



maroochy

2025

...a visioning journey



**Maroochy 2025**  
Community Visioning

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Community Visioning**

**May 2005**

# Executive Summary

Like much of the southeast coast of Queensland, the Sunshine Coast is undergoing massive population growth and equally rapid development. **Maroochy Shire** is in the heart of the Sunshine Coast. Long aware of the impacts of the 'sea change' phenomena on the region, Maroochy's Council and communities have been thinking and planning for a sustainable future. **Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning** project is this beautiful 'Bush and Beach' region's response to the challenges of sustainability.

Through **Maroochy 2025**, the local communities and their leaders are taking the opportunity to make sound, solid decisions. Their decisions will affect the fabric of life for all who call this region home now and 20 years into the future.

In 2002, **Maroochy Shire Council** – one of the leading stakeholders in the project - began pioneering **Maroochy 2025**, a *community visioning* and *action-planning* project.

**Maroochy 2025** is a wonderful story of people taking charge of their destiny.

**Maroochy 2025** is a way for Maroochy communities to develop their own visions and action plans for the Shire's future. Each part of the visioning project was conducted by, and through, its communities – a process that quite naturally increases the community's capacity to participate in planning decisions.

Through this process of community participation, others were able to learn from the project and learn from contemporary methods of community visioning used. In particular, the project helped infuse greater awareness of many elements of *Futures Studies*.

The current publication aims to document and broadly communicate the process, the philosophy, the visions and the actions – all integral components of **Maroochy 2025**.

# Forewords

## Cr Joe Natoli - Maroochy Mayor



*On behalf of Maroochy Shire, as Mayor, I would like to thank the thousands of people across our diverse communities who helped create our Community Vision.*

*I want to recognise the fantastic work of Francis Howes and the other members of the Community Task Force who have volunteered their time to do this important work. Between September 2003 and November 2004, the Community Task Force met for three hours nearly every fortnight. Their work doesn't finish with the Vision. They will continue to oversee the development of the Action Plans, and will leave a lasting legacy for future generations.*

*I will continue to support the tremendous work currently undertaken through the Maroochy 2025 visioning process. The Vision prepared by the Community Task Force on behalf of the community is being incorporated in Council's next Corporate Plan and in its future Planning Scheme reviews. Towards this, Council has made a strong commitment to fund the Community Vision Action Plan in the 2004/05 Budget. The actions of Council will now truly reflect the desires of our community for the next two decades.*

*It's important that everyone understands that this is a community-based project and not a political exercise. This Vision belongs to the community and will be much broader than just Council's responsibilities. I encourage you all to get involved in making it a reality and let's work together for the future of Maroochy Shire, and create a place in which we are all proud to live.*

*Thank you for your commitment to the future of Maroochy Shire.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Natoli". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'J'.

# Ms Francis Howes - Maroochy 2025 Community Task Force Chair



*On behalf of the members of the Maroochy 2025 Visioning Project Community Task Force, I wish to express my thanks to the community and Maroochy Shire Council for the privilege of being involved in such a ground-breaking activity. It certainly places Maroochy Shire at the forefront of the emerging global trend whereby communities choose to participate in creating their own future, rather than being passive recipients of change.*

*The 32 volunteer members of the Task Force were selected on the basis of being representative of the community demographic in age, gender, and geographic location. We came together as a group of people who didn't know one another but had a shared passion for the future of this exciting and beautiful region. We wanted to contribute to creating a vision but were also very conscious of our responsibility to display integrity in truly representing the many views expressed by community members through workshops, interviews, surveys, websites, school activities and the exciting Visioning Summit.*

*What has evolved to be presented in this document is a dynamic statement from a community that knows where it wants to go. The shared vision is about building a stronger, more self-reliant community, fully committed to its preferred future and willing to partner with other stakeholders in actioning the vision and creating a truly connected Maroochy Shire.*

*I encourage all residents of Maroochy Shire to participate in the next stages of the Maroochy 2025 process and to jointly take ownership of our shared vision for the future. Thank you to my fellow Community Task Force members for their commitment of time and energy.*

*F Howes*

*We acknowledge and respect the  
Indigenous Custodians of this  
land*



© Image by Ms Renee Baldwin: Indigenous artist<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Image Copyright held by Ms Renee Baldwin.

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# Synopsis

*"Our imagination is the only limit to what we can hope to have in the future."<sup>2</sup>*

**Maroochy 2025 Community Vision** refers to the process in which the community of **Maroochy Shire** has developed its own visions and action plans for the future of Maroochy Shire. Each part of this visioning process was, and is, conducted by, and through, our community. This publication documents this process.

**Maroochy 2025 Community Vision** comprises three books. Books One, Two and Three mirror (respectively) the first three (of four) key stages of Maroochy 2025 process:

1. Current scenario ("Where are we now and where are we heading?")
2. Community's vision ("Where do we prefer to be in 2025?")
3. Community's plan of action ("How will we get there?")

## Book 1: Background & Philosophies

**Book One** provides a contextual understanding. It explains why Maroochy 2025 was undertaken, who participated, how participation was sought, maintained, and recorded, and the process by which Maroochy 2025 evolved.

- **Section 1** documents present and future scenarios for Maroochy Shire
- **Section 2** presents the Key Focus Areas (KFAs). The KFAs are the issues that the residents of Maroochy Shire identified as their chief concerns, or aspirations for the Shire's future. Section 2 Also contains a profile of Maroochy Shire, frequently asked questions about Maroochy 2025 and an outline of the process by which Maroochy 2025 developed
- **Section 3** expounds the central philosophies and methods used in the project and how these were applied (eg. results of community surveys)

## Book 2: Future Aspirations

**Book Two** documents the community's vision statement for Maroochy Shire in 2025.

- **Section 4** introduces and explains the various components of the Community Vision Statement
- **Section 5** records the actual **Maroochy 2025 Vision Statement**, and accompanying visions for each of the six Key Focus Areas
- **Section 6** documents a journey into our preferred future and details the major challenges impeding the realisation of our key visions, as well as strategies by which we may be able to realise this preferred future
- **Section 7** presents Maroochy Shire's prevailing metaphor, or deeper story, that drives its community to create a better future. This is expressed in the form of a fictional 'Letter from the future'

## Book 3: Action Plans (2005 – 2010)

**Book Three** consists of the actual strategies - and more than 200 actions - for moving Maroochy Shire towards achieving its community's visions

- **Section 8** explains the process by which the Maroochy 2025 Action Plans were developed
- **Section 9** presents the six action plans, organized according to each of the six Key Focus Areas. This section details key strategies, actions and lead partners

## Access to Documents

Copies of both versions are available in electronic format (CDROM/DVD format), with abridged versions of Books 2 & 3 available in hard copy. You can also download all three books from the Maroochy 2025 website: [www.maroochy2025.net](http://www.maroochy2025.net)

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<sup>2</sup> Charles F Kettering, United States inventor 1876 -1958





# Book 1:

maroochy

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# Philosophies & Background

# Section 1: Scenarios

*The first step of any visioning exercise is thinking of alternatives to a commonly held position. The following scenarios are designed to start this process of questioning.*

## 1. A snapshot of today (2005)

Maroochy Shire offers rich, diverse natural habitats. It boasts of being one of the most biologically diverse local government areas in Australia. However, 42 species of our local flora and 48 species of our local fauna are listed as rare, threatened, or vulnerable under the *Queensland Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 1994*. Some of these species are found nowhere else on earth. Environmental protection is one of the Shire's major community concerns, yet our natural enclaves are under constant threat from urban development and habitat clearing.

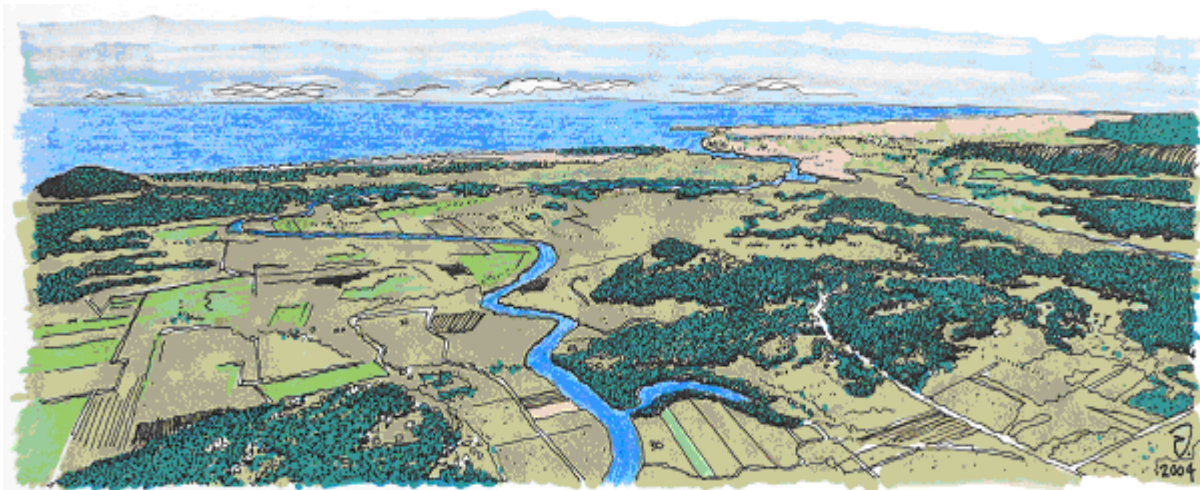
Surveys indicate 64 per cent of us believe we enjoy good quality of life. The Shire is highly liveable. It offers a unique lifestyle. We enjoy ready access to many educational and lifelong learning opportunities. Our neighbourhoods are mostly safe and crime-free. In comparison to many other regions, we experience amicable relations between our ethnic components. We provide equitable health care. Access to our cultural arts is inadequate, but it is slowly improving.

We are aware of the need to strengthen and expand our sustainable communities. To achieve this, the greatest challenges we currently face are: increasing smart growth management; improving quality of our leadership; developing a fairer, more ethical means of decision-making.

Maroochy today is car-dependent. Traffic congestion is a major community concern. We are aware of the need to improve public transport to keep our distinct townships well connected and accessible.

Our local economy is growing. It is heavily reliant on its retail and financial property services / development sectors. The agricultural sector is transforming. It is under continual threat from global markets and local development pressures. Opportunities for long-term employment, and the range of jobs available to us are proving inadequate for our needs.

### Image of Maroochy Shire today



## 2. A snapshot of tomorrow (2025) – given current trends

Projections of massive population growth proved correct. Through a combination of poor governance, limited regional cooperation, inadequate growth management and vigorous urban development, Maroochy is now a mesh of sprawling settlements, jostling to house even more people. Our community misunderstood sustainability. Short-term economic gains took precedence over environmental and social needs. Local government authorities continue to make decisions separately, each Shire working towards a quite different vision of the future. The result is an *ad hoc* patchwork of policies and regulations.

Our quality of life is deteriorating. Urban sprawl is the dominant landscape. Mere pockets of our natural environment survive. Even these are rendered squalid through the constant influx of polluted air, toxic waterways, and litter.

Many people experience social isolation - public transport being unable to service such large areas of low-density residential development. Most residents simply can't afford the spiralling costs of owning a car. Others are simply too young or too old to be driving. Access to facilities and town centres is increasingly inequitable.

Urban sprawl doubled our travel times and travel distances. This, in turn, eroded our capacity to participate in community life. For the majority, life is stressful. Unemployment is rife. Cost of living is escalating. Local housing is unaffordable for most new families. Quality of life, safety, and any sense of community identity are fast disappearing. Consequently, our wider community is strongly disillusioned with, and disassociated from, government leadership. It is cynical about our processes of decision-making. In this climate of fear and self-preservation, volunteerism is vanishing, even though a large portion of our community now consists of retirees (a quarter of all residents are over 65).

The knowledge economy has not bloomed. Other regions proved more attractive - offering better quality of life. "Bare-foot" executives and culturally creative talent moved elsewhere. In fact, our economic base - tourism and leisure, fisheries and the rural sector – is struggling to survive. Pollution, habitat fragmentation, and declining services are taking their toll on these industries.

On the other hand, our ageing population is ensuring that health, community services, and education remain significant industries. Likewise, physiological wellbeing and learning are emerging as lifelong social pursuits.

### Possible image of Maroochy Shire in 2025



### 3. Components of Maroochy's "Anticipated Future"

In the following pages, the possible future of Maroochy Shire is broken down into major components, arranged according to Key Focus Areas (KFA – the broad areas of the community's interest). For ease of comprehension, this is done as lists of points. Every KFA is tabulated as lists that detail *the scope* (meaning chief objectives and concerns), *the specific drivers of change* (meaning factors that will affect the handling of its objectives), *the trends* (meaning current developments or issues in this field) and *current initiatives* (meaning what is being done at the moment in these key focus areas).

The purpose of this is to highlight what we might see as a possible scenario for the future of Maroochy Shire if we continue on the same course. This could be called an '*Anticipated Future*' with anticipated solutions based upon current assumptions.

## Key Focus Area: Our valued natural environment



### I. Scope (chief objectives and concerns)

- *Protecting and managing the habitat, landscapes, natural systems (air, water and soils) and diversity of plants and animals*
- *Climate change (global warming)*
- *Water quality*
- *Biodiversity*
- *Waste management*
- *Principles: Sustainability, Precautionary, Intergenerational Equity*

### II. Specific drivers of change (factors affecting these concerns)

- *Climate change (global warming) impacts*
- *Coastal land at future storm surge risk*
- *Biodiversity extinction: spread of exotic species, loss of local ecosystems, land clearing, land development and the impact of human behaviour*
- *Declining air, water and soil quality*
- *Waste management focussed on short-term demand - not addressing human behaviour/consumption; lack of waste management systems that provide valuable products for our society and economy*
- *Poor levels of sustainability, environment reporting and 'triple bottom line' (social, economic and environmental accountability)*
- *Expensive environmental strategies (currently protection via acquisition of land or rehabilitation)*
- *Leisure, recreation, and tourism impacts*

### III. Trends (current developments or issues)

- *Increase in population figures for Maroochy Shire*
- *Increasing energy use (car and home) and increasing greenhouse gas emissions*
- *Habitat-clearing leading to more species lost; the reason why we came to Maroochy Shire is disappearing for many of us*
- *Increasing development and settlement patterns impacting upon our natural environment*
- *Water quality in our waterways/river continuing to deteriorate whilst water restrictions become more frequent (drier regional climate caused by climate change/global warming impacts)*
- *Increasing community expectations that governments should save the environment, whilst legislation and policy become more complex and government resources decline*
- *Government, business and community partnerships increasing to meet environmental challenges*
- *Increasing demands upon our environment from leisure, recreation and tourism activities*
- *Increasing recognition and costing of the value and benefits of the natural environment (eg, human health, wellbeing, and attraction to cultural/creative and knowledge economy)*

### IV. Current Initiatives (what's being done now)

- *Water quality monitoring*
- *Water quality management*
- *Riparian rehabilitation*
- *Vegetation Conservation Levy*
- *Development assessment of conditions and outcomes*
- *Conservation agreements*
- *Land for wildlife*
- *Bushland management*
- *Enforcement programs*
- *Greenhouse program*
- *Public education, including River Watch initiative*

Key Focus Area:  
Our healthy, vibrant, inclusive and learning communities



I. Scope (chief objectives and concerns)

- *Quality of life with the common good of all community members*
- *Safe, healthy communities*
- *Developing a culture of creativity*
- *Sense of identity*
- *Affordable housing*
- *Inclusion and equity*
- *Lifelong learning*

II. Specific Drivers of Change (factors affecting these concerns)

- *Population growth*
- *Population diversity*
- *Changing economic climate*
- *Changing nature of work and leisure*
- *Ageing population: increasing generational gaps and social isolation*
- *New societal groups: 'sea changers'; rich, global, mobile baby-boomers; 'bare foot executives'*
- *Attraction to employment in capital city (travel costs)*
- *Competing demands for government funds*
- *Increasing focus on personal and community health: provision of, and access to holistic health care services/facilities; education about proactive health practices and lifestyles*
- *Problems of sustaining safe, healthy, neighbourhoods/communities*
- *Loss of access to the natural environment*
- *Problems of sustaining our unique sense of community and cultural identity: diminishing cultural heritage sites; limited cultural infrastructure/facilities and cultural services; limited artistic development and promotion*
- *Access to education facilities and lifelong learning opportunities*
- *Availability and access to public open space and access to affordable housing*



### III. Trends (current developments or issues)

- *By 2016, 26.6 per cent of Maroochy residents will be aged over 65: increasing social isolation, fractured community and generations*
- *Increasing cost of health provision and care - increase in poor public health and obesity due to urban sprawl isolation, rising costs of care and poor mobility of aged*
- *Broadening ethnic and cultural diversity due to increase in population<sup>3</sup>*
- *Local/regional cultural identity forgotten - importation of globalised cultures of consumerism; continued loss of local cultural heritage*
- *Increasing gap between wealthy and poor*
- *Housing affordability decreasing - younger generation alienated from the market*
- *Increasing community expectation/need for quality urban design celebrating local places*
- *Increasing expectation/community demand for cultural infrastructure*
- *Less government commitment and funding for cultural development per person - increasing reliance on 'user pays' or community/business partnerships*
- *Decreasing quantity and quality of public spaces relative to increasing population*

### IV. Current Initiatives (what's being done now)

- *Development of Maroochy social plan*
- *Community facilities plan*
- *Youth strategy*
- *Cultural plan*
- *Sports strategy*
- *Community wellbeing strategy*
- *Cultural relations strategy*
- *Community Assistance Scheme (Council grants program)*
- *Development of ArtSync (Arts incubator centre)*
- *Program of bikeways/pathway expansion*
- *Service delivery - swimming pools, libraries, child care facilities*

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3 Harriyet Buccanan, *Understanding Maroochy's Diversity* University of Sunshine Coast: Maroochydoore, 2002.

