



## **'What Works' Communiqué**

First of all, on behalf of the University and our partners, the Sunshine Coast Council, I'd like to thank you most sincerely for giving of your time and expertise last Friday for our 'What Works' Conference.

Certainly, the feedback already has been very positive and there has been general agreement that it was a valuable and enjoyable day.

As was noted at the Conference, some of the matters discussed perhaps reinforce and give additional confidence regarding our current strategies but, hopefully, some new and innovative ideas emerged.

By way of summary, the key matters that we all agreed were as follows:

- **Session 1: Regional Progress and Leadership**
  - Getting the question right: Where are the jobs coming from and is this a planning issue *should be* where are the workers coming from and who will populate this vision?
  - The delivery of prosperity through the 3 Ps – population, productivity and participation
  - Complex systems and interactions – understanding the nature of change and acknowledging its complexity; understanding how structures and processes come together to deliver prosperity
- **Session 2: Regional Economic Planning and Sustainability**
  - Speaking with one voice to 'talk up' the strengths of the region – buy in, and effective collaboration and partnerships (is that the chicken and the egg?) allow for the development and promulgation of a clear vision and identity and the capacity to sell it (we were challenged to list the three features that define the Sunshine Coast...)
  - Statistics: Know your strengths and your weaknesses and be willing to admit them – promote one and deal with the other
  - Clear and articulated strategy: Successful regions knew where they were going and how they planned to get there; key to this was having a decision making structure that worked
  - Partnerships: Partnerships are about developing a way to work together; to have successful partnerships you must have leadership authentic to the region; you can't leave a sector out – government, private sector and community
  - What will create the sense of urgency that will galvanise people to move forward? Maybe we need to *create* that sense of urgency? Again, we need a clear vision and to use one voice in promoting it internally and externally!



- **Session 3: Business, Industry and the Future – Current Major Sectors and their Future**
  - Clarity of vision: Again, this is about knowing where you're going and using one voice to communicate the vision, no matter which sector you belong to
  - Cohesion: Partners from all sectors must be present in decision making processes; partnerships include those within and across sectors
  - Leadership from government: Must emanate from all three tiers of government, and be right for the time – the right leaders (who can herd cats) need to be in place
  - Statistics: Sectoral data needs to be compiled and held in a single place
  - Integrated strategy is required to bring together the sectors to meet the needs of the community
- **Session 4: Business, Industry and the Future – Realistic Employment and Sectoral Opportunities in Emerging Sectors**
  - Getting the question right: We need to think outside of the square in asking questions so that we get innovative and create answers – not just in terms of product development but also in conceptualising the business/market context
  - Specific and clear visions are required, as is the capacity to convey them
  - Presenters gave us solutions for complex issues
  - Thinking big was a theme, emphasising the importance of ensuring an appropriate skill base and economic viability
  - All sectors represented had made significant investment in innovation (R&D)
  - All presenters were risk takers who didn't let fear get in the way of moving forward.

As Sandy Zubrinich observed in concluding the day, there were quite remarkable synergies and common themes evident in both the more theoretical and the more practical sessions, and perhaps these provide us with a clear way forward.

Interesting also is the fact that many of the options discussed do not demand large capital expenditure and could be commenced (or, in some case, current initiatives reinforced) relatively easily. The overarching theme of the day, however, was about coordination, partnerships, and real commitments. I believe that last Friday was a platform from which to move forward, and I am sure that other organisations and individuals represented there would be willing to progress those high priority initiatives.

Again, with thanks and best regards.

Mike Hefferan



A sustainable economic future for the Sunshine Coast

# What Works Conference

Friday 12 November 2010