

# Book 2:

maroochy

2025

...a visioning journey

# Future Aspirations

## Section 4. Introduction to the Community Visions

### 1. Understanding Book 2 (the Community Visions)

Book 2 documents the Maroochy 2025 Community Vision Statement, which was crafted by the Maroochy 2025 Community Task Force. The statement and accompanying visions are expressed as an imaginary journey into the future of Maroochy Shire.

The views expressed here are a comprehensive compilation of what the majority of Maroochy residents strongly *want, hope and aspire to be* for their community in 2025. More than a wish list, this Community Vision actually charts out how this future is achievable, and describes a view of that future according to each of the six *Key Focus Areas* (KFA). Of particular importance are the *Key Vision Ideas* (five for each KFA) because they came directly from the community<sup>44</sup> and helped map out this *'journey'* to Maroochy of 2025.

### 2. Navigating the Community Visions

#### Navigating Section B: Maroochy's 2025 Community Vision

Section B gives the actual *Maroochy 2025 Vision Statement*. It then divides the Maroochy 2025 vision into its six *Key Vision Areas* and describes an overview of the preferred future desired by Maroochy residents for their Shire according to each KFA.

#### Navigating Section C: Journey to our visions of the future

Section C clarifies the context for attaining our preferred future. Organised according to each Key Focus Areas, Section C first charts *'where we were'* (ie. the Maroochy of 2005) and then details *'what we did'* to transform, and then describes the results of those efforts – the Maroochy of 2025. Section C outlines the *principles* we would need to follow if we want to be successful and documents the top five *'key vision ideas'*.

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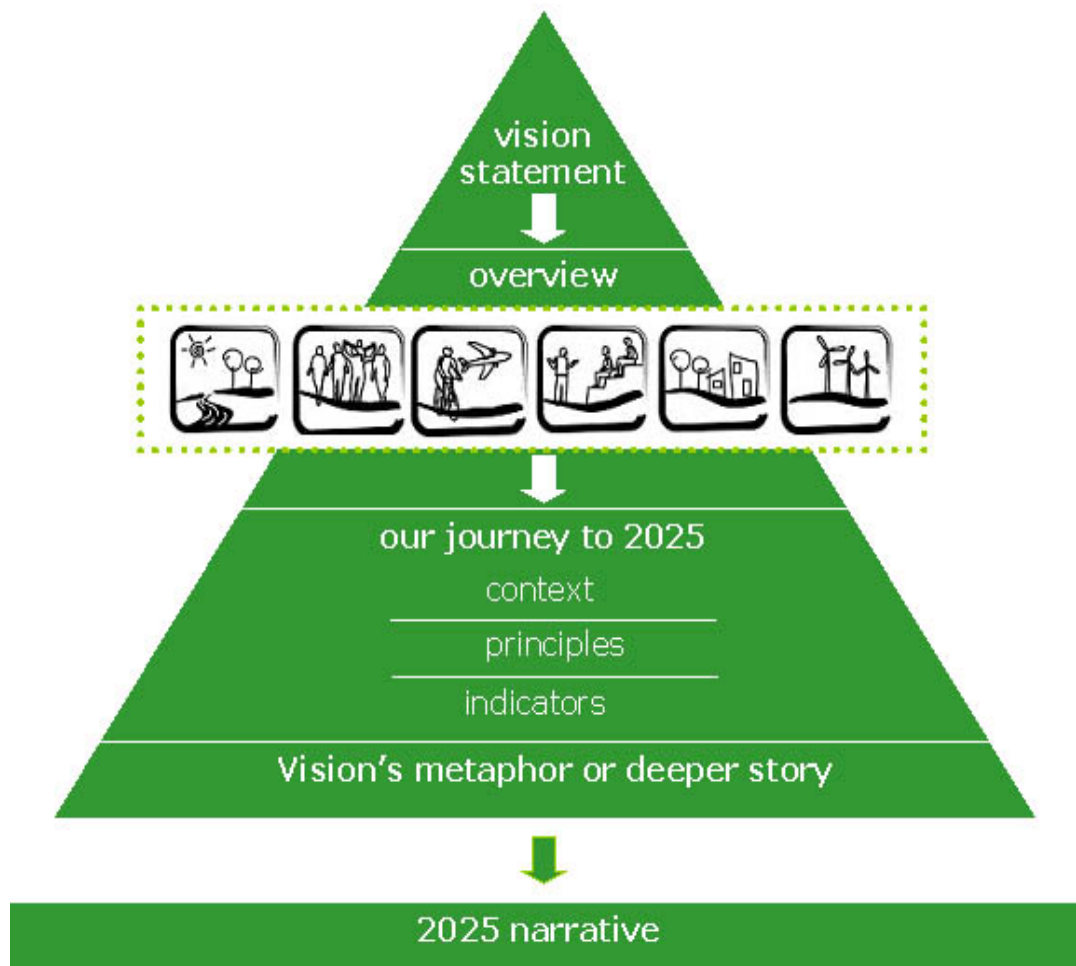
<sup>44</sup> These *key vision ideas* were polled at the Community Vision Summit (April 2004) from a list of 124 vision ideas. These, in turn, were validated (checked) with the wider community through a survey in May 2004, and through innumerable other paths of data collection. The results were then ranked in order of importance, based on the outcomes of a second community survey, by the Community Task Force. A full ranking of the 30 vision ideas can be viewed in the results of Community Survey No. 2 (see Book 1).

This section also considers 'How we will measure our achievements' and describes what will be the 'visible indicators' to show we have succeeded in our goal.<sup>45</sup>

## Navigating Section D: Our deeper story

Book Two concludes with the description of our deeper story or metaphor – revealed through the unfolding of the Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project. Images/metaphors were collected during the visioning process from Maroochy Shire residents across all strata of the community. These reflected values underpinning the community ethos. They are what residents feel best encapsulates what Maroochy is, or what residents aspire for it to be, or what residents stand for.

As part of this unfolding story, Section D includes an imaginary narrative, describing the world and lifestyle of a Maroochy resident in 2025, should our community vision be realised in its fullest.



<sup>45</sup> The Indicators and Measurements are not complete performance indicators using the 'smart' criteria, as the latter are associated with Stage 4 - Implementation and Monitoring.

