Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan

Cultivating a strong, healthy and sustainable future for the Wide Bay Burnett

September 2011

Queensland Government

Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan (WBB Regional Plan)

Prepared by the Honourable Paul Lucas MP, Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State in accordance with the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*, section 27 and 58.

With assistance from the Department of Local Government and Planning.

In consultation with the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Planning Committee.

Queensland Government

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Acknowledgement

Regardless of creed or colour, whether in sorrow and hardship or in joy and prosperity, we acknowledge the collective contribution of all peoples in the Wide Bay Burnett region. The Wide Bay Burnett Regional Planning Committee also acknowledges the traditional people of the country within the area where this project has been carried out.

The Butchulla/Badtjala, Wakka Wakka, Gubi Gubi/Kabi Kabi, Gurang, Gureng Gureng/Gooreng Gooreng, Wulli Wulli, Djak-Unde, Burrunggam and Taribelang Bunda people are fully recognised in all their cultural diversity and fulfilment of continuing responsibilities under customary law/lore for this country.

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Table of contents

Part A Introduction 6

Purpose 6

Structure 8

Operation 9

Developing the plan 9

What the plan aims to achieve 9

Regional overview 9

Part B Regional framework 15

Regional vision 15

Strategic directions 15

Sustainability, climate change and natural hazards 16

Environment 16

Natural resource management 17

Rural futures 17

Strong communities 17

Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 18

Urban consolidation and delivery 18

Towns and cities structure and form 18

Strong economy 19

Infrastructure and servicing 19

Regional settlement pattern 20

Bundaberg Regional Council 22

Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council 27

Fraser Coast Regional Council 29

Gympie Regional Council 35

North Burnett Regional Council 40

South Burnett Regional Council 42

Part C Desired regional outcomes 46

1 Sustainability, climate change and natural hazards 47

1.1 Sustainability 47

Principle 47

Policies 47

Programs 47

Notes 48

1.2 Climate change 48

Principle 48

Policies 48

Programs 48

Notes 49

1.3 Planning for climate change 49

Principle 49

Policies 49

Notes 50

1.4 Mitigating hazards 51

Principle 51

Policies 51

Programs 51

Notes 52

2 Environment 57

2.1 Biodiversity 57

Principle 57

Policies 58

Programs 58

Notes 58

2.2 Coastal environment 61

Principle 61

Policies 61

Programs 61

Notes 61

2.3 Air quality and noise 63

Principle 63

Policies 63

Programs 63

Notes 63

2.4 Regional landscapes 64

Principle 64

Policies 64

Programs 64

Notes 65

2.5 Green space network 66

Principle 66

Policies 66

Programs 66

Notes 66

3 Natural resource management 68

3.1 Natural resource management 68

Principle 68

Policies 68

Programs 68

Notes 68

3.2 Ecosystem-dependent economic resources 69

Principle 69

Policies 69

Programs 70

Notes 70

3.3 Mineral resources and extractive industry 71
Principle 71
Policies 71
Notes 71
3.4 Planning and managing agricultural land 72
Principle 72
Policies 72
Programs 73
Notes 73
3.5 Regional water supply planning 76
Principle 76
Policies 76
Programs 76
Notes 76
3.6 Total water cycle management 78
Principle 78
Policies 78
Programs 78
Notes 79
3.7 Water quality, waterway health and wetlands 79
Principle 79
Policies 79
Programs 79
Notes 80
4 Rural futures 82
4.1 Sustainable rural economy 82
Principle 82
Policies 83
Programs 83
Notes 83
4.2 Rural growth 84
Principle 84
Policies 84
Programs 84
Notes 85
5 Strong communities 86
5.1 Social planning 86
Principle 86
Policies 86
Programs 86
Notes 87
5.2 Addressing social and locational disadvantage 87
Principle 87
Policies 87
Programs 88
Notes 88
5.3 Healthy and safe communities 89
Principle 89
Policies 89
Programs 89
Notes 89
5.4 Community engagement, capacity building and identity 90
Principle 90
Policies 91
Notes 91
5.5 Heritage, arts and cultural development 93
Principle 93
Policies 93
Programs 93
Notes 94
6 Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 96
6.1 Traditional Owner and Elder engagement 96
Principle 96
Policies 96
Programs 96
Notes 98
6.2 Community engagement 98
Principle 98
Policies 98
Programs 98
Notes 99
6.3 Social and economic equity 99
Principle 99
Policies 99
Programs 99
Notes 100
7 Managing growth 101
7.1 Efficient use of land 101
Principle 101
Policies 102
Programs 102
Notes 103

Table of contents (continued)

7.2 Planning for growth 105
Principle 105
Policies 105
Notes 106
7.3 Rural residential development 109
Principle 109
Policies 109
Notes 110
7.4 Housing choice and affordability 111
Principle 111
Policies 111
Programs 111
Notes 111

8 Urban form 112

8.1 Urban form 112
Principle 112
Policies 113
Programs 113
Notes 114
8.2 Heritage and character 117
Principle 117
Policies 117
Notes 117
8.3 Rural towns 118
Principle 118
Policies 118
Programs 118
Notes 118
8.4 Centres 120
Principle 120
Policies 120
Programs 120
Notes 122

9 Strong economy 123

9.1 Strong economic leadership 123
Principle 123
Policies 123
Programs 123
Notes 124
9.2 Infrastructure supporting job creation and business opportunities 126
Principle 126
Policies 126
Programs 126
Notes 127
9.3 Diverse and strong business and industry 128
Principle 128
Policies 128
Programs 128
Notes 129
9.4 Employment and skills development 130
Principle 130
Policies 130
Programs 130
Notes 131
9.5 Tourism development 132
Principle 132
Policies 132
Programs 132
Notes 133

10 Infrastructure 134

10.1 Infrastructure planning 134
Principle 134
Policies 136
Programs 136
Notes 137
10.2 Protecting key sites and corridors 138
Principle 138
Policies 138
Programs 138
Notes 138
10.3 Energy 138
Principle 138
Policies 138
Programs 138
Notes 139
10.4 Information and communication technology 139
Principle 139
Policies 139
Programs 139
Notes 140
10.5 Waste and recycling 140
Principle 140
Policies 140
Programs 140
Notes 141

10.6 Social infrastructure 141
Principle 141
Policies 141
Programs 141
Notes 142
10.7 Efficient, accessible and safe transport 142
Principle 142
Policies 143
Programs 143
Notes 144
10.8 Freight 146
Principle 146
Policies 146
Programs 146
Notes 146

Part D Preparation and implementation 147

Regional plan operation 147
Planning period 147
Preparation 147
Effect 147
Implementation 148
Governance 149
Community plans 149
Other relevant plans, policies and codes 149
Local government planning schemes 149
Development Areas 150
Identified Growth Areas 150
Monitoring 151
Regional plan review 151
Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 151
Wide Bay Burnett regional land-use categories 151
Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area 153
Urban Footprint 153
Rural Living Area 154
Glossary 156
Abbreviations 157
Bibliography 158
Acknowledgments 161

Hervey Bay
Courtesy of MWA Viewfinder

Part A Introduction

Purpose

The *Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan* (the regional plan) establishes a clear vision and direction for the region for the next 20 years. It provides certainty about where the region is heading and provides a structure to assess and respond to challenges and opportunities.

The purpose of the plan is to manage regional growth and change in the most sustainable way to protect and enhance quality of life in the region. The plan does this by:

- addressing regional economic, social and environmental issues
- identifying key infrastructure and service needs
- strengthening economic prosperity and employment opportunities
- highlighting and responding to climate change concerns
- identifying environmental areas for protection and enhancement
- supporting growth in established regional centres and townships
- mobilising public, private and community sectors to respond to key regional issues
- aligning efforts across agencies and all levels of government.

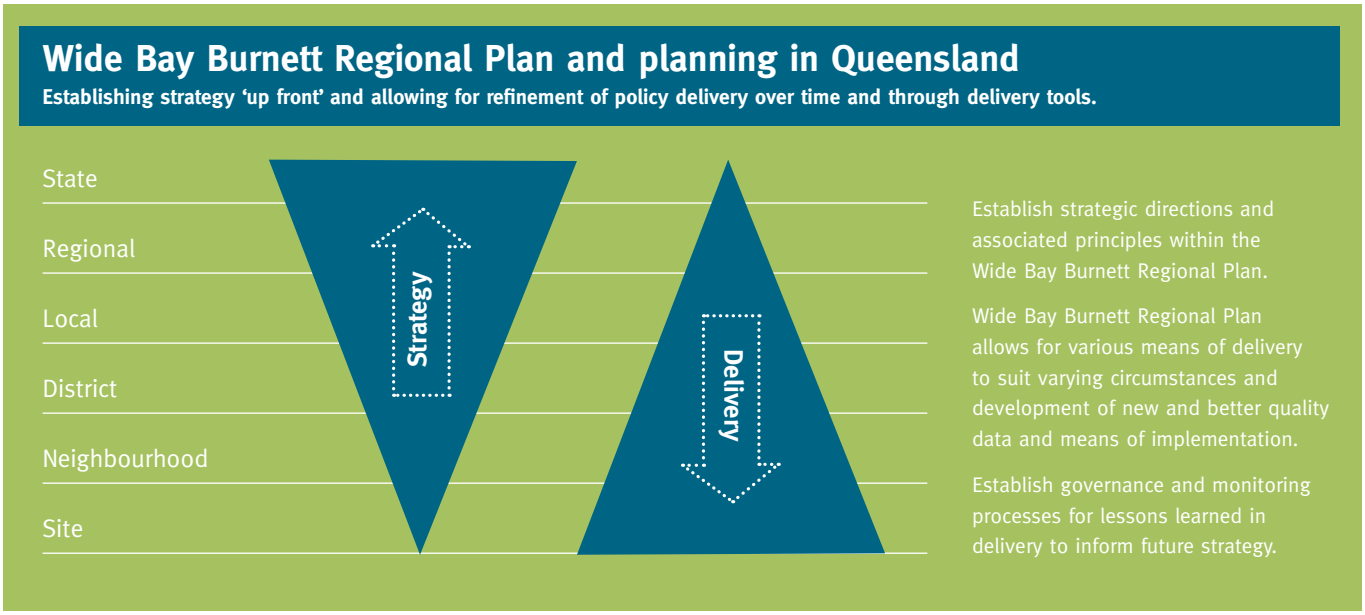
As the pre-eminent planning document for the region, the regional plan provides context for local level planning. The regional plan will be implemented by the coordinated actions of state and local government and the community to achieve this shared vision for the future.

The regional plan identifies the regional framework (in Part B) and desired regional outcomes (in Part C) for the Wide Bay Burnett region. The regional plan is the pre-eminent plan for the region, and takes precedence over all planning instruments, other than state planning regulatory provisions.

However, the regional plan is a whole-of-region document. It is intended that, for the Wide Bay Burnett region, the regional framework and desired regional outcomes in the regional plan will be further informed by more detailed and local assessment of issues by state and local governments, and more specific state planning policies (for example, *State Planning Policy 1/03: Mitigating the adverse impacts of flood, bushfire and landslide* and the *Queensland Coastal Plan*) and local government planning schemes.

The regional plan includes the *Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2011* (in Part E), which must be complied with and cannot be further informed by any planning instrument.

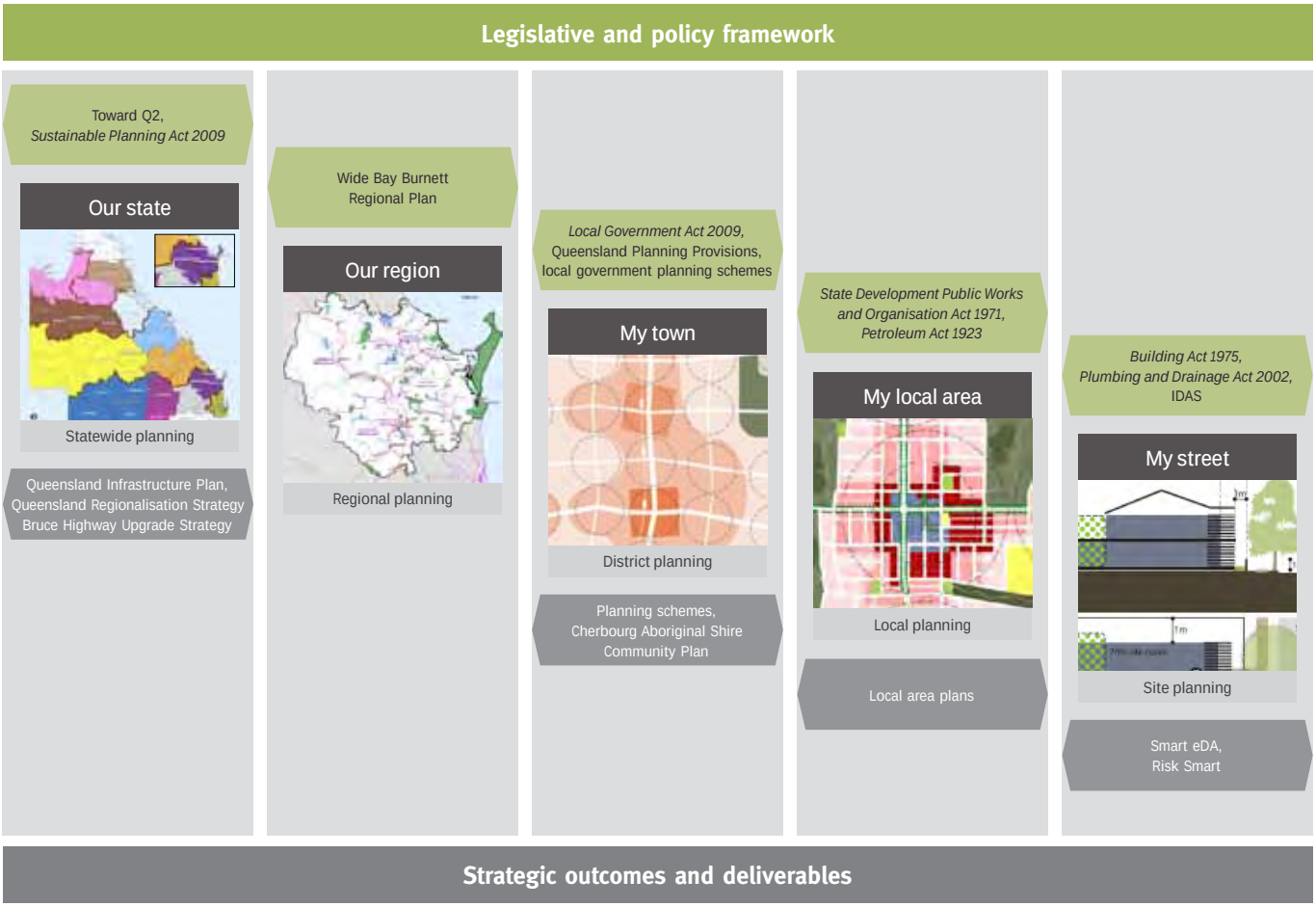
Figure 1: Regional plan and refinement of policy delivery



Qplan

The regional plan is an integral component of Qplan—Queensland's planning, development and building system. Figure 2, over page, illustrates how the regional plan and various other plans, programs and legislation relate to the state, region, town, local area and street level.

Figure 2: My street. Our state



Structure

Part A – Introduction

Summarises the purpose and context of the regional plan, including what the plan intends to achieve.

Part B – Regional framework

Defines and describes the regional vision and summarises the strategic directions taken within the plan to achieve this vision.

Describes the desired regional settlement pattern and outlines the strategic intent for each subregion.

Part C – Desired regional outcomes

Expands on the regional vision and strategic directions through the use of principles and policies to inform future planning decisions.

Identifies programs to assist in enhancing planning decisions, monitoring and review.

Contains 'notes' to provide additional context and examples of current or proposed plans, strategies or programs to assist in the delivery of the regional plan. 'Notes' are not intended to establish policy.

Part D – Preparation and implementation

Outlines the operation and implementation of the regional plan, and its relationship with other planning instruments, including local government planning schemes.

Outlines governance arrangements and relationships with other planning undertaken outside the scope of the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA).

Part E – *Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2011*

Operation

For the purposes of the SPA, this document contains:

- the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan (Parts A–D, excluding the 'Notes' in Part C)
- the *Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2011* (Part E)
- Notes ('Notes' in Part C).

The notes in Part C are not part of the regional plan. They provide guidance on regional plan policy, to assist in the interpretation of the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan. The notes also include examples of plans and strategies that can assist in its delivery.

Developing the plan

The regional plan builds on the vision and content of the previous non-statutory *Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan 2007–2026*. This statutory planning document ensures action can be taken by government and community groups to address regional growth management issues, including continued population growth, urban development pressures, employment generation, landscape protection, sustainable rural communities and resilience to climate change.

The regional plan has been developed with advice from the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Planning Committee (RPC), which was established under the SPA. The function of the RPC is to advise the regional planning Minister about the development and implementation of the regional plan. The RPC includes representatives from local governments, state government, peak state and federal networks, industry and community sectors. Consultation with state agencies and other stakeholders has also taken place through the Regional Managers' Coordination Network and its working groups.

Prior to the development of the plan, consultative workshops and meetings were held with federal, state and local government, industry, the community sector, the private sector and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives in order to gain their input and advice.

The *Draft Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan* (draft plan) and *Draft Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2010* (draft SPRP) were released for public comment on 1 October 2010. During the three-month consultation period, public information sessions were held across the region. This gave the community, industry and local governments the opportunity to review the draft plan and draft SPRP, ask questions and make submissions on how the plan and its policies could best support their vision for the future of the region. Before the closing of the consultation period on 24 December 2010, 235 submissions were received. Issues raised within these submissions were considered when finalising the regional plan and the State Planning Regulatory Provisions.

A consultation report detailing the themes of the submissions and the response was released at the same time as the finalised regional plan and can be viewed at www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/wbb.

What the plan aims to achieve

The regional plan aims to respond to the variety of distinct challenges facing the region over the next two decades and beyond. It seeks to guide and support projected growth. The plan recognises that the economy and population currently comprises of an ageing population and workforce, a limited but strong number of economic drivers, and a need to prepare for, and appropriately respond to, the anticipated impacts of climate change.

Regional overview

The Wide Bay Burnett region (the region) encompasses the area from Winfield and Cania Dam in the north, to Blackbutt in the south, east to Fraser Island and west to Eidsvold and the Auburn River. It covers an area of more than 48 488 square kilometres.

The region includes six local government areas and adjacent Queensland waters, as shown on Map 1 over page:

- Bundaberg Regional Council
- Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- North Burnett Regional Council
- South Burnett Regional Council.

