



09

St. George Bank
**STATE OF THE REGION
SUMMIT**

Junipers Keynote: 'An Event Driven Recovery'

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GOOD AFTERNOON EVERYONE AND MY THANKS TO SCOTT PRASSER FOR ASKING ME TO SPEAK TODAY.

WHEN SCOTT ASKED ME TO SPEAK, HE INDICATED THAT HE WOULD LIKE ME TO TALK ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EVENTS TO REGIONAL QUEENSLAND AND ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE CHALLENGING TIMES CONFRONTING THE STATE'S TOURISM INDUSTRY.

BUT HE ALSO SAID HE WAS HAPPY FOR ME TO BE AS CONTROVERSIAL AS I LIKED.

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING AT THE TIME BUT I THOUGHT GIVEN MY BRIEF, IT WAS PROBABLY OPPORTUNE THAT I REMIND SCOTT OF SOME WORDS HE WROTE IN AN ARTICLE IN THE COURIER MAIL BACK IN APRIL 2007.

FOLLOWING OUR UNSUCCESSFUL BID FOR THE WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS SCOTT WROTE THAT:

“STATE GOVERNMENTS’ ENTHUSIASM FOR MEGA-EVENTS IS DRIVEN BY POLITICAN’S DESIRE FOR ACTIVITY WITHOUT DOING ANY REAL HARD, LONG-TERM POLICY DEVELOPMENT OR PROBLEM SOVLING. ATTRACTING A MEGA-EVENT IS QUICK, EASY AND RELATIVELY CHEAP.”

THANKS SCOTT – I HAVE JUST SPENT THE LAST FEW WEEKS ATTEMPTING TO CONVINCING MY NEW CHAIRMAN THAT EVENTS ARE A TOUGH GIG.

“BUT SCOTT IS NOT ALONE IN HIS THINKING AS TO THE REAL VALUE OF EVENTS - THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION IN 2005 MADE THE STATEMENT THAT THE SYDNEY OLYMPICS WAS FUNDAMENTALLY A CASE OF BREAD AND CIRCUSES AND WENT ON TO SAY THAT THEY THOUGHT THIS WAS THE CASE FOR MOST SPECIAL EVENTS.”

I HAVE A 25 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER WHO HAS A MASTERS DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY AND WORKS WITH CHILDREN IN CRISIS. SHE TELLS ME THAT IF MAJOR EVENTS WERE A PERSON, THEY WOULD BE DIAGNOSED AS HAVING SEVERE ATTACHMENT DISORDER OR AT THE VERY LEAST THEY WOULD HAVE SELF ESTEEM ISSUES.

WHY

ON ONE HAND, EVERYONE LOVES AN EVENT. THEY MAY NOT ALL LIKE SPORTING OR ARTS EVENTS - BUT ESSENTIALLY PEOPLE LOVE EVENTS. WHENEVER THERE IS A NATURAL DISASTER, WHAT IS ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS PEOPLE DO WHEN LIFE SETTLES DOWN - THEY ORGANISE AN EVENT - PART OF THAT IS OFTEN TO RAISE MONEY BUT MORE THAN THAT IT BRINGS A SHATTERED COMMUNITY TOGETHER AND GIVES HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. IT IS WHAT HUMANS DO - THEY GATHER TOGETHER.

EVEN THE CRITICS OF EVENTS ATTEND EVENTS. MANY OF THOSE EVENTS THAT THEY ATTEND WILL IN SOME FORM BE SUBSIDISED BY THE TAXPAYER.

WHETHER THAT IS DIRECTLY INTO THE EVENT ITSELF, OR THE STADIUM, MUSEUM, GALLERY OR THEATRE IN WHICH THE EVENT IS HELD, WHICH WAS BUILT BY THE TAXPAYER OR THROUGH THE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS A YEAR THAT GO INTO SUPPORTING THE VARIOUS SPORTING AND ARTS ORGANISATIONS AROUND THE COUNTRY THAT STAGE OR PARTICIPATE IN THESE EVENTS.

