

Sunshine Coast Council
Regional Economic Development Strategy
Annual Report
2024–25



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sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au
mail@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au
07 5475 7272
Locked Bag 72
Sunshine Coast Mail Centre Qld 4560

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Cover image

Visit Sunshine Coast - Kings Beach
Pool

Traditional acknowledgement

Sunshine Coast Council acknowledges the Sunshine Coast Country,
home of the Kabi Kabi peoples and the Jinibara peoples, the Traditional
Custodians, whose lands and waters we all now share.

We recognise that these have always been places of cultural, spiritual,
social and economic significance. The Traditional Custodians' unique
values, and ancient and enduring cultures, deepen and enrich the life of
our community.

We commit to working in partnership with the Traditional Custodians
and the broader First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
communities to support self-determination through economic and
community development.

Truth telling is a significant part of our journey. We are committed to
better understanding the collective histories of the Sunshine Coast and
the experiences of First Nations peoples. Legacy issues resulting from
colonisation are still experienced by Traditional Custodians and First
Nations peoples.

We recognise our shared history and will continue to work in partnership
to provide a foundation for building a shared future with the Kabi Kabi
peoples and the Jinibara peoples.

We wish to pay respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging, and
acknowledge the important role First Nations peoples continue to play
within the Sunshine Coast community.

Together, we are all stronger.



Image: Study Sunshine Coast Ambassador Greet



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Image: Mayor Natoli officially opening McCormick's new sustainability facility. From L to R Michael Anderson GM of Aerofloat, Marty Hunt MP, Mayor Natoli, Paris Golden MD of McCormick, Minister Powell and Project Manager Tim Cooney



Image: Study Sunshine Coast Student Ambassadors



Image: Study Sunshine Coast Surf Awareness

A message from our Mayor and Economic Development Portfolio Councillors

The Sunshine Coast continues to thrive as one of Australia's most desirable regions to live, work and play.

With community at the heart of every decision, Council is proud to support a dynamic and resilient economy that reflects the aspirations of our residents and businesses.

The Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy remains a strong foundation for delivering meaningful outcomes, and we are already seeing impressive progress toward our 2033 goals.

Gross Regional Product has reached \$26.33 billion, and high-value industries are now providing over 112,000 employment opportunities – exceeding our original target nine years ahead of schedule – with a new goal to reflect this momentum.

Key highlights in the 2024–25 financial year include Council's Economic Development Branch providing expert advice and support to 8,450 businesses and delivering a diverse calendar of events and programs attended by more than 5,000 people. These included Testing Tech in Paradise, the Thriving Through Change Business Resilience Expo, the Sunshine Coast Business Awards, Future Careers Immersive Showcase, Meet the Makers, FWD Fest and more.

Through the Major Events Sponsorship Program, 57 major events generated an economic impact of \$106 million in direct economic return, while nearly 60,000 community members enjoyed place activation events in Mooloolaba, Caloundra and Nambour.

Our Invest Sunshine Coast campaigns generated 914 new leads, contributing an estimated \$161 million in economic impact (direct and indirect) and creating 564 new jobs.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on building a more diverse, higher-value industry base with better-paying jobs to address affordability challenges and support families.

At the heart of our strategy is a commitment to putting families and residents first. By fostering higher-paying jobs, supporting local businesses and driving innovation, we're helping create healthier lifestyles, stronger communities and enduring opportunities for all.

The rise of artificial intelligence presents both opportunities and challenges, and Council is proactively guiding the region through this transformation. A cross-sector advisory group has been established to ensure our innovation economy continues to grow in a way that benefits all.

We invite you to explore this report and discover the impactful initiatives being driven by Council, the business community and our industry partners.

Together, we are shaping a future with initiatives that are creating lasting opportunities and shaping a strong, resilient economy for generations to come.

Mayor Rosanna Natoli
Councillor Terry Landsberg
Councillor Joe Natoli



About the strategy

The Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) was adopted in 2013, with a forward-looking 20-year timeframe. With over a decade now passed since its adoption, a comprehensive review of the REDS was conducted in 2023 and the direction of this strategy redefined and updated to reflect the changing times.

Having undergone extensive community consultation in its creation, the REDS Refresh was adopted by Council on 26 October 2023. This holistic approach provided a set of strategic pathways to transition the Sunshine Coast into a regional economy that is innovative, adaptive, resilient and climate ready.

It encourages a more sustainable and equitable future economy by attracting investment and supporting local businesses to innovate, grow, and enable diverse employment opportunities. Additionally, it seeks to act as a mechanism for change, guiding the future evolution and transformation of the economy over time.

Council's vision for the region is supported by three long-term strategies. These regional strategies collectively provide the strategic framework and desired outcomes for Council to work collaboratively across our community, with business and other tiers of government to advance our vision as Australia's most sustainable region. To achieve the vision for the region, it is critical to progress our community, environment and economic objectives, understanding that all three are integrated and critical to the success and overall sustainability and liveability of our region.



United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Council is demonstrating regional leadership by embedding the SDGs into its strategies, including the Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy 2023–2033. REDS supports sustainable development by building industry capability, promoting innovation, supporting First Nations and small businesses, and connecting talent with emerging sectors. Through collaborative partnerships, infrastructure investment, and responsive policy settings, the REDS drives economic resilience, addresses workforce challenges, and ensures the region remains globally competitive and future-ready.

SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-Being

SDG 4 - Quality Education:

The REDS supports health and education by creating local jobs, reducing commute times, and promoting inclusive growth. It strengthens families and communities, empowers learners through partnerships, and builds career pathways via showcases, awards, and workforce programs, contributing to a more resilient, educated Sunshine Coast.

SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth

The REDS drives economic growth by supporting local businesses, attracting investment, and creating high-value jobs. It fosters innovation, promotes inclusive employment, and builds a resilient workforce, empowering individuals and boosting regional prosperity.

SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

The REDS accelerates industry, innovation and infrastructure by investing in smart city technologies, supporting advanced manufacturing, and enabling digital connectivity through initiatives like the Google TABUA cable. It fosters entrepreneurship, strengthens innovation ecosystems, and positions the Sunshine Coast as a globally competitive hub for sustainable, tech-driven economic development.

SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

The REDS fosters sustainable communities through inclusive growth, smart infrastructure, and vibrant places. It boosts liveability by supporting local jobs, businesses, and town centres. Investment in digital connectivity and engagement builds resilient urban environments across the Coast.

SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production

SDG 13 – Climate Action:

The REDS drives responsible consumption and climate action through circular economy programs like ASPIRE and low-emission practices. It helps businesses cut waste, reuse materials, and reduce emissions. By investing in innovation, biosphere engagement, and infrastructure, it supports environmental leadership and positions the Sunshine Coast for regenerative, climate-ready growth.

SDG 17 - Partnerships For The Goals

The REDS builds strong partnerships by encouraging collaboration across government, industry, education, and community sectors. Strategic alliances with UniSC, TAFE, FAN, MEF, and Study Sunshine Coast drive innovation, shared economic outcomes, and a coordinated approach to a sustainable and inclusive regional future.



Strategy on a page

Our Resilient Economy: Driving jobs and prosperity across the region





Image: Buderim Ginger harvesting



Performance indicators/goals

Regional Economic Development Strategy Aspirational Goals

	Baseline Results ¹	2024–25 Outcomes ²	2013 to 2025 Progress	2033 Aspirational Goals ²
Goal 1 Gross Regional Product growth	A \$13.8 billion economy	A \$26.33 billion economy	 91% growth over the 12-year period	Gross Regional Product growth up to \$33 billion by 2033
Goal 2 Jobs growth in high-value industries	High-value industries provided 59,000 employment opportunities	High-value industries providing 112,393 employment opportunities	 90% growth over the 12-year period	Jobs growth in high-value industries up to 131,000 by 2033 ³
Goal 3 Regional household income levels to exceed Queensland household income levels	Household income levels were 22.3% below the State average	Household income levels 4.8% below the Queensland average	 17.5% reduction in income gap over the 12-year period	Regional household income levels to exceed Queensland household income levels by 2033
Goal 4 Increase goods and services produced for export outside the region	13.6% of goods and services were produced for export outside the region	21.5% of goods and services were produced for export outside the region ⁴	 7.9% increase over the 11-year period	Increase goods and services produced for export outside the region up to 20%

1. Combined Sunshine Coast and Noosa; 2. Sunshine Coast, excluding Noosa; 3. Due to the original REDS 2033 HVI job's goal being achieved nine years early, a new target of 131,000 has been formulated. Considering projected population growth and demographic shifts, this new aspirational goal for 2033 reflects the region's evolving economic opportunities and long-term employment growth potential. 4. While this update indicates that the Sunshine Coast has met its 2033 export target through strong growth in international and domestic trade, this outcome reflects both opportunity and volatility. Rather than revising the goal, the priority will be to sustain this achievement consistently and ensure export growth supports a balanced, resilient regional economy without compromising long-term stability.