## Key Focus Area: Our diverse transport, infrastructure and mobility



### I. Scope (chief objectives and concerns)

- *Greater mobility – ‘getting around’: transportation to, from and within Maroochy Shire and the infrastructure that supports it*
- *Better public transport*
- *Traffic calming*
- *Walkable towns*
- *Equitable access*
- *People before cars*
- *Alternative ways to travel*

### II. Specific Drivers of Change (factors affecting these concerns)

- *Fuel and energy consumption levels and supply*
- *Urban sprawl into rural areas*
- *Community behaviours in relation to the car*
- *Personal and family safety needs*
- *Traffic congestion in urban areas*
- *Managing mobility (walk, cycle, car, bus, rail, boat) within urban sprawl; infrastructure costs*
- *Car dependency*
- *Public perception of public transport as inadequate and monopolised*
- *Social isolation of communities and their residents*
- *Workers commuting to work within the Shire*
- *Cost of road infrastructure and maintenance - community expectations to seal rural roads*

### III. Trends (current developments or issues)

- *Mobility for the ageing population becoming increasingly difficult*
- *Increasing demands for mobility*
- *Increasing car congestion*
- *Pressure to find appropriate and effective transport options/alternatives to the car-based system for residents, business and tourists*
- *Increasing community resistance to traffic volumes in residential areas*
- *Increasing demand for traffic calming*
- *Increasing expectations to make town centres people-friendly, walkable and pedestrian-friendly*
- *Increasing demands for equitable access in built environments*
- *Increasing environmental, social and economic costs of bigger road infrastructure*
- *Increasing numbers of visitors and tourists to region arrive and depart by air*
- *Sunshine Coast Airport's long-term plans to build an east-west runway - managing the impacts*

### IV. Current Initiatives (what's being done now)

- *SM 2032 Sunshine Motorway Planning Study (Main Roads study of the Sunshine Coast up to 2032)*
- *CAMCOS Study: State Cabinet endorsed the corridor<sup>4</sup>*
- *TRANSLINK: a project by Queensland Transport to introduce integrated ticketing to SEQ*
- *4-laning at Sippy Downs, and Interchange at Dixon Road/Claymore Road - completion by June 2007 (giving access to Knowledge Precinct)*
- *Interchange with Maroochy Boulevard (previously Southern Access Link) and new connection from Sugar Road to Mooloolaba Road east of Motorway (a result of the Voluntary Infrastructure Agreement for the Wise Land development). Completion by June 2007*
- *Pacific Paradise northern bypass and interchange Stage 1*
- *Planning Study for the Bruce Highway, Caloundra Road to Maroochydoore Road*
- *The Kawana Infrastructure Agreement signed 1996: identifies Multi-Modal transport corridor through developing areas of Kawana to our southern boundary*
- *SunTRAN: proposal by SunROC to produce integrated<sup>5</sup> sub-regional transport plan for the Sunshine Coast, similar to the IRTP for SEQ, but with a sharper focus on requirements for this sub-region. Maroochy Boulevard construction ultimately to 6 lanes, with Motorway Interchange*
- *Evans Street widening to 4 lanes; Plaza Parade widening to 4 lanes - both with appropriate intersection upgrades*
- *Northern end of the Sunshine Motorway: construction of Walter Hay Drive from Maroochy boundary into the new Noosa Shire Business Centre and the Eenie Creek Arterial*
- *Mooloolaba Land Use and Traffic Study*
- *Coolum Land Use and Traffic Study*
- *Planning Study for Maroochydoore Road, Martins Creek*

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<sup>4</sup> A recent Planning Court appeal against a development condition in Caloundra confirmed the authority of Queensland Transport to protect the corridor. However, implementation is probably post-2025.

<sup>5</sup> The term 'integrated' refers to all transport modes, but should be taken to also include strategies such as *Transit Oriented Development (TOD)* around public transport nodes, and *Travel Demand Management* strategies such as parking policies, bus priority, etc.

## Key Focus Area: Our responsible leadership, participative decision-making and foresight



### I. Scope (chief objectives and concerns)

- *Consistent, coordinated governance, directing resources and human capital to achieve community's visions and goals*
- *Layered vertical and horizontal partnerships*
- *Community involvement in decision-making*
- *Regional cooperation between key decision makers and opinion holders*
- *Ethical behaviours*
- *Foresight beyond the immediate and short term*
- *Public participation as a way of life*
- *Responsibility by whole of communities*

### II. Specific drivers of change (factors affecting these concerns)

- *Increased scrutiny and accountability of civic and corporate leaders*
- *Growth and diversity of community profiles*
- *Increasing and varied expectations*
- *Increasing expectation to be involved in decision-making processes*
- *Increased demand for access and equity to information from civic and corporate leaders*
- *Governance not well understood by the community*
- *Poor perception of appropriate public participation in current decision-making*
- *Poor practice in making sustainable and coordinated decisions for our long-term future with our regional neighbours*
- *Regional coordination difficult with state agencies*
- *Local Indigenous reconciliation needs*
- *Large and diverse communities within Shire, with different agendas, local interests, expectations and financial constraints limiting Council's ability to sustain and deliver nearly 200 services*

### III. Trends (current developments or issues)

- *Continuing devolvement of State Government responsibilities and increasing community expectations in areas of economic development, transport, conservation, education, health and housing*
- *Increasing responsibility and cost shifting from Federal and State Government to Local Government without appropriate resources, leading to diminishing service delivery*
- *Voter growth likely more than double by 2025<sup>6</sup>*
- *Increasingly informed and governance-astute communities calling for greater transparency and participative decision-making; increasing demand for scrutiny of information in greater detail*
- *Large and diverse communities within the Shire, with different agendas, local interests expectations, and financial capacity, reshaping the Shire (limited collective agreement on visions and goals)*
- *Fragmented regionalisation: increasing urgency for making enduring, coordinated decisions with our regional neighbours, to deliver sustainable communities*
- *Emergence of regional decision-making bodies to coordinate efforts and resources*
- *Technology allowing community 24-hour, 7-day access to decision makers*
- *Increasing workloads: minimalist approach and basic compliance with legislation*
- *Decreasing social cohesion - higher costs of involving the community in public decision-making processes*
- *Increasing regulation to respond to the demands of conservative, ageing population*

### IV. Current Initiatives (what's being done now)

- *Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project*
- *Maroochy Public Participation Policy*
- *Reviewing overall electoral model*
- *Technology improving access to Council decisions*
- *New Governance Framework*
- *Cost shifting by state and federal governments*
- *SEQ 2021 (South East Queensland Visioning Plan)*
- *Education for intending councillors (Councillors Training) at TAFE*

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<sup>6</sup> By 2025, the twelve single member divisions (representing an average of 7,800 voters) will increase to 18,500 voters.

## Key Focus Area: Our smartly managed rural and urban future



### I. Scope (chief objectives and concerns)

- *Balancing population growth, nature, society, land use, infrastructure and the quality of urban and rural lifestyles*
- *Population capacity*
- *Nature's limits*
- *Character of development*
- *Smart Growth: liveable, viable, memorable*
- *Maintaining lifestyle and liveability*
- *Managing population capacity within natural resource limits of our environment*
- *Maintaining profitable and productive use of rural land despite agricultural market changes*
- *Maintaining rural character and rural community life*
- *Minimising rural land use conflicts with adjoining areas*
- *Character of development and the urban quality of areas within Maroochy Shire should meet community expectations and value-adds to visitor experience*
- *Preserving open space and visual landscape amenity*

### II. Specific drivers of change (factors affecting these concerns)

- *Expanding economy*
- *Increasing consumptive behaviours*
- *Preferences and habits pertaining to urban design and developments*
- *Emerging sustainability principles*
- *Consistent decision-making ensuring sustainable development of communities*
- *Unsustainable environmental, social and economic costs of urban sprawl and its infrastructure servicing*
- *Loss of rural land to urbanisation*

### III. Trends (current developments or issues)

- *Likely 90 per cent increase in Maroochy Shire's population by 2025: urban sprawl worsening state of the environment*
- *Increased pressures to expand settlements out (horizontal sprawl) and up (vertical sprawl)*
- *Increased costs of infrastructure for developers, governments and communities: greater emphasis from governments on 'user pays' to fund provision*
- *Green, eco buildings becoming more common (new Planning requirements and legislative targets)*
- *Gradual reduction of open space/landscape amenity: increasing isolation*
- *More rural land being demanded from farmers and community for urban purposes*
- *Diversification of local primary production to offset global market fluctuations*
- *Less social cohesion in rural communities and poorer public health in urban communities*
- *Global produce markets reducing our locally-grown exports whilst local market demands increase for fresh organic produce*

### IV. Current Initiatives (what's being done now)

- *Maroochy Plan 2000 - Urban Containment boundary amendment; SEQ 2021- A Sustainable Future (South East Queensland Visioning Plan) - growth management strategies endorsing urban development and rural protection*

## Key Focus Area: Our innovative and diverse economy



### I. Scope (chief objectives and concerns)

- *Developing diverse business and work opportunities that are sustainable and provide for our wellbeing*
- *Knowledge economy*
- *Leisure, health and nature*
- *Access to technology*
- *Renewable energy*
- *Economic development is not economic growth*
- *Creating sustainable employment – clean, green industries and knowledge economy*
- *Infrastructure provision and cost management*
- *Turning waste into resources to protect our environment*

### II. Specific drivers of change (factors affecting these concerns)

- *Increasing wealth of Maroochy residents and visitors increasing their expectations in terms of services, speedy access to information and infrastructure*
- *Sustained population growth*
- *Political uncertainties*
- *Tourism*
- *Transition of agricultural economy – eg. sugar industry*
- *Emergent knowledge economies*
- *Growing wealth–poverty divide*
- *Increasing difficulty in accessing affordable housing*
- *Agricultural economy in transition – eg. sugar industry*
- *Heavy reliance of local economy on retail and financial services supplying the property development industry*



### III. Trends (current developments or issues)

- *Poor diversity of choice in jobs; employment not meeting population needs*
- *Increasing 'Productive Ageing' – aged persons wanting to remain productive in the workforce for longer*
- *Increasing casual/part-time nature of employment at expense of full-time work (casuals and part-time currently 45 per cent of the workforce)*
- *Increasing number of home-based businesses*
- *Increasing investment and purchasing of assets by individuals and corporations from outside the Shire*
- *Funding for business infrastructure increasingly shared by private enterprise and local government*
- *Expanding role of international tourists and part-time summer residents in the local economy (global-local connections increasing)*
- *Movement to a 24-hour society and economy*
- *Continued lack of venture capital*
- *Increasing contribution of information and communication technology related industries*
- *Increasing business commitment to sustainable practices*
- *Increasing business commitment to 'the 3Rs' – Reuse, Recycle and Renew*
- *Increasing importance of education and health services to the local economy*

### IV. Current initiatives (what's being done now)

- *Economic development strategy*
- *Economic development levy*
- *Economic performance indicators*
- *Economic policies (internal and external)*
- *Reductions in Shire costs to business: a more business-friendly environment*
- *Strategic economic partnerships*
- *Support for training opportunities for local businesses*
- *Increased employment, broadening economic base*
- *New business and technology incentives – eg. Sunshine Coast Knowledge Precinct and Business Incubator (Sippy Downs)*
- *Business and industry complementing existing lifestyle and environment*
- *Increasing and more continual consumer spending*
- *Support for the growth of existing businesses*

# Section 2: Background to the Maroochy 2025's Community Visioning Project

## 1. Maroochy Shire Profile

### a. Setting the scene

Maroochy Shire is a lush, coastal region of Queensland covering 1,157 square kilometres. It includes major towns such as Maroochydore, Nambour, Kenilworth, Buderim, and Eumundi. Maroochy Shire relies heavily on the tourist, retail and construction industries, but is also an agricultural and fishing district.<sup>7</sup> It has long been a popular holiday destination on account of its warm, sunny climate and its varied offerings of water sports, rainforest retreats, rolling farmland, fine crafts, restaurants and urban amenities. The region's university (University of the Sunshine Coast) is located in Maroochy Shire as is one of Australia's fastest-growing regional airports.

### b. Location of Maroochy Shire

Maroochy Shire is situated in the Sunshine Coast region – 100 km north of Queensland's capital city, Brisbane. It is a sub-tropic coastal area, boasting a 25km stretch of surf beaches, an average of 11 hours of sunshine each day, and usually mild temperatures with highs between the mid-20s in winter and the mid-30s in summer.<sup>8</sup>

### c. Demographics

Maroochy Shire has 130,000 residents. Additionally, each year the shire attracts 700,000 tourists/visitors to the area.

Maroochy is one of the fastest-growing Shires in Australia, yet manages to retain a rural character. In fact, it has the second highest number of rural dwellers of any Shire in Queensland (37 per cent).<sup>9</sup> During the past 40 years, its longer-established communities have experienced a massive influx of newcomers embracing the 'sea change' lifestyle. In this manner, 63 per cent of the Shire's residents are now considered 'coastal urban', with almost all (up to 99 per cent) tracing their origins to other parts of Queensland or Australia - and even other parts of the world. Reflecting such rapid change, the district

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<sup>7</sup> *Maroochy Community Profile 2000*, Nambour: Maroochy Shire Council, 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Maroochy Shire Fact File #2*, Nambour: Maroochy Shire Council, n/d.

<sup>9</sup> *Maroochy Community Profile 2000*, Nambour: Maroochy Shire Council, 14.

has a higher rate of mobility than most parts of Australia: more than half Maroochy's residents moved house in the last five years.

Although Maroochy attracts many young people during holiday seasons, roughly half of all residents (49 per cent) are aged over forty. Indeed, Maroochy is increasingly peopled by active and influential retirees.

Maroochy has some 1,500 persons of Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) descent<sup>10</sup>. Amongst these are traditional custodians, the Gubbi Gubbi people.

Maroochy is home to residents originating from 128 different countries. More than 37 languages are spoken at home. The language most spoken after English is German closely followed by Dutch and Italian.

Maroochy Shire has an unusually wide variety of Christian denominations with Evangelical and Charismatic churches being especially predominant<sup>11</sup>. Similar to other parts of Australia, there is a small number of people (two per cent) following various non-Christian religions, whilst up to a quarter of all residents do not consider themselves as adhering to any religion. Both these groups are rapidly increasing.

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<sup>10</sup> *Maroochy Community Profile 2000*, Nambour: Maroochy Shire Council, 18.

<sup>11</sup> *Maroochy Community Profile 2000*, Nambour: Maroochy Shire Council, 20.

## 2. Frequently asked questions about Maroochy 2025

### a. What is Maroochy 2025?

**Maroochy 2025** is made up of many things. It is a document, a process, a framework, an action plan. It is an evolving form of community consultation and *applied action learning* (learning by directly solving real-world problems). It is a community project that aims to increase the quality of life for Maroochy Shire residents both now and into the future. Most of all, Maroochy 2025 is an opportunity to develop new levels of empowerment, knowledge and trust between Government and the wider community.

