

Economic injection

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It's the biggest thing to happen to the Sunshine Coast – a new hospital precinct set to nurse the local economy back to life.

The largest health infrastructure project in the southern hemisphere has landed on the Coast's doorstep, and will inject \$3.5 billion worth of activity into the local economy. In fact, this Sunshine Coast University Hospital (SCUH) and town centre project in Kawana could just be the lifeline the current comatosed Sunshine Coast economy needs. Soil has already turned on the 20-hectare site on the corner of Lake Kawana Boulevard and Kawana Way, but it's been a long process. The council, Stockland (who owns the land) and Queensland Health have been working together on this project since 2007.

When construction gets well underway next year it will be the biggest hospital development in the country, and it will provide a huge boost for local businesses in a range of industries including construction and trade, hospitality, tourism, retail, education, food and beverage, medical and, of course, the property sector.

The sheer magnitude of this project is hard to comprehend, with the SCUH expected to be approximately the same size of the Royal Brisbane Hospital, and by 2021 it's forecast to be the biggest hospital precinct in Australia.

Sunshine Coast Council CEO John Knaggs calls this project a "game changer for the Sunshine Coast". He says people need to start understanding the scale and the importance of the SCUH and the positive affects it's going to have on the region. "This single public infrastructure investment is unprecedented in this region and is not likely to be replicated in the foreseeable future," he says. "This is the equivalent of a resources boom for the Sunshine Coast. This is our resources boom."

The estimated multiplier effect on the local economy is in excess of \$3 billion and once complete, the hospital will be the single largest employer in the region. The project will create 11,000 construction jobs over its life and the hospital itself will host more than 3500 health staff with 15,000 visitations per day.

At a time when employment on the Coast is subdued, this is considered a huge boost that is expected to rejuvenate the local economy. After all, these workers and visitors will need to live, play and eat on the Coast and that means more spending in our region, from cafes, bars and retail through to renting and buying property.

Stockland's Sunshine Coast regional manager Troy Wainwright says locals should be very excited about this massive project. It presents an abundance of opportunity for local business and for those who invest in property, if they have the foresight.

"Those who get in early and buy now will have the opportunity to benefit from future growth," Troy says. "The delivery of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital will bring thousands of workers to the area, who will require places to purchase and rent. We are already seeing an increase in medical employees

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looking to purchase in our Birtinya Island and Brightwater communities.”

University of the Sunshine Coast Professor of Property and Development Mike Hefferan is the State Government's consultant for the Gold Coast Hospital, and has been involved in the SCUH project for four years. He has calculated that more than \$1.25 million is being spent every single day on the Kawana site.

"At this stage exact estimates and timings are difficult to quantify but this project involves building the largest single-campus hospital in Australia, a major private hospital, an integrated town centre with a range of urban land uses and the infrastructure that goes with all of that," he says. "By a rough calculation that means that between now and the end of 2016 something between \$1.25 million and \$1.5 million is likely to be spent in the Kawana precinct every day, seven days per week."

Mike says this figure does not include the ongoing financial inflow that will be required to pay wages and other expenses at the two hospitals and for the many employees and businesses that will be employed there over time. As an antidote to a volatile and cyclic economy,



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Mike Hefferan, University of the Sunshine Coast

a thriving hospital precinct of this calibre will not only draw an increase in population and their demand for housing and other services, but will create a relatively stable demand over a long period of time.

Mike says locals are yet to fully grasp the magnitude of this project or the opportunities it will present. With so much money being spent in the region, there are a number of lucrative opportunities for people to generate cash flow, from property investment through to small business. “It is very difficult even for professionals involved to really appreciate the scale of all of this, but like all projects it is made up of a huge number of opportunities – some for large corporations and builders but others for a wide range of smaller firms and for individuals,” he says.

“The council, RDA [Regional Development Australia] and the State Government are working

closely together to try to ‘unbundle’ the project into bite-size pieces, but it is the responsibility of anyone who is interested in being involved to watch closely, and to be proactive and innovative about how they might be involved. Opportunities will not just ‘turn up’ for local firms and residents – they have to take the time to be ready and to understand where those opportunities are emerging.” ■



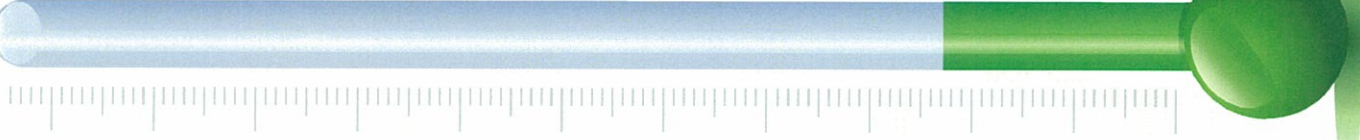
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TIME LINES

According to all those involved, time lines are hard to confirm with a project of this calibre, but this is what is scheduled to take place at this point:



Dec 2016

The public hospital will open. The town centre is subject to final planning, but it is envisioned to be developed by 2016 and by 2020 the aim is for the whole precinct to be fully constructed, sold and occupied.

2015

The first buildings of significance will be constructed in the medical precinct.

Dec 2013

The private hospital will open.

October 2012

Construction is due to start on the public hospital.

2012

Stockland aims to take off-the-plan commercial space and residential property to the market.

NOW

Soil is turning on the private hospital site.

The three bids on the public hospital site are being assessed.

THE MAIN COMPONENTS

Hospital precinct: The 200-bed Ramsay Private Hospital due for completion December 2013, and the Sunshine Coast University Hospital due for completion 2016, opening with 450 beds, growing to 738 beds by 2021.

Medical precinct: This will consist of 730 units, 20,000 square metres of commercial space, 15,000 square metres of conference

and accommodation space plus a community centre and 400 square metres of retail.

Town centre: The surrounding hub for education, health, residential and entertainment. The core town centre will consist of 490 units, 20,000 square metres of retail space, 10,000 square metres of commercial and 4000 square metres of indoor entertainment

space. The town centre mixed-use will consist of 540 units, 28,000 square metres of retail, 7250 square metres of commercial, a library and community-use space.

Transit precinct: This will consist of 300 units, 77,200 square metres of mixed-use space including education, retail, commercial, food, tavern, accommodation, hotel plus service station.