Progress indicators

Since 2013, the Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy has provided a vision and blueprint for the new economy — a prosperous, high-value economy of choice for business, investment and employment, while offering an enviable lifestyle and environment

The Sunshine Coast LGA ended the 2024-25 with the following results:



Gross Regional Product
\$26.33 billion¹



Local jobs
181,931¹



Locally employed residents
198,837¹



Employment growth 3.1%²



Unemployment rate
3.1% with a 0.6% increase²



Exports of goods and services
produced in region
\$9.4 billion¹



Businesses
38,138³



Annual consumer expenditure
in the region increased 3.1%
year on year to June 2025⁴

Regional Economic Development
initiatives resulting in:



\$248.28 million

Economic impact

Target: \$250 million



1527 Jobs

Supported/created

Target: 1500



13,532

Clients/businesses assisted

Target: 3300

Data sources: 1. National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2025. ©2025 Compiled and presented in economy.id. 2. ABS, Labour force Australia, detailed, released 21 August 2025, 11:30am (AEST). Compiled and presented in QGSO Regional labour force (report). 3. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits. Compiled and presented in economy.id. 4. Spendmapp by Geografia 2025.

Economic development family and community ties

It is pleasing to see significant progress across our four key performance indicators, however, a strong regional economy is not just about the four goals in the Regional Economic Development Strategy (economic growth, high value employment, regional exports and household income growth).

Internationally, governments are increasingly recognising the value of broader measures of wellbeing. Countries such as Scotland, Wales, Canada, New Zealand and Germany have used wellbeing frameworks to raise the profile of non-economic outcomes and to improve policy making.

A strong regional economy is essential for a thriving, liveable region. It impacts on every aspect of our community life, including better health outcomes, improving family stability, reducing crime, reducing the proportion of households experiencing financial stress and creating more trusted and resilient communities.

While the economic statistics can look 'dry', behind them are local family stories. For example, our focus on growing household incomes means fewer family members having to travel outside of the region for work. Currently, 32 per cent¹ of our top earners leave the region daily for work, which not only creates economic leakage, it also places strain on our community's cohesiveness. By creating more higher paying jobs locally, we can free up hours of commute time per week that can be used for sport, health and family time. We know that there is a cost of absence on a family.

Therefore, while the economic indicators can look dry, our successful delivery against them will deliver significant community benefits. Significant progress has been made since 2013 but there is still a lot of work ahead.

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census - employment, income and education, LGA (POW) by INCP Total Personal Income (weekly) by LGA (UR), accessed 7 August 2025.

Economic Development Initiatives:

- Improve family stability by increasing household wealth.
- Improve work-life balance by creating more local jobs, reducing commuting time and work-family conflict, helping families spend more quality time together.
- Improve retention of high earners by developing high-paying local jobs, reducing the need for long commutes.
- Improve community health outcomes by driving economic growth, as higher incomes are linked to fewer chronic conditions and nearly double the rate of reported good health.
- Improve life satisfaction by driving inclusive economic development that raises incomes and education, leading to better health, stronger coping, and happier communities.
- Improve public safety by strengthening the local economy.



Looking ahead

For a Council that puts the community at the heart of its decision making, the Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy is well placed to deliver meaningful outcomes, but significant work lies ahead.

The Sunshine Coast has consistently ranked as a top destination for internal migration with many young families and professionals seeking lifestyle and remote work options, particularly driven by the impacts of COVID-19.

While these trends have created strong economic benefits, the demand for housing (in addition to constrained supply) has led to a median sales price growth of 71.4 per cent over the past five years, putting it in Queensland's top five price growth areas.

Over the past five years, our region's property prices have grown three to four times faster than our regional wages creating significant affordability pressures for families. With the current median house price at more than \$1 million and the average salary below \$100,000, the challenge to get onto the property ladder is self-evident. Our focus on creating a more diverse, higher value industrial base with higher paying jobs is critical.

Adding to the challenge is the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI). It is clear that we are entering into a period of significant disruption. Council has a strong focus on driving its innovation economy and this has formed the backbone of a number of advocacy campaigns to both federal and state governments.

While AI has the potential to deliver significant productivity and broader benefits, it also has the ability to displace a number of jobs. A cross sector advisory group representing business, higher education and local government has been established to help guide the region through this significant period of change.



REDS pathways

This annual report highlights the program of activities delivered during 2024–25 against the strategy’s five critical pathways and their respective priorities.

Pathways	Priorities
 Leadership, sustainability and equity	• Advocate to state and commonwealth governments to support investment into key catalytic infrastructure • Deliver strong economic leadership and collaboration by government, business and industry • Champion the Sunshine Coast Biosphere, sustainability and support circular economy principles • Support inclusion and equity across the economy for the advancement of First Nations peoples, people with disabilities and residents experiencing socio-economic disadvantage
 Investment and growth	• Market and promote the region to attract investment and support local businesses to grow export markets • Ensure sufficient development assets are available and an efficient planning process to support population and business growth • Leverage the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games to create legacy economic assets for the future • Leverage key assets to elevate the region’s key sectors and benefit from the utilisation of the foundation infrastructure • Providing a regulatory environment that encourages investment and growth
 Business retention and expansion	• Support local businesses and key delivery partners to expand on the Sunshine Coast • Build local business capacity and increase business resilience • Champion local procurement, including supporting local First Nations businesses through the supply chain • Support identified Gateway Precincts and town centres through activation and place making initiatives
 Innovation, technological advancement and scaling up	• Promote innovation, research and development activities of local businesses and institutions • Support local entrepreneurship networks and activities to help scale up local businesses • Advance Smart City infrastructure to further support local businesses and leverage the Sunshine Coast International Broadband Network • Identify and expand the Innovation Ecosystem to grow the regions capabilities
 Talent and skills	• Support local education and training providers to build pathways for local workforce and connect to local businesses • Conduct talent attraction, development and retention programs to provide a high quality workforce to local businesses • Support youth development and innovation initiatives that foster talent and skills for the future • Attract international students and connect local students to opportunities within the region

Pathway 1



Image: Anderson Silveira, Google, Mayor Rosanna Natoli and Craig Scroggie, NEXTDC - partners in the new Google TABUA cable



Pathway 1: Leadership, sustainability and equity

Advocate to state and commonwealth governments to support investment into key catalytic infrastructure.

Advocacy Projects

Economic Development played a key role in advocating for state and federal government funding for an Innovation Hub (The Hub) in the Maroochydore City Centre Innovation Precinct.

The Hub was identified as an advocacy priority for the region, stemming from the Sunshine Coast Innovation Mapping Project and the Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy (2023 refresh).

A Business Case for The Hub has been completed, showing strong demand which will drive further advocacy.

Economic Development successfully advocated for increased support for Advanced Manufacturing in the region with the Queensland Government announcing funding for the Sunshine Coast Manufacturing Hub as well as committing funding for the Turbine Food and Beverage Manufacturing Precinct.

Deliver strong economic leadership and collaboration by government, business and industry.

The announcement of Australia Connect, a new international submarine cable developed by Google, NEXTDC and Sunshine Coast Council, marks a significant advancement in the region's digital infrastructure. This initiative complements the Sunshine Coast's existing technology capabilities through the Sunshine Coast International Broadband Network (SCIBN) and supports the continued development of the Maroochydore City Centre as a key investment destination.

The Australia Connect cable will deliver faster, more reliable internet connectivity to emerging Pacific markets, positioning the Sunshine Coast as a strategic digital gateway and enhancing its competitiveness in attracting technology-focused investment.



Image: Leaders Panel at 2024 Sunshine Coast First Nations Supplier Day

Champion the Sunshine Coast Biosphere, sustainability and support circular economy principles

ASPIRE Circular Economy

ASPIRE is an online marketplace for businesses to sell, exchange and trade unwanted materials – essentially a tool to encourage and foster circular activity. The platform helps hundreds of businesses unlock cost savings, resolve issues around waste, create new supply chains, reuse materials destined for landfill and reduce their carbon emissions. Sunshine Coast Council has invested in an enterprise license to offer free registration to any Sunshine Coast ABN-holder with up to 100 employees. Organisations registered include businesses, community groups, charities, sporting groups and schools. Currently 559 local organisations are registered and trading with ASPIRE.

Sunshine Coast Biosphere

The Sunshine Coast Biosphere Festival was supported through industry engagement and promotion, particularly through the Biosphere Industry Partners, the Food and Agribusiness Network (FAN) and the Manufacturing Excellence Forum (MEF) who have participated in a range of workshops and events throughout the year.

