Downtown Caloundra Taskforce

SUMMARY REPORT – FY2018/19

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Background

The establishment of a Caloundra Central Business District (CBD) Taskforce was one of twelve priority recommendations detailed in the *Caloundra Economic Revitalisation Study Research and Recommendations Report* in 2014. In accordance with this recommendation, a Caloundra CBD Taskforce was set up in April 2015 and ended its tenure on 31 July 2017.

Prior to its cessation, the first Caloundra CBD Taskforce recommended that a new leadership group be formed to focus on the central business precinct of Caloundra (since known as Downtown Caloundra). This led to the creation of the Downtown Caloundra Taskforce in September 2017, made up of six (6) business owners from the CBD with Division 2 Councillor and Deputy Mayor, Cr Tim Dwyer as Chair. The Business Development Facilitator – Downtown Caloundra provides secretariat support to the Taskforce.

From July 2018 to June 2019, the Downtown Caloundra Taskforce met 11 times to provide leadership over a range of objectives for the Downtown Caloundra area.

Objectives

The Downtown Caloundra Taskforce's primary focus is to drive economic revitalisation outcomes, innovation and leadership unity in the Downtown Caloundra area.

The current Terms of Reference for the Taskforce state the Taskforce will, amongst other things:

1. Act objectively and impartially for the greater good of Caloundra (with a specific focus on Downtown Caloundra)
2. Position Downtown Caloundra as a cohesive, collaborative business centre
3. Inform strategies that will enhance the main street's point of difference and appeal as a shopping, business, investment and events destination
4. Review the implementation of the priority recommendations listed below and design a program of events and activity for Downtown Caloundra (by way of Calendar) with associated funding
5. Support the Business Development Facilitator for Downtown Caloundra
6. Guide performance monitoring and reporting on economic indicators for Downtown Caloundra, and
7. Provide input to the statutory amendment process of the master plan for Downtown Caloundra by Council.

Focus Priorities

The priorities and key performance indicators (KPIs) of the Downtown Caloundra Taskforce are set out in the Terms of Reference, which draws on the *Caloundra Economic Revitalisation Study Research and Recommendations Report* and learnings from the first Caloundra CBD Taskforce.

Following the completion of Stage 4 Streetscape works in Bulcock and Knox Streets, which began in April 2018 completing in November 2018, the focus of the Downtown Taskforce for the 2018/19 financial year was the delivery of initiatives against the first four priorities listed below as well as supporting businesses through into the recovery year:

1. Identify and implement urban quality 'quick wins'
2. Establish an action plan to improve the use and integration of the Transit Centre
3. Establish a consultation plan for ongoing engagement with stakeholders
4. Develop and implement an ongoing program of events and activities (by calendar); and
    - (i) continue to adopt and implement Downtown Caloundra Invigoration Strategy;
    - (ii) position Downtown Caloundra as a diverse events destination.
5. Establish targets and an action plan to maximise the accessibility of the precinct
6. Establish an action plan to maximise awareness and use of public facilities
7. Consider the role, feasibility and impact of a history and surf museum within Downtown Caloundra
8. Determine and secure a future funding pathway for the Taskforce and the delivery of the objectives.

The following section of this report outlines the specific activities delivered against the Taskforce's top four priorities and the outcomes achieved.

1. Priority: Identify and implement urban quality 'quick wins'

A number of quick win projects were initiated by the Taskforce and delivered by Sunshine Coast Council - Downtown Caloundra Business Development Facilitator in 2018/19. The collective impact of these projects included increased footfall; better connectivity between the main-street and feeder streets; elevation of the on-line presence of Caloundra; increased engagement between business and community; and an overall increase in business confidence, as detailed below:

1.1. Caloundra Greeters (July 2018 – May 2019) – expenditure $680

a. A "Caloundra Greeters" program was initiated in partnership with the Rotary Club of Caloundra Pacific with a database of 60 volunteers.
b. Greeters were in Downtown Caloundra on rostered shifts Thursday, Friday and Saturday for four (4) hours each time.
c. Although feedback from Greeters and the public was positive, Rotary struggled with the sustainability of the project, when a key member/driver of the program retired from Rotary due to a health crisis.
d. The primary outcomes of the initiative were increased engagement between business and community plus a strengthened reputation as a welcoming and friendly shopping district.
e. Overall, this provided a very good return on investment with the outreach to locals and visitors and they visited/shopped in Downtown Caloundra during the streetscape project.

