

MAYOR MARK JAMIESON

ANNUAL 2016 STATE OF THE REGION ADDRESS

Mooloolaba Surf Life Saving Club

Friday 9 December 2019

9.00am - 10.00am

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Before we get underway, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we gather this morning – the peoples of the Kabi Kabi First Nation - and pay my respects to their Elders past and present.
- I would also like to acknowledge:
 - Federal Member for Fisher, Andrew Wallace
 - State Member for Buderim, Steve Dickson
 - My fellow Sunshine Coast Councillors - Deputy Mayor Tim Dwyer and Councillors Rick Baberowski and Jason O'Pray – who are part of a strong, united and committed team that leads one of the most progressive and ambitious councils in Queensland – if not Australia
 - Professor Greg Hill, Vice Chancellor of the University of the Sunshine Coast
 - John Knaggs, Chief Executive Officer of SunCentral Maroochydore Pty Ltd
 - Warren Bunker, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Sunshine Coast Council

SPEAKING POINTS

- Welcome to the end of what has been another momentous year on the Sunshine Coast.
- As many of you know, when I became Mayor in 2012, I instituted this annual report.
- Because it is important that our community understands how we are progressing as a region, where we have got to on the journey and what lies ahead.
- And we already know that next year will have special significance as we mark the 50th anniversary of the naming of our Sunshine Coast.

- As many of you will well know, I never shy away from highlighting how our region is performing.
- In fact I made a commitment during my first public speech as Mayor on 11 May 2012 that I would always promote our region comprehensively and consistently.
- The annual State of the Region is just one of the many tools we use to do this.
- Quite frankly ladies and gentlemen, there is no better place to be than the Sunshine Coast at this time.
- 2016 has been a historic marker, as a number of our region's transformative projects have moved from planning to implementation.
- Council's plan for the region was re-affirmed by our community at the March 2016 local government election, providing a clear impetus for us to continue the journey we commenced in 2012.
- All of our sitting Councillors who sought re-election were returned for another four years and we welcomed Councillor John Connolly into our ranks when Chris Thompson retired.
- It is fair to say that our Council has been entrusted by the residents of the Sunshine Coast to continue to shape a prosperous future for our community.
- One which offers enduring employment opportunities, better access to facilities and services, greater connectivity between communities and an outstanding natural environment.
- In short, a region - and a future - that is healthy, smart and creative.
- A region that is vigorous in its approach.
- Clever in how it tackles challenges and pursues opportunities.
- And one that thinks outside the square to generate new ideas for how we build our economy, maintain our fantastic lifestyle, support our communities and preserve our natural assets.
- This is not a responsibility we take lightly.
- And it drives everything that our Council undertakes each day.
- I readily admit there is still a big task in front of us all.

- With plenty of catching up to do – particularly given the decades of neglect this region has experienced.
- And on that note, I would just like to emphasise that point that our Council is leading a progressive and innovative agenda that will transform this region for decades to come.
- One that we have had to pursue and one on which all levels of government in the region need to work together.
- Many people do not realise that for every dollar in taxation revenue collected in this country, on average 82 cents goes to the Federal government, 15 cents goes to the State government and three cents goes to Council.
- I certainly think that the region is getting a lot of value out of the three cents that goes to Council.

Building Momentum

- Let me outline just a few of the results we have achieved as a region this year.
- I know I said last year that we had a great report card.
- But there are certainly some aces in the pack this year.

Our Results

- For starters, the Sunshine Coast has been independently ranked as the second highest performing regional economy in Queensland for the second consecutive year.
- Only our neighbour to the south – Moreton Bay – is in front of us.
- Which puts us as the fifth highest performing regional economy nationally.
- A great place to be and our goal is to be ranked even higher.
- Our Gross Regional Product – at \$16 billion – is growing at a rate on average of nearly 4% per annum.
- In February, the Sunshine Coast was recognised by Infrastructure Australia as one of five cities (in addition to the State capitals) that will be the focus for the future productivity of the Australian economy.
- They are looking to our region for inspiration, innovation and output.

