

Visit Sunshine Coast
A.C.N. 144 749 717
10th Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 18 November 2020
Malt Shovel Tap House
Minutes of Meeting

Members present: Members noted as per attendance register.

In attendance: David Ryan, Chair
Mark Skinner, Deputy Chair
John Hall, Company Secretary
Winston Hall, Director
Jennifer Swaine, Director
Zoe Sparks, Director
Craig Davidson, Interim Chief Executive Officer
Gillian Toner, Head of Operations & Board Secretariat
Guy Williams, Financial Controller
VSC Staff

By video link: Rodger Powell, Director
Ashley Howden, Director

1. Welcome by the Chair:

The Chair started by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which the meeting is held:

"I would like to respectfully acknowledge the Kabi Kabi people, the Traditional Owners of the land on which this event is taking place and Elders both past and present.

I also recognise those whose ongoing effort to protect and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures which will leave a lasting legacy for future Elders and leaders."

The Chair officially opened the meeting at 4:11pm and welcomed all in attendance and introduced himself.

The Chair also welcomed the Board of Directors, Craig Davidson (Interim CEO) and Shannon Adams of Poole Group (Company Auditors) who is available to answer any questions as needed.

Notice of Meeting

Notice of meeting taken as read by the members and convened as a quorum was present as confirmed by the Company Secretary.

Total eligible members in attendance: 30

As a quorum was present, the meeting was declared open for business.
(Quorum is a minimum 30 eligible members or 5% of eligible members).

It was noted that guests were welcome to witness the proceedings of this meeting, but the business of the meeting is confined to eligible members and their nominated representatives only. Any comments, questions or matters raised for discussion during the meeting must be relevant to the business and may be taken on notice.

Introduction of Directors and CEO

The Chair introduced the Company's Directors and Interim CEO. The Chair noted that two non-executive Directors, Rodger Powell and Ashley Howden, were unable to attend due to border closures but have joined via video link.

The Chair also welcomed representatives from Tourism Noosa, Destination Gympie Region and our sub-regional tourism organisations.

2. Apologies

No apologies.

3. To confirm the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 20 November 2019

Noted as read.

The motion was moved by: John Orning

Seconded by: Mark Skinner.

The motion was carried in favour by members.

4. Chairman's Report

It has been without doubt one of the most challenging years for Sunshine Coast tourism.
To use a clichéd – but very pertinent – expression: it has been a tale of two halves.

From a performance point of view, we couldn't have done better in the first half of the financial year. We finished the 2019 calendar year as the fastest growing tourism region in Queensland

– and one of the best performing across Australia. This backed up tourism growth figures over the previous three years, highlighting that the results were both consistent and unequivocal.

In absolute numbers, in the pre-Covid-19 world, the Sunshine Coast tourism region was kicking goals in terms of growing visitor numbers and increasing visitor expenditure. In fact, when compared with other competing tourism destinations such as the Gold Coast, Tropical North Qld and North Coast NSW, over the period March 2019 to March 2020, the Sunshine Coast was number one in terms of:

- growth in domestic visitor nights,
- growth in total visitor nights and
- top generator of intrastate visitation.

While the result is a great endorsement of the effort put in by the whole industry, the impact COVID-19 has had on our region’s tourism businesses has been shocking. VSC responded quickly and has focused its work on supporting tourism businesses during the crisis through to recovery, not too far in the future.

This included a high level of communication to keep members informed about guidelines and what it meant for their business to operate safely, information on funding programs and creating an agile approach to different marketing scenarios and campaigns to best position the Sunshine Coast for visitors who could travel to the region.

From 2 May, restrictions began to ease for recreational day trips through to 1 June where stage two of easing of restrictions allowed unlimited travel and overnight stays for most of Queensland. Pleasingly, our region began to see a re-emergence of visitation to the Sunshine Coast in particular from the drive market. This provided a glimmer of hope and some confidence for our tourism businesses as they slowly returned to operation.

The performance was strong across the region, and basically since intra-state travel opened up, anecdotal reports suggest that the Sunshine Coast has been Queensland’s leading region for travel. Which doesn’t compensate for the fact that numbers are vastly down on previous years.

While visitor levels mid-week have not recovered to pre-Covid levels, weekends have been very strong and has attracted both new and return visitors, which augurs well for the future.