## Section 5: Maroochy's 2025 Community Vision

### 1. The Maroochy 2025 Vision Statement

*"From the Mary River Valley over the Blackall Ranges to the Pacific Ocean, Maroochy Shire on the Sunshine Coast is a place that our connected community is proud to call home. We, Maroochy's residents, live in harmony alongside our clean waterways, beaches, and our diverse bush and farmlands. We respect and protect these natural places because they are home to our valued wildlife; they nurture our wellbeing, our physical and community needs and our economy.*

*"We are happy, healthy, safe, productive, creative and empowered. Learning, sharing knowledge and experiences, inspiring each other and together making decisions is our way of life. Our leadership is responsive and is focused on building trust and a better inclusive future whilst holistically providing for our basic needs in the present.*

*"Maroochy's distinct towns and villages are designed to minimise energy-use, resource use, and environmental impacts. Our communities are connected by efficient public transport, and walk and cycle paths. Maroochy's viable rural and urban economies mutually benefit each other to protect our natural assets and provide diverse long-term employment. We have a unique 'Bush and Beach' culture – we know this and we actively care for it and for each other."*

## Overview of Maroochy Shire in 2025<sup>46</sup>

In 2025, Maroochy's distinctive and separate towns and communities are interconnected ecologically, socially, and economically. We form a network of 'learning' communities. Our liveable places are separated by a patchwork of rural lands and natural havens of bio-diversity. In these natural places, we can breathe the humid richness of rainforest, waterfalls, wetlands, honeyed wildflowers or the salted spray of our beaches. We value the mutual benefits of sustaining our 'Bush and Beach' culture. This means our rural and urban lifestyles are not competing against one another for resources, but rather support one another in providing diverse lifestyle choices that can be sustained by our region's resources. Our built environment is *clean and green*. It celebrates our cultural values and our heritage.



### Our valued natural environment

In 2025, governments, communities, developers, businesses, and individuals work together to sustain and improve the natural environment. Maroochy's most valued asset is the rich diversity of its natural environments. Our scenic 'Bush and Beach' landscape is readily visible, clean, and accessible. It gives our region character. The shire boasts many types of nature reserves, protected by planning legislation, and monitored by a diligent workforce of 'eco rangers'. Maroochy's *environmental levy* funds acquisition and management of these reserves. Native bushlands are also embedded in residential areas through community-monitored green corridors. The ongoing Sunshine Coast-wide program of habitat re-generation ensures that residents are enabled and supported to manage their own vicinity, controlling weeds and rejuvenating native flora in order to restore biodiversity, and a habitat for our native animals. Local *eco-innovations* developed in the business sector help us sustain the environment and Maroochy's residents and enterprises use many forms of alternative energies such as solar, wind and hydro to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Maroochy's beaches are places of both natural and cultural value. They are safe, clean, and maintain equitable access. The beach and the dunes are kept in peak natural condition.

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<sup>46</sup> Drawings representing each of Key Focus Areas © Jim Friscino – a visual artist engaged by the Maroochy 2025 visioning summit

In return for their proud efforts in caring for their natural environment, residents enjoy a sustained, balanced, healthy outdoor quality of life. We feel an inner sense of wellbeing and contentment that we attribute to our connectedness to nature.



### Our healthy, vibrant, inclusive learning communities

In 2025, Maroochy is known for the lively, valuable, and inclusive contribution of our citizens. Maroochy prides itself in its various mixed-age mentorship programs and cross-cultural learning projects. Members of all groups feel included in our community because we strive to minimise disadvantages through community support and action.

In Maroochy, learning is continuous and easily available. This means that there is inexpensive and readily accessible formal and informal training in our community. Children through to the elderly can access these learning opportunities to improve both their social and work life. Citizens choose to serve in Maroochy's innovative mentorship programs and freely share their knowledge and skills. This has led to constructive intergenerational learning, respect, and communication. Our children benefit from this as they grow up in this healthy, supportive community.

Volunteerism remains high within our civic-minded communities. We are well informed through 'grassroots' communication networks about the decisions our community needs to make. Maroochy's communities debate and participate in developing options and solutions for the challenges we face and communicate these through community governing panels to Council.

After decades of community promotion and action, we now enjoy holistic, healthy living. Every town and village has a community activity centre - a hub for social interaction providing access to information and learning. These community hubs often include a public space or town square to allow outdoor gatherings, events, and festivals. Local festivals provide opportunities for stimulating creative expression through the arts. Neighbourhood Arts groups are thriving. Through theatre and other art practices, people of all ages and socio-economic strata are interacting. This produces an environment for sharing, learning, and engendering strong community ties. We celebrate our visionary successes often and create hope by being proactively 'community-vision' focussed and action orientated.



Affordable, liveable 'green' housing is available through government initiatives and community co-operatives. We build mixed-housing clusters in our towns and villages. We provide adaptable accommodation for different life-phases of our residents: from the sole householder and share accommodation through to family and 'empty nesters'. Residents are ageing with dignity in their homes. Financial, emotional and community service support is available in their locale.



### Our diverse transport infrastructure and mobility

In 2025, Maroochy's community enjoys diverse ways of moving around towns and villages, especially by public transport. With the intent of providing for people before cars, we have planned our places and our mobility in partnership with the public. Residents can safely and practically walk or cycle in and around Maroochy's towns and villages. Fewer people drive alone to work in 2025, where car-pooling and car share networks are the norm. Many prefer to walk, cycle or use the reliable, affordable, and accessible public transport system.

Maroochy is an active member of *Cities for Climate Protection*. Residents can receive incentives for owning *green and clean* powered vehicles. Urban residents are within comfortable walking distance from an integrated public transport service. A light rail tram links the Sunshine Coast, whilst sea and river ferries join our river and seaside communities. The public transport connection to Brisbane offers integrated ticketing and coordinated timetabling across the region and between the different modes of travel (bus, tram, ferry and rail). Maroochy has a direct train service link to Brisbane offering a viable alternative to car trips on the highway.

Our major urban centres are beautified, people-friendly, car free areas. Park'n'Ride stations and car-share services provide ready access. A range of community transport is available thanks to partnerships between Council, business and community service providers. These services offer communal transport to and from retirement villages, resorts as well as our towns and villages.



Parts of the former Cane Tramways are now major walking trails, adding to the eco-tourism and recreation experience. The Sunshine Motorway is now a multi-modal greenway. It caters not only for vehicles, but also for light rail and safe walk/cycle trails amidst roadside vegetation.



### Our responsible leadership, participatory decision-making and foresight

In 2025, Maroochy is renowned for its informed, accountable leadership. Our decision-making continues to evolve. It is based on achieving the community visions. Community leaders educate themselves about their community's aspirations, needs and cultural heritage. As a result, our decisions benefit the future, improve the present, and respect the past as we learn from it. We are able to respond quickly if our decisions don't create the desired solutions. We adapt our thinking by regularly checking challenges facing the community. We are constantly considering the wellbeing of our community within a rapidly changing world.