Support inclusion and equity across the economy for the advancement of First Nations peoples, people with disabilities and residents experiencing socio-economic disadvantage

First Nations Supplier Day

Economic Development and the First Nations Partnerships Team delivered the First Nations Supplier Day at Altitude Nine. 25 First Nations businesses were represented at the event, connecting to 97 attendees across government, industry and buyers.

First Nations Stronger Business Connect

Economic Development partnered with AUSIndustry, the First Nations Partnerships Team, RDA Moreton Bay Sunshine Coast and the Department of State Development to deliver the First Nations Stronger Business Connect event. The event aimed to create connections between First Nations business operators with service providers that can help their business grow.

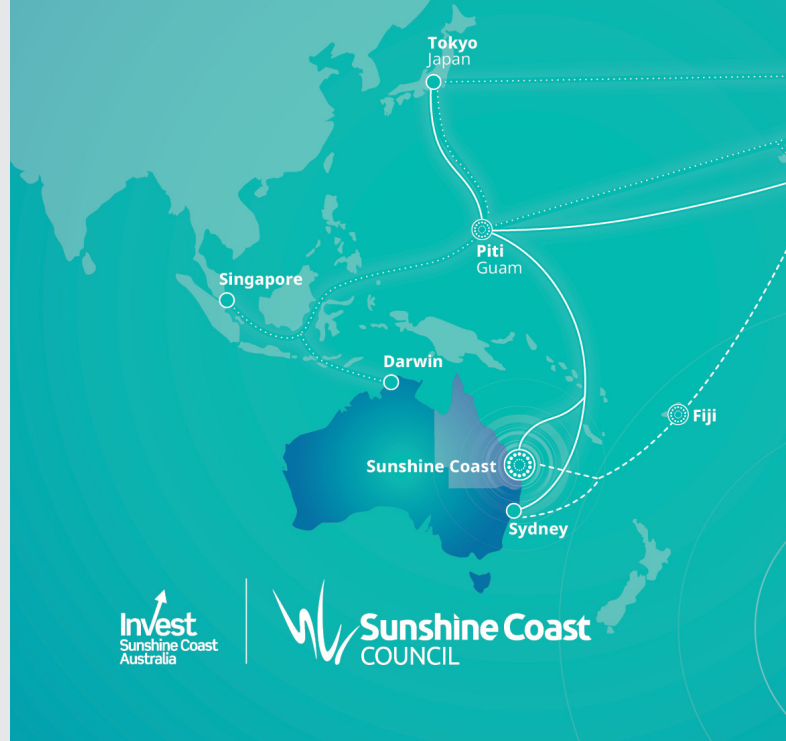
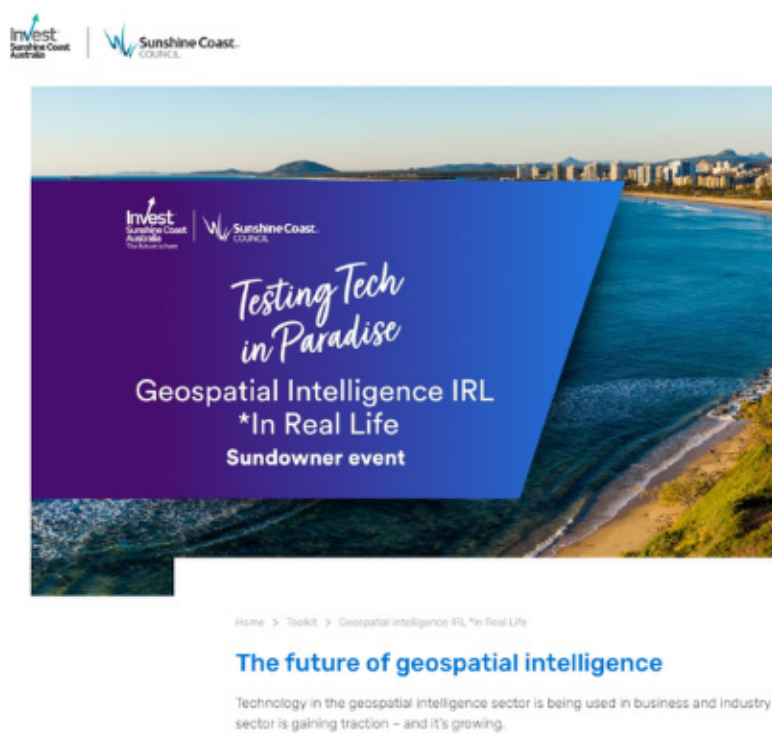
Pathway 2



TRADE +
INVESTMENT
QUEENSLAND



Image: Sunshine Coast Seafood showcased in Singapore



Pathway 2: Investment and growth

Market and promote the region to attract investment and support local businesses to grow export markets

Invest Sunshine Coast delivers out-of-region marketing initiatives to influence the region's business identity and value proposition to target investment audiences. In 2024–25, combined organic and paid digital activity generated 3,469,585 impressions, 38,828 engagements and 914 new investment leads, supporting strategic efforts to attract business investment to the region. Key targeted advertising campaigns included:

Testing Tech in Paradise Geospatial IRL* In Real Life

Advertising campaign for three weeks to promote the Testing Tech in Paradise Geospatial IRL* In Real Life event on 4 December 2024.

This campaign achieved:

-  **632,007** impressions,
-  **2,849** clicks
-  **94** new leads.

Google cable announcement

The announcement of Australia Connect, the new submarine cable by Google, NEXTDC and Sunshine Coast Council, was promoted through Invest Sunshine Coast organic social media and a short four-week LinkedIn campaign 'The Google Factor' to raise awareness of the opportunity this brings to the Sunshine Coast and business.

This global announcement from Google complements the Sunshine Coast's existing technology capabilities, supports Maroochydore City Centre's growth as a key investment destination and will create faster more reliable internet infrastructure for emerging Indo-Pacific markets.

The 'Google Factor' achieved:

-  **237,396** impressions,
-  **962** clicks



Hotel Investment Attraction 'Prosper in Paradise' campaign

The hotel investment attraction campaign titled Prosper in Paradise was launched in April across Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia. The campaign positions the Sunshine Coast as a premium destination for hotel investment and highlights iconic regional assets such as Australia Zoo.

From 14 April to 24 June 2025, the campaign achieved:

-  **967,100** impressions,
-  **122,889** video views
-  **4,900** clicks and
-  **80** new leads.

Three of these leads have progressed to active investment opportunities and are currently being progressed by Council's Hotel Investment Lead.

Tech in Paradise campaign

The Tech in Paradise advertising campaign was launched in April to promote the Sunshine Coast International Broadband Network, including the newly announced Google TABUA cable, alongside Council's Smart City infrastructure.

From 22 April to 24 June across Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, the campaign generated

-  **234,296** impressions,
-  **94,202** video views
-  **5302** clicks and
-  **189** new leads.



Image: Investment Outcome Cybermerc

Blogs shared throughout the year showcasing regional assets and local business success and innovation. These included Maroochydhore CBD update, Zone RV, Priority Industry Projects for the Sunshine Coast, Advanced Aquarium Technologies, Hotel Investment Incentives, Open Access Telecommunications Network, Silver Sea Seafoods, Ozzi Kleen, Sunshine Coast subsea cable hub webinar, the Testing Tech in Paradise client, Soulbotix, using AI Avatar 'Laura', Testing Tech in Paradise client, Bundle of Rays' health-tech trial leveraging Council's unique digital infrastructure, the Sunshine Coast Seafood export success in Singapore, Cure Marine's launch of a new production catamaran and business support networks for success that underscore the region's connectivity and strong support for new business investment.

Trade & Investment Qld (TIQ) – Taste of Qld was held in Brisbane with 18 local businesses participating in the event. Council hosted buyers from Hong Kong, China and Singapore as part of TIQ Taste of Qld, to showcase and highlight the seafood businesses and do site visits and famils including Walker Seafoods, Silver Sea Seafoods, Mooloolah Fisheries and Fraser Spanner Crabs.

Bundle of Rays 'Test and Trial' project remotely training nurses in Sri Lanka demonstrated how export can occur leveraging the fibre cable connections, opening up new opportunities for local business to undertake international business.

Manufacturing Excellence Forum (MEF) bus tour on 4 July 2025 was attended by 15 local businesses to visit Zone RV to hear from Dave Biggar and his journey with business and exporting. The Food and Agribusiness Network (FAN) Grow National Export Workshop was held at the Innovation Centre and attended by 35 businesses. SCBWN Export and Grants Workshop was held on 30 July at Vitality Village and attended by 20 businesses.

