

Certainty grows confidence

The first thing you notice about the State Governments 2026 - 27 budget is the lack of flashy micro announcements that seemed to propagate previous brochures.

True to their word, this is a no-frills budget, one that every lobby group seems to think they didn't get enough out of it.

So, it must be good.

Given the inherited mess including a litany of unfunded essential projects, like the Bundaberg Hospital, I can understand why interest groups might feel this way.

Even the Chambers state body, Business Chamber Queensland, called the budget "a missed opportunity for government to provide real relief for the current challenges and lay the foundation for long term business confidence."

I couldn't disagree more.



For business, we have seen the continuation of funding for already announced programs, ones that are already helping business during these times of economic uncertainty.

I say, if it's working, keep doing it.

We don't need flashy new programs that often require complete resets. Just get on with it.

We've also seen an upswing in regional pro-

curement opportunities, especially regarding Olympic procurement opportunities, which we highlighted at the Chambers May breakfast.

These opportunities for local businesses, ensure that money from state projects continues to flow to the regions and our regional businesses, rather than just benefiting the southeast corner of the state.

We even see money for both the new Bundaberg Hospital and for Paradise Dam, both projects that are essential for the region's future.

Locally it is great to hear that work on the main hospital pad should start shortly.

Bundaberg Port is also mentioned with money for additional work, work that will again benefit local businesses through further procurement opportunities.

But there is one thing that we have seen in this

budget that was desperately needed, something that is still missing from the federal budget.

That is certainty.

There are no changes to any economic fundamentals that drive away investment and opportunities for business.

There are no unfunded empty promises to gain votes nor are their sweeteners to entice the woke inner-city greens and teals.

This is a budget that is plain, with no frills, as was expected. It doesn't have anything to hide - it simple outlines the plan and the direction and with that, gives people certainty about their future.

And certainty begins to rebuild confidence.

Who knows, maybe the Feds will learn from this and change their position - again!

Group is blown away by growth

By Angela Norval

When it comes sharing a friendly smile with locals and visitors alike The Windmill Group now - The Windmill Cafe, The Beach Mill Cafe and The Garden Mill Cafe owner/operator Joey Caruana is always happy to oblige.

Joey said as both a local business owner and a director of Bundaberg Tourism, he has seen first-hand the incredible work Bundaberg Tourism does in promoting the region.

"Their efforts help showcase everything that makes Bundaberg special, from our natural attractions and local produce through to our hospitality experiences," he said.

"When visitors are inspired to visit the region, that flow-on effect benefits local businesses like ours and helps create opportunities for everyone involved in tourism."

One area that Joey covers well is showcasing just how food and hospitality are often at the heart of a visitor's experience.

"People may come for our beaches, turtles, rum or beautiful weather, but it's often the warm welcome, great coffee, delicious food and genuine local service that they remember most.

"Hospitality gives us the opportunity to tell the story of our region through local ingredients, friendly conversations and memorable experiences.

"We want every person who walks through our doors to leave feeling they've experienced a little piece of what makes Bundaberg and Bargara so special."

Asked what it was valuable for businesses to be active members of Bundaberg Tourism or contribute to destination marketing, Joey said destination marketing was something that benefits the entire community.

"The more we work together to promote Bundaberg, the stronger our region becomes as a visitor destination.

"Being involved with Bundaberg Tourism allows businesses to collaborate, share ideas and contribute to a bigger vision for the region.

"Tourism isn't about one business succeeding—it's about creating an experience that encourages visitors to stay longer, spend more time exploring and return again in the future.

"I am extremely proud and deeply grateful to have developed so much growth with The Windmill Group now - The Windmill Cafe, The Beach Mill Cafe and The Garden Mill Cafe.

"What started as a passion for creating welcoming spaces has grown into three unique venues that have become part of so many people's daily lives.

"The fact that locals have their favourite spot, whether it's The Windmill, The Beach Mill or The Garden Mill, means the world to me because local support is the foundation of everything we do.

"To then see visitors from across Australia and beyond enjoying our venues as part of their Bundaberg experience is very rewarding.

"None of it happens without our amazing staff, loyal customers and the wider community that has supported us along the journey.

"We're fortunate to be part of a region that people love visiting, and we're proud to play a small role in helping create memories for both locals and visitors alike."



First National Real Estate Bundaberg owners Elisa and Justin Mayberry at the awards night held in Da Nang, Vietnam. (Supplied)

Impressive achievement for Bundy agency

First National Real Estate Bundaberg was recognised for outstanding achievement during the network's National Convention in Da Nang, Vietnam.

The awards recognised the achievements of First National's estate agents throughout Australia in 2025.

First National Bundaberg, principal, Justin Mayberry, said it was his team's honour to be recognised for the results achieved over the

past 12 months.

"These awards are a testament to the dedication, expertise, and resilience of my team," he said.

"Their commitment to delivering outstanding customer service, even in the face of challenges, is truly commendable.

"Each accolade reflects not only their individual talent but also our collective drive to set new benchmarks in real estate. I am incredibly

proud of what we have achieved together."

At the awards presentation, First National Bundaberg received the following awards:

- Highest Number of Settled Sales.
- Highest Gross Sales Commission.
- Justin Mayberry said the First National Real Estate State Awards are an important event as they as they encourage First National's agents to aspire to an ongoing process of performance improvement that benefits customers.