



## NOVEMBER 2024

### CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR CY 2024

What a year! Local Government elections in March resulting in two new regional mayors – Mayor Rosanna Natoli for the Sunshine Coast and Mayor Frank Wilkie for Noosa Shire.

State Government elections in October - a new majority LNP State Government with David Crisafulli the new Premier and Sunshine Coast Kawana MP, Jarrod Bleijie, the new Deputy Premier. All seven Sunshine Coast state electorates now held by LNP members with Sandy Bolton comfortably retaining Noosa as an Independent.

We congratulate the Premier, Deputy Premier and all regional State MP on their win and re-election and look forward to working with the LNP State Government over the next 4 years.

This has been a tough year for the Sunshine Coast region and many regional businesses due in part to:

- Sluggish national and state economies impacting the regional economy.
- Interest rates remaining at the higher post covid levels.
- IR environment adding cost and complexity for business.
- Higher operating costs, wages, insurances, mortgages, energy, etc.
- Skills shortage across industries.
- Businesses are feeling exhausted, overwhelmed and less confident.
- Private sector businesses have carried much of the burden to keep the economy growing.
- Investors (large and small) experiencing a lack of confidence in government direction, decision making and commitment to private sector funded growth and development.

This has been a year where housing and transport have continued to dominate much of the political conversations.

On Housing - Business Council continues to encourage local councils to increase land supply as a key strategy to increasing housing stock and addressing housing affordability. We do not believe infill strategies are sufficient to address either housing stock or affordability and that councils must employ both infill and land supply to address the housing crisis and to meet the demand of a fast-growing population.

### BOARD MEMBERS 2024

**Sandy Zubrinich, Chair**

**Adran Allen, Treasurer**  
Development Director, Stockland  
Communities Qld

**Kevin Covey**  
Principal Consultant, Covey  
Associates

**Kylie Ezzy**  
GM, People & Communications  
Sunshine Coast Airport

**Jason Garland**  
Director, Secure Access IT  
Founder, CTO

**Alex Hoffmann**  
Director, Habitation

**Peter Saba**  
Group Executive - Development,  
Walker Corporation

**Nicola Scott**  
Regional Manager – Sunshine Coast,  
Master Builders Qld  
(Resigned 30 May 2024)

**Brad Williams**  
Technical Director, Planning +  
Sunshine Coast Practice Lead  
RPS Australia Asia Pacific

### BOARD ADVISORS

**Mark Reilly**  
General Manager – East Coast  
Region, TAFE Queensland

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

David Oliver, Inaugural Life Member  
2015

Tony Sowden, 2016

Sandy Zubrinich, 2022

On Transport – Business Council has continued to call for heavy rail between Brisbane and Maroochydore City Centre and the new LNP State Government has committed to making this happen by 2032. It won't be easy; particularly given the deteriorating state budget it has inherited.

Under these conditions, the smart thing is for regions to be measured and definitive on the priority projects they seek funding for. Focus on regionally significant infrastructure needs and not get side tracked asking state and federal governments for the 'nice to have'. Timing is everything and maybe this isn't the time to take a 'wish list' to state government.

But . . . it is the time for all tiers of governments to act quickly, and can we say, in unison, to address the serious flaws in the national and state investment environment. Remove the impediments to private sector investment, create a conducive investment environment and get investment flowing again. Let the private sector step forward to help governments get the job done, particularly in Queensland as we close in on 2032 – the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

This region needs multiple hotels, thousands of new dwellings, a decent size conference and entertainment centre, and investment in manufacturing, food & agribusiness in tourism. We need a commitment by local councils, state and federal governments to provide the best possible environment to get things done and to do it efficiently and effectively.

We have high hopes for a new planning scheme to go with the recently appointed local and state governments and we look forward to a federal election sometime before the end of May 2025. It is time for change if we want this region 'firing' in 2025 and beyond.