- We have been included as one of only four Australian regions on the world's Smart 21 communities list for 2017 – along with Ipswich, Melbourne and Prospect in South Australia.
- Building approvals in 2015-2016 were at an eight-year high with \$1.29 billion worth of construction approved last financial year – more than double what it was in 2012.
- Our region is experiencing one of the highest growth rates in Queensland for international and overnight domestic tourism.
- In the 12 months up to September this year, our region experienced a 45% increase in expenditure by international tourists – and all time record for the Sunshine Coast.
- And one of our region's proudest achievements is the decrease we have seen in our unemployment rate.
- Ladies and gentlemen, our unemployment rate has more than halved since 2012.
- It now sits at 4.7% - lower than for the state of Queensland – and the Treasurer informs me that he classes anything under 5% as full employment.
- Our youth unemployment rate has reduced by over 5% since five years ago - something I am particularly pleased to see.
- Demand and competition for talent is becoming an important element of our growing economy.
- As is evident from the investments being made in our rapidly growing knowledge industries, the new hospital and health precinct and by companies like Youi.
- I put it to you that in an economic context, we are in a position that is not the "usual place" for our region.
- Instead of lagging behind State averages and other regions, we are out in front.
- I only need look at some of the challenges that other regions elsewhere are facing to know that we are genuinely seeing the results of the work that we commenced in 2012.
- It also shows the inherent value of having a plan for building the economy and doing so in such a way that delivers dividends for our community.

- That is what we did in 2013 as part of a collaboration with local business and industry groups when we developed our Regional Economic Development Strategy.
- We have stuck with the plan, had a determined focus on its implementation, driven key stimulus projects - and haven't looked back since.

The Healthiest Region

- Our enviable position does not stop with the economy however.
- Are you aware, the Sunshine Coast is Australia's healthiest region?
- Clearly, our sweet spot is climate and geography.
- Largely due to the fantastic lifestyle we have on offer and the facilities we provide.
- Our parks and gardens, our coastal pathway, our aquatic centres and sport fields and community buildings.
- All of which provide the opportunities for our residents to get active more often.
- Our average life expectancy is 82 years - two years above the state average.
- We have the highest percentage of non-smokers in the state.
- And we are number two in Queensland in terms of healthy weight – with our estimated levels of obesity 19% below the state average.
- Which in part, is a product of our focus on sport, encouraging participation in physical activity and supporting opportunities to improve the personal well-being of our community.

Strong Environmental Credentials

- Our Council also recognises - and shares - the community's passion and commitment to maintaining our outstanding lifestyle and environmental assets.
- We continue to place a very high priority on our conservation land acquisition program.
- Supported by our Environment Levy, this is a significant and tangible investment in the livability of the region and the retention of our biodiversity.

- Only a few weeks ago, I had the pleasure to announce the purchase of an incredible 27.5 hectare eucalypt and rainforest habitat in the foothills of Buderim.
- This is in addition to two hinterland properties at Bald Knob and Maleny, containing 80 hectares, which we acquired in February.
- These purchases provide an enduring environmental legacy – one to enjoy now, as will our children and grandchildren in the longer term.
- We also support some truly nation-leading environmental programs such as Land for Wildlife.
- These programs deliver genuine partnerships with our community to support the region’s sustainability.

A high performing Council

- And as ratepayers, we can all take pride in the financial performance of your Council.
- Council has again achieved the second highest financial sustainability rating available for a local government – and no other Council in Queensland is higher than us.
- And this year, we are delivering a record \$717 million budget – a substantial investment in the well-being and future of our community.
- What it means is that we can ensure the needs of our community are being met every day -
 - From assisting the more than 107,000 members of our libraries.
 - To maintaining 461 recreation parks.
 - To working with more than 1800 community organisations across the region.
 - To ensuring the safety of our community and our visitors by funding the patrols of 21 beaches.
 - To managing and maintaining over 3000 kilometres of roads, 448 bridges and 1,100 kilometres of pathways.

Building Confidence

- Across the board, we have achieved some remarkable results.

