



Development Watch Inc

12 October 2025

president@developmentwatch.org.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached the submission prepared by Development Watch Inc on behalf of its members in relation to the Sunshine Coast Airport-Gateway Masterplan.

The submission has been developed with the strong support of the community and various stakeholders across the region including OSCAR, Marcoola Community Group Mudjimba Residents Association and Friends of Yaroomba. We support a number of components the masterplan but raise strong objection to the proposed height, scale and bulk of the building envelope contained in the Masterplan. Refer attached document for further detail.

We thank EDQ for the opportunity to comment on the Masterplan and we look forward to EDQ taking seriously our views on aspects of the Masterplan.

Yours Sincerely

Brian Anker

President

Development Watch Inc.

Sunshine Coast PDA Airport- Gateway Precinct -Submission to EDQ

1.0 Background

Development Watch Inc. (DW) is a volunteer community group whose primary focus is advocating respect for the Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme in relation to the Coolumb and Northshore areas. Our input has been both in partnership with various levels of government and when the need arises, to object on behalf of its membership, to inappropriate development that would conflict with the planning scheme or negatively impact on the community generally.

In this regard we thank EDQ for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Masterplan for the Gateway Precinct- Sunshine Coast Airport. We appreciate that the airport site is a PDA but expect that development will align with the Planning Scheme of the Sunshine Coast and importantly embrace the community's expectations in maintenance of amenity and enhanced liability for the area and broader region.

We would also like to acknowledge the good working relationship the community and its representative groups (including DW) have with the Sunshine Coast Airport (SCA) team. DW looks forward to an ongoing and positive engagement into the future.

2.0 Executive Summary

DW supports but with changes the current Gateway Precinct Masterplan (July 2025). In particular we do not support the proposed height of ten storeys across the precinct. The community is totally opposed to the proposed two 10 storey towers, one a hotel and another an office building. This creates a dangerous precedent and is not in accord with the current Planning Scheme 2014 or the proposed Planning scheme 2025 currently under development.

We do acknowledge the positive aspects of the master plan and understand the need for shareholders of SCA to be provided with a return on investment. However, and importantly the wider community needs to ensure it receives its own "return" on this public asset and that any development does not negate or adversely impact upon the amenity of the Northshore area in a way that reduces the very essence of why people want to live and holiday on the Sunshine Coast.

We totally dispute the commercial need and commercial viability for buildings at a ten-storey level across the site and the precedent it creates.

3.0 Matters for EDQ and Minister's further consideration: -

3.1 Vision

DW supported the original Airport's Development Scheme Vision for the entire site but wanted see simplification of the then 16 outcomes contained in the earlier document. Sixteen outcomes were seen as too many with some overlapping. The current Masterplan document states that the Masterplan must respond to this scheme's Vision, but it then fails to address the fact that it compromises the Sunshine Coast Planning Framework and is silent on matters such as enshrining and valuing community support and maintaining the amenity for the "host" community in which the airport resides. This is an oversight. The community must see in the document a recognition that its views are valued and that the liveability of the region will be supported.

DW requests that consideration be given to better reflect and articulate the benefits to the local and surrounding community. These principles then become touchstones for assessors when considering individual POD's and development applications across the whole site.

3.2 Timing of infrastructure provision

The Northshore area is already poorly serviced by infrastructure, particularly road and transport infrastructure. There are several road and transport proposals on foot and at various stages of assessment. These include early identification of need, business case development, substantial detailed planning or awaiting clarification of state/commonwealth funding sources.

Complicating this is the fact some business cases have been deferred or now require signification updating re costings and option identification. Indeed, some business cases or early assessments are based on, at best, questionable assumptions regarding current and future traffic volume carriage capabilities of the existing road system.

Other submitters will no doubt articulate this in further detail, but DW is of the opinion that traffic impacts are understated in the documents supporting the Gateway Masterplan.

The main road networks that will service the airport are State controlled and the onus is on the State to ensure that this system not only suitably services the community and the airport's needs now, but services them during and after the various stages of airport expansion and development. All too often developments are progressed on the basis that infrastructure will catch up when the need arises. Already the road system, at peak times is at capacity now and with even minor disruption such as breakdowns and accidents can cause traffic chaos to the whole Northshore road system.

