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Introduction

Surfers Paradise is an internationally renowned tourist destination and home to more than 18,000 people.

Each Friday and Saturday night more than 30,000 people (on average) visit the Surfers Paradise entertainment precinct, with visitor numbers swelling to 50,000 during events such as New Year, Schoolies and the Gold Coast 600\(^1\).

As the city heart has changed over the years, maintaining the balance of activity across the precinct has become an ongoing challenge for the community, Council and other stakeholders.

The Surfers Paradise Vision project aims to develop a Council endorsed vision to take the precinct and the community forward in a more cohesive and celebrated way.

Looking ahead, while industry diversification has happened within and around Surfers Paradise, it is clear that tourism will remain important to the local economy. As the city heart of the Gold Coast, Surfers Paradise is a significant drawcard for visitors and tourists and so needs to remain competitive in a highly contested international market impacted by constant changes in the global economy.

First and foremost, tourism is a significant economic activity that relies on individuals making decisions about where they want to spend their time and hard earned income. Research is clear that people will go to places that offer the best experience – a place that is not only affordable, but a place where ‘memories are made and held forever’.

With many countries and cities increasingly turning to tourism to help overcome the negative impact of extreme shocks such as the Global Financial Crisis, this highly contested market has become even more competitive. The bar has been raised, so it is time to embrace future possibilities and regenerate Surfers Paradise.

The development of a shared vision is a vital step in ensuring that Surfers Paradise moves forward in a way that confirms its position as an international tourist destination in an increasingly competitive and ever changing market.

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\(^1\) Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing (2011) *Three month snapshot: Drink Safe Precinct trials*
How we engaged the community

Gold Coast City Council is committed to engaging with the community to help inform and shape decisions and actions.
To enable Council to obtain a range of ideas and views, the engagement strategy to develop a vision for Surfers Paradise encompassed:

- A review of other documentation (strategies, action plans, planning documents)
- The development of a draft vision to invite and provoke comment
- An online survey
- A public display and survey
- A 1800 number available 24 hours a day
- Targeted interviews, and
- A marketing and communications strategy which included a letterbox drop across the precinct.

Development of a draft vision

To help better position Surfers Paradise locally and globally, Gold Coast City Council sought the assistance of internationally renowned facilitator and futurist Sohail Inayatullah.

Among others, Sohail has worked with organisations and services including: the Australian Federal Police; the Istanbul Chamber of Industry; the World Congress of Health Professionals; Ernst and Young, Australia; Bluescope Corporation, Australia; Telstra Countrywide, Australia; Boeing, Australia; and Australia Bio-Security.

Local business leaders and stakeholders were invited to one of two workshops held in October 2010 to help build a draft vision to be disseminated for public comment.

A total of 45 key internal and external stakeholders attended the two workshops, which culminated in the draft Vision for Surfers Paradise, released for public comment on 31 January 2011.

A desktop review of all major reports, planning documents, strategies and action plans was also undertaken to inform the development of the draft vision document.

Online survey

To help Council understand the interests of the community, an online survey was developed and launched on 31 January 2011 on Gold Coast City Council’s ‘Have Your Say’ web page. The survey was broadly promoted and kept open for comment until midnight 25 March 2011.

Via the survey, members of the community were invited to provide feedback on the draft Vision for Surfers Paradise and to tell Council:

- what Surfers Paradise should look and feel like in 2040, and
- how Council, the community, visitors and business could work together to make this a reality.

A total of 268 people completed the survey, with a further 70 partially completing the survey. In filling out the survey, respondents were invited to answer a series of closed and open-ended questions. In addition to the feedback provided through the closed-ended questions, some 780
comments were also submitted through the open ended questions and the ‘other’ category provided at the end of each question.

**Public display and survey**

Two public display sessions were also held at the Beachfront markets on 9 and 11 March 2011.

Some 155 people (locals, workers, visitors and tourists) participated in the sessions, taking the time to complete a short 4 question survey and have their photo taken in our mobile photobooth.

These public display sessions were designed to:

- raise levels of awareness about the draft vision
- gain the views of visitors and tourists and other people less likely to complete an online survey
- test the findings of the broader online survey
- provide an opportunity for people to ask questions and generally share their opinions about what they liked about Surfers Paradise, what they would change and what would bring them back in the future, and
- be an enjoyable activity for participants.

**Interviews and research**

To enrich the information already gathered, a further 12 interviews were conducted with 17 business owners, groups and interested individuals committed to Surfers Paradise.

Interviewees were asked a series of questions designed to help triangulate the data gathered via the survey and the public display activity. Interviewers also used these interviews to gain deeper insights into some of the comments and ideas raised through the survey and public display activities.

**Information and communications strategy**

The consultation strategy was supported by an information and communications strategy, intended to raise awareness of the vision project and engage as many people as possible.

Activities included:

- A postcard drop across the precinct
- 1800 number
- Media releases and sound bites
- Business GC Newsletter
- Gold Coast Tourism Newsletter
- Council website we banner
- Message on Council’s ‘On Hold’ facility
- City News
- Information posted and promoted via Twitter and Facebook
- Information posted on websites and promoted by participants and stakeholders including the Surfers Paradise Surf Life Saving Club, Gold Coast Music Industry Association, Gold Coast Tourism, Surfers Paradise Alliance, Queensland Police Service and a number of others, and
- Council computer background.
Findings – Online Survey

Survey design

The online survey was designed to find out:

- The community’s thoughts on the draft vision document
- what people liked about Surfers Paradise
- what they disliked and what they would change
- the community’s shared vision for Surfers Paradise into the future, and
- what could happen to make the shared vision a reality.

Respondent profile

A total of 268 people completed the online survey, with a further 70 people partially completing the survey. More females (54 per cent) than males (44 per cent) completed the survey (n=267).

Of the 266 respondents who told us their age, 28 per cent were between 30-39 years. 26 per cent were 40-49 years, 22 per cent were 19-29 years, 19 per cent were 50-59 years and 12 per cent were 60-69 years. One respondent was between 70-79 years and one respondent identified as being 80+ (see figure 1).

Figure 1

Of the 267 people completing the full survey:

- 61 per cent (164) live on the Gold Coast
- 12 per cent (33) live in Surfers Paradise and
- 6 per cent (17) live elsewhere in Queensland
- 7 per cent work in Surfers Paradise (19)
- 4 per cent (12) work elsewhere on the Gold Coast, and
• 6 per cent (15) identified as local business owners.

A further two per cent (6) of survey respondents were visitors from interstate and 1 respondent was a visitor from overseas.

For those living on the Gold Coast (n.164), more than half (55 per cent) have lived there more than ten years, 17 per cent have lived there between 6-10 years, 23 per cent have lived there between 1-5 years and 6 per cent have lived there less than one year.

Respondents were also asked to identify their main reason for visiting Surfers Paradise. Of the 265 respondents answering this question, 19 per cent identified work as the main reason, 18 per cent said the beach, 18 per cent said entertainment, 14 per cent said eating, 8 per cent said a festival/event, 3 per cent said shopping, 3 per cent said drinking, 3 per cent said exercise and a further 14 per cent said other.

Analysis

What do people think about Surfers Paradise now

There were three questions in this section. Question 1 asked people what they liked most about Surfers Paradise now. Respondents were asked to choose their top three answers and an option for other was also provided.

Figure 2

As can be seen in figure 2, 231 (79 per cent) of respondents picked ‘the beach’ as the feature they liked most. ‘Shopping and restaurants’ was next with 138 (47 per cent) and ‘events and festivals’ received the next highest choice with 126 (43 per cent), although the rivers and waterways were close with 120 (41 per cent).
Thirty-three respondents chose to make comments via the ‘other’ option, with some respondents citing that they found the options in the survey too limiting. Other comments included:

- the surf club
- the people, the buzz – there’s always something going on
- the relaxed, fun atmosphere
- the dramatic contrast of the skyline against the ocean and mountains
- owning my own business (something I would not have been able to do in Sydney)
- the markets
- the boardwalk

Some struggled to identify what they liked most, with comments including:

- not a great deal to like at the moment
- to be honest I’ve lived here for 30 years and I do not like anything about Surfers Paradise
- nothing really ‘calls to me’ about Surfers unfortunately.
Question 2 asked respondents to identify what had helped to change Surfers Paradise the most. Respondents were asked to choose their top three answers.