Map 1: The Wide Bay Burnett Region

Note: this map is not intended to reference specific parcels of land and is to be treated as indicative only. This map should be used in conjunction with the copyright information on the inside front cover of this publication.

More than 80 per cent of the region's population is located in the major urban centres of Bundaberg, Maryborough, Hervey Bay, Gympie and Kingaroy. Rural settlements of various sizes are scattered throughout the region.

Due largely to its origins, historical land uses and the associated requirements of those early communities, the region developed over time to accommodate a widely dispersed population and urban settlement pattern, which comprises multiple principal centres, as well as a variety of smaller urban centres, distinct rural and coastal towns, and rural residential areas.

Early European migration was initially motivated by the region's rich natural resources, valuable agricultural assets (such as fertile soils, temperate climate and access to abundant natural water sources) and extensive timber forests. In recent years, stimulants to migration have predominantly related to the shift to a more relaxed residential style offered by the region and the relocation of older and retired persons to coastal townships.

The continued development and diversification of the economy since the founding of the region's earliest centres has also contributed to the existing settlement pattern.

The cities and larger towns within the region are generally located on key transportation routes, including road, rail and port infrastructure. Several of the early settlements responsible for establishing these transport networks have been retained over time and prospered due to their advantageous locations, making accessibility a strong feature of the region.

Growth in the region

In recent years, the population growth in the region has matched or, in some cases, exceeded, state and national averages. The estimated population of the region in 2010 was 293 500, an increase of 2.7 per cent since 2006. Population growth is expected to continue, with the region's population forecast to grow to an estimated 425 200 by 2031. The population for the region is anticipated to increase by an average annual growth rate of 1.6 per cent over the 25-year period from 2006 to 2031. In comparison, Queensland is projected to have an average annual growth rate of 1.7 per cent over the same period. The projected growth, combined with the continuing nationwide trend towards smaller family groups and lower occupancy rates, will require 57 300 additional new dwellings to be built in the region by 2031.

This increase in population will generate demand for 58 300 additional jobs[1], equating to an increase of up to 47 per cent on current employment rates. This would be supported by a range of new and augmented infrastructure and services that would underpin the growth and diversity of the population. Employment opportunities and residential growth in each of the subregions will differ according to the attributes of each of the cities and townships.

The region has also experienced significant change over the last three decades with the emergence of coastal communities as highly desirable places to live. This boost to the population of coastal townships has seen a dramatic improvement in the quality of the infrastructure and services available to those communities; however, it has also resulted in significant pressures on the natural environment. Some of the most fragile landscapes, and areas most prone to coastal hazards, have absorbed a notable proportion of previous growth in the region. Conversely, there are areas, particularly in smaller rural communities, that have seen limited population growth in the same period.

The government recognises that within the region, growth is putting pressure on the environment, open spaces, productive rural land, infrastructure and social support, particularly in coastal settlements. While the Queensland Government cannot control migration and natural population increases, it can seek to manage the impact of population growth, harness the opportunities it brings, and mitigate the associated risks. The regional plan plays a crucial role in this strategy through identifying policies and strategies to promote and support the sustainable growth of the region.

Demographics

The Wide Bay Burnett region's population is ageing, as retirees move to the area and young people leave the region to seek further education, job opportunities and life experience.

Many people move to the region, most notably coastal communities such as Hervey Bay, to retire and enjoy the relaxed lifestyle offered by these communities.

The region is projected to accommodate a slightly higher age profile than the state in the age groups 55–59 through to 85 and over, and a lower proportion of residents in the 15–19 through to 50–54 age groups, which has led to an increased demand on health and community services and resources. This presents opportunities and challenges in areas of economic development, infrastructure and service delivery, as well as the diversity and availability of a suitable range of housing.

While population has increased, a significant demographic challenge has emerged over time, with the region facing the challenge of retaining youth, particularly in rural areas such as the North Burnett, as young people choose to leave the area for education, job opportunities and life experiences. The region has a lower proportion of young people, and those with post-school qualifications, than the state average. This presents challenges in addressing the long-term unemployment rate and the ability to support future labour markets and economic development.

[1] *Experimental Queensland Employment Scenarios by Statistical Division: 2011 to 2056 (2011), Office of Economic and Statistical Research (OESR), Queensland Treasury.*

The region remained consistent with the state average of 3.3 per cent of the population being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin at the time of the ABS 2006 Census. The majority of the Indigenous population is located in Bundaberg (19.5 per cent), Hervey Bay (16 per cent) and Cherbourg (13.2 per cent).

Based on the ABS 2006 Census, from a spatial and socioeconomic perspective, the region has been acknowledged as among the most disadvantaged in Queensland. The regional plan seeks to address this by striking a balance between protecting our environmental assets and enabling and encouraging economic development and growth in appropriate locations, to improve the prosperity of the region measured by economic performance, social wellbeing and inclusiveness of community.

The regional plan focuses on these issues and proposes a range of policies and programs to address them.

Environment and natural resources

The natural environment is the foundation of the regional economy and lifestyle enjoyed by its residents. The region has rich biodiversity including wetlands, coral reefs, stream systems and forests, relatively intact hinterland areas, as well as a variety of ancient, rare and threatened plant and animal species. Prominent natural resources supporting the region include productive agricultural land, fresh water resources, forests, minerals and marine waters. These resources provide a diverse range of ecosystem services that underpin the wellbeing of the community, in addition to supporting industries that rely on their quality and accessibility.

The environment and natural resources of the region face many challenges in the future, including ensuring their sustainable management to meet growing energy and water demands, adequate protection of environmentally valuable areas, restriction on encroachment of urban development into agricultural lands, and further fragmentation of rural areas.

Population growth and the anticipated impacts of climate change present challenges to the region's environment and natural resources, including:

- impacts on the high biodiversity and relative values of the coastal zone by urban development in the past, through fragmentation of important habitats and edge effects adjacent to the urban fringe
- land-use, development and management decisions lowering the quality of water entering wetlands, waterways, estuarine systems and the Great Barrier Reef Lagoon
- the spread of invasive pest weed and animal species, which adversely affects biodiversity, regional landscape and agricultural production values
- escalating demand from population growth and climate change and the immediate and significant impacts on the sustainability of the region's natural resource assets.

The regional plan is based on the sustainable management of the environment and natural resources, and provides the framework for how they will be protected and enhanced for the prosperity and enjoyment of future generations.

Economy

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the region's economy underperformed when compared to the state. In recent years, the regional economy has grown at approximately 1.1 per cent, significantly slower than the Queensland average of 2.3 per cent.

Historically, the region's economic drivers were in the agriculture, fishing and tourism sectors. The region contributes approximately 12 per cent of Queensland's agricultural production. Significant agricultural production includes timber, beef, pork, poultry, sugarcane, tree crops, fruit, vegetable and seafood industries. This agricultural base has remained steady in recent times, and will continue to be important for the economic prosperity of the region. As the gateway to the southern Great Barrier Reef and Fraser Island, tourism is also an important economic driver. In the 2009–10 period, $444 million was spent by visitors in the Fraser Coast region alone.

In 2005–06, the region accounted for 4.2 per cent of the Queensland economy (real gross state product) and produced $7.8 billion worth of final goods and services. The recorded average annual economic growth rate in gross regional product was 3.6 per cent between 2000–01 and 2005–06 (lower than the state's 4.8 per cent). In 2006–07, there were 22 866 businesses in the region, equating to 5.7 per cent of the total businesses in Queensland.

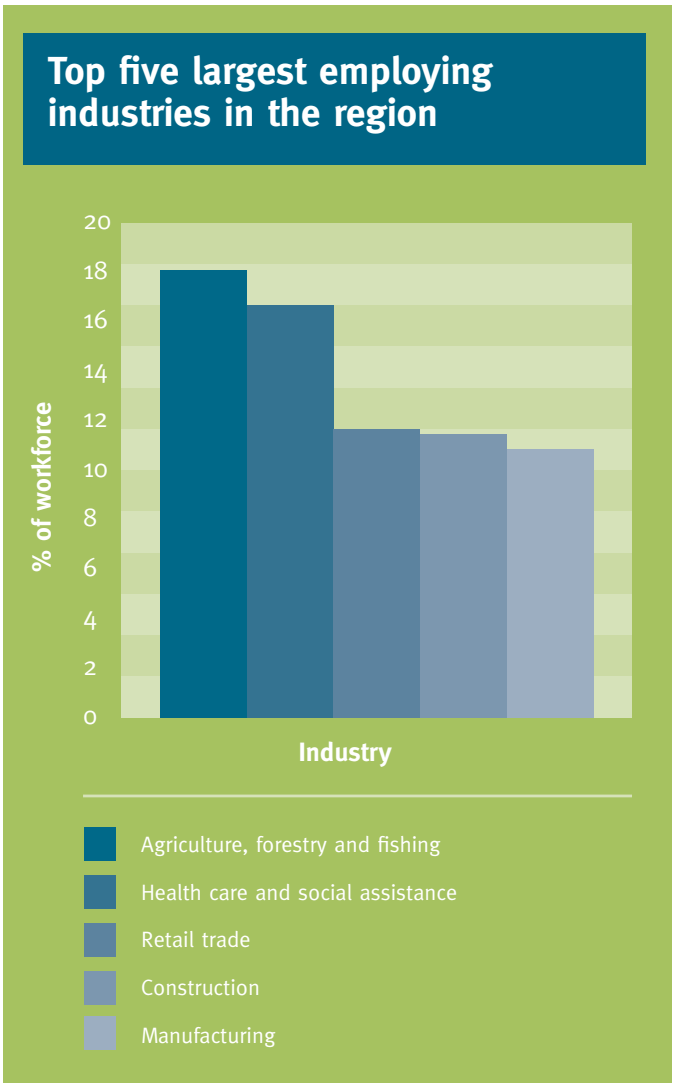
Rohan, cattle farmer, Bundaberg *Courtesy of Ray Cash Photography*

Agriculture had an estimated gross value of $1.1 billion for the region in 2006–07, which accounted for almost 12 per cent of Queensland primary industry production. Vegetables grown in the region in 2006–07 provided 93 per cent of Queensland's production. Sugar cane continues to be a major crop, using upward of 53 000 hectares of land, representing 11 per cent of Queensland sugarcane production. Cattle grazing is a significant rural business within the western areas of the region. In 2007–08, it provided approximately seven per cent of Queensland's domestic beef. Additionally, the region remains a strong producer of milk through established dairying activities. In 2007–08, the region produced 18 per cent of the state's milk products.

In more recent times, growth in aviation, advanced manufacturing, aquaculture, food processing, marine industry, construction and service industries has motivated change in the local economy and the region's contribution to the state's economic prosperity. Potential to expand the region's economic growth through introduction of new manufacturing opportunities is significant. The key centres of Maryborough and Bundaberg are positioned to support a large proportion of growth in this sector, owing to the availability of suitable land areas and relatively unconstrained topography.

There are several challenges that will confront the regional economy in the near future, including an ageing population coupled with a trend for young adults to move away from the region, a shortage of skilled labour, a shortage of projected and identified industrial land, low levels of labour force participation, and higher than average unemployment and long-term unemployed rates.

Figure 3: 2010 top five largest employing industries in the region



Emerging opportunities that may help to strengthen the region and build resilience to these challenges include:

- maximising the region's advantageous geographic location—the region is surrounded by growth in South East Queensland and Gladstone, and mineral and energy development in the Surat Basin, which can provide opportunities for supplying labour, skills development and manufacturing and services supply chains
- infrastructure development—existing infrastructure corridors and opportunities for expansion of the Port of Bundaberg will improve the region's capacity to contribute to the state's economy
- economic expansion—the region presents opportunities for additional industrial land allocations to attract substantial industrial development in the vicinity of Bundaberg and Maryborough
- expanding existing aviation and port areas and their supporting service industries—the Port of Bundaberg and operational airports of the region provide prospects for economic development and employment generation.

The regional plan provides a framework for addressing these issues, with a focus on diversifying industry and employment opportunities. This includes encouraging and attracting emerging industries to develop within the region, such as aviation, advanced manufacturing and the marine industry.

Culture and heritage

The regional plan also outlines policies and programs that will protect and enhance culture and heritage.

The Wide Bay Burnett region is made up of many vibrant local communities, each with its own unique character and identity. The region's diverse culture is a mix of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, descendants of early European settlement, agricultural and mining foundations, as well as the structural heritage retained in many townships, complemented by modern architecture and cultural facilities. The cultural heritage of the region is well represented in historic towns like Gympie, Maryborough, Childers, Wondai and Kilkivan, the Aboriginal local government area of Cherbourg, and coastal towns like Tin Can Bay. The regional plan promotes the retention of valuable historical buildings, structures and places for the cultural identity and sense of place that they provide.

Communities

Many coastal communities are experiencing high demand for new residential areas and dwelling stock, resulting largely from the effects of the 'sea change' phenomenon. These communities face the challenges that come with managing growth, particularly in the continued supply of infrastructure and services. Other areas, such as Mundubbera and Eidsvold, are experiencing a decline in growth; however, this trend is evident mainly in the smaller rural communities, rather than urban and coastal areas.

Locational disadvantage and unemployment are two of the most significant challenges facing the region into the future. Currently the region has an unemployment rate of 6.9 per cent, compared to the rest of Queensland which has a rate of 5.9 per cent (September 2010). North Burnett Regional Council recorded the lowest unemployment rate in the region (3.6 per cent), and Cherbourg Shire Council recorded the highest unemployment rate (11.8 per cent).

Demographic factors that are acknowledged as influencing the social wellbeing of the region's residents include:

- locational disadvantages resulting from restricted access to services and a lack of public transport to support the highly dispersed settlement within the region
- higher proportions of the population experiencing low income, low educational attainment and unemployment
- limited economic opportunities resulting in restricted employment opportunities and diversity, leading to a loss of skilled workers and youth from the region
- a high proportion of residents in the ageing demographic, and limited access to appropriate health services
- the availability of appropriate and affordable housing
- limited family and social support systems and access to community health facilities.

Great Barrier Reef, Bundaberg
Courtesy of Darren Jew

Part B Regional framework

Regional vision

The Wide Bay Burnett region has a distinct identity and strong sense of community, achieved through a balanced lifestyle that respects cultural values and provides diverse employment and recreation opportunities.

It has a robust regional economy supported by a well-managed and high value natural environment, plentiful natural resources and a strong agricultural base.

This in turn provides accessible community services, infrastructure and affordable housing choices that support the region's liveability and sustainability.

The regional vision is the foundation of the regional plan. It defines the community's long-term aspirations for the region, and presents a view of what the region values now and how it would like to be in the future. It seeks to balance the recognised 'lifestyle' values of the region with the establishment of a strong economy, while recognising that the long-term prosperity of the region is reliant on sound management of the region's natural resources and ongoing viability of the agricultural sector.

In seeking a liveable and sustainable region, the regional plan will support:

- a balanced lifestyle with diverse housing, employment and recreation opportunities
- a distinct character and sense of community based on its people and their culture
- the retention of the regionally unique built and natural environments
- a robust economy built on the foundations of its natural and human resources that takes opportunities to build diversity and resilience to change
- infrastructure and services that meet the region's need to support the economy, accessibility and healthy, active communities.

The regional vision was developed in consultation with the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Planning Committee, and reflects the aspirations of regional communities, as well as key regional networks and industry sectors.

The vision is consistent with the Queensland Government's 2020 vision (*Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*), which sets out targets around five ambitions for communities in every Queensland region:

- Strong: Create a diverse economy powered by bright ideas
- Green: Protect our lifestyle and environment
- Smart: Deliver world-class education and training
- Healthy: Make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people
- Fair: Support a safe and caring community.

The regional framework establishes the direction for how the regional plan seeks to achieve the vision and includes the following components:

- The **strategic directions** further express regional vision while describing the current situation and the desired outcomes for the region.
- The **regional settlement pattern** narrative describes how the region will grow and develop. It tells the historical story of the region, and expresses the features of the settlement pattern that will contribute to the achievement of the regional vision.
- The **subregional narratives** apply the features of the settlement pattern and the desired regional outcomes to each local government area that makes up the region, describing each subregion's historical context and role in advancing toward the regional vision.

Strategic directions

The strategic directions set down the broad policy framework for the region. They identify the important aspects involved in planning for the region's long-term development into a connected and accessible network of vibrant, healthy communities. These healthy communities will be achieved through appropriate management of the region's natural resources and environmental assets, and mechanisms that support a bustling economy.

The following strategic directions support the regional vision and inform the principles and policies identified in the desired regional outcomes.

Sustainability, climate change and natural hazards

The region is to be managed in a sustainable way by containing and consolidating the region's ecological footprint, while enhancing its economy and residents' quality of life.

The regional plan aims to create a balance between biodiversity, urban development, community identity and the economy. In order to achieve this, improvements to existing social, ecological and economic systems need to be identified and implemented.

An additional consideration in establishing the directions for the region is the global environmental challenge of climate change. Scientific evidence indicates climate change is already impacting, and will continue to impact, on all communities. Building the region's resilience to such implications requires a coordinated response.

Projections for the region include a decline in rainfall, with increasing temperature and evaporation, in conjunction with more extreme weather events, and possible sea level rise impacting on coastal communities. These temperature and rainfall changes are likely to affect the communities and industries throughout the region, and will require specific management to ensure impacts are minimised.

International and Australian research indicates that there are significant benefits to be gained from responding immediately to climate change by both reducing the emission of greenhouse gases and adapting to climate change impacts. In simple terms, earlier reduction of emissions and adaptation to climate change will mean fewer long-term costs to economic growth and lifestyle.

Strategies to increase the region's resilience to climate change impacts will strengthen the economy and protect environmental and natural resource values. These may include using water more responsibly and adopting sustainable land management practices. Further modelling and research to identify regionally specific implications and opportunities will be required.

The effects of climate change may be mitigated through adaptation strategies, for example, through influencing the location and design of development, and protecting areas at risk (in particular coastal areas) from sea level rise.

A consolidated urban form and the adoption of transit oriented development principles will assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through increased walking and cycling, and a reduction in the frequency and length of vehicle trips.

Natural and man-made hazards also pose a significant threat to the region, including flood, bushfire and coastal hazards. Future development should not be located in areas of risk from natural hazards, and should be designed to mitigate risks to life and property.

Complex interrelationships between climate change and sustainability and the other regional priorities exist which will require consideration as part of all the desired regional outcomes.

Environment

The natural environment underpins the economy and lifestyle enjoyed by the residents of the region. Many of these environmental values are recognised at national and international levels. The World Heritage areas of Fraser Island and the Great Barrier Reef, along with the Ramsar-listed Great Sandy Strait wetland, comprise a significant portion of the region's coastal land and waters.