Visioning is a way of life for us. Maroochy's communities partner with Council to collaboratively manage our towns and villages, guided by the Community Visions and Action Plans. Community projects have access to a community vision fund/grant scheme run by Council. This helps communities to take ownership of their own issues and to work together to find solutions rather than expecting governments to own and solve all problems. Community governing panels meet and inform the *Regional Council* of their town's decisions concerning its locale. Additionally, other community panels interface with government representatives about regional and national policy initiatives.



For residents who wish to have their say, public participation in decision-making has evolved to a fine art. It takes many forms within Maroochy. *E-poll*<sup>47</sup>, a regular form of community consultation, is one way we allow citizens to have their say on issues involving their community. Input received this way is automatically recorded to improve accountability and collective memory.



### Our smartly managed rural and urban future

In 2025, the view from the Blackall Range presents a planned tapestry of protected nature reserves, farms, and green corridors of native bush supporting a diverse network of towns and urban landscapes.



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<sup>47</sup> E-Poll is a secure and efficient way for governments to collect community feedback by using computers with access to the World Wide Web. See the Queensland Government's E-democracy policy framework.

Sustainable *'green' architecture*, with its climate-responsive design and its extremely low level of greenhouse gas emissions, is the norm. As a result, our buildings do not increase global warming: On-site generation of renewable power neutralises the energy use of buildings.

Our urban areas are designed to harvest rainwater and to minimise the effects of harmful runoffs to our streams and rivers. Maroochy's towns and villages have low-rise buildings. Major urban centres have a maximum height limit of 10 storeys. This height restriction helps to distinguish Maroochy's urban landscape from the high-rise 'cityscape' typical of large cities. Our places are intimately designed, avoiding buildings that dominate the skyline and surrounding panorama. We maintain vistas of Maroochy's mountains, tree ridgelines and foreshores. Within residential areas, gardens of local native flora merge into bushland corridors. Organic fruit and 'veggie' patches are popular across the region. They are owned, and managed by individuals and the community. These food gardens feed on recycled 'grey water', green manure crops and organic waste.

Maroochy's rural lands and communities are vital, viable places. Both rural and urban communities guide the enrichment of their areas to realise local aspirations. Through regional partnerships and cooperation, the community, Council and governments reach consensus in their community visioning. We know how many people our region can support, so we smartly manage our local resources to sustain our *'Bush and Beach'* culture for future generations.

### Our innovative and diverse economy

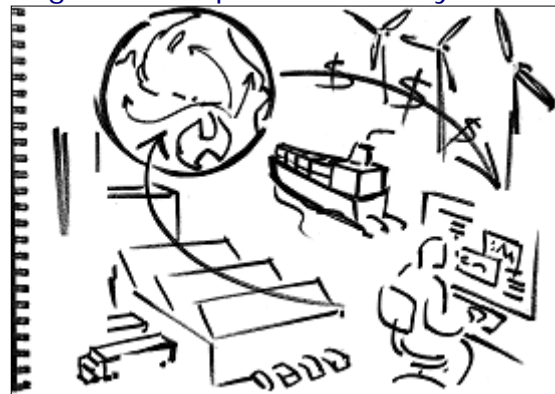


In 2025, Maroochy has varied and exciting employment opportunities. Rural areas boast thriving new agri-businesses. These rely on farming cooperatives and rural enterprise clusters.

The co-ops and clusters supply the growing local and global demand for alternative foods and organic produce, floriculture and aquaculture. Cane lands have become viable in the long term due to their successful transformation into areas producing a range of high value products. Farm forestry adds further diversification whilst providing environmental benefits, particularly along the Maroochy River and its flood plain.

Employment in our mixed-use towns and villages is innovative and diverse. Our quality *Bush and Beach* lifestyle is a drawcard to attract regional and head offices of major public and private organisations. We are a *'showcase region'* for sustainable development. A booming redevelopment industry exists, based on retrofitting older homes with modern eco-friendly fixtures, as well as building mixed-use urban villages within older unsustainable suburbs.

Maroochy is an e-enterprise hub for small businesses. These enjoy global access to markets via the World Wide Web. We have skilled knowledge



workers who service this e-enterprise hub, trained locally through the Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE, Sunshine Coast Knowledge Precinct, and University of the Sunshine Coast. Education, cultural tourism and eco-tourism, and the health and wellbeing business sectors dominate in our region. We understand that *'green is gold'*. This means our businesses value Maroochy's natural attributes. They know how to benefit from them by creating *clean and green* enterprises.

Maroochy's *Bush and Beach* culture provides employment opportunities for the growing creative industries and for the cultural tourism sector. Cultural facilities network together across Maroochy as an enterprise cluster. Within this cluster, the *Maroochy Bushland Botanic Gardens* is a cultural and environmental facility of global appeal, maximising the complementary benefits of eco and cultural tourism.

Maroochy values and supports its small businesses through a range of practical services such as professional development training and business mentoring programs. Workplace cultures value people's contributions. They provide meaningful work for individuals.

# Section 6: Journey to our Visions of the Future

## Preamble

*“Our journey was not easy. Many hard choices were made to realise our vision. We recognised that careful planning for the future in a collaborative and consultative way was important. Understanding and applying the over-riding principle of ‘sustainability’ was the key to our future.*

*“Sustainability for our community means practising balance where the health of the environment is the main priority. This means allowing for the wellbeing of our social and cultural systems through a ‘clean and green’ economy. This way of being and doing leaves a positive legacy for future generations within Maroochy.”*

## Our valued natural environment

Where we were...



Maroochy faced the extinction of local flora and fauna species. It faced declining air, water and soil quality due to population growth and increased development pressure. In time, community expectations for governments to save the environment increased. However, our government’s capacity to do so declined and legislation became more complex.

## What we did to sustain our valued natural environment

To keep it simple, we prioritised actions: We focussed on improving the health of our waterways. This ambitious task meant that many factors were improved in the water cycle, from water catchments with healthy biodiversity through to *water sensitive urban design* and the containment of urban development. We educated ourselves on how we could individually reduce pollution, waste, energy and water consumption, and how we could reuse and recycle resources.

## How we look in 2025

Nature reserves conserve the natural qualities of Maroochy. They are also now integral to our eco-tourism. The dunes of our clean beaches, which are full of healthy vegetation, protect our lowlands from the ocean waves. Corridors of bushland run into the region’s farmlands and wrap around the urban landscape. The Maroochy River system - restored to health - flows within dense and protected riparian corridors.

