



Speech by

**Mark McArdle**

**MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA**

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## **SUNSHINE COAST GROWTH**

**Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—Lib) (1.07 a.m.): As is well known, the Sunshine Coast region has for many years been grappling with its growth on many levels, including economic. Yet in recent times there has been a concerted effort by the council to direct growth across the region to maintain the Sunshine Coast with a sustainable environment and provide employment opportunities in new industries to retain young people who are currently obtaining an education and leaving the region and to attract other young people to the area on a permanent basis.

The task the Sunshine Coast has set itself has not been established easily, and many years of history have had to be put aside. Where in the past rivalry has occurred, the knowledge that if we are to grow we must work as one has now taken hold. This can best be put down to many organisations and people, and I would like to detail some. In doing so, I name them as representing the whole of the Sunshine Coast population.

The councils themselves have provided leadership and direction by establishing SunROC under the leadership of Graeme Pearce. SunROC has undertaken a series of studies detailing critical questions and potential solutions, with yesterday seeing the launch of three of these studies. Mr Pearce has drawn together a body of very talented men and women whose experience has ably assisted this process. Business has also seen the need to look at itself and, importantly, at how it lobbies government at all levels.

Until recently there were a number of chambers of commerce throughout the coast which dealt expertly with the needs of their members in their locality. To their credit they saw the bigger picture, and within the last three to four weeks we have seen two regional bodies established, being the regional council, under the auspices of Commerce Queensland, and the Sunshine Coast Business Council. Both of these bodies will work with the individual chambers. From advice I have received, the bodies have diverse interests and goals but are uniform in original approach.

One of the bodies growing in influence is the Sunshine Coast Business Women's Network, chaired by Karen Neuendorf. Mrs Neuendorf holds a conviction that women have a greater role to play in the coast's development and has directed her drive and dedication to that end.

Two other people I would like to mention are Professor Paul Thomas, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Sunshine Coast, and Colin Graham, who heads the Innovation Centre based at the university. Both men believe in the Sunshine Coast and are committed to it. Of course, the work undertaken is a long way from completion and there remain many hurdles and challenges ahead.

As I have stated, the people I name should be seen as representing the spirit of the Sunshine Coast residents. Like many others in many areas of the country, they have enormous pride in where they live and it is this pride that will carry the issue through. I have no doubt that the Sunshine Coast is set for a great future and that will occur because the people who live there will make it happen.