**Figure 3**

![Bar chart showing the top three answers](image)

Respondents rated ‘public improvements’ more highly (83 per cent) than other choices presented, and ‘more residential development and people living locally’ and ‘more events and festivals’ were the next two most popular choices (42 and 38 per cent respectively). Increased business and retail was a close fourth with 36 per cent.

Through the ‘other’ option, respondents suggested that there had been both positive and negative changes.

- **Surfers has a significant amount of work to do in reinvigorating itself as a destination** - the foreshore is a great start.
- **the level of public drunkenness and anti-social behaviour**
- **too many night clubs**
- **Surfers has no services available for local people, it is very hard to get a simple sandwich or takeaway salad. There is nothing for locals**
Question 3 asked respondents to identify their concerns about Surfers Paradise. Respondents were asked to choose their top three answers.

Figure 4

What concerns you most about Surfers Paradise? Pick and tick your top three answers

Some 85 per cent (249) of respondents chose ‘safety and crime’, followed by ‘negative media and community perceptions’ (58 per cent) and ‘preservation of natural assets’ (42 per cent).

The ‘other’ category provided the following insights:

- **Cleanliness is a big issue, as is poor quality maintenance of public areas**
- **Noisy nightclubs with drunk and unruly patrons exiting in the early hours of the morning. Close the nightclubs as 3am so the streets are clear by the time others start using the beach**
- **Disrespect to residents from tourists seems to be encouraged as it is seen as a place to let loose**
- **The fun police forgetting that Surfers is a party town**
- **Construction of the never ending (and sometimes very ugly) high rise**
- **Lack of high quality and diverse restaurants and bars**
- **High commercial rents push up the cost of retail business, which makes it unattractive for shopping**
- **Better access for film production**
Too much concrete makes it hot and unpleasant
Ageing and dilapidated buildings and infrastructure
The night-time attractions are too targeted at a single demographic while dissuading other potential users
The economy is too narrowly focused on tourism. It needs to broaden to include a focus on the arts, food colleges and fashion

What is the vision of Surfers Paradise into the future
In question 4, Chairman of the Heart of the City Advisory, Barry Lee, shared his vision of Surfers Paradise to help prompt respondents to share their own vision. This question was open-ended to promote the broadest feedback possible.

A total of 258 people chose to answer this question via the online survey and all comments received were tagged, colour coded and then grouped together to identify themes.

In telling us about their vision, people also took the time to share more about the concerns they had raised earlier.

The major themes arising from the data are outlined briefly below, although a full analysis is provided elsewhere. The themes below are presented as ‘shared visions’ and ‘shared concerns’.

Shared visions
Generally, the shared vision of Surfers Paradise in the future is one where the city heart is transformed from being perceived as a ‘tacky’, ‘poorly maintained’, ‘sleazy precinct’ into a more sophisticated, vibrant and liveable city.

The Surfers Paradise of the future:
- Is friendly and people-centred
  - Welcoming and safe
  - Envied for its relaxed and chilled surf culture and history

- Celebrates and shows off its natural assets
  - The beach is the city’s most important asset
  - A place defined by the beach, the river, the city and the ocean
  - A place that’s all about people rather than buildings and cars
  - A globally renowned beach city where local cafes and restaurants look out over the beach and offer ocean views
  - Defined by great food, farmers markets and places where you can sit and have locally made fish and chips along the beach or river

- Is a celebration of the surf culture
  - A city known for its surf culture and relaxed atmosphere
  - Is defined by iconic markers, such as the Surf Life Saving Club
  - Is a place that integrates the ‘chilled vibe’ with ‘urban sophistication’

- Is about excellence
  - A city known for innovation in tourism – it is always ahead of the rest
  - A place defined by service excellence
  - Somewhere you want to keep coming back to year after year
• Public amenities are well designed and reflect the size of the tourism inflow

**Celebrates diversity and people**
• Recognised as a culturally diverse and vibrant place defined by festivals and events that help make Surfers an exciting and memorable experience
• A place where more families are out and about, visible and enjoying themselves
• A vibrant city full of people out and about joining in
• A place for and valued by locals, visitors and tourists alike
• A place where the entertainment reflects the diversity of ages, cultures and tastes

**Is all about proximity**
• A premier fun destination where everything is within walking/cycling distance or a short train or bus ride away
• Every bit of Surfers Paradise is accessible and has something to offer, so it’s not just about the entertainment precinct

**Is open all hours**
• A place that retains its dual identity as a family place by day and an entertainment precinct by night
• A city of excitement and an entertainment precinct defined by smaller clubs offering greater diversity and live music
• A place where the transition from day-time to night-time activities is respectful and seamless
• A shopping precinct defined by unique shops offering local products/services and shopping experiences
• A place of discovery, with alleyways and lanes providing cosy nooks and alternative spaces for activity

**Is connected**
• A place which is connected, so it’s easy to move from north to south and east to west across the precinct
• There is connection from the beach through to the hinterland
• Somewhere you can walk/travel around and feel connected to and a part of no matter what time of the day or night
• The streets connect to each other through design and streetscape
• The Oceanway is connected, offering ways to explore and connect to other places along the coastline
• The spaces between buildings are places in themselves where people want to be and interact

**Is a cultural hub**
• An arts and cultural hub, attractive to filmmakers, writers, artists and musicians
• Culturally vibrant with festivals used to help redefine and reshape events such as schoolies
• There are street exhibitions (like in Singapore) where you follow the trail of art through the streets
• The cultural hub is defined by a structure as iconic as the Opera House
• The ‘fringe’ culture is more visible and celebrated
**A sophisticated city**
- A place where colour helps define the buildings which are never drab and grey no matter what the weather
- Colour, light and shade also help define and enliven the spaces between buildings
- A city that 'is more than just common city life’
- Well known for being a highrise city that found ways and made the effort to become more sustainable
- Known for its amazing architecture and where the spaces around and between the buildings are vibrant places where people want to be
- Brightened with art, feature lighting and shade, which helps add a sense of discovery and wonder
- Keep small traders in the precinct – not just massive franchises – encourage and support small operators. Diversity and mix of businesses that is supported and sustainable
- The buildings give you a reason to look up and engage

**Is liveable and is a community**
- Clean and environmentally sustainable is a given
- A lot, lot greener, with more green spaces and streets lined with shady trees, green canopies
- Has a strong local character
- Free from congestion enabling roads to be reclaimed as public space
- Liveable and affordable and where locals are out and about enjoying themselves and helping to create a culture and vibe that others want to be a part of
- Has a transport system and a network of paths, roads, lanes and walkways that are all about people

**Is legible**
- Signage is a feature in itself and makes it easy to find ways to events and places
- Markers, signs and street furniture help define places and precincts

**Is healthy and active**
- There is beach equipment for hire (umbrellas, surf mats, surfboards, chairs) to cut down on sun exposure and ensure visitors have access to things they won’t/can’t have brought with them
- There is exercise equipment along the beach or foreshore
- Walkways and cycleways make it easy for people to get around and be active
- Healthy food is easily available and affordable from local businesses along the foreshore
- The active surf culture is celebrated
- The word missing in the vision is fitness – it needs to be there as so many people come to Surfers to walk, jog, ride, swim, surf etc

**Is open to opportunity**
- A great place to do business because the local business community is connected, works as a team and understands the unique local, national and global value of Surfers Paradise. No sector is left out of this business community, including nightclubs and adult entertainment venues
• Is renowned for having a local Council that welcomes and values locals, visitors, tourists and businesses alike and provides creative forums for resolving ongoing and emerging issues

**Shared concerns**

The beach is the city’s most important asset. This has gotten lost

*The major asset is the beach and beachfront*

*The beaches need to be left in a natural state*

*It’s about iconic beaches – we need to maximise the opportunity to interact with the beaches*

Residents, visitors and business owners perceive the streets as dirty

*The inner city needs to be cleaned*

*What we have now is a dirty place with drunks everywhere*

*Knock out Orchid Avenue and start again! It is dirty and horrible to look at*

Residents, visitors and businesses perceive and experience Surfers Paradise as unsafe

*I’d like to see Surfers safe … it’s not safe to take your family there after dark*

*It needs to be 100% safe for local residents to move about freely at any time*

The identity of Surfers Paradise has been overwhelmed and invaded by the ‘party precinct’ concept and the anti-social behaviour that goes with it

*at the moment I hardly take my babies into the heart of Surfers Paradise because of the crime and unruliness*

*Need to change the perception with locals and visitors alike that Surfers Paradise is not an ‘anything goes’ area*

*I would like to see Surfers Paradise as a party town (always has and always will be) that appeals to and caters for all ages, cultures and demographics without the excessive brain, soul and family destroying consumption of alcohol …*