BUT WHILE PEOPLE LOVE EVENTS AND MOST WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE – THEY ALSO DON'T WANT TO PAY FOR THEM – ACADEMICIS AND MEDIA CRITICISE THEM – NO ONE LOBBIES FOR THEM AT ELECTION TIME – EVERYONE THINKS THAT THE MONEY SPENT ON EVENTS WOULD BE BETTER EXPENDED ON ROADS, HOSPITALS ETC – BUT AS SOON AS A GOVERNMENT SAYS NO TO FUNDING AN EVENT IN REGIONAL QUEENSLAND THEN EVERYONE IS ON GOVERNMENT'S CASE.

IF I WAS AN EVENT I WOULD BE CONFUSED TOO.

YOU WOULD ALL KNOW THAT GEOFF DIXON RECENTLY TOOK OVER AS CHAIR OF QUEENSLAND EVENTS. DURING ONE OF OUR BRIEFING SESSIONS HE ASKED ME HOW WE WORKED WITH TOURISM. I SAID WE HAD A GREAT RELATIONSHIP AS WE SHARED ONE THING IN COMMON.

EVERYONE HAS BEEN A TOURIST AND EVERYONE HAS BEEN TO AN EVENT – THEREFORE THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF EXPERTS TO TELL US HOW TO DO OUR JOBS BETTER. HE LOOKED AT ME UNSYMPATHETICALLY AND SAID – YOU SHOULD TRY RUNNING AN AIRLINE.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE AUSTRALIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY IS FACING CHALLENGING TIMES. QUEENSLAND IS CERTAINLY NOT IMMUNE TO THE IMPACTS OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS WHICH HAS NOW BEEN MADE WORSE BY THE OUTBREAK OF SWINE FLU.

LAST WEEKEND, THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW REPORTED FORMER VICTORIAN PREMIER JEFF KENNETT AS SAYING THAT HE FEARS FOR WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN TO NORTH QUEENSLAND OVER THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS IN TERMS OF TOURISM.

HIS COMMENTS WERE PART OF A BROADER CRITICISM OF TOURISM AUSTRALIA AND THE VARIOUS NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BRANDING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS IN RECENT YEARS. CAIRNS' OWN FRED ARIEL COMMENTED IN THE SAME ARTICLE THAT THE CURRENT BRANDING FOR NORTH QUEENSLAND IS NOT WORKING.

STRANGELY ENOUGH BRISBANE MARKETING IS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING A NEW BRANDING EXERCISE AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE GOLD COAST TOURISM BUREAU ANNOUNCED THAT ITS CURRENT VERY GC CAMPAIGN WAS BEING DROPPED AS IT HADN'T WORKED AND IT WAS LOOKING TO DEVELOP A NEW BRANDING.

SO WHILE THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IS FACING CHALLENGING TIMES AND GENERALLY APPEARS TO BE QUESTIONING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR BRANDING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS, LARGELY THE INDUSTRY'S RESPONSE IS TO DEVELOP MORE BRANDING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS. BUT

HISTORICALLY THAT IS WHAT THE TOURISM INDUSTRY DOES. IT RELES ON THIRD PARTY DEVELOPED CREATIVE CAMPAIGNS TO OVERCOME ANY AND ALL OF ITS MANY ILLS.

NOW I AM NOT SAYING THAT BRANDING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS ARE NOT IMPORTANT TOOLS – BUT IT SEEMS THAT EVERYTIME THE INDUSTRY CONFRONTS A CHALLENGE – THE RESPONSE IS THE SAME – CRITICISE THE CURRENT BRAND AS INEFFECTIVE AND SPEND MORE MONEY ON ANOTHER ONE, THAT IS LIKELY TO SUFFER THE SAME FATE IN DUE COURSE.

BOB MC NULTY IS THE PRINCIPLE OF AN ORGANISATION BASED IN WASHINGTON DC CALLED PARTNERS FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES. HIS BOARD OF TRUSTEES CONSISTS OF MAYORS AND CIVIC LEADERS FROM SOME OF THE WORLD'S LEADING CITIES. THE ORGANISATION CONSULTS TO CITIES AROUND THE WORLD.