Local business, Advanced Aquarium Technologies (AAT), was crowned as Business of the Year at the Sunshine Coast Business Awards and took out the awards for Export and Building and Construction (large business).



Image: Tatebayashi student delegation

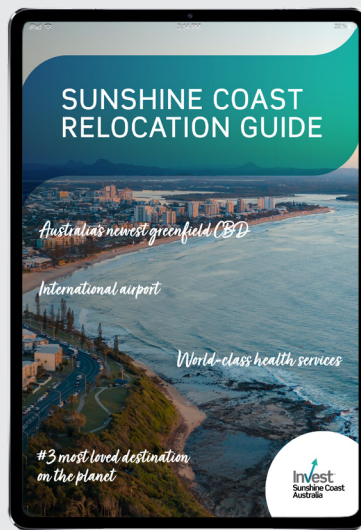
A briefing with TIQ Middle East & Africa Trade Commissioner Kassem Younes discussed investment opportunities in Sunshine Coast, with 13 local export businesses attending to explore the Middle East market potential.

A highly successful launch event was held on 13 May 2025 at Oumi Restaurant in Singapore to promote Sunshine Coast seafood. The event welcomed 40 attendees, including renowned chefs from prestigious restaurants such as Hilton, Hyatt, W Hotel, and Marina Bay Sands. The initiative resulted in new sales for Fraser Isle Spanner Crab and San Antone Food Group's Whiting, while also boosting orders for Silver Sea Seafoods through Orca Group. Marketing activities surrounding the event generated export interest from China and attracted importer and distributor engagement for upcoming events including Meet the Makers (FAN) and The Curated Plate. Building on the success of this pilot initiative—delivered in partnership between Sunshine Coast Council and Trade and Investment Queensland (TIQ) Sunshine Coast—TIQ Singapore has secured funding for the 2025–26 financial year to host a Queensland seafood promotion in Singapore and Malaysia.

Sister City Tatebayashi, Japan participated in a student exchange with 20 students, five teachers from Ministry of Education with Palmwoods and Woombye State Schools, plus a visit from Izumisano Deputy Mayor and small delegation from the education department. Xiamen City, China held a 25 year celebration event of Friendship Charter with Xiamen Media Group, six journalists and six delegates from Municipal People's Congress and Xiamen Foreign Affairs Office.



Images: Hotel Prospectus



Relocation Guide



Investment Prospectus

Ensure sufficient development assets are available and an efficient planning process to support population and business growth

The Economic Development branch provided advice on a range of state government, council and private projects in FY25. Examples include the proposed Sunshine Coast Planning scheme, Sunshine Coast Airport PDA, Birtinya Town Centre Masterplan and Caloundra Art Precinct. Economic Development also played a key role in various advocacy work on behalf of Council to support population and business growth, including the funding of a new Innovation Hub, adoption of a Hotel Temporary Local Planning Instrument, commitment of Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games infrastructure, The Wave transport solution as well as the 20 year tourism strategy, Destination 2045.

Leverage the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games to create legacy economic assets for the future.

The Queensland Government announced its delivery plan for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games with significant outcomes for our region including funding for a new integrated Athlete Village, arena and cultural precinct in the Maroochydore City Centre and a new public transport solution, 'The Wave', from Beerwah to the Sunshine Coast Airport.

The opportunity to leverage the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games continues to be communicated with the business community via a range of communication channels including through presentations to chambers of commerce and industry groups, in Council's Business e-newsletter and through social media and promotional activities.

The Investment Prospectus, Hotel Investment Prospectus, and Relocation Guide were refreshed and published on the Invest Sunshine Coast website and provided to the Mayor for use during the Paris Olympics, supporting international promotion of the region's investment opportunities.

Invest Sunshine Coast actively marketed the announcement of the \$10 billion infrastructure investment ahead of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games as a strategic opportunity to attract business investment. Through digital communications, the initiative was positioned as a catalyst for regional growth, supporting lead generation and reinforcing the Sunshine Coast's value proposition to prospective investors.



Image: Xiamen Delegation

Leverage key assets to elevate the region's key sectors and benefit from the utilisation of the foundation infrastructure

Council hosted the Senior Trade Commissioner for the Pacific to discuss trade and investment opportunities associated with the new Google TABUA submarine cable. The cable will significantly enhance digital connectivity across Pacific nations, enabling growth in sectors such as HealthTech, digital education, and remote service delivery, while reinforcing the Sunshine Coast's role as a strategic hub for international investment and innovation.

As part of ongoing investment attraction efforts, the Investment Lead attended the AI Summit in Brisbane on 19 September 2024, showcasing the Sunshine Coast's advanced digital infrastructure. This strategic engagement generated two qualified investment leads, reinforcing the region's positioning as a competitive destination for technology-driven business growth.

New Zealand Trade and Enterprises (NZTE) partnered with Council for a NZ based webinar (facilitated by the Auckland Chamber of Commerce) to promote Sunshine Coast opportunities and provide support for NZ companies expanding to Australia.

As part of the NZ Tech Week program, the Investment Lead hosted a webinar on 20 May 2025 titled Expand Your Tech to Paradise, featuring a panel of 14 guest speakers. The event attracted strong interest, generating 418 page views, 129 registrations, and 80 live attendees from six countries. The session resulted in four immediate investment leads.

Council hosted an Investor Briefing and Smart City Tech Tour for selected REMIX25 Summit delegates. This event showcased the region's advanced digital infrastructure and new CBD offerings, leading to four qualified leads from the immersive technologies sector who were briefed on local investment opportunities. The Investment Lead also presented a Sunshine Coast Investor Briefing to the Hong Kong Trade and Investment Queensland (TIQ) audience during a Queensland Tech and Innovation online session.

Accommodation Hotel Incentives Policy was adopted on 29 August 2024. As part of this policy, a new Temporary Local Planning Instrument (TLPI) supporting hotel development in Maroochydore and Caloundra was formally adopted on 4 April 2025. The announcement was shared with key partners across Australia to support coordinated investment messaging. A detailed hotel investment opportunities and incentives briefing was subsequently held with Trade and Investment Queensland (TIQ), attended by more than 30 officers. Representatives from Stockland, Sunshine Coast Airport and SunCentral presented a unified message promoting the region's hotel investment potential. Following the session, the presentation, media kit and supporting research materials were distributed to TIQ offices globally to support international engagement.

A hotel investment attraction campaign 'Prosper in Paradise' was targeted across Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia. This campaign aimed to promote awareness of the Sunshine Coast as a hotel investment destination and generate leads, to help bridge the shortfall of approximately 2,500 hotel rooms needed by 2032. The campaign generated 80 new leads, two of which, and one lead from TIQ, have progressed to active investment opportunities and are currently being nurtured by Council's Hotel Investment Lead.



Image: Local seafood businesses showcased in Singapore



Image: REMIX25 Delegation

Providing a regulatory environment that encourages investment and growth

Investment outcomes for 2024–25 achieved an estimated total economic impact of \$161.49 million to the Sunshine Coast economy, supporting the creation of 564 new jobs across the region. Among the businesses investing were Cybermerc, a national cyber-security firm, selected the Sunshine Coast for its first base outside Canberra. Sunshine Coast Commercial Laundry invested in a new facility at Chevellum, while Bebrok Excavations established a new site at Kalangoor. Cure Marine launched its first production catamaran, the Cure 55, from its advanced manufacturing facility in the Coolum Eco Industrial Precinct, reinforcing the region's innovation and marine manufacturing capabilities.

BG&E expanded to the Sunshine Coast with an office in Maroochydore, following engagement at the 2022 Investor Briefing in Brisbane. McCormick marked its expansion with the opening of a new Trade Waste Facility in Palmwoods. Calix Ltd, an environmental technology company from Victoria, established a facility Caloundra West, supporting the waste collection and treatment sector. Simplimate relocated from Melbourne, contributing to the professional, scientific, and technical services sector. Cardboard Display Australia expanded with a manufacturing facility in Yandina, and Converse Advisory, a boutique professional services firm, relocated from Brisbane.

Note: economic impact (direct and indirect) is determined through economy.id

Sunshine Coast Industrial Park (SCIP) Stage 2 – Investment Assistance Program: Sunshine Coast Council has created an Investment Assistance Program to encourage targeted investment and reinvestment in the Sunshine Coast. The aim of the Program is to fast-track the establishment of precincts such as SCIP Stage 2, diversify the regional economy, create a platform for sustained economic growth and encourage the creation of employment opportunities for the region.

In August, a complimentary concierge Investment & Growth Toolkit discovery session was held with the President of Sunshine Coast Chinese Association (SCCA) to run through the online platform and demonstrate the types of services, tools and resources are available for investors looking to come to the region. This tool will be used by SCCA as a resource when speaking with enquiries from China.