### The year in review for SCBC

Our objective was, as always 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

**Meet the Mayoral Candidates 2024** – held 15 February and held at the Youi Pty Ltd Sunshine Coast Headquarters in Sippy Downs.

This was the first forum of the year given in the leadup to the March 16 local government elections. It was well attended by approximately 60 SCBC members interested to hear from the mayor candidates for Noosa and the Sunshine Coast.

Most of the candidates attended and the speeches and Q&A session were probing and well received by the audience. The rest is history now.

**SCBC Annual Strategy Direction Workshop** – held Thursday 24 February 2024. This year the workshop was limited to members only to discuss the economy and issues impacting business in the region and to contribute to the direction of the Business Council for 2024. To set the scene, the workshop included the following presentations:

- National and State economic update by Alan Yang, Economist from Stockland Head Office Sydney.
- Sunshine Coast Regional Investment Performance presented by Mal Aikman, Director Innovociti Pty Ltd.
- Member presentations by:
  - Caloundra Chamber Local Business Survey '23 - B Sullivan
  - PCA key advocacy areas - J Caire and A McNeil
  - Students enrolling and completing Trades - M Reilly, TAFE
  - Students enrolling and completing Degrees – Prof R Young, UniSC

Members then had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the potential implications outlined in the presentations with a view to determining the SCBC advocacy direction for 2024.

**Think Tank Series 8** – the 2024 Think Tank (TT) was a 4-hour session to review the progress made on agreed advocacy actions and next steps since TT Session 7 (conducted between May and September 2023) which focussed on *Talent Attraction Strategies to allow Sunshine Coast Region to compete nationally and internationally*. Participants included representatives from UniSC, TAFE Qld, both Sunshine Coast and Noosa councils, State Government, industry and SCBC members.

It was agreed at the TT 8 session, the output from the extensive work covered in TT 7 should be provided to the *Sunshine Coast Regional Jobs Committee (RJC)* formed in July 2024 as part of a broader state government initiative. Several of the TT participants are members of the local RJC. The 16-person Committee representing education, training, council and business are making good progress in shaping pragmatic strategies to deliver local skilling and workforce solutions and have already launched a function website to support local business development [www.scrjc.com.au](http://www.scrjc.com.au). The program is funded to 30 June 2024.

**Combined Government & Business Forum (CGBF)** – held today on Friday 22 November 2024. This annual event brings regional politicians representing 3-tiers of government together with business leaders, in one room at the same time to contest ideas and issues relating to the economy. This year 70 people will discuss *The Road Back to Economic Growth & Prosperity*.

Presenters (in order on brochure) included:

- Mr Stephen Walters, Chief Economist BCA on What to Expect in 2025 regarding the world and national economies.
- Mr Michael Campbell from Lucid Economics who will cover what is needed to stimulate growth and why.
- Mr Jarrod Bleijie, Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Industrial Relations will cover how the newly elected State Government will stimulate economic growth.
- Mr Paul Riga from URBIS will update the audience on the SCBC Pipeline of Major Projects and key points the data highlights.

A moderated panel discussion will follow with panellists including:

- Mr Jarrod Bleijie, Deputy Premier
- Mayor Rosanna Natoli, SCC
- Mr Stephen Walters, BCA
- Mr Adrian Allen, Stockland

The theme -The Road Back to Economic Growth & Prosperity – will be actively explored by our impressive and experienced presenters and through the questions our equally experienced audience will seek answers and opinions on.

In advance I thank the presenters for their time and the experience and endeavour they bring to the Forum. This will feed into the advocacy direction for the Business Council in 2025.

