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4 August 2017

**Eurobodalla’s Chambers of Commerce**

**Submission on Draft Integrated Economic Growth and Development Strategy**

The DIEGDS (Draft Integrated Economic Growth and Development Strategy) is considered by the combined Chambers as providing the most significant outcomes for both social and economic fundamentals in the Shire. The Chambers welcome its enactment.

The following submission contains suggestions for enhancement and effective implementation.

**Outcomes and Priorities linked to Social and Economic Fundamentals**

While some indicators and many positive predictions are noted, ultimately the strategy must address our Economic and Social Fundamentals. How the strategy and action plan addresses these fundamentals needs to be addressed in the ”Executive Summary, “Purpose of the Strategy” and “Economic Snapshot of Eurobodalla”.

Economic and Social metrics need to be utilized to determine Priorities and Measure Performance in the Draft Action Plan.

We understand that ESC is not solely responsible for affecting some macro fundamentals, though tangible metrics for performance measure must be found to give purpose to the action plan.

While necessary, we are less inclined to be concerned with bureaucratic priority and performance measure.

We would like to see further mention of the following fundamentals and associated metrics included in “Monitoring Measures” p16. We would also like to see metrics associated with the following used for prioritization and performance measure in the Action Plan.

1. Gross Regional Product

Pertinent is the 2015 figure where domestic GRP continues to climb yet business GRP loss was such that it pulled total GRP into the negative, thus having a local recession.

1. Employment

Has declined steadily since 2012 against state and national averages.

1. Age Dependency Ratio

Currently the Shire sits at 557 out of 563 Shires. We simply will not have enough the younger people to look after older people within the Shire. This fact needs to be considered when looking at increasing aged care and health services.

1. Median Age

We have seen since the last census that Eurobodalla increased four years, NSW zero years and Australia one year.

1. Youth Disengagement

These metrics, particularly for young women, together with Age Dependency Ratio and median age define potential employment and social issues. We need to define strategies addressing these metrics.

1. Skills

The various skill metrics are important and so is infrastructure development to retain, skill up and attract skilled people as per the RDA 2013 Skills Audit. The impact and prioritisation of infrastructure projects is relevant to skills.

1. Tourism Numbers and Overnight Visitor Spend

A clear need to transfer resources from demand to supply side destination development. Integrate DMAP priorities and outcomes with DIEGDS. Use local data in performance measure.

1. Accommodation

The Shire is undergoing a critical loss of 5 room and above accommodation (34 to 28).

**Strengthening the Shires Institutions and enabling informed input to council process.**

With regard to the many recommendations by public forums and consultancies and advisory committees, we do not want to see more overlays of structure, especially where uninformed comment is given equal weight to professional and organisational advice. As per the combined Chambers Community Strategic Plan Submission we would like to see less fractured commentary and more evidence based input with assessable outcomes for all Council strategies.

The Chambers of Commerce and their combined views represent positions developed within the organisations and should carry appropriate weight. The lay person has plenty of opportunity for comment through public display, direct approaches etc. We would like to see an annual economic growth and development summit between Chambers and the ELT plus Councillors wishing to attend.

Where advisory groups are necessary, we would like to see 3 5 5 committees that are professional skills based as per recommendation in the Destination Management Action Plan for Tourism to provide informed input, and not replace or detract from current institutions.

**Draft Integrated Economic Growth and Development Strategic Action Plan**

**General Recommendations**

* There should be a set of Strategic Key KPIs / Performance Measures with 'Sub KPIs' under them. The Key KPIs and Sub KPIs should be developed and consistent across multiple strategies, plans and initiatives in the Eurobodalla so that the inter-linking actions all speak to each other. This will help with assessing the achievements with various strategies and plans.
* The Performance Measures listed in almost all Actions are generic and are not sufficiently measured.
* There needs to be a clear definition of who the Deliverers are in the strategies and actions. The IEG&D Strategy needs to outline who the stakeholders and specific deliverers are as mentioned in the start of this document " This draft Integrated Economic Growth and Development Strategy is a comprehensive plan and set of actions for government, Council, businesses and our community...
* There needs to be an overview of how the priority is rated, what is the time frame and what is the consequence of this action is not delivered in the timeframe or if the KPIs is not achieved?
* In 'Key economic drivers in Eurobodalla' it states - In addition to these key sectors, growth in professional and business services, information technology and high-tech, ‘green’ industries will facilitate greater economic diversity in Eurobodalla. A snapshot of these and other industry sectors is provided in Appendix 3. In Appendix 3 the highlighted growth areas are not mentioned at all.

