

FUTURE

# IMAGINING THE GOLD COAST OF THE FUTURE

**B**ehold the Gold Coast. Sixth largest city on the Australian continent. Non-existent at the time of the 1954 census but today a metropolis of more than 600,000 residents. The Gold Coast was founded by a people of enterprise and of energy. That free-enterprise culture is still evident today: Coasters are more likely than the residents of any of Australia's largest cities to be self-employed and in fact to send their children to a private or a non-government school.

The truly remarkable feature of the Gold Coast is its history of growth. For the better part of two decades the Gold Coast has added close to 15,000 new residents per year. By the middle of this century the Gold Coast including the urban part of Tweed is projected to contain 1.2 million residents. At that time the Coast will still be this nation's sixth largest city but it will also be a city of truly metropolitan scale. Unlike Canberra that was funded into existence by the Australian people the Gold Coast was willed into existence by the Australian people. And needless to say the Gold Coast continues to be one of this nation's most popular destinations for Australians on the move.

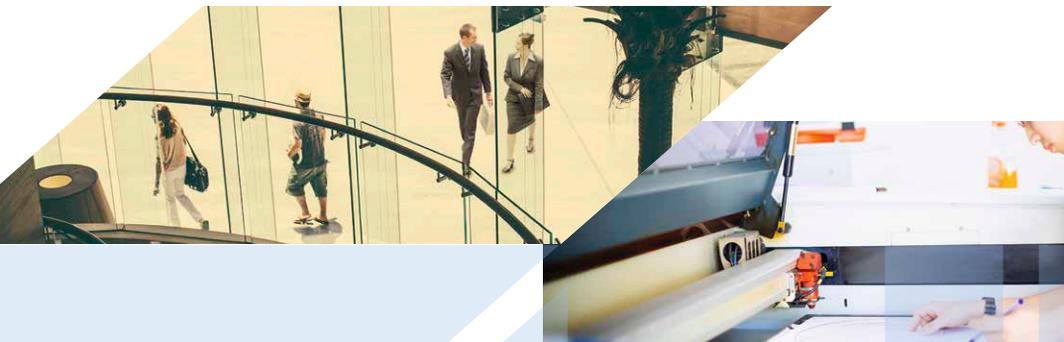




No other comparably scaled city in Australia can credibly claim to double in size over the next 35 years and yet that is precisely the promise of the Gold Coast. For this reason alone Australian and international businesses should be made aware of the opportunities for investment and development in this most unique city of our time.

Strategic planning by the City of Gold Coast shows that the additional population will be largely accommodated within the existing urban footprint but with some greenfields growth spilling into the corridor between Mudgeeraba to Pimpama.

The Coast's residents of 2015 have the opportunity to contribute to what their city will look like by mid-century by getting involved with and having an opinion on the *Beyond the Horizon report*. And why wouldn't you want to get involved? Here is a city of unparalleled opportunity. Here is a can-do people thinking ahead and on a grand scale. Here is a community bound together by lifestyle aspiration, by enterprise and in the future by diversification into the knowledge economy.





The city form will remain elongated. The city will retain its four regional centres (Coomera, Southport, Broadbeach and Robina) but the retail spending pie will double in real terms. The city must extend its heavy and light rail networks towards if not to Coolangatta. The city must build on its connectivity into Asia and beyond by investing in the airport and in business connections to Brisbane. The city must develop an articulated culture with iconic architecture and open space including cultural and arts facilities. The city must retain its core lifestyle and enterprise heritage but this culture must evolve to be relevant to a larger and more diverse city.

The Australian people will not want a city of 1.2 million people based solely on retirement and lifestyle. The Australian economy like other developed economies is developing into a knowledge economy. The Gold Coast cannot be left behind. The Gold Coast will not be left behind. The Gold Coast will develop next generation leisure and lifestyle facilities in casinos, in the cruise ship terminal, in theme parks and in shopping centres but the Coast must aspire to achieve even more.





We are looking for a transformative evolution of the city where existing strengths in the healthcare and education sectors are cultivated and expanded. We want to see not just world class medical, surgical and educational facilities we want to see world class research schools, laboratories and centres of excellence in technology such as robotics, biotechnology, nanotechnology and AI. The most engaged workers of the mid-21st Century will be knowledge workers who can and who will choose where they work. That is the market, that is the niche, that is a future for the Gold Coast that builds on the past and that capitalises on the way in which the broader economy is shifting.

But none of this can happen unless there is buy-in by Gold Coast residents, by the business community, and by all levels of government into the vision. And who wouldn't want to buy into a vision to deliver an even better, an even more prosperous, an even more connected Gold Coast in 2050? This project and the support of local residents and businesses is a clear statement to other cities and to other city-states about the level of confidence that Gold Coasters have in their future of their great city.

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**Bernard Salt**

KPMG Partner

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