## Principles

- Protect nature, and coordinate the required financial resources and personnel to enable this to be done satisfactorily
- Meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
- Be cautious about our lack of understanding, and err on the safe side (*Precautionary Principle*)
- The simplest solution or explanation is often the best
- Be fair to present and future generations (*intergenerational equity*)

## Our top key vision ideas

- From our reverence for water, we developed innovative and alternative strategies in water conservation and sewerage treatment such as using biological water filters and re-using treated water
- People of all ages are able to safely access our diverse natural environment. Internationally, we lead the way in sustaining clean water, clean waterways, clean beaches, clean environs, and clean recreational parks
- Maroochy's Rivers boast revegetated banks, and are teeming with life
- Through a united regional approach, we are motivated to protect and improve our natural environments and provide sufficient funding to do so
- Through strict environmental legislation, we manage to balance human needs with those of the environment

## How we will measure our achievements

- Decrease in the number of flora and fauna species listed as threatened
- Percentage targets of natural area managed publicly and privately for conservation purposes
- Improved water quality in Maroochy's waterways and percentage increase in area of riparian vegetated buffers
- Amount of sustainable fish stock levels in Maroochy River and offshore fishing grounds
- Percentage targets for domestic and commercial water consumption, recycling and private rainwater harvesting
- Annual report card, showing the community's ecological '*footprint*' upon the carrying capacity of our environment

## Visible Indicators

- We brought back the black swan by revitalising sea grasses
- The river system is teeming with native aquatic, bird, and animal life
- We can safely and easily access clean waterways, beaches, parks, and countryside
- We see community orchards and permaculture gardens in urban areas where people are growing their own food and supplying markets

## Our healthy, vibrant, inclusive learning communities



### Where we were...

Maroochy faced rising costs of living and a rapid population growth. The mix of peoples and ages was changing. This trend affected us in three ways. Firstly, our sense of community and cultural identity seemed threatened. Secondly, it was difficult to gain access to affordable housing and health care services. Thirdly, the community was fracturing. There was an increasing wealth divide amongst generations, groups and genders. Our artistic and creative expression was also constrained due to a lack of facilities, funding, awareness and recognition of skills.

### What we did to achieve our healthy, vibrant, inclusive learning communities

To meet these difficult challenges, we focussed on lifelong learning and partnerships between generations and groups. We established agencies that could increase our community capacity and engender an inclusive and tolerant culture. We developed physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual spaces to nurture our ongoing human and community development. We showed that community wellbeing is concerned with the quality of life, safety, and common good of all residents. We increased our attention on personal and community health and education. We prioritised establishing accessible information and communication technology infrastructure.

### How we look in 2025

Maroochy is known as a region that leads the way in holistic, healthy living. Our towns encourage greater interactivity between the ages, cultures and socio-economic groups. Each town has its own community centre, vibrant town square, and has access to sports and recreation facilities. Equipped with *world-best practice* information and communication technology infrastructure, our community centres are places of learning as well as places to gather, share and be entertained. Our town's public spaces are designed to offer natural surveillance and safety. They are the favoured meeting place for young and old alike. They are shaded by trees and tranquil gardens and are alive with human endeavour and activity, such as community artworks, street festivals and markets. Lifelong learning is a central ethos for our community. Residents of all ages access knowledge, skills, and training through many informal and formal opportunities.

## Principles

- Be inclusive
- Be fair in the present and for future generations
- Be creative, lifelong learners
- Conserve our cultural diversity, our histories, and aesthetics
- Value the contribution of individuals and groups to the varied tapestry of life in our community
- Keep each other safe; value each other's wellbeing and quality of life

## Our top key vision ideas

- We developed a community culture concerned with the safety and well being of others. We take responsibility for how our actions affect others
- We are an inclusive society - all people have a sense of belonging
- We are a community that focuses on equitable access to lifelong learning, public education and training. We have increased the value and worth of our communities. Interaction between age groups is common
- We inform, educate, and provide products and services on holistic, healthy living to all ages
- We created pleasant public places, town squares and village community centres that offer social opportunities for education, information and celebration

## How we will measure our achievements

- Established targets for the number of meeting places and spaces per capita
- Percentage of community members participating in a voluntary (or social) capacity within the community
- Percentage targets of people who feel that they and their neighbours could fix an issue through mutual assistance and cooperation
- Percentage targets of people who know their neighbours and feel connected and safe within their community
- Percentage targets of people who participate in physical activity or sport
- Percentage targets of people who have access to information via the Internet
- Percentage targets of people participating in formal and/or informal learning activities
- Good mental health profile of the community and effectiveness of health facilities to support mental wellbeing

- There is an increased level of satisfaction among disadvantaged groups for their needs being met
- Quality and quantity of volunteer and agency support services to our disadvantaged groups
- Reduction in crime rates
- Percentage increase in level of funding for artistic/cultural development

## Visible Indicators

- We acknowledge the Indigenous custodians of this land
- We are all 'stewards' of our environment
- People feel comfortable and safe walking around our public places at night
- We genuinely celebrate all ethnicities and their cultures
- People of all ages frequently meet and socialise in our town squares
- Local festivals that celebrate our lifestyles and promote our communities are held frequently
- We see a diverse range of community groups, networks, and neighbourhoods supporting each other and the disadvantaged
- Availability of a range of affordable mixed housing options
- Mentorship programs exist for mutual knowledge sharing and support

## Our diverse transport infrastructure and mobility



### Where we were...

Maroochy faced traffic congestion in urban areas, car dependency, and inadequate access to affordable public transport. These factors increased the social isolation of our communities - particularly amongst young and ageing residents. Transport infrastructure (walk, cycle, road, rail) was not meeting the demands of population growth. Trips between the hinterland and coast were difficult.

### What we did to achieve our diverse transport infrastructure and mobility

We focussed on making our towns, villages and neighbourhood centres walkable and pedestrian-friendly. This was in keeping with growing community expectations that we make places for people rather than cars. Building transport infrastructure, particularly bus lanes and tramways, was our priority. We promoted cost benefits of car-pooling and car share networks.

### How we look in 2025

Maroochy presents a well-planned tapestry of walkable towns, mixed-use villages and residential neighbourhoods. These are connected by many modes of private and public transport. All these modes of transport are affordable, clean, energy-efficient and reliable. Our towns are connected by walk and cycle trails. Use of open rural space and nature corridors is a distinguishing feature of these trails.