The motorway duplication from Pacific Paradise to Coolumbia is essential together with on and off ramps at Suncoast Beach Drive. The widening of David Low Way north to at least Petrie Street Marcoola and south through the Marcoola Village (Surfair precinct) to Airport Drive needs active consideration and firm commitment on timing.

Years of seeing "traffic congestion ahead" on electronic road signs along the Sunshine Coast Motorway is evidence that the current road system is under stress even without allowing for any airport expansion to occur.

The Wave project even if delivered on time for the Olympics (DW has reservations that this will actually be the case) is part of an over estimation of public transport usage that will access the site. Also, the reduction of private car usage patterns (an assumption in the plan) is unrealistic and "active transport" use by users of the airport including employees is considered an over estimation.

DW requests that the Transport Analysis supporting the Masterplan be reviewed and aligned with known traffic conditions.

3.3 Hotel and Office accommodation Vs Community expectations-

3.3.1 Height envelope for entire Precinct

The Masterplan identifies two parcels of land within the Gateway Precinct one for a 250-bed short term hotel and the other, an office tower. It suggests that these will be up to 10 storeys. Indeed, the whole of the Gateway precinct has a 10-storey envelope.

DW rejects the need for such heights across the Gateway Precinct.

3.3.2 Hotel and mixed-use sub-precinct

At a community consultation forum last year for the original Airport Development Scheme, EDQ's Executive Director, Ms Ruth Stokes suggested that hotels need to be 10 storeys to be viable. DW strenuously disagrees with this statement. It is interesting to note that in the Masterplan documentation itself (page 43), the artists impression of the "ATURA" hotel appears to be only at 6 storeys. This confuses the community.

EDQ must already be aware that community, for nearly a decade has been fighting inappropriate development and had a major community action against an international developer who originally wanted to construct amongst other things a 10-storey hotel and resort/residential development at Yaroomba. This original application was rejected by Council and the developer subsequently made an application to build a 7 storey hotel and associated tourist/residential development. Over 9000 objections were lodged by the community against this latter development. Although narrowly approved by the then Council, the community mobilised and fought against this size of development at a significant cost to itself. In money terms only, the community raised over \$700,000 through sausage sizzles, community events and small-scale donations to cover court and associated costs.

The developer has subsequently sold the site and the new owner, a national residential builder, has commenced work to supply principally up to 8.5 metre high residential housing. The community was also pleased that the new owner subsequently asked Council to cancel the approval for the high-rise development which it has now done.

Very disappointingly, we now find that the State is considering allowing 10 storey developments on the airport. This is of major concern to our members and the community more broadly. The Masterplan references in the Precinct Outcomes- "*Sensitive building heights up to 10 storeys*". **We do not consider 10 storeys "sensitive" in this area.**

There are many examples of hotels where they are less than 10 storeys. Clear examples of these are the Mercure Hotel in Britinya, Oaks Hotels in a variety of locations including Cairns and indeed all buildings along the current Surfair precinct.

It must also be said that the need for a 240-bed hotel development, close to what EDQ is anticipating being a busy airport, may not be a “bankable” development. Developers already find it difficult to raise funds to pursue projects. Tourists only have to travel relatively short distances to existing tourist enclaves at Mooloolaba, Maroochydore, Caloundra, Noosa, Coolum etc. for accommodation. In any event aircraft traffic is predominately at times of the day that will allow travellers from these existing tourist facilities to get to the airport without the need for onsite accommodation.

Furthermore, the announced “Wave” rail and bus connection service to the airport as part of the 2032 Olympics Games Delivery Plan is expected to provide convenient timely travel to existing Sunshine Coast tourist enclaves. This will provide an attractive alternative rather than staying at the airport precinct. This will further reduce any projected demand for a hotel of such a scale.

DW requests that EDQ reduces storey identification for the Hotel site and aligns it with similar developments of up to 6 storeys that currently operate in the Surfair precinct.