*We at the coast need to develop a culture of our own, arts, sport, theatre, education, music and festivals*

The nightlife does not start at 10pm and end at 4am

*I go for a walk to the beach at 6am and have to put up with drunks yelling out, vomiting on the foreshore or asleep on the beach*

There are too many junk shops and commercial rates push small, unique businesses out. Franchises hold prime positions along the foreshore and do nothing to build a sense that you’re in Surfers Paradise

*While there are some very upmarket stores there are many tacky, cheap touristy shops*

*I’d like a city centre that has less cheap touristy shops*

Concrete is overwhelming the look and feel of Surfers and there is no shade, making walking around uncomfortable
We need a high quality public realm with tree lined streets – with real and mature shade trees

The eco statement appears too much of a stretch, Surfers is just a huge amount of built concrete

Best practice urban design and public infrastructure solutions need to be a requirement not a recommendation

The sense that Surfers Paradise is about people is getting lost

We need to put people first rather than architectural designs

There are too many eyesores

We need quality developments like Circle on Cavill

We need effective signage controls getting rid of tacky advertising

The space is being overwhelmed by roads and there are too many cars, making is seem less about people, the beach and fun and more about traffic

Limit the number of vehicles on Surfers Paradise Boulevard and the Esplanade, between View Street and Clifford Street. Make this area more pedestrian friendly

Visitors in public spaces (like Cavill Avenue) are fed constant reminders of adult entertainment – such as the ‘party plan’ hawkers and the Hooters Girls and the Meter Maids walking around during time designated as ‘family time’

I am a Gold Coast resident and usually avoid Surfers, particularly during the day as I feel it has become a bit trashy

Parking is a problem

Parking is difficult and a real deterrent to visitors

I like it the way it is but more parking would be better

The food is expensive and ordinary

I would love Surfers Paradise to be like it used to be, less commercialised with places you can sit on the beach and eat fish and chips

Who will the Surfers Paradise of the future be for

Question 5 asked respondents to imagine their ideal Surfers Paradise and who it would be for. The top three answers affirm Surfers Paradise as both a tourism hub and a place for everyone; tourists, visitors, residents and business alike:

- tourists and visitors (72 per cent)
- all people (57 per cent)
- Gold Coast residents (54 per cent)

‘Families’ was the next highest category with 49 per cent, while other comments indicated that Surfers Paradise should, at its core, be:

a truly diverse place where people respect each other and respect the location
A city heart that’s connected

In question 6, respondents were asked what would make them feel like Surfers Paradise was a community.

Figure 5

The top three answers were, ‘you can walk around anytime and feel safe’ (85 per cent), ‘locals and visitors interact in public spaces at cafes, markets and events’ (82 per cent) and ‘business, locals and visitors value the space by getting involved and keeping it clean’ (53 per cent).

Respondents also took the opportunity to offer other comments, which continued to highlight some differences in how people see Surfers Paradise. Comments included:

- Nothing, it’s not achievable
- It’s supposed to be an entertainment precinct according to town planning, so what does this question have to do with what Surfers is supposed to be
- Families, families, families
- Working together to reward and encourage extremely high standards in business, trade and education
- Art, live music
In question 7, respondents were asked to pick their top three choices regarding what would encourage them to come to Surfers Paradise.

**Figure 6**

What would encourage you to come to Surfers Paradise? Pick and tick your top three answers

While there were fairly sharp contrasts between answers chosen in previous questions, the difference between the answers chosen in question 7 were not as marked, possibly reflecting how heavily contested Surfers Paradise is as a shared space.

The most popular choice was unique shop, dining and entertainment with 57 per cent, followed by events and activities happening all the time with 48 per cent. However, the three following choices were tied with the beach and iconic skyline, more open spaces and parklands and easy access by public transport and more places to walk and cycle, at 42 per cent.

Respondents also took the opportunity to offer the following comments:

*The beach*

- A safe place to walk around after dark
- Less construction
- Lively atmosphere with cafes and music
- More shade and trees rather than a hot, ugly concrete jungle
- Better access for people with disability
- Being able to use the riverfront as well as the beach
A city heart with style

In question 8, respondents were asked what would make Surfers Paradise unique.

Figure 7

What would make Surfers Paradise unique? Pick and tick your top three answers

The three answers most commonly chosen by respondents were ‘the landscape and street design creates the sense that you are in Surfers Paradise’ (67 per cent), ‘cafes and bars connect and interact with the beach or street’ (66 per cent), and ‘providing exciting and usable interactive public spaces’ (36 per cent).

Respondents also offered the following comments:

- Film festivals - possibly beach cinema
- Good food, not what we have now
- Rooftop and beachfront restaurants - please, please, please catch up with the rest of the world. The beach is our most unique proposition and we do nothing to capitalise on it
- Being able to hire chairs and umbrellas on the beach
- Live music
- Quality events that showcase the Gold Coast to the world
- Connections to the waterways and the cultural precinct
- Close it to cars on a Sunday
In question 9 respondents were asked what could be done to create a unique sense of Surfers Paradise.

Figure 8

How can we create that unique sense of Surfers Paradise? Pick and tick your top three answers

Responses indicated a clear expectation that council will work with the community (including the business community) to implement the vision for Surfers Paradise (58 per cent) and that events and festivals will support the vision for Surfers Paradise (48 per cent). Data also suggests that creating a unique sense of Surfers Paradise also means encouraging locals to rediscover the place.

In providing other comments, respondents suggested:

- The beach must be kept in pristine condition
- Use the best designers to improve the streetscape
- Needs more green space, trees and other vegetation to soften the place and provide shade
- Position iconic sculptures throughout the area
- Provide more incentive for private investment, like in Southbank (Brisbane)
A city heart that celebrates

In question 10 respondents were asked to identify the kind of events Surfers Paradise should be known for.

**Figure 9**

**What kind of events should Surfers Paradise be known for? Pick and tick your top three answers**

Responses indicated a higher level of support for ‘live music, events and festivals’ (59 per cent), ‘street festivals’ (57 per cent) and ‘surfing’ (50 per cent), although this was closely followed by ‘arts and cultural festivals’ (48 per cent).

In providing other comments, respondents also suggested:

- *Beach festivals (thought that one was obvious)*
- *Live saving events*
- *Celebrations, but not like schoolies*
- *Food and wine events*
- *Events for locals and families – anything that helps build community spirit*
- *A Rio, Mardi Gras style street festival*
- *International sand sculpture competition*
- *A ‘reclaim the streets’ event every Sunday (say 7am – 2pm)*
- *All of the events included in the survey question*
With public drunkenness and aggression identified elsewhere as an ongoing concern for Surfers Paradise residents, business owners and visitors, question 11 asked respondents how to encourage safe drinking in an environment of entertainment and celebration.

**Figure 10**

**How can we encourage safe drinking and celebration? Pick and tick your top three answers**

The top three answers chosen were 'promote Surfers Paradise as a place to visit and celebrate rather than just drink' (66 per cent), 'business, government and community work together to create a safe, fun environment' (53 per cent) and 'encouraging a mix of night-time entertainment' (43 per cent). Respondents also offered the following views:

- Consider the reduction of licensed premises/reduce the number of nightclubs
- Stricter control on clubs, higher standards required
- Offer a better balance of entertainment options
- Manage the drinking venues responsibly
- Zero tolerance of public drunkenness
- Separate the club scene from families
- Get rid of the notion of Surfers Paradise as a place to come and binge drink
- Encourage smaller scale venues that are not massive drinking barns
- Provide other options, diversify the night-life, create other options
- More of a police presence
A city heart that thrives

Question 12 asked respondents what commercial activity they would like to see in Surfers Paradise.

Figure 11

![Bar chart showing the top three answers chosen by respondents.]

The top three answers chosen by respondents were ‘unique and distinctive retail outlets’ (56 per cent), ‘globally recognised restaurants’ (55 per cent) and ‘using the beach and the foreshore for commercial activity’ (53 per cent).

Respondents also offered the following insights:

- All of the above could and should be encouraged
- Put the surf club on the beachfront where it belongs
- Beach front dining, roof top dining, roof top cinemas
- Modern, high quality nightclubs and bars
- Beach entertainment, music, events and festivals
- A greater diversity and balance of retail, bars, tourist facilities and public spaces
- Regular markets
- Affordable rent so independent cafes can move in
- Pedicabs which transfer people from one end to the other
- No commercial activity on the beach
- A fish and chip shop on the ocean front
Respondents were then asked what would make them feel safe in Surfers Paradise.