### Principles

- Equal access to all mobility options
- Support diverse ways of travel
- In building our places, people are more important than cars
- Provide non-polluting ways of travel

### Our top key vision ideas

- Our reliable and affordable public transport provides comfortable and equitable access to all users. It caters for the needs of the elderly, people with disabilities, mothers with strollers and young people with bikes/boards

- Council and regional stakeholders provide a balanced and diverse range of travel options, including public infrastructure for walking and cycling networks, roads, multi-modal greenways, transit lanes, rail, light rail, ferry, CBD shuttles and Park'n'Ride stations
- By careful urban and transport planning, we have distinct walkable villages where people live, work, play and grow old without having to leave their local area. Our urban residents are within comfortable walking distance to a public transport service
- The core of our public transport system in Maroochy is a light rail (electric tram) service connecting all townships and business centres
- In 2025, our CBDs and seaside tourist centres are people-friendly and beautified. Frequent and free public shuttles service these centres, while other private vehicles have limited access

## How we will measure our achievements

- Percentage increase of trips made by public transport
- Percentage targets of homes within 400 and 800m of public transport and a centre (town, village or local), and a *walkability* rating using '*Pedestrian Shed*<sup>48</sup> analysis of neighbourhoods
- Established targets for the kilometres of cycle and walk paths constructed per annum
- Established targets for the kilometres of roads improved, repaired or constructed per annum
- Established targets for the kilometres of rail line constructed per annum
- Ensured percentage of transport funding and expenditure per annum allotted to diversification of transport infrastructure (walk, cycle, road, rail, bus)
- Percentage decrease in road deaths per annum
- Percentage decline in greenhouse gas emissions caused by transport/mobility
- Established targets for areas of "pedestrianisation" within centres

## Visible Indicators

- People of all ages walking/riding on safe trails throughout the Shire and choosing to leave their cars at home; trains are available for longer trips.
- Incentives for reducing car trips
- Streets and motorways are shaded with native trees

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<sup>48</sup> *Pedestrian Shed* analysis is an urban design method of mapping the connectivity within an area by illustrating the actual path of direct travel to a distance of 400m and 800m (factoring in obstructions and slope).

## Our responsible leadership, participatory decision-making and foresight



### Where we were...

Maroochy's residents perceived that we were poor at making sustainable and coordinated decisions for our long-term future and wellbeing. They also perceived that we had difficulties collaborating with our neighbouring local governments and state agencies in decision-making processes. Despite the rapid changes taking place in our Shire, we were working with antiquated legislation. Much of it lagged behind our desired outcomes. We craved leadership with foresight and commitment. We called for greater transparency, responsibility, objectivity and public participation in local decision-making.

### What we did to achieve our vision of responsible leadership and participatory decision-making and foresight

We realised that responsible governance takes into account the need for partnerships, community involvement, and regional cooperation. We focussed on putting *first things first* - what mattered most for our better and preferred future. As a result, we focussed on the six *Key Focus Areas* of our community vision. These became our high order outcomes. They described where we wanted to be in 2025. We recognised the lessons of the past. On the basis of those lessons, we reassessed our planning and development systems to achieve our community vision. We also invested in leadership and community agency training.

### How we look in 2025

Maroochy's leadership is based on the vision goals of lifelong learning and participation with an empowered community. Maroochy's leaders continuously participate with our empowered community. Successful leadership is now based on the ability to sustain genuine partnerships. Community panels inform the regional council of issues and decisions that concern their locale, whilst other community panels inform the council about wider policies and strategies. A spirit of cooperation, common passion, learning and coordinated vision enables us to navigate the global and technological changes constantly impacting on our community. Legislation is progressively evolving to ensure environmental, social, and economic outcomes that are sustainable and sensibly balanced.

## Principles

- Listen, and determine our needs from our wants
- Integrated decision-making and goal setting across governments
- Active community involvement and participation in our decisions
- Value foresight, work collaboratively and enrich collective wisdom
- Take responsibility for our actions
- Develop trust and integrity and be ethical

## Our top key vision ideas

- Community leaders educate themselves to be ethical, inclusive, informed, compassionate, transparent, collaborative and lifelong learners
- Our decision-making is based on achieving the community vision's long-term goals and action plans through partnerships; Council consults with community panels to ensure consistency with the community vision
- Community visioning is a way of life – corporate governance for us, enabling effective community and government partnerships. We keep our visions '*alive*' – by regularly updating them to match the community's changing values and circumstances
- Legislation allows community-initiated referenda and *e-polling* on major issues that affect the community vision
- To achieve our community's regional vision, a regional council for the Sunshine Coast empowers our distinct local communities to manage their own places

## How we will measure our achievements

- Percentage increase of residents that feel well informed about Government decisions which affect their locale
- Percentage increase of people participating in community decision-making and governance
- Established targets of community applications within government funding programs and other government or corporate sponsorship
- Percentage increase of people (youth included) who trust and rely on their local community leadership
- Percentage targets of new residents receiving a '*Welcome Pack*' containing the community vision
- Number of actions in the Maroochy *2025 Community Vision Action Plan* completed per annum
- Established targets for the dollars invested in community planning workshops
- Established targets for the number of community-based projects involving residents in the decision-making group

## Visible Indicators

- Our communities have ownership over decisions
- Civic duty/responsibility instilled into our way of life
- Local Community Referenda in action
- Some form of regional council or collaboration
- Funding programs for community organizations
- Good news community stories

## Our smartly managed rural and urban future



### Where we were...

Maroochy faced: the collapse of its local sugar industry due to global market forces; the need to accommodate an increasing population in the form of urban sprawl; the loss of urban and rural lifestyles and decreasing liveability. We were concerned that we would lose open rural spaces and the visual landscape amenity of our rural lands and natural habitats due to urban development. Providing basic infrastructure to a growing and widely spread-out population was also proving expensive.

### What we did to achieve our smartly managed rural and urban future

We managed population growth and its impacts. We focussed on containing urban development within legislated boundaries. We prioritised preserving nature and rural lands. We assisted in the diversification of the cane industry: the industry developed alternative high value products in the long term rather than sugar in the short term.<sup>49</sup> Within our urban areas, we demanded innovative climate-responsive design. These designs met community expectations and added value to visitor experiences.

### How we look in 2025

Maroochy sets Queensland's benchmark for balanced, responsive and responsible stewardship of our resources. We know how many people our region can support. We smartly manage our local resources to sustain our *Bush and Beach* cultures. In partnership with other government agencies, we have reduced our resource consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Maroochy has created - and continues to create - clean, green neighbourhoods and industries.

We avoid urban sprawl and consolidate our towns. We have developed our suburbs into mixed use, adaptable, affordable, energy-efficient urban villages with accessible parks and public places. We utilize *green architecture* that has low environmental impacts. Our buildings harvest rainwater, recycle grey water, generate renewable energy and are built with low toxic materials. We are proud of our built environments as they reflect our values and local cultural heritage.

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<sup>49</sup> See *Cane Futures Vision and Action Plan*, Nambour: Maroochy Shire Council, March 2004.

