



# ShapingSEQ technical note

## Regional Planning Interests Act 2014

### Purpose

The purpose of this technical note is to explain how *ShapingSEQ* responds to the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* (RPI Act) and Regional Planning Interests Regulation 2014 (RPI Regulation).

### Context

#### RPI Act and RPI Regulation

The RPI Act and RPI Regulation commenced on 13 June 2014. Together, the RPI Act and the RPI Regulation seek to strike an appropriate balance between protecting priority land uses and delivering a diverse and prosperous economic future for our regions. In essence, this legislation provides for a transparent and accountable process to assess and manage the impacts of proposed resource activities and regulated activities on areas of regional interest.

#### Areas of regional interest

Areas of regional interest are identified in regional plans, the strategic cropping land (SCL) trigger map or prescribed in a regulation. Areas of regional interest are those areas which contribute, or are likely to contribute, to Queensland's economic, social and environmental prosperity. The RPI Act identifies four areas of regional interest:

- **Priority Living Areas (PLA)** – A PLA includes the existing settled area of a city, town or other community and other areas that are necessary or desirable to manage the future growth of the settlement and provide for an appropriate buffer between the existing or future settled area and resource activities.
- **Priority Agricultural Areas (PAA)** – A PAA is an area of regionally significant agricultural production that contains one or more priority agricultural land uses (PALU). A PAA may also include other features such as regionally significant water sources which support the PALU.
- **Strategic Cropping Area (SCA)** – The SCA includes land that is, or is likely to be, highly suitable for cropping because of a combination of the land's soil, climate and landscape features.
- **Strategic Environmental Area (SEA)** – A SEA is an area that contains one or more regionally significant environmental attributes. Within these areas, protection of ecological integrity of identified environmental attributes is the priority land use.

### SEQ context

*ShapingSEQ* has considered the land use planning of resource activities in the SEQ region, to address potential land use conflicts between these activities and existing agricultural and urban uses.

Chapter 6 of *ShapingSEQ* identifies and maps two types of areas of regional interest: PLA and PAA. The region also contains areas that are mapped as part of the SCA. *ShapingSEQ* identifies the regional outcomes sought and introduces policies to manage the impact of resource activities in the PLA and PAA for South East Queensland (SEQ).

It is important to understand that the RPI Act and associated assessment framework is only applicable in SEQ to those resource activities which are proposed in areas of regional interest. Further, chapter 6 of *ShapingSEQ* does not apply to applications for development that require approval under the *Planning Act 2016*.



## Restricted Area 384 (RA384)

RA384 came into effect in August 2011 under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* as a temporary prohibition on new coal, certain mineral exploratory activities and coal seam gas exploration tenements in and around identified urban areas and towns across the state. This restricted area designation included the whole SEQ region and was intended to manage the impacts of resource activities on urban land uses in SEQ.

Now that *ShapingSEQ* has commenced, RA384 will be revoked from SEQ as the identification of areas of regional interest provides for the case-by-case assessment of impacts from resource activities on SEQ's priority land uses in accordance with the RPI Act. The rationale and methodology used to define these areas of regional interest in SEQ for the purposes of *ShapingSEQ* is explained below.

## Priority Living Areas (PLA)

SEQ is a unique region and the pre-eminent urban area in Queensland. In addition to the variety of urban and rural communities, SEQ contains various features and amenities that are essential to the liveability and health of SEQ's communities, including outdoor recreation, environmental areas and bulk water storage infrastructure.

SEQ in its entirety is important for the ongoing health, wellbeing and prosperity of the region's population. As such, the whole region is mapped as PLA and any resource activity proposed within SEQ will trigger assessment under the RPI Act. All applications for resource activities in a PLA will be referred to the relevant local government as an assessing agency for assessment against any relevant criteria under the local planning scheme.

Resource activities proposed within the PLA must ensure that the ability of the region's communities to grow over time is not compromised. Additionally, the region's important drinking water catchments and regional and rural landscape amenity must be protected. As such, the land uses and features which support the region's role as a major metropolitan area is the priority land use in SEQ, over resource activities.

The PLA does not imply that land has been allocated for urban development – this is the role of the Regional Land Use Categories described in chapter 3, part B of *ShapingSEQ*. Rather, this designation identifies the significance of SEQ as an area for community and living, rather than resources activities.

## Priority Agricultural Areas (PAA)

In SEQ, some of the most productive agricultural land and activities are in the same location as coal, gas and minerals resources. Accessing these deposits is likely to create competition for the use of the land and contribute to land use conflicts.

Agricultural land in SEQ is limited in extent but is highly productive, contributing approximately 9.8 per cent of the state's gross value of agricultural commodities. These areas are also close to a large domestic market and have good accessibility to international markets, offering export opportunities.

Any resource activities that seek to operate in the PAA must coexist with the identified priority agricultural land use (PALU). PALUs within the PAA are recognised as the primary land use and given priority over resource activities.

The PAA captures significant contiguous clusters of PALUs and reflect the major agricultural activities within SEQ.

### Priority agricultural land uses (PALU)

The following Australian Land Use and Management Classification (version 7, May 2010), classes are defined as PALU in *ShapingSEQ*:

- 3.1 – Plantation forestry
- 3.3 – Cropping
- 3.4 – Perennial horticulture
- 3.5 – Seasonal horticulture
- 4 – Production from irrigated agriculture and plantations
- 5.1 – Intensive horticulture
- 5.2 – Intensive animal husbandry.

### Strategic Cropping Area (SCA)

SEQ contains areas that are mapped as part of the SCA. The SCA is identified on the strategic cropping land trigger map that is administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM) and can be requested from the [DNRM website](#). Accordingly, the SCA is mapped independently of *ShapingSEQ*. In addition, *ShapingSEQ* does not contain any SEQ-specific regional outcomes or policies for SCA. This means that resource activities proposed within the SCA are not assessed against *ShapingSEQ*.

### Strategic Environmental Areas (SEA)

*ShapingSEQ* does not identify any SEA. While SEQ contains a number of areas with high environmental value, many of these areas are already afforded protection from resource activities and regulated activities under existing environmental legislation. Accordingly, the identification of national parks as SEAs would not achieve any additional regulatory protection for the purposes of the RPI Act.

Where an area's regional and rural landscape amenity are important for the ongoing health and wellbeing of the region's community, this will be considered through any assessment under the PLA. The PLA does not, however, allow for the consideration of environmental values in and of themselves.

### Regional Interests Development Approval (RIDA)

A RIDA is equivalent to a development approval under the *Planning Act 2016* and may be required when a new or amended resource or regulated activity is proposed to be located in an area of regional interest. To obtain a RIDA, an 'assessment application' under the RPI Act must be made to the Chief Executive of the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning.

An application for a RIDA in the PLA, PAA or SCA in SEQ will be assessed against the assessment criteria contained within the RPI Regulation, which call up the relevant policies contained within *ShapingSEQ* for these areas of regional interest, where applicable.

The decision maker for all applications for a RIDA is the Chief Executive (or delegate) of Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning.

### Further reading

Further information on the RPI Act and the RPI Regulation can be obtained from the [RPI Act website](#), including information on how to apply for a RIDA, links to guidelines, FAQs, forms, applications and departmental contact details.