Downtown Caloundra Taskforce

SUMMARY REPORT



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CONTENTS

Backg	rou	und	2
Objectives Focus Priorities and KPIs			2
			3
	1.	Priority: Identify and implement urban quality 'quick wins'	4
	2.	Priority: Establish an action plan to improve the use and integration of the Transit Centre	7
	3.	Priority: Establish a consultation plan for ongoing engagement with stakeholders	10
	4.	Priority: Develop/implement ongoing program of events and activities (by calendar)	11
	5.	Additional activities	11
Project Impacts			12
	1.	Media Reach	12
	2.	Partnerships	12
	3.	Economic Stimulation	12
	4.	Business Resilience	13
Forwa	Forward Plan 2018/19		

Background

The establishment of a Caloundra Central Business District (CBD) Taskforce was one of twelve priority recommendations detailed in a 2014 *Caloundra Economic Revitalisation Study Research and Recommendations Report.* 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 (now known as Downtown Caloundra). This led to the creation of the Downtown Caloundra Taskforce in September 2017, made up of 6 business owners from the CBD and Cr Tim Dwyer as Chair.

From October 2017 to July 2018, the Downtown Caloundra Taskforce has meet 9 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 and KPIs

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

Due to the anticipated impacts of the Stage 4 Streetscape works in Bulcock and Knox Streets, which began on 16 April 2018 and will continue through to the end of November 2018, the focus of the Downtown Taskforce for the 2017/18 financial year was the delivery of initiatives against the first four priorities listed below.

- 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'

Six quick win projects were initiated by the Taskforce and delivered by Sunshine Coast Council, Downtown Caloundra Business Development Facilitator in 2017/18. 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 Buskers on Stage (29 September 1 October 2017)
 - a. Five buskers performed over a three day busking event in Felicity Park over the Caloundra Music Festival weekend.
 - b. Fuzzy Furry Friends performed a daily show for kids.
 - c. 87 children attended the three free shows.
 - d. Little to no increase in footfall was measured.
 - e. The primary outcome of this initiative was an increase in the business community's confidence in the Downtown Caloundra Taskforce.
 - f. Expenditure \$4000 (would not repeat again)
- 1.2 Art in Construction (June July 2018)
 - a. Seven local schools participated in the Art in Construction program which entailed decorating and painting yellow safety oversized corflutes.
 - b. 30 completed artworks were displayed in Stage 4 Bulcock Street, creating a colourful vibe, with the public asked to vote on their favorite piece.
 - c. The initiative attracted mainstream media coverage in the Sunshine Coast Daily.
 - g. Facebook stats: 2,792 people reached. 1,159 video views. 103 reactions, comments/shares.
 - h. The primary outcomes of this initiative were an elevation of the online profile of activity in the Caloundra area and increased engagement between business and community.
 - i. Expenditure \$1155 (one-off project to align with Stage4 Street works)
- 1.3 Caloundra Greeters (May 2018 ongoing)
 - a. A "Caloundra Greeters" program was initiated in partnership with the Rotary Club of Caloundra Pacific with a total of 57 volunteers signing up.
 - b. Greeters are in Downtown Caloundra Thursday, Friday and Saturday for 4 hours each time on rostered shifts.
 - c. Feedback from Greeters and the public has been positive and Rotary intends to make this a long term project to further progress cultural and heritage programs for Caloundra.
 - d. The primary outcomes of this initiative were increased engagement between business and community and a strengthened reputation as a welcoming and friendly shopping district.
 - e. Expenditure \$2075 (ongoing project)