Maroochy 2025 was specifically designed to improve and expand current *community capacity levels*, which means it was designed to increase individual and collective (organisational) efficiency and confidence in dealing with the challenges of understanding and planning for the future. Thus Maroochy Shire is actively engaged in questioning the future, initially through its 32-member Community Task Force and currently through community-led Maroochy Vision Implementation Committees (MVIC).

### b. Why do we need Maroochy 2025?

#### 1. The impact of population growth

With South East Queensland rated as one of the fastest growing regions in all Australia, *growth management* is a vital issue for Maroochy Shire. The *Australian Bureau of Statistics* predicts South East Queensland swelling from 2.46 million to 3.4 million by 2021. Of this, the Sunshine Coast is expected to experience one of the largest increases – almost doubling from 245,000 to 435,000.<sup>12</sup>

Maroochy Shire will probably absorb more than half of all this massive Sunshine Coast growth. In other words, there will be some 237,000 Maroochy residents in 16 years time (2021) compared with 130,000 in 2004. Current Council plans are based on a *maximum* population of only 220,000.

We can expect many changes to accompany population increase. These include advances in technology, shifting economies, the ageing of local populations, environmental degradation, emerging new patterns and problems of work and lifestyle, and possibly a host of lifestyle-related illnesses.

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<sup>12</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics *Basic Community Profile: LGAs*. (Catalogue No. 2001.0), Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2002.

## II A strategy for managing our future

The changes that accompany population growth will affect every Maroochy Shire community in some way. Thus it is imperative that we find ways of managing the factors that produce the changes the Shire will undergo.

Projects such as Maroochy 2025 are *strategies* whereby the Maroochy Shire community and its governments plan and actually anticipate, direct, and engage with each other, thereby sharing the responsibility of managing common and preferred futures. Maroochy 2025 has made it possible for the community to move from *visioning* to *actioning* (realising) its dreams *as a way of life*. In other words, through this project, Maroochy Shire now has a strategy whereby it can implement – as *actions* - what the community itself has discerned as being indicative of its wants and needs.

## III. Community requests for more direct involvement in decision-making

Shaping the future may appear attractive to some, so much so that some individuals pursue it as a full-time career. Politicians, planners, and futurists regularly design new visions of what will be. *Today, however, communities themselves are determining their region's future directions.*

There is a growing need to be creative about the ways residents participate in planning their community's future. This can mean re-defining the framework of community consultation. Communities are themselves requesting a more active involvement in the decisions that affect them.

Maroochy Shire's residents have long expressed their determination to have a say in the decisions that directly affect their lives. The community wants government thinking to be balanced, considering both immediate and longer-term values. Maroochy 2025 has created the vehicle for developing 'a stronger say'. It gives communities the knowledge of 'how to question the future' and – more importantly – the knowledge and confidence to question futures being proposed. Through actually creating change by proactive intent, the community also learns how to be more effective and influential in creating their desired future.

Community pressure to know and desire to own their future has been a key *driver* (source) behind the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project. Maroochy 2025 is one of many consultation practices designed to assist the evolution of community consultation.

As a custodian of the Shire's future, Maroochy Shire Council partnered with Maroochy Shire communities to form the *Maroochy 2025 Community Task Force (CTF)* and the *Maroochy Vision Implementation Committees (MVIC)*. These bodies developed, managed, and will monitor our 20-year Community Plan. In other words, *Maroochy 2025 Community Vision* is both the end result and the process that enables the community to become the active creator of

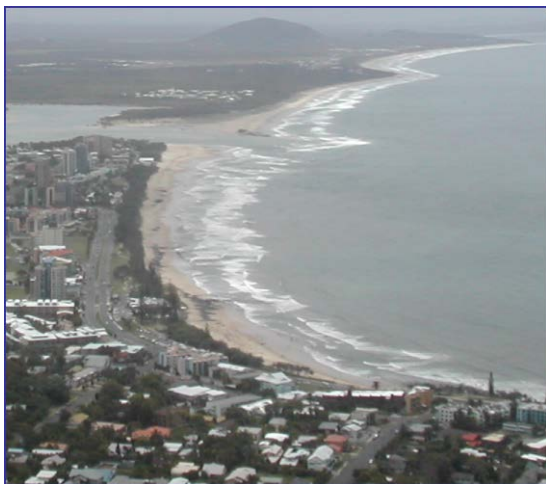
its own future, rather than a passive receiver. The process will help all Maroochy Shire communities, public, and private, to manage the potential effects of change. In this way, our future does not need to be a forgone conclusion.

#### IV. Complying with the standards of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), 2002

Governments around the world are facing massive economic, environmental and other changes. Three years ago, the mayors, leaders and representatives of cities and local governments of the world, along with their international and national local government associations, met to discuss their problems at Rio de Janeiro and – more recently – at Johannesburg in South Africa. These first-ever *World Summits on Sustainable Development* (WSSD) created a set of standards and strategies to cope with the future: a *Declaration on Sustainable Development*.

*Sustainable development*, as outlined by the *World Summit*, is not merely the preservation of our environments. It means *sustaining our communities*. This means creating community cohesion, building community *transversality* (the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions), enabling societies to participate in decision-making, and being responsible towards future generations and disadvantaged populations.

Since the World Summit of 1992, many local governments have successfully implemented measures to create sustainable development by following a World Summit strategy called *Local Agenda 21* within their community. The success of the *Local Agenda 21* processes has reaffirmed to the World Summit the vital role local governments play in fostering efforts towards sustainability:



The mouth of the Maroochy River

*National states cannot, on their own, centrally manage and control the complex, fast-moving cities and towns of today and tomorrow – only strong decentralised local governments, in touch with and involving their local citizens can do this... The effects of economic liberalisation and globalisation are felt most sharply at local level...<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> *Local Government Declaration to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002, Context: 1, 2.*

The World Summit's declaration challenged all local governments to adopt measures that combat poverty and that build a just, peaceful, and sustainable world. The Summit's *Local Agenda 21* identified the following inter-connected principles as essential to achieving these goals:

- *Sustainable development*
- *Effective democratic decentralisation*
- *Good governance*
- *Co-operation and solidarity*<sup>14</sup>

Maroochy Shire Council was well placed to adopt the Summit's strategies. The Council's planning scheme (Maroochy Plan 2000) was based on principles of ecological sustainable development (ESD). In fact, Maroochy Shire Council was already busily enacting the ESD principles of the Integrated Planning Act (1997) in formulating its planning scheme. This included recognising directions from the Queensland Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport, and Recreation, which required all local authorities to develop 20-year Community Plans for sustainable development. Moreover, the Local Government Management Association Queensland (LGMAQ) had decided to adopt *Position Statement on Sustainability* to "support major themes and functions for creating sustainable communities".<sup>15</sup> It is anticipated that findings from Maroochy 2025 will inform future amendments to the planning schemes like SEQ2026 Regional Plan and the Maroochy Plan 2000.

## V. Keeping Maroochy Shire on the cutting edge of change

Maroochy 2025 is a means of providing Maroochy Shire up-to-date standards in community development, capacity building and partnered planning. Maroochy Shire took the initiative to directly apply Future Studies concepts and chose to implement some of the most renowned and current models in the field of futures studies. For this reason, it is being lauded as one of the 'best-practice case studies' on how to create a 20 year community plan.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Proceedings of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*, Johannesburg, 2002, Local Government Section.

<sup>15</sup> *Proceedings from LGMA Annual Conference*, Brisbane, 2000.

<sup>16</sup> David Grogan, *Best Practice Guidelines: Corporate and Operational Planning* Draft Version 1.0630 Brisbane: Queensland Govt. Dept. of Local Govt., Planning, Sport & Recreation, June 2004, p. 39.

### c. What is Maroochy 2025 for?

In essence, *Maroochy 2025* is about creating long-term, future-orientated options and consultation frameworks for emergent communities who want to create rather than just 'receive' the future. *Maroochy 2025* aims to be a means of empowering the many to participate in decisions that may affect their lives. *Maroochy 2025* gives us a way of recognising significant actions, or milestones, along the way to our preferred future. In finer detail, this means that Maroochy 2025 task is to:

#### I. Short term

- *Engage the community in a visioning dialogue*
- *Identify key drivers of change affecting the Shire*
- *Create and assess a brief 'snapshot' of the 'now' - Maroochy Shire in 2005*
- *Discuss and develop a possible scenario for the future*
- *Develop preferred visions, including identifying key focus outcomes*
- *Develop a 5-year Community Action Plan for Maroochy 2025's vision goals*
- *Synergise outcomes with Maroochy Shire Council 2005 –2009 Corporate Plan*
- *Establish a Maroochy Visioning Implementation Committee*

#### II. Long term

- *Synergise planning and actions from regional perspectives*
- *Build communities' capacities for engaging with, and questioning, their future*
- *Build partnerships between Governments and communities*
- *Increase levels of trust between Local Government and communities*
- *Increase communities' use of anticipatory and 'alternative thinking' methods*
- *Empower the community to move ahead of changes and thus increase the level of pro-active measures for shaping the future*
- *Evolve and further develop community-produced consultation frameworks*
- *Support community-developed strategies and actions*
- *Evolve the concept of community visioning as a way of life in Maroochy Shire*

### d. Is this being done anywhere else?

Visioning projects are occurring in many local regions around the world. Numerous local governments and regions of Australia are beginning to embrace the concept of community visioning. Maroochy 2025 is unique because it focuses on Applied Futures Studies methods in conjunction with community visioning (see Methodologies section), but otherwise it is comparable to other visioning projects.





## e. On what model is Maroochy 2025 based?

Maroochy 2025 follows Steven Ames' model for visioning used in *Hillsboro 2020* (Oregon, USA).<sup>17</sup> Ames, a world-renowned community planner, has an outstanding track record in community visioning. It was decided to base Maroochy 2025 on Steven Ames' *Hillsboro 2020* because Ames' ideas have been found to work successfully in a number of communities. Indeed, *Hillsboro 2020* participants were able to implement up to 70 per cent of their desired action plans within a very short cycle of time.

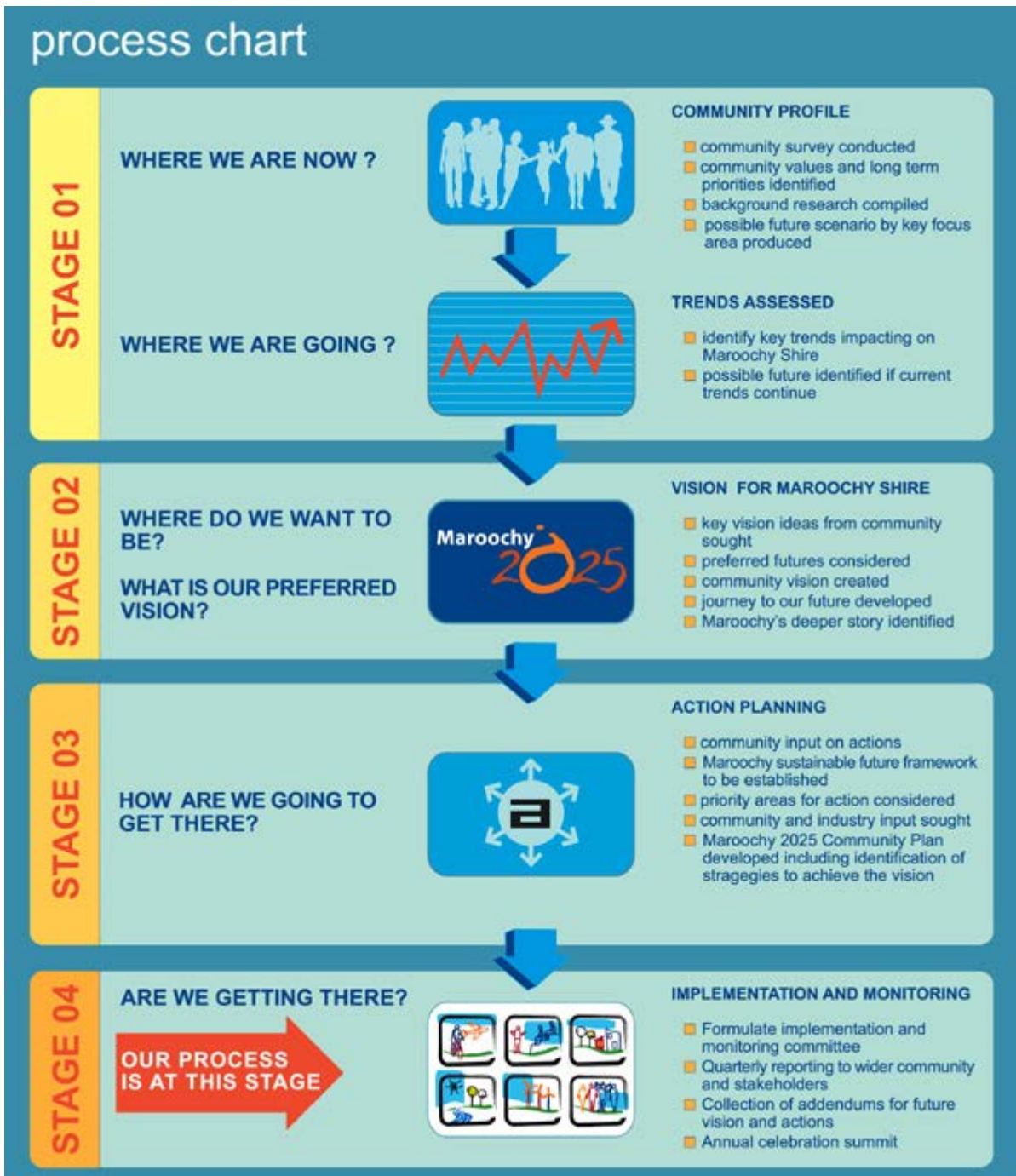
Basing Maroochy 2025 on *Hillsboro 2020* meant engaging in a four-stage process (see *Maroochy 2025 Process Chart* on next page). The community was asked to establish and articulate their visions and action plans in a logical sequence, each based around a question that required answering:

- *Stage 1: Where are we now? (Current Reality):*  
*Where are we going if we continue on the same path? (Possible Future)*
- *Stage 2: Where do we want to be? (Preferred Visions)*
- *Stage 3: How do we get there? (Action Planning)*
- *Stage 4: Are we getting there? (Implementation and Monitoring)*

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<sup>17</sup> For more about this model, see Steve Ames, *Principle: Steven Ames Planning: Building Strategic Vision for the Future Portland*.

# Maroochy 2025 Process Chart



## f. Who took part in Maroochy 2025?

Community engagement is the cornerstone of Maroochy 2025. The Maroochy 2025 process sought not just to engage community opinion, but to *involve* the community in activities through which they would better articulate their preferred visions for the future of their region.

Maroochy 2025 processes were specifically designed to collect and utilize as many varied contributions as possible. To maximize public participation, many different methods of collecting and informing public opinion were applied (see also *'Public Participation'* in *Section 3 – Philosophy & Methodologies: Part 3 – Future Studies Applied*). These methods included:

- *A pre-consultation workshop*
- *The 'Maroochy 2025 Background Paper'*
- *A website*
- *Stakeholder consultation and questionnaires*
- *Community workshops*
- *School summits*
- *Youth Council ('Youth Voice') visioning sessions*
- *Maroochy Shire Council staff workshops*
- *Community summits and summit pre-polling*
- *Creation of a Community Task Force*
- *Action planning groups*
- *An Action Planning 'Integration Night'*
- *Document and literature reviews*
- *Community surveys*
- *Maroochy 2025 Community Newsletters*
- *Articles in Maroochy Council newsletters, local newspapers and other media*

This ensured an unprecedented level of involvement from residents, making Maroochy 2025 a thoroughly representative community plan. In the end, Maroochy 2025 embodied:

- *Input from more than 3,840 people who directly participated in the visioning and action planning stages*
- *More than 40,208 public responses (written, emailed, phoned, etc.)*
- *More than 32,514 hours of community representatives' time*
- *More than 3,368 community vision ideas/goals (from which the community vision statement was created)*
- *More than 60 community strategies and 200 community actions - crafted from the above ideas/goals, during some 1,728 hours of prioritising, organising and summarising by community members*

Participants included representatives from a range of special interest bodies and stakeholders, including:

- *State and Local Government*
- *Local academics and professionals*
- *Business representatives*
- *Community groups*
- *Schools and youth groups*
- *Local ethnic groups*
- *Indigenous communities*
- *Persons with disabilities*
- *The general public*

This broad mix of representatives was especially active in the development of the action planning stage of Maroochy 2025.