Also, our clear preference is for height limits to be articulated in both storeys and metres.

3.3.3 Office Tower and commercial sub-precinct.

Like the Hotel, the office tower is proposed to be a 10-storey development within the commercial sub-precinct at the corner of David Low Way and Airport Drive. This sub-precinct has a GFA of 14,750m². The actual GFA for the office tower is not listed. The building would appear to have access from a reformed internal road network. Both the office tower and height of the hotel will be totally out of character with the surrounding built and natural landscapes.

As mentioned above the community has an expectation that development across the Northshore should be low rise. Indeed, the consultation undertaken by the Sunshine Coast Council in its preparation for the implementation of a new town plan references the Northshore area as low rise with only “gentle development” to occur.

It is of course understood that the Airport development is being undertaken as a PDA and does not need to comply with a town plan however any PDA should, by best practice standards, take into consideration the expectations of the community that it wishes to partner with. This community is already in place, where people have made their own investment decisions and where significant effort, and support has been sacrificed to ensure the area maintains its current level of liveability now and into the future.

The need for a 10-storey office tower is questionable especially as the Sunshine Coast Council promotes its CBD at Maroochydore and significant office space goes underutilised across the Sunshine Coast including Nambour.

The office tower has the potential, based on the Masterplan documentation to have very little engagement with the David Low Way interface in terms of aesthetic and pedestrian impact. Under the streetscape strategy the plan at:- *JJ- David Low Way Frontage*, fails to show the impact of the office tower and only shows a 2 storey “industry” building. The Masterplan should clearly show a streetscape inclusive of the office tower.

DW requests that the office tower either have an active interface with David Low Way (albeit at a reduced and staggered height moving away from the street) or be relocated within the sub-precinct to a site such as “C2” (a commercial mixed-use site) again at a reduced height but definitely not exceeding 6 storeys.

3.4 Vista and View Lines

One of the most significant natural attractions on the Sunshine Coast is Mount Coolum, the second largest single monolith in Australia. It is iconic and vista it creates can be seen clearly from the current airport, David Low Way and the Sunshine Coast Motorway.

Any building in scale or bulk within the Gateway individual sub-precincts, or collectively across the airport, should not destroy or impede this vista. The potential of inappropriate development destroying these iconic view lines is real especially if upwards of 10 storey buildings are permitted.

Also the sight of two high-rise buildings from various vantage points outside the site and across the Northshore detracts from the natural assets of the Sunshine Coast.

DW requests that prior to the finalisation of the Masterplan that full disclosure be given to the community of the impact of development on current view lines and vistas from vantage points including, but not limited to Sunshine Coast Motorway, David Low Way and residential areas within Mudjimba, Pacific Paradise and Marcoola.

3.5 Weather Protection

The Masterplan has addressed well the public realm components of the Gateway Precinct. However, from a traveller's perspective weather can cause significant impact on movement across the site during storm season and periods of intense summer heat.

DW strongly suggests maximum use is made of covered walkways, utilisation of awnings attached to buildings and other weather protections and refuges for airport users, visitors and employees.

3.6 Drainage

It is understood that the Gateway site will be built up with fill to the depth of 0.6 to 1.6 metres. This will require fill to be sourced from areas internally to the site and possibly elsewhere. The Sunshine Coast has a number of developments on foot and suitable fill can be a challenge to source and transport.

EDQ will be fully aware that flooding across the Northshore area is a significant issue. Opportunities exist to improve drainage systems servicing the wider Northshore area as a “return” to the immediate community for the ongoing development of the airport.

DW requests that in widening of the eastern drainage system to service the site that these works be extended toward and or include Precinct 5.

This will enable all required fill to be sourced on site without external movement of fill as well as having the early benefit to the community of increasing storm/water capacity within the reformed and enlarge drainage system. Involvement of Council in enhancing culverts under David Low Way and

downstream of the site is strongly encouraged. It is understood that current modelling is based on 12-hour rain intervals. This modelling maybe insufficient as weather events increase in intensity and frequency (refer Sunshine Coast CHAS).

