Chairman Report 2016

It would be so easy to get last years Chairman’s Report and duplicate it, because sadly in this current era of overpowering democracy and changing minority governments it often feels almost impossible to get any projects off the ground that will provide a solid future for our region because of the continuing hurdles that keep popping up.

In saying that our region I believe is now in one of the best positions politically on all levels of government with very supportive and proactive representation in George Christiansen and Dale Last, combined with a revitalised Whitsunday Regional Council and a new Economic Development Officer we can only go one way.

An example of this is that we now see the Adani mine, rail, and water infrastructure being declared “critical infrastructure” for Queensland something I am sure our local politicians will have played a big part in.

This year has gone too quickly to put any real finishing ticks on the board, but we certainly are getting closer with 3 major economic opportunities for our area.

Firstly we have Urannah which after all the years of hard work and persistence (especially over the last Christmas break) of Dave Nebauer and David Evans being continually backed by our board has seen a $3,000,000.00 government grant being obtained to do a final study on the viability of this water source for not only Bowen and Collinsville but for Proserpine and the mining hinterlands of the Bowen and Galilee Coal Basins. The project now also has the official support of our neighbouring Burdekin and Isaac Regional Councils.

This could only have happened with our $30,000.00 “white paper” study being used as a catalyst for the formation of Urannah Holdings Pty Ltd with our partners being the Urannah Properties Association and Initiative Capital and so hopefully next year will see all this effort give an outcome to secure the region’s future.

A special thanks to David Evans for his special efforts in his reports, delegations, and travel, in keeping the project on track and also to Kevin Baxter from Ruddy Tomlins and Baxter for providing free legal representation for the formation of the company.

The Bowen Boat Harbour Concept Plan is still active but has been delayed because of the State Government not committing to its implementation until the Whitsunday Regional Council Plan has been endorsed. Phillip Burns of Queensland Transport and Main Roads assures us that they is still in full support of it but will not allow commencement until they are assured that the “Town Plan” and the “Concept Plan” align. Andrew Willcox has had preliminary discussions with Abel Point Marina owner Paul Darousett about a superyacht service hub being added to the plan which will only strengthen its viability. Thanks to John Finlay, Terry Pilcher and Paul Crack for their continued efforts in making sure BCE had input into these plans and again we look forward to forward movement in 2017.

The fruit and vegetable processing plant idea has taken a slight turn after checks found there is already a lot of study being undertaken by DAFF and a business consortium and more information on this will be revealed once confidentiality agreements are put in place so discussions in this region can take place.

Funds have been committed to a study from Whitsunday Regional Council, Department of State Development and Regional Development Australia totalling $30,000.00 but are being held until non duplication of studies can be guaranteed. Thanks here to our members Carl Walker, Tom Mullins, and Ross Meier and Mike Brunker for their input in trying to secure viability of our major industry.

As in past years members of BCE have represented us at a number of forums and our ideas and comments are still very well respected.

The base of BCE is now very broad with our Burdekin representation and also that of our State and Federal Departments that give us a forum that all our industries and promoters all have a common feel about where and how this region can prosper.

Thanks again this year to Peter Taylor from Abbot Point Bulkcoal and Ross Meier from Queensland Country Credit Union for being our only income providers, Andrew Crosby from TAFE for the use of this great complex, and because of all this help we can remain autonomous and viable.

We farewell Andrew Crosby as he has a new role in TAFE and welcome Ian Smythe CEO of TAFE NQ and look forward to his input and supporting him with his organisation and especially his new ideas in relation to agriculture.

Mardi Mathieson is our unsung hero in keeping BCE together and we can never be too grateful for her dedication to this organisation.

To all our members and associates thank you for your loyalty and commitment again this year and because of this we have been able to keep a vision for the region while we travelled the stormy waters of the last few years and it is something I have noted in recent times other regions would be grateful of.

To my executive of Ross Meier, Dave Nebauer, and John Finlay your commitment to BCE, Bowen, Collinsville and the whole Whitsunday region is something that we all appreciate.

George Christensen in a pre-election debate was questioned on his support of local projects and he answered “I have consulted with Bowen Collinsville Enterprise which is made up of representatives of all industries in the region, community members, and the Whitsunday Regional Council and I don’t believe I need look much further than that for an opinion of what a community wants”.

This I believe sums up the role of Bowen Collinsville Enterprise something that it has done for the last 18 years and I am sure will play a vital role in supporting those who are working to make the region great.

Stephen Darwen

Chairman