The Great Sandy Biosphere has been established, and is one of the most diverse regions in Australia. It spans a subtropical to temperate 'transition' zone, and contains representative species from both climates, including some that are unique to the region. It contains the world's tallest and most complex rainforests growing on sand, habitat supporting half of Australia's known bird species, more marine fish diversity than the entire Great Barrier Reef, over 7500 recorded species of fauna and flora (many of which are rare or endangered), the largest and highest perched dune lakes in the world, World and National Heritage listed areas, and the world's best observable example of ancient sand dunes.

Population growth and climate change pose immediate and significant threats to the region's natural assets, highlighting the imperative for sustainable management and use. Previous urban and rural residential developments have been acknowledged as impacting on the significant natural environmental values through:

- loss and fragmentation of important habitats in the coastal zone, an area high in biodiversity and environmental values, terrestrial ecosystems and wetland environments
- poor water quality entering wetlands, waterways, estuarine systems and the Great Barrier Reef Lagoon as a result of urban development and land management practices
- the spread of invasive pest weed and animal species.

The health and resilience of the environment will be improved through managing new impacts on areas of ecological value, encouraging sustainable management practices, and limiting urban encroachment and rural residential subdivision in these areas. Connectivity will also

be achieved through identifying and preserving areas of high ecological significance, protecting and restoring waterways, and expanding and linking green space across the region, allowing for increased public use and accessibility. This will allow the region's significant biodiversity to continue its contribution to the prosperity of the region economically, socially and culturally.

Natural resource management

The region's plentiful natural resources include productive agricultural land, freshwater systems, air, forests, native plants and animals, minerals and marine waters. These resources underpin the region's economy, and support the diverse range of industry and business opportunities that rely on their quality and accessibility.

Population growth places significant stress on the condition and availability of natural resources. Escalating pressures and a continual reliance on natural resources highlights the necessity for sustainably managing these resources for current and future generations. Proper management of the natural resources associated with agriculture and mining is also vital to the future of the region.

Limiting loss and further fragmentation of productive agricultural lands and forestry will ensure the strong economic base of the region is maintained. Supporting rural activities through opportunities for diversification and value adding will encourage ongoing confidence in the industry.

Water resources, both quality and quantity, will play a significant role in building resilience and providing water security for the region.

Rural futures

Rural communities are an important component of the regional fabric. They are major contributors to Queensland's economy, providing diverse agriculture, grazing and fishing opportunities. Strong rural communities that have sustainable economies will contribute to the overall wealth, character and liveability of the area. The sustainability and viability of rural communities needs to be supported to ensure the region's quality of life.

Natural resources are in many ways the foundation of rural communities. Economic growth will result from the protection of natural resources, such as water through sustainable management practices, and rural production lands by limiting further fragmentation and managing impacts from urban encroachment. Alternative activities that are compatible with rural activities, such as tourism and rural industries, will also assist in sustainability and longevity of these rural landscapes.

Sustainable planning and infrastructure and human services delivery in a region with many small towns and a dispersed settlement pattern requires diverse and adaptive approaches. State and local government will need to work together with rural communities to promote leadership, social networking and enhanced communication to provide opportunities to capitalise on and preserve their special attributes and valued characteristics.

Strong communities

The region is made up of many vibrant local communities, each with their own unique character and identity.

The region is growing rapidly, and this presents many challenges in managing the implications of growth while continuing to support the prosperity of local communities.

High levels of disadvantage have been consistently recorded over many years for the region[2]. There are many causes for these circumstances, and records show that a significant number of residents are experiencing some form of disadvantage, such as low income, low educational attainment, unemployment or low levels of car ownership.

Demographic factors, such as a significantly higher than average ageing population and the dispersed nature of the population, mean supporting growth is a complex task. Other factors, such as geographical distribution, access to transport, appropriate and affordable housing, family and social support, adequate income and employment, a quality built environment, community safety and optimal health are all contributors to community wellbeing.

Strengthening the region's communities will occur through consolidating and improving built environments, understanding the uniqueness of place and the needs of individual groups, working in partnership with communities to inform planning and decision-making processes, and ensuring access to key essential community services by all residents. This will ensure that the liveability of the region is retained and improved.

Many residents live in rural areas, where essential community services are often provided via outreach from larger centres. The dispersed settlement pattern in the region results in many residents travelling some distance to access health and education services, business and employment opportunities, and social and cultural experiences. Other factors, such as a lack of timely and affordable transport options, further inhibit access to such services. A settlement pattern that consolidates growth within, and close to, key centres will improve accessibility, as will adopting alternative solutions such as videoconferencing as part of service provision.

[2] Social and Economic Indicators for Areas (SEIFA) data from the 2006 Census, the Scan of Disadvantage 2010.

Individual communities create place and identity, and are the essence of any regional area. It is their ability to respond to change and maintain unique characteristics that distinguishes one region from another. Strong communities look to provide social and economic opportunities to encourage people to remain in, return or move to the region. Improving employment and education opportunities will assist in the attraction of a wider demographic profile. This is particularly important to locations with greater numbers of older people. Ensuring a more balanced social mix and providing for the retention of young people and young families within these communities are essential for the future growth and sustainability of the region.

Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Many of the region's communities have significant numbers of resident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in particular, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council area. Although the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is not proportionally high, these residents show very high levels of social disadvantage (notably in terms of health, education and general community service participation and access).

The active involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including Traditional Owners, in planning and decision-making processes is imperative, particularly given the high number of cultural sites and artefacts to be identified and considered across the region.

The culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is unique and offers many economic and cultural advantages. Similarly the importance of connection to Country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders should not be underestimated, as it is this connection that underpins the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Urban consolidation and delivery

The region's settlement pattern currently consists of several regional cities and large towns, and numerous rural and coastal communities. This produces many challenges to economic growth, accessibility, and the provision of infrastructure and services across the region. In addition, the trend toward growth in coastal locations may potentially result in risk to life and property through storm surge and climate change impacts, as well as significant implications for the environment and natural resource assets.

Extensive agricultural lands surround existing urban and rural residential areas and support a vibrant rural industry. Urban encroachment has the potential to impact on the viability of agricultural activities; however, some losses of agricultural land will be inevitable to accommodate the projected growth for the region. The continuation of high value primary production activities will be safeguarded through the development of a regional framework, which will identify strategically located and recognised productive agricultural land. The framework will recognise the importance of these lands and protect them indefinitely.

Recent trends show changing household structure and reduction in average household size will mean the percentage of growth in housing demand will continue to be higher than the population growth rate. A diverse housing supply, providing suitable options for a range of circumstances, will also need to include affordable housing alternatives that respond to current and future resident needs, as well as making more efficient use of available land for urban development.

Providing a more compact urban settlement pattern focusing on existing towns and cities will provide higher levels of accessibility and more efficient and cost-effective provision of infrastructure and services. These strategies will assist in limiting the loss of valuable resources, such as agricultural land, and environmental values of the region.

A coordinated approach to urban planning and development, including the provision of infrastructure, will ensure growth is managed well into the future.

Areas at risk from flooding, storm surge, climate change impacts or other natural or man-made hazards should not be extensively developed. Where this cannot be avoided, for example, in areas that have already been settled and are part of the urban fabric, measures will be required as part of development to ensure these risks are minimised.

Towns and cities structure and form

Towns and cities are the focus for regional growth in employment, housing and provision of services. Where and how growth is accommodated can affect accessibility, the character of a place and the economic sustainability of the region.

A mix of uses, including affordable housing, will be designed to enhance accessibility and efficiency of infrastructure provision and management for long-term sustainability and investment security. It will also assist in the reduction of greenhouse gases that influence climate change.

Establishing a clear role for centres, and adopting a complementary and cooperative approach to the planning and development of the subregions, will benefit the economy of the region as a whole by reducing unnecessary competition between centres.

Maintaining and enhancing the character and heritage of the region, and considering design attributes that suit the climate, will further build on the characteristics that make the region a sought-after location to live and visit.

Strong economy

A region's economic viability is a key element in ensuring its sustainability and growth. The principal drivers for attaining sustainable economic development include population growth, business and industry opportunities, a skilled workforce and good environmental management.

The region accounts for approximately 10 per cent of Queensland's agricultural production, with a diverse agricultural and agribusiness base. Significant agricultural activities include timber production and processing (softwood and hardwood), beef, pork and poultry production and processing, sugarcane production and processing, tree crops (in particular macadamias and avocados), fruit and vegetable production (especially citrus and tomatoes), and seafood production and processing. These agricultural industries will continue to be important for the region into the future. This agricultural base has remained steady in recent times, with declines in traditional industries such as sugar and dairy being balanced against the growth in horticulture, aquaculture, pork and beef.

In more recent years, growth in aviation, advanced manufacturing, aquaculture, food processing, marine industry, construction and service industries have further expanded the economy.

Diverse employment opportunities will assist in attracting and accommodating current and future residents and retaining young families in rural areas. Appropriate opportunities need to be available to enable employment-related development to occur.

Sugar cane, Bundaberg *Courtesy of MWA Viewfinder*

Economic development and population growth will support the expansion of higher order services within the regional centres, contributing to lifestyle factors that will also help attract and retain skilled workers within the region. Establishing appropriate planning for these developments will stimulate further investment and growth without diminishing existing liveability.

The region's close proximity to South East Queensland presents opportunities for access to the largest population in the state, as well as national and international markets. Economic growth could also be leveraged through the region's physical connection to the development of the Surat Basin's liquefied natural gas (LNG) and coal production. The Port of Bundaberg, and upgrades to the Bundaberg and Hervey Bay airports, present further opportunities for economic growth within a range of industries.

Infrastructure and servicing

The growing popularity of coastal corridors, such as the Bargara area and Hervey Bay, represents a move away from the historical dominance of urban centres such as Bundaberg, Maryborough and Gympie. This growth, coupled with the region's dispersed rural settlement pattern, presents many challenges to the timely provision of accessible, well-located regional infrastructure.

The delivery of infrastructure and services in a coordinated and timely manner is fundamental in securing the community's liveability and viability to support future growth. There are many impediments to successful long-term infrastructure planning and coordination, including the need to consider capacity, and the implications of climate change.

A multi-layered approach will deliver infrastructure that supports the preferred settlement pattern of the regional plan. It contributes significantly to strong economic gain and employment opportunities for the region, and allows communities to fully maximise existing infrastructure before needing to invest often limited funds in augmenting or building new networks. Funding for new infrastructure needs to be timely to meet growth demand, while simultaneously considering whole-of-life costs of infrastructure to ensure benefit to current and future users. Innovative partnerships to facilitate effective joint funding options may be required.

Appropriate planning will ensure the identification and coordination of infrastructure is efficient and timely to support predicted population growth. The provision and funding of infrastructure will be in line with land-use planning and decision-making to significantly improve the region's ability to cater for future development needs and meet capacity demands.

Regional settlement pattern

The regional settlement pattern has a central role in achieving the intentions of the regional plan. It is relevant to all aspects of the plan, as it outlines the spatial distribution of activity and associated growth.

During the last 30 years, the region has experienced noteworthy growth in the resident population, particularly within the region's coastal communities. Similar levels of growth are anticipated over the coming two decades.

Urban growth has traditionally been through low density housing, and limited dwelling diversity has occurred in the absence of market pressures. This has led to the outward spread of low density urban areas and the highly dispersed regional settlement pattern that exists today. The preferred regional settlement pattern is heavily influenced by these existing urban and rural land-use patterns, particularly the location of existing towns and centres, transport networks, ports and airports, rural activities and tourism attractors. The settlement pattern will also continue to be significantly impacted by the natural features and topography that characterise the region.

Achieving a more efficient and sustainable settlement pattern will help balance the projected rates of growth for the regional cities and townships with the need to protect the inherent lifestyle and important natural assets unique to the region. Consolidation of urban development will contribute significantly to making the best use of existing and future infrastructure investments, and improve the liveability and attractiveness of residential and tourist areas. Importantly, the preferred regional settlement pattern will ensure all communities have the opportunity to grow in a sustainable way and achieve self-containment appropriate to the resident and business communities' needs.

The existing and future investment in state infrastructure for the region will support the regional vision and settlement pattern, which seeks to:

- relieve development pressures on the coast and avoid risk to lives and property as a result of natural coastal hazards such as cyclone, storm surge and sea level rise
- manage the high costs of providing infrastructure for a dispersed population
- protect valuable and unique environmental features of the region, including terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, noting that to accommodate the high levels of anticipated growth, some loss of natural resources and environmental values may be inevitable
- redistribute growth to Bundaberg and promote additional growth opportunities (particularly employment generating development) in Maryborough and Gympie to build on the economic foundations of these communities. Hervey Bay will also continue to attract high levels of growth and will develop to complement the role and function of Maryborough
- support Kingaroy and Gayndah as the key inland towns of the region
- support existing centres through promoting mixed land uses, and improving the quality of overall urban design and density, access to services and sustainability
- ensure rural towns have opportunities to prosper and accommodate appropriate levels of growth, stabilising and supporting the vibrancy of these important hinterland areas
- manage and appropriately plan for the development of additional rural residential lots throughout the region. Local government planning outcomes may identify locations suitable for additional semi-rural living; however, the expansion of rural residential development should be restricted in areas that may have capacity for more efficient use of land when considering safety, liveability and ongoing land management.

Any growth in the region will inevitably add pressure to existing water supply limitations and critical ecological habitat. Electricity, communication and road infrastructure will need to be progressively upgraded across the region, and the capacity of many education, health and other community facilities will need to be increased. The preferred settlement pattern seeks to minimise adverse impacts and deliver cost-effective and efficient infrastructure services. Further investigation and planning will be required to ensure development proceeds in a logical and sequential pattern, supported by the timely delivery of appropriate communications, social and transport infrastructure.

Meeting changing residential pressures in the future will rely on the provision of diverse and affordable housing options. Supporting the development of a broad range of styles and forms of housing choices will assist in creating diverse communities and preventing social polarisation and displacement. It is important that affordable housing is well-located in relation to transport, community facilities and services, open space and recreation, and education and employment opportunities.

Residential growth should be underpinned by a strong focus on delivering education, commercial and industrial activity for the community. Growth is supported in rural towns, and rural sustainability will be promoted by encouraging diversification and using existing infrastructure and services.

Centres throughout the region provide hubs of activity and key locations for services, housing choice, hotspots of commerce and community services. The regional settlement pattern reinforces the roles of centres, primarily through the consolidation and containment of key attractors within each centre. This principle will be reflected in the use of appropriate actions and policies in local planning strategies and decisions. Consideration of the role of each centre is to be applied when making decisions about the location of significant development and the siting of government and community services. It is important that all communities are provided with the opportunity to enhance self-containment of residential uses, employment and services, with capacity for appropriate levels of growth provided.

As the population of a town or city increases with time, so too does the range of speciality services and infrastructure it provides, and the relative catchment area that centre supports.

There are five key centres of commerce and urban activity—Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Gympie, Maryborough and Kingaroy—which provide a range of higher order services and functions for the urban communities of the region and support the region's rural areas.

These key growth locations will provide for sustainable residential and employment growth due to good accessibility and a network of established communications, social and transport infrastructure. Consolidation of growth will help sustain the provision of social and community services and facilities across the region, including culturally specific events and activities. A consolidated settlement pattern will encourage broader diversity in housing styles that take advantage of existing infrastructure and services. Focusing growth within key centres will also have a positive impact on the environment by reducing trip length and travel time, while building on opportunities for public and active transport. Areas of significant ecological value, or subject to environmental constraints, will need to be protected from development pressures to ensure a successful future for the region.

Bundaberg, Maryborough and Hervey Bay have historically been the most dominant regional cities, containing the most diverse concentration of urban activities, and accommodating the significant proportion of the resident population, services and community facilities for the region. These centres will continue to provide higher order services in the future and support expansion, due largely to their existing infrastructure, diverse economies and available water and land supplies.

Gympie, Kingaroy and Gayndah are also important centres in the region. They will continue to supply services and facilities to the surrounding rural communities, in addition to the resident population. These regional centres generally possess extensive areas of land that are relatively unconstrained, with good levels of accessibility and moderate diversity in their economies. They will provide a range of retail services, local and state government administration, and important economic, industry, health, education, cultural and entertainment facilities to meet the everyday needs of local and regional residents.

Population expansion has not been evenly distributed across the region, with many rural communities not sharing in the region's overall growth by migrant attraction or natural increase. However, through the sustained presence of these towns, the rich agricultural fabric and landscape values of the region will be maintained. These smaller centres cater to the daily needs of local residents, tourists and primary production industries, and are critically important to the longevity of the region's population, economy and production.

The coastal centres of the region, particularly east of Bundaberg between Burnett Heads and Elliott Heads, provide limited opportunities for additional growth. Consideration to the management of the coastal environment and protection against natural hazard risks will be critical for new development, as well as safeguarding these locations and their existing residents. Development in coastal areas south of the Elliott River will be limited due to the higher potential for risks from natural hazards, the anticipated impacts of climate change, and reduced accessibility.

Bundaberg Regional Council

Estimated population in 2010: 96 936

Indicative planning population in 2031: 150 100

Forecast additional dwellings by 2031: 23 100

Principal regional activity centre: Bundaberg

Local activity centres: Bargara, Childers and Gin Gin

Opportunities

- Unique natural environment and abundant natural resources
- Bundaberg airport aviation industries and related uses
- Industry and manufacturing
- Port of Bundaberg
- Reliable water supply
- Tourism
- Primary production and rural industries
- Kalkie–Ashfield Development Area (residential)
- Fairymead Identified Growth Area (employment)
- Branyan Identified Growth Area (residential)

Challenges

- Planning for significant growth
- Effects of climate change and natural hazards
- Impacts of coastal development on the environment
- Job creation
- Diversifying the economy

European pioneers initially settled in the area as timber getters, leading to the establishment of the first timber mill on the banks of the Burnett River. Shortly after, sugarcane plantations were founded, and the Bundaberg Sugar Company is still heavily invested in the region for the growing and refining of sugar for national and international markets. Sugarcane growing and processing remains a significant contributor to the region's landscape and economy, although small crops and tree crops now dominate the rural economy.

The Bundaberg region is located at the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef, and captures portions of the Great Sandy Marine Park within its bounds. Part of its coastal waters includes the environmental reserve of Mon Repos, which supports the largest concentration of nesting marine turtles on the east coast of Australia. Protecting critical and unique environments such as these will be a key challenge, as well as an opportunity for the subregion as it continues to support a growing population.