BOB HAS ONE SIMPLE PHILOSOPHY FOR ANY TOWN, CITY OR REGION THAT WANTS TO GET ITSELF NOTICED – THAT IS: MAKE YOURSELF FAMOUS FOR SOMETHING.

I AM NOT AWARE OF TOO MANY CITIES, TOWNS OR REGIONS THAT HAVE MADE THEMSELVES FAMOUS THROUGH BRANDING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS ALONE – BUT YOU CAN WRITE A BOOK – AND THERE ARE SEVERAL – AND A LIBRARY FULL OF ACADEMIC PAPERS ON TOWNS, REGIONS AND CITIES THAT HAVE PUT THEMSELVES ON THE MAP THROUGH EVENTS.

A RECENT MEDIA ARTICLE SUGGESTED THAT IN “OUR LOW SEASON FROM HELL” AUSTRALIA’S TOURISM MECCA – THE GOLD COAST – WOULD BE HOSTING A BONANZA OF RECESSION-BUSTING EVENTS. EVERYTHING FROM THOROUGHBRED RACING TO MOTORSPORT – FROM WORLD TRIATHLON CHAMPIONSHIPS TO WORLD TRANSPLANT GAMES – FROM AUSTRALIA LARGEST MARATHON TO THE ASIA-PACIFIC’S PREEMINENT FILM INDUSTRY EVENT.

THE 2008 GOLD COAST MARATHON AND NOOSA TRIATHLON EXPERIENCED PHONOMENAL RECORD GROWTH. THE TRANSITION FOR THIS YEAR’S MOOLOOLABA TRIATHLON WAS EXPANDED THREE TIMES TO CATER FOR THE RECORD NUMBERS.

SO WHAT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS GROWTH – WAS IT EXPENSIVE AND CLEVER BRANDING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS. WELL FOR THE GOLD COAST WE ALREADY HAVE THEIR PEAK TOURISM BODY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THEIR BRANDING CAMPAIGN OF THE LAST FEW YEARS HASN’T WORKED. THIS IS THE SAME BRANDING CAMPAIGN THAT HAS BEEN IN PLACE AS THE MARATHON WENT FROM 7,000 RUNNERS TO OVER 25,000 LAST YEAR AND APPROACHING 30,000 THIS YEAR.

FOR ME THE INTERESTING THING IS THAT THE EVENTS THAT ARE STANDING STRONG IN CURRENT TIMES – ALSO STOOD STRONG THROUGH THE ASIAN MELTDOWN – SARS – BIRD FLU – PILOTS STRIKES AND THE LIKES. THEY HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR IN SOME CASES NEARLY THRITY YEARS. THAY HAVE

SEEN CLEVER AND NOT SO CLEVER BRANDS AND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS COME AND GO. THEY HAVE STOOD THE TEST OF TIME.

THE GOLD COAST - AND AN INCREASING NUMBER OF OTHER CITIES AND REGIONS ARE BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THE LONG TERM BENEFITS OF EVENTS AND WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO - WE ALL KNOW THAT THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IS SUBJECT TO MANY AND VARYING SEASONAL FLUCTUATIONS. THE PRIMARY ROLE OF EVENTS AS PART OF ANY TOURISM MIX IS TO ATTEMPT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE TO LEVEL OUT THOSE FLUCUATIONS - TO BRING SOME DEGREE OF CERTAINTY AND STABILITY TO AN INDUSTRY THAT IS SUBJECT TO THE EVER CHANGING WHIMS OF TRAVELLERS AND GLOBAL FACTORS

FOR ME IT IS ALSO INTERESTING THAT BOTH CAIRNS AND THE GOLD COAST ARE HAVING THEIR BRANDS QUESTIONED. HOWEVER EVENTS ON THE GOLD COAST CONTINUE TO GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH AND PROVIDE A HIGH DEGREE OF COMFORT TO TOURISM OPERATORS THERE - WHILE EVENTS IN CAIRNS LIKE CAIRMS AMATEURS AND FESTIVAL CAIRNS HAVE AND CONTINUE TO FACE CHALLENGING TIMES.