Figure 12

What would make you feel safe in Surfers Paradise? Pick and tick your top three answers

Respondents chose the following as their top three answers – ‘visitors, residents and families out and about enjoying themselves’ (61 per cent), ‘crime prevention through design of public space and buildings’ (56 per cent) and ‘visible police and security presence’ (54 per cent). Forty-eight per cent also suggested that clean streets and public spaces would make them feel safer.

Respondents also offered the following suggestions:

- Much, much more lighting and illuminated art
- Changing the image of Surfers away from the night club capital of Queensland
- I generally feel safe, it would only be at night in the Orchid Avenue area that would be of concern
- Zero tolerance of drunken and unruly behaviour
- Better management of the transition hours between 8-10pm and 4-7am
A city heart that breathe

Question 14 posed the question, how can we make Surfers Paradise more environmentally sustainable.

Figure 13

How can we make Surfers Paradise more environmentally sustainable? Pick and tick your top three answers

Respondents chose the following as their top three answers – ‘incorporate renewable energy, smart water use and recycling into development’ (61 per cent), provide ‘greener streets and walkways’ (51 per cent), and ‘reduce traffic congestion’ (39 per cent).

Respondents also offered the following insights:

- All of the above
- Better bikeways
- Use the sun, and get reliable public transport
- Compulsory green star rated new development
- Keep the natural dune system to the north and south
- Remove vehicle access to the Esplanade (other than disability and service vehicle access)
- Improve pedestrian/cycle connection
- What a silly question after all the super high rise buildings have been put in
Question 15 asked how could the natural assets of Surfers Paradise be better used.

**Figure 14**

How could the natural assets of Surfers Paradise (e.g. beaches, waterways) be better used? Pick and tick your top three answers

![Bar chart showing responses to Question 15](image)

The most popular answer was 'pedestrians can get around using walkways, shaded streets and boardwalks' (70 per cent). This was followed by 'beaches and open spaces are places for recreation and physical activity' (59 per cent), and 'cycling routes are easily identifiable and connect to things to do and see' (41 per cent).

Respondents also added:

- All of the above needs to happen
- Utilise the Nerang River and River Cat style ferries to provide major transport links to Surfers from Sanctuary Cove in the north and Robina in the South
- Remove the cars from the Esplanade and widen the foreshore
- Keep the beaches replenished and clean
- Finish the Oceanway for the whole length of the coast
- Proper beach access for the length of the beach
- Better marketing to promote parklands etc and more accessible activities in these areas
Other ideas and feedback

Question 16 asked respondents to add any other comments they wished to be considered when developing the vision for Surfers Paradise. One hundred and twenty comments were received.

All responses were tagged, colour coded and collated to identify the following themes and issues:

**Move the Surfers Paradise identity on from the ‘party precinct’ image**

Get rid of the party precinct image

People need to come here to enjoy the place not just to get drunk, vomit on the footpaths and cause endless disruption and distress to residents and genuine tourists

It needs many and varied clubs and bars

I don’t think having things like schoolies is so great for our suburb, it’s like a couple of weeks of destruction and noise

**Make it about people**

Please consider developing the area from a local resident’s perspective first. If the city is a great place to live it will naturally be a great place to visit

Please give Surfers Paradise back to the locals and tourists. Turn it into the world class tourist destination it deserves to be. Put some colour in the streets – flowers, live bands etc

**It’s a beach city, with a holiday culture**

Surfers Paradise should continue to protect its iconic beach assets at all cost

Keep it clean, keep it safe and promote its own natural beauty – the beach

Surfers was never our first choice for a holiday destination, but we were pleasantly surprised with the beautiful white sandy beaches and the relaxed lifestyle.

I think Surfers needs to find a way to recapture the feeling of being a relaxed beach suburb with great dining and shopping surrounded by beautiful natural areas, which are preserved

Some of the buildings are a real eyesore though, which does make it a little ugly in some areas, and while the skyline is part of Surfers, the long shadows on the beach in the afternoon make it cold and gloomy. Therefore, when any development goes ahead, don’t lose sight of the glorious natural coastline that Surfers is built on

**Promote and enable local businesses**

More local businesses. The markets are great for showcasing locals and things like this should be encouraged

It should avoid the cheap tacky retail shops, bars and drinking holes that currently dominate the shopping precinct
Local businesses and Council should have a cooperative plan with a view to bringing back the locals

While tourism provides an economic base, the city can’t just be about tourists

Please listen to the community ... use our rates to create a great new vibrant city

Surfers Paradise needs to be re-established as the icon it once was

Surfers Paradise has gone backwards and has become an embarrassment, rather than the iconic place it once was

Surfers is just windswept, barren concrete streets at the moment. Frangipanis, gingers, palms, natives and magnolias would really enhance the streetscape

The public perception needs to be vastly improved

It’s about community safety, urban planning, better marketing, commercial opportunities and ownership and pride

To be honest, Surfers Paradise needs major re-branding
Findings – Interviews

Interview design
A set of interview questions were developed to test the data gained through the online survey and the public display activity. The interview questions were as follows:

- What do you value most about Surfers Paradise?
- What makes Surfers unique – what makes people want to come here?
- What, about Surfers Paradise, most concerns you?
- What could happen to address those concerns?
- What’s your vision for Surfers Paradise in the future?
- What would need to be included in the final vision for you to feel connected and committed to it?

Analysis
Interview feedback has been collated and themes identified as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you value most about Surfers Paradise?</th>
<th>Surfers is an iconic internationally recognised brand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The recognition/profile of the name ‘Surfers Paradise’ internationally</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Urban and beach lifestyle – don’t need a car to live and work in Surfers</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Unique cultural identity around the beach</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Iconic location – the beach</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Dramatically different from the rest of the Gold Coast</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Distinctively ‘the heart’ of the Gold Coast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sense of not being just any old city or just a precinct of shops</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Surf Life Saving Club has a central role in the history and culture of Surfers. It’s an icon and is where community and heart meets business.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surfers is a multicultural space and it’s about people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- We have people from everywhere in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- It’s the people that make you love it – not the buildings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The atmosphere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The excitement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- It’s dynamic – constantly changing and exciting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Energy and vibrancy – the atmosphere – the buzz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dynamic sense of street theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 20,000 people per night visit the entertainment precinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What makes Surfers unique – what makes people want to come here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It’s a mistake to compare ourselves to other places – we are what we are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The beach**

- It’s absolute beachfront
- Big, wide, sandy beach
- The beach
- Beaches, restaurants, theme parks, shops and parks – it’s the whole package really and this is going to increase with the opportunity the rapid transport is going to bring to link Surfers with Broadbeach etc
- The beach – prime asset and is magnetic. Beach – close physical and psychological connection with the beach (go

**It’s a place where things get done**

- The innovation and commitment to problem-solving. Solution drive by the licensees NOT the council or the police
- The opportunity
- Can be whatever you want to be – you can go out and create opportunities

**Tourism is part of our economic future**

- Tourism as a key economic driver + tourists bring colour and variety and then liven up the streets
- We have terrific hospitals and doctors due to the tourist demand e.g. 12 x hotels with 300 staff create taxes to fund public infrastructure – quality of local facilities is on the back of the tourist dollar
- The primary industry here is tourism and we can’t forget that. Backpackers are a big market and the Asian market is huge
- We pull huge numbers of tourists each week and have a dual image – family by day, entertainment by night
- There isn’t a clear Queensland is open for business message being given to tourists in general
- Tourists spend 3 times as much as residents – this was proven through some study done in Honolulu
- 10M people walk through Cavill Mall per year – Centro have this data
- Have hold on to tourism because of low cost airlines and travel – tourists are getting smarter and more selective and booking their own travel experiences

It’s for the young and the young at heart
- I liked the old slogan – always amazing, forever changing – it sums up what I value about it
| surfing in lunch break) | The weather  
- The weather is a pretty safe bet – offers a wide range of experiences for families and international visitors, including ‘weather safe’ options – like timezone, strike bowling etc  

It’s a great experience  
- Fun and positive attitude  
- It’s an experience – emotional experience is strong and has a connectivity for many people  
- Memory lane experience – lots of people’s memories are tied up with visiting Surfers Paradise  
- Surfers Paradise Festival was a great event that got local people involved  

It’s a great city bordered by a beautiful beach  
- The city on the beach with fresh air is unique in the world  
- Interface of urban and natural environments  
- Water to water – i.e. Broadwater to beach  
- Cheap accommodation  
- High rises – postcard image, skyline  
- Circle on Cavill is a good example of the vibe of Surfers Paradise  