Bundaberg Regional Council area is anticipated to accommodate a projected population of 150 100 by 2031. The area consists of a diverse range of rural and coastal communities. The city of Bundaberg straddles the Burnett River, with urban settlement primarily on the south side of the river, where extensive residential, commercial, health and social infrastructure has been developed to meet growing community needs. It is the hub of commerce and services for the subregion.

The Burnett River is a significant feature of the local environment, flowing in a generally northern direction toward the coastline and the mouth of the river at Burnett Heads. Small pockets of rural residential development are scattered throughout the surrounding area. Unlike other parts of the region, Bundaberg consists of relatively flat terrain.

Future development in existing urban areas will assist in preserving important natural environments and resources surrounding the urban areas of the region, such as agricultural land, and avoiding urban development in areas subject to risks of natural hazards.

Growth of the Bundaberg region's economy and residential sectors over the next two decades will rely on the adequacy of infrastructure ahead of, and during, cycles of growth. Appropriate expansion of road, rail and reticulated services in Bundaberg, coastal and rural towns and rural areas that make up the subregion's community will be required to support this growth.

Bundaberg

Bundaberg is the major centre for the subregion, providing essential and higher order services to the residents of the urban and rural areas. Employment, retail, health, education, cultural and recreation opportunities are all represented within the city, and draw residents of the subregion seeking the variety and specialist services that are not available in the smaller towns.

Development is predominantly residential and focused on the south side of the Burnett River. The primacy of the traditional retail and commercial centre, including the main street of the CBD, are to be protected in future decisions for the subregion. The Burnett River presents significant potential to enhance the riverside atmosphere of the city in future development for residential, recreation and entertainment purposes.

The city is well placed to support a greater share of the region's population growth into the future, in part as a result of the proportion of relatively unconstrained land near the city centre.

The regional settlement pattern for Bundaberg reflects this capacity by providing additional areas for growth, through the provision of a wider extent of urban lands and supporting greater levels of development.

The Urban Footprint provides capacity for additional dwellings, as well as commercial and industrial uses. This capacity will support demand for employment and social infrastructure, including schools, health services and child care, in addition to open space and recreation lands. Growth will be accommodated through the extensive, relatively unconstrained broadhectare lands. However, infill opportunities, including the redevelopment of established areas, will be facilitated to promote a range of housing options close to employment and services, and make best use of available land. This will also reduce pressures to convert agricultural lands to urban development.

Broadhectare land will accommodate a range of housing types, with a focus on consolidating growth. Land within broadhectare areas will also be considered for non-residential uses, including employment and local industry development. Increasing densities in appropriate locations will assist in providing affordable and accessible housing and maintaining the vibrancy of the city.

The Kalkie–Ashfield Development Area (DA) to the east of Bundaberg provides a significant opportunity to accommodate residential growth in Bundaberg. It is intended that the area will incorporate local employment, community and recreation activities, in addition to the predominantly residential uses which will provide a diverse housing stock.

Development of the Kalkie–Ashfield DA will not occur until further detailed planning is undertaken and endorsed. Infrastructure planning and investment will be necessary to ensure that Kalkie–Ashfield can support a substantial proportion of the envisaged growth for Bundaberg. The interface with the Bundaberg Ring Road, and with adjacent agricultural land, requires specific consideration to achieve satisfactory separation between these agricultural areas and sensitive land uses.

Bundaberg is well placed to increase its role as a manufacturing hub. With the existing port facilities, airport, rail and highway access, its relative proximity to mining centres and reliable water supply, the city will be able to support a moderate to high increase in manufacturing and industry.

Recent upgrades to the Bundaberg airport also provide opportunities for the establishment of additional aviation industry and related business close to the airport.

In order to satisfy anticipated demand and diversification of industrial activities, the identification and protection of suitable land is pivotal to the long-term capacity of Bundaberg to actively participate in Queensland's industrial expansion. Further analysis and planning will be required to determine suitable locations for industrial activities, including consideration of the types of activities for each area, specific environmental constraints, transport requirements and consistency with the regional settlement pattern. Bundaberg and its proximity to southern markets makes it well suited as a location for industrial development.

The area adjacent to the Bundaberg Ring Road, and accessed through Channel Lane in South Bundaberg, has potential for service industry uses. Particular consideration will be required in relation to impacts on nearby sensitive land uses and transport access impacts on the Ring Road.

Some areas of Bundaberg are subject to the threat of flooding from the Burnett River. This is a consideration for existing residential areas, as well as in the future development of urban land. It is important that detailed planning processes and investigations to establish the extent of the urban area take into account land determined to be at risk of flooding and other constraints. However, there may be opportunities for expansion to the urban areas adjacent to locations at risk of flooding for non-residential activities.

Sequencing of urban development and infrastructure provision will prioritise the management and progress of growth for Bundaberg. Improvements to existing infrastructure services will be necessary in many cases, and the capacity of these networks to support growth will be a key driver for future expansion.

Bundaberg will continue to play a vital role in the growth and development of the region beyond 2031. Identified Growth Areas (IGAs) at Fairymead and Branyan have been designated to accommodate some of this future growth.

The Fairymead IGA may be suitable for employment uses that support the Port of Bundaberg. Its location on the western bank of the Burnett River includes strategic port land which may accommodate an expansion to the Port of Bundaberg in the future. Significant environmental values and access to the area will require investigation and investment prior to a development commitment. Parts of the area are also at risk from flooding and climate change impacts, which will require resolution prior to development.

The Branyan IGA may be suitable for employment and residential uses in the future. Its strategic location adjacent to the Urban Footprint and the Isis Highway, and its proximity to the Bundaberg Airport, present significant opportunities for its potential development. The area may also accommodate a range of employment opportunities and local services commensurate with the level of residential development located in the area. The Branyan area is currently fragmented by a mix of rural, residential and industrial activities, which may impact on the sequencing of development and provision of urban infrastructure. Further fragmentation and development that may conflict with the potential use of the site for urban residential purposes should be avoided.

Development may be supported prior to 2031 if a need for the IGAs can be established, and the issues associated with each location can be resolved.

Coastal towns

Small towns located along the eastern coastline from Elliott Heads to Burnett Heads currently function as suburbs of Bundaberg. They support residential and small-scale tourism development, with limited district level services, providing an alternative lifestyle option for residents to the more urban environments of Bundaberg. These areas support a growing tourism sector, which has generated significant growth in communities such as Bargara.

Bargara, a tourist and retail centre for the coastal strip, will continue to accommodate most of the existing and future growth on the coast. However, this will be restricted to areas unlikely to be threatened by unacceptable risk from natural hazards and the anticipated impacts of climate change. There are limited opportunities for ongoing growth in Bargara, but small increases in appropriately located district level services will provide for improvements in the self-reliance of Bargara and nearby coastal communities, such as Innes Park.

Additional urban development between Coral Cove and Bargara may be appropriate in the future; however, further planning will be required prior to this development occurring. This planning should take into account the mix of uses that should be established, impacts from existing Key Resource Areas, other extractive resource deposits, transport infrastructure and environmental values.

Woodgate, Buxton and Moore Park Beach are at relatively high risk from potential impacts of storm surge and climate change, and only limited growth will be achieved within these established urban areas. Availability of infrastructure and their distance from the local centre of Childers and Bundaberg also reduces the ability of these towns to support additional growth.

The role of these towns as residential and tourist locations is not likely to change, and they will continue to rely on Bundaberg for employment and more specialised services into the future. Employment within each of these towns will remain locally significant, consisting predominantly of nature-based tourism, community services and small-scale retail. It is not intended that the coastal towns will support broad expansion of employment or commercial development in the future; however, diversification of local employment will be supported where appropriate.

Higher order service needs will continue to be met by Bundaberg. The relative distance to the city centre, limited infrastructure capacity and inherent environmental constraints of coastal towns will impede further expansion. Intensification of urban uses in these areas should be managed to avoid additional people and property being subject to the anticipated risks of climate change and natural hazards.

The temperate climate and relaxed pace of life offered by these coastal localities will continue to be a drawcard for retirees and older residents. A significantly ageing demographic profile, and continued demand for accommodation will place increasing pressure on the existing health and community facilities provided. Some expansion of these services may be necessary in appropriate locations to provide local support for the ageing population.

Rural towns and surrounds

While significant proportions of the subregion's growth will be met by Bundaberg City, rural towns will continue to provide alternative residential and employment opportunities for residents. To sustain expansion within these areas, additional infrastructure and employment, education and other social services will need to be investigated.

Gin Gin and Childers provide key services to their surrounding rural communities. Both of these towns are located on the Bruce Highway, providing an opportunity to accommodate moderate growth in population and employment. Detailed analysis of Childers, Gin Gin and other rural towns, such as Cordalba, Wallaville, South Kolan, Yandaran and Avondale should be undertaken to determine future growth needs and appropriate locations for residential and employment activities as well as infrastructure requirements. Higher level facilities and services will be met by Bundaberg.

As with much of the region, the Bundaberg subregion's economy has traditionally been based on primary industry, and the rural sector forms a cornerstone of the regional economy. Timber milling and sugarcane industries founded many of the rural areas and towns at the time of first European settlement. The Millaquin and Bingera sugar mills and the Bundaberg Rum distillery on the banks of the Burnett River still rely on locally produced sugar cane, and the role of sugar cane in the local economy will be retained largely as a result of its climatic suitability and the local success of its production. These are regionally significant examples of early local industries remaining productive and in operation today.

Rural diversification is improving through increasing successes in producing small crops and tree crops, and the wider expansion of the timber industry, with western areas also supporting other primary industry pursuits, predominantly cattle grazing.

Infrastructure

There is some capacity in the infrastructure networks underpinning the region to support short-term growth in residential, commercial and industrial sectors. However, to accommodate the proposed intensification of employment, health and residential activities within the region, upgraded road and sewerage infrastructure may be necessary to sustain the medium- to long-term additional demand.

There are significant opportunities for the subregion to build a stronger and more responsive economy. However, to achieve the levels of growth envisaged for Bundaberg and its surrounds, upgrades to the regional road network will be required, including improved connectivity between coastal villages, hinterland and city areas through the design and development of regional transport distributor networks.

Strengthening the freight network will support additional economic growth and potential expansion of the Port of Bundaberg and other niche and local industries.

A significant area of Burnett Heads is strategic port land accommodating the Port of Bundaberg. The quality and availability of infrastructure to secure the long-term viability of port operations requires planning and investment. An additional consideration for future intensification of port activities, and a possible constraining factor on expansion, is the existing extent and types of development surrounding the port.

The freight network may also require strengthening to support additional economic growth and potential expansion of the Port of Bundaberg.

Existing water capacity, via Paradise and Fred Haigh dams, is available to serve current and anticipated population growth. Demand from economic and industrial expansion should largely be accommodated by this existing water storage capacity; however, the network's ability to continue to underpin projected growth is to be monitored to ensure stability of supply.

A number of smaller towns, including existing coastal towns, are not serviced by sewerage infrastructure. To be responsive to the sensitive receiving environments in the region, an expanded reticulated sewerage network should be investigated and provided where appropriate.

Economy and employment

The Bundaberg subregion is well placed to support a robust economy, characterised by a diverse, contemporary and adaptable range of industries that are compatible with, and advance, the region's lifestyle benefits. Investments supporting the ongoing prosperity, access, connectivity and skilled workforce attributes of Bundaberg will propel the region's economy.

The Port of Bundaberg has capacity to accommodate additional port-related activities such as industry and waterfront development. The port is also adjacent to the Port of Bundaberg Marina and related marine industries. Appropriate management and diversification of port activities will position the Port of Bundaberg as a regional linchpin of southern Queensland's industrial diversity. It has the potential to contribute to external economic activity, such as responding to additional demand for goods transportation generated by the expansion of mining activities in central Queensland and the Surat Basin, and opportunities for overflow from the Port of Gladstone. Opportunities to expand the port operations have led to recognising an area at Fairymead as an IGA as described above.

TAFE Queensland operates a marine training centre near the port. The continuation of this education component, in addition to limited expansion of appropriate tourist activities based on the marina precinct, will support both the marina and port functions.

Value-adding opportunities for local crops and produce are supported, including the development of alternative fuels like ethanol and alternative energies as a result of output co-generation. The Isis Mill industrial area should continue to be supported, drawing on the current focus of primary production, and using by-products such as the Australian Prime Fibre plant that uses sugarcane trash to produce mulch and fibre pellets. Future planning for this area will consider the appropriate range of industrial uses, the area of land that should be dedicated to this purpose, its impacts on transport (in particular the Bruce and Isis highways) and the ongoing operation of the Isis Mill.

Aviation and related industries and uses are supported in proximity to the Bundaberg Airport. This will build on the aviation industry focus established by Jabiru Aircraft Pty Ltd, which manufactures light aircraft (the Jabiru) and other aircraft components. The Bundaberg Airport also hosts the biennial Wide Bay Australia International Airshow. This is a major event for the region and attracts both national and international enthusiasts.

Central Queensland University has a campus at Bundaberg with a current student population of over 1000. Courses and programs offered at the Bundaberg campus are from the Faculties of Arts, Humanities and Education; Business and Informatics; and Sciences, Engineering and Health. The university offers a Bachelor of Aviation Technology at the Bundaberg campus—Australia's only regional aviation degree— which reflects the region's existing aviation and aerospace industries and prospects for further development of these industries.

Attracting and retaining skilled workers in the region will be essential to support the preferred economic development strategies for the subregion. Training and skills improvement programs should cater to niche and emerging industries and areas of current and projected shortfall.

Development of the Surat Basin for LNG and coal extraction may also present new opportunities for residential and industrial growth. This may include assembly of mining machinery components at the Port of Bundaberg or Fairymead, warehousing, logistics and maintenance, relating to both mining and Port of Gladstone operations.

Residential

By 2031, it is projected that an additional 23 100 dwellings will be required to house the Bundaberg region's expected population growth. A substantial proportion of this can be accommodated within broadhectare lands identified for this purpose. However, infill and redevelopment in established areas should be supported to increase housing choice and accessibility for existing residents seeking alternative housing options, making better use of public infrastructure and improving opportunities for non-car based transport.

The significant amount of broadhectare land identified in the Urban Footprint will require detailed planning by state and local governments to plan and coordinate appropriate sequencing of infrastructure with development to serve the projected population.

Rural residential

Rural residential development can be found in various parts of the Bundaberg region. Where existing rural residential areas have a significant capacity for further 'infill' rural residential lots, these areas are located within the Rural Living Area designation. Where no significant capacity for additional lots can be identified, rural residential land is located within the RLRPA.

Rural residential development is abundant in the Bundaberg region, both within the identified Rural Living Areas and existing subdivided rural lands in the RLRPA.

The Rural Living Area is generally located close to existing towns, with a significant proportion located close to Bundaberg, including the areas of South Bingera, Kensington and Innes Park. Additional capacity is provided at Branyan and Sharon.

All future rural residential development is to be appropriately located to achieve land and infrastructure efficiency, and ensure that further fragmentation of strategic agricultural land does not occur. Land suitable for cropping or other rural production activities and higher order urban purposes are to be protected from this form of incompatible development.

Community services

Many community services are approaching, or at, capacity, and ongoing investment in line with growth will be required to satisfy long-term demand, particularly in health and education.

Bundaberg Hospital is the major hospital and referral centre for the Wide Bay Health Service District. It provides specialist services, mental health and a variety of community health services for the region. There are also two private hospitals in Bundaberg—Friendly Society Private Hospital (an acute care medical facility) and the Mater Hospital. There are planned extensions at the private hospitals that will provide for an expanded range of services for the community.

Childers and Gin Gin each have a small public hospital with a range of services. Higher order health care within the subregion will continue to be provided by the Bundaberg hospitals, with expansions of these regional health facilities not intended.

Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council

Estimated population in 2010: 1260

Indicative planning population in 2031: 1700

Forecast additional dwellings by 2031: 200

Local activity centres: Cherbourg

Opportunities

- Strong culture
- Small business and industries
- Build relationship with South Burnett Regional Council

Challenges

- Preparing and implementing a community plan and planning scheme
- Job creation
- Addressing disadvantage

Continued growth in coastal areas may result in the need to review the provision of education facilities, especially in Bargara, and the enhancement or addition of specific aged care and health services to meet the needs of the changing demographic over time.

Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire comprises the small township of Cherbourg and adjacent lands, approximately six kilometres to the south of Murgon. The community is small compared to other local government areas in the region, situated on three square kilometres of Deed of Grant in Trust land. The current estimated resident population of the shire is 1260 people.

The Cherbourg community has developed a strong culture deriving from 40 different groups, which include the original group from this area, the Wakka Wakka people. Cherbourg is the oldest and the third largest Aboriginal community in Queensland.

Since the mid to late 1960s, Cherbourg has had an elected Aboriginal Council. However, since the passing of the Deed of Grant in Trust legislation in 1986, Cherbourg started managing its own affairs as an independent shire.

The township is located adjacent to Barambah Creek, with the majority of development on the south side of the creek. The township surrounds the school and hospital, with opportunities for expansion in most directions.

The close proximity to the town of Murgon provides key opportunities for a complementary and cooperative approach between the Cherbourg and South Burnett Councils to the planning, development and capacity building for employment and services for the Cherbourg community.

High unemployment and housing demands, coupled with the provision of appropriate infrastructure, are key challenges for the Cherbourg community.

Developing a community plan and a planning scheme will provide an avenue to set the future strategic direction for the shire.

Infrastructure

Providing good access to nearby Murgon and other towns in the South Burnett is important to ensure the residents of Cherbourg—including those with limited access to a private vehicle—have access to work, education, health, and other services and opportunities.

Existing infrastructure and urban services, such as the region's sewerage system, may need to be enhanced in future to meet growth in demand, providing appropriate treatment of waste and management of potential environmental impacts.

Economy and employment

The majority of employment in the area is provided by the council or government agencies. Further opportunities are found in the nearby town of Murgon.

The Cherbourg economy is supported by agriculture, beef cattle, joinery and other small business ventures. These have supported, and continue to support, local employment opportunities to allow for greater employment prospects and a stronger local economy. Further expansion of the market garden selling produce directly to the Cherbourg community and surrounding towns will add value to the local agricultural enterprises.

Opportunities for industry and small business growth in Cherbourg are being investigated and encouraged, such as the re-use of the existing abattoir facility.

Local training ventures that are complementary to staffing requirements for existing and new business and industry should also be encouraged and enhanced. This includes use of the local workforce to construct housing and other infrastructure in Cherbourg.

Residential

Housing growth should be located predominantly within or adjoining the existing township. Opportunities to provide a more diverse range of housing to cater for the changing needs of the population should also be pursued.