SOME YEARS AGO A THEN SENIOR TOURISM IDENTITY IN CAIRNS STATED AT A NATIONAL TOURISM CONFERENCE THAT HE SAW NO SYNERGY BETWEEN EVENTS AND TOURISM. THAT GENERALLY HAS SEEMED TO BE THE OVER RIDING POSITIION ADOPTED BY CAIRNS OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS.

WHILE GOLD COAST AND CAIRNS BOTH RELY HEAVILY ON TOURISM – ONE DESTINATION HAS HAD A LONG TERM UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY THAT EVENTS ARE INTEGRAL TO THE TOURISM MIX. BACKING THAT UP HAS BEEN AN AGGRESSIVE STRATEGY OF ATTRACTING AND SUPPORTING EVENTS. AND THAT IS THE KEY – THE GOLD COAST HAS HAD A STRATEGY – BUT THIS IS NOT JUST A DOCUMENT – IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF IN THE BENEFITS THAT EVENTS BRING TO A REGION BACKED UP BY SOME VERY BASIC AND PRACTICAL, BUT ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL PRACTICES AIMED AT MAKING THE GOLD COAST AS EVENT FRIENDLY AS POSSIBLE.

CURRENTLY A MAJOR REGIONAL CITY IS GOING THROUGH THE TENDERING PROCESS TO ENGAGE A CONSULTANT TO DEVELOP AN EVENTS STRATEGY. ONE OF THE KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE EXERCISE IS TO IDENTIFY THREE EVENTS THAT THE REGION SHOULD BE LOOKING TO ATTRACT. WHILE I COMMEND THEM FOR AT LEAST HAVING THE FORESIGHT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANCE OF EVENTS AND THE NEED TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY – I BELIEVE THEIR APPROACH TO BE FUNDAMENTALLY FLAWED.

AN EVENTS STRATEGY AIMED AT SOLELY IDENTIFYING EVENTS TO GO FOR IS FOR ME THE EQUIVALENT OF A GOVERNMENT DEVELOPING A PUBLIC HOUSING POLICY THAT FOCUS ON THE COLOUR SCHEME FOR THE HOUSING UNITS, BUT FAILS TO ADDRESS THE UNDERLYING NEED FOR THE UNITS, WHETHER DEMAND SAYS THEY SHOULD BE 2 OR 3 BEDROOMS AND ISSUES SUCH AS AFFORDABILITY, AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT, LONG TERM CAPITAL MAINTENANCE ETC ETC.

SO WHAT ARE THE FUNDAMENTALS OF A SOUND EVENTS STRATEGY. WHAT HAS THE GOLD COAST DONE RIGHT.

FIRSTLY THEY HAVE A COUNCIL THAT TO A DIVISIONAL COUNCILLOR, PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE IMPORTANCE OF EVENTS AND THE INTEGRAL PART THEY PLAY IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FABRIC OF THE CITY. IT IS NOT ARGUED OR DEBATED - IT IS AN ACCEPTED TRUISM TO A POINT WHERE WHEN IT COMES TO EVENTS, THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE GOLD COAST COMES BEFORE POLITICAL DIFFERENCES.

LAST YEAR IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL, WE NEGOTIATED A 12 YEAR MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR AGREEMENT FOR THE AUSTRALIAN SURF LIFE SAVING CHAMPIONSHIPS TO BE HEADQUARTERED ON THE GOLD COAST TILL 2022. CENTRAL TO THE NEGOTIATIONS WAS THE ISSUE OF CONFIDENTIALITY OTHERWISE THE AGREEMENT WAS IN DANGER OF COLLAPSING BECAUSE OF INTERSTATE INTERESTS THAT WERE ALSO IN PLAY. THAT AGREEMENT WENT THROUGH ALL STAGES OF COUNCIL DUE DILIGENCE DELIBERATION WITHOUT ONE WORD BEING OTTERED TO THE MEDIA, DEPSITE THE GOLD COAST BULLETIN ALMOST DAILY CONTACTING COUNCILLORS FOR COMMENT.

NOW YOU MAY BE ALREADY THINKING WHY AM I FOCUSING IN ON COUNCILS - WHAT ABOUT THE TOURISM BODIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES ETC - SHOULDN'T THEY ALSO BE INVOLVED. AND YES YOU ARE RIGHT.

