

BUILDING THE FRASER COAST BRICK BY BRICK, CLICK BY CLICK

BY JIM MYHILL

The fast-growing Fraser Coast region is harnessing the power of information to stimulate investor interest and business growth and assist with future planning.

Fraser Coast Opportunities (FCO), the region's new peak body for investment, tourism, events and marketing has created an online demographic and economic information centre for the Fraser Coast, which it says will be a "game changer" for businesses and economic development.

Recognising that plans for growth and opportunities for the region would always need to be founded on a clear evidence base, FCO investigated available options to both obtain that information, keep it updated, and share it easily and effectively with their business and residential community.

After a thorough investigative process, FCO commissioned Informed Decisions (.id) to provide a comprehensive market intelligence toolkit. .id is well known to local government, supplying similar online tools to more than 250 councils around Australia.

The online market intelligence toolkit was launched at a special event, held in the Fraser Coast's renowned Discovery Sphere, before a local audience of councillors, local businesses and community support agencies.



Prior to the event, attendees were mailed an invitation that simply invited them to help build the Fraser Coast "brick by brick, click by click" with no other explanatory information. This catchy and innovative approach captured the interest of many locals, and created a sense of anticipation for the events of the evening. As part of the launch event, Ivan Motley (.id's founder) presented a brief presentation of the tools to the attentive audience.

The toolkit consists of four web-based components, including:

- Profile.id - community profiling tool with the ability to generate suburb-based population profiles based on historical census data, including change over time
- Atlas.id - A visual representation of socioeconomic data in a map-based format, including satellite and hybrid imagery, highlighting communities of interest
- Economy.id - Access to economic information that describes the region's role within the broader economy, explores options for economic development and promotes the area's strengths
- Forecast.id - tailored analysis of the drivers of population change in the community, including how the population, age structure and household types will change from year to year, at a suburb or small area level.

DELIVERING A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

FCO General Manager David Spear said the intelligence tools would assist businesses of all sizes make more informed decisions and deliver a sophisticated new level of capability for the region.

"Fraser Coast Opportunities is committed to growing the regional economy and assisting business of all sizes as well as attracting new business to the region," he said.

"Ensuring prospective and existing businesses have access to the latest information and statistics allows them to make more informed decisions and ultimately creates better business.

"We believe this is a game changer for our region."

FCO met with several consultants to find the most user friendly and up-to-date suite of tools that will be widely utilised across a wide sector of industry and commerce.

“Subsequently, FCO has decided to invest in the .id market intelligence tools and, more importantly, provide them free of charge to anybody with access to the internet.

“In the past this information has not been freely available. We want to ensure our businesses have every tool to remain competitive and to be prepared for the changing economy which is a reality across regional Australia.”

Fraser Coast Opportunities has been quick to put the tools to work, providing training and encouraging local businesses to embrace the market intelligence tools.

FCO staff have conducted training with a wide variety of businesses and organisations from: Chambers of Commerce, law firms, accountants, hospitality operators, university, community groups, local and state government employees, progress associations, real estate agents, hotel operators, health industry and hospital operators.

The information generated from the tools has also been used to produce a fold out business brochure.

The brochure is handed to potential investors and visitors requiring a snapshot of the Fraser Coast economy and population demographics.

Local businesses have also been quick to get on board in using the information to their advantage.

Bay Fusion (a high-end catering business) used the tools to source the higher income small areas to target a direct mail marketing campaign.

And a developer of the proposed waterfront residential estate used the impact assessment model within economy.id to model the flow-on effects of his development to show its job creation and overall economic value to the economy, both within the Fraser Coast and outside.

FCO said the on-line demographic and economic information resource centre delivered a competitive advantage to business and investors on the Fraser Coast.

“Fraser Coast Opportunities is one of the rare regional local government authorities to offer the full suite of ID tools to their local business and residential community – free of charge.

“These online tools will enable FCO to provide businesses with historical and forecast population and economic intelligence for the region, allowing them to better plan for the future of their businesses and for growth and expansion.

“Access will be available to anyone with the internet, allowing small and medium enterprises to generate their own tailored demographic reports specific to their business needs – a capability that until now has been largely beyond their reach.”

Fraser Coast Opportunities

For more information on Fraser Coast Opportunities go to <http://www.frasercoastopportunities.com.au>

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