### g. Who organised Maroochy 2025?

Representatives from the above groups were either selected, or joined of their own accord. This created the seven basic groups responsible for Maroochy 2025. These are as follows:

#### I Maroochy 2025 Project Team

The *Maroochy 2025 Project Team* is the principal manager and coordinator of the community visioning process. The team consists of a small group of individuals, all with professional backgrounds in managing complex and inclusive projects. The composition of the team changes according to the type of expertise required for different phases of the project. Each team member brings his/her speciality and foresight to the process ensuring a varied and collective involvement.

#### II Consultant Advisor

To increase the professional competency of the Maroochy 2025 Project Team, Maroochy 2025 engaged the services of Mr Steven Ames, a planner whose theories have been the basis of community visioning in many parts of the world. Steven Ames facilitated a community-priming workshop which provided powerful insights into project planning activities. It also helped mentor and up-skill the Maroochy 2025 Project Team, and enabled team members to hone and craft their skills in community planning practices. This consequently improved the quality and efficiency of the entire Maroochy 2025 process and has greatly contributed to the project's success to date.

### III. Community Task Force

The *Community Task Force* consisted of 32 community members from across the Shire, aged from eleven to 70 years of age. It was formed to enact *Anticipatory Action Learning* (AAL) methods. During an 18-month timeframe, the task force met a total of 26 times (nearly every fortnight). Members worked continually with the community, action planners, and the Maroochy 2025 Project Team. Project Team members facilitated the Community Task Force to achieve their outcomes.

### IV. Action Planning Teams

For the third stage of the project a call was made to communities, industries, and governments to assist with the development of the five-year Maroochy 2025 Action Plan. Seventy-two diverse and talented action planners were subsequently recruited and divided into six action-planning teams. Each team (of 12 or more individuals) addressed one of the six key focus areas and over the course of four months the teams produced 60 strategies and more than 200 actions. Each team included two facilitators trained in action-learning techniques.



Action Planning Teams at the integration night.

### V. Action planning facilitators

Twelve Maroochy Shire Council facilitators were utilised during the action planning stage. Two facilitators were allocated to each of the six action-planning teams. These pre-oriented facilitators guided the development of strategies and actions through action learning methods.

## VI. Lead partners

Various influential lead partners, including other government and educational business partners, were invited to participate in the development of the Maroochy 2025 Action Plan strategies and actions. These partnerships aimed to increase a shire-wide sense of ownership and responsibility for the implementation of Maroochy 2025's strategies and actions. From a strategic perspective, the inclusion of lead partners provided an opportunity to share information on existing efforts and promote integration.

## VII. Maroochy Shire Mayor and Councillors

Maroochy's elected decision-makers - the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and divisional Councillors - were invited to participate in both the visioning and the action learning process. Their involvement was particularly valuable for the success of the action planning stage.

### h. How will Maroochy 2025 affect Maroochy Shire?

#### I. Outcomes for Maroochy Shire residents

Maroochy 2025 Community Vision is a community-directed roadmap for the future of the Shire. It will guide the strategies and actions of industries, communities and organisations on how to realise their collective visions of Maroochy Shire residents. This community visioning process has created a unique opportunity for shared responsibility towards Maroochy's future.

#### II. Outcomes for Maroochy Shire Council

Outcomes from the community-directed roadmap will contribute to support Maroochy Shire Council's future plans and operations including the delivery of Maroochy Shire Council programs, projects and services.



### 3. Identifying Key Focus Areas (KFAs) for Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project

#### a. Key Focus Areas (KFAs): a definition

In a visioning project such as Maroochy 2025, there is always a need to establish some boundaries, to enable community groups to focus their input. *Key Focus Areas* (KFAs) encapsulate broad areas of major community interest. They represent a balance between various views and needs. KFAs are usually identified by examining projected plans of current strategic documents, marrying this to the results of environmental scanning, and conducting an analysis of emerging issues. The resultant focus areas serve to contextually contain any discussions around forecasting, visioning, and action planning. In other words, KFAs help map our future. They guide the dialogue and narration surrounding possible scenarios. They also focus our visioning and create highly specific fields of action.

Areas that Maroochy 2025 identified as the Shire's areas of principle concerns were drawn from: what is known of global and local drivers of change; the Maroochy 2025 Background Paper; and the work of the Maroochy 2025 Community Task Force.

#### b. Global and local drivers of change

There are some forces (that is, *drivers of change*) that occur in any given location, as a result of trends and issues that are emerging at that point in time on a regional, national, and international scale.

##### I. Examples of global drivers of change:

- *Growth of new economies: leisure, entertainment, service, life sciences, information*
- *Globalisation of economies*
- *Altering nature of work*
- *Diminishing availability of fresh water*
- *Widening gap between rich and poor*
- *Existing and desired planning and policies about our future*
- *Technological advancements*
- *Globalisation of cultures (consumerism)*
- *Energy usage and fuel consumption*
- *Ecological sustainability (eg. climate change / global warming)*

## II. Examples of local drivers of change:

- *Existing and desired regional planning and policies about our future*
- *Population growth and expanding demographic profiles*
- *Change demographics - mainly ageing and wealthy newcomers*
- *Community demands for involvement in complex decision-making process*
- *Community demands for continuous opportunity for lifelong learning*
- *Community demands for developing leadership*
- *Ecological sustainability - eg. Levels of land-clearing, pollution, climate change*
- *Regional moves to protect unique environmental and community (cultural) values and lifestyles*
- *Rapidly growing knowledge industry / creative economy*
- *Local physical (recreational / sport / medical), mental, emotional, and spiritual needs*
- *Local economic growth / decline and sustainable development*
- *Regional desires*
- *Local energy use and resource consumption*

### c. KFA elements derived from the Maroochy 2025 Background Paper (Information for Participants)

As part of the visioning process, a paper - *Maroochy 2025 Background Paper (Information for Participants)* - was written by Sinclair Knight Merz and made public between June and July 2003. This paper helped identify main arenas in which we could expect significant changes. These were given as: *nature, water, architecture, settlement pattern, culture and Shire decision-making, community wellbeing, getting around, waste management, energy and business sustainability.*

### d. Elements developed by the Community Task Force into the Key Focus Areas (KFA)

Arenas identified in *Maroochy 2025 Background Paper (Information for Participants)* formed the backbone of six key focus areas devised by the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Task Force. The task force took these arenas into account, along with what was known of local and global drivers of change. The task force then considered trends in current strategic documents and the results of environmental scanning. Task force members also conducted an analysis of emerging local issues (through *Community Survey No. 1* and various other means mentioned earlier).

The Community Task Force collated and sorted thousands of community responses into generalized areas. Out of this emerged six outcome-based goals: Maroochy Shire's Key Focus Areas.



## 4. Maroochy Shire's six Key Focus Areas

The Community Task Force established that Maroochy's six chief Key Focus Areas (KFAs) of concern could be summarised as:

1. *Our valued natural environment*
2. *Our healthy, vibrant, inclusive and learning community*
3. *Our diverse transport, infrastructure and mobility*
4. *Our responsible leadership, participative decision-making and foresight*
5. *Our smartly managed rural and urban future*
6. *Our innovative and diverse economy*

Maroochy's communities considered their first priority to be balance - with sustainability of their environment (that is, maintaining the natural system). Our next priority, according to the surveyed community, is the wellbeing of our social and cultural systems, supported by a creative economy. Otherwise, there was no specific order of precedence in the KFA. Consequently, the numbering here does not reflect their value. All are equally pressing concerns.

## 5. The Evolution of the Maroochy 2025 Process

### a. Stage 1

There were a number of developments over the last several years that provided the necessary catalysts for Maroochy 2025 to happen. These included:

1. 1999: Maroochy Shire Council employing its first official Social Planner.
2. 1999-2000: Internal Council discussions on developing a Social Plan.
3. 2000: Completion and publication of a *Community Profile*.
4. 2000-2002: Further internal discussion on the scope of a Social Plan, and more importantly, how a Social Plan related to other corporate Maroochy Council documents such as:
  - Maroochy Council's Corporate Plan
  - Maroochy Plan 2000
  - Other environmental and economic strategies/plans

Many Maroochy Council staff were concerned about producing yet another plan that would 'sit on the shelves'. Also, increasing numbers of Council staff voiced the need for an overarching community plan that captured the community vision yet contained other Maroochy corporate documents.

Finally, Council agreed to undertake a broad-based community plan that captured the community's vision. But lacking was a model for how to do this. So when Steven Ames presented just such a model at a Community Development and Planning Conference in 2001, it was eagerly adopted.

In the meantime, *Queensland Health* announced their decision to fund another Health Plan. Queensland Health embraced Council's concept of a Community Plan and in April 2002 made a grant of \$10,000 available towards the development of a *Quality of Life Plan*<sup>18</sup>. The *Queensland Health* grant made it possible to begin running *Maroochy 2025*.

Discussions during the next five months led to the formulation of the *Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project*. The project was officially endorsed and the *Maroochy 2025 Project Team* established in December 2002.

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<sup>18</sup> This plan also contained Council's response to the legislative requirements of the *Integrated Planning Act* (1997) regarding Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD).

By March 2003, the *Maroochy 2025* project was in full swing, and on 17 April 2003 a *Pre-consultation Community priming workshop* was held at the University of the Sunshine Coast. The aim of this summit was to test whether a visioning project was required for Maroochy Shire. At the workshop, it was established that 95 per cent of the surveyed community agreed that Maroochy Shire needed a community vision. Preferred methods of community consultation were defined at the workshop, and consequently towards the end of September 2003, a 32-member Community Task Force was formed. Recruitment of the task force signified the start of Stage 1 of Maroochy 2025 visioning project.

Stage 1 sought to answer: “*Where are we now?*”, and “*Where are we going if we continue along our current path?*”. During this phase, the Maroochy 2025 Project Team undertook statistical research (data collection) to define Maroochy Shire ‘today’ and ‘tomorrow’ (an *anticipated trend scenario*). This assessment confined itself to six key areas of community concerns (*Key Focus Areas* or KFAs) identified by the Community Task Force. Out of this grew a possible ‘scenario’ for Maroochy Shire in the year 2025.



During the community consultation process, it was noted some of the community expressed a feared scenario of the Sunshine Coast becoming another Queensland Gold Coast, full of high rises and highways.

## b. Stage 2

In January 2004, Maroochy 2025 entered *Stage 2*. This phase addressed the question: *“Where do we want to be in 2025?”*. To arrive at a comprehensive answer, the wider community was invited to participate in visioning activities, workshops, surveys, interviews and summits. These visioning activities form the basis of *Anticipatory Action Learning (AAL) processes*<sup>19</sup>, a process designed by Professor Sohail Inayatullah, a leading Futurist.

The AAL framework has three main elements:

- *Questioning assumptions at every level*
- *Anticipatory - scanning the future, using all our ways of knowing, all of our senses*
- *Participatory - including others, since non-inclusion of one variable can change outcomes in unanticipated ways*

This approach assisted in unravelling the deep images surrounding the Maroochy Shire’s collective future. Within the framework of AAL, participants engaged in a dialogue of ‘questioning the future’. Using a second framework developed by Professor Sohail Inayatullah<sup>20</sup> participants considered:

- *“What will the future be like?”*
- *“What do we fear about the future?”*
- *“What is missing from our possible future?”*
- *“What are the alternatives?”*
- *“What do we prefer the future to become like?”*

In answering such questions, a community took on the important step of empowering itself with its desired future. Continuous public participation, in the form of community workshops, focus groups and surveys, enabled draft scenarios to be developed by the Community Task Force. These scenarios detailed the community’s preferences for Maroochy’s future.

Support by Queensland Education, provided a fantastic opportunity for school children to become involved in Maroochy 2025 through school-based visioning projects. School children from grades 2 up to grade 12 contributed to the development of individual and collective images and visions for Maroochy Shire in the year 2025. These visions were presented at the April 2025 visioning summit.

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<sup>19</sup> See Sohail Inayatullah, *Questioning the Future*, p.121.

<sup>20</sup> See Sohail Inayatullah, *Questioning the Future*, p.187.

## I. The Visioning Summit (April 2004)



The Visioning Summit was held at the University of the Sunshine Coast on Saturday, 3 April 2004. The purpose of the Visioning Summit was to validate the evolving scenarios and the results from the local schools "futures" projects, community consultation, and from the school-visioning summit.

As planning preparations were underway for the visioning summit, there was an opportunity to involve the local TAFE students in a real 'action learning' process relating to event management. This initiative was consistent with the principles of doing, reflecting and learning. The TAFE students provided incredible solutions to complex event management problems and the students were key players in making the Visioning Summit such a great success.

The Summit consisted of three sessions:

- *'Plug into the Future'*
- *'Lay your cards on the table'*
- *'Join the dots for our future'*

After a local Indigenous welcome from the *Gubbi Gubbi Dancers*, participants 'plugged into the Future' by viewing a visual arts presentation giving youth and school children perspectives for Maroochy's future. Ms Francis Howes, spokesperson for the Community Task Force, reported on the task force's activities.

Professor Sohail Inayatullah then examined the four alternative futures (scenarios) facing the Shire:

- *Maroochy by Decree*
- *E-Maroochy Cyber City*
- *Maroochy's Connected and Learning Villages*
- *Maroochy Metropolis*

These four 'possible futures' developed by the Community Task Force emerged out of two major apprehensions and uncertainties expressed earlier during community visioning workshops regarding:

- *How we value the natural environment*
- *Capacity/form of leadership and the community's involvement in decision-making*

The Shire's local arts incubator (ArtSync) performers dramatized the four futures to help participants appreciate their distinctive traits at an emotional, spiritual and creative level.

In the 'Lay your cards on the table' session, participants discussed alternative futures and voted on their preferred future. When the votes of the 310 summit participants were tallied with those of the 'man/woman in the street' polling (59 people polled prior to the summit at Nambour and Coolumbur libraries and at Maroochy's Sunshine Plaza), the results were:

- 74% preferring the Maroochy's Connected and Learning Villages model
- 11.4% preferring the Maroochy by Decree model
- 9.8% preferring the E-Maroochy Cyber City model
- 4.8% preferring the Maroochy Metropolis model

This exercise was designed to guide the Community Task Force in crafting a collective vision. As three-quarters of those polled chose 'Maroochy's Connected and Learning Villages' as their preferred future, it was subsequently adopted as the basis for crafting the *Maroochy 2025 Community Vision Statement*.



Community residents registering for the Visioning Summit (April 2004)

Participants were also polled on their top vision ideas for a preferred future in terms of social relationships, access to technology, the environment, the economy, politics, values and our deeper story or metaphor.

For the 'preferred future' of '*connected and learning villages*,' a majority indicated that the local economy should deeply value the Shire's natural environment and that should help protect this asset at a profit. Many also thought that Maroochy's local economy should be capable of generating diverse opportunities for 'green' employment. Finally, most envisaged the Shire's leadership eventually being based on genuine partnerships with an empowered community that could together achieve the community's vision of lifelong learning.



Community resident participating at the Maroochy 2025 Visioning Summit

A total of 3,368 vision ideas were collected from the community prior to the summit. These were collated and sorted by the Community Task Force and synthesized down to 124 Key Vision Ideas (KVI). At the summit, in the 'Join the dots for our future' session, these KVI were displayed and participants were also given the opportunity to prioritize these ideas for achieving the preferred future.



