

Coast's clean, green, hyper fast future

Sunshine Coast residents know the ocean is an essential part of the region's enviable lifestyle. However, sun, sand and stunning views are only half the story.

Beneath the waves, a new development is set to carry the future to the coast.

In Maroochydore, where river meets sea, one of Queensland's largest urban renewal projects is under way.

"This is a unique project," says John Knaggs, CEO of SunCentral, the council-owned company that is set to transform the Maroochydore CBD.

"We've designed a new Maroochydore, a 21st-century city centre from the ground up."

The Sunshine Coast is one of Australia's fastest-growing regions. The population is expected to grow from 350,000 today to 550,000 by 2040.

In July 2013, the Queensland Government declared the former Horton Park Golf Club, a 53-hectare site in the centre of Maroochydore, a Priority Development Area. This gave the Sunshine Coast Regional Council a unique opportunity to create a modern CBD from scratch.

"For the first time, a regional city will have capital city infrastructure and technology," Knaggs says.

Fundamental to the CBD will be hyperconnectivity. A new international submarine broadband cable is set to deliver the country's fastest data and communications connection to Asia and the second-fastest connection to the United States.

"Council deserves credit for looking not just at what the region's needs are currently, but ahead in the 21st century," Knaggs says.



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Of the six international undersea cable landing stations in Australia, four are in Sydney, two are in Perth. The new project connects the Japan-Guam-Australia South internet cable directly to the new Maroochydore CBD and will be operational by 2020.

"The high speeds delivered by the cable will make Maroochydore unique among regional centres," Knaggs says.

"There's no need for signals to bounce back to Sydney. You're instantly 1000 kilometres closer to markets in Asia." Adding to the hyperconnectivity is an expansion of Sunshine Coast Airport now under way. Soon, direct international flights to Asia and the Pacific will be possible.

"The cost of doing business on the Sunshine Coast is already low, so we wanted to make the offer irresistible for potential

'You're instantly 1000 kilometres closer to markets in Asia.'

John Knaggs

investors, developers and future tenants."

The cable is at the heart of Maroochydore's transformation into a high-tech hub. But it's not alone. The CBD's tech upgrades will work harmoniously with Australia's fifth-largest solar farm, built on council-owned land at Valdora.

Street lights, community buildings and other council infrastructure will be offset entirely by green energy.

Australia's first automated underground waste collection system will use vacuum pipes to whisk garbage away at speeds of 70km/h to a transfer station on the edge of the CBD. "So no more wheelie bins or garbage trucks at 4am," Knaggs says.

Urban renewal usually causes more than a few eye-rolls among locals who are faced with months of construction and disruption, but according to Knaggs, Maroochydore's upgrade is seamless.

"Because we're centralised in the old golf course, life goes on," he says.

The project will result in an estimated 15,000 new long-term jobs for the region, which Knaggs says he's most proud of.

"As a parent, to be able to work towards the creation of employment and career opportunities drives my passion for this project and it drives the locals to support us too," he says. "This is the future of Maroochydore and the future of the Sunshine Coast."

Maroochydore

AUSTRALIA'S FASTEST DATA CONNECTION TO ASIA

A new international sub-sea broadband cable is coming to Maroochydore in South East Queensland.

In service by 2020, it will provide turbo-charged Internet and accessibility for the new CBD, and make Maroochydore the only location on Australia's East Coast outside Sydney to offer direct international broadband connectivity to global markets.

Faster. Smarter. The future of business is here.

Interest is being sought from:

- Investors and developers
- Technology companies and others seeking high speed communications
- Future commercial and retail tenants
- Tertiary education and training providers
- Government and not-for-profit organisations

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Artist's impression.