

Moving Towards Greater Community and Local Business Prosperity

Raeleen Kaesehagen

Opening

Often when we look at something we look at the problem. Climate, business, economics, development. What ever it is, we see a problem and a fear comes over us.

The thing with fear or being scared is that it leads to the 'flight or fight' mechanisms in our brain, and we often sit like a deer in headlights. Afraid of what is to come, but don't know what to do about it.

In the following I propose that rather than look at the problem, we look at solutions. Lets create a vision, a future, a dream.

Inspire yourself by the 'what if' and 'how it could be' and think about what it is that you want.

The following is looking at the positive, the solution and will inspire you as to what it could be.

What Makes Peregian Beach Special?

When we ask the question, what makes Peregian Beach special many things come to mind. Take a moment. What makes Peregian Beach special to you?

Community, the coast, nice village atmosphere, park.....

There a long list of what makes it special. For local economy the most interesting thing that makes Peregian special is it's foundations.

Peregian Beach has the foundation for a wonderfully prosperous, completely unique, economically thriving, vibrant town.

It already has diverse, independently owned local businesses, strong community spirit, character, charm, many active non profits including an organic veggie village, food co-op, community house, free live music event and surf club. The community is healthy and the town is a walk-able and bike-able town. There are defined commercial and open space and recreation areas. It is safe and works with it's environment in a pleasant and sustainable way.

Going Local

"Going local does not mean walling off the outside world. It means nurturing locally owned businesses which use local resources sustainably, employ local workers at decent wages and serve primarily local consumers. It means becoming more self-sufficient and less dependant on imports. Control moves from the boardrooms of distant corporations and back into the community where it belongs."

-Michael H. Shuman, author of the book **Going Local**.

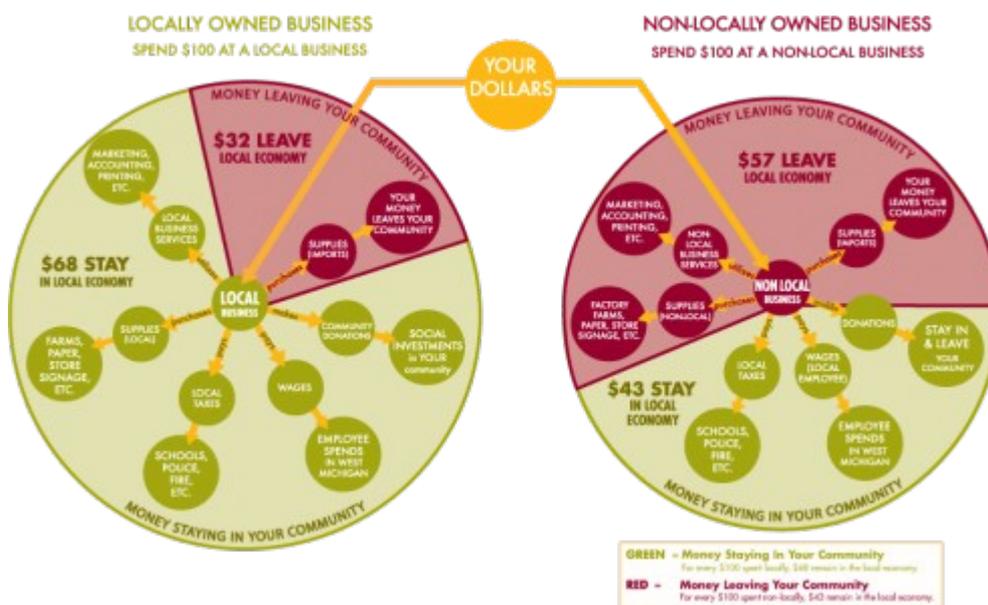
Local Business Drives Prosperity and Job Creation

The Time Magazine wrote a great article that summarised “Buying Local: How It Boosts the Economy.”

In the article it was written: “Cutting-edge economic developers increasingly recognise the importance of strengthening locally owned, small businesses. Growing evidence suggests that every dollar spent at a locally owned business generates two to four times more economic benefit—measured in income, wealth, jobs, and tax revenue—than a dollar spent at a globally or nationally owned business. That is because locally owned businesses spend much more of their money locally and thereby pump up the so-called economic multiplier. Other studies suggest that local businesses are critical to tourism, walkable communities, entrepreneurship, social equality, civil society, charitable giving, revitalised downtowns, and even political participation

When a chain store opens it may create minimum-wage jobs, but when an independent store opens it creates community owned and controlled assets that have the potential to stabilise neighbourhoods as they are inherited from one generation to the next”

What this article and thousands more are indicating is that local business equates to more money in the community.



The above example from localfirst.com shows that for \$100 spent at a locally owned business, \$68 dollars remains in the community. Whereas a non-locally owned business, only \$43 dollars remains in the community. In some coastal communities this is shown to reach as high as \$80 remaining in the community for locally owned businesses.

Locally owned businesses create what they call the multiplier effect. The multiplier effect works as the money remains in the community. It keeps circulating and does not leak out.