BUT THERE IS SCARCELY AN EVENT OF ANY CONSEQUENCE THAT CAN BE STAGED WITHOUT THE SUPPORT, ENDORSEMENT, PERMIT OR APPROVAL OF A COUNCIL. FOR ME – COUNCILS ARE THE KEY TO DEVELOPING A DIVERSE LONG TERM AND EFFECTIVE PORTFOLIO OF EVENTS.

NOW NOT FOR A MINUTE AM I SUGGESTING THAT COUCILS SHOULD BLINDLY ACCEPT EVERY EVENT PROPOSAL PUT BEFORE THEM – FAR FROM IT. BUT FOR THOSE COUNCILS THAT BELIEVE THAT TOURISM IS A KEY INDUSTRY FOR THEIR REGION, THEN THE DEBATE SHOULD NOT BE WHETHER YOU SHOULD BE SUPPORTING EVENTS, BUT HOW YOU BEST USE YOUR LIMITED RESOURCES TO SUPPORT, DEVELOP AND ATTRACT EVENTS IN YOUR REGION. AND IF YOU THINK THIS IS REALLY ONLY FOR COUNCILS IN THE “PRIME TOURISM” REGIONS, THEN BRAD CARTER, MAYOR OF ROCKHAMPTON REGIONAL COUNCIL HAS A MESSAGE FOR YOU:

"ROCKHAMPTON IS THE IDEAL PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND INVEST AND IT HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE ON ITS EVENTS CALENDAR WITH GREAT REASONS TO VISIT THE REGION."

"WE ENJOY LIVING IN THIS REGION THAT HAS TRULY COME OF AGE, WITH FIRST-CLASS FACILITIES, AN EXCITING EVENTS CULTURE THAT IS PUMPING ENERGY THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE REGION, AND WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT THEIR REGION."

"OUR EVENTS ARE A BIG PART OF OUR COMMUNITY LIFE HERE IN THE ROCKHAMPTON REGION, CREATING JOBS AND BUSINESSES, ATTRACTING TOURISTS AND FUELLING GROWTH, BRINGING A REAL SENSE OF PRIDE".

THE SECOND ELEMENT OF A SOUND REGIONAL EVENTS STRATEGY IS TO PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS. YOU CANNOT EXPECT QUEENSLAND EVENTS, THE STATE GOVERNMENT OR CORPORATES TO SUPPORT AN EVENT THAT YOU ARE NOT PREPARED TO SUPPORT.

THE NEW SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL HAS BEEN WORKING ON ITS OWN EVENTS STRATEGY FOR SOME TIME. THEY HAVE COME A LONG WAY IN THE PAST 3-5 YEARS. THEY NOW PUSH THE GOLD COAST WITH EVENTS LIKE THE AUSTRALIAN PGA CHAMPIONSHIPS, NOOSA TRIATHLON (THE SECOND BIGGEST IN THE WORLD) AND MOOLOOLABA WORLD CUP.

THE NEW SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL RECENTLY ANNOUNCED SUBSTANTIAL FUNDING TO SUPPORT AN EVER GROWING PORTFOLIO OF MAJOR EVENTS. THEY HAVE RECOGNISED THE IMPORTANCE OF EVENTS AND ARE PREPARED TO BACK THEM EVEN IN THESE TOUGH TIMES.

THE THIRD ELEMENT IS TO ESTABLISH AND CLEARLY ARTICULATE THE CRITERIA BY WHICH YOU WILL SUPPORT EVENTS. THIS IS TO SOME DEGREE THE HARDEST ELEMENT TO GET RIGHT AND FOR PEOPLE TO AGREE ON.

EVENTS COMES IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES. SMALL COMMUNITY EVENTS ARE AS IMPORTANT TO A REGION AS THE MAJOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS. BUT OBVIOUSLY THE APPLICATION AND DUE DILIGENCE PROCESSES WILL BE VERY DIFFERENT AND SHOULD REFLECT THE NATURE OF THE EVENT, THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT AND THE DEGREE OF RISK INVOLVED.

