



# Coast 'on way to suburbia'

## Identity going: Prasser

By **MARK BODE**

THE Sunshine Coast is in danger of losing its identity and becoming "another suburb of greater Brisbane".

The convenor of next Friday's Sunshine Coast State of the Region Summit, professor Scott Prasser, warned rapid population growth and development in south-east Queensland was having serious consequences on the region.

Prof Prasser said it was turning into another Gold Coast due to the encouragement of the "east-west sprawl".

"Now is the time for some of this to be remedied, but it requires rigorous planning and a commitment to stick at it long enough to make a difference," he said.

Prof Prasser, who up until recently was a senior business lecturer at the University of the Sunshine Coast, said halting the current development trend in south-east Queensland would be difficult because of changing governments and the need for housing.

But the current professor of Public Policy at Canberra's Australian Catholic University said that unless appropriate policies were put in place now, the region

would be beset by bigger problems in the future.

"The region as a whole needs to think about how it is going to manage its projected growth over the next 25 years," he said.

"The role of the Sunshine Coast, within the broader south-east Queensland region, needs to be identified, developed and acknowledged so that local differences can be nurtured and capitalised upon."

Prof Prasser said that if the trends continued, the region's strengths would be undermined and it would essentially become an outer-Brisbane suburb.

Infrastructure and planning department figures show the Coast was the equal-fastest growing major population region in Australia outside the capital cities last year.

Urban Development Institute of Australia Sunshine Coast president David Oliver said Prof Prasser had got it wrong.

"I don't for a minute believe we're headed in that direction," he said.

Mr Oliver said the Coast had planning schemes in place that did not reflect the development strategy of the Gold Coast, and the Sunshine Coast council was in the process of devising a new regional planning scheme.