It is created as a locally owned business employs local people who also shop locally. The same locally owned business tends to use local suppliers and local services. A locally owned business will employ a local accountant, lawyer, marketer and so on. Where-as a non-locally owned business will tend to centralise their operations and not employ these local services.

Local businesses are also rooted in the community, understand the community, are accountable to the community and spend their profits in the community.

Non-locally owned businesses can just up-root, with no concern for the effect on the community or employees.

Diversity and Local Ownership is the Key to Economic Growth, Happiness, and a Healthier community

Local ownership is the key to economic growth. Local Ownership:

- **Create jobs:** local businesses are the largest employer nationally and in our community, provide the most jobs to residents.
- **Local Businesses Provide Better Service:** They have a better understanding of the products and take more time to get to know customers.
- **Put taxes to good use:** Local businesses require comparatively little infrastructure investment and make more efficient use of public services as compared to nationally owned stores. In addition, local businesses do not get tax large tax subsidies funded by our rates & tax dollars as many multi-national businesses do for establishing a headquarters in a town.
- **Buy what you want, not what someone else wants you to buy:** Locally owned businesses select products based on the local needs, not a national sales plan.
- **Adaptable:** local businesses can move with change and are resilient.
- **Grounded:** Local businesses are embedded in community. Non-local businesses have no connection to community and can just uproot leaving an entire community stranded.
- **Local businesses create diversity.** Diversity means the town is not reliant on one particular business or industry. This minimises risk. In addition, real diversity creates character and charm, which is essential for tourism. Real diversity is only achieved through local owned, independent business.
- **Maintains uniqueness:** Global businesses homogenise, rolling out the same look and feel. This creates a 'same same' look and people feel. People then look at the town as 'any-place' rather than some-place. 'Some-place' is delivered by having different, unique, independent businesses with local charm.
- **Creates entrepreneurial spirit:** Having a community of locally owned businesses creates a spirit of entrepreneurship. In addition children of entrepreneurs are more likely to be entrepreneurs themselves, thus providing for future generations of new businesses.
- Local owned communities create walkable, sustainable unique towns with character which drives tourism, health, happiness
- **Sense of Pride:** By having a unique, diverse town with character creates a sense of community pride, and adds to the health and happiness of the community.

How a Local Economy Approach Helps Local Businesses Achieve Their Goals

With businesses supporting other local businesses, the residents and community then support the business. With a local economy approach there is less leakage and the money stays within the community. It circulates thus creating the multiplier effect. This means more money for each business, who in turn spends their profits in the community, and the circulation continues.

The uniqueness, diversity, character and charm that the local economy approach creates also drives tourism and awareness for the businesses.

The awareness also allows the locally owned businesses to provide local products that are more sustainable, with better service. Locals reward this and are more likely to tell others.

How Non Profits and Community Groups Can Benefit from this Approach

Local businesses support their local charities and non profits. As the spirit of the community increases, so do the contributions to non-profits. Non profits receive on average 250% more support from smaller business owners than they do from large businesses. In addition, the more financial security within the community means businesses and residents can devote more volunteer time and more dollars towards charities.

A vibrant, healthy community equals vibrant and healthy non-profits.

How Peregian Beach's Current Town Plan is Key to the Local Economy

Sustainable communities must take into account their environment as much as their economy as it is the economy that survives based on the viability of the local environment.

The uniqueness, diversity and charm of Peregian Beach is by and large a result of its town plan. The setup of the town means that the locals enjoy shopping in an area that is away from and separate to the highway, that includes a green park at it's central focus and adjoins a coastal park. The feeling people have as they walk or bike through Peregian Beach adds to it's charm and diversity and keeps people coming back for more.

When the shopping and eating is over, residents and locals look to health and activity and off to the recreation spaces within Peregian they go. The open space and recreation area that includes the community house, Di-Hurst oval, veggie village, volley ball courts, tennis courts and kindergarten make for a nice secluded escape with a peaceful surround. Whether it is yoga at the community house, a hit of tennis or the more active volley ball for the younger crowd, this area makes Peregian Beach special, as it can provide it's local residents and tourists with a healthy lifestyle and much needed sport and recreation.

The Peregian Town Plan has worked well to separate these two areas physically and provide for walking and biking paths to easily connect the facilities.

Keeping the open space and recreation area in tact is both key to the health and well-being of the locals, as it is to the economic health of the local independently owned businesses over in the separate commercial and retail area.

An Alternative Approach to Development

Saying no to developments that homogenise and yes to developments that are locally owned, sustainable and respect the town plan

There's always been a belief that to make money a town needs multi-nationals and large scale development. This is not the case, as we've discussed above.

So if locally owned independent diverse business is driving prosperity in the town, what does that mean for development.

It means that a town no longer has to FEAR development.

A town with a local focus that is community aware can take a pro-active approach that embraces and supports development that is in line with the towns local economy focus.