Community residents poll the top 124 key vision ideas identified by the Maroochy 2025 Community Taskforce

The task force used these KVI as the foundation out of which they crafted much of the language for the Vision Statement document (see Book 2). The following vision ideas received the highest priority:

*a. Our valued natural environment*

- *We are able to access our diverse natural environment for all to enjoy - clean waterways, safe access to beaches, environmental and recreation parks, and countryside*
- *Through a united regional approach, with strict environmental codes for developments - even at the expense of personal convenience - we are promoted as a Shire with pockets of residential development linked with green corridors*

*b. Our healthy, vibrant, inclusive, learning communities*

- *We are creating public places, educational centres, and meeting places with pleasant environments. People have places to come together (outdoors and indoors) and cultural centres, including town squares and village community centres*
- *We are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of others as we are about ourselves, and we take responsibility for the effects of our actions on others*

*c. Our diverse transport infrastructure and mobility*

- *By careful planning, we are ensuring that all our communities are connected by public transport and walk/cycle trails. Residents in urban areas are no more than 800m from a public transport service or a dedicated walk/cycle trail. Parts of the former Cane Tramways are now light rail passenger lines or trails*
- *Council and regional stakeholders are providing a balanced and diverse range of travel options, including public infrastructure for walking and cycling networks, roads, multi-modal greenways, transit lanes, rail, light rail, ferry, CBD shuttles and Park'n'Ride stations*

*d. Our responsible leadership and participatory decision-making and foresight*

- *A Regional Council for the Sunshine Coast empowers our distinct local communities in managing their own places to achieve our community's regional vision*
- *As community leaders, we educate ourselves to be ethical, inclusive, informed, compassionate, transparent, collaborative, lifelong learners. We are better communicators and accept that one person's model of the world will likely be different to our own*

With regard to the latter vision idea, there was a 'tie' for second place:

- *In making decisions, we use a holistic, triple bottom line method of evaluating the impact on the community and environment. Our decision-making is based on achieving the community vision's long-term goals and action plans*

*e. Our smartly managed rural and urban future*

- *Our diverse communities live, work and play in high quality, distinct, compact, walkable urban villages separated by green belts, wildlife corridors, natural ecosystems, or rural lands. Sophisticated public transport systems and walk/cycle networks service our towns, neighbourhoods, and urban villages. We value and respect our unique rural and urban identities/characters and maintain urban containment boundaries to protect them*
- *We are reducing the impacts of urban living by creating environmentally sensitive developments and innovative buildings (green architecture), which are designed for our climate and lifestyle, and are energy efficient by utilising solar power and grey water re-cycling*

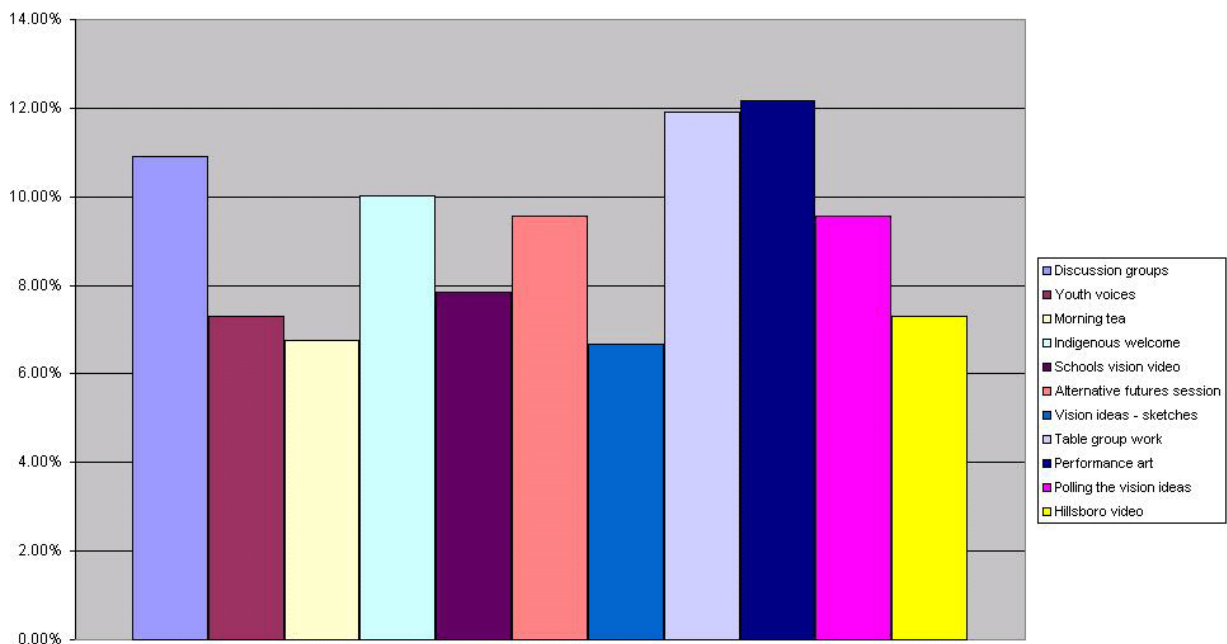


f. Our innovative and diverse economy

- We encourage and support innovative industries and are developing niche industry opportunities as well as larger export-oriented industry
- We are developing new technologies while maintaining support for established professions and industries

## II. Evaluating Participation in the Summit

What part of today's program did you like the most?



As indicated by the above results (derived from feedback forms), the summit's *discussion groups* and *table group work* were popular, which (along with people's comments) suggest that the event helped instill a greater sense of community empowerment regarding the future, and a stronger sense of community ownership of the project.

For instance, 75 per cent believed that the design of the summit program and workshop design was effective in allowing people to have their say about the future. More importantly, almost half of the participants (142) indicated that they would like to be involved in subsequent phases of the visioning process. About a third (93) wanted to be surveyed as part of validating the draft vision statement, either as stakeholders or individuals, whilst considerably more (128) wanted to be involved in the final (Action Planning) phase.

Such enthusiasm took even Professor Sohail Inayatullah, the key Futurist facilitator at the Summit, by surprise:

*“Having been to almost a 100 such meetings across the world, Barcelona to Turkey, San Antonio to Suva, all I can say is that the attention to detail, the general feel, the community engagement, the Futures studies, the art, the drama, the ‘footprints’... all were outstanding.”*



Maroochy Shire's future reaching for the visioning sun

By mid-2004, the final draft of the Maroochy 2025 Community Vision was validated. The vision was officially launched on 28 July 2004 through local media outlets, and presented to the Mayor and Councillors of Maroochy Shire Council.

### b. Stage 3

Completion of the Maroochy 2025 Vision paved the way for the commencement of *Stage 3: Action Planning*. Action Planning focused on how the preferred vision could be achieved through the development of strategies, actions, and most importantly *action elements* (elements which identify responsibilities, costs and priorities for implementing the vision).<sup>21</sup>

For this phase of the project, more than 72 people from communities, private industries, and public sectors met during a four-month period. They produced six Maroochy 2025 Action Plans: over 60 strategies and up to 200 actions. The action plans reflect existing strategies and proposed future-orientated actions. Therefore, they offer a logical integration of current practices with new approaches.

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<sup>21</sup> For more on Action Elements, see *Book 3 of Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning*.

### c. Stage 4

Following the distribution of the 5-year Maroochy 2025 Action Plans, the Maroochy Vision Implementation Committees (MVIC) will be established. During 2005 and up to 2010, these three-tiered monitoring and implementation committees will perpetuate the Maroochy 2025 Community Vision. On a regular basis, the committees will provide feedback to the wider community on progress in implementing the community vision.

It is anticipated that the MVIC will work to foster:

- *High levels of community support, partnerships, and other networking through Maroochy 2025 activities*
- *Increased community capacities for:*
  - *Developing alternatives*
  - *Questioning and using the future*
  - *Ongoing celebrations of milestones and actions achieved by our Shire*
  - *Collection of new 'visions' to shape our future*
  - *Problem solving, to overcome any barriers preventing us from progressing our visions, goals and actions*
  - *A sense of social and community cohesion*

To realise such goals, the MVIC will develop high-level means of measuring the success and efficiency of the action plans and associated strategies. The establishment of the MVIC will enable communities themselves to implement, monitor and report progress on Maroochy 2025. Meanwhile, the Maroochy 2025 Project Team will be securing ongoing commitment, responsibility, and funding from lead partners identified in the Maroochy 2025 Action Plans. It is anticipated that an annual summit will be established to recruit and rotate community membership to the MVIC. Such annual summits will also provide opportunities to 'showcase' Maroochy 2025 achievements.



Maroochy 2025 Community Taskforce

## Section 3: The Philosophy and Methodologies behind Maroochy 2025

### 1. The Rationale behind Maroochy 2025

#### a. Emerging planning themes

Pressures previously identified (population growth; the changing nature and viability of traditional industries; increasing community requests for more direct involvement in decision-making; concerns surrounding sustainable development and the provision of solid governance and leadership) eventually combined to impel Maroochy Shire Council to develop a strategy for managing the future: the *Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project*.

To determine the validity of the proposed strategy, Maroochy Shire Council undertook preliminary research - reviewing existing strategic documentation pertaining to Maroochy's future. Results were presented and discussed at a Maroochy 2025 priming workshop on 13 April 2003.

The priming workshop comprised of key public, private, and community stakeholders who had previously been active in planning for the region's future. During this early consultation period, it became clear that the Maroochy 2025 strategy would be much better equipped to address future issues if a deeper understanding of the nature of the Shire's community was acquired. This also meant identifying the major emerging issues within the Shire, and how our Maroochy community wished to define its futures. Stakeholders had already perceived that the Maroochy community desired to sustain its unique environment, character, culture, and social dynamics. They also understood the community wished to support, inform, and partner in local planning and policy-making decisions.<sup>22</sup> These early priming sessions helped to clarify the desired outcomes from the Maroochy 2025 project based on *Futures Studies*-orientated planning and visioning concepts.

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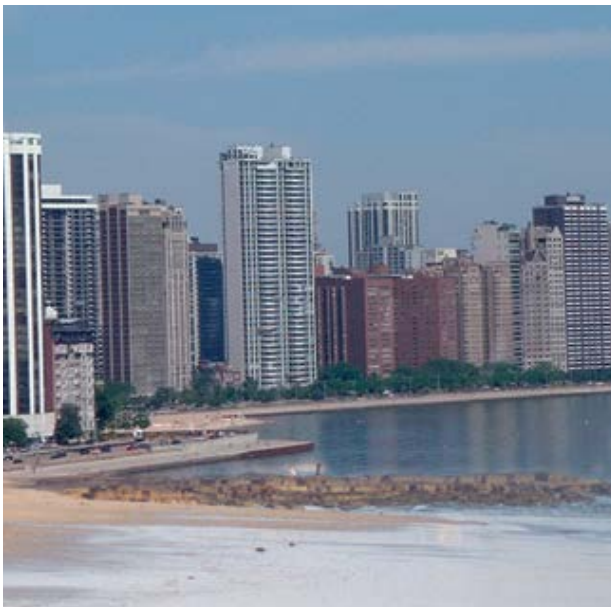
<sup>22</sup> Identified through a survey conducted as part of the Maroochy 2025 Visioning Workshop, on 17 April 2003.

## 2. Mapping Maroochy Shire's Future

To best meet the needs of the project, the Maroochy 2025 Project Team researched local and international planning frameworks. Research led the team to adopt the *Hillsboro 2020* model, as it had a proven track record of success in cities in the United States. *Hillsboro 2020* is a 4-step visioning model developed by community planner Steven Ames for the town of Hillsboro, Oregon (USA).

A seminar conducted for Maroochy Council in 2001 by *Futures Studies* expert Professor Sohail Inayatullah proved to be the first link in formulating the Maroochy 2025 methodology. The seminar inspired Council to pattern planning processes and policy-making along Futures Studies lines. Professor Inayatullah had many suggestions on how these policies could be achieved and was able to offer actual methods whereby the theory of Futures Studies could be readily applied to real life scenarios.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, active engagement is one of the main thrusts of Professor Inayatullah's *Futures* message:

*Futures research must not solely be engaged in pure research, but rather the future must actualise itself through praxis. There must be an effort to identify cultures that have been suppressed, or that will be suppressed given various trends, and then aid them in articulating and realising new visions.*<sup>24</sup>



Through the *Futures* workshop and planning sessions, Professor Inayatullah assisted Maroochy Council in developing its capacity to anticipate the future and develop alternative visions and plans. Discussions between Professor Inayatullah and Maroochy Shire Council's Chief Executive Officer also led to an awareness in Council of what might be called the 'business as usual model' or the 'growth mania model', which has the potential of resulting in a fragmented and unplanned city.

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<sup>23</sup> Sohail Inayatullah, *Questioning the Future*, p. 187.

<sup>24</sup> Sohail Inayatullah, 'Reduction, Cultural and Epistemologies,' *Futures* Vol. 22: 2 (March 1990), p. 115.

## b. The Philosophy of Futures Studies

*Futures Studies* is the analysis and application of patterns, images, epistemes (world views) and discourses pertaining to the future. It advocates alternative choices, holistic involvement, purposeful actions, the need to extend notions of time and space, and the importance of guiding images.<sup>25</sup>

Futures Studies came into existence when it was realised that we continue to suffer the consequence of unwise decisions made long ago. In the 1970s, sociologists such as Alvin Toffler (author of *Future Shock*) started drawing public attention to the need to plan and discuss the impact of the future. By the early 1980s, discourses on Futures Studies were being generated by futurists such as Clem Bezold, James Dator, Hazel Henderson, Duane Elgin, Richard Slaughter, Elsie Boulding and Wendell Bell, and by poststructuralist theorists such as Michael Shapiro, and by experts from the field of peace studies (for example, Johan Galtung).

The field of Futures Studies has multiple implications. It is increasingly important in business, planning, policy-making, and community visioning. As an emerging discipline within governments, Future Studies provides a more holistic and longer-term dimension to planning debates. The study of the future has become a process rather than an end in itself. Whether or not the visions become realities, it has been noted that our involvement in the process shifts our attitudes towards the future.<sup>26</sup>

As a discipline and science, Futures Studies is expanding and changing. Being a relatively new development with diverse origins, its boundaries remain unclear. Currently, many Futurists are exploring alternative ways of solving complex issues such as sustainability.<sup>27</sup> This is proving extremely useful in the current climate of dwindling resources, pollution, religious fanaticism, and rapid population growth.<sup>28</sup> Sustainable visions are often required for such problems, to avoid the community losing confidence in their leaders, their institutions, and themselves. Indeed, during this decade, the ability to visualise in detail the possible results of major changes in existing social,

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<sup>25</sup> Geoffrey H. Fletcher, 'Key Concepts in the Futures Perspective,' *World Future Studies Bulletin*, Jan.-Feb. 1979.

<sup>26</sup> Jennifer Fitzgerald, 'Hoping Good Futures,' ed. Richard A. Slaughter, *Knowledge Base of Futures Studies Vol. I - III* (CD-ROM) Indooroopilly: Futures Study Centre, 2000.

<sup>27</sup> Wendell Bell, 'An Overview of Future Studies,' ed. Richard A. Slaughter, *Knowledge Base of Futures Studies Vol. I - III* (CD-ROM) Indooroopilly: Futures Study Centre, 2000, pp. 1-3.

<sup>28</sup> Duane Elgin, 'The Challenge of Planetary Civilisation,' in Sohail Inayatallah, ed. *Knowledge Base of Futures Studies Vol. IV* (CD-ROM), Indooroopilly: Futures Study Centre, 2000.

technological, economic and environments will need to be developed in many institutions.<sup>29</sup>

Using Futures Studies methodologies in community consultation and planning provides greater opportunity for active participation by all types of stakeholders or opinion holders. Engaging the full community in the identification of issues, trends, drivers, probable scenarios and visions, creates a more representative articulation of preferred futures. Thereby, the community actively influences the planning and policy-making decisions that directly affect it. In the long term, insights and perspectives gained by exploring community visioning are expected to provide local governments with a framework for transformational change.

For the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project, Maroochy Shire Council seconded a project team to apply concepts of *Futures Studies*. Maroochy 2025 is one of the first projects in Australia to apply Futures Studies on such a large scale.

### c. Future talk: some important terms of reference

#### I. Scenarios of the future

*Scenarios of the future* are the images - the 'pictures' - people have of what the future will be like. We usually construct these from whatever we notice to be the current *drivers of change* – for example, technology, demographics, or globalisation. Scenarios help us clarify what should change during our lifetime, what effects this may have on us, and what alternatives we need to consider. In this sense, *scenarios* serve as an early warning mechanism.

Most people's scenarios of the future are bound to long-established religious, cultural, or philosophical views about what the future is likely to contain. These are known as *archetypes*. That is, most people will adhere to either one or another archetype about the future: either that there will be continued growth along current lines, a collapse, a return to the past, no change (a steady state or status quo), or otherwise a complete transformation. *Transformation scenarios* usually envisage a revolution in values or technology rapidly changing the nature of our world.

