



WISE WORDS: Phillip Di Bella of Di Bella Coffee and Robyn Henderson of Ballandean Estate Wines at the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry networking lunch at See Mooloolaba.

Photos: Erle Levey



Robyn Henderson, Joe Natoli, Santo Santoro and Phillip Di Bella at the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry networking lunch.



Maurizio Fenu, left, of Jewellery Lounge and Peppi Buetti of Queensland Advertising.



Ian Buscombe of BDK Buscombe, Rosie Chapman from House of Lingerie and solicitor Peta Simpson.

'It all starts with perceptions'

Business leaders share tips at Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry networking lunch

By **ERLE LEVEY**

THE Sunshine Coast needs a clear vision of what it wants to be. The whole Sunshine Coast – not just Maroochydore and Mooloolaba. Speaking at the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry networking lunch at Mooloolaba, coffee marketer Phillip Di Bella said the region needed to have a clear and compelling vision.

"Perception. It all starts with that," he said. "But it has got to be backed with quality."

"Lead people into perception, do not let their

perception drive it."

Mr Di Bella, who is also a director of Queensland Tourism and Events, said he was fortunate to be in an industry with the second most popular beverage in the world.

The most popular was not wine, not beer, but water, he said. Coffee was the biggest paid-for beverage.

Part of the success of his Di Bella coffee was to take a practical approach to everything. And the same applied to virtually any business.

"Be first or be different," he said. "I was not going to be the first coffee company, so I had to be different. We had to be the best at what we

do. Everything we do has to deliver that promise. So I put the processes in place.

"Product, service and promise. Not product, service and price. Do not focus your business on product. It has to support the perception.

"Service – get rid of that (word) and put in passion. Passion will be your core ingredient behind service. If you are passionate, the service will come naturally."

Fellow speaker at the lunch Robyn Henderson of Ballandean Estate Wines at Stanthorpe urged the Sunshine Coast to go to other regions and talk about what this area offered.

In a highly competitive industry, such as wine-making, success came after focusing on what the company did best.

"The key is to do – and know what you want to do," Ms Henderson said. "People are sold on quality, not on incentive gimmicks.

"As a region we (Stanthorpe) have to do things differently. You don't have to do what everyone else does.

"What the region does well is so many things, including creating a wine trail to expose those 40 different types of wines – the ones you may not see in a bottle shop.

"The region decided to display its God-given gifts. Instead of complaining about being on television every night for the cold nights we experience, we are now on television every night because of this and we have adopted our events to highlight the fact.

"Exploit it. Rely on your focus."

Political lobbyist Santo Santoro told the meeting the Sunshine Coast should not be ashamed of what it was.

"There is nothing wrong with appealing as a better, safe place for a family to visit. It's what I have done for 20 to 30 years.

"Don't move away from what you have been for so many people for so long. It's about lifestyle but you have to go beyond that and attract industry.

"This is one of the most politically powerful regions in Queensland. Put the acid on (politicians).

"Congestion is an issue, so don't be afraid of constructing some roads to make it easier for people to come here."

Mr Santoro's comments were supported by former Maroochy mayor Joe Natoli.

"Marketing tourism is one thing," he said.

"Having the infrastructure to attract them is another."



Charles and Christine Knight of Meridien Migration.



Joe Natoli, left, Lydia Najlepszy of Queensland Youth Industry Links and Jason Desmond of NAB Private Wealth.



Joe Natoli, left, Alison Barry-Jones and Santo Santoro.



Val Wilson and Tony Otton of Tony Otton and Associates.



Greg and Brandy Murley of Gympie 4WD.