**Specific Recommendations**

**A1**

Moruya AirportMasterplan was completed before deregulation. We recommend future proofing airport to 3D standard which allows ATR and Q400 aircraft (approx.. 70 seat aircraft).

When upgrades are complete we recommend either selling the entire precinct for multi-level tourism and business development or enter Private Public Partnership to achieve the same. Significant Airport renewal and increase in passenger services has been seen through private initiatives.

Note: Private airport operators commented on the difficulty of recouping costs from GA business development without a commercial airline passenger strategy.

**A5**

Council lobbies for business and home business to fill the calculated gap in NBN services at each stage of the NBN rollout. NBN intends filling the gap with complimentary technologies.

**B1.1.1 to B1.1.4**

The points be reviewed with consideration of strengthening existing structures and not introducing more fractured structures. Council re-examine and reduce councils Advisory groups to become skills based 355 groups and incorporate “think tank” notions.

Multiple community forums and consultations can weaken existing structures and their relevance.

Retirees, and ex professional should be encouraged to join existing structures. Too many costly structures with duplication within and outside the ESC reduce viability and relevance of existing structures.

Council holds 2 economic growth and development summits per annum with Chambers of Commerce.

Council provide financial support to Chambers of Commerce for direct support of young entrepreneurs and incubators.

**B1.2.2**

Customer service is a perennial training issue within the shire. Various entities including the Shire have been providing training for customer service. Many see this as a symptom of small marginal businesses and weekend penalty rate issues . Training is not the simple panacea.

**B2 1.2**

Rework with consideration to Accommodation as a fundamental of tourism and its critical situation.

Critical loss of 5 room and above accommodation. Shoalhaven on 66, Bega 35 and Eurobodalla on 34 (5 rooms and above) and we are about to lose 7 of these properties. Tourism properties are invariable zoned for increased yield in alternative use. The rise of AirB&B, Stayz etc to fill the gap has the effect of increasing domestic housing rents, reducing accommodation quality and annulling group, conference and wedding destination travel within the Shire.

**B2 2.2 and 2.3**

Include the mitigation of financial loss or suffering by business through additional compliance to sea level rise and sustainability requirements.

**B3 1.2 and 1.3**

Private and Public Infrastructure Identification and opportunities need to have clear assessment and prioritisation as per effect on our social and economic fundamentals. Their priority is listed as on-going, yet we would like to see urgency and timeframes. We note that current infrastructure funding opportunities may never be repeated in the foreseeable future.

**B3 2.1**

The TRA metrics of visiting family and friends is from a small group and highlights lack of local data. The business operators paid holiday guide is a contentious issue with some operators. This strategy for local businesses may not gain traction for experienced operators and should be reworked with industry.

**B3 2.2**

Supply Chain issues were discussed recently at a local forum with the Federal Minister for Small Business, ACCC, ATO and Small Business Ombudsmen. The supply chain issues for regional areas such as Eurobodalla are primarily economic disadvantage through dependence on monopolised supply chains. Unreasonable loading of rates, charges and Cost of Goods Sold, payment terms and finance for both producers, manufacturers and retailers were identified as critical areas to be addressed.

**B4 1.2 to 1.3**

A “desirable place to invest, live and work” contains mutually exclusive strategies and messages and should be separated as such.

**B4 1.5**

As pointed out by the consultant running the Visitor Information Centre review that in Australia it is overwhelmingly apparent that successful Visitor Information Centres are co-housed with local points of difference to improve public interest, offset costs and deliver relevant services. These points should be included.