1.2. Street Pole Banner program for Bulcock Street (July 2018 – ongoing) – expenditure $59,290 (with ongoing benefits/use over multiple years which will increase the return on investment).

a. Six (6) initiatives/programs were advertised with a total of 137 flags

i.	Caloundra Music Festival	15
ii.	Caloundra Film Festival	14
iii.	Welcome to Caloundra (Nylon)	29
iv.	Welcome to Caloundra (Vinyl)	7
v.	Sunshine Coast Turf Club	22
vi.	Pa & Ma Bendall	27
vii.	Hot 91 Ignite Chilli Festival	23

b. This initiative created an enhanced vibrancy in town and the strengthening of the reputation of Caloundra as an events destination. It made guests/visitors feel welcome and aware of the activities on offer in the area, connecting downtown to other areas of Caloundra.

1.3. Shop to Win MixFM campaign (7 Sept - 13 Oct 2018) – expenditure $25,000.

a. The second “Shop to Win” promotion to assist in overcoming any negativity towards the changes taking place on Bulcock Street and to broadcast the “open for business” message to the community.
b. Campaign of 160 x 30 second commercials encouraging in-store shopping to the value of a minimum of $10 spend.
c. Mix FM promotional team members were on the street for two (2) hours once a week to engage with the public and promote the message through their social channels.
d. An innovative unique coded online version of the entry was implemented for this campaign (previous campaign was paper based) to circumvent the manual process of inputting entries. 168 businesses engaged and participated in the promotion. 15,764 entries were received online with Mix FM reporting it as the biggest online response they had ever achieved.
e. A winner was drawn at a live three-hour outside broadcast on 15 October.
f. The primary outcomes from this initiative were increased footfall and an increase in business confidence, measured by feedback from traders.
g. Total value of media activity received was $87,560.00 versus the contract amount of $49,500.00 (over two campaigns) which equates to .20c per database acquisition (of 15,764 entries). MixFM has a following of 4978 on Instagram and a Facebook reach of 111,000 on a monthly average, with the ‘Shop To Win’ campaign enjoying 13% of that reach over the seven-week campaign which included six Instagram posts with a combined reach of 4633.

1.4. George Rose Mural (October 2018) – expenditure $20,000.

a. Looking Glass Fish in the Deep Hue Sea is Sunshine Coast's first augmented reality mural artwork, with an interactive animation and sound layer visible to audiences through their smart device using the Eyejack app, available as a free download for iPhone and android devices.
b. The project was initiated by the Creative Arts team of Sunshine Coast Council, working with First Coat's curator, Grace Dewar. The project was supported by Downtown Caloundra with local business, Amici's Restaurant to allow the installation of the new work on their premises.
c. Results included increased visitation and visitor retention within the Caloundra area with additional people attracted to local neighboring businesses with large engagement on social media (45,066 views).
d. In November 2019 it was awarded the Best External Mural at the inaugural Australian Street Art Awards thus enhancing the tourism profile of Caloundra.
e. Expenditure including artist management fees, installation, artist commissioning, both mural and animation and hosting of the work on the Eyejack App, totaled $36,956.00 with Downtown Caloundra contributing $20 000.

1.5. Celebration of Bulcock Street Streetscape completion (December 2018) – expenditure $11,276.

a. The objective was to alert the public to the completion of Stage 4 streetscape, advise the parking amnesty for the holiday period and thank businesses for their patience and resilience.
b. Investment in this initiative delivered a larger number of people on the street compared to the same day the year before and week before. On an increase footfall outcome the cost of the initiative translates to $4.20 per extra person in the street.
c. In terms of the value of increase in positive social media activity relating to Bulcock Street, the cost of paid advertising that returns this number of event responses would have been $27 500 (thereby a net gain of more than $16,000 in benefits/financial offset).
d. Outcomes - 39% increase in foot traffic from 2017 (6817 people) to 2018 (9510 people). 179K reach on Facebook event page with 9.2K responses.