## Principles

- Be smart by using *systems thinking* – which means seeking to understand the interconnections between the environments, our ways of life and our means of making a living
- Live within limits – understanding a population size that our ecosystems and natural resources can support
- Make our places liveable
- Make our places memorable, thereby adding to our dynamic culture and diverse economy
- Protect our vistas, views and areas of scenic and heritage significance

## Our top key vision ideas

- We reduce the impacts of urban living by creating environmentally sensitive developments and innovative buildings (*green architecture*) designed for our climate and lifestyle. These are energy and water efficient and generate solar power. They harvest rainwater and recycle grey water
- Affordable, adaptable, liveable and '*green*' housing exists for our diverse community. It will meet the needs of all ages
- We have urban containment boundaries. These protect the viability and bio-diversity of our natural resources whilst ensuring the quality of life of our unique townships
- Our diverse communities live, work and play in high quality, distinct, compact, walkable urban villages/towns separated by green belts, wildlife corridors, natural ecosystems or rural lands. The unique characteristics in our landscapes and in our heritage are clearly identifiable
- We capped the population to known limits

## How we will measure our achievements

- We know how many people our region can sustain - the size of the population that our ecosystems and natural resources can indefinitely support
- Decreasing water and energy consumption of households and businesses per annum
- Percentage increase in renewable energy within our local energy market
- Established targets for minimum energy ratings per annum through new construction and refurbishment
- Established targets for the percentage decrease in Council's, and the community's, greenhouse gas emissions
- Percentage targets of '*adaptable housing*' applications approved per annum in accordance with Australian Standard 4299 (1995)

- Percentage targets of mixed-use developments approved within existing centres and new urban areas
- Decreasing percentages of *'Material Change of Use'*<sup>50</sup> developments approved outside the urban containment boundary

## Visible Indicators

- Distinct, compact walkable urban villages contained by boundaries and connected by a variety of public transport
- We have halved our resource consumption by utilising solar power, harvesting rainwater and recycling grey water
- We have preserved the cultural heritage of our communities and the natural heritage of our land
- *Bush and Beach* lifestyle choices and culture

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<sup>50</sup> "Material Change of Use" is a change in how land is being used, or a significant change in the intensity of its use, eg. from rural use to residential use.

## Our innovative and diverse economy



### Where we were...

Maroochy's businesses were not meeting the employment needs of the population. There was little diversity of work choice. Unemployment and seasonal/casual work was above the national average at 8.5 per cent. Our farmers struggled to make a living, as did our small businesses. Each year, there was an 80 per cent ownership turnover in local businesses. Many people bought businesses that they were ill equipped to run. Just four major industries provided half of our jobs: retail trade; property and business services; the construction industry; and health and community services. We did not take advantage of the potential benefits of the knowledge economy. Maroochy suffered a 'brain-drain' as our talented people sought higher paying jobs elsewhere.

### What we did to create our innovative and diverse economy

We took advantage of our quality of lifestyles, the capability of our people and Maroochy's natural attributes to create '*green*' employment opportunities. We chose, as a community, to deeply value these characteristics by developing creative and viable work opportunities. We addressed the rising importance of education, leisure and health services in our economy. Our focus was on doing more with less – what was known as *Factor Four*<sup>51</sup> – doubling our productivity and halving our resource consumption.

### How we look in 2025

By combining our region's three greatest strengths – climate, biodiversity and social and human relationships - Maroochy Shire enjoys enviable and well-earned prosperity. We realise that economic development is not the same as economic growth for growth's sake. Economic development in Maroochy Shire now means, diverse long-term employment opportunities. This economic sustainability enhances the liveability of the Shire, with limited effects on community wellbeing and the ecology.

Through strategic partnerships, creative relationships and the use of technology, business clusters and incubators are thriving. The '*brain-drain*' has been reversed and e-businesses with global reach provide local benefit and employment.

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<sup>51</sup> "*Factor Four*, in a nutshell, means that resource productivity can and should grow fourfold. The amount of wealth extracted from one unit of natural resources can quadruple. Thus we can live twice as well yet use half as much." - Hunter Lovins, Ernst von Weizsacker and Amory B Lovins, *Factor Four: Doubling wealth, halving resource use*, London: Earthscan, 1988, Introduction.

Maroochy engages in energy-smart and efficient bio-mimicry<sup>52</sup>. Maroochy also sets world standards in *green architectural redevelopment* and architectural training. Smart *eco-redevelopers* are prospering. We work with local government bodies and *eco-developers* to offer the latest in technology and eco-friendly designs. This includes applications for redevelopment and retrofitting existing residential areas.

The Sunshine Coast is leading the way in water recycling technology. Water conservation is our major continuing priority in the face of drier climate and other environmental changes. Our towns and villages, nature corridors, organic farms and eateries form a complete health and leisure-orientated *Bush and Beach* tourist package. Locals and visitors enjoy healthy relaxation in a picturesque landscape adjacent to the beautiful Pacific Ocean.

## Principles

- Be smart by using systems *thinking* – seeking to understand the interconnections between the environments, our ways of life and our means of making a living
- Practice '*natural capitalism*'<sup>53</sup> – understanding that economic development is not economic growth. This means that we:
  - a. Radically increase resource productivity
  - b. Bio-mimicry
  - c. Re-invest in our natural capital
  - d. Ensure no net loss of human or natural capital
- Share knowledge, mentor each other and increase our advantage

## Our top key vision ideas

- In urban areas we are known for our clean, green and varied light industries. These include eco-tourism, education, healthcare professions, retail, service, hospitality and renewable energy innovations
- In rural areas we are known for our farm-tourism, farm forestry and organic produce. These meet the needs of the local, national and international markets
- We developed new technologies to assist an innovative and diverse economy, while maintaining support for established professions and industries

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<sup>52</sup> Bio-mimicry means copying the efficiencies studied in nature's processes.

<sup>53</sup> P. Hawken, A. Lovin & L. Lovins, *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*, Rocky Mountain Institute, 1999 (Reviews <http://www.natcap.org/>)

- Through collaborative, creative, community-minded efforts, our innovative businesses increase natural and human capital. These businesses are globally competitive and export-orientated. They celebrate the success of a diverse and knowledgeable workforce culture
- Our advantages (vibrant community lifestyle, creativity and infrastructure) make *e-enterprise* a viable option for small businesses wishing to access global markets

## How we will measure our achievements

- Established targets for increased income per household and per capita
- Established targets for workforce participation rate (regional indicator)
- Established targets for unemployment rate (regional indicator)
- Percentage targets for increase in number of residents working within Maroochy (decrease in the number of commuting residents)
- Regular profiling of Industry Sectors in Maroochy and establish targets to diversify
- Dollar value of agricultural product per square metre of rural lands
- Percentage targets of agricultural land in Maroochy producing agricultural goods
- Percentage targets of businesses applying principles of natural capitalism
- Established targets for the kilograms of recycling per capita compared to kilograms of waste per capita
- Percentage targets on the number of telephone exchanges in the Shire with broadband capability and capacity
- Percentage increase in number of people employed in the creative industries and cultural arts sector
- Increased number of annual arts/culture/health conventions hosted within the Shire and benefiting the local economy
- Percentage decrease in failure rate of small businesses
- Percentage increase in renewable energy within our local energy market (solar, wind, hydro, bio-fuels)
- Percentage increase in high-yield tourism (eg. cultural, eco, knowledge)