- 1.4 Shop to Win MixFM campaign (16 April 14 July 2018)
 - a. 16 April 13 May 80 x 30 second promotional commercials to assist in overcoming any negativity towards the changes taking place on Bulcock Street and encourage the "open for business" message.
 - b. 21 May 14 July campaign of 160 x 30 second commercials encouraging people to shop in store to the value of a minimum of \$10 spend.
 - c. Two promotional team members from MixFM were on the street for 2 hours every week to help further promote the message.
 - d. An estimated 10,000 entries were received with a winner drawn at a live 3 hour outside broadcast on 14 July.
 - e. A second campaign will commence on 7 September to 13 October 2018.
 - 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 2 campaigns) which equates to .20c per database acquisition (of 10 000 entries). MixFM has a following of 2139 on Instagram and a Facebook reach of 111 000 on a monthly average, with the Shop To Win campaign enjoying 15% of that reach over the 7 week campaign. This was achieved with 9 Instagram posts (631 minutes viewed) and 6 Facebook posts (ongoing project and could have potential to be an annual expenditure).
- 1.5 Street Pole Banner program for Bulcock Street (May 2018 ongoing)
 - a. 22 new brackets and fabric banners installed in May 2018 for Winter Racing Carnival.
 - b. Ongoing event banners will be rolled out for existing and new events in Caloundra e.g. Caloundra Film Festival (October 2018), Hot 91.1 Ignite Chilli Festival (November 2018), Season's Greetings (December 2018).
 - c. The outcome of this initiative will be enhanced vibrancy in town and strengthening of the reputation of Caloundra as an events destination.
 - d. Expenditure to date \$15 690 (ongoing project, excluding one off costs)
- 1.6 Registration of Downtown Caloundra on Trip Advisor as a location.
 - a. A successful application was lodged with Trip Advisor for Downtown Caloundra to be recognised as a location.
 - b. Downtown Caloundra as a location listed on Trip Advisor achieved a ranking of 24 within the 48 registered things to do in Caloundra.
 - c. Seven reviews have been lodged on Trip Advisor with an average of 4.5 stars received between March 2018 to July 2018.
- 1.7 Business led quick wins (September 2017 ongoing)
 - a. Through the support and assistance of the Downtown Caloundra Taskforce and the Business Development Facilitator, the Caloundra Business Alliance secured Council grant funding (Major grant of \$1500, Festive Funding Division 2 grant of \$5000), and was assisted to deliver:



- (i) A Launch party in September 2017 with 101 businesses attending, 30 membership signups in the first month, with membership at 55 by 30 July 2018.
- (ii) Talk like a Pirate Day in September 2017, which saw 31 businesses actively participated by either being represented on the map, dressing up or a window display.
 - 196 maps were returned completed over the 7 days out of 1200 handed out (12% return).
 - 31 colouring in entries were received by primary school children.
 - Nightowl Caloundra reported 101 extra paying customers through the till on Tues 19 and sold 31 coffees on that day their best coffee day to date.
 - Escape Room Oz secured 4 additional bookings valued at \$200.
 - The Art Hub secured 5 x extra bookings valued \$140.
- b. Christmas promotions in November/December 2017 (Festival of Lights, Santa's Workshop, Festive lighting in The Strand, Christmas Tree Lane, Santa's breakfast).
 - 1,014 adults and children, and 75 animals had their Christmas photo taken over the 16 days of Santa's workshop.
 - Nine 5-star reviews received on Downtown Caloundra Facebook page, commending the team on the Christmas setup.
 - Expenditure \$14 500 (would repeat and is a highlight on the calendar)
- c. 15 businesses participated in the End of Summer Sidewalk Sale. Two retailers reporting it was the best Saturday they have traded in months.
- d. Created the Shop Caloundra brand and launched an "Eat Shop Stay" lift out in My Weekly Preview in March 2018 which was distributed to 27,000 homes. This included the launch of a Shop Caloundra Loyalty Card. The initial 1,000 cards batch were signed up for within 10 days and the total number of active cards is currently 1,800. To carry the brand into the visitor market a temporary "Shop Caloundra" local card was produced and is now distributed to external event organisers who bring groups to Caloundra and the Sunshine Coast. Expenditure \$2820 (ongoing project)
- e. Created "Shop Caloundra" Facebook Page which grew to 2,900 followers in 6 months.

My Style Caloundra Fashion Show in conjunction with My Weekly Preview is set for 7 September 2018, with a total of 20 businesses participating by supplying models, outfits or displaying trade stands. An estimated 200 ladies is expected to attend.



Image 1: L-R: Buskers on Stage, advertisement in the 2017 Caloundra Music Festival program, Evelyn and Marilyn, Rotarians and Caloundra Greeters from the Rotary Club of Caloundra Pacific, advertising collateral of the Shop to Win a Cruise.

Caloundra Greeters story from Marilyn.