1.6. Leveraging public interest of the Rabbitohs visit to the Sunshine Coast (12 – 14 April 2019) – expenditure $15,000.

a. The objective was to raise the profile of the destination by elevating the profile of Downtown Caloundra by appealing to the intrastate and interstate club supporters.
b. Twilight Markets activation resulted in a healthy crowd interacting and engaging with Rabbitohs legends with additional lighting, entertainment and engagement from representatives from the SSR at the merchandise tent.
c. A positive reaction was elicited at the stadium when six volunteers (made up of Taskforce members and one student from Caloundra State High NRL Seniors team) handed out 2000 flyers and encouraged people to visit the SSR representatives in Caloundra the next day.
d. This activity created a 65% increase in attendance at The Caloundra Street Fair with the peak of 2655 people at 9am, compared to a peak of at 11am of 1608 people on the same Sunday in 2018.
e. Anecdotal information from businesses reported strong, steady trading on the Sunday.
f. Overall, the footfall in Caloundra over the weekend increased by 14% from 26,706 to 30,445 people the previous year.
g. The relationship with SSR and Caloundra can be further developed in the next two years with a greater focus on visitation and linkage to Caloundra accommodation packages given their digital audience numbers 63K with two campaigns achieving a 43% open rate and 22% on two separate EDM's.
h. The project investment $15,000 which resulted in a 37.5k reach in social media and an overall increase in additional footfall of 3739 people.

1.7. Parking Meter Wraps and information (April 2019)

a. This joint project by Transport and Communication and Community Engagement, with input from Downtown Caloundra Taskforce resulted in the inclusion of an information sticker "Where do the funds go".
b. 64 Smart meters were upgraded with graphically designed orange wraps plus tap and go functionality and payment through the EasyPark App.
c. In addition a new parking information map has been designed and is now available on the SCC and DC website. Ongoing campaigns to encourage uptake of parking at Cooma Terrace and Ormuz Ave Parking garages is being encouraged through the use of Google My business listings.
d. Additional signage has been erected at the Ormuz Ave Parking and Cooma Terrace Garage highlighting the free parking.

1.8. Shop Improvement Program (May 2019 – ongoing)

a. To encourage businesses to get creative and enhance their business shop frontage appeal by providing financial assistance for exterior physical works to improve street works and increase patronage.
b. A maximum of $5000 dollar matching fund per with a total budget of $25K allocated.
c. Prior to end June 2019 a number of enquiries had been received with the expectation the full effect of the program will be seen in 2019/2020 financial year

1.9. Skyline Wheel (14 June – 28 July 2019)

a. Leverage a single event to progress positive economic initiatives. Increased footfall by 15% over the five-week period.
b. The Wheel elicited a strong interest in social media with the first announcement post on Facebook reaching 93,000 people and a cumulative audience of 171,098.
c. Footfall (Using POC Rumba dataset) increased by 37% during July in the immediate area.
d. During the 45 day event 71,082 ticketed riders rode the wheel with 28,000 local visitors attributed to the 4551 area.
e. Skyline reported an average of 10,000 riders weekly. Business uptake of the leverage opportunity is the highest ever experienced in the history of this project with 30 businesses actively selling tickets with an offer equating to 20,000 people. Many more businesses distributed the $2 discount vouchers which resulted in an additional 12,500 customers directly encouraged by businesses to cash in their flyer at the ticket box office.

1.10. Business led quick wins (July 2018 – June 2019)

The Taskforce and the Business Development Facilitator supported a number of external business led events/initiatives:

a. The Caloundra Chamber hosted the 2nd annual Ignite Chilli Festival in November 2018 which attracted 12,000 people and 100 stall holders. They were supported by two local Not for Profits - Caloundra Business Alliance and Co Create – by volunteering on the committee and ran a Chilli Beer Garden at Paisley Park in Lamkin Lane.
b. The Caloundra Business Alliance organised and hosted the Christmas in Caloundra promotions in December 2018 (Welcome Santa to Town, Santa's Workshop, and festive lighting for businesses).
   - The community uptake of Santa's workshop has increased markedly year on year and offers an incentive to shoppers to come to Caloundra as an alternative to visiting a shopping centre.
   - 2023 photos were taken in 2018 compared to 1600 photos in 2017. This equated to 670 family groups attending the workshop with a total of 1423 adults and children photographed over the 9 day program which averaged 158 per day compared to 65 per day in 2017. 228% increase in page views on website 2017 vs 2018.
   - Investment $10 528.00
c. My Weekly Preview supported businesses by co-hosting the My Style Caloundra Fashion Show – expenditure $2,500.
   - Two information meetings with 26 and 30 businesses attending respectively.
   - The fashion show drew a record crowd of 220 ticketed attendees, with 14 fashion houses showcasing their spring fashion wear. Another 14 retailers hosted pop up shops at the venue.
   - A full page spread of social photos in the weekly addition of My Weekly Preview.
d. New Year's Eve in Caloundra 2018 organised by Creative Events and supported by Downtown Caloundra Taskforce funding – **expenditure $12 000**.
   - Although this event did not deliver measurable outcomes for Downtown Caloundra 17,158 people were counted at Kings Beach between 4pm and 10pm (PowerBI data). As the event is well patronized it could be considered for further funding in 2019 with an active leverage plan for the CBD. Example dinner package, park and ride from Bulcock Street/Esplanade to Kings Beach.
   - The event attracted the highest level of web traffic on Downtown Caloundra as people searched for the event with 3500 views which was excellent exposure for Caloundra Tourism.
   - The Facebook event reached 5.5k people.
   - Search engine optimization on the website via the events (NYE2018, CMF2019) has increased sessions by 25% and users by 42% during December and January. Given these results a redesign of the website is underway to further exploit this by creating banner/related adverts to businesses on the events listings which will encourage click through rate to businesses.

2. Priority: Establish an action plan to improve the use and integration of the Transit Centre

The commercial portion at the Transit Centre (250 sqm.) has been vacant for more than four (4) years. This has led to a feeling of degeneration of the general area around the parking garage. The Downtown Caloundra Taskforce supported The Creative Arts Team to trial different strategies to increase usage of the transit centre, as listed below:

2.1. Functional use and occupation of commercial space at The Transit Centre by Creative Spaces and inclusion of public artwork and murals.

2.2. The Google My Business listing for the Cooma Terrace Car Park typically attracts 3000 views a month and shows as a top result in search/maps when “Downtown Caloundra” is searched for on Google of which the total search results exceed 147,000.

3. Priority: Establish a consultation plan for ongoing engagement with stakeholders

Throughout 2018/19 a range of approaches were employed to ensure consistent and open consultation and engagement with key stakeholders, with specific focus on businesses trading within the Downtown Caloundra area, with a major focus on the support of the formalisation and relationship building of a traders group. This included:

3.1. Electronic newsletter to 500 local businesses

a. 15 EDM’s sent to business owners with an average open rate of 45%.
b. Business owners contact the BFD via email, telephone, closed Facebook group, Facebook messenger or face to face on street walks.

3.2. Establishment of monthly tri-party meetings with Cr Tim Dwyer, Caloundra Chamber of Commerce and the Business Development Facilitator.

3.3. Provision of ongoing support to businesses during recovery of Stage 4 Streetscape.

3.4. A survey was undertaken to understand the business and community feedback on the proposed change of scheduling for the Caloundra Twilight Market:

a. In January 2019 the Caloundra Chamber of Commerce requested approval for new dates for the Caloundra Twilight Markets. Historically the Twilight Markets have been held over several Fridays during peak holiday seasons namely Easter, September and December/January equating to 13 markets over 12 months
b. The survey conducted through Council gathered feedback on both the Sunday and Friday night markets where a total of 73 businesses responded.

c. Responses received from food and hospitality businesses who are not in the immediate footprint, maintain the markets impact their sales/income. Some report this has led to a decrease in the need for staff on a Friday night.
d. Given 71% of surveyed market goers purchased food from stalls this would support the recommendation to trial the new dates during the remainder of 2019 lessening the number of markets during peak holiday periods.
e. Based on the feedback from the businesses that responded to the survey there is a slight preference towards the change in twilight market program. A negative view of the impact of the markets was the minority opinion. When the consumer view is considered the largest response was support for a monthly market. Approximately 50% of consumer respondents were from the Sunshine Coast area.
f. $3675 was expended on the project