One way of building scenarios is *anticipating* the consequences of current trends – both local and global. From this, we can speculate about our possible future. Another method is to explore *alternative scenarios*. This means considering many and varied types of futures. Such *scenario planning* highlights contrasts (tensions) between different futures. Out of these contrasts, image-rich *alternative futures* can be planned. Then, by aligning our preferred images of the future with specific strategies and actions, we can

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<sup>29</sup> Elsie Boulding, 'The Dynamics of Imagining Futures,' *World Futures Society Bulletin* Sept.- Oct. 1978, pp. 1-8.

work towards creating a shared future that will be substantially different from what we might otherwise have had to endure.

## II. Visioning

*Visioning* is the process of identifying images we hold both consciously and sub-consciously about the future. A *visioning process* is a method for expressing those images both individually and collectively. When a community undertakes *visioning*, the end result is a tapestry of views, perspectives, assumptions, and stories woven into many collective foci.<sup>30</sup> Visioning can be undertaken through any one of three approaches: Logical, Critical, and Creative.<sup>31</sup> Each of these methods was utilised in Maroochy 2025.

One of the strengths of Maroochy 2025 was that it provided the vehicle through which a diversity of residents from across the Shire could be brought together to develop shared images. Through visioning, the community was able to establish what trends and forces were shaping their community. Visioning enabled participants to better understand the 'pull' or the power of particular images of the future in motivating us to generate those realities, either as individuals, or as a community. The visioning process helped clarify the Shire's key values. It also made possible the creation of shared visions from all ages and positions. Thus visioning gave Maroochy 2025 participants the foundations from which they could launch their strategies and indicators. Through visioning, they discovered what it was that they were aiming to promote and preserve.

## III. Creating sustainable communities

*Sustainable communities* are communities that are able to survive and prosper into the future in a manner that is socially, culturally, biologically, and economically rewarding. Communities are sustainable when their financial systems remain or become socially, culturally, and economically inclusive. This often requires a regional development strategy. Communities become sustainable when they focus on social and environmental wellbeing, seek community agreement on general directions and implement community initiatives.

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<sup>30</sup> Sohail Inayatullah, *Questioning the Future*, p. 218.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.



To survive as distinct entities, communities also need to balance inclusiveness and uniqueness. On the one hand, they must allow their internal communities and ethnicities to define and solve their own problems, directions, and goals. At the same time, they must attract and retain the type of populations that will best help them preserve and enrich their specific regional and local characteristics.

This should not degenerate into exclusiveness or discrimination, for in the final analysis; communities can only become sustainable when their various components work together in an inclusive, harmonious, *integrated* manner.<sup>32</sup>



Community Taskforce spokesperson, Ms Francis Howes, handing Maroochy Vision to Mayor Joe Natoli, July 2004.

Generally speaking, Australia's local governments - due to their electoral and legislative mandates and multiple roles - are the usual vehicles for building better (more sustainable) local communities. Of all levels of government, the local government level has traditionally maintained the closest relationship with its community and, in more recent times, forged greater partnerships through community participation activities. Local councils, therefore, play a vital role in linking communities to broader government initiatives, especially in translating, facilitating, and implementing holistic concepts such as *sustainability* and *the triple bottom line* (that is, social, economic and environmental accountability).

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<sup>32</sup> Dr Helen Ross, Presentation, *Community Development Conference* (Economic Regional Development Conference) Noosa 2003.

## IV. Social capital and social trust

*Social capital* is the value of individuals and their capacity to enhance community life. For those in local government, increasing social capital requires building *social trust*. *Social trust* means helping communities 'do things themselves'. In effect, this means – amongst many other things - building on council staff's existing connections with the community, giving the community a better understanding of how council works, skilling community groups in administration, and creating more community spaces or community facilities. It also means our local council taking more the role of a catalyst or facilitator.

Building social trust and capital is a key goal of Maroochy Shire Council. The Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project was identified as a major step towards improving levels of trust between communities and government agencies. As part of the process of building social capital and trust, a 32-member Community Task Force was recruited to facilitate, develop and record the community's visions for the future and to compose a community vision.

## V. Community development

Maroochy 2025 used the practices and principles of *community development*. *Community development* means developing a community's capacity by unwrapping its potential.<sup>33</sup> It is the process of re-establishing the community as the centre of significant human experience and the true provider of human needs. Thus community development means relying less on larger, more 'inhuman,' or less accessible structures such as the welfare state, the global economy, bureaucracy, and professional elites.<sup>34</sup>

Although the concept of 'community development' is not new, contemporary practices require new approaches to transform the existing paradigm, which is still based on a strong social justice and service-delivery mentality,<sup>35</sup> into one of *empowering the community*. Maroochy 2025 is a project that was designed to empower the community to 'question their future' or at the very least, know how to ask the pertinent 'questions.'

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<sup>33</sup> Tim Muirhead, *Weaving Tapestries* Perth: Local Government Community Services Association, 2002, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> Jennifer Ife, *Community Development: Creating community alternatives — visions, analysis and practice*, Melbourne: Longman, 1995, p. 131.

<sup>35</sup> 'Just and vibrant communities,' *Proceedings of the National Local Government Community Development Association Conference*, Cairns, 2003 Cairns: NLGCDA, 2003.

## VI. Community consultation

In earlier decades, *community consultation* was highly structured and prescriptive. Local governments and their bureaucracies often comprised or directly involved the majority of any given region's professionals. Consequently, they considered themselves better informed and better qualified than the general community to identify local issues and provide solutions. The community was not usually consulted on issues that affected it, except as a means of improving management (foreseeing residents' likely attitudes to specific issues) or to fulfil a legislative requirement (community opinion being checked because the government *had to*).

Now, as our communities become more diverse and better informed, this manner of operation is increasingly outmoded. It creates the impression that local governments only implement strategies they have already decided upon, regardless of the community's informed position.

Today, councils and communities alike are aware of the need for community consultation and better utilising our community's potential. For the organs of government, this change translates as "ever-greater emphasis on social planning and community consultation."<sup>36</sup>

Especially through their departments of *community development*, local councils are now expected to link people and politics, ensure community ownership, inclusiveness, co-operation, and build self-sufficiency, self-organising and self-responsible activities.<sup>37</sup>

They are also being increasingly pressured to create developments at a pace decided by the community. As Jenny Wills, prominent author on community development, notes, this means that the aim of local government:

"...has moved towards building a Council that is responsive to community needs and equitable in its opportunities for all members of the community to participate in council and community activities."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Wendy Stone & Jennifer Hughes, *Social Capital: Empirical meaning and measurement validity*. Research Paper No 27, June 2002, Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies - Commonwealth of Australia, 2002, 1f.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 1-9.

<sup>38</sup> Jenny Wills, *Just, Vibrant & Sustainable Communities: A Framework for progressing & measuring community wellbeing*, Local Government Community Services of Australia, 2001, pp. 36-46.

Support for a more community engagement was clearly reflected in outcomes from Maroochy 2025's pre-consultative community workshop and in the survey results of the April 2003 Community Visioning Summit: The community strongly agreed that projects such as Maroochy 2025 require activities that will create opportunities for direct community involvement in local decision-making processes.<sup>39</sup>

## VII. Capacity building

*Capacity building* is the process of developing individuals' and organisations' efficiency and confidence in planning for the future. *Capacity building* in community development means confronting structural disadvantages and allowing the community to define its own frameworks for its needs and its engagement with government. Community visioning projects such as Maroochy 2025 are not only re-shaping community development approaches, but also furthering current debates concerning the need to move community development practices away from *service delivery* towards capacity building.



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<sup>39</sup> Deborah Woodhouse, 'Emerging issues for Local Government Governance in 2025,' Presentation to *Maroochy 2025 Community Task Force* Nambour: Maroochy Shire Council. November 18, 2003.

### 3. Application of Methodologies

To apply the theory of Future Studies to real life, Maroochy 2025 utilised Future Studies methods and concepts such as:

- *Anticipatory Action Learning*
- *Anticipatory Democracy approaches*
- *Interpretative and deconstructive tools (qualitative and statistical research)*
- *Scenarios*
- *Visioning*
- *Back casting*
- *Action Planning*

#### Anticipatory Action Learning

*Anticipatory Action Learning* (AAL) is learning and reflection through questioning, using existing knowledge, and striving for innovative and intuitive answers to future issues and problems. It means that the people most likely to be directly affected by particular issues are themselves coaxed into defining, creating, and analysing possible trends, issues, scenarios, and solutions. By harnessing every means of knowing at their disposal, and questioning their assumptions at every level, they are impelled to scan the future so broadly that they include many more perspectives and variables than they would otherwise consider<sup>40</sup>.

As an activity, AAL consists of learning by solving real world and work-based problems set with the context of future issues and problems. Thus learning occurs amongst a group of colleagues who share the problem and contribute mutual support, advice, and criticism. Gradually, the action-learning group develops a united approach to solve the problem. This is more than just 'learning by doing': it is the process of developing fresh perspectives on existing knowledge, and building the required experience to tackle current issues. Reviewing, reflecting, rethinking, and reinterpreting knowledge and experience are all pivotal to this process. Indeed, the biggest challenge in facilitating anticipatory action learning groups is achieving a balance between these different elements.

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<sup>40</sup> Sohail Inayataullah, *Questioning the Future*, p. 96 & 97

# Anticipatory Democracy

## I. Defining Anticipatory Democracy (AD)

*Anticipatory Democracy* (AD) means having groups of people engage in meaningful dialogue about not one, but many alternatives to the future. Jim Dator, one of the founding fathers of Future Studies, believed that: "All human beings are futurists, but some people may be more futuristic than others."<sup>41</sup> In other words, to become a reality, our future must first be imagined. Unfortunately, there will be a myriad of competing and often conflicting imagined futures - some more constructive than others. *Anticipatory Democracy* allows us to compare and contrast these diverse visions. It allows us to negate or affirm their plausibility, to arrive at a consensus, and even find alternative images neither party had even dreamt of.

As an activity, anticipatory democracy consists of 'futurising' democratic, participatory and community-based consultation. However, AD groups can often be little more than planning meetings. To avoid this, Maroochy Shire is utilizing the processes involved in Future Studies to help the Community Task Force concentrate on exploring both anticipatory and alternative visions, collection methodologies and new ways to undertake community consultation in the future.

## II. Anticipatory Democracy through participation and communication

One means of creating is by opening up new channels for public participation. Maroochy 2025 developed a spectrum of public activities and publications between April 2003 and December 2004. These included:

### a. Pre-consultation workshop

A pre-consultation public lecture and workshop was conducted in April 2003 at the University of the Sunshine Coast. More than 200 community members were introduced to the community visioning concept and the possible model it would follow. Participants discussed their hopes, dreams and concerns for the Shire in the year 2025. Eighty-eight per cent of participants indicated a need for the development of a community vision.

### b. Maroochy 2025 Background Paper (Information for Participants)

The *Maroochy 2025 Background Paper* is an introductory analysis prepared by Sinclair Knight Merz. It was intended as a 'priming tool' to stimulate discussion amongst the Community Task Force and Project Team. The paper

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<sup>41</sup> Jim Dator, *The future of anticipatory democracy* Honolulu: Sage, 1978, pp.315f.

provided 'probable scenario snapshots' of Maroochy in 2003 and 2025 for eleven focus areas.

### c. Website

A website was established at [www.maroochy2025.net](http://www.maroochy2025.net) to disseminate information and to allow the public to participate in the visioning process online.

### d. Stakeholder consultation and questionnaires

Maroochy Shire Council's Corporate Management Team held one-on-one information sessions with identified stakeholders to encourage participation.

### e. Community workshops

A series of 28 community workshops were held in eleven locations across Maroochy Shire in February and August 2004. In Round One of the workshops, the community was asked to contribute its hopes, dreams and visions for the future of the region. A total of 400 community members attended the workshops. This generated over 2,000 vision ideas and 1,000 'footprints on the future.' Focus group sessions also took place with TAFE and University students, and with representatives from the disability sector.

In Round Two of the workshops, the community was asked to contribute its suggestions on "actions we need to take" to achieve the short-listed 'Key Vision Ideas'.



### f. School summits

Maroochy 2025 visioning studies were added to the curriculum of eight local primary and secondary schools during the first school term of 2004. Through a series of 'School Summits', the community consultative link was expanded to young people. Their visioning studies culminated in a Schools' Visioning

Summit in March 2004, when 65 student delegates came together to present their school's vision. Students then collectively developed the following joint youth vision statement for the Shire:

*Our Vision is to be committed to sustaining a balanced and positively energised way of life that is connected, ambitious, enthusiastic and determined to keep the community of Maroochy alive in 2025 and beyond.*

During a second round of school summits in October 2004, 30 students and teachers from five schools participated in devising action strategies. The students were asked to express their ideas and thoughts on how to make the visions a reality through the use of a 'Mandala'. The students' work provided a multitude of recommendations for the Action Planning Teams to consider. As Debra Robertson, facilitator of Performance Frontiers, noted: *"The elegance and sophistication of their input was simply stunning!"*



facilitator, MS Deborah Robinson  
(Performance Frontiers) facilitating schools  
Action Planning Workshop, August 2004.

### g. Youth Council ('Youth Voice') visioning sessions

Maroochy Shire's Youth Councillors held a visioning session in March 2004. They discussed issues that concerned them regarding the future of the Shire, and investigated methods that might address those issues. Their involvement was video recorded and presented at the Visioning Summit in a video presentation titled 'Youth Voice'. The video was designed as a message from the youth of the Shire to summit participants.

### h. Maroochy Shire Council staff workshops

Council staff attended information sessions throughout the project. In April 2004, a visioning workshop was held with 300 outdoor staff. Participants were polled on their preferred future.

### i. Summit pre-polling

Summit pre-polling sessions were held in Coolum, Nambour and Maroochydore in the week leading up to the Community Visioning Summit. This enabled community members to choose their preferred future without attending the four-hour Summit.



## j. Community Task Force

The 32-member Community Task Force had the job of:



In June 2004 the Community Taskforce completed the development of the Maroochy 2025 Visions

- *Sorting/clustering a database of 3,368 vision ideas into Key Focus Areas*
- *Titling (naming) sub-themes for each Key Focus Area identified*
- *Validating (reaffirming) Key Focus Areas and sub-themes*
- *Filtering, by short-listing, the Key Vision Ideas to be polled at the Visioning Summit, using specified vision criteria*
- *Refining the Key Vision Ideas after the Visioning Summit*
- *Drafting tiered Vision Statements and Indicators*
- *Drafting the Vision Statement document (presented here as Book 2)*

During the Action Planning phase of Maroochy 2025, the Community Task Force were 'keepers of the vision' by:

- *Ensuring strategies and actions aligned to the top Key Vision Ideas and Key Focus Areas*
- *Reviewing Status reports highlighting any problems that had occurred, or had the potential to occur*
- *Promoting the project as it evolved*
- *Endorsing the Action Plans in context of the Maroochy 2025 visions*

Some of the Community Task Force members played a dual role by also being a member of one of the action planning teams. However, members could not dually represent an agency and be on the Community Task Force at the same time.

## k. Action planning groups

Six diverse and dynamic volunteer groups were selected from within the wider community to form the Maroochy 2025 Action Planning Teams. The groups comprised specialists and interested parties. Each group focussed on one of the six Key Vision Areas. These *Action Planning Teams* met during the course of four months. The purpose of the action planning groups was to add 'operational dimensions' to the visions, as well as to create complimentary synergies between strategies developed by the various groups.

### I. Anticipatory Action Learning workshops

Maroochy 2025 involved a level of planning that had never been undertaken before by Maroochy Shire Council. 'Anticipatory Action Learning' (AAL) approaches were chosen for the task of developing an understanding of how to

map the Shire's future. AAL techniques were utilised by the three major groups involved in Maroochy 2025, namely:

- *The Community Task Force*
- *Action Planning Teams*
- *Maroochy 2025 Project Team*

Each group participated in workshops on the principles of AAL. Throughout the whole Maroochy 2025 process, participants and project teams were constantly asked to question assumptions, engage in as many ways of 'knowing' as possible, utilise all their senses and consider alternatives – all of which reflect principles of AAL. Using AAL approaches allowed goals to emerge. These methods also helped create an eagerness to develop practical actions.