## Events

**Outlook For Business Investment** – held 3 May 2024. This event attracted over 130 people to hear from excellent national and state speakers including:

- Mr Stephen Walters, Chief Economist Business Council of Australia
- Mr Stephen Smith, Macroeconomist & Partner, Deloitte Access Economics
- Mr David Janetzki, Shadow Treasurer, Shadow Minister for Investment and Trade and Shadow Minister for Home Ownership
- Mr Malcolm Aikman, Property Economist, Innovociti Pty Ltd
- Mr Greg Laverty, Sunshine Coast Council

A lively panel discussion followed facilitated by Ms Jess Caire, Executive Officer PCA, with the following SCBC members:

- Mr Evan Aldridge, Project Director, Dennis Family Corporation
- Mr Rob Comiskey, Director, Comiskey Group
- Mr Tony Scanlon, Director, Scanlon Group

**Corporate Lunch** with Jarrod Bleijie MP and Deputy Leader of the LNP, held Friday 30 August 2024. This was a successful and well received lunch with Jarrod engaging an audience of 130 in a wide-ranging conversation for nearly 60 minutes covering a wide range of topics including:

- How if elected, a LNP government would approach fixing the State's key services such as health, education, police and justice.
- Grow the State's economic base and deliver key infrastructure and private sector development projects.
- Strategies to build the required housing stock which included incentives to local governments (who wanted to participate) to increase land supply and take on a commitment to build houses.

**Corporate Lunch** - Building a Brighter Future – A Mayoral Panel Discussion. This event was held Wednesday 19 June 2024 and attracted a crowd of 125 people.

Michael Campbell from Lucid Economics facilitated the discussion with the 4 mayors:

- Mayor Peter Flannery, Moreton Bay
- Mayor Frank Wilkie Noosa
- Mayor Rosanna Natoli Sunshine Coast
- Mayor Frank Wilkie Noosa

The audience appreciated the mayors' frank responses to questions and their wide-ranging discussion.

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

## Delivering on SCBC advocacy and research agenda

### Sunshine Coast Council - New Planning Scheme (NPS)

The proposed New Planning Scheme continued to be a major area of focus for the SCBC Board. There were several meetings with the previous Sunshine Coast Council CEO Emma Thomas, with Madam Mayor Rosanna Natoli, Group Executive for Customer and Planning Services, Debra Robinson, members of the Planning and the Economic Development teams regarding concerns with:

- Current planning scheme structure and useability.
- Drafting of the new planning scheme and how it must support the delivery of the economic development strategies and changing needs of the LGA.
- The ongoing housing crisis and ways to alleviate the lack of stock such as rezoning and unlocking new supply of land for housing to meet growing demand, assist housing affordability and provide more social housing.
- Attracting investors into the region to develop new (internationally branded preferred by SCC) 4 and 5 star large and boutique hotels.
- Improved access to regional mayors and councillors for developers and investors to discuss proposed developments and value to the region.
- Need for planning teams to have the appropriate knowledge and experience to cover the diverse range of development requirements and understand the value to the economy and region of major development.

### Pipeline of Major Regional Projects

SCBC commissions URBIS to maintain the SCBC Pipeline of Major Regional Projects (currently those above \$50m). These projects are integral to the growth and prosperity of the region. The pipeline provided a fact-based source of data which is updated once a year, usually before CGBF, and included on the forum agenda to update political and business leaders together of the value of the pipeline, split between private and public investment, investment by industry, stages of approval and delivery of projects, those at risk of not proceeding and why, and other key messages.

The information and knowledge are used by SCBC at events, in media and to underpin advocacy work.

### Heavy Rail between Brisbane and Maroochydore

SCBC has maintained a consistent position supporting heavy rail initially between Brisbane and Maroochydore City Centre. We also support an improved intra-regional transport system and look forward to the State's position on how that will be implemented.

## Community Activities

### St Vinnies Sleepout, Sunshine Coast

SCBC again supported the sleepout with six members participating and raising over \$23k for Vinnies regional services. This was the first year since 2013 that I haven't been able to sleep rough however I did fund raise and sincerely thank all members who either slept rough or supported those who did.

Whilst numbers were down on the previous year in both team members and funds raised, the team was still the leading Sunshine Coast team fund raiser

I want to thank and acknowledge the members of the SCBC team for 2024:

- Adrian Allen from Stockland
- Kristine Hazelwood from Covey & Associates
- Alex Hoffmann, Habitanca
- Nicole McNaughton, Food & Agribusiness Network (FAN)

SCBC have been fund raising for this important social issue since 2013 and I hope that more members will get behind this worthy cause next year.