The people  
- Different languages in the street – multicultural and diverse  
- The people, the characters, the friendly vibe  
- Always people around, diverse colourful characters  
- International students blend in well and are an asset  

There’s always something happening  
- City is a Chameleon – it changes colour every day from day to night  
- It’s two worlds as one – the difference between night and day is noticeable  
- The nightlife, there are 21 venues with 5am licences  
- Having a designated ‘entertainment precinct’ is almost unique  

| What, about Surfers Paradise, most concerns you? | It’s not keeping pace as an international tourist destination  
- Perceptions – it WAS the jewel in the crown but never ending construction is always disrupting everything  
- Competing with other business districts on the Gold Coast especially Broadbeach and, to some extent, the Burleigh area |
- Competition is fierce in Asia especially on service and our skills bank is very low for service needs – we don’t have enough high quality staff
- Competition – Bali and cheap Asian holidays are all low cost
- Accommodation – demands are changing. People don’t want to stay just in chain hotels any more – they want their own experiences
- It’s dirty, untidy and smelly, most of the time
- There is no respect or value of history when things are new they are allowed to get old with no upkeep or maintenance
- Regulate clean up times with heavy fines for the fast food outlets to have to clean up their own mess in the streets
- Obviously Council have spent money on new stuff/development and then not maintained or used it to engage people at all
- It’s always dirty and scruffy
- Lots of prime CBD properties are unleased for ages and ages and look bad/empty AND the turnover of retail is so quick we get cheap and nasty shops as rent fillers that offer rubbish, cheap food and never ending hawking
- The Transit Centre – is terrible – a terrible statement, ugly, no signage – if you arrive in Surfers on a bus from the airport then you’d think you’d arrived in an ugly, disgusting place
- The afternoon experience in Surfers is tawdry

**Management of the precinct could be improved**

- The Council and SPA relationship – how council manage the SPA suffers continually by different people having different agendas
- Lack of any shared vision to date – too many conflicting visions working against each other
- Venue owners are not valued in the wider business community – so they have developed their own community to work together with very little support or encouragement
- Toilets, not taking nightlife activities into consideration at all when planning – the whole place constantly smells like urine
- The high turnover of business doesn’t help – it’s an issue in terms of building community. You try to connect with them, to involve them, but they’re gone inside of 12 months

**Safety is a real issue, but the media doesn’t help**

- Media driven bad perceptions rather than any detail on real issues and what is actually being done to address things. There’s a lack of good stories in the local media about
what we already DO have

- Perception that party problems are worse than they are. Safety and security – the reality isn’t as bad as it seems but the politics are affecting investment and growth
- Media exaggerating the violence and alcohol issues. The perception is that people say ‘just don’t go’ when they really don’t know
- Night-time issues across the board and the media’s handling of issues giving an increasing perception that the streets are not safe
- Safety is an issue

Out of balance

- Has become a monoculture of 18-25 year old drunks
- Uncontrolled young people 18-25 drinking in the suburbs and then coming out every night, out of control monoculture
- Perception that rules don’t apply here and there is a HUGE mentality that after 10pm you can do whatever you like and it’s anarchic
- Australian girls do not come to Surfers Paradise
- 18-25 year old people are increasingly choosing not to go and will seek alternatives rather than go to Surfers
- Only support for activities is with the 18-25 year old demographic – URGENT need to attract more families, more 25-30+ market – residents + tourists and both new ones and returning ones, including residents from right across the Gold Coast

The night-time, day-time issues are growing

- We have a problem balancing the family place by day image with the entertainment precinct by night reality. Currently we’re being overwhelmed by the entertainment/party image. It starts early – before 10pm – and goes well into the morning – so the people who are up early and out for a run, or on patrol, or cleaning up, are inundated by people leaving nightclubs, puking on the beach, swimming while drunk – it’s a real problem
- We need to get the balance right – 5am closing time for nightclubs should be changed to 2 or 3am at the latest. Santiago is 2am closing. It just gives everyone a breather and lets the place clear before the 4:30 runner and surf patrol take over the place
- We’re competing with other cities – need to recognise this – not just on the coattails of Brisbane (the Valley) and Byron Bay. The big clubs and pubs compete with these and can’t lose sight of this – business from Brisbane has dropped by 30% since the Valley club scene opened up
- Lack of responsible service of alcohol
- The lockout is ridiculous and just puts everyone on the street at 3am – clubs should be able to open to 7am to enable people to leave over a number of hours. Feasibility study on 24 hour licencing

**Underutilisation of natural assets**
- Limited activity on the beach front
- River it totally underutilised
- The beach doesn’t get the afternoon sun – It’s a shady beach!!!

**Regulation and planning**
- Council regulations are prohibitive – the current framework is nothing but roadblocks to stifle ideas and opportunities for any form of urban renewal
- Planning laws around change for business use in new spaces e.g. buildings on the beach front, carparks
- Council should facilitate not regulate for development – planning provisions need to support ideas, not stifle them
- Amenity/works development by council have exemptions that have a negative impact on tourists and residents e.g. Council rubbish collection and noise

**We need more local businesses**
- McDonalds and Hungry Jacks occupy prime real estate, it’s stupid
- Retailers turn over every 12 months
- Shopping and dining are severely limited
- Stand touters/hawkers cheapen the city – give it that ‘city of shonk’ vibe
- Rents in the mall are very high at $40k per month – this is unsustainable and the people are hurting

**We need greater connectivity**
- The Oceanway walk terminating is an issue
- Lack of pedestrian links
- Lack of public transport – though rapid transit will help
- Not a strong sense of permanent residents
- Perception of no parking. Pedestrian and cycle links are not strong.

**We need better dining experiences**
- Cheap, crap food everywhere
- No council permissions for a food and wine event in the streets
- Limited dining experiences, especially with a beach view –
**It’s crazy**

**It’s a hodge podge, with no clear identity**
- Lack of connectivity – physical and between business types
- Hodge podge of business types e.g. strip clubs
- High end retail survival – how are they going to survive?
  - There is such a disconnect
- Live music has become segregated from the entertainment precinct – and is now in the burbs behind at Chevron Island with no protection like the entertainment precinct re noise and licensing issues

**Locals don’t want to come here**
- Locals avoid the area because parking is non-existent or expensive, the nightclub culture and the drinking issues, the hawkers are horrible, most building have property display centres in prime retail areas
- Not family oriented – I would never take my kids
- Locals don’t go – safety issues with violence and atmosphere where it’s very easy for people to get aggressive
- Locals don’t come to the precinct, parking’s too expensive/frustrating, safety perceptions, no reason to come here it’s dirty and grotty, they’re out of the habit

**Development and accommodation**
- The building/development/property/hotels are at capacity and there can be very little more development – it’s maxed out. That means no more construction jobs and new resident settlers which drive the local economy – the government is two years behind this as they haven’t clued on to this saturation point yet and the effects that will have on the fall of unit prices and ‘depressing’ the local economy – it will take another 18 months to 2 years to hit rock bottom and then start to climb out over the next 4 years and then repeat – this is a cycle we’ve seen again and again
- Limited further development opportunities – we have what we have, now
- Shared use hotels can be tricky, where there are residents and tourists with different needs and expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What could happen to address those concerns?</th>
<th>Strong leadership, collaboration and management</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong leadership is essential (currently useless) with business and tourism understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personalities work together to drive it – embrace the whole community and a respectful sharing and understanding everyone’s point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More need to support nightclubs as businesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Value all people including those doing the not so glamorous jobs

**Innovation and practical problems**
- Gold Coast City Council overall need to be much less restrictive with any new ideas
- GCC also needs to think about some of the day-to-day stuff. For instance, Council just built a toilet block and change room on the Foreshore with only two cubicles. What were they thinking ... we’re an international tourist destination!!