We are fortunate in that our tourism assets mirror the new fundamentals of travel and the wider society.

The ‘great outdoors’, uncrowded spaces, wellness and nature are at the heart of travel decisions these days and will continue to be so for at least the foreseeable future. However, it is one thing

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to have the right assets, it is another thing to be able to market and communicate these unique advantages and then get buy-in from the travelling public.

The results over the past six months, in the most of trying circumstances, have shown that the way we have positioned the Sunshine Coast is resonating with the travelling public.

I emphasised at last year's AGM that Visit Sunshine Coast was working hard to differentiate itself from other coastal destinations. We did not want to be a 'one trick pony', despite arguably having Australia's most attractive beaches. In fact, I am very happy to say that the 'star' performer of our sub-regions over the past six months has been the Hinterland. Even with State borders closed, the Hinterland drew on its rich collection of natural and authentic experiences to consistently fill over weekends. Did this make up for the loss of some of their key target markets such as weddings and groups? No, but in the circumstances, thanks to an intensive promotional campaign by the VSC team with our friends in Hinterland Tourism and all the operators, the Hinterland experienced an impressive recovery once travel restrictions were eased.

Interestingly, some of the best exposure during Covid-19 came when Maleny in the Hinterland attracted Sunshine Coast local, Adam Scott (the former world champion golfer). He is an incredible ambassador for the region, and with the VSC team, his round of golf at Maleny – which can cost as little as \$5 a round – brought worldwide attention to the Hinterland.

Celebrity power also worked very strongly for the Gympie region, with the Hemsworths' camping holiday at Rainbow Beach being cleverly used to highlight the area's laid back charm. The teams at Destination Gympie and VSC cleverly translated this celebrity endorsement into significant publicity, causing an immediate and very discernible spike in destination searches for Rainbow Beach and Maleny on some of the world's biggest most-influential travel sites.

As I say, it is one thing to have the potential, it is another thing to make sure that it resonates with travel markets, and the VSC team was highly effective in making the most of whatever opportunities the political situation (and status of borders) allowed.

We know how challenging that was for local operators. There are many tourism and hospitality operators who weren't able to survive, and others who were just getting by but given the health and safety record achieved in Queensland, the future is positive, even if it is not perfect. The crucial aspect that has helped the Sunshine Coast recover strongly is the co-operation on display across the region.

As the Regional Tourism Organisation we have appreciated the outstanding support of Sunshine Coast Council, Tourism and Events Queensland as well as Local tourism organisations, Tourism Noosa and Destination Gympie Region and all the sub-regional tourism organisations. We have

had success in attracting greater funding from the Queensland Government and this additional funding is directly benefiting local tourism organisations.

Our primary objective has been to ensure the wider region – Sunshine Coast – is a dominant force in the State and National tourism landscape. We have formidable regional competition, so it is essential to work as a team to build our unique selling points.

To achieve that, we began developing a new destination campaign called For Real that captures all the authentic and distinctive features that sets apart the Sunshine Coast. Allied to campaigns such as Tourism Noosa’s Biosphere branding, it presents the Sunshine Coast’s nature-based credentials. The campaign is being developed further, with many applications for various sectors – think...For Real Adventure, For Real Weddings, For Real Dining, For Real Wellness. The emphasis, of course, is REAL. Interestingly, we were developing the campaign well in advance of Covid, but the pandemic has made it even more relevant.

I am confident that we have the natural attributes to recover quickly, and that is backed by new infrastructure such as the new runway at Sunshine Coast Airport. Its launch was at the height of the pandemic, so planes haven’t been too frequent, but significantly, the crisis provided opportunities and led to a new partnership with Alliance Airways, who over the past three months have introduced two totally new direct services to Sunshine Coast Airport from Cairns and Canberra, and tomorrow QantasLink will also start direct services from Canberra. These services are all performing stronger than expected and we are confident they will be sustainable. This is quite a turnaround from 30 June 2020, when we had lost all our direct services. Direct services from Adelaide had re-commenced and we are ‘hopeful’ that full capacity will return to the Sydney and Melbourne routes as soon as possible.