A pro-active approach means rather than wait and fight any proposed development that does not sit well with the community, the community can openly say to all future investment: '*This is our town. This is what you can expect here and this is what we expect of any development or investment.*'

The community can document that the town is a local economy focus, that it supports locally owned independent, diverse businesses that are sustainable and environmentally friendly and in keeping with the town plan and the community obligations. That the town does not welcome any businesses that homogenise, are non-locally owned or are a fast-food, global business or multi-national business.

This pro-active approach opens the door to special and wonderful development that will make Peregian Beach even more prosperous.

Like will attract like, and the developers out there that want to create something special (and there are such ones) will be attracted to Peregian Beach, and the developers that are only interested in a quick sell and profit or a homogenised business for a 'piece of the pie', will stay away, as they will know it will be not worth their time.

This approach is happening elsewhere, and I have been fortunate to be in contact with Associate Professor Phil Heywood who lectures on Urban and Regional Planning at QUT. He is a leader in this area and author of 'Community Planning: integrating social and physical environments - a key planning textbook on designing healthy & sustainable communities

Professor Heywood has shown his support for Peregian Beach. Through him QUT will support the exercise to articulate the community vision to local council. A group of students will help in the community vision documenting and presenting to local council.

Another key in being pro-active is having a Local Area Code. In the Sunshine Coast Area, only Buderim, Forest Glen and the Blackall Range have a code, with Noosa Heads coming under the Iconic places Act.

Local Bronwyn Buksh, Researcher and Sessional Lecturer for Regional and Urban Planning Program at the University of the Sunshine Coast has put up her hand to coordinate the development of the Local Area Code for Peregian Beach.

In addition, Dr. Jane Craig who is the Director of Postgraduate Programs, Faculty of Business at the University of Sunshine Coast will be studying the local food co-op from a business perspective. This shows further Peregian Beach's unique and diverse nature and how different business models can be prosperous

I have also been in contact with Michael Shuman, author of 'Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age' and Small-Mart: Ideas and Tools for Building Healthy Local Economies. Mr Shuman is coming to Australia in September.

Peregian Beach Has An Opportunity Here

The opportunity that Peregian Beach can become a thriving local economy is very exciting.

If we go back to the beginning and look at 'what makes Peregian Special', we can see that Peregian Beach already has the foundations. It already has all the pieces in place with local independent diverse businesses, no global or multi-national business, a strong community focus with non-profits, a healthy community and with entertainment, leisure and fun through live music events and sport and recreation facilities.

All the pieces are in place and moving to a prosperous local economy that drives the types of developments that the community wants is achievable.

Like does attract like and it encourages further local prosperity, attracting entrepreneurs looking to settle in communities that preserve their one-of-a-kind businesses and distinctive character.

Peregian Beach can set a blue-print for the future, and share this with other communities that also want to prosper and create their own unique character.

For areas such as the Peregian Beach bowls club site, the community can be proactive and tell developers what we want. We can let pro-active let developers know that Peregian Beach wants recreation open space with community focus and when purchasing properties with this preferred use the development must remain within this zoning use.

There's so many ways financially to makes properties such as the bowls club work without needing to resort to the old-style multi-national and homogenised development thinking. With this new thinking, we can create prosperity with sustainability, with community and truly create something unique and inspiring.

Encourage Open Communication with Council's Strategic Planners

By taking a pro-active approach with community vision and local area code and presenting this to council it lays the foundations of open communication.

The community can engage with council in an open manner that expresses the wish for proper consultation with the people who live here, and the desire to have the character and diversity of Peregian Beach maintained.

The open communication fosters trust, which means we can start working together.

Action item: Where To From Here

Think local first + Buy local when you can = Being a local!

As mentioned in the opening, these ideas are here to inspire. To allow you to look at the solution rather than the problem. To help you move forward and know you can make a difference.

From here there are many things that can be done. The very first is to stop and look around. Appreciate what you have here at Peregian Beach. Look at the positives. Look at all the wonderful things that happen and think for yourself about what makes this town special to you.

Next think about the idea of diversity, local ownership and open space. Think about wanting to keep these things and the how a pro-active approach would help to do this.

To kick off the pro-active approach there are three letters you can sign. One is addressed to the purchaser of the bowls club informing the developer that the community will only support open space and recreation development on the site, the second is a letter to council regarding the Peregian Originals, highlighting the economic, community and health benefits of the originals and the third is a letter regarding the recent survey on the park.

These letters are the first step in moving forward and creating a vibrant, thriving local economy.

The final action item is for the all locally owned businesses (including home based, retail,

commercial and service businesses). Discuss in your next traders meeting and informally amongst each-other about the idea of implementing a local economy infrastructure (promoting buy local and import substituting) that will increase profitability of your business. If this is something of interest express your interest at inperegianbeach.com or at your traders meetings, and a 'how to' can then be implemented.

Readings and Further References

<http://greenupgrader.com/8539/10-reasons-to-shop-local/>

<http://cuttingedgecapital.com/shift-your-shopping-to-create-more-jobs-stronger-communities/>

http://www.localfirst.com/why_local_first/

<http://small-mart.org/>

<http://www.livingeconomies.org/>

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<http://sustainableconnections.org/thinklocal>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/08/dining/08verm.html>

<http://community-wealth.org>