## Visible Indicators

- Thriving orchards and market gardens in our countryside providing fresh produce for the local community. Our agricultural goods are globally in demand
- Maroochy is an e-enterprise hub for small businesses with global access to markets
- Cane farmers turn to alternative high value products instead of sugar. Long-term diversification of cane lands
- Flourishing creative industries sector
- Solar energy panels adorn the roofs of our homes and industries

## Section 7: Our Deeper Story

*Maroochy - habitat of 'Bush and Beach' towns; restoring waters for 'Life'; creating a balanced web between built and natural environments - reconnecting communities with nature and nurture.*

These passions of ours are motivated by the deeper story shared by our community<sup>54</sup>. Maroochy, for us, is "like a living rainforest rather than a single tree that grows, dies and falls". Like a rainforest, the whole for us is greater than the parts – always regenerating its self and returning to a balance in response to the forces around and within it.



© Renee Baldwin: Indigenous artist<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> In *Maroochy 2025 Community Survey No.2*, May 2004, there was 62% agreement with the rainforest metaphor.

<sup>55</sup> Image © 2004-5 Renee Baldwin.

## Maroochy 2025 Narrative

The following is a narrative communication of the preferred future for Maroochy in 2025. It is written in the form of a letter from a fictional character, Amy Lee. Amy lives in 2025, and is recording her daily activities for an oral history project for the benefit of future generations. As such this is not a normal diary. It attempts to describe how people could be living in Maroochy in future if we succeed in reaching the goals of the Community Visioning Project.

### Amy Lee's Letter to the Future

#### Preamble:

It is 2050. An Indigenous Elder has opened the Maroochy 2025 time capsule. Inside lie many small information cubes storing digital letters from residents of Maroochy in 2025 to the next generation. One of these is selected for holographic screening before the curious crowd of onlookers at the *Maroochy Story Telling Festival*.

#### 1st October 2025 – Greeting

*Hi, I am Amy Lee. I was born in 1967 at Nambour Hospital and I am 58 years old. The following diary will show what my life is like in Maroochy in 2025. This is my letter to the future. I hope you enjoy the experience. If I am lucky I might make it to the opening of the time capsule in 2050 - I'll only be 83. I live with my life-partner Nick and have a daughter named Alexandria and toddler grandson, Jack.*



#### 4<sup>th</sup> October 2025

*My family are visiting today. Alexandria and Jack will take the train from Mooloolaba to Coolum with their bicycle and toddler seat. We plan to cycle along Maroochy River to Dunethin Rock for a picnic, then return to Coolum Beach for a swim. Our dual peddle/electric cycles will make the journey a mix of exercise and relaxation...*

*The Maroochy River has revegetated banks and is teeming with aquatic, bird, and animal life. A wide range of rehabilitated habitats now surrounds Mount Ninderry - vine forest, scrubland... I catch glimpses of old cane lands between the tree-buffered path and riverbank. In other properties, diverse speciality plantations are growing for timber, native flowers, and nuts...*

*Meandering through the bushland reserve and picnic grounds we see eucalypts shedding great slabs and spindly slithers of bark. Jack is running ahead chasing a Richmond butterfly. I call him back to gaze at the pearl*

and bright orange trunks. Alexandria is a primary school teacher. She is taking a photograph for her classroom's eco-education lesson on "nature's colour display."



10<sup>th</sup> October 2025

It's market day today at Maroochydore's Civic Square. I'll take my electric cycle along the Sunshine Motorway. That was converted in 2020 into a multi-modal greenway. It allows not only smart cars, but also train and safe walk/cycle ways. The Melaleuca forests along the way fill my lungs with the pungent scent of nectar...

Beforehand, I rendezvous with Zoe, my close friend in Maroochydore. Zoe lives by her self in a single bedroom apartment within a multi-function complex designed to be green. We call these 'Sun-homes'. Sun-homes are made of non-toxic recyclable materials. They are energy and water efficient, and generate most of their own power (seeking to be energy neutral). I find them charming, as they have a lot of heritage features and are built to the desired low-rise character of our region. For me, Sun-homes offer the essence of liveability. Zoe tells me her house can be readily modified to suit her changing needs.

Zoe's place is part of a mixed housing complex for diverse types of income earners. It has singles, couples, young families, and 'empty nesters'. I find it quite a green and affordable housing project. It's the end result of a lot of joint public and private sector investments.

Zoe tells me her neighbours are great at working together to monitor their energy consumption. Together they make building improvements, recycle waste and tend their communal food garden in the courtyard. Zoe says she loves the sense of belonging and community responsibility she finds within her precinct...

To get back to Maroochydore markets... What can I say? They're like a great bazaar of people power and ingenuity. Adjacent to the markets there is a community-learning hub. It has free access to information from across the world. There are rooms for formal and informal learning, re-skilling and mentoring programs.

Today at the markets, Zoe and I walked along Cornmeal Creek Promenade towards Cotton Tree Park. The annual Maroochy Story Telling Festival is in full swing there. Here we listen to locals, young and old, tell their tales, visions and histories. The festival is a celebration of who we are and what we want to become... From the bridge I can see a banner proclaiming the Festival Organisers' motto: "We make the time and effort to listen to each others stories and leave 'footprints' to the future upon our pristine beaches."



14<sup>th</sup> October 2025

I awoke to the sound of kookaburras laughing at the rising sun kissing the pounding surf. As I departed for my morning walk, I was thinking about my home. It is a suburban three-storey townhouse, one of a small row. It's built in an existing older suburb. So in some ways, my home is similar to Zoe's Sun-home in that it takes advantage of our climate. It is energy smart - generating solar power. However, its 'timber and tin' architecture is more Coastal in style than Zoe's place. In fact, these townhouses are modelled on the architecture of the first Cotton Tree public housing project and on the traditional 'beach shack' style.

Native trees shade the footpath along my journey towards the creek which joins an extensive walk/cycle network that links the "Great Sunshine Coast Walk" to the east from Caloundra to Noosa and the "Great Maroochy River Walk" up to the "Great Western Walk" along the Blackall Range...

Today I stuck to my 45-minute route along the creek. On the way, I picked some fresh strawberries from the community permaculture garden. It's a place I help manage.

Just a little note here about our wonderful creek: It was revitalised in 2009 from a mere concrete channel. Now it's a gorgeously revegetated wildlife corridor.