Pathway 3





Pathway 3: Business retention and expansion

Support local businesses and key delivery partners to expand on the Sunshine Coast.

Local Business Support

The Local Business Support Program delivered specialist advice and support to 1,045 small businesses across the region. There were 23 events delivered for small business in support of the Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy involving 2,251 participants including the Thriving Through Change Business Expo, the Sunshine Coast Business Awards, the Business Woman of the Year Awards and a range of business planning workshops.

Thriving Through Change Business Expo

The fourth annual Thriving Through Change Business Expo was held at the Maroochy RSL. The event has had overwhelmingly positive feedback with 100 per cent of survey respondents saying they were satisfied with the event and likely to recommend this event to other business owners. Almost 300 attendees enjoyed two masterclasses; a keynote presenter; an exhibition that offered access to 36 business support organisations; and a networking event wrapped up the evening.

Level Up Your Business

The Level Up Your Business program provides resources, tools, information and support to small businesses to help them overcome challenges and take advantage of opportunities. The suite of resources were refined, consisting of updated website content; a hard copy and online brochure including the support available from all levels of government; a one page fact sheet and promotion of the resources to the business community.

Small Business Month

As part of Queensland Small Business Month in May - an initiative celebrating the vital role small businesses play in our communities - the Business and Industry Development team attended the Small Business Month Breakfast on 1 May 2025 at Maroochy RSL. The event brought together 200 Sunshine Coast business leaders for a morning of networking, inspiration and celebration. The event set a positive tone for the month-long program of workshops, forums, and events designed to support, connect, and empower small businesses across the region.

Hinterland Connection

The Business and Industry Development team attended the Maleny Chamber breakfast event at Spicers Tamarind Retreat, engaging with 30 local businesses to promote resilience and sustainable growth. The team was invited to present The Resilient Business Series, providing practical tools and strategies to help small businesses prepare for unexpected events and build long-term resilience. The session strengthened connections with the Maleny business community, raised awareness of available support programs, and encouraged participation in regional business awards—contributing to greater visibility and confidence among local businesses.

The Business and Industry Development team attended the Montville Chamber Coffee Catch-Up at The Candle & Quill to engage with local businesses and promote business support initiatives. The team delivered a presentation on The Resilient Business Series, equipping attendees with tools to strengthen business continuity. Buy Local Day was promoted, encouraging participation in this region-wide campaign to boost local spending and community support. Following the event, the team conducted targeted outreach by door-knocking along the main street of Montville, raising awareness and driving engagement with Buy Local Day. This proactive approach helped increase visibility of council-led programs and fostered stronger connections with the Montville business community.

Food and Agribusiness

Established by the industry for the industry with ongoing support from Sunshine Coast Council, the Food and Agribusiness Network (FAN) is a not-for-profit food industry cluster that has been operating since 2015. FAN aims to grow the industry by creating an ecosystem that supports collaboration, accelerates innovation and drives trade locally and globally. Now with 255 members, FAN delivered events across the year that were attended by more than 2,500 local businesses and made 1,200 direct connections for their members with customers, collaborators and key stakeholders.

The Project Crafted Agritourism Familiarisation Tour to Queensland's Scenic Rim region supported six Sunshine Coast businesses to attend and engage with local farmers, producers, and artisans to learn about their sustainable practices and innovative approaches to agritourism and to network with fellow industry professionals and exchange insights on agritourism development and best practices.

An Export Market Development Workshop and Presentation was held as part of the Food and Agribusiness Network's (FAN) Grow National Program. The workshop was attended by 25 aspiring Sunshine Coast food and beverage exporters and covered essential topics, including setting an export vision and goals, resourcing for export success, export pricing, market entry strategies, activation, pitch development and more. This session was followed by a presentation by Trade and Invest Queensland (TIQ) who talked the participants through how TIQ can support their business, and things to consider when preparing to export.

Food and Agribusiness Network (FAN) announced their collaboration with Food and Beverage Accelerator (FaBA). FaBA is backed by the Federal Government and invests in small to medium enterprises, start-ups and large corporations to help grow their business and achieve commercial success by bringing together industry and universities to deliver innovations, ingredients, products, and skills. By working together, they will assist FAN members to thrive in the ever-evolving food and beverage manufacturing market.

Queensland's Sunshine Pantry (A Curated Plate Signature Event) was held at The Station, Birtinya. The event showcased the finest local produce from more than 50 of the region's top producers and makers and included appearances from celebrity chefs Hayden Quinn and Peter Kuruvita. More than 1,200 people attended the event.

Council partnered with FAN to support the Grow National Program participants to exhibit at Fine Food Australia under the Queensland's Sunshine Pantry brand. Fine Food Australia is the leading trade event for the food industry and was held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. Grow National is a business growth program that aimed to build capacity and scale 52 businesses from across the region.

Council supported the Food and Agribusiness Network (FAN), Manufacturing Excellence Forum (MEF) and the Sunshine Coast Business Women's Network (SCBWN) to deliver the Meet the Female Makers – Cash Flow Workshop, bringing together nearly 100 women from across the region. The event combined practical financial insights with vibrant networking opportunities, celebrating the achievements and potential of women in the food and manufacturing sector



Image: FAN Queensland

The Resilient Business Series

Prepare your business for major weather events and unexpected disruptions



Get started



Build local business capacity and increase business resilience.

Resilience Business Series

The Business and Industry Development team launched the Resilient Business Series, a new initiative by Sunshine Coast Council designed to help local businesses prepare for, respond to, and recover from unexpected disruptions. The series offers a free, practical, month-by-month program that guides business owners through the essential steps of continuity planning. Each month focussing on a different theme—such as risk assessment, cyber security, financial resilience, emergency planning and more, providing actionable tools, templates, and checklists to help businesses build a tailored continuity plan. The program aims to strengthen the region's economic resilience by empowering small businesses to navigate challenges like natural disasters, cyberattacks, and supply chain disruptions with greater confidence and preparedness.

Sunshine Coast Business Awards

The Sunshine Coast Business Awards 2024 program culminated with a fantastic Gala dinner held on the 9 November at the Sunshine Coast Convention Centre. The event reached capacity with over 830 people in attendance and celebrated 31 local business winners across 16 industry categories, plus the Export Award, the Sunshine Coast Business of the Year Award, and Hall of Fame recipients. The 2024 Business of the Year was awarded to Advanced Aquarium Technologies presented by Mayor Natoli

Sunshine Coast Music Industry Awards

The inaugural Sunshine Coast Music Awards took place on 1 June 2025 at The Station in Birtinya and was attended by more than 200 members of the music industry. The Awards are delivered by local not-for-profit organisation the Sunshine Coast Music Industry Collective as a way to showcase and support music industry professionals and provide a platform to develop the night-time economy on the Sunshine Coast.

Sunshine Coast Business Woman of the Year Awards

The Sunshine Coast Business Woman of the Year Gala Awards was held at the Maroochy RSL. The winner of the six categories were announced and celebrated by more than 340 attendees. Sunshine Coast Council sponsored the Sustainable Business Woman of the Year category which was won by Jodi Salmond for her work with Reef Check Australia. The winners will represent their category for a full year with a range of speaking, professional development and event opportunities across the region.

Disaster Preparedness

Economic Development held an information session with the Economic Recovery Local Advisory Group which consists of representatives from chambers of commerce, industry groups, Visit Sunshine Coast and state government, to discuss their respective roles during a major weather event and the processes that in place to ensure efficient economic recovery post disaster event. Resources, information and templates were provided to the group to support them and the business community with emergency event planning and preparedness in preparation for storm season to ensure impacts to business continuity are mitigated.



Image: Thriving Through Change



Image: Thriving Through Change

Champion local procurement, including supporting local First Nations businesses through the supply chain.

Doing Business with Council

The Business and Industry Development team delivered the Doing Business with Council workshop at the Community CoLab in Maroochydore. 20 local businesses participated in the workshop which provided practical guidance on what businesses need to be attractive to government buyers. This workshop is one of several supplier capability building initiatives from the team which also included an introductory webinar attended by 74 local businesses. Businesses now have access to a Doing Business with Council Fact Sheet which provides clarity around council's procurement policy and requirements.

Support identified Gateway Precincts and town centres through activation and place making initiatives.

