles which are accommodated under the Sunshine Coast Business Council Inc Constitution:

- Ross Young, Vice-Chancellor Academic (Research & Innovation), UniSC – Board Advisor – Tertiary Education and Talent Attraction & Retention
- Mark Reilly, General Manager TAFE Queensland East Coast – Board Advisor – Vocational Education & Training

This allows the 9 board roles to be held by private sector members who will hold voting rights and be eligible for elected roles. They will be supported by two advisory roles who will take a multi-industry regional view on issues relating to talent attraction, retention, education, and training.

Welcoming onto the Board we have five (5) new members:

- Adrian Allen, Regional Manager, Sunshine Coast – Communities, Stockland
- Alex Hoffmann, Founder of Habitanze Architects
- Jason Garland, Founder and Director of Secure Access IT and Deputy Chair of the SCTechIA
- Kylie Ezzy, General Manager Corporate Communication, Sunshine Coast Airport
- Peter Saba, Group Executive, Developments, Walker Corporation

Thank you all for stepping forward and joining our board.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank those members who joined me again to sleep rough and raise funds for St Vinnies 2023 CEO Sleepout.

The SCBC team excelled in our fund raising this year, raising just over \$60k. The most of all regional teams.

It was a gratifying experience, again, and I want to thank and acknowledge the members of the SCBC team for 2023:

Kevin Covey and Kristine Hazelwood from Covey & Associates

Kate McCreery-Carr from Sunshine Coast Airport

Matthew Byrne from Stockland

Ben Heaton from RPS

Crista Dight and Melanie Holmes from TAFE

Will Wilson and Hew Williams from Watermark Constructions

Andrew Stevens from Project Urban

Paul McHugh from Thompson McNichol Lawyers.

We look forward to doing this again next year with more members raising more funds for Vinnies and our homeless. THANK YOU.

Lastly, on behalf of the SCBC Board, I extend our early best wishes for a Merry Christmas to you all and for a prosperous and successful 2024.