4. Priority: Develop and implement an ongoing program of events and activities (by calendar);

This priority seeks to ensure there is a consistent program of activities throughout the year and co-ordination of quick win activities leveraging off major events.
The strategies implemented by the Downtown Caloundra Taskforce in 2018/2019 were:

4.1. Continued implementation of the Downtown Caloundra Invigoration Strategy which was developed and adopted by the previous Caloundra CBD Taskforce.

4.2. Curation and maintenance of a major, minor and local calendar of events which is listed on the Downtown Caloundra website.

4.3. Working with Caloundra Business Alliance, Caloundra Chamber and external organisers to promote existing events, and implement new events.

4.4. Existing – New Year's Eve Caloundra 2018, Ladies Oaks Day 2019, Downunder Beachfest 2019, Caloundra Cup Day 2019, Hot 91.1 Ignite Chilli Festival 2019, Australian Pastel Expo 2019.

4.5. Website redesign and increased focus on improving digital reach with a paid SEO campaign.

4.6. Google AdWords campaign.

5. Additional activities

To further understand past and future projects in Caloundra the Taskforce engaged in the following activities and presentations:

5.1. Craig Burton, Manager, City Growth at the City of Adelaide within the Economic Development and Tourism team.

5.2. The Taskforce reviewed funding requests received from the Caloundra Chamber, Caloundra Business Alliance, Caloundra Film Festival, Creative Events, Horizon and Place 2.

Project Impacts

The following metrics were concluded to be a result of the abovementioned projects and activities led by the Downtown Caloundra Taskforce:

- The 2018/19 financial year saw a slight decrease of 1% in the strength of the economy and profile of the suburb of Caloundra equating to a loss of $5.8 million in trade as compared to the previous year.
- The total investment of $242,000 in 2018/19 in Downtown Caloundra activation initiatives, including advertising, materials, promotions, taskforce activities, printing and digital costs, all contributed to mitigating the likelihood of a significantly greater decrease of trade and economic activity in the Caloundra CBD due to previously identified factors.

1. Media Reach

1.1. Social Engagement:

a. The average daily viral reach of 2-3K peaked in June 2019 with the arrival of the wheel accounting for a gigantic leap of 78K people reached in one day.
b. Facebook continues to grow with an increase of 72% followers (up from 68% year on year before) over the past year.

1.2. The Downtown Caloundra website continues to be updated and refreshed and lists over 360 businesses with logos and map locations in the directory listing.

a. Users increased 438% over the last year to 21K
b. Sessions increased 140% to 5K
c. Bounce rate decreased by 94%
d. Session duration increased by 243%.

1.3. Registration of Downtown Caloundra on Trip Advisor as a location.

a. Downtown Caloundra is listed as a location on Trip Advisor achieved a ranking of 11 of 22 things to do in Caloundra an increase in ranking from position 24 in 2017.
b. 21 reviews have been lodged on Trip Advisor with an average of 4.5 stars received

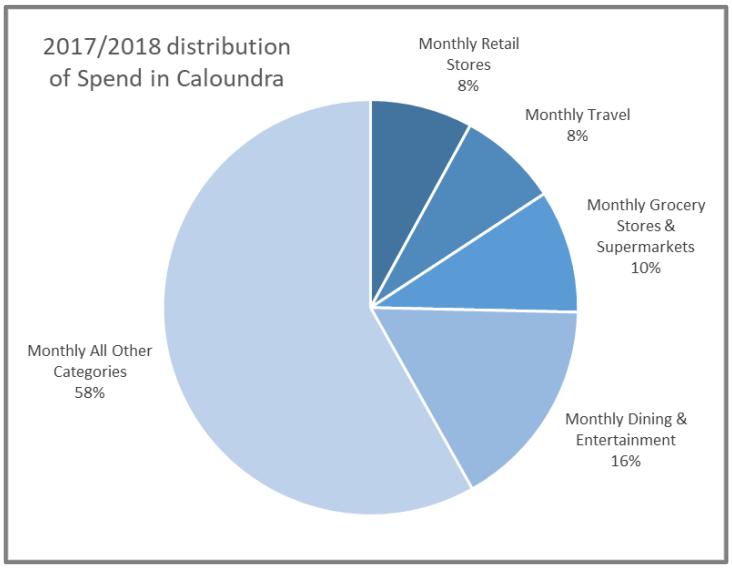
1.4. Google My Business has three listing locations – Downtown Caloundra, Cooma Terrace Car Park and Ormuz Car Park where over 5K monthly users search for directions