Community services

There are a wide range of community services available in Cherbourg, including a hospital, aged care facility, TAFE, primary school, childcare centre, and drug and alcohol rehabilitation service. Other additional services are also available in nearby Murgon. The level of service provision should continue to meet the demands of the population and support for the disadvantaged.

Fraser Coast Regional Council

Estimated population in 2010: 102 080

Indicative planning population in 2031: 146 700

Forecast additional dwellings by 2031: 19 400

Principal regional activity centres: Maryborough, Hervey Bay

Local activity centres: Howard–Torbanlea, Tiaro

Opportunities

- Coordination and complementary growth of Maryborough and Hervey Bay
- Unique natural environment and abundant natural resources
- Marine industry
- Tourism
- Aviation and related industries
- Primary production and rural industries
- Rail, road and air transport infrastructure
- Gas supplies in Maryborough
- Granville Development Area (residential and employment)
- Nikenbah Development Area (residential and employment)
- St Helens Development Area (employment)

Challenges

- Planning for significant growth
- Effects of climate change and natural hazards
- Impacts of coastal development
- Reliable water supply
- Job creation
- Diversifying the economy
- Ageing population

The Fraser Coast Regional Council area contains the Great Sandy Biosphere area, recognised internationally in 2010 for its unique environmental values, and the subregion is home to areas of critical environment and geological distinctiveness, including the World Heritage area of Fraser Island. Its coastal waters also host humpback whales on their annual migrations past the Queensland coast. These naturally occurring characteristics assist in making the Fraser Coast the region's premier visitor destination. The Fraser Coast was also home to 102 080 people in 2010.

The Fraser Coast subregion possesses rich soils, which assist in agriculture remaining an important economic feature in the region. Productive rural lands will be protected to ensure the viability of rural pursuits in the future. Tourism and manufacturing industries are becoming more prevalent, and will continue to do so, further diversifying the economy of the Fraser Coast over time.

Historically, urban development was concentrated in Maryborough and the coastal villages that now make up Hervey Bay. The Mary River was the foundation of first European settlement within the region, with historic settlements originally located on the banks of the river at Maryborough.

The subregion is supported by two major centres—Hervey Bay and Maryborough—supplying a range of community health and services, retail, and education and employment opportunities to the residents of surrounding rural areas and towns. It supports two airports, a state boat harbour at Urangan, and two smaller marinas. An operational state north–south rail network and the Bruce Highway form the major interregional transport links for the region.

The centres of Hervey Bay and Maryborough are closely linked due to their proximity and overlapping catchments. A complementary approach to the development of these two centres will be required in the future to support a sustainable Fraser Coast community.

Maryborough

Originally established around a thriving river port used for immigration and the export of wool, cotton, timber, sugar and gold, the city of Maryborough has been a significant centre for the subregion. Its early history has been largely preserved, and the town is well known for its intact heritage buildings and architecture.

Maryborough is centrally located within the Fraser Coast area, and will accommodate a significant proportion of the region's future administrative and employment growth. It possesses a wealth of development potential due to fewer environmental or topographic limitations than other major centres of the region. Key advantages of the Maryborough area include its accessibility to other markets, the available infrastructure, including the national highway, the north–south rail line connecting Brisbane to Cairns, local air transport services, gas supply mains and an established electricity substation.

The preferred settlement pattern for the region supports the potential for Maryborough's population to double in size. Planning for infrastructure, community services and employment will be essential. The Urban Footprint has capacity to accommodate broad ranging uses, in addition to meeting dwelling demand.

Several locations have been identified with the potential to accommodate further growth in industry and manufacturing, including St Helens and Granville. Each of these locations will need to be investigated for suitability and development potential in the short to medium future, before any development commitments are reached. In addition, a marine industry precinct, to be established on the banks of the Mary River at Granville east of Maryborough, will assist in the diversification of the industry base.

The Urban Footprint consists of sufficient land area to accommodate additional urban development and residential dwellings by providing for a mix of broadhectare development and infill capacity. Significant land for rural residential development has also been assigned in the Rural Living Area close to Maryborough.

Granville contains a DA that may provide opportunities for medium term residential and employment expansion. It is intended that the area will primarily provide for residential growth; however, opportunities for local services and employment opportunities to support a higher level of self-containment should be incorporated.

Prior to development, further planning will be required to establish the appropriate mix and location of land uses, the preferred sequence of development, connectivity and accessibility in the area, and a coordinated approach to infrastructure delivery. Constraints such as the potential risk of flooding will need to be considered, as well as the interface with adjacent agricultural land and the nearby marine industry precinct. Planning for the Granville DA should consider the broader context of the site, particularly the intent for the marine industry precinct to be established on the banks of the Mary River, intended future uses, and possible expansion and infrastructure requirements. Significant investment in infrastructure will be required, and access across the Mary River will be a key consideration in the sequencing and delivery of development. Transport impacts in the immediate vicinity, as well as the broader context of Maryborough, will require resolution prior to development commitment in the area.

The St Helens DA will deliver medium- to long-term opportunities for industrial activities. The St Helens DA will predominantly provide employment opportunities for Maryborough, building on the existing industrial uses and the accessibility of the site. Some residential activities are already established in St Helens. Appropriate measures will be required to ensure impacts from the employment activities are mitigated. Prior to development of the DA, planning will need to address the connectivity and accessibility in the area; the interface to the potential Maryborough bypass; access to, and the need for widening of, the Maryborough–Hervey Bay Road; constraints such as risks from flooding; and infrastructure planning, in particular the impacts of the use of recycled water in the area.

Hervey Bay

City centre, Hervey Bay *Courtesy of MWA Viewfinder*

Hervey Bay is one of the region's major retail and commercial centres and biggest holiday destinations. Its role as a key tourist destination and gateway to Fraser Island will facilitate further growth in the community.

The existing settlement pattern of Hervey Bay has resulted from the development of small coastal villages, loosely based on the historical settlements, which have merged to become suburbs of one large coastal city.

The Urban Footprint of Hervey Bay has capacity to accommodate the anticipated dwelling demand to 2031, primarily within established urban zoned land, as a mix of broadhectare and infill development. The city will continue to experience growth in the short to medium future; however, the proximity of the settlement in relation to the coastline will restrict expansion, given the area's inherent locational vulnerability to the projected implications of climate change.

Hervey Bay is capable of supporting further growth in tertiary education, tourism and service related activities—such as aged care and support services—to a larger extent than Maryborough, expanding on the existing education facilities, such as University of Southern Queensland's Fraser Coast campus. This will support an increase in the diversity of local services and employment opportunities.

One of the key challenges for Hervey Bay in the last two decades has been maintaining centralised retail and commercial development in specific nodes. This is a particular consideration in the protection and primacy of Main Street Pialba and Boat Harbour Drive, Urraween, with secondary retail centres to be provided by Urangan and Eli Waters.

Urangan Boat Harbour is the local hub for marine transport and tourism. Potential future upgrades and renewal of these facilities will reinforce this focus for the marina. Strong tourism has developed over time as the city established itself as a gateway to Fraser Island. While this opportunity has provided a range of benefits to the area, it has also limited potential for the commercial marine industry to expand among the existing tourism-oriented facilities.

Coastal suburbs, including the Eli Waters and Dundowran Beach areas, are susceptible to the constraints associated with climate change, including sea level rise and storm tide inundation. Consequently, development within the Eli Waters and Dundowran Beach areas may be limited. Consideration for development within these areas would require detailed analysis and planning, particularly in relation to impacts from coastal hazards and protection of its significant environmental values. Planning for infill or redevelopment of existing urban areas of Hervey Bay should also consider the potential impacts from coastal hazards and climate change.

The Nikenbah DA will provide additional residential and employment growth opportunities. Land identified between Maryborough–Hervey Bay Road and Madsen Road is subject to constraints, and is unsuitable for residential development. However, subject to appropriate planning to identify the area of developable land and the range of acceptable uses, other urban activities may be appropriate. Remaining portions are intended to accommodate residential growth in the medium to long term. Infrastructure planning and investment will be required prior to development occurring.

Coastal towns

Growth has historically been dispersed and fragmented, with many coastal towns, including Toogoom, Poona, Riverheads and Boonooroo, accommodating a mix of permanent residences and holiday homes. While this responds to a lifestyle demand for affordable coastal living, it increases the burden on an inadequate coastal road network and social infrastructure, and adversely impacts on natural environment values.

Communities within the coastal towns will continue to be primarily focused on residential accommodation rather than employment or commercial expansion, and the majority of specialist and skilled employment will continue to be provided by Hervey Bay and Maryborough. Employment opportunities provided by each of these coastal areas will continue to maintain locally relevant industries, including retail, tourism and community services.

Residential growth in coastal towns will be consolidated within the Urban Footprint to minimise the increased risk from natural hazards, the potential impacts of climate change, and the restricted capacity of social infrastructure to service further growth.

The coastal town of Burrum Heads was originally established as a coastal holiday village, but has grown into a small community for permanent residents and holiday-makers. The area has significant environmental values, including habitat for the endangered Wallum Froglet, and is potentially at high risk from permanent inundation from sea level rise and impacts from storm tide. Past investment in infrastructure and existing development indicates that some limited additional growth may be supported at Burrum Heads, subject to detailed analysis and planning, particularly in relation to impacts from coastal hazards and protection of its significant environmental values.

Rural towns and surrounds

Tiaro, Howard and Torbanlea are the main subregional towns providing local services for residents and those of surrounding rural towns. Higher order services, such as health, retail and community services, will be met by Hervey Bay and Maryborough.

The establishment of Tiaro was originally influenced by the Gympie gold rush, while Howard was settled as a coalmining town. Both towns are now rural settlements that provide an important role in servicing surrounding settlements and rural communities.

The Tiaro and Torbanlea towns are not currently serviced by reticulated sewerage networks. Reticulated sewerage service areas within Howard are limited and the existing sewerage treatment plant requires future investment prior to considering expansion of the urban area it supports.

Detailed analysis and planning of rural towns should be undertaken to determine future growth needs and appropriate locations for residential and employment activities, as well as other infrastructure requirements. Subject to the outcome of these investigations, expansions to the urban area may be identified in local government planning schemes.

A significant defence facility, the Wide Bay Training Area, is located within the Fraser Coast and Gympie Regional Council areas, as identified on Map 2. The defence facility is used by the Australian Defence Force for live firing ranges and field training. This facility can result in noise impacts, and residential development should be avoided adjacent to the facility to ensure the ongoing operation of the facility is not compromised.

Infrastructure

Complementary planning of Hervey Bay and Maryborough will be supported by enhanced transport links between, and within, the centres themselves. Investment in public transport and active transport links will be a key driver to the success of this approach to planning for the Fraser Coast subregion.

Regional water capacity and supply is likely to require additional investment to cater for future population growth in the subregion. In some towns and the urban fringe of Hervey Bay and Maryborough, sewerage treatment plants may require upgrades in order to support projected population growth over time. Planning for these areas needs to consider capacities and the timeframes required for upgrades.

Electricity infrastructure will require investment in both Maryborough and Hervey Bay to support anticipated growth. Sites for substations and other infrastructure should be identified as part of the planning for expansion to ensure availability when demand requires installation of these services.

The Fraser Coast currently supports two airports, in Maryborough and Hervey Bay. Future planning of airport land needs to be investigated, and the potential impacts from nearby development should be mitigated to ensure ongoing viability of both airport sites.

Economy and employment

Hervey Bay and Maryborough are key activity centres for the subregion, in recognition of their level of commercial, retail and government services. However, their proximity, and the promotion of a greater proportion of growth to Maryborough, will require coordinated and complementary planning and investment in infrastructure and services, and the appropriate allocation of land for commercial, retail and industrial purposes as part of local government strategic planning programs.

Tourism will continue to be a major economic driver in the Fraser Coast, particularly for Hervey Bay. Growth and intensification of these services will contribute to a diverse and self-sufficient employment sector for local residents. The natural environment and rural character of the subregion are the major drawcards for tourist visitation, and planning and development decisions should continue to protect these important resources to support and stimulate the region's attractiveness for tourism activities.

Rural areas contribute significantly to the amenity of the regional landscape through their natural environment values, and play an important role in the attraction to the region of day-trippers and nature-based tourists.

Agriculture, native forestry and pine plantations have been strong drivers of the subregional economy, and they will remain significant contributors to the region into the future. Farming activities are predominantly within sugarcane and timber farming sectors; however these activities have been declining in their contribution to the economy. Opportunities for diversification and product value-adding will be important long-term strategies for the rural sector, including the ongoing viability of the sugar and timber industries.

In addition to maintaining the traditional industries of the subregion, manufacturing has emerged as an important future employment and economic driver, particularly for Maryborough, which maintains a strong reliance on this sector. Economic strategies and land-use planning should continue to build opportunities for additional manufacturing and other industries in appropriate locations to limit the possible impacts of incompatible land uses, and to encourage diversification of the sector.

The natural coastal and river environs present opportunities to build on existing marine industry and aquaculture projects. The marine industry precinct near Maryborough provides a key opportunity for the subregion, as opportunities for these facilities are becoming increasingly limited.

The viability of coalmining is being re-examined near Maryborough. Should mining activities recommence, direct and indirect employment opportunities will result, and will have a positive impact on the economy of the community and region as a whole. However, the conduct of these activities should maintain satisfactory separation from, and consideration of, the existing urban fabric and residents of nearby settlements in a way that promotes a balanced approach to land uses that stabilise and diversify the economy.

Canterwood Industrial Area at Owanyilla is recognised as having the potential to provide additional industrial lands, using high quality access to an existing rail siding and the Bruce Highway, and relative proximity to the ports of Brisbane, Gladstone and Bundaberg.

Residential

By 2031, it is anticipated that an additional 19 400 dwellings will be required to house growth within the Fraser Coast subregion.

The Urban Footprint can accommodate over 20 000 dwellings through broadhectare and infill development. Taking into account existing capacity of rural and rural residential lands to provide alternative residential forms, the subregion contains sufficient area to accommodate growth within the major cities and larger towns beyond 2031.

The significant areas of broadhectare land available within the subregion will require coordinated and detailed planning by state and local government to accommodate appropriate infrastructure to serve the projected population, as well as delivery of infrastructure with development. Prior to undertaking development or expansion, many of the region's existing urban areas will require infrastructure upgrades, such as sewerage treatment facilities in Hervey Bay and Howard; and secure water supply, electricity and transport infrastructure for the growing communities of Maryborough and Hervey Bay.

Planning of broadhectare areas will be required to make effective use of available land and existing or planned infrastructure. Mixed uses and dwelling diversity in these areas will assist in consolidating growth, reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle, and improve self-containment of the major centres, coastal towns and rural centres.

Existing rural residential areas of the subregion are recognised as providing a valid housing and lifestyle choice for the region, with ample capacity available within the Rural Living Area for growth of this type of development for the life of the regional plan.

Community services

Most community services within the subregion are recognised as being at or near capacity. Ongoing investment will be required to strengthen and sustain these important community facilities and services. Higher order community services will be predominantly located in Maryborough and Hervey Bay. Co-location of complementary services will be supported where appropriate.

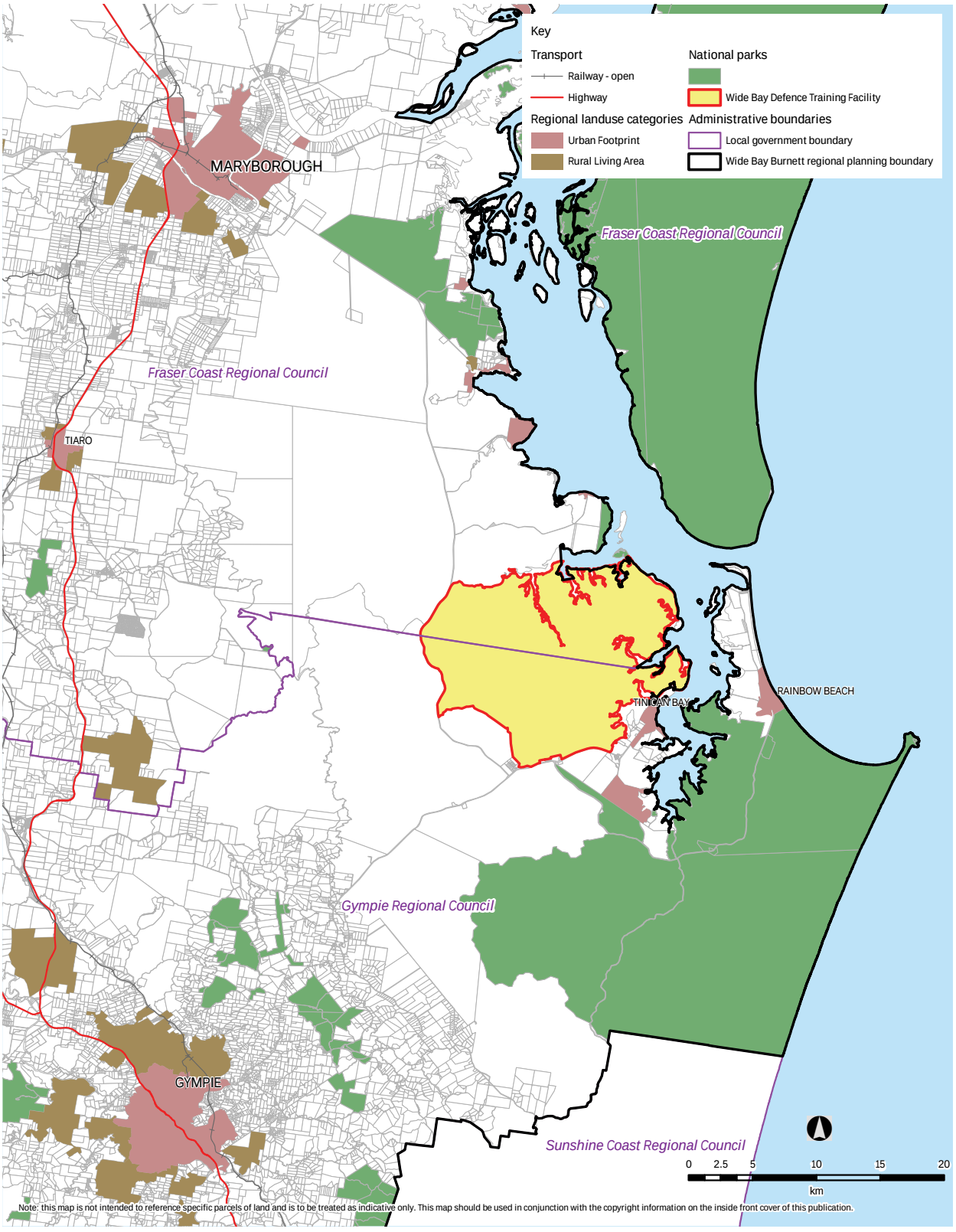
Further investment will be required in the future to ensure sufficient levels of service are maintained and improved to meet the needs of the diverse and ageing population. Planning for community services will need to take into account predicted growth levels, and the unique implications that population expansion will have for each community.