UNFORTUNATELY THIS IS THE AREA THAT MOST GET WRONG.

AT QUEENSLAND EVENTS WE HAVE DEVELOPED A 16 POINT ASSESSMENT MODEL WE CALL THE MATRIX, AGAINST WHICH WE ASSESS POTENTIAL INVESTMENTS AND ROUTINELY ASSESS PERFORMANCE OF OUR MAJOR EVENTS. ONLY ONE OF THOSE 16 POINTS IS ECONOMIC IMPACT.

NOW THERE ARE WHOLE CONFERENCES ON EI AND WHAT IT MEANS SO I AM NOT GOING THERE TODAY. BUT WHAT I WILL SAY IS THAT IT IS THE MOST MISQUOTED PERFORMANCE INDICATOR EVER DEVELOPED. IT IS THE DOMAIN OF THE LAZY WHO BELIEVE THAT UNLIKE ANY OTHER INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS IN THE WORLD, THE ENTIRE PERFORMANCE OF AN EVENT CAN BE REDUCED TO ONE NUMBER.

AND IT IS A FIGURE THAT HAS SEEN MORE MANIPULATIONS THAN A CHIROPRACTORS PRACTICE DUMMY. NOW I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT POLITICIANS OR THE GOVERNMENT HERE. SOME OF THE BEST ECONOMIC IMPACT FIGURES I HAVE SEEN HAVE COME FROM ECONOMISTS, PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH COMPANIES, ACADEMICS, EVENTS ORGANISERS,

THE MEDIA, COUNCILS, TOURISM BODIES, AND LOBBYISTS. THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE ODD OPTIMIST ECONOMIC IMPACT FIGURE HAS NOT BEEN QUOTED BY A POLITICAN.

SO WHY DO THESE PEOPLE COLLECTIVELY GO TO SUCH LENGTHS TO ADAPT, AMEND, ADJUST, AND ALTER ECONOMIC IMPACT FIGURES TO JUSTIFY WHY THEY INVESTED IN AN EVENT OR TO ATTEMPT TO BOLSTER THEIR SUBMISSION FOR GOVERNMENT TO INVEST IN THEIR EVENT.

WELL THE SAD FACT IS THAT FOR MANY TOWNS, CITIES AND REGIONS – SCOTT PRASSER WAS ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.

ECONOMIC IMPACT REPRESENTS A DESIRE FOR ACTIVITY WITHOUT DOING ANY REAL HARD, LONG-TERM POLICY DEVELOPMENT OF PROBLEM SOLVING. WOULD YOU INVEST IN THE SHARE MARKET, COMPANY, PROPERTY OR WHATEVER BASED PURELY ON ONE HIGHLY DEBATABLE INDICATOR.

OUR FILES ARE LITTERED WITH PROPOSALS FROM BASICALLY COMMUNITY EVENTS DESIGNED TO CATER FOR THE LOCALS WHERE COUNCILS AND OTHERS HAVE DECIDED THAT THEY NEED TO MOUNT A CASE TO GOVERNMENT FOR RIDICULOUS SUMS OF MONEY AND TO JUSTIFY THAT REQUEST, THEY HAVE DEVELOPED INNOVATIVE AND TOTALLY FALSE ECONOMIC IMPACT FIGURES SHOWING THAT THEIR EVENTS RIVALS THE OLMPIC GAMES.

WHAT I AM SAYING IS THERE IS NO ONE SIZE FITS ALL WHEN IT COMES TO EVENTS FOR YOUR REGION. KNOW YOUR PRIORITIES – KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE – KNOW WHAT REPRESENTS VALUE FOR MONEY AND BE PREPARED TO PUBLICLY BACK THAT POSITION. IF YOU KNOW WHY YOU ARE SUPPORTING EVENTS AND WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT TO YOUR REGION, THEN YOU WILL NOT HAVE TO RESORT TO MANIPULATING

ECONOMIC IMPACT FIGURES TO EITHER JUSTIFY YOUR INVESTMENT OR SUPPORT YOUR CASE FOR GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT.

WHEN DETERMINING YOUR PRIORITIES THERE ARE SOME BASIC RULES.