### **St Andrews Anglican College – Young Business Leaders**

This was the first time SCBC participated in an after-school Business Leader Program offered by St Andrews Anglican College Peregian Springs. Three of our member organisations donate their time and expertise to students to cover the 8-week program. Session topic covered included:

*Customer Personas and Market Research; Branding and Sourcing Materials; Social Media; Marketing and Placing Orders; Website Design & E-Commerce; Work Time and Mentoring; Pricing Models; Operations and Legalities; Pitching and Connecting with Customers; and Launch Preparation.*

All busy professionals, I want to thank the following members who together covered the 8 weeks program:

- Maya Gurry, Fresh PR
- Alex Hoffmann and Ali Hoffmann, Habitanca, who both led sessions
- Angela Lisle, then TAFE, now Sunshine Coast Council

## **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:

- 26 media distributions (media alerts, releases and opinion pieces)
- 5 onsite media opportunities hosted
- 87 relevant mentions across print, online, TV and radio valued at \$105,890 and with an audience reach of \$930,820
- 27 Facebook posts
- 10 LinkedIn posts
- 215 total hours completed by Fresh (101 hours delivered pro-bono)
- \$10,200 value of annual media monitoring via iSentia (pro-bono by Fresh)

**SCBC media coverage** included subject and event areas such as:

- Economic growth
- Economic outlook
- Population growth
- Cost of living
- Housing availability and affordability
- Regional housing strategies
- Business investment outlook
- Halls Creek/Aura South
- Homelessness/Vinnies Sleepout

- Local Election
- State Election
- Federal Budget
- 2032 Olympic & Paralympic Games
- Infrastructure Investment
- Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line Project (DSC)
- Draft South-East Queensland Regional Plan

## 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 2024.
- Business partners – Aria, Lend Lease, Stockland, Sunshine Coast Airport, Walker Corporation and UniSC - who continue to provide valued support, advice and funding.
- Event and forum sponsors during 2024 – Caloundra Chamber of Commerce, PCA, RDA Sunshine Coast Inc., Stockland, Sunshine Coast Airport, Walker Corporation 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.
- Ali Hoffmann who joined our team in a casual capacity to manage the SCBC website and social media as well as lend a hand to Kerrie and Fresh PR in the work they do.

I also thank our regional Federal and State members, and Local Government mayors, councillors and staff who have supported SCBC throughout the year and attended events.

I warmly acknowledge our Board Members and Advisors who give their time, energy and experience during a busy 2024 to prosecute the SCBC's agenda. The SCBC board is an active group who get involved in the research and advocacy agenda and their support is essential for the Business Council to succeed and be effective for our members.

On behalf of the Board, I thank Nicola Scott from Master Builders for her time on the Board during 2023 and 2024. Nicola resigned from the Board in May 2024, and we hope to have her back again sometime in the future. In the meantime, Nicola will remain an active member on behalf of Master Builders, a long-term Business Council member.

Also leaving the Board is Adrian Allen and we sincerely thank Adrian for his tireless support and service as a board member and Treasurer over the past few years. We wish him success in his expanded role for Stockland in Queensland.

Replacing Adrian is Josh Sondergeld, Development Director for Stockland's master planned communities on the Coast and branch president for the UDIA Sunshine Coast branch. Josh will join the board for 2025.

We welcome another long-term member onto the Board for 2025 - Tony Scanlon - from Essence Peregrine Beach. Tony has been a member since 2015, and we look forward to working with him in the coming year. Thank you, Tony and Josh, for stepping forward to contribute to SCBC as a board member.

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.

## CONTACT US

[www.scbusinesscouncil.com.au](http://www.scbusinesscouncil.com.au)

[info@scbusinesscouncil.com.au](mailto:info@scbusinesscouncil.com.au)