**Marketing, communication and re-branding**
- Increased advocacy with Council to actively shift perceptions – we are trying but need more support in the media
- Stop thinking that Surfers is just 2 blocks, and embrace the whole suburb
- Start with what we already have, who and what is here, giving them high standards (in service and opportunities) and the very best all the time. Need to change the mindset of existing people.
- Can’t rely on the beach along to attract young women (boys go where the girls are). Need to offer safe alternatives to attract young women, e.g. events, good shops and safe, high quality clubs
- Be active not passive in marketing
- Market competitively against other cities
- Need reliable statistics that inform the media and everyone about the real picture – not just police stats either – and inform visitors and residents regularly
- The time for change is now, it feels right. There’s a bit of a resurgence – we’re still seeing tourist numbers but have to act now to ensure they stay high and that people come back. There’s also lots happening that we need to capitalise on (Gold Coast United, new stadium built etc)

**Make it easy to be here**
- We need to give people a reason to come back. We need to give people the confidence to come back. Families don’t come here. People don’t want to bring their kids – I don’t bring mine
- Everything we do needs to make it easier for people to be here
- Communication to residents and tourists to be much more effective – e.g. when stuff is happening. Gradually change their perspective and understanding and gain buy-in to the bigger picture of what Surfers is
- Culture shift for locals to understand where they live and the benefits of change

**Maintenance**
- Put a covenant on forcing building owners to upkeep their buildings
- Traders forced to clean up the streets themselves between midnight and 4am – there is some weird bureaucracy that SPA cleans the streets to midnight and Council from 4am – in between it turns into a tip
- Maintain all amenities to a high standard
- Integrate the old with the new better
- Budget for maintenance and use what is already there

**Better resolution of ongoing issues – need more creative thinking and goodwill**
- Deeper understanding by all stakeholder about what’s triggering alcohol-related violence
- Maintain the safe drink precinct
- Overall, the SPA and Council valuing the patrons as people first and not some sort of scourge
- More diversity in the club patrons at night – they need a reason to be there though
- More public toilets to help keep the place clean

**More vibrant city**
- Incentives for developing beach front businesses
- River activity generation e.g. cafes and restaurants
- Commercial activity on the beach
- Commercial activity on the beach (lift the restrictions) e.g. towels, cabanas, umbrellas, chairs for hire – the reality is that most people fly and NEED these things to have a good holiday experience on the beach
- Broader mix of quality licensed venues + better management of the transition hours i.e. 8-10pm and 4-7am
- Diversity of mix or retail and dining experiences, especially dining, with ocean views
- Maximise the brunch dining experience – it should be peak time in the Surfers Paradise district
- Restrict franchises in the shops/fast food and bring in more owner operators
- Support the streetscape lighting proposal currently lodged with GCCC
- Get rid of the meter maids they are crass and distasteful
Live music
- Make Chevron Island a live music precinct
- Support more free live music that isn't purely even-based e.g. multicultural styles of music in various genres in public spaces
- Making GCCC processes smoother for live music as an attraction in family hours of 4-10pm

Connectivity
- Celebrate the water to water connection
- Improve and embrace pedestrian access to Cavill Avenue – especially the river end
- East West connections through boulevards
- Pedestrian bridges as per the plan from 15 years ago. Pedestrian scramble crossing at main intersections
- Completion of the Oceanway walkway – linking transport infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists
- Need to celebrate the history and the surf culture of Surfers – you’d think we didn’t have any. People need to be able to walk around and see and feel the history of the place. People need to connect to the place and each other
- Critical that people adopt rapid transit options – worried though that the rapid is actually a slow boat monorail from hell

Parking
- Decent parking signage about the transit centre parking – like other cities do
- Good signage about the Transit centre parking options
- Free parking in the transit centre
- Free parking for Surf Life Savers
- Residents/locals could get free parking for up to 3 hours
- The rules need to be more flexible. Parking is an issue – but only because it doesn’t recognise the different needs
- Car parking – GCCC must step away from current council car parking rate and culture in development – total disincentive for any form of renewal of old buildings in particular
- Pragmatic approach to parking – don’t just assume that people will stop driving, but remember age, distance, habits and don’t be unrealistic

Challenges for the labour market
- Realisation that 40% of the local workforce has been in construction and this is likely to change given the saturation point
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What’s your vision for Surfers Paradise in the future?</th>
<th>We need to live up to the promise of a surfers paradise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Increase the level of government employment to 20-30% of workforce (currently only about 15%) – accepting that full employment will only last another 2 years and then there’s going to be 8 years of high unemployment trouble</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Better management of safety and anti-social behaviour issues</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People need to feel safe and positive – now and tomorrow, not by 2014 or 2040 or whatever</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Trial of more police in the precinct is definitely happening</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Expectations of the users re: safety during the day – mentioned the ‘eyes on’ campaign here with 70 cameras watching for safety 24/7 but no one knows about them ... this is a trial campaign but potentially could be adopted for the longer term</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Adopting the Valley Liquor Accord for the precinct from 10pm to 4am – with new roles – the powers simply must change as its not sustainable as it is</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Continue funding for adequate policing – i.e. extend the current trial permanently</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Look at what has been done in Ipswich by the Liquor Industry Action Group – they have a strategy to reduce alcohol related violence/crime and it’s working</td>
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</table>

**A united community working toward the same vision**

• A bipartisan across the board vision that’s accepted and has skills/capacity building elements at all levels – council, community, business etc so that we all get great at making the vision work and not just bring outsiders in all the time

• United front on the media

• Encouragement of the vision in practice through support of logistics, planning and permissions to get on with it

• Investment of government into tourism advertising to keep visitors coming
### Renewal and regeneration

- Urban renewal – commercial activity framing green spaces, incentivising developments, interface for ‘eyes on’ activity – things to do around empty space
- Need to create that sense of being in it – everyone is a part of it and connected to each other and the place
- Public seating in the precinct that is face to face, not just the sides of garden beds made of granite
- Something – public art) placed on the Esplanade that acts as a real experience for tourists and residents – e.g. the rising sun memorial – Japanese tourists go there and get their photo taken with it at dawn … but it’s ugly, so something much better
- Public art that honours history and is respectful (not kitsch) e.g. surf lifesaving inspired and that the foreshore is the space for this
- **Wow factor**
- Complete reinvention and reinvigoration of the city
- Spaceage and far more funky, effervescent, bringing technology in with experience and creativity e.g. lights and experiential stuff
- Signage – highly visual, colourful and interactive (i.e. apps that engage with people by where and how they are using Surfers)
- Friendly, but tech savvy
- No old buildings and no neon signs

### Weave a deeper cultural fabric

- Green heart with a cultural dimension
- Deeper cultural fabric than just gimmicks and restaurants
- Feel more cultural and a vibe like nowhere else
- Old and new cultures together – building events and entertainment
- Cultural, outdoor, civic space that embraces: art and culture; green space; coffee shops
- Embrace the history of the surf culture, surf lifesaving, surf lifestyle and values – start a surfing and surf lifesaving museum
- Streetscape entertainment – more buskers that have humour – street theatre with a message
- Art and culture are important and will become more important – a contemporary art and culture hub that is a physical space (e.g. the Malthouse in Melbourne, the Powerhouse in Brisbane) that is not just tokenistic and tacky
- Culture (not theatre) that connects the art centre to Surfers Paradise (it just sits there on its own) – the art
centre needs to be attached to Surfers Paradise in a meaningful way

- A cultural hub that supports the other events on the Gold Coast e.g. the after party for the Gold Coast Marathon

**A spectacle**

- An ‘event feel’ all the time e.g. spectacle, fountains, lights a show – but this must be maintained, we have the skills to do this
- Evolution of schoolies into the world’s biggest youth event. Acknowledge the fear, grief and uncertainty of school leavers and given them an inspirational festival event that values and celebrates young people in an inspiring environment – engaging them through meaningful activities – create something they have ownership over
- Events on the best, that have activity where people can see and feel it – less about quantity - high quality events with high quality food
- National events and awards events to be held locally e.g. movie awards, music awards, fashion shows
- Events – that bring in locals and are good quality and impress the international five star hotel guests
- Matching Melbourne’s lead in events/festivals tourism
- Activated laneways and arcades
- More permanent public celebration on a nightly basis e.g. a performance/experiential/lighting show/event that happens regularly ‘vegas style’
- Events that bring CHILDREN to Surfers – diversity of ages, styles, cultures that have a high level of community participation (e.g. Kite Festival at Coolum)
- More events-based activity e.g. ‘chefs of Surfers in the streets having a cook-off and also SPA have an existing 3 tiered even support strategy –
- International events want to be held here
- Celebration – connection with each other – noted this doesn’t always have to be intense entertainment to be effective