1. IDENTIFY WHAT ARE YOUR KEY CURRENT EVENTS – YOUR MUST KEEPS - WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT AND HOW CAN THEY BE IMPROVED UPON AND THEIR FUTURE SECURED
2. IDENTIFY YOUR CURRENT EVENTS THAT WITH SOME WORK AND SUPPORT COULD DEVELOP INTO THE FIRST CATEGORY
3. AND FINALLY AND ONLY AFTER YOU HAVE DONE THE FIRST TWO – THEN LOOK AT YOUR POTENTIAL TO ATTRACT, DEVELOP AND SUPPORT NEW EVENTS IN THE REGION.

AND THE FINAL ELEMENT IN YOUR EVENTS STRATEGY - IF YOU BELIEVE EVENTS ARE IMPORTANT TO YOUR REGION AND YOU ARE PREPARED FUND THEM AND YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT AND WHY – THEN HAVE THE PEOPLE AND SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO DELIVER.

ON THE GOLD COAST I CAN GIVE YOU THE NAME AND NUMBER OF THE ONE PERSON IN COUNCIL THAT WILL WORK WITH YOU FROM THE TIME OF YOUR FIRST MEETING TO THE TIME YOU PACK YOUR EVENTS UP AND HEAD HOME. THE GOLD COAST HAS PERFECTED THE ART OF THE ONE STOP SHOP FOR EVENTS.

THE EVENTS LANDSCAPE IS INCREDIBLY COMPETITIVE. THERE ARE MORE AND MORE REGIONS LOOKING TO EVENTS TO PROVIDE AN ECONOMIC STIMULUS. EVENT ORGANISERS GENERALLY WILL HAVE A RANGE OF OPTIONS AS TO WHERE THEY PLACE THEIR EVENTS –

THE SMART ONES WILL NOT SIMPLY BE LOOKING AT THE DOLLARS – THEY WILL BE LOOKING AT WHICH REGION GIVES THEIR EVENT THE GREATST CHANCE OF SUCCESS. AND WORD GETS OUT FIRST BELIEVE ME.

SO IN WRAPPING UP:

WHY SHOULD REGIONS LOOK TO DEVELOP LONG TERM SUSTAINABLE EVENTS STRATEGIES ESPECIALLY IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES.

1. THERE IS AN NEVER ENDING SUPPLY OF CRISIS THAT WILL CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE THE TOURISM INDUSTRY
2. WHAT WAS ONCE INITIALLY TOUTED AS THE MOST INNOVATIVE BRANDING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGN WILL INEVITABLY BE QUESTIONED WHEN TIMES GET TOUGH AND ARE THEY REALLY THE PANCEA FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY'S ILLS
3. A SOLID – DIVERSE – SUSTAINABLE AND PERFORMING PORTFOLIO OF EVENTS CAN PROVIDE SOME RESPITE FROM THE CHALLENGES THAT THE INDUSTRY CONFRONTS AND WILL CONTINUE TO CONFRONT ON A REGULAR BASIS. THEY SHOULD BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF YOUR TOURISM MIX
4. IF YOU DON'T HAVE THAT EVENTS PORTFOLIO IN PLACE – THEN YES YOU ARE TOO LATE FOR THE CURRENT CRISIS BUT TRUST ME THERE WILL BE ANOTHER ONE – SO START YOUR EVENT PLANNING NOW AND BE PREPARED FOR WHAT THE FUTURE HAS IN STORE FOR YOU

5. AND FINALLY - COUNCILS HAVE A KEY ROLE TO PLAY IN DEVELOPING AN
EVENTS PORTFOLIO - BUT IF THERE IS ONE RULE - THEN IT IS TREAT
EVENTS LIKE THEY WERE ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AND IF YOU ARE STILL QUESTIONING WHY YOU SHOULD EVEN BE CONSIDERING
BEING INVOLVED WITH EVENTS

THEN I WILL LEAVE YOU WITH THE WORDS THAT I STARTED WITH TODAY -
FROM OUR HOST SCOTT PRASSER - **ATTRACTING EVENTS ARE QUICK, EASY AND
RELATIVELY CHEAP.**

THANK YOU