It is recommended that the flood modelling be revisited in conjunction with the Sunshine Coast Council to ensure the site is future proofed and that the surrounding community sees benefit from the airport development in terms of flood mitigation and resilience.

4.0 Supporting Photography

4.1 Impacted Current Local Views from proposed building heights

The following photographs of the existing airport site and surrounds at various locations are provided to assists and reference DW's concerns in relation to height, scale and bulk of the Hotel and Office Tower proposed by SCA on the airport site.

Photo 1 (refer 3.3.3 and 3.4 above)

Current “Gateway” entry to airport at the corner of Airport Drive and David Low Way looking east.

An office tower of up to 10 storeys situated immediately behind this area will have significant negative impacts on surrounding area and impact views and vistas towards Mt Coolum



Photo 2

Current view line across airport's proposed Gateway Precinct looking west from Keith Royal Drive. Heights of both the Hotel and office tower will significantly reduce local amenity and vistas. It will not position the "gateway" into the Sunshine Coast as World Biosphere location. We request the SCA Masterplan demonstrate with clarity impact of proposed heights with scaled photo montages.



Photo 3 (Refer 3.3.2)

Current Surfair precinct

Current view of the Surfair Village accommodation looking east from David Low Way at Marcoola.

Any buildings on the airport site should not exceed the existing 6 storey envelope at Marcoola.



Photo 4 (refer 3.3.3)

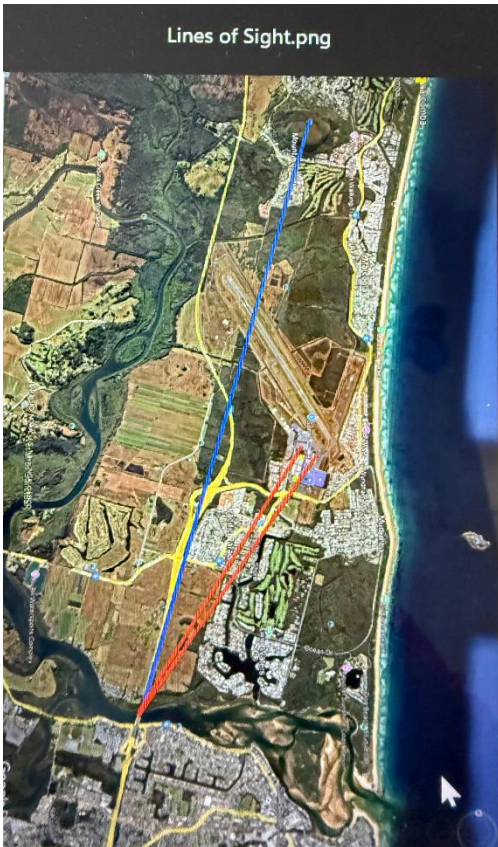
David Low Way looking west with southern boundary of the Gateway Precinct on right of the photograph.

The “Typical Street Sections” contained in the Masterplan at *JJ- David Low Frontage* should show the proposed office tower not just the 2-storey industry building. This can be considered deceiving for the community. Alternatively, we request that a further “Typical Street Section” is added to show the impact of the Office Town on the streetscape. This is essential as it is immediately adjacent to residential housing. The Masterplan must be open and transparent in terms of what the actually the building height envelope will look like.



Photo 5 (refer 3.4)

View line from Sunshine Coast looking north to Mt Coolum.



The Sunshine Coast as described in the Sunshine Coast Framework and PS greatly respects and values the unique view lines and vista across the Northshore. These internationally regarded natural assets are significant drawcards for both residents and visitors. Any development at the airport should not put these view lines at risk or diminish them in anyway. The proposed 10 storey heights as envisaged in the Masterplan are not supported and will put at risk the very attributes that give the Sunshine Coast its market positioning.

5.0 Conclusion

DW thanks EDQ for the opportunity to comment on the draft Gateway Precinct Masterplan and it looks forward EDQ embracing the very real concerns of the community as detailed above.

Should you require any additional information or wish to discuss the submission further with DW please see contact details below.

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END.