**Great nightlife**

- Recognition of ‘after dark tourism’ – not just pub crawls, but where is it? Apps for phones, tips, multi-media engagement about the diversity of nightlife
- It’s vital to have good restaurants, taxis, hotel accommodation and shops to entice tourists with high expectations
- Shops – we need lots of new shops that actively engage people from 4-10pm (this is the first shift of tourists) and then from 10pm-4am (the second shift of tourists) in the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>entertainment precinct</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• More markets e.g. farmers markets, ‘Finders Keepers’ style markets</td>
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<tr>
<td>• More café, delis and small business with the support to keep them thriving</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Entertainment precinct maintained – this is very clear for tourists however, need to encourage to move beyond this north to south (e.g. do the walk) and east to west especially</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Not big nightclubs, but smaller boutique clubs that trade day and night and are about 200 person capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Zoned widely as an entertainment precinct to protect the experience – ensure everyone is clear on what this means and what to expect re noise, road closures during events etc</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<td>• Physical beach to river connections</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connections that link green/park spaces together</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connectivity between Broadbeach and the broadwater and Mainbeach to Surfers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Waterways – alternative modes of transport e.g. ferries and terminals – Boardwalks e.g. riverwalk in Brisbane – green bridges to link and make convenient walkways</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Continue to open up 100% of the Esplanade between Main and Broadbeach</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Maximise the rapid transit precincts – this will widen the focus away from the entertainment precinct</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Green, clean and sustainable</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Streets lined with shady trees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parks! Greenspace! Vital that these are activated during the days and embrace the riverfront too</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Event friendly parks as part of the creation/design/planning e.g. clean, power, water, accessible – a blueprint for making them used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clean and green (shade) vibe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• World class environmentally sustainable city</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 5-7am is Clean Up Time, Mandatory and enforceable that high quality cleaning takes place every day – with this volume of people this required more intense effort and regular cleaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Activate the beach</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Beach – possible width of beach to increase public space.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The beachfront is the biggest shop we’ve got ‘let’s use it’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commercial activity on the beach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Commercial activity on the beach – but be careful what is allowed, planned correctly and be generally events-related
- Beach concerts are a really important point of difference for Surfers Paradise – they have huge potential and give a cultural linkage to the district
- Beach concerts – free enjoyment to thousands that celebrate the beach culture
- Activity on the actual beach – a beach experience like no other. A holiday experience in a capital city
- Exercise stuff on the beach in Surfers – apparently this is elsewhere on the coast but not in Surfers and it’s ridiculous
- Manmade surf beach/break – so there is actually waves to surf in Surfers Paradise

**Marketing**

- Ambassadors for the city (not famous people) that are local people and workers that genuinely LOVE the city and will help everyone who comes to have a good experience
- Have Ambassadors for Surfers Paradise in the future that are cool, beautiful people known by international audiences e.g. people, businesses, products and brands – not just celebrities
- Miami with celebrities and sporting people being seen here

**Diversity and quality of businesses**

- Keep small traders in the precinct – not just massive franchises – encourage and support small operators
- Diversity and mix of businesses that is supported and sustainable

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would need to be included in the final vision for you to feel connected and committed to it?</th>
<th>The vision needs to be about Surfers Paradise and what we want to be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- We will never be Melbourne by the beach and why would we want to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Paradise Place needs to be part of the solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The Surf Club needs to be incorporated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Lighting needs to be in the vision – it adds to the perception of safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Make local people proud of the city</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Needs buy-in from stakeholders**

- The document is important to re-establish the relevance of Surfers Paradise before change can happen
- Make it personal
- Needs buy-in from traders and business to make it stick
- There needs to be the political will and interest to make
The vision needs to be a shared one which will achieve real outcomes

- Sharing of a common vision
- Commonality of purpose, including patrons and tourists
- Common agreement across the board on the end vision
- There can be no tension between pubs/clubs and other traders in the vision – it needs to be holistic in approach
- Don’t strive for mediocrity – strive for excellence
- No motherhood statements
- Not watered down
- The document needs to not all be about words and fluff but have clear outcomes
- Clear precinct maps in the final document – that picture the future
- Clear timelines included – what, how and when in 2, 4 and 10 years time
- Sample itineraries, e.g. a day in the life of SP and not just for young people – a but a look, feel, ideas, real people – but a look, feel, ideas, real people telling why SP is for you
- Cut the bureaucracy – sign off at the highest level to impose a regulatory body to get laws changed that can enact that vision. Without this nothing will change

The final document needs to reflect the cultural diversity

- Structure that allows inclusion of all
- Draft document looks laughable – get rid of the anglo appearance
- Words and pictures that match the audience and create public awareness of environments and understanding of ‘clean and green’
- Something for everybody

Getting the message out

- Communicate the message through people – not marketing collateral

Needs to be about people

- Not just bricks and mortar but a real sense of people connecting with each other in a genuine way

Needs to be about the future

- It’s about 2040 and not now. It feels very 2012 and not 2040 – more forward thinking and less motherhood statements would change that
- Document is currently very 2012-2014 and needs to aim high to get to 2040 – Council needs to work harder with the community (residents and businesses) to inform and communicate the vision effectively – this needs to be through Early Intervention and Proactive to build the vision

- Don't lose the 2012-2014 stuff. It's important – perhaps separate this in to a let's fix t now document – what is essential – foundations to get right, not visionary stuff – maintain safety as mandatory (e.g. current drink safe precinct legislation becoming permanent
Findings – Public Display

Design

The public display was designed to be gain input from the day-to-day users of the Surfers Paradise space. The beachfront markets were identified as an existing activity that may provide access to this group which included residents, locals, intrastate, interstate and international tourists and visitors.

The activity was held on two separate days and involved inviting visitors to the market to participate in a short four question survey. In return participants were given the opportunity to take their photo in a mobile photobooth. Participants kept the photos as a momento.

The survey questions were design to complement both the online survey and the interview questions.

Analysis

Over the two sessions 155 people participated and shared their thought through a short survey as part of the public display. They told us:

1. What brought them to Surfers Paradise
2. What they liked most about Surfers Paradise
3. What they would change if they could, and
4. What would bring them back in the future.

Their responses are included below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What brings you to Surfers Paradise today?</th>
<th>In identifying this:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three people identified as being market stallholders or workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twelve people identified as living in Surfers Paradise or locally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thirty-nine people identified as being on holidays or visiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eight people identified as being on holidays, but specifically out to see the markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four people were on their honeymoon or celebrating their anniversary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fifteen people identified as being on holidays from interstate: Adelaide, Launceston, Tasmania, Melbourne, Canberra and Perth, although the majority were from Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three people were from intrastate destinations: Roma, Townsville and Ipswich, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nine people were international visitors from: England, New Zealand, Japan, Germany, Chicago, Mexico and Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other reasons included: scuba diving; hen’s weekend; eighteenth birthday; footy; here for a rugby league tournament; to pick up a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
camera, pick up from eBay.

A further three people were either here for work, or looking for work, while three others identified themselves as being here for business.

Others stated they were in Surfers Paradise for:

- The sun
- The beach
- Beach. People. Friends
- Q1 tower
- Beachfront atmosphere
- Beautiful views. There’s nothing else happening at the Gold Coast – only at Surfers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you like most about Surfers Paradise?</th>
<th><strong>It's unique and different</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three people stated that they like Surfers because it is unique and different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's the most important city on the East Coast. The name Surfers Paradise is the Australian Miami</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better than the Sunshine Coast. Good to get away. Couldn't live here all the time, but good to visit. Looks good.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different to the country. A break a getaway. Like being up high for the view</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The atmosphere**

