

Development Watch Inc

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To: The Chief Executive Officer
Sunshine Coast Regional Council
BY EMAIL

NOTICE OF SUBMISSION

Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy Refresh

Development Watch Inc. (DW) is a volunteer community group whose primary focus is advocating respect for the Planning Scheme for Coolum and surrounding areas. We also provide feedback on strategies that may have an affect on the Planning Scheme for Coolum and surrounds, hence the reason for our submission herewith.

We note from this Strategy Refresh, a lot of our economic activity is as a result of population growth.

We also note the Strategy touches on liveability and the environment.

The Strategy does reference climate change which is positive but only in terms of rising sea levels. It should reference floods and other natural disasters and the need for proper planning principles to be put in place in order to avoid all impacts of climate change. Building on riverine flood plains, as is evidenced from the catastrophic events in Australia in the past couple of years, can be an economic disaster not only for all levels of Government but also for residents and businesses that bear the brunt of these disasters. Similarly the cost of maintaining water bodies and the high cost of insurance for business and/or residential owners must also be taken into account. Development Watch would therefore like to see a reference to the need to do things proactively like no building on flood plains.

The Strategy makes a number of points that Council can use in future planning decisions like the need for a mass transportation solution, maximising opportunities from the “international” airport, meeting the needs of the 2023 Olympics, ensuring efficient planning processes are in place to

support population growth etc. In terms of these future planning decisions, Council needs to give proper consideration to the protection of the environment and the liveability of our region. Our natural environment and current lifestyle are seen as the two main economic "Assets" by business and industry so there should be a commitment by council in the document for strong action to protect these valued assets.

When Development Watch attended the Community Strategy workshop earlier in the year we pointed out at the time there was a need for all Strategies to be crossed referenced with each other. To some extent that has been done by including what we suggested ie a Venn diagram of interlocking strategies (not silos in themselves).

This document does have a gap though in that the "community" is not seen as a stakeholder. Basically only business and industry audiences are focused on.

Some of our members are business owners. Business owners are in most cases residents of the Sunshine Coast and residents of the Sunshine Coast are often business owners. Therefore all members of the community are stakeholders in all strategies and all strategies should be linked. Unless you engage with the general community and bring them on a journey of true partnership you only end up with the various parties back in their respective corners and "us and them" conversations. There should be a section on community engagement and ownership. This would require council to clearly articulate its plans, desired outcomes and how the community can participate and offer input over time.

Overall we complement Council on the document but it would benefit from a community engagement chapter/ action plan as well as more focus on avoiding the impacts of climate change.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynette Saxton". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light blue rectangular background.

Lynette Saxton
President, Development Watch Inc.