I’d like to acknowledge the team at Sunshine Coast Airport. CEO Andrew Brodie had an extremely tough first year. At one time it was like having a pub with no beer, but the new runway is a tremendous initiative, and Sunshine Coast Council’s and now Palisades investment in such a high-quality asset will provide critical momentum for the recovery of our tourism industry over the coming years.

Before the pandemic, one of the fastest growing sectors of our market was the business, meetings and events sector, and there’s no doubt that the increased capacity at the Airport will play a major role in encouraging growth in this high-yielding sector.

It has already encouraged complementary infrastructure such as the Sunshine Coast Convention Centre, along with new accommodation projects and attractions.

We saw during the pandemic that the Sunshine Coast became a “sporting hub” for AFL, NRL and the national netball league. Our accessibility was an important factor in this, as was our

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reputation for great facilities, attractive climate and our nature-based environment. It has provided us vast media coverage and while the border situation may take time for the media presence to translate into interstate bookings, we have established a very powerful platform.

The VSC team – in conjunction with our partners – has worked hard to make the Sunshine Coast name front-of-mind with potential travellers. Even with interstate borders closed, our team very effectively focused on key drivers of intrastate tourism, with dedicated Sunshine Coast programs on Queensland Weekender as well as promotions through RACQ and the Courier Mail. The QLD Weekender program that was on Friday caused a spike in numbers. And to ensure that interstate residents had the Sunshine Coast on top of their “to visit” lists, we have hosted numerous national TV shows such as Today, as well as journalists representing national publications.

We are very well positioned for the recovery not just for the immediate future, but for the longer term. To expedite this and working with all key stakeholders, we have produced a new Destination Tourism Plan covering the five years to 2025. You may recall that we produced the Visit Sunshine Coast Strategic Plan in 2018, and for the first two years, we clearly as a region delivered. We will release the document online today.

The Strategies and Plans will be delivered in line with additional funding received from Tourism & Events Qld and the QLD State Government to assist with the recovery of the Sunshine Coast tourism industry. The deliverables of the Destination Tourism Plan remain relevant as strategies and infrastructure requirements remain basically the same. The five-year plan was built with extensive research into best practice tourism, consumer insights and trends and infrastructure requirements to drive visitation, expenditure and overnight stays. Our tourism future needs to remain agile and responsive.

Even with the impact of Covid, we have seen some very exciting new product. In fact, just two weeks ago, the Night Quarter, next door to us here (and where we will enjoy our networking gathering later), was launched and will boost significantly the region’s hospitality and night life. You may have seen it featured on the Today Show a few weeks ago. The VSC media team brought the Today Weather Crew to Night Quarter to show that while beaches and nature might be central to our profile, we can also offer dynamic entertainment and hospitality. And even at breakfast time, Night Quarter put on a spectacular show.

I’d also like to congratulate Sunshine Coast Council for introducing numerous tourism-friendly projects, from art-related initiatives to walking and cycle tracks.

Refreshing our product base is critical. That is why one of the most important projects we have undertaken in the past year has been a complete review of the VSC website which will ultimately lead to a revitalisation of the website, incorporating more functionality for users and digital

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resources. The project is ongoing, but you will see significant changes over the next six months, and thereafter.

RTOs are by nature collaborative efforts. We are only as strong as our members and our partners. Even with the restrictions of Covid-19 we have engaged constantly with our members, and to ensure that the tourism community is as connected as possible, we extended a free membership to existing members and a special \$10 annual fee offer to new members, which has been very well received. In fact, in the 12 months since the last AGM we have added over 150 extra members.

While we haven't been able to run as many members workshops as we would have liked we have engaged extensively with our members, as well as with our sub-regional organisations, who bring enthusiasm, experience and insight to our day to day operations, and help shape our direction in the immediate and longer term.

During the year we lost the services of VSC CEO Simon Latchford, but were very fortunate to be able to attract an Interim CEO, Craig Davidson, who brought his extensive experience in destination management to the Sunshine Coast as we worked through the Covid-19 recovery phase. The Chair acknowledged the work of Craig Davidson and his work in pulling together the entire region to work for the Sunshine Coast. He is well regarded in the industry. Craig finished up at VSC on Friday.