The University of Southern Queensland's Fraser Coast campus is located in Hervey Bay. A range of programs and courses are offered in the areas of human services, community welfare and development, accounting, marketing, education and nursing. The human services focus reflects the needs of the community, and provides an opportunity to develop and retain skilled workers in the region. Capacity to expand the university in its current location provides a further opportunity to diversify the range of programs and courses offered, to retain and attract school leavers through to 35 year olds.

Hervey Bay and Maryborough hospitals will continue to service the subregion over time for specialist and emergency health care. Additional health services will continue to be enhanced by private hospitals in the region, such as St Stephen's hospitals in Maryborough and Hervey Bay, which recently received funding for expansion.

Providing diverse and universal housing designs as part of the urban expansion will assist in accommodating different and changing housing needs over time, including those of an ageing population.

Map 2: Wide Bay defence training facility



Gympie Regional Council

Estimated population in 2010: 49 334

Indicative planning population in 2031: 68 900

Forecast additional dwellings by 2031: 8500

Major regional activity centre: Gympie

Local activity centres: Cooloola Cove, Imbil, Kilkivan, Goomeri, Rainbow Beach, Tin Can Bay

Opportunities

- Close proximity to major centres on the Sunshine Coast
- Rail, road and air access
- Industry expansion
- Unique natural environment and abundant natural resources
- Tourism
- Primary production and rural industries
- Gympie airport aviation industries and related uses
- East Deep Creek Development Area (employment)
- Victory Heights Development Area (employment)
- Southside Development Area (residential)

Challenges

- Planning for high growth
- Dispersed rural residential development
- Effects of climate change and natural hazards
- Impacts of coastal development
- Job creation and diversifying the economy
- Topography

The Gympie Regional Council area is located at the southern end of the region, and benefits from access to abundant natural resources and easy access to South East Queensland markets, particularly the Sunshine Coast. The estimated 2010 population was 49 334 people. Urban development is concentrated in Gympie, with rural, coastal and hinterland living opportunities available in various parts of the local government area.

The Gympie subregion has retained the historic settlement patterns established during the early goldmining and timber milling ventures that founded European settlement in the area.

The subregion possesses a wealth of environmental and biodiversity assets, including the Great Sandy Biosphere, national parks, rural hinterland areas and coastal environs. The Mary River and Six Mile Creek riparian corridors are dominant features of the region.

The southern extent of the subregion adjoins the northern boundary of the South East Queensland region. Planning and land-use decisions will concentrate and capitalise on this strength and advantageous proximity to build stronger connections with neighbouring regions that benefit both communities.

Gympie

Gympie is the key regional centre for the southern part of the region, and has a pivotal role as the primary administrative, service, sporting, commercial and industrial centre. Its heritage values are recognised and provide a focus for tourism to the subregion.

Two key areas of urban settlement have been established within Gympie, separated by the Mary River. The eastern area is extensively developed for commercial, health and residential settlements, and is focused around the Gympie CBD. Contemporary housing estates supported by small to medium community and commercial activities are now establishing at the suburb of Southside.

The layout of Gympie has emerged as a consequence of the unique natural constraints of local topography and environmental conditions. Gympie's current extent of development and unique riverside location presents opportunities for future development and design responses that address and embrace the Mary River. Public open space is plentiful, providing significant recreation opportunities for the community. The abundance of open space in the inner city is largely due to the area of land affected by local flooding. However, this natural phenomenon ensures the city will retain large tracts of green space, protecting amenity and recreation opportunities for the future.

Urban growth will continue to be accommodated by the expansion of the suburb of Southside. Large tracts of relatively flat broadhectare land to the south of the Mary River will enable the development of diverse dwelling types that are able to be adapted to changing demographic and housing needs over time. As the development of Southside is progressing, but not yet self-sustaining, residents will continue to travel across the Mary River daily to access health, employment, education and commercial services. Residential intensification will require additional infrastructure investment, and possibly additional or augmented river crossings to retain accessibility to the CBD and other employment hubs.

The Southside DA will provide medium- to long-term opportunities to accommodate residential growth for Gympie. Further development of the area will not occur until comprehensive planning has been completed. This will require consideration of the fragmented nature of the area, natural features, potential flooding impacts and topography to provide high levels of accessibility and connectivity. Sequencing and coordination of development and infrastructure delivery will be required. Access across the Mary River will be a key consideration in the sequencing and delivery of development.

Employment throughout the Gympie subregion has been historically dominated by the agricultural, health, commercial and retail sectors. Economic diversification and employment growth may include expansion of the industrial, resource, aviation and tourism industries, which will help to retain Gympie's youth, as well as attract new workers and families to the region.

The Urban Footprint contains sufficient land to maintain the existing employment base, in addition to accommodating growth in the industrial and business sectors, particularly in the Victory Heights and East Deep Creek areas. The Bruce Highway upgrade is necessary to support the long-term industrial expansion sought for the region. Infrastructure provision and resolution of conflicts in relation to noise and other emissions generated by these uses are to be resolved prior to development being undertaken.

The Urban Footprint is a regulatory tool to manage urban growth and is a response to the information available at the time of its release. Given the topographical constraints of the subregion, the outcomes of detailed local planning in the Gympie area may demonstrate that urban development is suitable outside, or unsuitable inside, the Urban Footprint. The edges of the existing developed areas, and of future or developing areas, are the most logical areas to be considered in detailed local planning. Locations on the edge of the urban area, such as Monkland, and between Stumm Road and Glastonbury Road, Southside, are potentially subject to risks from flooding. It may be suitable to locate urban uses in this area; however, detailed analysis and planning will be required to define the extent of the urban area. This will be reflected in the local government planning scheme, subject to the outcome of those investigations.

Commercial and employment growth will respect and reinforce the primacy and importance of Mary Street as Gympie's historical and commercial city centre. Competition between commercial and industrial land needs to be managed to ensure industrial areas are not constrained by commercial uses. Land-use allocation and strategic planning decisions to identify future commercial centres will help the subregion attract and accommodate demand, and reduce the incidence of the siting of these uses in incompatible locations.

City centre, Gympie Courtesy of *Ray Cash Photography*

The Gympie Aerodrome offers opportunities to take advantage of the Wide Bay Burnett's Centre of Enterprise for aviation. Investigations into appropriate aviation-related land uses (including a residential airpark), and controls to protect the integrity of future aerodrome operations and to minimise impacts on surrounding land uses, including the nearby Mary River, will be required prior to development occurring.

Industry will be the key employment generator to support residential growth. Capacity and the need for additional industrial land should be monitored and responded to accordingly. The Development Areas at Victory Heights and East Deep Creek will meet the majority of the local demand for industrial land.

The Victory Heights DA will accommodate employment opportunities, primarily industry. Planning prior to development will need to establish appropriate land uses and infrastructure requirements. The realignment of the Bruce Highway will require consideration in the planning and development of the area, particularly access to, and the interface between, land uses. Land to the west of the rail line is fragmented and accommodates low density residential uses. Strategies are to be put in place to manage the interface between the DA and the residential uses to ensure the impacts from the industrial activities are mitigated.

East Deep Creek DA will provide employment opportunities to the Gympie region. Future uses will predominantly be industrial, building on the existing uses, including the abattoir and mining activities. This is a significant amount of land, and provides an opportunity for Gympie to attract diverse industries to the area. Further planning prior to development will be required to address the range of land uses, strategies to mitigate impacts, and infrastructure provision. The Bruce Highway will be realigned through East Deep Creek. Appropriate planning to ensure access and resolution of potential conflicts in relation to noise and other emissions will be required prior to development. Further, growth in this area, including the need to gain access to the current or future alignment of the highway, may have significant impacts on the local road network. This, in addition to state government infrastructure requirements, will require detailed analysis and planning to ensure sufficient capacity to accommodate increased traffic movements as well as mitigating impacts on local areas.

Coastal towns

Rainbow Beach, Cooloola Cove and Tin Can Bay are local centres servicing the coastal area of Gympie Regional Council. They offer a coastal way of life for residents and a tourist experience for visitors. Employment in each centre will maintain locally relevant industries—predominantly fishing and marina activities in Tin Can Bay, local shopping and emerging industrial activities in Cooloola Cove, and nature-based tourism and hospitality in Rainbow Beach. However, further diversification of local employment and economic activity will be supported where appropriate.

The attraction for older and retired residents to these coastal towns, particularly Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach, as part of the sea change lifestyle phenomenon, will place increasing strain on emergency services and health care sectors over time. Some expansion of these health services will be required in appropriate locations to support the needs of the ageing community.

The Cooloola Cove air strip is currently underused, and options for its redevelopment may resolve the land-use conflict with nearby residential uses. Opportunities may include future tourism activities or affordable housing, given its proximity to the existing Cooloola Cove services and infrastructure. The need for the development, the type and scale of uses, and potential impacts on the adjacent environmentally significant areas will require resolution prior to development.

There are limited opportunities for broadhectare residential growth within coastal towns, with the majority of urban expansion to occur within the Cooloola Cove area. The Urban Footprint does not identify new areas for growth for these settlements, generally containing future development to existing areas already committed for development, and redevelopment within established areas where appropriate. Development within each of these towns is required to respect the intent and scale of its setting, and contribute to the amenity and coastal character of the location.

These coastal locations are particularly susceptible to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards, and have restricted infrastructure capacities. Therefore, the expansion of urban activity, particularly residential development beyond existing urban areas, is severely limited.

Higher order services will continue to be provided by Gympie. The physical distance of these towns from the major centre, the absence of significant infrastructure capacity (education, utilities and health), and limited land availability to establish such facilities will, in addition to environmental constraints, restrict the ongoing expansion of these locations.

Rural towns and surrounds

Goomeri, Kandanga, Kilkivan and Imbil service rural areas in the Gympie Regional Council area. Higher level services will continue to be met by Gympie, and to a lesser extent, the Sunshine Coast.

The rural areas are the cornerstone of the regional economy, as they support primary production and tourism. Opportunities for the diversification of rural industries should be investigated in order to supplement rural production activities into the future.

Imbil is the hub of the Mary Valley community. It provides a diverse range of commercial, industrial and social services for residents, and has retained a village atmosphere. Imbil will remain the commercial centre of the Mary Valley. New development will largely occur on the north side of Yabba Creek.

Kilkivan and Goomeri provide opportunities for residential and industrial expansion, as these locations have existing highway and infrastructure capacity, as well as ample residential land. Growth in these towns will not compromise the village feel of the settlements.

Urban expansion will occur to the outer areas of Goomeri. However, growth is to be located so that the substantial existing extractive industry activities located near the town, which are envisaged to be in operation for another 50–60 years, will not be compromised.

Access to reliable water supplies for some rural towns is problematic, particularly for western towns of the region, which experience significantly reduced rainfall and warmer climatic conditions than coastal areas. These towns will require new infrastructure over time to help sustain communities and support additional growth.

Infrastructure

There is existing capacity in the Gympie region to accommodate growth in the residential, commercial and industrial sectors. The major location for industrial land is east of Gympie, which has sufficient water capacity to support projected growth. However, upgraded road and sewerage infrastructure may be required in the medium term to meet additional demand. Following the highway upgrade, the Kybong area will have significant opportunities for industrial development, and may support large footprint and hard to locate industries. The local government planning scheme should appropriately identify this area to ensure these opportunities are not lost to inappropriate development.

The Gympie region has considerable opportunities to accommodate regionally significant industrial expansion; however, to fulfil this potential, investment in upgrading the Bruce Highway will be crucial. The Bruce Highway upgrade, which will result in additional road capacity and provide a bypass of Gympie from Cooroy to Curra, will provide additional opportunities to attract growth in industry to Gympie. It will facilitate safe and quick access to South East Queensland, presenting opportunities for logistics and transport operations in proximity to the highway. Large footprint and hard to locate industries will also benefit from the highway upgrade, which will ensure safe access is available without prohibitive costs.

The towns of Tin Can Bay, Rainbow Beach and Cooloola Cove have adequate water and wastewater capacity to accommodate the moderate growth expected, particularly following the recent completion of new sewerage treatment plants in each community.

Further expansion of residential and industrial land in Imbil will require water and road infrastructure investments to support growth.

During the life of the regional plan, it is projected that an additional 400 marine wet berths will be required in the southern area of the Great Sandy Straits. Marine facilities should locate near existing infrastructure where possible.

Additionally, a significant defence facility, the Wide Bay Training Area, is located within the Gympie and Fraser Coast Regional Council areas, as identified on Map 2. The defence facility is used by the Australian defence force for live firing ranges and field training. This facility can result in noise impacts, and residential development should be avoided adjacent to the facility to ensure the ongoing operation of the facility is not compromised.

Economy and employment

Gympie benefits from major road and rail infrastructure connections to South East Queensland. This will continue to create opportunities in the Gympie region to access local and international markets, and in particular, demand generated from the Sunshine Coast.

Gympie represents an affordable option for relocating and expanding enterprises servicing the south-east corner and requiring access to state and national freight routes. National manufacturing businesses are already located in the region in sectors such as food items and timber goods.

Coordinated land-use and infrastructure planning and sequencing will be required to ensure appropriate areas are able to be used for industrial purposes, and not used for incompatible uses such as commercial or retail.

Rural production, including grazing, cropping and forestry, will remain key contributors to the subregion's economy. Agribusiness and agritourism will be strong drivers for diversifying the economy of rural towns and larger centres such as Gympie. Future land-use decision-making should seek to take advantage of these opportunities to diversify the economy, stimulate a sustainable rural sector and protect areas identified as Good Quality Agricultural Land.

Residential

By 2031, it is anticipated that an additional 8500 dwellings will be required to house expected population growth within the Gympie Regional Council area. It is anticipated that broadhectare development can accommodate more than 9000 dwellings, primarily within the Gympie Urban Footprint. Along with infill development, these dwellings will be sufficient to accommodate growth beyond 2031.

A significant amount of broadhectare land projected to accommodate further growth will require detailed planning to accommodate appropriate infrastructure to serve the projected population and determine land capabilities and constraints.

Rural residential

The established rural residential communities dispersed throughout the subregion are a fundamental part of the settlement pattern and identity of Gympie, and provide an important lifestyle drawcard to the region. Existing residents of Gympie and its surrounds seek out this form of residential accommodation for its natural amenity and aesthetic values.

A significant proportion of the subregion, and in particular, land close to Gympie, has already been divided into rural residential properties. In a large proportion of these cases, rural residential development offers the most efficient use of this land, based primarily on topography, and hazard management and mitigation. On the whole, these developments have allowed otherwise difficult topography, located only a short distance from established community services, urban areas, employment and the Gympie CBD, to be used for residential purposes. Increasing the density of development in many of these areas would expose a greater proportion of the population to hazards, including, for example, bushfire, landslide or flood inundation, and place strain on infrastructure systems and capabilities.

The subregion hosts a number of outlying rural residential areas that are located a significant distance from existing towns and services. Expansion within these areas needs to consider these locational disadvantages before development commitments are made, potentially leading to restrictions on further development.

All future rural residential development commitments are to be appropriately located to achieve land and infrastructure efficiency and avoid unacceptable risks from natural hazards. Land that is suitable for more intensive residential development or rural endeavours is to be protected for these uses. Further fragmentation and development of rural residential land that may conflict with the preferred use of the site and surrounding areas should be avoided.

Community services

As with much of the region, the ageing population highlights the need for an increase in the diversity and availability of housing opportunities and improved support services.

The subregion is serviced by Gympie Hospital and Gympie Private Hospital. Both of these community facilities are located within the Gympie CBD area to the north of the Mary River. Additional health services to support population growth at Southside will be necessary in the future to address residential expansion and changing demographics.

Education requirements for primary and secondary students are adequate for the current population, but may need to be reviewed in light of future population changes, including long-term investment in strengthening these, as well as expanding tertiary education opportunities. Accessibility to secondary school education is limited for residents of many of the region's coastal communities. Strategies to monitor and support improved accessibility should be considered to address changing demands.

North Burnett Regional Council

Estimated population in 2010: 10 805

Indicative planning population in 2031: 14 900

Forecast additional dwellings by 2031: 1780

District regional activity centre: Gayndah

Local activity centres: Biggenden, Eidsvold, Mundubbera, Monto, Mount Perry

Opportunities

- Primary production and rural industries
- Industry and mining activity
- Tourism

Challenge

- Low growth rates and dispersed settlement pattern
- Reliable water supply
- Effects of climate change and natural hazards
- Job creation and diversifying the economy

North Burnett Regional Council has a large geographic area and population, which is accommodated primarily in the towns of Gayndah, Biggenden, Mount Perry, Mundubbera, Monto and Eidsvold. The estimated residential population in 2010 was 10 805, which is likely to increase to 14 900 by 2031. The region supports a substantial rural sector, predominantly centred around grazing and citrus.

The subregion is steeped in history, from the first European settlements for grazing activities to the strong goldmining industries. This history is evident in the location and pattern of land uses, as well as visually apparent in many buildings that have been retained in the towns within the subregion.

In recent years, North Burnett has been experiencing low growth, and in some locations decline. Creating and sustaining growth will be a key challenge into the future.

With a large geographic area and a population accommodated primarily within six towns, providing and prioritising infrastructure and investment by all levels of government will continue to necessitate detailed planning and coordination of government and community services.

Towns

Gayndah, Biggenden and Mount Perry have recently experienced higher levels of growth than other centres in the subregion. This is expected to continue, with each of these rural towns continuing to grow by diversifying and building on a foundation of rural pursuits.

Gayndah will be the focus for attracting and accommodating a greater share of the growth in the North Burnett; however, all communities are provided with the opportunity to improve their self-containment. Biggenden, Eidsvold, Monto, Mount Perry and Mundubbera have additional capacity for residential uses, employment and services.

Detailed analysis and planning of towns should be undertaken to determine future growth needs and appropriate locations for residential and employment activities, as well as other infrastructure requirements. Subject to the outcome of these investigations, expansions to the urban area may be identified in local government planning schemes.

Infrastructure

Transport within the subregion is reliant on the road network. The dispersed settlement and urban form require improved connections and accessibility between towns within the subregion and outside the region to Bundaberg, Maryborough and Biloela. In particular, appropriate regional public transport provision should be maintained for towns in North Burnett to provide access to services such as health care, professional services and higher level retail in Bundaberg and outside the region.