2. Economic Stimulation

2.1. Comparing Image 4 and 5 below the reduction in retail spend from 8% to 4% is telling and aligns with the broader economic outlook of a slowdown in the Australian economy. Retail spending reduced by 50% to 4% from the previous year, Travel reduced from 8% to 6%. Dining and Entertainment gained 4% increasing from 16% of total spend to 20%. The positive impact of the wheel in the latter half of June could have accounted for the rise.

2.2. Future forecasts will see the continuing slowing of the economy with stable, small gains.

Image 3. Suburb boundary for Caloundra Spendmapp data.



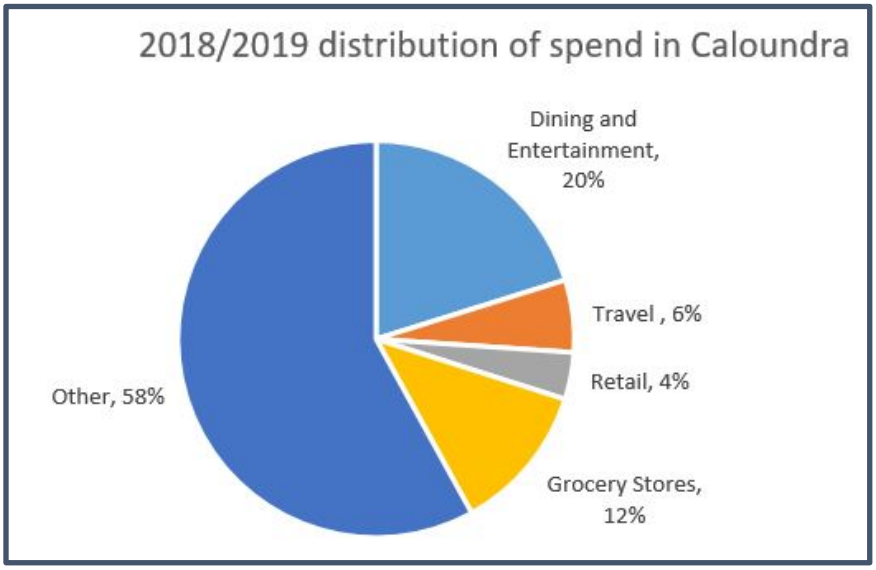


Image 4 and 5. Spendmapp profile of expenditure types in the suburb of Caloundra. Source: Data Republic, 2019.

Forward Plan 2019/2020

The Downtown Caloundra Taskforce has identified a program of activities for the 2019/20 financial year that aligns with their priorities, will stimulate visitation to the downtown area and will support ongoing business recovery from the impacts of substantial infrastructure works being undertaken as well as the continuing slowing of the economy. As a result, a Downtown Caloundra 2019/2020 Activation Plan has been endorsed by the Downtown Caloundra Taskforce, with a focus on:

1. Developing and implementing an ongoing program of events and activities (by calendar)
2. Identifying and implementing quality urban 'quick wins'
3. Increasing business resilience and building up a strong online presence
4. Continue to grow the brand and reputation of Downtown Caloundra using digital assets and marketing.

In addition, the Taskforce will also:

1. Continue to focus on current KPI's plus set new ones to reflect the growth needed in recovery post Stage 4 Streetscape works and to better accommodate any downturn in the economy
2. Inform strategies that will enhance the main street's point of difference and appeal as a shopping, business, investment and events destination
3. Establish a consultation plan with landlord/landowner stakeholders in order to address vacancy rates and influence curation of business occupation in town
4. Assist the project control group for Caloundra Master Plan where required.