Later in the day, I took a tram to Nambour, via the Brolga Line. You see, I had to meet my doctor. Due to advances in medical research, I found out quite early that I do not carry the Alzheimer gene. Thank goodness! My mind is my world - my wisdom! However, if I did have that gene, there's a great range of gene therapy and complementary options available. These treatments are very effective in treating the problem, with no negative side effects. (I knew those donations I made to medical research would be worthwhile some day!)



15<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Like I said, my passion is wisdom. I serve on a community panel that participates in local Council and regional policy, especially regarding local redevelopment issues. We also develop business partnerships to "make real" our decisions concerning our town and locale. Like all community leaders, I completed a course on my hometown's biodiversity, cultural heritage, and infrastructure. I've been encouraging Zoe's grandson Zane to be a member of the Sunshine Coast Youth Council. They are incredibly active lately in visioning and action planning for 2050.

Another part of my life is the volunteering work I do to source suitable older citizens to serve in Maroochy's innovative mentorship program. With more than 100,000 people in Maroochy over 45 years of age and 40,000 over 65,

*our collective wisdom is substantial. Our mentorships transfer technical, social and life skills. They are helping create a living local identity and are increasing our capacity to meet future challenges.*

*I think this is important, because the social challenges keep growing. There's such a wave of human genetic enhancements available these days. Artificial intelligence just keeps getting sharper and sharper, and the impact of global warming is starting to bite hard on our way of life. For instance, only last year, Maroochy welcomed a big quota of Pacific Island refugees. Their homeland is suffering regular tidal storm surges, due to the rising sea level (a side-affect of global warming). Fortunately, our local South Sea Islander community have been wonderful in helping them relocate with dignity.*

*But climate change isn't just affecting the Pacific Islands. Shortly, we're holding a community referendum on whether or not to change the urban containment boundary to exclude our own storm surge prone coastal urban areas being subjected to future redevelopment and consolidation. The referendum looks to be the climax of an intense period of public participation and debate over policy options. These options were expressed in the 'Community Green Paper'. Public debates took place through community workshops and through the 'Online Community Policy Forum'. The online forum is fantastic: Residents can attend a virtual community workshop in real time if they can't come to the face-to-face workshops due to health or other circumstances.*



24<sup>th</sup> October 2025

*My heart led me to the top of Mt Coolum today for my early morning walk... I like going up here. From the summit, I get a clear view of the vibrant urban villages within our suburbs. I see ribbons of green landscape growing longer each month and linking our villages. I can see a web of passenger tramways connecting the towns. Buderim Mountain still has its broad skirt of jade green escarpment. The rural hinterland and Maroochy flood plain looks productive and moss green. The air is clean and crisp. Often I can see the bushy folds of the Blackall Range to the west. To the east, a buffer of casuarinas and coastal dunes protect us from the wild Pacific Ocean...I wouldn't live anywhere else, this is my home...*

*Despite all those genetic 'wanna-bes' of earlier decades, we still eat 'real' food in 2025! In fact, much of it is organic. There are abundant permaculture farms in our rural communities. I myself keep two chickens in the backyard - Rosemary and Flopsy. They weed and de-pest my espalier tropical fruit orchard as well as supplying my family with eggs.*

*Modern computer technology is great. My home and kitchen is aware of my habits. On my return from my morning walk, I find my daily community news page on screen. All the local and global events in my circle of interest are up there - also my diary schedule and emails. The ventilation louvres*

opened automatically. This helps catch the spring morning breeze. Today I read an email from my dear hubby Nick... He is getting a bit precious at 56 about ageing but still doing the night shift as a contract cleaner.



28<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Leisure economy is all the go in Australia and the Sunshine Coast these days. We love our recreation. Even so, I've read we are still one of the hardest working societies in the world. I think the way we work in Maroochy comes from the way we value our natural environment and its biodiversity. Maroochy's businesses mirror the way nature does business. From nature we have learnt how to be more productive, more energy efficient, and use less resources so as to add more value to what we do. It's a highly creative process, not like the exploitative and destructive way things were done twenty or thirty years ago...

Maroochy's enterprise clusters are a good example of what I mean about copying how nature does business: Related businesses collaborate and gain advantage from sharing their resources and knowledge. My employer is a member of the Sunshine Coast Renewable Energy and Recycling Industries Cluster. I work part-time for an e-enterprise that sells local recycled raw materials through the World Wide Web. Other businesses in our cluster provide resources and knowledge. There's Macadamia Nut Green Fuel, Farm Forestry's Carbon Credit Trading, and the Maroochy Waste Recycling Centre.

I like my pattern of work. Working part-time gives me the flexibility to blend family and civic duties. Nick is in a similar situation. As a contract cleaner, he's got a ready but flexible job - the service industry is still a big employer here in Maroochy. However, at 56, Nick doesn't intend to only do cleaning. He has made plans to re-skill towards his biggest passion - fishing. So he now wants to work part-time between two vocations: aquaculture farm hand and diving instructor/guide for the Coast's offshore artificial reef. If all that works out, he'll be handling more fish than he can imagine!

What Nick is doing is pretty typical of what is happening everywhere in the Maroochy workforce. They call it the "Plerk Shift" ("pleasure-work shift"). Basically, our residents are increasingly doing what they love - whatever they find meaningful. People here want to do what gives them pleasure, rather than just working for a living.

If I think about the last decade or so, I guess the other big change in Maroochy occurred in the development and construction industry. Eco-redevelopment and eco-refurbishment seems to be the mainstay in that industry now. A lot of green-field land and housing developments were completed in the 2010s.

I know Zoe's neighbours, David and Tim, work in the construction industry. They refit older homes with modern eco-friendly fixtures. Their ambition is

to start their own company specialising in 'Home Resource Watcher' monitoring units. They explained to me that a Home Resource Watcher unit is an intelligent system. It monitors all the resources consumed in the household. It even credits household recycling and energy generation. I should explain - new national laws provide tax credits for lowering household resource consumption. So I guess David and Tim's Home Resource Watcher units are going to be very popular.

Another change I noticed is the popularity of niche agribusiness. Alice, another friend of mine, is a good example: She is a senior citizen. She used to manage a cane farm. Over the decades, Alice was able to transform the cane farm she managed, because it had richer loam soil from all that cane activity. Now Alice supervises bunya plantations on the former cane farm. Alice supplies bunya nuts to bush tucker restaurants both locally and interstate. Some of her crop is even flown to Europe.

### 30<sup>th</sup> October 2025 - Farewell:

As a farewell from me here in 2025, I want you all to know that it was our Shire's deeper story of "common unity like a rainforest" that motivated many of us. That vision impelled us to create better options, better relationships and ultimately better futures individually and as a community. I only hope life in 2050 is a further improvement, born of the best of our collective wisdom and endeavour.

Amy Lee, Resident of Maroochy in 2025.