Ten people stated they liked the atmosphere

- The energy, the atmosphere. It’s alive, buzzy, people around

**The lifestyle**

Fifteen people stated that they liked the laidback, friendly lifestyle

- Friendly, welcoming, nice, alive, never boring, down to earth.
- The casual lifestyle, don't have to dress up to walk around – relaxing.
- The laidback lifestyle
- Friendly people
- The beach, relaxed lifestyle
| The weather | Fifteen people stated that they liked the weather  
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             | *Best climate in the world. Best place in the world. Beautiful place. Comfortable city*  
|             | *Weather, nice people, good beach*  
| The markets | Seven people stated that they liked the markets  
|             | *Friday night markets*  
| The nightlife | Two people stated that they liked the nightlife  
|             | *Coast. Parties*  
|             | *After hours nightlife – though don’t like the violence*  
| The beach | Forty people stated that they liked the beach  
|             | *Warmth, beaches, atmosphere. Just beautiful*  
|             | *Beach – everything*  
|             | *The beach. The sun*  
|             | *Beach, shopping, family oriented*  
|             | *Childhood memories, the beach, restaurants*  
| The theme parks | Twelve people stated that they liked the theme parks and attractions  
|             | *Theme parks. Everything. Family atmosphere*  
|             | *Theme parks, beach, good pizza*  
| The shopping | Six people stated that they liked the shopping experience  
|             | *Shopping, clothes, got everything you need*  
|             | *Like the shopping. Relaxed. Family visit*  
| Everything |  
|             |  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ten people stated that they liked everything</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Everything, beautiful art pieces.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Buildings</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Just loving it – a bit of everything for everyone</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The games. The perving. The scenery</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The beach, the people, family atmosphere, markets</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Beaches, building, boardwalk, people, lighting – blue lights</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Diversity. Culture, people. Like the changes. Cleanliness.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twelve people stated that they like the fact that everything is in one place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Everything is close – restaurants – beach</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The beach, the water, sand.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Everything is close together, shops, restaurants</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The variety of things to do in a small area – it is central</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>You can walk everywhere, public transport, late night shopping hours and it’s clean</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always something to do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seven people stated that they liked the activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>So much to do</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The kids like it here – they are happy.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>All about swims, walks, good weather, pools, resort</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Always things to do with kids. Nice shops. Dreamworld The beach, the rainforest, the Broadwater – boating, jet-skiing. New beachfront. Surf Club</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>While others liked:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Good transport</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Surf Club – has excellent meals</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Esplanade is beautiful. Space.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What would you change if you could?

**Places to sit and walk.**

**City opposite the beach. Theme parks. Ice creams**

**Nothing**

Thirty-four people stated that would change nothing

*Nothing – I love it – though sightseers take the sand off the beach*

*Nothing, it’s great*

**Markets**

Five people stated that they would change the organisation of the markets

- Stall holders need to supply their own power on top of the rates they pay.
- More food stalls at the markets
- The market is too sterile – need more recycled goods and a more interesting array of goods. Markets 7 nights a week, not just two.

**Safer and more family friendly**

Seven people stated that they would like to see a safer and more family friendly side to Surfers

*Needs to be more family friendly with the ‘adult stuff’ out of sight of minors*

*Would change the drunken violence. First night of being here there were 8 fights in 1 hour*

**Nightclubs**

Eight people stated that they would change the nightclubs

*Tone down the nightclubs – too many drunks turning up at the markets*

*Less loud drunk people from the nightclubs*

*It’s trashy with the nightclubs – it’s like Kings Cross in Sydney*

*The nightclubs are out-dated and overdone – especially if you are walking around with your family. It needs to be cleaned up. All the nightclubs are concentrated in one place and that gives the place a bad name*

*Keeping the clubs laid back – need a*
laid back vibe at clubs

Party people
Three people stated they would change the party stands

Party people bothering you all the time, asking you to party
The party stands – marketing of clubs is everywhere

Parking
Six people stated that they would make parking easier

There's no parking. Parking issues
Parking is difficult

Cavill Avenue
Nine people said they would change Cavill Avenue

Cavill Mall needs a shot of sophistication – there’s nothing to go there for. Needs quality restaurants.
Upgrade cavil Mall – the pine trees need to go. Need a footpath and a canopy – shade all year round
Tacky looking in places, like Cavill Avenue and Orchid Avenue
Cavill Mall – needs redevelopment

Highrises
Five people said they would change the highrises

Not a fan of highrise – they’re a bit gloomy, especially when the weather is not good
Not a fan of highrises, but understand why they are here. Need to look more natural, not large highrises

More culture and entertainment
Four people said they would add a bit more culture

A better music scene
There’s no history in the buildings, no tradition or culture – feels modern but temporary
Museums – where’s the local culture ...
Cleaner
Five people said they would make it cleaner

Cleanliness - has to be a higher standard upheld. Expectations are high – so need to meet them.

It’s dirty and we need the cleaners to clean the footpaths – overall cleanliness is an issue

Orchid Ave needs a good clean.

Cleanliness – the toilets on the beach/boulevard are disgusting and should not be unisex

Signage
Three international visitors said signage was an issue

Pedestrian rules are unclear – better signage – almost got hit by cars

Not sure when some things are open. Need to make it clear

Need more directions for people

Shade and green space
Ten people stated that they would like more green areas and shade

The Esplanade needs grass and shade.

More trees/shade

The cost
Ten people stated that the cost of food, accommodation was too high

Meals need to be cheaper.

It’s too expensive

Rents are too high, need cheaper accommodation. Need to be more competitive on holiday prices to bring in more tourists

Longer opening hours
Four people stated that they expected everything would be open longer
Opening hours. Everything was shut at 12pm – I was looking for 24/7
Longer trading hours

Connectivity
Nine people stated that they would change connectivity and transport

Make the boardwalk link up along the foreshore.
Would like a bike track along the beach
Would change the buses and taxis – rude service
Bus services don’t go where you need them to go. They go out along the highway!
Transport – Saturday transport out is expensive – can’t get a day pass

Use the river and have cafes near the beach
Five people stated that they would change the ways things are used

More stuff to do on the riverside. The river’s good – just need more things to do on that side
Would be nice to have coffee shops near the beach – or on the beach

More sophisticated
Five people said they would make it more sophisticated

Tackiness
Don’t like it, usually steer clear of it. Broadbeach is much better, not as tacky, more sophisticated.
It’s looking tired. A lot of things don’t work properly e.g. escalators in public places.

Construction
Six people said they would change the level of construction

All the construction
Always building going on – nothing is
What would bring you back in the future?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In thinking about the future:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twenty-two people said that having another holiday would bring them back in the future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nineteen people said the beach would bring them back in to the future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixteen people stated that the people, the atmosphere and the holiday feel would bring them back in the future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine people stated that more family oriented activities would bring them back in the future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine people stated that the theme parks would bring them back in the future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight people stated that the promise of good weather would bring them back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four people stated that surfing would bring them back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three people stated that better clubs and a better live music scene would bring them back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People also stated that they would come back in the future for:

- More casual open restaurants that open onto the beach
- More public spaces that bring people along – make it right in the middle of town
- Continue to develop the foreshore – like the Strand in Townsville. Like Burleigh Heads, they have exercise machines
- More colour (nicer colours) on the buildings during the day or night
- More changes to having lighting designed around the beach and the boulevard
- A lagoon near the ocean (like at Southbank) – the beach has stingrays, sharks and stingers
- More parklands for kids to play
| | The Surf Club need to be down here participation in the markets  
| | Act more worldly and big cityish – need to celebrate different cultures and festivals etc  
| | More shows at the concert centre  
| | Daytime music activities  
| | Live music on Friday 6-9pm would help to attract the crowds to the markets  
| | Museum and art  
| | Going back to the olden days – like the photo (the old photo of surf life savers). Good old fashioned fun and something to do  
| | A flying fox from the sky tower to the park  
| | A train – monorail – something to make it easier to get around. Balconies covered for safety  
| | More catering for the people that live here, because it’s more for tourists  
| | Cleanliness is upheld  
| | I come back every day. It’s in my heart  
| | Great memories and experiences e.g. trying to surf  
| | Wouldn’t come back  
| | Sporting facilities and events  
| | Regular farmers markets with good set up and a wide range of produce, fresh veg, flowers, deli AND live entertainment in public places that are inviting e.i. string quartets, jazz trios etc  
| | Pretty much Q1  
| | Good priced holidays, airfares and accommodation  
| | Friendly people. |
# Attachment 1 - Stakeholder Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angela Driscoll</td>
<td>Gold Coast Youth Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Falk</td>
<td>Director, Urban Planning Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Forsyth</td>
<td>Senior Town Planner, Urban Planning Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barry Lee</td>
<td>DBI Architecture and Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair of the Heart of the City Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Cross</td>
<td>DBI Architecture and Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lino Girardi</td>
<td>Cocktails and Dreams Nightclub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Christmas</td>
<td>Max Christmas Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Ceh</td>
<td>Gold Coast Music Industry Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Younger</td>
<td>Surfers Paradise Alliance (Chair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Winlow</td>
<td>Acting CEO, Surfers Paradise Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miranda Grace</td>
<td>Sponsorship Manager, Surfers Paradise Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Cox</td>
<td>Manager, Gold Coast Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindsay Wallace</td>
<td>Director, Marketing and Corporate Relations, Gold Coast Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiana Higginson</td>
<td>Director, Australian Domestic Tourists, Gold Coast Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny Jones</td>
<td>President, Surfers Paradise Surf Life Saving Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham Long</td>
<td>Vice President, Surfers Paradise Surf Life Saving Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shane O'Connor OAM</td>
<td>President (Business), Surfers Paradise Surf Life Saving Club</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>