



● **SUSTAINABLE Development**
Gold Coast president Chris Kogler has joined the Sun as a columnist providing insight into the future direction of our city.

The Gold Coast must be built on its economic diversity for it is no longer just a tourist destination.

At a recent business seminar for Sustainable Development Gold Coast, speakers Geoff Coghlin and Professor Stuart McAuliffe both stressed this point.

Our tourism sector performed remarkably over the past 12 months – up 5 per cent on last year.

Despite this higher-than-expected result, the jobless rate reached 8.1 per cent – double the peak of the GFC and almost double the current national average.

It reinforces the opinion that our city no longer relies on tourism.

We should see our sustainability and future tied to the growth of our economic diversity.

This is particularly the case when the pundits predict a high Aussie dollar to remain up for much longer.

The health sector is now our biggest employer, replacing retail and tourism.

Education is growing, representing an overall growth of public sector jobs to about 30 per cent.

It helps to explain why we were hit so hard by the GFC and yet are better off than Cairns and the Sunshine Coast.

Parallel with all this is the demise of the construction industry that has employed so many for so long. It has been wrongly linked to tourism for many years and the above statistics demonstrate why.

The seminar convinced us that growth is tied to our living environment's attraction and to how competitive our city must be to attract business investment.

Ask yourself "why am I living here?" and it will be determined by both factors.

Which is more important? Next ask "would I still be here without a job?"

Perhaps that's why our unemployment is so high.