Place Activation

The Place Activation team delivered support to 2,040 businesses and delivered 35 key events in Nambour, Mooloolaba and Caloundra that were attended by more than 58,800 members of the community. This included the Winter Wonderland, Stadium Cabaret and Christmas Street Party in Caloundra, the Beat Street Forecourt event, Sunshine Coast Hinterland Writers Festival and TramFest Christmas Party in Nambour, and the Friday Night Lights beach volleyball events, 'Tallo Billa' Whale Season Launch, and an esplanade tree-lighting project in Mooloolaba. Central to this was a deep engagement with the business community within each of these locations to ensure all events and initiatives delivered on the aim of driving consumer activity and raising awareness of the destination as an active and vibrant destination.

Mooloolaba Foreshore Revitalisation Project

The Mooloolaba Foreshore Revitalisation Project commenced on 17 July 2025, following the contract signing with SEE Civil. To support local businesses, Economic Development established and worked closely with a Mooloolaba Business Activation Group and the broader business community over an 18-month period to develop and implement a Mooloolaba Business Activation Plan. Significant pre-construction activities were delivered including business readiness programs, a tree-lighting project along the esplanade, and a range of events such as 'Tallo Billa' for the launch of the Whale Watching season. Engagement with the business community continues.



Image: Nambour Cyclone Alfred Damage



Image: Buy Local Day

Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred Economic Recovery

Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred impacted the region on 9 March 2025, bringing winds and heavy rainfall across the region. Businesses in Nambour were most heavily impacted, facing significant challenges including premise inundation, temporary closures, supply chain disruptions, loss of stock and infrastructure damage. The broader economic impact across the region was felt in multiple sectors including retail trade, accommodation, food services, construction, tourism and more. The Economic Recovery Local Advisory group was activated to collect business impact intel that was then shared with the Local Disaster Management Team and state government. The Business and Industry Development team provided resources and support to more than 100 impacted Nambour businesses.

Building Better Businesses

The Business and Industry Development team facilitated the delivery of the Build a Better Business program in collaboration with TAFE Queensland which saw seven business owners participate in four face-to-face workshops and three online workshops with the guidance of an industry expert. Participants are rewarded with a Cert IV in New Business and Entrepreneurship, and walk away with focused business plans, finance plans and marketing plans.

Buy Local Day

The Business and Industry Development team collaborated with chambers of commerce, industry groups and local businesses to deliver the 2025 Buy Local Day campaign. The region-wide campaign aimed to inspire the community to support local independent businesses on Buy Local Day (28 June) and beyond while encouraging local businesses to leverage the campaign to engage new and current customers. Seven Buy Local Day events were delivered by partnering with key stakeholders and more than 10,000 businesses benefitted from the campaign.

Pathway 4



Image: Testing Tech in Paradise - Bundle of Rays



Pathway 4: Innovation, technological advancement and scaling up

Promote innovation, research and development activities of local businesses and institutions.

Advanced Manufacturing

The Manufacturing Excellence Forum (MEF) is a grassroots not-for-profit industry group established with support from Sunshine Coast Council to help grow the Sunshine Coast's manufacturing sector. Through ongoing support from a range of key partners, MEF works directly with local manufacturers to help them connect, improve, and grow through events, workshops and best practice tours.

The MEF membership and reach has continued to expand, with 370 manufacturer members and more than 2,700 on the broader network. The group are approaching 4,000 followers on LinkedIn and monthly events consistently attract approximately 120 attendees. Since its inception, MEF has delivered 55 events with more than 4,600 total attendees. MEF has connected business and industry with more than \$7 million in successful grant funding outcomes and have assisted in placing 55 jobs within the region.

MEF delivered a range of key programs and initiatives delivered with the support of Sunshine Coast Council including Generative AI in Manufacturing Workshop Series attracting 60 participants, Employment Law, Performance Management and Mental Health workshop attracting 30 participants, Practical workshop on quantifying ROI in Automation attracting 25 participants, PCB Connect 2025 at Caloundra Air Museum attracting 350 attendees, Advanced Manufacturing Tour to Brisbane visiting EGR Extrusion and Corematic which had 15 participants, and a Lean Manufacturing Workshop Series that saw 20 participants attend.

Sunshine Coast Screen Summit 2024

The Sunshine Coast Screen Summit 2024 attracted 108 registrations and received overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees and Screen Collective members, who voiced strong support for continuing this annual event. The enthusiasm highlighted the Summit's value in fostering industry growth and collaboration on the Sunshine Coast. This is the third year the event has been held and in 2024, the Screen Collective took a lead role in programming the event, with a focus on capability building and the potential benefits government offset programs could bring to the region.

ShowDown MAX

The Sunshine Coast Screen Collective launched Showdown MAX to over 150 industry in attendance. ShowdownMAX is an initiative that has evolved from the Sunny Coast Showdown, aiming to establish the Sunshine Coast as a leading Australian screen hub. With up to \$250,000 in funding, it supports the development and production of a single commercially viable project. Four shortlisted projects each receive \$10,000 for professional development before pitching to a final panel.

The winning project secures more than \$200,000 in production funding and support. The program, backed by Sunshine Coast Council since 2022, seeks to boost the local screen industry, talent, and economy.



Image: AIDC Regionality Sunshine Coast 2025

SunCon Cyber Security Conference

The inaugural SunCon Cyber Security Conference was held at UniSC bringing together 125 cybersecurity professionals, academia and government. The theme was innovation, collaboration and community in cyber security, providing two dedicated streams for leaders and technologists. The excellent event run by members of the Sunshine Coast Cyber Security Network has the ability to become an annual event.

Something Tech Delegation

A delegation of 10 local industry members were supported to attend Something Tech in Brisbane 28 - 30 August 2025 via an Industry Vertical Partnership. This partnership enabled a strong presence at the event including two speaking opportunities, exhibition and Sunshine Coast Council branding. Held as part of Something Fest, this tech innovation event provided an opportunity for the Sunshine Coast ecosystem to showcase local innovation on a national stage, network with industry, government and investors.

FWD Fest

FWD Fest 2025, held from 7–9 May 2025, was a three-day innovation and entrepreneurship festival themed 'Riding the Wave', with Sunshine Coast Council as a Strategic Sponsor alongside Advance Queensland and Regional Development Australia. The event attracted 357 unique attendees, featured 60 expert speakers across four thematic streams and showcased 21 local founders. Key highlights included a Procurement Pitch connecting local entrepreneurs with major procurement leaders, a Celebration Dinner attended by the Mayor and the Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation recognising regional innovation leadership, and the FWD ACT Think Tank exploring strategies to boost regional investibility. The festival reinforced the Sunshine Coast's reputation as a thriving hub for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Space to Sea Accelerator Program

Council was a Collaborative Partner alongside UniSC and Advance Queensland in the delivery of the Space to Sea Accelerator Program. Eight companies were selected through an EOI process to participate in the program which is designed to propel innovative ventures from concept to reality in just six months. Participants received support and resources to refine their ideas, culminating in a 'Demo Night' that showcases their progress to potential investors and industry leaders.

GovHack Sunshine Coast

Sunshine Coast Council partnered with UniSC, Unitywater and Silicon Coast to create the GovHack Sunshine Coast Node event which was held at the UniSC Innovation Centre Auditorium and attended by 20 participants. GovHack provides government at all levels with the ability to directly engage with a passionate 'hacker' community (or problem solvers) to find creative and innovative solutions to defined (or not so defined) civic problems using government agency open data. GovHack showcases the potential of open data to help solve the challenges facing government and its citizens, it also provides a talent attraction opportunity for Council.

Health Tech Roundtable

A Health Tech Leaders Roundtable discussion was facilitated to highlighted themes that identified several strengths and recognised barriers to the growth of the ecosystem. Looking ahead, the discussion focused on global collaboration and pragmatic partnerships that connect and support startups, research and commercialisation in the region.





Image: TTiP Bundle of Rays



Image: TTiP Geospatial IRL

Support local entrepreneurship networks and activities to help scale up local businesses.

EvokeAG

Evoke Ag is the leading global agrifood technology and innovation event that unites the agrifood innovation community across the Asia Pacific and around the world. The EvokeAg Conference and associated Agtech Summit was attended and supported in partnership with FAN with positive feedback regarding opportunities and business development achieved. This event provided a powerful platform for FAN's delegation of 20 to delve into national innovation and build valuable connections to drive future growth.

From Space to Sea: Harnessing Geospatial Data for Agrifood

Delivered in partnership with FAN, this future-focused event explored how geospatial data and high-speed connectivity are transforming agriculture and aquaculture. Held at Altitude Nine during the week of EvokeAg 2025, From Space to Sea brought together national leaders in agtech, research and data innovation for a keynote, panel discussion and behind-the-scenes tour of the region's edge data infrastructure. From on-farm application to smart city potential, the event showcased how space-to-sea data is reshaping what's possible for sustainable food production.

