

Mayor Mark Jamieson

Wednesday, 25 January 2023 – 9.00am

Sunshine Coast City Hall – inaugural Ordinary Meeting

Good morning, Councillors, ladies and gentlemen.

May I start by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area.

The Kabi Kabi peoples of the coastal plains and northern hinterland and the Jinibara peoples of the southern hinterland.

And pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to all First Nations peoples.

Today marks an historic day in the governance of our Sunshine Coast as we hold our council's first statutory meeting in our new City Hall.

As you know, our City Hall is the seat of government for our region and as such, this chamber is the home of local democracy and local decision making on behalf of our residents.

As I was thinking last night about opening our first meeting in City Hall this morning, I was reminded of the words of Jim Gray, former Mayor of Lexington, Kentucky in the United States.

In a rather trite - but nonetheless pragmatic insight to his administration – and one which I am sure you will enjoy – Jim said –

In City Hall and in local government, you have to get things done without drama.

Perhaps there is something in that for all of us!

The reality is that while our Council will always have robust debate and express diverse views, we generally remain respectful and courteous to each other.

And most importantly, we know how to work together to get the job done.

So in a sense, perhaps we are living the mantra that Jim pronounces – and now doing so in our own City Hall.

Before we get proceedings underway this morning, on behalf of each of us, I want to acknowledge and offer a big thank you to all who have made this moment possible.

From the former councillors that served in the last council who contributed to the original decision to establish our headquarters in the heart of our new city centre.

To our staff who have worked tirelessly over the last few years to bring this building to life.

It does not seem that long ago when we turned the first sod in 2020.

And in this context, I want to particularly acknowledge each of you, my fellow Councillors, who agreed to proceed with the construction of this building in the interests of generating certainty and jobs in those dark and uncertain early days of the pandemic.

Thank you also to the community members in our gallery today – and those of you joining online – who are sharing in this experience today.

We all have our fingers crossed that the technology will be kind to us!

It's been close to 30 years since the Caloundra Administration Building was opened by the then Local Government Minister, the late Terry Mackenroth.

And some 45 years since the Eddie de Vere administration building in Nambour opened in 1978.

Both of these former administration buildings have played an important role in the governance of this region.

And it is our intention that they will continue to make a significant contribution to the economic and social fabric of the communities in which they are located.

Just over a month ago, on 10 December, I had the great privilege to officially open this remarkable building on behalf of our Council and the community we represent.

More than 1500 people were part of that event – these being the first members of our community to walk through city hall – the building built for our people.

Importantly, our new administration centre and this chamber are located in the heart of our Sunshine Coast.

Expanding our connections with, and accessibility to, our customers and our community.

As you will have heard me mention before, City Hall's design is inspired by the majestic Glass House Mountains.

Arguably the most significant natural feature in our region and one with an enduring connection with our First Nation peoples for thousands of years.

Equally, the design characteristics for this building have been very much about forging an even stronger connection between our pristine Hinterland and our urban landscape.

This landmark green-star building is setting a new benchmark for sustainable internal and external design, for the City Centre itself and for the Sunshine Coast more broadly.

We are now seeing this standard of design being modelled in other building designs in the Maroochydore City Centre.

And the building continues to deliver new surprises.

One that I am particularly looking forward to is the completion of the fit out of Level 9, which will occur around the middle of this year.

Level 9 well and truly belongs to our community – no matter where they live – and it will be used for a wide range of council-hosted and sponsored events, citizenship ceremonies and community engagement workshops.

In essence, it is part of ensuring that the people's house is genuinely just that – available to and accessible by our communities.

Ladies and gentlemen, before we move into the business of this meeting, it is worth pausing for a moment to reflect on the criticality of the decision-making that will take place in this Chamber.

Together we are charged with making decisions in the best interests of our region – for today, tomorrow and for the future.

We have never shied away from that responsibility.

Whether it be committing to secure an international broadband submarine cable.

To delivering a truly international standard airport.

To creating Australia's only new city centre.

To driving hard to secure our place in hosting the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

But equally, we intrinsically know that retaining the lifestyle and natural assets that we all revere and love, is what particularly resonates with our communities.

Which is why we pursued and secured our biosphere designation and it is what will shape the decisions we – and others – will make in the months and years ahead.

Decisions that will be made here - in this room - in our city hall.

And increasingly, those decisions will impact at a state and national level – as our region's contribution to the state and the nation becomes even more important.

But we cannot let our state and national profile be the sole determinant of the course that we chart into the future.

We know that local government is the closest level of government to the community.

We live and breathe that every day.

We represent the hopes, ideas and aspirations of our community - a responsibility that we never take for granted.

On that note Councillors, I wish you all well as we continue to lead our region from our new chamber.

I now proudly declare this meeting of our council – the first for the year and the first in our City Hall – officially open.

ENDS