### m. Action Planning 'Integration Night'

To achieve a more seamless integration between the various Action Planning focus groups, a 'world café' night was held wherein the teams gathered, ate, and had the opportunity to share and create synergies between the various teams' strategies and actions. Teams were encouraged to view the work of other groups and negotiate changes and recommendations to each other's plans. Team members were invited to dress in 'artefacts' pertaining to their focus area - to enliven their relationship with their strategies. This combination of fun and dining created an atmosphere of tolerance that allowed the plans of the focus groups to be amended and integrated with each other in a positive, productive manner.



In Nov 2004, over 72 Action Planners come together to compare and compliment strategies and actions between Maroochy 2025 Key Focus Areas visions

### n. Document and literature reviews

Members of the Maroochy 2025 Project Team undertook a comprehensive document and literature review to deepen their understanding of key concepts

utilised and to strengthen discussions throughout the Maroochy 2025 process. This material was also made available to Community Task Force members to help broaden their awareness of contemporary trends affecting communities.



Work by Lyn Moes

## o. Artists

Maroochy 2025 also engaged many varied and local artists to assist with creating powerful images of the future. These images were created in many forms including banners, storytelling books and drawings.

### Interpretative and deconstructive tools (Qualitative and statistical research)

Another method of applying future studies was through the interpretation of collected data. Through the numerous channels of public participation described earlier, data was constantly collected about Maroochy residents' needs, aspirations, fears and thoughts with regard to the future. Much of this was assessed qualitatively through four surveys.

*Qualitative research* refers to any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by simple statistics or other means of quantification.<sup>42</sup> It is research designed to uncover and understand what lies *behind* particular phenomena. Qualitative research is ideally suited for examining issues such as the future and local government bureaucracies. It undertakes analysis of people's lives, stories, societal behaviour, organisational functioning, social movements, and inter-actional relationships.<sup>43</sup> Maroochy 2025 applied qualitative research to measure the effects of attitudinal change (brought about by action learning methods) on visioning and action planning.

Maroochy 2025 was also strongly augmented by statistical data provided by four Surveys. *Market Facts* – a local statistical research company - scientifically conducted surveys amongst the general public.

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<sup>42</sup> Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Ground Theory, Procedures and Techniques*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1990, pp. 123 - 127.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123f.

## I. Community Survey No. 1

The first survey, begun in October 2003, identified community values, aspirations, focus areas and key choices to be made in Maroochy for a better future. *Community Survey No. 1* was a vital means for the Community Task Force to understand “*Where our community is now*”. It remains an important statistical validation of the community’s input into the visioning process.

*Market Facts* telephoned 484 randomly selected people from the Maroochy community. The statistical researchers ensured that the range of ages and geographic locations were representative: 44 respondents in each of the Maroochy Shire’s eleven divisions, and age quotas matching the 2001 Census.

The principle results of the Survey No 1 were as follows:

### a. Community awareness of Maroochy 2025

Twenty per cent of respondents were aware of the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project. Awareness levels varied from < 20 per cent up to 40 per cent across council divisions.

### b. Reasons for living in Maroochy Shire

Jobs, a relaxed healthy lifestyle and the scenic beauty / environment rated highly as the reasons why respondents chose to live in Maroochy Shire.

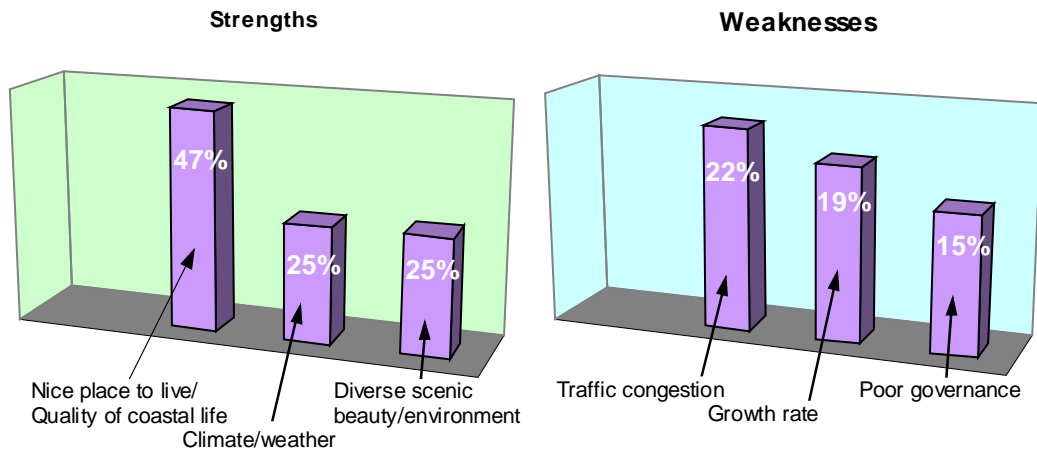
### c. Maroochy 2025 core value statements

Respondents generally agreed strongly with the following core value statements:

- *Practising ethics, integrity and respect in personal and public life (79%)*
- *Fostering community involvement and participation in decisions that affect our Shire (79%)*
- *Caring for and respecting our natural environment (74%)*
- *Belonging to a fair community that will improve our quality of life (67%)*
- *Valuing our cultural heritage (53%)*

### d. Community perceptions of living in Maroochy Shire

The top responses to the current strengths and weaknesses of the Shire are shown in the graphs below.



Strengths	Weaknesses
Nice place to live/quality of coastal life (47%)	Traffic congestion (22%)
Climate/weather (25%)	Growth rate (19%)
Diverse scenic beauty/environment (25%)	Poor governance (15%)

e. Key community issues / concerns facing Maroochy Shire  
(as at October 2003)

- *Managing population growth*
- *Traffic congestion*
- *Development character/building height*

f. Has Maroochy Shire become a better place to live since you arrived? Is it a worse place? Has it stayed the same?

- **37%** said they believed Maroochy was a better place to live since they arrived

When asked about the future:

- **41%** stated that they believed that Maroochy Shire would become a better place to live
- **92%** of respondents agreed that Maroochy Shire needed a shared vision to create a better future

## g. Evaluation of communities

Respondents were read a list of qualities used to evaluate communities and were asked to rate the importance of each quality. The majority of respondents stated that all these qualities were 'very' or 'somewhat' important. Respondents were then asked to rank these qualities in terms of current performance. Ratings varied from 'good' to 'fair'. The main divergence between importance and performance was in the area of 'quality of leadership', which was rated as poor.

The top rating qualities and respondent's current assessment of these qualities for Maroochy Shire are summarised in the table below.

Quality	Personal Ranking	Performance Rating for Maroochy Shire	
Quality of leadership	Very important (82%)	Poor	45%
Accessible health care	Very important (82%)	Good	57%
Fair and ethical decision-making	Very important (79%)	Fair	38%
Protecting and sustaining healthy natural environment	Very important (69%)	Fair	43%
Safe, crime-free neighbourhoods	Very important (69%)	Good	54%

## h. Community expectations (priorities) for the future

In order to meet community expectations for a better future, respondents said that Maroochy Shire would need to:

- *Control/manage growth*
- *Improve leadership and increase wise decision-making*
- *Protect and sustain our natural environment*
- *Improve public transport and mobility*

## i. Community's key choices (policy options)

When respondents were read a set of policy options facing Maroochy Shire, the following four options rated highest:

- *Maintain low building heights (92%)*
- *Maintain current rate payer levels (80%)*
- *Provide resources to the community to build civic leadership and partnerships (70%)*
- *Make coordinated decisions with our regional neighbours (63%)*

Other high priorities were:

- *'Protecting the quality of the natural environment' (61%)*
- *'Limiting the population growth' (60%)*

	Top Four Community Priorities for Maroochy's future	Community's Key Choice
1	Control/manage growth	Maintain low building heights, contain urban expansion, promote compact walkable towns, and protect open and rural spaces
2	Improve leadership and increase wise decision-making	Provide resources for civic leadership, and make decisions with regional neighbours
3	Protect and sustain our natural environment	Limit population growth, contain urban expansion, and protect air/water quality
4	Improve public transport and mobility	People before cars, and increase infrastructure for alternative forms of transport instead of for the car

## II. Community Survey No. 2

In May 2004, a second scientific survey was conducted. *Community Survey No. 2* matched the validity of the emerging core values, goals (Key Focus Areas), key initiatives (30 vision ideas/goals) and priorities of Maroochy 2025 Visioning Project against the views of the general public. In this survey, 484 residents were interviewed by phone. The sample size fitted the community's demographic profile (age profile except youth under 18 years of age), and exceeded the statistically valid sample size of 384. The sample thus represents, with confidence, the views of up to 95 per cent of the Maroochy community. These survey results greatly assisted the Community Task Force in checking the validity of their work. Indeed, it helped them to draft the Community Vision for Maroochy.

Each key focus area has five vision ideas/goals. These have been numbered 1-5 although do not necessarily rank in order of priority or importance to each other. To enable the reader to interpret survey 2 and 3 results, the following table itemises the 30 vision ideas/goals.

<b>Key Focus Area 1:</b> <b>Our valued natural environment</b>	1.1 From our reverence for water, we developed innovative and alternative strategies in water conservation and sewerage treatment such as using biological water filters and re-using treated water.
	1.2 People of all ages are able to safely access our diverse natural environment. Internationally, we lead the way in sustaining clean water, clean waterways, clean beaches, clean environs, and clean recreational parks.
	1.3 Maroochy's Rivers boast revegetated banks and are teeming with life.
	1.4 Through a united regional approach, we are motivated to protect and improve our natural environments and provide sufficient funding to do so.
	1.5 Through strict environmental legislation, we manage to balance human needs with those of the environment.

<b>Key Focus Area 2:</b> <b>Our healthy, vibrant, inclusive and learning community</b>	2.1 We developed a community culture concerned with the safety and well being of others. We take responsibility for how our actions affect others.
	2.2 We are an inclusive society - all people have a sense of belonging.
	2.3 We are a community that focuses on equitable access to lifelong learning, public education, and training. We have increased the value and worth of our communities. Interaction between age groups is common.
	2.4 We inform, educate, and provide products and services on holistic, healthy living to all ages.
	2.5 We created pleasant public places, town squares, and village community centres that offer social opportunities for education, information and celebration.



<p>Key Focus Area 3: Our diverse transport, infrastructure and mobility</p>	<p>3.1 Our reliable and affordable public transport provides comfortable and equitable access to all users. It caters for the needs of the elderly, people with disabilities, mothers with strollers and young people with bikes/boards.</p>
	<p>3.2 Council and regional stakeholders provide a balanced and diverse range of travel options, including public infrastructure for walking and cycling networks, roads, multi-modal greenways, transit lanes, rail, light rail, ferry, CBD shuttles and Park'n'Ride stations.</p>
	<p>3.3 By careful urban and transport planning, we have distinct walkable villages where people live, work, play and grow old without having to leave their local area. Our urban residents are within comfortable walking distance to a public transport service.</p>
	<p>3.4 The core of our public transport system in Maroochy is a light rail (electric tram) service connecting all townships and business centres.</p>
	<p>3.5 In 2025, our CBDs and seaside tourist centres are people-friendly and beautified. Frequent and free public shuttles service these centres, while other private vehicles have limited access.</p>

<p>Key Focus Area 4: Our responsible leadership, participatory decision-making and foresight</p>	<p>4.1 Community leaders educate themselves to be ethical, inclusive, informed, compassionate, transparent, collaborative and lifelong learners.</p>
	<p>4.2 Our decision-making is based on achieving the community vision's long-term goals and action plans through partnerships; Council consults with community panels to ensure consistency with the community vision.</p>
	<p>4.3 Community visioning is a way of life – corporate governance for us, enabling effective community and government partnerships. We keep our visions 'alive' – by regularly updating them to match the community's changing values and circumstances.</p>
	<p>4.4 Legislation allows community-initiated referenda and e-polling on major issues that affect the community vision.</p>
	<p>4.5 To achieve our community's regional vision, a regional council for the Sunshine Coast empowers our distinct local communities to manage their own places.</p>

<p>Key Focus Area 5: Our smartly managed rural and urban future</p>	<p>5.1 We reduce the impacts of urban living by creating environmentally sensitive developments and innovative buildings (green architecture) designed for our climate and lifestyle. These are energy and water efficient and generate solar power. They harvest rainwater and recycle grey water.</p>
	<p>5.2 Affordable, adaptable, liveable, and 'green' housing exists for our diverse community. It will meet the needs of all ages.</p>
	<p>5.3 We have urban containment boundaries. These protect the viability and bio-diversity of our natural resources whilst ensuring the quality of life of our unique townships.</p>
	<p>5.4 Our diverse communities live, work and play in high quality, distinct, compact, walkable urban villages/towns separated by green belts, wildlife corridors, natural ecosystems or rural lands. The unique characteristics in our landscapes and in our heritage are clearly identifiable.</p>
	<p>5.5 We capped the population to known limits.</p>

<p>Key Focus Area 6: Our innovative and diverse economy</p>	<p>6.1 In urban areas we are known for our clean, green and varied light industries. These include eco-tourism, education, healthcare professions, retail, service, hospitality and renewable energy innovations.</p>
	<p>6.2 In rural areas we are known for our farm-tourism, farm forestry and organic produce. These meet the needs of the local, national and international markets.</p>
	<p>6.3 We developed new technologies to assist an innovative and diverse economy, while maintaining support for established professions and industries.</p>
	<p>6.4 Through collaborative, creative, community-minded efforts, our innovative businesses increase natural and human capital. These businesses are globally competitive and export-orientated. They celebrate the success of a diverse and knowledgeable workforce culture.</p>
	<p>6.5 Our advantages (vibrant community lifestyle, creativity and infrastructure) make e-enterprise a viable option for small businesses wishing to access global markets.</p>

The following table shows the order of ranking respondents to Survey 2 gave to the 30 vision ideas. The 'mean score' given here is the average of all the respondents' ratings - 'crucial', 'important' etc., through to 'don't know'. The first column indicates the position of the vision idea within the overall focus area.