The Mungar–Monto–Taragoola rail line is challenged by issues such as poor alignment, steep topography and significant load limits. Opportunities exist for reactivation of the rail network in the North Burnett for emerging mining, tourism and agricultural sectors. For example, in the event that the North Burnett mineral province is developed, the Mungar–Monto–Taragoola rail line may be investigated to cater for this potential demand. The retention and possible upgrade of rail infrastructure in the North Burnett would strengthen opportunities for mining in the region, and provide an alternative option to road transport of materials. Opportunities for open space activities, such as a recreational rail trail, may also be considered.

Infrastructure and associated services in the six major towns of the North Burnett are to be maintained or enhanced to a level appropriate to the purposes, population and demand of each town.

Reliable water supply is problematic for the North Burnett, and in particular for the urban settlements of Gayndah and Mundubbera. Additional capacity and potential alternative sources may be required to provide water supply and improve reliability into the future.

Economy and employment

The economy of the North Burnett is reliant on primary industry activities, with a prevalence of citrus and grazing industries forming the basis of the subregion's prosperity.

North Burnett's relatively low population base is insufficient to sustain significant retail or commercial activity, and most residents will continue to rely on Bundaberg and Maryborough for higher order shopping, specialist education and training, health and related regional level services.

Fruit seller Maxwell Huth, outside Gayndah
Courtesy of Ray Cash Photography

Opportunities for expansion of industry will be promoted to encourage establishment in the area, to diversify the employment base, and to provide alternative options for residents and the surrounding workforce. This may also assist in retaining youth in the subregion.

An existing goldmining operation currently supports the town of Mount Perry. These mining operations are expected to continue. Other mining exploration and activity are underway throughout the North Burnett. These projects will provide significant economic gains for the North Burnett, and could be supported by upgrades to the rail line.

Residential

Based on an anticipated planning population of 14 900, an additional 1780 dwellings would be required to house the North Burnett region's residential growth.

Broadhectare development can accommodate more than 2000 dwellings. In many areas and towns of the subregion, smaller scale developments will be sufficient to support growth. It is anticipated that this land supply is sufficient to accommodate growth beyond 2031. The capacity of the rural areas to accommodate the projected growth in resident population on existing lots associated with continuing and new rural land enterprises is also acknowledged.

As with much of the region, loss of productive rural land to rural residential uses has occurred in the past. Capacity for well located rural residential development has been provided in the Rural Living Area close to existing towns, and the extension of rural residential land uses into rural areas and productive agricultural land is to be avoided.

Community services

While each local centre and the district centre have health service facilities currently operating, a full range of services, including specialist medical providers, is not available. These services will continue to be provided for the subregion's residents by Bundaberg, Maryborough and Kingaroy.

A TAFE operates in Gayndah, and secondary schools up to Year 12 are located in Gayndah, Monto and Eidsvold. Biggenden and Mundubbera secondary schools offer classes up to Year 10, with Years 11 and 12 generally completed in Gayndah. Students from Mount Perry generally attend high school in Gin Gin.

A flexible and adaptive approach to the provision of community services over time, and accessibility to additional services, including improved mental health services, will be required. This includes using technology, such as videoconferencing, to access specialist services within and outside the subregion, without the need for extensive travel.

South Burnett Regional Council

Estimated population in 2010: 33 040

Indicative planning population in 2031: 42 900

Forecast additional dwellings by 2031: 4300

Major regional activity centre: Kingaroy

Local activity centres: Murgon, Nanango, Wondai

Opportunities

- Primary production and rural industries
- Proximity to Surat Basin and South East Queensland
- Power generation
- Industry
- Tourism

Challenges

- Reliable water supply
- Dispersed rural residential development
- Effects of climate change and natural hazards
- Diversifying the economy

In 2010, the estimated population of the South Burnett Regional Council area was 33 040, accommodated primarily in the urban areas of Kingaroy, Murgon, Nanango and Wondai. These towns are located along major regional thoroughfares leading into and out of South East Queensland. Access from South east Queensland into the subregion is initially via the D'Aguilar Highway, continuing north along the Bunya Highway, and ultimately connecting to the Burnett Highway.

The strategic location of these towns along these major transport routes provides exceptional access for the region into local, national and international markets. South Burnett's proximity to both South East Queensland and the emerging regional resource province of the Surat Basin provides the subregion with outstanding opportunities for growth and expansion of the existing industry sector, complemented by the projected population increases and the economic and social benefits that growth will produce.

The subregion has largely maintained settlement formations established during European habitation for early industries, including sheep grazing, dairying, timber and peanut farming. The rich soils of the subregion make the continuation and expansion of agricultural pursuits in the area a practical economic strategy, in conjunction with the intended broadening of the local economic and industrial activities for the area.

Kingaroy will continue to accommodate a greater proportion of the subregion's population and commercial development, with additional capacity provided within the Urban Footprint for the smaller centres of Murgon, Nanango and Wondai.

The subregion possesses a diversity of landscapes and ecological corridors, including several state forests, aquatic ecosystems such as Barambah Creek, and working agricultural pasturelands. The Bunya Mountains are a striking topographical feature of the landscape, offering opportunities for day-trips and tourist visitation to the region.

At its southern and western extent, the South Burnett Regional Council area meets the Surat Basin. South East Queensland adjoins the South Burnett subregion at its eastern boundary, and it encircles Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council. Future planning and land-use decisions for the South Burnett subregion will be mindful of these strategic advantages, and will maximise its accessibility and proximity to these other regions to build a stronger regional economy and community.

Kingaroy

Kingaroy is the main activity centre for the subregion and houses a significant proportion of the residents of the area. As such, it contains most of the South Burnett's education, retail, health, industrial and government services.

The town of Kingaroy was established originally around the founding of Taabinga Station in the late 19th century, which first introduced sheep grazing to the region. Following the arrival of rail transport, agricultural activities within the Kingaroy rural environs multiplied, including the conversion of sheep grazing to dairying, the establishment of Kingaroy's butter factory, and several peanut farms. The town still retains many of these early peanut silos, which feature prominently as a marker of the origins of the town. Agricultural and primary industry pursuits have since diversified, and the region now also produces a variety of legumes and small crops.

Kingaroy, and more broadly, the households of rural and urban South Burnett Regional Council area will continue to rely on centres at Gympie, Caboolture, Ipswich and Brisbane for higher order comparison shopping needs, commercial and specialist health services than are available within the town.

Aviation-related business and industry at the Kingaroy Airport will take advantage of the Wide Bay Burnett Centre of Excellence for Aviation initiative and the investment made into the Kingaroy Airport. Opportunities to expand and leverage the current aviation activities may provide avenues for additional transport and specialist employment, in addition to offering future alternative settings for difficult to locate industries, where they will be situated away from sensitive land uses. Appropriate planning and land-use decisions will be required prior to commitments for additional aviation or industrial development in these locations.

Railway crossing, peanut silos and streetscape, Kingaroy
Courtesy of Ray Cash Photography

Into the future, the South Burnett's population growth will continue to be accommodated predominantly within Kingaroy and its surroundings. The Urban Footprint includes sufficient capacity to accommodate more than 3500 dwellings through broadhectare and infill development, and will promote a contained urban development pattern.

Murgon, Nanango, Wondai and surrounds

Murgon, Nanango and Wondai provide the region with secondary services and facilities, including convenience shopping, primary and secondary education, and some banking and commercial services.

Murgon and Nanango provide local retail and commercial needs in their immediate areas. Wondai offers some local services but its proximity to Kingaroy results in most local retail needs being met there. It is not likely that the function of these local centres will change in the future as a result of the contrast between the projected population growth of these communities and that for the town of Kingaroy.

Each of these towns was established originally for an agricultural production purpose. For Murgon, grazing and dairying has been a strong community driver for many generations. When at their peak, these industries were substantial enough for the town to support butter and cheese factories and the nationally significant South Burnett Meat Works Co-operative. The town now includes alternative agricultural activities, such as grape and olive growing, and the Murgon region is recognised as containing fossil deposits. These features, when appropriately managed, will be a conservative, but important drawcard, and contribute to the sustainability and resilience of the resident community.

The town of Wondai was settled at a similar time to Kingaroy, and supported timber and dairying, including the establishment of a small butter factory. The extreme climatic conditions experienced by Wondai, coupled with market regulation changes over time, have resulted in the decline of local dairying; however, the timber industry remains a significant contributor to the local economy.

Nanango, as a larger rural town of the subregion, consists of a greater variety of industries and employment opportunities for residents. Originally founded as a settlement of prospectors of local goldmines, Nanango now supports pastoral properties, including beef cattle, bean, grain and grape growing. In addition, the Tarong Power Station and Meandu Coal Mine in the southern reaches of Nanango are significant industries for the region and for the community.

The proximity of Nanango to the emerging industrial activities of the Surat Basin will provide opportunities for residents to access alternative employment. Prospects to improve and diversify existing rural industries should be investigated; however, growth in these sectors will not compromise the existing rural village feel of the town.

Capacity is available in rural townships to accommodate a proportion of growth beyond 2031, although the rate of growth will be limited. Some towns, like Proston and Hivesville, will continue to accommodate small populations in a rural setting, due primarily to the distance between these communities and the larger towns, and restricted infrastructure capacities of these locations.

Adjacent to the entrance to the Bunya Mountains National Park, a small number of residential allotments exist.

The extent of the urban area of towns in the RLRPA will be defined in the local government planning scheme.

Infrastructure

Demand for water in the South Burnett subregion is likely to exceed supply in the short term. Infrastructure and investment may be required to provide a long-term solution to water security, in particular for Kingaroy, and to a lesser extent Nanango, Wondai and Murgon.

While the towns of the South Burnett are relatively close to one another, transit options are largely reliant on private vehicles. Accessibility between towns in the South Burnett should be maintained or improved in line with growth, with existing road networks maintained or improved over time.

The provision and continuation of innovative, locally grounded public transport solutions will remain important to meet local needs as the region expands. Planning for regionally specific transport infrastructure ahead of significant population growth cycles will improve the sustainability of these communities, pre-empt demand and avoid crisis responses to infrastructure shortfalls. Active transport will also provide a convenient alternative to the private vehicle for local travel within the relatively compact towns.

The diversification and expansion of agricultural and industrial activities, particularly in conjunction with emerging industrial and mining activities within the nearby Surat Basin, will place pressures on local infrastructure, including transport (road and rail) for the movement of goods by oversize or heavy vehicles, as well as increase demand for electricity and water supplies. These pressures will present challenges to the region; however, where planned for, will improve the integration of the South Burnett with the wider Queensland economy, and support the communities of the subregion.

Economy and employment

The South Burnett subregion currently has a relatively strong economy and low unemployment rate.

Surat Basin and Tarong Energy provide an emerging opportunity for the region to support or participate in complementary industry and commercial activity within the South Burnett. Additional infrastructure capacity and residential growth in appropriate locations will support this strategic vision for the South Burnett subregion.

Maintaining and enhancing the rural productivity of the region is both an opportunity and a challenge. Building on the existing foundations of the rural economy will provide prospects to improve the viability of rural enterprise, attracting additional tourists, strengthening the economy and providing diversity in employment.

High intensity rural uses such as feedlots and piggeries are currently located within the region. It is anticipated that these uses will continue to be supported within the rural area, acknowledging the economic and employment benefits of these uses and the flow-on effects to other uses such as abattoirs.

Agribusiness and industry provide additional key prospects for the region to expand the employment base, including improvements to the viability of rural production activities. This may be through expansion or diversification of the operations of the region's largest employers and agricultural producers.

Tourism in the South Burnett will continue to grow, predominantly drawing on the driving holiday market, and nature-based and rural-themed tourist stays. The South Burnett region is one of Queensland's largest wine regions, and home to some of the state's biggest vineyards. Natural areas, fossil deposits and lakeside recreation areas are also tourist drawcards. The region's proximity to South East Queensland also provides access to a large day trip market. Agribusiness may also take advantage of this market through agritourism.

The main mining activity in the South Burnett is the Meandu coal mine that services the Tarong Power Station. As the resources at Meandu become depleted, the locus of coalmining is anticipated to shift to the Kunioon resource, south of Kingaroy. As a result, some economic activity is likely to transfer from Nanango to Kingaroy. However, the relative proximity of these towns to each other will provide opportunities for a large proportion of the employment base to transfer at the cessation of mining activity at Meandu.

Residential

By 2031, it is anticipated that an additional 4300 dwellings will be required to house growth within the South Burnett region.

Urban and rural living broadhectare land can accommodate a significant proportion of the required dwellings. This, with infill development, is sufficient to accommodate potential growth beyond 2031.

A large area of rural residential land is currently available within the subregion. Limited additional capacity is provided in the Rural Living Area close to existing towns, resulting from existing supply of this residential type when compared to demand. Until such time as market demand for this housing product increases, the creation or extension of existing rural residential areas is to be avoided.

Diverse and well-designed dwellings to satisfy the housing requirements for South Burnett residents will be required. Retirement housing and the use of universal housing designs will assist in meeting the accommodation needs of an ageing and demographically evolving population.

Community services

With Kingaroy serving much of the South Burnett region, health and community services and improved accessibility to this centre will be required in line with the anticipated increase in demand.

Kingaroy Hospital is the main medical facility servicing the South Burnett region. Improvement of the hospital's facilities and staffing levels will allow a wider range of health services, including mental health services, to be provided. Currently, residents of the South Burnett subregion are required to travel out of the region to access these services. Smaller hospitals are located in Wondai, Murgon and Nanango, and offer limited capacity and services from specialists visiting from Kingaroy Hospital and from outside the region.

Education and training within the subregion is satisfactory for the current extent of settlement, but may need to be reviewed in light of future demand and in response to demographic changes over time. Education facilities should be complementary to the business and industry sectors relevant to the South Burnett subregion to attract and retain the region's youth.

Hervey Bay
Courtesy of MWA Viewfinder

Part C Desired regional outcomes

The desired regional outcomes (DROs) articulate the preferred direction for the development and land-use outcomes for the region, and include specific policies and programs to manage the growth of the region over the next two decades.

Embedded within each DRO are a series of principles that seek to achieve the DRO. Detailed policy statements recognise the steps that must be taken for the principles to have effect. These policies are supported by programs, to be implemented over the life of the plan, that identify actions that underpin the achievement of the policies. The programs will not detail all actions that may be required during the life of the plan to achieve the policies and may be added to over time through implementation. Notes have been included with each DRO to provide an explanation of the policy statements, identify implementation processes, or provide additional relevant information to aid in the understanding of the DRO.

The principles and policies will guide state and local government in the formulation of their own policies and planning documents, such as planning schemes. Local government planning schemes and subordinate policies must align with the intent of the DRO, principles and policies.

Programs may be delivered by state or local government, industry, non-government organisations or community groups.

The DROs are an integrated and holistic set, with no intended priority. They appear under the following headings:

1. Sustainability, climate change and natural hazards
2. Environment
3. Natural resource management
4. Rural futures
5. Strong communities
6. Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
7. Managing growth
8. Urban form
9. Strong economy
10. Infrastructure.

1. Sustainability, climate change and natural hazards

The region grows and changes in a sustainable manner—generating prosperity, maintaining and enhancing quality of life, minimising the use of resources, providing high levels of environmental protection, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and increasing resilience to natural hazards and the anticipated effects of climate change.

Significant environmental, economic and social impacts can occur in periods of intense growth in the absence of sustainable land-use practices. Minimising these impacts to provide a tenable outlook for future generations is central to ensuring the environmental, economic, social and cultural values of the region are preserved and enhanced.

Fundamental to the principles of sustainable development is the imperative to integrate environmental protection and management with economic and social goals. Environmental considerations in planning decisions are recognised to include the potential implications associated with modified weather patterns resulting from climate change.

Overwhelming scientific evidence indicates that human-induced climate change is occurring, primarily due to increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Urgent action is necessary to stabilise greenhouse gas emissions at a level where the effects of dangerous climate change can be avoided.

Our climate is naturally variable. As a consequence, we need to plan for risks of droughts, fire and floods. As has been Queensland's recent experience, climate change will potentially result in more extreme events into the future. For western parts of the region in particular, heat impacts will intensify with time, which requires a shift in policy and land-use decisions toward subtropical design principles.

International and Australian research indicates that there are significant benefits to be gained from responding to the projected impacts of climate change and reducing the emission of greenhouse gases. In simple terms, earlier reduction of emissions and adaptation to climate change will mean lower costs to economic growth and lifestyle.

Planning can play a role in both reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing communities for the anticipated effects of climate change. Designing urban centres to reduce the need to travel or the distance travelled; incorporating green space, and increasing energy efficiency in buildings are just a few examples of measures that can be taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in urban areas. Strategies to adapt to climate change impacts include influencing the location and design of urban development and protecting areas at risk, such as coastal areas from sea level rise and greater storm intensity factors.

Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the region is a key consideration woven throughout the DROs of the regional plan. A key to this is the implementation of ecologically sustainable decision-making into all decision-making frameworks.

1.1 Sustainability

Principle

1.1.1 Decision-making supports ecologically sustainable development.

Since 1994, sustainable development principles have been included in a range of Queensland's legislative instruments, such as the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* and *Water Act 2000*. The *Australian National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development* (ESD) defines the goal of ESD as:

> *Development that improves the total quality of life, both now and in the future, in a way that maintains the ecological processes on which life depends.*

Responsible decision-making is vital to the region's longevity and protection of the principles of ESD. The challenge of reducing the region's ecological footprint, while enhancing the region's economy and people's quality of life, remains one of the major issues facing the region, now and into the future.

Policies

1.1.2 Decisions contribute to the ecological sustainability of the region by considering:

- integrated and long-term outcomes
- intergenerational equity
- intra-generational equity
- conserving biological diversity and ecological integrity
- internalising environmental costs
- engaged governance.

Programs

1.1.3 Develop targets for sustainability that are aligned to the desired regional outcomes, and monitor the progression towards achieving the desired regional outcomes of the regional plan.

1.1.4 Develop and publish the State of the Region report for Wide Bay Burnett to review the progress in achieving sustainability in the region.

Notes

The intent of the regional plan is to ensure the region responds to growth and long-term shifts towards employment and economic diversification in a sustainable way. The challenge is balancing the issues associated with growth and the environment, while enhancing the region's economy and people's quality of life. The regional plan seeks to achieve this through the DROs to realise concurrent social, ecological and economic improvements.

