

A Sunshine Coast 2030 Community Vision needed

Dr Phillip Daffara

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(2004) Community Summit participants polling their preferred image of the future: "Maroochy's Connected and Learning Villages"

Dr Phillip Daffara, architect and city futurist says that one of the first policy tasks of the new Sunshine Coast Regional Council ought to be the preparation of a Sunshine Coast Community Vision and Action Plan. This would put the new Council firmly on the path of being collaborative and inclusive by engaging with its greater number of and diversity of citizens on what are their ideas for the Coast's future. He is calling upon Coast Mayoral candidates to announce their support for a foresight project to develop a long term vision and action plan for the Sunshine Coast, which will help it to adapt in the turbulent times ahead.

The benefits of preparing a regional vision are much more than cobbling together existing policies from Noosa, Caloundra, and Maroochy to be bureaucratically efficient. Nor is it about re-inventing the wheel. An expert on city foresight, Dr Daffara who recently gave advice to officials in Bangkok and Chiang-mai, explains that "the participatory process of community visioning is about genuinely questioning the future, our assumptions and ways of life to look at what the Sunshine Coast wants to become by 2030". The challenges that face our communities are loaded with risks, just think about the combined impacts of climate change and sea-level rise, peak oil and water scarcity on our lives. However community visioning and governance to build shared futures would make us more effective in responding to these challenges by enabling communities to build their capacities to adapt and become more resilient. The Transition Town movement is a great example of how this can be achieved and locally,

the Sunshine Coast Energy Action Centre could be the catalyst to drive this forward at the grassroots level.

Benefits for the community include a way of exposing community tensions and healing past divisions; and tapping abundant local energy and talent to create a civic sense of purpose. Basically it is a practical way of building our capacity to create our preferred future and build hope in the face of constant problems in the present. Benefits for the new Sunshine Coast Council of having a community vision and action plan, include setting the strategic priorities for its future Corporate Plan and Planning Scheme, building new partnerships to tackle the new challenges to get ahead of the change and to look at policy integration opportunities. Sceptics may argue that the Coast's residents are not ready to tackle climate change, let alone peak oil but past participation in community visioning on the Coast shows otherwise. During the Maroochy 2025 community visioning process over 3000 people helped shape an action plan that desired the Coast to be a network of distinct "green" towns connected by public transport.

Dr Daffara reminds us that our communities need to manage the significant drivers of change that threaten our ecosystems and quality of life. To respond to the tripartite challenges of climate change (global warming), peak oil, and water scarcity; communities need to build their capacities to adapt and become resilient. Sustainable development and the "think globally, act locally" worldview requires a new form of governance that mobilises individuals, families, communities of interest

and industries to envision shared futures; and navigate shared pathways of change.



(2004) Footprints to the Future vision ideas on display at the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning summit