- As I said earlier, it shows there is enormous value in having a clear and coherent plan, and a determined approach to seeing that plan implemented.
- This consistency builds confidence – that most essential ingredient in any success story.
- And confidence is the greatest gift any level of government can give its community.
- Our Council understands the importance of putting the right policy and program settings in place to build that confidence and maintain the momentum.
- While at the same time, supporting a cohort of game-changing infrastructure projects which will take the region forward.
- And provide the community with a stronger foundation for employment growth, the ability to keep more of our young people here on the Coast and afford greater access to the services and facilities they need.
- Again it is about opportunity.
- Getting the fundamentals right, identifying where we can leverage what we have and planning an approach that is innovative, creative and anchored in delivering enduring results for our community.
- And what a year it has been for our game-changing projects.

Sunshine Coast Airport

- After several years of intensive work, council secured the required State and Federal government approvals to proceed with the expansion of the Sunshine Coast Airport.
- In October, we achieved our international designation for the Airport, securing the provision of customs and border control services for scheduled international flights.
- And last month, we finally secured the financing arrangements for the expansion project through a loan from the Commonwealth and support from the Queensland Treasury Corporation.
- Ladies and gentlemen, I don't think the region could have had a better Christmas present than the knowledge that this project is now going ahead.

- That the future of our Airport is secure and we will be able to connect directly with a wider range of domestic and international destinations.
- The pieces of the puzzle are finally falling into place.
- This project will deliver an economic benefit to the region of some \$4.1 billion through to 2040 and 2,230 jobs over the same period.
- The Sunshine Coast Airport also continues to be the fastest growing major airport in Australia.
- The 12 months from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 saw a 13% increase year on year and the highest recorded passenger numbers for a 12-month period.
- And last week, we had the honour of welcoming our one millionth passenger for the year.
- The first time we have hit the million mark over any 365 day period.
- That is around 2,800 passengers each day.
- And our objective to see the Sunshine Coast Airport recognised as a key agricultural export gateway have been reinforced in the recent draft South East Queensland Regional Plan.

Maroochydore city centre

- It has also been rewarding to watch the work commence on our new CBD in the heart of Maroochydore.
- In February, I had the honour of assisting Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk turn the first sod to mark the start of work on the Maroochydore City Centre.
- A project that will deliver more than 30,000 jobs by 2040 and a \$4.4 billion contribution to the Sunshine Coast economy.
- Our development company, SunCentral Maroochydore Pty Ltd, has also started marketing the initial commercial precincts.
- We are seeing a solid market response to the Expressions of Interest process being run by SunCentral for development opportunities within the Maroochydore city centre

- I am advised by SunCentral that as at 1 December, submissions proposing commercial and mixed use projects with a construction cost alone of over \$400 million have been lodged for consideration and further due diligence.
- This is great news indeed, given the very early stages of the CBD build.
- And our Council looks forward to seeing these and other proposals for the CBD, develop to contract and announcement stage in 2017.
- We are also taking the opportunity associated with a green field site to build in the infrastructure and digital solutions that will make Maroochydore Australia's first truly smart city.
- By way of example, in September our Council announced that Maroochydore would host Australia's first underground pneumatic waste collection system in a CBD.
- This attracted attention from around the country, increasing awareness of what we have underway here and the innovation and sustainability principles that are at the heart of what we do.
- And there will be more to come as we incorporate smart lighting, smart parking and other smart solutions throughout our CBD.

Solar Farm

- Ladies and gentlemen, I am also pleased to report that work is continuing on the construction of our Sunshine Coast Solar Farm.
- This project is being keenly watched by other councils wanting to replicate what we are achieving.
- By mid next year, our Solar Farm will offset 100% of Council's electricity consumption across all its facilities and operations, with solar energy going into the grid.
- Most other governments are still talking about offsetting 50% of their energy needs from renewables by 2025.
- But importantly, this solar facility will reduce the cost of Council's operations –at least \$22 million after costs over the 30 year life of the project - and we will no longer be exposed to escalating energy costs.
- As I have always said, a great win for the environment and a great win for our residents too.

