

News

Guile slams lost opportunities

THE Shoalhaven has much more to offer than just clean beaches, but chances to promote the region and build the local economy are being lost, according to a Shoalhaven City Councillor.

Cr Andrew Guile said the summer holidays when the local population swelled from 95,000 to more than 300,000 was the ideal time to promote the local economy, but the opportunity was again being lost.

"Leadership inertia within Shoalhaven City Council means that once again in 2013 all these visitors to our region will go back to Sydney or Canberra having learnt very little about what the Shoalhaven has to offer families and businesses," Cr Guile said.

"As far as council is concerned tourism promotes our wonderful coastal location and economic development is left to do its own thing.

"They function as separate silos in the organisation and despite my sustained lobbying to see them work together, here we are amongst another tourism season without any changes," Cr Guile said.

He laid the blame at the feet of Shoalhaven Mayor Joanna Cash.

"After more than 100 days in office, the new mayor has not introduced one new initiative to promote the Shoalhaven as a permanent destination to bring your family and your business," Cr Guile said.

"The only suggestion coming from the administration is a possible change of name for the department from economic development to business development. Well, so what?"

Cr Guile said the Shoalhaven had much to offer new residents and business owners, including "good

schools, a world class university including a medical school, lots of industrial land with good access to water and power and substantial progress toward a better highway.

"That is all over and above the recreation and leisure options that draw people to our region," he pointed out.

Yet for the hundreds of thousands visiting the region, "Where is the signage, where is the media campaign, and where is the app that will link up these messages?" Cr Guile asked.

"There is no 'find us on Facebook and there's not even a tweet from our mayor."

Cr Guile said council needed to be more proactive and, "Combining tourism and economic development is a strategic first step."