"I was waiting to meet someone at Felicity Park when a woman approached me asking where the closest public facilities were. After a while she returned and stopped to ask what the Caloundra Greeters was all about and its connection with Rotary. We had a lovely chat and she told me it was her first full day in Caloundra having moved here from interstate. She was thrilled to be connected with a friendly face and a chat about how great Caloundra is. When she settles in, she said she will be in contact and apply to become a Caloundra Greeter. She left happy and said she just knows she is going to love living here. Isn't it great to make someone's day."

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

The commercial portion at the Transit Centre (250 sq.) has been vacant for more than 2 years. This has led to a feeling of degeneration and abandonment of the general area and the parking station levels. The Downtown Caloundra Taskforce has led a suite of activities to examine and trial different strategies to increase usage of the transit centre, as listed below.

- 2.1 The removal of all furniture, fittings and furniture held in storage.
- 2.2 Improvements in interior parking signage, with signage highlighting the 3 hour and free all day parking zones.
- 2.3 A weekly pressure cleaning schedule of stairwells and a complete pressure hose to all parking levels is contracted for August 2018, which will help reduce the number of complaints and remove psychological barriers that impede better use of the space
- 2.4 Improvements in exterior signage scheduled for implementation August 2018 to further promote usage.
- 2.5 Support for a successful application by the Projects Delivery team to inhabit a portion of the space alongside the Aspect Construction crew from April to December 2018.
- 2.6 Support for a request by Horizon team for use of Transit Centre for opening ceremony and artist activations. Did not eventuate due to land use issues
- 2.7 Support for a request by Rockestra for use of Omrah Ave Parking Station for a rock concert. Did not eventuate due to land use issues.

As shown in Image 2, the usage of Cooma Terrace Parking Station has not changed significantly from 2017 to 2018. Minor gains were made during day time usage however night time usage has decreased.

Despite limited increases in usage today, the free Parking Station at Cooma Terrace shows as a top result in search/maps when "Downtown Caloundra" is searched on Google (total search results exceed 147,000).

The Taskforce will continue to trial initiatives and is working closely with various Council departments to find solutions for the commercial vacant space, and will continue to keep focused on increasing the parking usage of the Cooma Terrace Parking Station.



Image 2. Snapshot comparison April 2017 to April 2018. Source. Jamie Wilson (Projects)



Throughout 2017/18, 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 Support for the formalisation of a traders group.

- a. In September 2017 an informal traders group incorporated as the Caloundra Business Alliance with the objective to help formalise and unify themselves to drive business initiatives.
- b. Working closely with the Taskforce and Business Development Facilitator the Alliance established a number of mini activations and events, outlined in 1.7 of this report.
- 3.2 A system for timely resolution of concerns
 - a. Arrangements for traders to connect with the Business Development Facilitator as the first point of contact was established, whereby concerns could be resolved before they are elevated as a formal complaint.
 - Business owners contact the BFD via email, telephone, closed Facebook group, Facebook messenger or face to face on street walks. Comparison of email interactions from traders to the appointed external Public Relations company decreased by 70% in the first 5 months of the project to 74 in 2018 from 243 in 2016 (Stage 3).
- 3.3 Establishment of monthly tri party meetings with Cr Tim Dwyer, Caloundra Chamber of Commerce and the Business Development Facilitator.
- 3.4 Provision of ongoing support to businesses during Stage 4 Streetscape.
 - a. 30 business owners attended an interactive facilitated workshop on the "Business Continuity Guide" which resulted in 51 marketing strategies and action points put forward by the businesses.
 - b. the workshop started the year positively for traders/businesses as they discussed with their peers how to 'talk up' the street not 'talk down' trade and visitation. In general, sentiment towards construction and business sentiment has been more positive than the previous work in 2016.

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 coordination of quick win activities leveraging off major events.

The strategies implemented by the Downtown Caloundra Taskforce in 2017/18 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. This was shared as an online calendar with the Caloundra Chamber of Commerce and Caloundra Tourism as a collaborative way to ensure information is openly shared, updated and distributed via all channels. This action also improves engagement with stakeholders.
- 4.3 Working with Caloundra Business Alliance, Caloundra Chamber and external organisers to promote existing events, and implement new events.
 - a) Existing New Year's Eve Caloundra 2017, Ladies Oaks Day 2018, Downunder Beachfest 2018, Caloundra Cup Day 2018
 - b) New Hot 91.1 Ignite Chilli Festival 2017, Australian Pastel Expo 2018.