LEAP FWD

Silicon Coast launched the LEAP FWD Accelerator and Incubation Program in partnership with ACS Labs and Sunshine Coast Council under the Advanced Queensland Regional Enablers Grant. Each program will take five start-up founders through a six-month program providing access to national expertise, mentorship, education, resources, talent and industry connections.

GAME ON: Sunshine Coast Digital Games Summit 2024

In partnership with the University of Sunshine Coast (UniSC), the Sunshine Coast Screen Collective, Screen Queensland and Jobs Queensland, the inaugural Sunshine Coast Digital Games Summit attracted 81 industry, education and stakeholder attendees. This sold-out event aimed to identify key stakeholders in the local game development industry and develop a prioritized action plan to grow the region's game development industry. A list of priority actions was devised and voted on at the event with a focus on ecosystem building, sourcing a place for game development and business support for local developers to scale. A core industry group will meet in December to discuss the next steps and form an advisory panel.

Season of the Dev

The Sunshine Coast welcomed the Jobs Queensland and Screen Queensland funded Season of the Dev digital games event series which commenced with a Community Day (150pax) and Game Jam (40pax). Season of the Dev consists of a series of events held across the Sunshine Coast region between 13 March and 9 May 2025 with the aim of providing capability building and networking opportunities for the local digital games industry

Australian International Documentary Conference

137 delegates attended the Australian International Documentary Conference (AIDC) Regionality Sunshine Coast conference at the Maroochy RSL with over half originating from outside of the Sunshine Coast and Noosa Local Government Area's (LGA). Presented by AIDC and Screen Queensland with the support of Sunshine Coast Council and in collaboration with the Screen Collective, this expertly curated event attracted delegates, speakers and decision-makers from around Australia including Screen Australia, Screen Queensland, ABC, SBS, Paramount, Mile End Films, Wildbear Entertainment, Brown Cabs and Doc Society.



Image: Testing Tech in Paradise Soulbotix



Advance Smart City infrastructure to further support local businesses and leverage the Sunshine Coast International Broadband Network.

The Testing Tech in Paradise VIP Tech Tour and Sundowner Networking events on 3 July 2024 achieved significant interest in 'smart cities' infrastructure and activities in the CBD. The Sundowner attracted more than 100 attendees who were predominantly executive audience. Testing Tech in Paradise (TTIP) Australia in Space second webinar was held with guest presenters inclusive of the CEO of the Critical Infrastructure - Information and Sharing Analysis Centre, a national body for identifying and managing intelligence around cyber threats, who invited members of the audience to also consider the Sunshine Coast for undertaking tech-based trials, research and residency.

The announcement of Australia Connect, the new TABUA submarine cable by Google, NEXTDC and Sunshine Coast Council, was promoted through Invest Sunshine Coast organic social media and a 4-week LinkedIn campaign to raise awareness of the opportunities this brings. This global announcement from Google complements the Sunshine Coast's existing technology capabilities, supports Maroochydore City Centre's growth as a key investment destination and will create faster more reliable internet infrastructure for emerging Pacific markets. More than 130 guests attended the Testing Tech in Paradise Geospatial Intelligence event held at Altitude Nine on 4 December 2024, and 31 stakeholders participated in the follow up Teams Workshop. Testing Tech in Paradise project with Soulbotix and 'Laura' the avatar, took place in City Hall.

This project aimed to improve accessibility through Council's digital kiosks by providing AI driven search engine based on ChatGPT and combine with a hologram using data from council's systems only.

Council staff trialled and tested the customer interface, which was refined before trialling with members of the public for three weeks. A case study was developed and promoted through Invest Sunshine Coast social media channels showcasing how testing technology on Council's unique digital infrastructure can help improve business tech development for commercialisation.

A further Testing Tech in Paradise project trial involving local firm Bundle of Rays, ran for two weeks from a Landing Pad at City Hall. This project aims to deliver global healthcare education remotely to Sri Lanka using the Maroochydore WiFi 6 network and demonstrating the export of services using the fibre assets. A case study was produced and shared on Invest Sunshine Coast social media channels highlighting running e-health business from the region.

The Tech in Paradise advertising campaign, launched in April 2025, promoted the Sunshine Coast International Broadband Network, the newly announced Google TABUA cable, and Council's Smart City infrastructure. This campaign targeted tech-related business, developers and innovators across Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane generating 189 new investment leads.

As part of NZ Tech Week program, the Investment Lead hosted a 'Expand Your Tech to Paradise' webinar on 20 May 2025, featuring 14 guest speakers. The session attracted 418 page views, 129 registrations and 80 live attendees from six countries, generating four immediate investment leads.

Investment Attraction also hosted an Investor Briefing and Smart City Tech Tour for selected REMIX25 Summit delegates, showcasing the region's digital infrastructure and new CBD offerings. This initiative resulted in four qualified leads from the immersive technologies sector. Further international engagement included a Sunshine Coast Investor Briefing delivered to the Hong Kong TIQ audience during a Queensland Tech and Innovation webinar. Additionally, V2i Group was selected for the Space to Sea Accelerator Program and presented a 3D GIS project proposal to Council's GIS Working Group.



Image: FAN Space to Sea

Identify and expand the innovation ecosystem to grow the region's capabilities.

Ecosystem Enablers

Council continued to provide support and collaborate with the key delivery partners identified in the Regional Economic Development Strategy to build capacity, share knowledge and create opportunities to expand and grow the innovation ecosystem on the Sunshine Coast. These partners include the Manufacturing Excellence Forum (MEF), Food and Agribusiness Network (FAN), Sunshine Coast Tech Industry Alliance (SCTechIA), Silicon Coast, Sunshine Coast Screen Collective, Study Sunshine Coast, Sunshine Coast Music Industry Collective, Visit Sunshine Coast, the Sunshine Coast Events Industry Association, UniSC, TAFE Queensland East Coast, RDAMBSC, and chambers of commerce.

Pathway 5





Image: Future Careers Immersive showcase



Pathway 5: Talent and skills

Support local education and training providers to build pathways for local workforce and connect to local businesses.

Sunshine Coast Regional Jobs Committee

Sunshine Coast Council participated as a committee member of the Sunshine Coast Regional Jobs Committee (RJC) which is a Queensland Government funded initiative that brings together a proactive and diverse group of representatives from the community who voluntarily contribute their knowledge, skills, insight and passion for the region, its people and its future growth. The role of the RJC is to:

- identify local workforce challenges and connect stakeholders with government programs, resources, and events
- address barriers to training, workforce participation and business growth
- develop strategies to resolve skills gaps and workforce issues
- support regional job growth and plan for future employment needs
- foster collaboration among local businesses, industry leaders, government, training providers and schools to align local skills with economic activity.

Multicultural Jobs Fair

The Business and Industry Development team participated in the Multicultural Job Fair and Business Expo held at Mooloolaba TAFE on 28 May 2025. This well attended event brought together job seekers, students and graduates from diverse cultural backgrounds, offering them access to employment opportunities, training providers, and business support services.

Attendees were also connected with the Sunshine Coast Jobs Hub and Student Jobs Hub.

Employer Peer Network

The Employer Peer Network Breakfast was held at Sunshine Coast City Hall and brought together 16 local employers and industry representatives to discuss inclusive workforce development. Hosted by Study Sunshine Coast in collaboration with key regional and state partners, the event focused on attracting and retaining culturally diverse talent, including international students and graduates. Attendees shared experiences, identified common challenges, and contributed ideas for shaping a regional Employer Peer Network to support workforce inclusion and create meaningful career pathways.

Vocational Education Reference Group

Economic Development attended the Vocational Education Reference Group (VERG) in support of Vocational Education programs in High School environments. The VERG showcased students undertaking assessment in their chosen VET program including construction, hospitality and health.

Careers in Health

Sunshine Coast Council supported the Sunshine Coast Health Institute: Careers in Health Showcase event. More than 200 students with an interest in health careers attended to participate in simulations and had hands on experiences through Virtual Reality on what it would be like to work in hospital environments with patients.



Image: Study Sunshine Coast Cultural Competency

Conduct talent attraction, development and retention programs to provide a high-quality workforce to local businesses

Regional Workforce Research Collaboration

The Regional workforce attraction, development, and retention: Employer and Employee Perspectives report was completed. The study undertaken by researchers at the UniSC in collaboration with the Sunshine Coast Council examines both employer and employee perspectives pertaining to workforce attraction, development and retention in the Sunshine Coast region and Australia more broadly. The report can be found on the UniSC Research Bank.