Craig has done a fantastic job and his tenure will ensure that the recently appointed CEO, Matt Stoeckel will be well-positioned to help build the Sunshine Coast's position in the national (and hopefully Trans-Tasman) markets in 2021 and beyond. Craig and Matt have had a constant conversation to handover. Matt joins us after four years leading Tourism Fiji and is renowned for his work in diversifying the Fijian tourism image, which mirrors our goals over here. He's also worked for organisations such as Destination NSW, so we believe he is the ideal 'fit' for the CEO role.

I would like to thank all the VSC Board members for their highly professional input throughout the year, even if we have all been Zoomed-out over the past six months. We have been very fortunate to attract new directors in 2019-20 of the calibre of Jennifer Swaine and Zoe Sparks, as well as lure Philip Hart back to the Board. We have an outstanding collection of professionals with both strong local and national involvement in tourism. I'd also like to thank Board members for their valuable contributions in the various committees and more generally. Most I would like to thank our staff who have performed exceptionally well.

Before starting the business of the AGM, I will handover to Interim CEO, Craig Davidson, who will deliver his CEO report.

CEO Report

Thank you David, and let me say that I’ve really enjoyed my Interim CEO role at Visit Sunshine Coast. While no stranger to the region, it has been tremendous to spend the last six months here, working with the VSC team and all our partners. As David said, we are “the sum of our parts” – and it’s these relationships which have been so important for our success, especially during such challenging times for the industry.

David has really said everything that needs to be said about our performance over the past year. When the official TRA figures place you at the top of the growth charts in Queensland, it reflects very well on the VSC team’s ability to deliver the right promotions to the right markets at the right time. Now, obviously, there is nothing we can do about borders, though it did provide a possibly unwelcomed opportunity to show how a committed team can defy the odds.

I think it is fair to say that the VSC team were one of the quickest to adapt to ‘new normals’. They were amongst the first to completely re-calibrate their marketing pitch to the 300km radius drive market. The borders did open briefly, but VSC maintained its discipline and kept its eye exclusively on the one available market – Queensland.

While it is almost impossible to replace the New Zealand and Victorian markets over winter, let alone the groups and meetings business, the Sunshine Coast was successful in attracting new markets that may have otherwise gone to Bali, Fiji or Byron Bay. In fact, many of our operators said they welcomed a completely new group of visitors over the winter and autumn, and the goal is to make them regulars.

Being nimble and effective has been the hallmark of the VSC team during Covid-19. We have grabbed every opportunity possible, with a wide range of innovative campaigns that have really hit the mark.

Activity	Results
Pivoted message ‘Visit us later’	Anecdotal positive feedback
The Taste of escape – sound sensory campaign to keep the lights on	711,807 impressions 128,000 reach
Pineapple video campaign – local welcome back message	475,993 impressions 153, 507 reach 97,712 landing page views
Live, Love, Share campaign – VFR	Prize entries: 1,545 Campaign page views: 15,165 Social engagement: 78,483
TEQ SEQ Drive campaign	27,621 unique visitors to website landing page
Database acquisition competition campaigns – QLD / SA	14,974 subscribers
Spring School holiday campaign – Drive, Cairns, Adelaide	16,200 website landing page views

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Sub-regional – Paid social	202,720 impressions 3,893 reach 15,165 landing page views
For real campaign launch Phase 1 Phase 2	3 million impressions 625,000 reach 11,000+ website landing page views
Sponsored content – Urban List/RACQ/Kids in the city	
SEM Always on	
Aviation Partnership	Reference load factors and AEC survey results. Over-night visitors in region
12 days of Christmas campaign – drive	Launching 1 December

The For Real campaign is absolutely perfect for the times, though as David said, the concept of targeting nature and authentic experiences goes back to pre-Covid times. Since the launch, the For Real campaign has reached well over 800,000 social media users and generating more than 2 million impressions.

Phase one of the campaign, which showcased the Sunshine Coast in ‘Real Time’, was rolled out on social media in the drive market and ACT, in line with the launch of the direct Alliance Airlines flights to Sunshine Coast Airport. The campaign drives people to the specially created landing page – Sunshine Coast For Real – which has received more than 10,000 landing page views since its launch.

Importantly, because while visibility is tremendous, bookings are the end game, the website links to booking partners Wotif and Experience Oz, who are advertising a number of mid-week deals on the Sunshine Coast as the first part of the campaign.