5. Additional activities

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

- 5.1 Brian Beswick and Shane Morgan from DIS Sunshine Coast presented information on the Data and Sensor Collection project.
- 5.2 The Business Development Facilitator delivered a presentation on Spendmapp and included a case study on Downunder Beachfest 2017.
- 5.3 Megan Rowland, Team Leader Creative Development, Creative Arts presented the draft 3 year Place 2 Divisional arts plan.
- 5.4 Matthew Stevenson Regional Planning and Advocacy, Strategic Planning provided an overview of the Caloundra Master Plan.
- 5.5 The Taskforce reviewed funding requests received from the Caloundra Chamber, Caloundra Business Alliance, Horizon and Place 2.

Project Impacts

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

The 2017/18 financial year saw an increase in the strength of the economy and profile of the suburb of Caloundra. For the 2017/18 period the total spending was 8% above the 2016/17 results (equating to \$39.3 million in extra trade); the Downtown Caloundra Facebook page achieved a 68% increase in its fan base – closing the year with 2,900 fans; and there was a 2000% increase in users of the Downtown Caloundra website. The total investment of \$85,880 in 2017/18 in Downtown Caloundra activation initiatives, including advertising, materials, promotions, taskforce activities, printing and digital costs, all contributed to these outstanding results.

1. Media Reach

- 1.1 Social Engagement:
 - a. Facebook lifetime total likes 853,518. The highest daily total reach of 12,502 (out of an annual total of 561,171) was on 29 November 2017 (Christmas in Caloundra) with the highest daily viral reach of 11,223 occurring on the same day.
 - b. The highest number of check-ins occurred on 8 June 2018 (Downunder Beachfest Thursday night Street Party) totaling 239 out of an annual total of 978.
 - Facebook continues to grow with an increase of 68% of followers over the past year. The biggest peak (16%) was between 25 November (Ignite Chilli Festival) and 1 December 2017 (Christmas in Caloundra).
- 1.2 Downtown Caloundra logo was adjusted to align with Sunshine Coast brand guidelines. Additional collateral was designed to further support digital activities.
- 1.3 The Downtown Caloundra Website continues to be updated and refreshed and lists 360 businesses with logos and map locations in the directory listing.
 - a. Users increased 2000% over the last year to 4.3K
 - b. Sessions increased 1892% to 5.1K
 - c. Bounce rate decreased
 - d. Session duration increased by 243%.

2. Partnerships

- 2.1 Incorporation of the Caloundra Business Alliance with 55 financial members, a Facebook group of 151 members which has a 90% engagement rate.
- 2.2 52 business owners volunteered to work on 12 business driven initiatives over the year.
- 2.3 57 Rotarians and friends of Rotary volunteer in the Caloundra Greeters program.

3. Economic Stimulation

3.1 The 2017/18 financial year saw an increase of 8% in total spending in the Caloundra suburb above 2016/17 financial year (equates to a growth of \$39.3 million in extra trade). This result was double the average 4% growth in trade across the Sunshine Coast local government area, for the same period.

3.2 The overall contribution of economic activity in the suburb of Caloundra to the Sunshine Coast economy increased from 7.6% in 2016/17 to 7.9% in 2017/18.

4. Business Resilience

4.1 30 business owners attended an interactive facilitated workshop on the "Business Continuity Guide" which resulted in 51 marketing strategies and action points put forward by the businesses.



Image 3. Suburb boundary for Caloundra Spendmapp data.







Image 5. Spendmapp month by month comparison for the suburb of Caloundra. Source: Data Republic, 2018.



Forward Plan 2018/2019

The Downtown Caloundra Taskforce has identified a program of activities for the 2018/19 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 part of Stage 4 Streetscaping. As a result, a Downtown Caloundra 2018/19 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. establishing an action plan to improve the use and integration of the Transit Centre
- 4. local business support, and
- 5. 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.
- 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 Shop Front Grant program.
- 4. Establish a consultation plan with landlord/landowner stakeholders in order to address vacancy rates and influence curation of business occupation in town.
- 5. Assist the project control group for Caloundra Master Plan where required.



Image 6: Bulcock Street Banners.