Career Aspirations in STEM Research

The Encouraging Early Career Aspirations in STEM: Sunshine Coast project report was completed. The study undertaken by researchers at the University of the Sunshine Coast in collaboration with the Sunshine Coast Council is a crucial resource to inform industry, identify opportunities and drive change in education for the region. The report provides a rigorous analysis of STEM education in the early years. The report will bring about systematic change to enhance the talent pool and skill sets within the region. Consequently, it will support the creation of a dynamic, resilient and competitive local economy ensuring that the region remains at the forefront of education, technological advancements and economic progress. The report can be found on the UniSC Research Bank.

Support youth development and innovation initiatives that foster talent and skills for the future.

Future Careers Immersive Showcase

Sunshine Coast Council partnered with the Sunshine Coast Regional Jobs Committee, Noosa Council, RDAMBSC and the Department of Trade, Employment and Training (DTET) to deliver the Future Careers Immersive Showcase for Year 10 students at UniSC Stadium on Friday 14 March. More than 2,500 students from 23 schools attended the event which aimed to engage with students to inspire them to understand the opportunities that exist for them locally when they consider their career path and also connect with leaders from across business and industry. A Future Career Teacher Dinner and Parent Webinar were also held and attended by more than 250 people.

Mayor's Telstra Innovation Awards

Sunshine Coast Council partnered with Telstra and Study Sunshine Coast to deliver the 2024 Mayor's Telstra Innovation Awards to high school students on the Sunshine Coast. The 2024 Mayor's Telstra Innovation Awards and Pitch night was attended by more than 100 people in support of the 12 student teams who pitched their final innovative ideas and products in front of the judging panel.

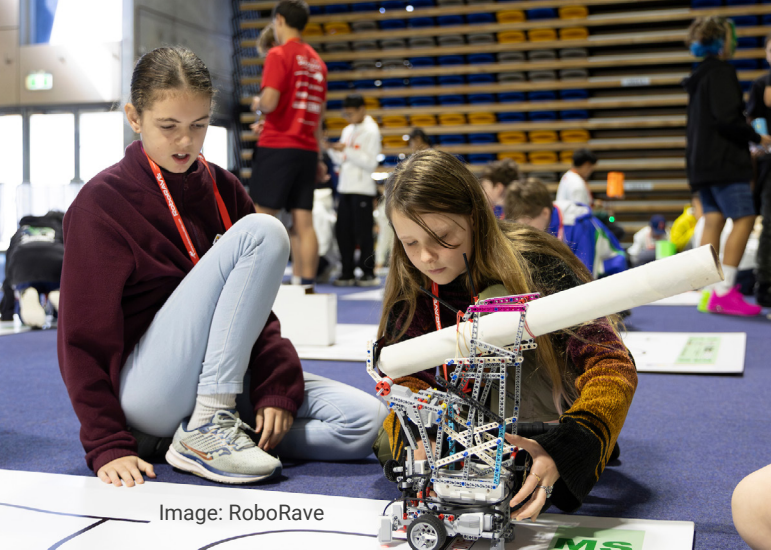


Image: RoboRave

Mayor's Telstra Innovation Masterclass Series

The first Mayor's Telstra Innovation Masterclass Series: Future Entrepreneurial Leaders, brought together 100 students from Years 8 to 10, representing 17 local secondary schools, for an inspiring full-day experience focused on leadership, creativity and connection. Participants were selected from a competitive pool of 117 applicants across the Sunshine Coast region. The initiative is designed to build leadership capacity in young people while offering insights into future career pathways and emerging industries.

Generation Innovation GI Challenge

Supported through Council's Community Grants Program, the GI Challenge is an independently run entrepreneurship program for 15–21 year-olds from the Sunshine Coast and Noosa that unleashes the innovation of young people. Three finalists presented their pitch videos and answered questions from a panel of judges. More than 100 people attended to hear the innovative ideas and celebrate the winning team.

RoboRave

The RoboRave 2024 World Championships were held at the UniSC Stadium. This is the first time Australia had hosted the World Championship event which attracted 1,164 competitors across 465 teams from 13 countries, plus 128 volunteers and over 900 spectators. The event was supported by Sunshine Coast Council through the Major Events Sponsorship Program.



Image: Mayors Telstra Masterclass

Attract international students and connect local students to opportunities within the region.

Study Sunshine Coast Student Employability

Study Sunshine Coast was proud to host two fully funded First Aid and CPR courses for 40 students held at UniSC. Delivered by local business First Aid Pro, students learnt life saving techniques and gained qualifications to help them in industry placements linked to their area of study.

The Global Mindset Cultural Competency Program was delivered with 20 students from across Europe, Asia and Australia. The program is an initiative designed to build cultural competency, deepen cross-cultural understanding and foster global awareness. Students reported significant personal growth, particularly in their ability to adapt, communicate and connect across cultures.

Study Sunshine Coast delivered an employability workshop for students studying on the Sunshine Coast to assist them in leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) to optimise their LinkedIn profiles in time for summer job opportunities. Students learnt how to engage with AI tools to craft profiles that truly attract future employers and were provided with professional profile pictures for their newly created LinkedIn profiles.



Image: Study Sunshine Coast Cultural Immersion

Study Sunshine Coast Industry Engagement

Study Sunshine Coast, in collaboration with the Sunshine Coast Young Chamber of Commerce, recently hosted the Homegrown: Sustainability and Industry event at the wharf attended by 43 students and industry. Designed to equip students with essential employability skills, local industry connections and the confidence to build a professional network, the event gave them a clear pathway to explore meaningful careers right here on the Sunshine Coast.

Study Sunshine Coast partnered with the Manufacturing Excellence Forum (MEF) to deliver a successful industry networking event hosted at BFX furniture manufacturer. With more than 100 attendees, the event offered valuable opportunities for connection and collaboration. Guests were also treated to an exclusive tour of BFX's state-of-the-art facility, showcasing their impressive \$20 million expansion. It was a fantastic evening celebrating innovation and industry growth.

Study Sunshine Coast Student Experiences

Study Sunshine Coast invited 55 International students to participate in an unforgettable day of cultural immersion at TribalLink in the beautiful Sunshine Coast Hinterland. Attendees received a traditional First Nations Welcome to Country, followed by a guided bush walk and a bush tucker morning tea and lunch with the aim of promoting the Sunshine Coast as a destination for student experiences.

Study Sunshine Coast hosted the Student Surf Awareness & Beach BBQ at Alexandra Headland Beach. The event welcomed 15 students, including both international and domestic participants from TAFE Qld and UniSC, who engaged in vital water safety training and enjoyed an introduction to surfing under expert guidance.

The day concluded with a traditional Australian beach BBQ, fostering cultural integration and social connection among attendees. The event successfully strengthened local partnerships and showcased the Sunshine Coast as a welcoming destination for students.

Study Sunshine Coast connected with more than 500 new students at the UniSC Orientation Day. The team also attended that UniSC Welcome to Australia Connect Desk Event at the Brisbane International Airport as part of the Study Queensland initiative to welcome international students to Queensland and promote the study destinations.

Study Sunshine Coast welcomed its 2025 Ambassador cohort at Sunshine Coast City Hall, where Mayor Rosanna Natoli greeted ten new international and domestic ambassadors. The Mayor connected with the students, shared her vision for a sustainable and inclusive Sunshine Coast, and the event included a guided tour of City Hall. This event marked the start of the ambassadors' role in representing the region and promoting student experiences throughout 2025.

Study Sunshine Coast Student Attraction and Retention

Study Sunshine Coast collaborated with the Union Institute of Language (UIL) to host 20 education agents from key market areas including China, Korea, Japan, Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam for a Familiarisation Tour (Famil) on the Sunshine Coast, showcasing the region's exceptional educational offerings and strong community connections.

Study Sunshine Coast participated in the Study Queensland delegation to the Australian International Education Conference in Melbourne. Representing the region at the Study Queensland stand within the Study Australia area, Study Sunshine Coast distributed key information packs on behalf of the region and its key members. Engaging in valuable discussions with industry members, the event provided deep insights through workshops and keynote sessions. It was especially enlightening to learn about the initiatives other Study states are pursuing in employability and career development.

Study Sunshine Coast were proud sponsors of the 2024 UniSC Student Leadership and Volunteer Awards Ceremony which was attended by 100 students, university representatives and community. This annual event is dedicated to celebrating and recognising the incredible contributions of student volunteers who have devoted their time and skills to various causes throughout their academic journey.



Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 - 2023 Refresh

Implementation of the Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 - 2023 Refresh is measured against a suite of Key Performance Indicators which were developed to monitor the achievements of the strategy. The Sunshine Coast Events Board provides an annual report detailing the results, with the 2024-25 report to be produced following the completion of acquittal reports for events that received major events sponsorship funding. Annual reports produced by the Sunshine Coast Events Board can be found at sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au.



sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au
mail@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au
07 5475 7272