We are launching For Real advertising in Brisbane in the remainder of November and early December in the form of digital street furniture and billboards. And eventually the campaign will be implemented in Sydney and Melbourne. We will then be looking at the next stage of the campaign focussing on industry conversion. We will be building on the successful launch, and working with all our partners to re-build the market and exploit all the opportunities available.

Our PR & Comms Team have also managed to get outstanding results in a tough market. We have three people in the team, led by Liz Tuckett.

Qantas for Real activation on Coolum beach was also well supported by the community.

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And on the subject of our partners, I just wanted to take a few minutes talking about the contribution of our partners – because they have all been integral to our performance over the past year.

- Sunshine Coast Council (Andy Eves-Brown, Kerrienne Haggie, Amanda Gooddy and Darrin Collins)
- Aviation Partnership – very successful working on the new Cairns and Canberra Alliance services, and the re-start of direct Adelaide flights with Jetstar. Preparing for further re-openings as well as new ports.
- LTO's Noosa and Gympie Councils/their tourism organisations
- Sunshine Coast Airport – the glue that brings all the LOCAL areas together
- State Govt/TEQ and Tourism Australia
- Sub regions – everyone targeted throughout the year...we loved them all – from Mary Valley through to Glass House
- Our small and large members doing great things
- Our passionate team at VSC

A short video from incoming CEO, Matt Stoeckel was played.

5. To receive and consider the Financial, Director & Audit Reports for the Financial Year ended 30 June 2020

The Chair explained the next item of business was to receive the financial statements of the Company and the directors' report for the year ended 30 June 2020, together with the auditor's report to the meeting.

The Chair mentioned an electronic copy of the 2019/20 Annual Report had previously been made available to members on the company's website.

Before questions were taken the Chair reminded everyone that only members, proxy holders or nominated representatives were entitled to speak, and matters raised must be relevant to the business of the meeting.

The company's auditor and Shannon Adams, from Poole Group was present to answer any questions relevant to the conduct of the audit and the preparation and content of the Auditor's Report for the year ended 30 June 2020.

The Chair mentioned for members to please state their name before addressing the meeting and called for any questions about the financial statements, directors' report or the auditor's report. After sufficient time and reasonable opportunity had been given for questions on the accounts and reports the discussion was closed.

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The Chair asked for a member to move the motion to accept the Financial Report of the company for the year ended 30 June 2019.

Moved by: John Orning

Seconded by: Mark Skinner

The motion was then put to the members to accept the Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2020.

The motion was carried by the members.

6. Member elected appointment

In accordance with the company's constitution, one member elected Director, Philip Hart, was due to stand down at this AGM. The Chair thanked him for his service.

The Chair explained that the voting process for a new member elected Director had been completed and thanked all candidates. The Chair announced that the auditors (who manage the process) had informed him that the successful candidate was Philip Hart. The Chair congratulated Philip on his election.

Philip Hart then addressed the AGM and provided a summary of his experience.

7. Skilled based appointment:

The Chair explained that in accordance with the company's Constitution, one skilled based Director, John Hall was required to stand down at this AGM. The Chair thanked him for his service.

The Chair explained that the Board regularly reviews the Director's skill sets and experience in order to achieve optimal performance through a balanced Board. He explained that skills-based Directors are appointed by the Board after prior nomination by the Nomination Committee.

It was communicated that after taking into account the Board skills matrix and with John Hall expressing his willingness to remain on the Board of Visit Sunshine Coast, the Board unanimously agreed to re-appoint John Hall to the Board. The Chair noted that this marked a moment of great stability for VSC, with the Board continuing on for another year.

8. To appoint an auditor for the ensuing year 2020/21

The Chair then progressed the meeting onto the appointment of the company's auditor. It was communicated that after consideration by the Board, it was decided to reappoint the Poole Group as the company's auditor for the year ending 30 June 2021.

The Chair asked for a member to move the motion to re-appoint the Poole Group as the company's auditor.

Moved by: Winston Hall

Seconded by: Philip Hart

The Chair then put the motion to the members to re-appoint the Poole Group as the company auditors for the year ended 30 June 2021.

The motion was carried by the members.

9. General business

With the formal matters concluded and no notice of any other general business for discussion the Chair declared the meeting closed and thanked members for their attendance.

On behalf of the Board the Chair invited the members to join them at the Christmas networking event for some refreshments.

Meeting closed 4:53pm