Research Background

The Sunshine Coast region has evolved dramatically over the past few decades and has rapidly matured to become a more sophisticated place with a critical mass. This paper takes a comprehensive view of how the region links externally to the balance of South-east Queensland (SEQ) and from there to a national and global environment.

Research Contribution

An understanding of ‘how we got to this point’ is important to accepting who we are and how we manage the future. The paper provides a brief development history which is essential in appreciating where we came from but, equally important, the region cannot be inhibited or limited by that past. The Sunshine Coast is often known for its image of beach culture and desirable lifestyle – there is nothing wrong with that. In fact, that notion represents a widely held ‘Australian aspiration’. It is an attribute that be protected and developed. It is purely anecdotal to say that is a detriment to business. As the Gold Coast proved decades ago, the two are complementary in the contemporary environment. It is simply how this offer is presented and nurtured. Perhaps, it is not the offer that is the problem but the region’s own confidence and what to do from here.

Research Significance

The paper recognises that a vibrant community is not simply about economic growth and external linkages. It would hold however that a prosperous, well-serviced and educated community is a far better place to produce the community that current and future residents demand. The Sunshine Coast is now poised to set its own course as a region presenting a third major node in SEQ and to become a destination in its own right. Unlike most of the major regions in SEQ, it is not fundamentally a commuter zone for Brisbane and is unlikely to become such for the foreseeable future. Therein lies a level of independence and separate identity, whilst having challenges will have particular and unique benefits.