- NE = (Sustain the Natural Environment)
- COMM = (Create healthy, vibrant, inclusive learning communities)
- T = (Improve transport, infrastructure and mobility)
- L = (Promote responsible leadership and decision-making to achieve our vision)
- R & U G = (Smartly manage rural and urban growth)
- E = (Create an innovative and diverse economy)



Overall Ranking (Mean)	Vision Idea	Focus Area & Rank	Mean	% Support	Overall Ranking (% Support)
1	From our reverence of water, we developed innovative and alternative strategies in sewerage treatment, biological filters and reuse of treated water	NE 1	4.5	96.3%	=12
2	All ages are able to safely access our diverse natural environment. We lead the way with clean water, waterways, beaches, environs, and recreational parks	NE 2	4.47	99.4%	1
3	Our reliable and affordable public transport provides comfortable and equitable access to all users. Eg, it caters for the needs of the elderly, people with disabilities, mothers with strollers and young people with bikes/boards	T 1	4.47	98.8%	2
4	Maroochy River has revegetated banks, and is teeming with aquatic and bird life	NE 3	4.45	98.3%	3
5	Council and regional stakeholders provide a balanced and diverse range of travel options, including public infrastructure for walking and cycling networks, roads, multi-modal greenways, transit lanes, rail, light rail, ferry, CBD shuttles and Park'n'Ride stations	T 2	4.39	98%	=6
=6	Through a united regional approach we are motivated to protect our natural environments	NE 4	4.38	95.9%	13
=6	Community leaders educate themselves to be ethical, inclusive, informed, compassionate, transparent, collaborative, and lifelong learners	L 1	4.38	96.3%	=12
7	By careful urban and transport planning, we have distinct walkable villages where people live, work, play and grow old without having to leave the area. Our urban residents are within comfortable walking distance to a public transport service	T 3	4.31	94.6%	16
8	We develop a community culture of concern about the safety and wellbeing of others as we are about ourselves. We take responsibility for the effects of our action on others	COMM 1	4.3	98.5%	4
9	Through strict environmental legislations, we manage to balance human and environmental needs	NE 5	4.26	95%	15

Overall Ranking (Mean)	Vision Idea	Focus Area & Rank	Mean	% Support	Overall Ranking (% Support)
10	We reduce the impacts of urban living by creating environmentally sensitive developments and innovative buildings (green architecture) designed for our climate and lifestyle, to be energy and water efficient, to generate solar power, to harvest water and recycle grey water	R & U G1	4.25	96.5%	11
11	Our decision-making is based on achieving the community vision's long-term goals and action plans through partnerships, and Council consults with community panels to ensure consistency with the community vision	L 2	4.21	93.6%	17
12	Affordable, adaptable, liveable, and 'green' housing exists for our diverse community - meeting the needs of all ages	R & U G 2	4.15	98.2%	5
13	We are an inclusive society for all – people have a sense of belonging	COMM 2	4.14	97.8%	8
=14	We are a learning community that focuses on equitable access to lifelong learning, public education, and training. We built the value and worth of our people, communities, and interactions between the ages	COMM 3	4.11	98%	=6
=14	In urban areas we are known for our clean, green and varied light industries including, eco-tourism, education, healthcare professions, retail, service, hospitality, renewable energy innovations	E 1	4.11	97.9%	7
15	We have urban containment boundaries to protect the viability and bio-diversity of our natural resources and the quality of life of our unique townships	R & U G 3	4.10	92.3%	=19
=16	Community visioning is a way of life and corporate governance for us, enabling community and government partnerships. Keeping our visions 'alive' we regularly update the community vision to stay in tune with the community's changing values and circumstances.	L 3	4.09	92.3%	=19
=16	Our diverse communities mainly live, work and play in high quality, distinct, compact, walkable urban villages/towns separated by green belts, wildlife corridors, natural ecosystems and rural lands. Our unique rural and urban landscapes, heritage, and characteristics are clearly identifiable.	R & U G 4	4.09	93%	18
17	We inform, educate and provide products and services to all ages on holistic healthy living	COMM 4	4.08	97.5%	9
18	Legislation allows community-initiated referenda and e-polling on major issues that affect the community vision for our future	L 4	4.05	90.3%	21
19	In rural areas we are known for our farm-tourism, farm forestry, and organic produce for wide and varied markets	E 2	4.03	95.3%	14
20	A regional council for the Sunshine Coast empowers our distinct local communities to manage their own places to achieve our community's regional vision	L 5	4.01	87.4%	23
21	We create pleasant public places, town squares, and village community centres to educate, inform, and celebrate social opportunities	COMM 5	4.00	97.4%	10
22	The jewel in our public transport system in Maroochy is a light rail (electric tram) service connecting all townships and business centres. Parts of the former Cane Tramways are now light rail passenger lines or trails	T4	3.97	89.1%	22
23	We developed new technologies to assist an innovative and diverse economy while maintaining support for established professions and industries	E 3	3.95	91.9%	20
24	We capped the population to sustain our natural resources, keep water and sewerage and transport infrastructure affordable and keep a healthy quality of life a reality for our residents and future generations	R & U G 5	3.90	81.4%	25
25	Through collaborative, creative, community-minded efforts, our innovative businesses build natural and human capital, are globally competitive and export orientated and celebrate the success of a diverse and knowledgeable workforce culture	E 4	3.88	84.7%	24
26	Our vibrant community lifestyle, creativity and infrastructure, makes us an e-enterprise Mecca for small	E 5	3.74	81.3%	26

Overall Ranking (Mean)	Vision Idea	Focus Area & Rank	Mean	% Support	Overall Ranking (% Support)
	business with global reach via the web				
27	In 2025, private passengers cars are restricted from our CBDs and seaside tourist centres. These areas are people-friendly and beautified and are serviced by frequent and free public shuttles or public-pool electric cars available at Park'n'Ride depots in convenient locations	T 5	3.48	73.5%	27

### III. Community Survey No. 3

In November 2004, a third survey was undertaken in response to the question of *"How will we get there?"* (ie. achieve our vision of the future) *Community Survey No. 3* gauged the level of support for strategies developed in Stage 3 - Action Planning. The results of the survey are being used to shape a focus point for the project team and the Maroochy Vision Implementation Committees (MVIC).

A random telephone survey of 300 residents from Maroochy Shire Council was conducted – the sample population being equally male and female. Most (63 per cent) had lived in Maroochy Shire for five to 20 years, but more than a quarter (26 per cent) had lived in Maroochy less than five years. More than half (60 per cent) were middle-aged (35-64 years old).

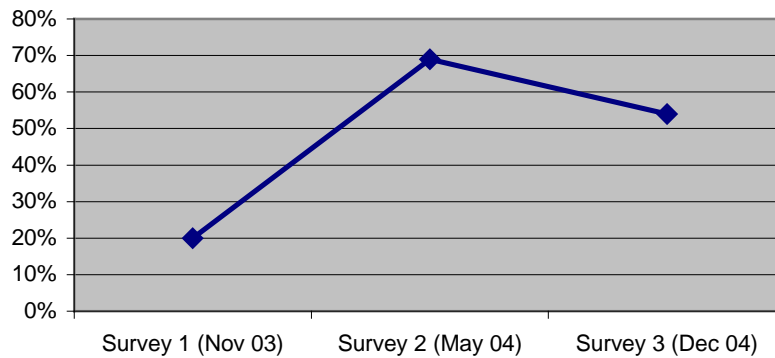
And 52 per cent of those sampled considered themselves as inhabiting the *"urban coastal strip,"* whilst 26 per cent listed themselves as living in the *"rural hinterland"*. A further 21 per cent described themselves as residents of *"semi-rural, in-between areas"*. These figures closely tally with the general demographic make-up of Maroochy Shire.

## Key Findings

### 1. Community awareness

- **54%** of respondents were aware of the Maroochy 2025 project
- In the first survey (December 2003), **20%** of respondents were aware of the Maroochy 2025 community visioning project
- In the second survey (May 2004), **69%** of respondents were aware of the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project

**Trend Analysis - Community Awareness**  
**Nov 03 - Dec 04**



### 2. Ranking the strategies

The following tables show what strategies ranked foremost (the top ten).

- *NE = (Our valued Natural Environment)*
- *COMM = (Our healthy, vibrant, inclusive learning communities)*
- *T = (Our diverse transport, infrastructure and mobility)*
- *L = (Our responsible leadership and decision-making to achieve our vision)*
- *R & U G = (Our smartly managed rural and urban growth)*
- *E = (Our innovative and diverse economy)*

*Ranking by Mean*

<b>Vision Idea</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Mean</b>
R & UG 1	Provide innovative solutions for our communities to reduce water and energy consumption levels	4.60
T 1	Develop high-standard public transport systems	4.49
NE 1	Develop, research, implement world-best practice standards for: water quality, waterway condition	4.45
NE 2	Increase biological filtering of the built and natural environment	4.43
E 1	Target and partner with others to facilitate the development of a skilled workforce and job accessibility for all community residents	4.42
NE 3	Establish programs to appropriately rehabilitate waterways, wetlands and riparian zones	4.41
T 2	Partner with our State and Local Government partners in the development of integrated transport solutions	4.34
T 3	Develop our communities so that all elements of community have access and mobility options	4.34
COMM 3	Foster environments that improve levels of self esteem	4.33
E 2	Promote environmentally and socially sustainable business practices	4.32
L 1	<b>Ensure we are achieving our visions through values-based and ethical leadership that is accountable to the community</b>	4.30

*Ranking by % of Support for strategies to be implemented*

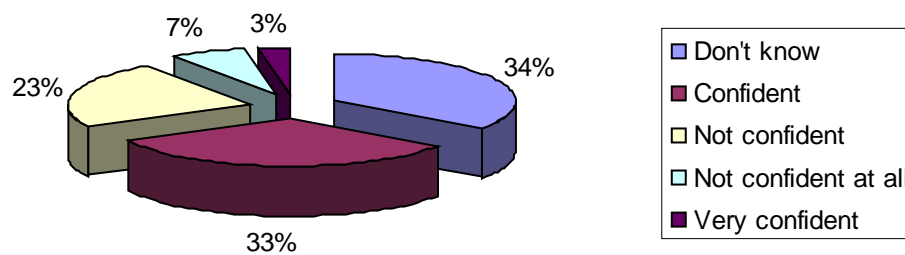
<b>Vision Idea</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Mean</b>
R & UG 1	Provide innovative solutions for our communities to reduce water and energy consumption levels	94.3%
E 1	Target and partner with others to facilitate the development of a skilled workforce and job accessibility for all community residents	92.7%
NE 1	Develop, research, implement world-best practice standards for: water quality, waterway condition	91.3%
E 2	Promote environmentally and socially sustainable business practices	90.7%
NE 3	Establish programs to appropriately rehabilitate waterways, wetlands and riparian zones	90.3%
T 2	Partner with our State and Local Government partners in the development of integrated transport solutions	89.0%
T 3	Develop our communities so that all elements of community have access and mobility options	88.7%
NE 2	Increase biological filtering of the built and natural environment	88.3%
T 1	Develop high-standard public transport systems	87.7%
R & UG 2	<b>Build upon our vibrant and diverse rural areas to ensure they remain sustainable economically</b>	87.7%
COMM 3	Foster environments that improve levels of self esteem	85.7%

The two highlighted strategies: *“Build upon our vibrant and diverse rural areas to ensure they remain sustainable economically”* and *“Ensure we are achieving our visions through values-based and ethical leadership that is accountable to the community”* are the only ones not reflected in both of the top ten ranking tables above. There is therefore a remarkable similarity with the community’s level of support for the top ranking strategies.

### 3. Confidence in Achieving the Maroochy 2025 Strategies

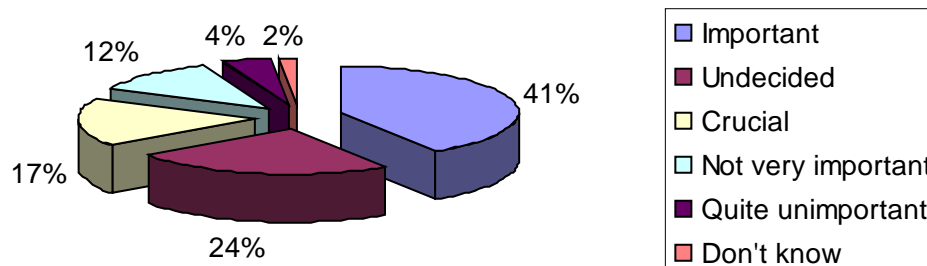
When respondents were asked about their confidence in achieving the strategies, 33 per cent of respondents were confident that they could be achieved, and an almost equal number of respondents (34 per cent), or one in three, *“didn’t know”* whether the strategies could be achieved. Their responses are shown graphically below.

**Confident Strategies can be achieved**



When respondents were then asked about their role in implementation, 41 per cent of respondents thought it was *“important”*, and 24 per cent of respondents *“didn’t know”*. Their responses are shown graphically below.

**Future Involvement in Implementing Strategies**





In summary, Community Survey No. 3 demonstrated a high percentage of support for the strategies. The highest recorded support was 94 per cent for: *“Provide innovative solutions for our communities to reduce water and energy consumption levels.”* The lowest recorded support was 67 per cent for *“Build upon our existing foresight capabilities through applied learning projects.”*

However, the community is not confident about the strategies being achieved. More than 60 per cent of respondents either didn't know (34 per cent), or were *“not confident”* or *“not confident at all”* (30 per cent) that the strategies could be achieved.

Despite this, Community Survey No. 3 found a reasonably high level of ownership or *‘sense of responsibility’* for the future implementation of the strategies. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents believe that they need to become involved in implementing the strategies. Less than 20 per cent considered their role to be either *“not very important”* or *“quite unimportant”*.

Community awareness about the project has declined slightly from the previous survey level of 69 per cent to 54 per cent. Just a little more than half of the respondents interviewed were aware of the project.

#### IV. Community Survey No. 4 (Maroochy 2025 Evaluation)

In November 2004, a fourth and final, benchmark survey was undertaken. This survey evaluated Maroochy 2025 as a whole. *Community Survey No. 4* was thus a longitudinal evaluation, determining whether Maroochy Shire residents who had experienced Maroochy 2025 had truly changed their attitudes towards the future. This survey has also measured the methodologies utilised and their application.

Market Facts was again commissioned to conduct telephone interviews, this time amongst a range of stakeholders who had been involved in the Maroochy 2025 project. The Maroochy 2025 Project Team provided Market Facts with the stakeholder database. From this database of 563 respondents, 331 interviews were conducted. The range of ages, length of residency in Maroochy and location (rural/coastal etc.) was much the same as the last survey, and once again men and women were interviewed in equal proportions.

#### V. Key Findings

Amongst the participants of Maroochy 2025 project who were interviewed, there was a high level of awareness and confidence in the implementation (over 60 per cent) of strategies and action plans. Respondents often felt it crucial to become involved in implementing Maroochy 2025 plans.

The group showed strong agreement (over 80 per cent) regarding the need for a range of measures to manage, evaluate and report progress in executing Maroochy 2025 plans. Personal impact from the project was viewed as generally positive: The majority described their experience as *“enjoyable”* (32 per cent), a *“learning experience”* (32 per cent) or *“empowering”* (18 per cent). Less than a quarter (22 per cent) found the process *“frustrating”*. Respondents remarked on how Maroochy 2025 improved their critical thinking (69 per cent), changed their attitude towards the future (57 per cent), or made them feel empowered to change their future (50 per cent).

Eighty-one per cent of respondents had been involved in action learning community workshops. Of these, nearly 60 per cent found the workshops *“very effective”* or *“effective”*.

There was optimism (83 per cent) about Maroochy 2025 influencing the future of local government planning and policy-making, but less than 40 per cent of respondents believed their community had become more cohesive as a result of Maroochy 2025. Even so, respondents generally wanted the impact of Maroochy 2025 to be assessed. Respondents were almost unanimous (94 per cent) that measures should be developed to judge the level of impact of Maroochy 2025 strategies and actions on communities. They also strongly believed (91 per cent) that it was important to assess the influence of Maroochy 2025 on local government planning and policy-making. Even the lowest level of agreement - on establishing measures for the number of people engaged in discussions about alternatives to their future – was still relatively strong (81 per cent).

Particularly notable was a shared confidence in the future. Over 90 per cent thought Maroochy Shire would become a *“better”* place to live in if the community worked together to achieve a shared vision. Even so, respondents were not convinced that Maroochy 2025 would become a way of life or would improve leadership. Only 45 per cent of respondents were either *“very confident”* or *“confident”* that this was possible. Political cynicism, and generally a lack of confidence with Council’s track record with regard to controlling development were the main reasons for this. Some comments were:

- *“Maroochy has never embraced what the community wants, (it is) more focused on business and development”*
- *“Because they suffer from short term greed and not long term plans”*
- *“Too many agendas – professional and political”*
- *“Putting a 20-storey building in Maroochydore is not in keeping with the vision”*

Despite all this, there was almost a consensus (92 per cent agreement) that the Maroochy 2025 Community Project had been worthwhile. This is probably one of the biggest compliments respondents can give to the project. The following comments are indicative of the range of positive responses given.

The project was worthwhile because:

- *"Anything that makes people think about the future is important"*
- *"It has generated a lot of ideas and energy from different people. It has bought people out of their bubbles and got them thinking on a broader basis"*
- *"It allows more optimism – not cynicism in spite of population growth – retention of Maroochy high-quality lifestyle"*
- *"Too many people say they don't get a say and now we have all had that chance"*
- *"It gives hope for the future – guidance for future and gives us a sense of being heard and valued for our future"*
- *"Sharing information and being with other people who have a passion for the community we live in"*
- *"Because it brought together a variety of different voices and gave (people) a forum from which to be heard"*

A majority of respondents were optimistic and expressed the hope that their involvement in the process would result in some positive outcomes for the community. Comments included:

- *"Hope (the project is successful) or it will be a waste of time"*
- *"(I am) hoping it will keep rolling"*
- *"I hope they do (carry out the project) and not just put (it) in the draw. I hope the people and not just big money developers, are considered"*
- *"(The project supports) the voice of the community. Councils are now required to listen to the community"*
- *"Hopefully they will take notice of the community"*
- *"(The project) was very intelligently carried out and [it] had good consultations"*
- *"It's a good start"*
- *"Hope all my efforts will have results"*

Other respondents had less positive views, as illustrated by the following comments:

- *"Money rules and that's the bottom line; developers and Councils are driven by money"*
- *"Money is what drives all Council and that's the bottom line"*
- *"Too many political influences and developers"*
- *"Politicians get their own agenda"*