A new economy

- More broadly, there is considerable activity occurring that is helping us to achieve the strong economic position that we are now able to claim.
- Our region has more than \$10 billion committed (or in the pipeline) in major public and private investment in the region.
- In April next year, we will see the long awaited opening of the \$1.8 billion Sunshine Coast University Hospital – the largest hospital infrastructure project in the country at this time.
- All we need now is for the Commonwealth to commit to funding the remaining 15 places needed to ensure our promised medical school becomes a reality.
- Work is now underway on the region’s two large scale master planned communities - Caloundra South (now known as Aura) and the \$3 billion Avid development “Harmony” at Palmview.
- These master planned communities will eventually be home to 50,000 people and 17,000 people respectively.
- The \$400 million Sunshine Plaza expansion is underway and is planned to open by the end of 2017, with many exciting new additions.
- And we are committed to creating a region where entrepreneurs are encouraged; ideas are nurtured through collaboration and supported by regional leadership.
- This is one of the reasons why we are continuing to aggressively pursue the declaration of a broadband cable protection zone, so an international cable can be brought ashore here on the Sunshine Coast.
- We are taking advantage of our entrepreneurial ecosystem - a network of education programs, business incubators, co-working spaces, advocacy, events and industry meet-ups which have developed organically across the community.
- We have partnered with the Innovation Centre, Spark Bureau and Telstra among others on a range of incubator and school programs.
- And, we will roll out a Digital Economy Program in 2017 to help local businesses to better embrace the opportunities associated with greater access to faster broadband via NBN and digital disruption.

- We are keen to see more companies like I-pug take off.
- I-pug is an innovative world-first digital health platform founded at the Spark Bureau here on the Sunshine Coast and launched worldwide by the Premier and myself at the BIO International Convention in San Francisco earlier this year.
- Our region's potential in terms of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurialism is outstanding.
- And next year, Council will release the region's first innovation policy that will provide the blueprint for how we take this to a whole new level.

A stronger community

- Ladies and gentlemen, while it is important for our economy to do well, it goes without saying that our community and their well-being – now and in the future – remains a number one priority.
- Due to our prudent fiscal management, our Council is in a strong financial position to support our community through a wide range of facilities, programs and services.
- Our heritage is an important asset of our region and one we will celebrate extensively in 2017 with the 50th Anniversary of the Naming of the Sunshine Coast
- *Our heritage, our stories* was launched this year to provide a comprehensive heritage guide to the Sunshine Coast region.
- This provides information on the Coast's Aboriginal sites, historic sites, museums and heritage places, and historical societies and research collections.
- An important reference for our community, for the millions of people who visit here each year and for future generations.
- We are also implementing the *Sunshine Coast Road Safety Plan 2016-2020*, through which we seek to be recognised as a place which provides a safe travel environment for all road users.
- We are targeting fewer fatalities, hospitalisations and total crashes in our region than the Queensland average, with a focus on driver education, crash

investigation and prevention, pedestrian and cycling facilities and speed management measures.

- On the sporting front, I am sure you can feel the excitement building as we count down to the first game for our national league netball team, the Lightning.
- I would just like to acknowledge and thank the Councillors, the Council executive team led by Coralie Nichols and staff who worked tirelessly with the Storm and the University to secure this opportunity for our region.
- The experience in the consortium that includes the Melbourne Storm Rugby League Club, the University of the Sunshine Coast and supported by Council, has not only led to the licence being secured, but a talented line-up of players and coaches being sourced for the debut season.
- In February we can look forward to a weekend of sport like no other ever staged in this region.
- A Trans-Tasman triple-header across two sports.
- Our Lightning against the Southern Steel in two games at the new USC Sports Stadium.
- And an NRL trial between the Storm and New Zealand Warriors at the upgraded Sunshine Coast Stadium
- So mark the weekend of 11-12 February on your calendar now.
- This year, Council provided more than \$3.8 million in grants to more than 750 community organisations and individuals to help deliver improved services, programs and facilities for our residents.
- The important role of arts and culture in the region was formally recognised by Council in establishing the inaugural Sunshine Coast Arts Advisory Board.
- Planning is already underway for the 2017 Horizon Festival after the inaugural event in September attracted 35,000 people to more than 220 events over 10 days.
- Horizon was one of the events that helped to firmly establish the Sunshine Coast as the major events capital of regional Australia.
- “*The World is Coming*” campaign very successfully showcased the extensive portfolio of major sporting, music and lifestyle events we hosted in 2016.

- From the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships to another successful Caloundra Music Festival, these events contributed an estimated \$100 million to the region.
- The efforts of our Sunshine Coast Events Board – led by Ralph Devlin – need to be acknowledged as part of the driving force behind growing our major events reputation.
- Council also continued to work on improving the liveability and functionality of some of our key centres.
- The blueprint to revitalise the centre of Caloundra – “Think Caloundra” - was unveiled in September with the release of the draft Caloundra Centre Master Plan.
- We are nearing completion of the Bulcock Street streetscape project which will create a vibrant new look for the main street and transform the Caloundra CBD
- And along the way, Council has also continued to make significant investments in local facilities and infrastructure for our communities.
- Some highlights this year include:
 - The \$20 million upgrade of Evans Street at Maroochydore which is just days away from completion – and ahead of time
 - The \$1.9 million Mudjimba Holiday Park expansion and refurbishment
 - Opening of the new \$1.65 million Eumundi Range Road Bridge and
 - The \$2.4 million Coolum Sports Complex expansion

Nurturing our lifestyle and environment

- Arguably ladies and gentlemen, I have left the best to last.
- I don't believe there is any dispute that our natural assets and rich biodiversity are a defining feature of our region.
- And that's why protecting our beaches, foreshores and bushland and moving to a clean-energy environment are a major priority for our Council.
- Our Council has adopted an Urban Lighting Master Plan which will see street lights being upgraded to energy efficient technology at 27 localities, delivering energy savings of around 50%.

- This year, Council's Environment Levy will generate over \$8 million which will be directly invested back into our environment and conservation initiatives.
- Council has funded \$950,000 in on-ground environmental projects, like removing weeds in road reserves and rehabilitating coastal dunes and reserves.
- We are midway through our four-year Maroochy River Rehabilitation Project and have reached the final year of the Rehabilitation Project at Pumicestone Passage.
- Both of these waterways received upgrades in the recently released Healthy Waterways Report Card.
- The result of a lot of hard work by a lot of people – both in Council and in our community – and recognising that there is still more we need to do to restore the health of these important waterways.
- Our work with our future generation was recognised with the *Sunshine Coast Kids in Action Conference* named a finalist in the *2016 United Nations Association of Australia World Environment Day Award*.
- It is well recognised that Council works closely with our community on many of its conservation initiatives.
- Our region is well-known for its many environmental volunteers.
- And I'm honoured that some of our volunteers have been able to join us here today.
- This year we had another 77 Land for Wildlife properties register with us, covering a total property size of 850 hectares.
- As one of the largest local government managed programs in Australia, this speaks volumes about the relationship between Council and the community and our shared respect and care for our environment.
- And we have had some success in our efforts to secure stronger protection for the regional inter-urban break that straddles our boundary with the Moreton Bay region.
- The draft South East Queensland Regional Plan for the first time, seeks to map the regional inter-urban break and commits to further work to ensure its preservation.

- We are not over the line yet, but we have come a long way in ensuring this defining asset for our region remains in place in perpetuity.
- Without a doubt, this is our front door – or our back door depending on the direction you are travelling.
- A truly unique, 690 hectare area that defines our region, its natural beauty and distinguishes the Sunshine Coast from the rest of south east Queensland.
- We do not want to see this become brick and tile – like what has occurred between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.
- Our Council – and our community – want this important asset protected.
- With existing use rights maintained.
- But with the assurance that this evolving landscape from the Pumicestone Passage to the Glass House Mountains will never disappear.
- And if we can secure this, it will be without a doubt the biggest achievement for our environment in the history of the Sunshine Coast.

Conclusion

- Ladies and gentlemen, so there you have it.
- Our 2016 report card on the State of our Region.
- I hope I didn't lose anyone along the way, because there was much to tell.
- But if there is a common thread that exists within the report card it is balance and synergy.
- Maintaining a clear and unequivocal commitment to developing our economy, supporting our community, preserving our natural assets and maintaining our lifestyle.
- And recognising and pursuing the links and opportunities between them all.
- That is what a healthy, smart and creative region does.
- It is what we are doing now – and it is why we are earning an excellent reputation nation-wide.
- Before I conclude, I would like to show you a short video which helps to paint the picture of our healthy, smart and creative city region.

ENDS