Maintaining the primacy of ecologically sustainable principles in decision-making will ensure:

- integrated and long-term decision making—long- and short-term environmental, economic and social considerations are taken into account
- intergenerational equity—the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations
- intra-generational equity—a fair share of resources and opportunity among present generations
- conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity—the variety of all life forms, their genetic diversity and the ecosystem of which they form a part are protected, recognising the various services they provide to humans, as well as their intrinsic value
- internalised environmental costs—the true costs and life cycle costs (incurred from when inputs are produced through to waste disposal) of protecting and restoring environmental damage are reflected in the price of a product or service
- engaged governance—community involvement in decisions and actions that affect people.

Developing regional targets for sustainability, and monitoring the progression of these targets, will provide valuable information for the review of the regional plan, and measure the progress in achieving the DROs. A State of the Region report will be produced as part of the revision process.

1.2 Climate change

Principle

1.2.1 The generation of greenhouse gases is reduced though land-use planning and development design.

Implementation of policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through planning and design in the region will be achieved by reinforcing activities such as the application of transit oriented development and climate responsive design principles, urban consolidation, provision of greater public and active transport, and improved sustainable housing regulations.

Primary producers and other rural industries also have an important role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The emergence of carbon markets (nationally and internationally) will increase business investment in carbon forestry and bio-sequestration projects.

Policies

1.2.2 Greenhouse gas emissions from transport fuel consumption are reduced through a consolidated urban structure and an urban form that reduces the need to travel by private motor vehicle and increases active transport opportunities.

1.2.3 Energy efficiency and reduction of greenhouse gases associated with electricity use are continuously improved through adjustments to building siting, orientation, design, construction and use of demand management technologies.

1.2.4 Improved public access to renewable energy options and low emission technology is increased.

1.2.5 Regional policies that relate to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions are developed, locally coordinated and streamlined.

1.2.6 Opportunities for carbon forestry are facilitated in the region, where appropriate.

Programs

1.2.7 Develop agreed performance criteria for minimising greenhouse gas emissions in development, land management and other planning decisions, through a ClimateSmart model code to guide state and local government approaches to planning and development standards.

1.2.8 Identify areas suitable for carbon forestry that avoid conflict with good quality agricultural land and align with natural resource management and biodiversity objectives and targets.

Notes

Almost one-quarter of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions can be attributed to energy use in residential and commercial buildings. Queensland's climate change strategy, ClimateQ: toward a greener Queensland, contains a Marginal Abatement Cost Curve, which compares abatement opportunities within the Queensland economy, shows improved energy efficiency in buildings as among the lowest cost ways to reduce emissions, resulting in economic benefits even without a carbon price. The transport sector also offers opportunities for cost-effective reduction of emissions. Given long-term projections of higher fuel prices, vehicle efficiency measures and alternative fuels offer large greenhouse gas abatement potential, as well as delivering an overall economic benefit.

To assist landowners in Queensland to engage in emerging carbon markets, there is a need for information on carbon market opportunities, business information and technical advice on appropriate areas for carbon forestry. Regional natural resource management bodies, for example the Burnett Mary Regional Group, are well placed to provide information on suitable areas for carbon forestry that complement broader natural resource management and biodiversity outcomes. There are already a number of established companies that provide technical support, brokerage services and finance for the voluntary carbon market.

From 1 May 2010, the Queensland Government introduced a 6-star energy equivalence rating for new houses and townhouses as a minimum requirement in Queensland. This requirement was implemented via the Building Code of Australia and the Queensland Development Code Mandatory Part 4.1 – Sustainable buildings. More information can be found at www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/sustainable-housing

The contribution of these and other initiatives to the region's sustainability will be strengthened over time by developing performance criteria to assess the contribution of development to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Such performance criteria would be incorporated into ClimateSmart model codes to assist governments and the development industry to improve the efficiency of the urban form, reduce resultant transport fuel and energy use, and maximise opportunities for the use of low emission technologies.

These regional initiatives and related programs will help to achieve the target in Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland to cut Queensland households' carbon footprint by one-third, with reduced car and electricity use and greenhouse gas emissions from waste, by 2020.

1.3 Planning for climate change

Principle

1.3.1 Long-term climate change impacts are considered in planning decisions.

Irrespective of our success at reducing emissions, a certain level of climate change is 'built in' to the climate system. Ensuring that land-use, development and infrastructure decisions take account of climate change impacts—such as sea level rise—will help build community resilience and minimise the costs of adapting in the future.

Policies

1.3.2 Development, land management and other planning decisions take account of projected climate change impacts—including reduced water availability—as a result of more variable rainfall, increased temperatures and sea level rise.

Notes

Climate change projections for the Wide Bay Burnett region include a decline in rainfall, with increasing temperatures and evaporation, in conjunction with more extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, coastal flooding and cyclonic weather. Climate change will affect the region's economy, development and urban planning—particularly due to its rapidly growing population. Taking these projections into account in land-use and development decisions now will minimise the impacts and costs for the region in the future.

More extreme weather events projected under climate change will impact on the intensity and frequency of natural hazards. The Queensland Government has identified climate change factors to be considered in determining areas at risk from flood and coastal hazards under a changing climate. The climate change factors are:

- a recommended five per cent increase in rainfall intensity for every additional degree of global warming for incorporation into flood studies (refer to the *Inland Flooding Study* at www.climatechange.qld.gov.au)
- a sea level rise of 0.8 metres by 2100 and 10 per cent increase in maximum cyclone intensity by 2100 (required by the *Queensland Coastal Plan)*.

Further information on these climate change factors and how they can be applied in land-use planning is contained in section 1.3 Mitigating hazards.

Adaptation to gradual climate change impacts and more intense extreme weather events can be achieved through a range of strategies, such as improved building design and construction standards for development and infrastructure, and developing and implementing management plans (e.g. the *Queensland Heatwave Response Plan*).

Biological hazards such as pests and diseases will also be affected by climate change, and will be principally managed through federal, state and local government biosecurity programs. For example, the incidence and distribution of mosquito populations and mosquito-borne diseases (e.g. dengue fever and Ross River virus) are likely to change as a result of changes in temperature and rainfall.

Climate change strategies

The Queensland Government's climate change strategies—ClimateQ: toward a greener Queensland, ClimateSmart 2050 and ClimateSmart Adaptation 2007–12—commit Queensland to making an equitable contribution towards the national target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 60 per cent below 2000 levels by 2050.

ClimateQ also contains summaries of climate change projections and impacts for Queensland's regional planning areas, including the Wide Bay Burnett.

For more information visit www.climatechange.qld.gov.au/whatsbeingdone/climatechangestrategy.

Climate change information provided by the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence, CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology will continue to inform responses that will help minimise the vulnerability of essential infrastructure, natural environments, people and development to climate change impacts.

1.4 Mitigating hazards

Principle

1.4.1 The resilience of communities, development, essential infrastructure, natural environments and economic sectors to recognised hazards, including the anticipated effects of climate change is increased.

The preferred approach to dealing with hazards, either natural or human-induced, is to avoid new or expanded development in hazard-prone areas. Implementation of natural hazard policies will be achieved principally by adopting a risk management approach that avoids development and construction of new critical infrastructure in areas with high exposure to natural hazards, and minimises the vulnerability of communities, development, essential infrastructure, natural environment and economic sectors.

The region's landscape and settlement pattern are characterised by natural features, including the natural coastline, conservation areas, and many river systems that cross the Wide Bay Burnett. These natural features have brought significant benefits, such as high quality agricultural lands, good access to water, and scenic values which continue to attract people to the region. Along with these benefits comes risk—the region is vulnerable to natural hazards such as bushfire, storm surge and flooding. Understanding and responding to natural hazard risk is pivotal to increasing resilience, while accommodating further growth and preparing for the impacts of climate change.

Responding to the impacts of flooding has shaped many towns in the region, such as Maryborough, Gympie, Nanango and Bundaberg. Flooding in the major centres of Gympie and Bundaberg in late 2010 and early 2011 provided further evidence of how such events can significantly impact on communities in the Wide Bay Burnett region. It is important that this continues to be a major factor in determining where and how future development occurs in these communities, and that the outcomes and recommendations from the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry and recovery plans prepared by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority are taken into account.

In addition, the outcomes of the *Inland Flooding Study*, a joint project between the Queensland Government and the Local Government Association of Queensland, recommend that a climate change factor of five per cent increase in rainfall intensity for every degree of global warming be factored into local government flood studies. The study also recommends temperature increases and planning horizons to support the climate change factor, specifically 2°C by 2050, 3°C by 2070 and 4°C by 2100. Ongoing analysis and risk identification such as this will assist in the management and planning of urban environments into the future.

Growth pressure in coastal areas and the projected impacts of climate change have seen coastal hazards such as storm surge become increasingly relevant to coastal communities in the region. Further understanding the implications of, and planning to mitigate and adapt to, natural hazard risks will build community resilience and allow for the long-term sustainability of coastal communities.

Policies

1.4.2 Areas of high exposure to natural hazards, including the effects of climate change on those hazards, are avoided.

1.4.3 Incompatible development where its location or form may unreasonably increase natural hazard risk elsewhere is avoided.

1.4.4 Vulnerability to natural hazards and extreme weather events is minimised through adaptive planning and building responses.

1.4.5 Development and essential infrastructure is located, designed and constructed to be resilient to natural hazards, including the effects of climate change on those hazards.

1.4.6 Risk to development is reduced through effective management of coastal and riparian environments to minimise alterations to natural systems, such as natural flow regimes and flood plain connectivity.

1.4.7 Effects of hazardous and high impact industries are mitigated.

Programs

1.4.8 Establish a natural hazard risk management framework, incorporating identification, monitoring, review and governance to inform land-use planning, development assessment and updated disaster management plans.

1.4.9 Undertake studies to establish reliable flood hazard mapping and defined flood levels within all drainage sub-basins in the region in order to identify flood-prone areas.

1.4.10 Increase the resilience of at-risk communities by raising their awareness and preparedness for more frequent extreme weather events, and ensure that disaster response plans, services and community recovery plans take into account the likely increased severity of extreme weather events.

1.4.11 Interpret and implement statutory and non-statutory planning guidance to reduce vulnerability and manage risks from natural hazards.

Notes

Natural hazards pose a significant risk to communities and infrastructure. Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of extreme weather events that cause these natural hazards.

Natural hazards include:

- flooding
- storm tide inundation and sea level rise
- coastal erosion
- bushfires
- landslides.

Extreme weather events include:

- heatwaves and higher temperatures
- extreme rainfall
- droughts
- tropical cyclones and thunderstorms.

Planning processes can reduce the risks from natural hazards, including the effects of climate change, by establishing adaptation strategies that reduce vulnerability through:

- improving the design of developments and infrastructure to minimise impacts from natural hazards
- improving community preparedness to respond to natural hazards and extreme events
- enhancing the resilience of natural systems
- maximising opportunities for rural industries in the face of increasing climate variability
- developing local disaster management plans.

The requirement to reflect State Planning Policy 1/03: Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Flooding, Bushfire and Landslide (SPP 1/03) and the Queensland Coastal Plan in planning schemes will reduce exposure to natural hazards. The aim of these statutory planning instruments is to minimise unacceptable risks in natural hazard management areas, storm tide inundation areas and coastal erosion and permanent inundation areas, which can all be considered as areas of high exposure to natural hazards.

The regional plan relies on the achievement of the policies and guidance provided within SPP1/03 to achieve policy outcomes.

The region's existing settlement pattern is heavily influenced by proximity to major water courses. As a result, many communities will continue to be subject to significant flooding risk. Any further development and infrastructure planning will need to respond appropriately to natural hazard risk.

Development outside established urban areas should be located outside of natural hazard management areas ((NHMA) (flood)).

Development within NHMAs (flood) will provide an acceptable response to flood risk. The Queensland Government, under SPP1/03, generally identifies lands with a one per cent or more annual exceedence probability (AEP) as an NHMA (flood). This can vary depending on circumstances, and should be determined as part of the planning scheme review process. SPP 1/03 provides further direction and guidance on flood risk management and response.

Planning for the potential impacts of flooding, bushfires and landslides is informed by SPP 1/03, which outlines a framework for local governments to manage the risk associated with land-use in natural hazard areas. Specifically, the SPP 1/03 framework requires that local governments identify areas that are hazard-prone and confirms the severity of the hazard. The management of flood hazard areas is also dependent on local governments adopting a flood event as a baseline, in accordance with SPP 1/03, to manage risk associated with development in a particular locality.

Flood plain assessment

A flood plain assessment mapping suite is available which sets a preliminary baseline for the identification of those areas potentially susceptible to flood risk within the region—an overview of this mapping is provided in Map 3. At the time of writing, this mapping was available on the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's website (www.qldreconstruction.org.au).

While this mapping provides a high level extent of potentially floodable land within the region, more detailed local flood studies are required to adopt a flood event as a baseline that can satisfy the requirements of SPP 1/03. These studies are normally undertaken as part of the process of preparing a planning scheme, and so could be undertaken in the course of preparing planning schemes compliant with Sustainable Planning Act 2009. However, it will be important to ensure the studies are undertaken at a sub-basin level, rather than confined to a local government area, level ensuring that a holistic approach can be maintained.

Planning should ensure development does not occur in a manner that is likely to result in an increase in the extent or severity of flooding. This strategy applies both within and outside NHMAs. Where feasible, natural flow and inundation patterns should be restored, including connectivity between rivers and flood plains and beneficial flooding of agricultural areas. This will also minimise the concentration of flows and flooding downstream. Using the flood plain assessment mapping suite as a guide, the NHMA should be determined from a defined flood event (recommended as the 1 in 100 year flood event), taking into account the anticipated effects of climate change on rainfall patterns.

Flood plain management

Most of the region's towns and cities are located on flood plains, both inland and coastal. This is an historical fact, principally for reasons associated with water supply, transportation, waste disposal, advantageous points for river crossings, access to productive soils or recreation purposes. Hence, these towns are subject to flooding.

Flood plain management in Australia has evolved through four successive phases:

1. structural works
2. planning
3. flood emergency management
4. all-embracing management.

During the structural phase, predominantly in the 1970s, structural works, typically levees, were used to protect existing properties at risk. Little consideration was given to the use of levees and their potential impact on the environment, risk management planning or even land-use planning. However, in 1974, a series of severe floods in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland caused widespread and significant damage. The aftermath was that better correlation and regulation of levees was required.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the importance of flood emergency management was brought into focus, predominantly by the Bogan River flood in April 1990, which required the forced evacuation of the town of Nyngan.

Finally, from the early 1990s, the importance of an all-embracing approach to flood plain management has been apparent. An integrated approach to flood plain management is crucial in mitigating the risks associated with flooding in the Wide Bay Burnett region.

Map 3: Floodplains and sub-basins

Floodwaters can also be altered by development outside the NHMAs, such as increased run-off from impervious areas as part of urban development, and interference with overland flows as part of agricultural activities. In urban areas, these flow alterations should be managed by applying water sensitive urban design principles. All development should be assessed to ensure flow alterations are acceptable in relation to flood risk and environmental flows.

It is recognised that some existing urban settlements are subject to significant flooding risk. While development in these areas can sometimes not be avoided, measures should be in place to ensure impacts are mitigated where practicable.

In light of climate change, it can be expected that the bar will be raised with respect to managing risk, as emerging trends indicate a need for re-assessment of hazard-prone areas under current and future climate projections. The Queensland Government has provided local governments with advice on how to incorporate the potential impacts of climate change into planning instruments through the Inland Flooding Study and Queensland Coastal Plan. These documents deal with climate change impacts on riverine flooding and coastal processes.

Increasing Queensland's resilience to inland flooding in a changing climate

A joint Queensland Government and Local Government Association of Queensland Inland Flooding Study was completed in November 2010. The study was undertaken to recommend options to increase community resilience to extreme flood events and provides:

1. a recommended climate change factor of five per cent increase in rainfall intensity for every additional degree of global warming for use by local councils in flood studies—which is supported by recommended temperature increases and planning horizons, specifically 2°C by 2050, 3°C by 2070 and 4°C by 2100
2. specific policy options for improved flood risk management in the Gayndah case study area
3. recommendations for inclusion in the review of the SPP 1/03.

As a result, this Inland Flooding Study combines the best available science and planning options to provide clear guidance and practical tools to enhance flood risk management by local governments.

For more information visit www.climatechange.qld.gov.au/whatsbeingdone/queensland/inlandfloodingstudy.html.

The Queensland Coastal Plan identifies minimum assessment factors for determining erosion-prone areas, storm tide inundation areas, and areas of permanent inundation due to sea level rise that consider the anticipated effects of climate change, based on the projections of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report (2007). This includes:

- for development not subject to a development commitment—
  - a planning period of 100 years
  - a projected sea level rise of 0.8 metres by 2100 due to climate change
  - an adoption of the 100 year average recurrence interval extreme storm event or water level
  - an increase in cyclone intensity by 10 per cent
- for development subject to a development commitment—
  - a planning period equivalent to the expected asset life
  - a projected sea level rise as identified, based on the expected asset life
  - an adoption of the 100 year average recurrence interval extreme storm event or water level
  - an increase in cyclone intensity by 10 per cent.

The Queensland Coastal Plan provides coastal hazard area maps based on these minimum assessment factors and high resolution digital elevation models. The maps identify:

- a default storm tide inundation area
- erosion-prone areas
- permanent inundation areas due to sea level rise.

The maps are available at www.derm.qld.gov.au/coastalplan/index.html.

Digital elevation modelling

To better understand the impacts of sea level rise, storm tide, coastal erosion and flooding in Queensland, the three tiers of government have invested in a high resolution digital elevation model (DEM). This DEM will help local government and other stakeholders to map areas likely to be at increased risk from coastal hazards and flooding. DEM data for the Wide Bay Burnett region is available from the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM).

National Strategy for Disaster Resilience

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to adopt a whole-of-nation resilience-based approach to disaster management, which recognises that a national, coordinated and cooperative effort is needed to enhance Australia's capacity to withstand and recover from emergencies and disasters.

This has resulted in the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*, which identifies that application of a resilience-based approach is not solely the domain of emergency management agencies; rather, it is a shared responsibility between governments, communities, businesses and individuals. The purpose of the strategy is to provide high level guidance on disaster management to federal, state, territory and local governments, businesses and community leaders, and the not-for-profit sector. The strategy is the first step in a long-term, evolving process to deliver sustained behavioural change and enduring partnerships.

For a copy of the strategy visit www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2011-02-13/docs/national_strategy_disaster_resilience.rtf.

Hazardous and high impact industries

Mitigating impacts from hazardous and high impact industries can be achieved by:

- providing appropriate buffers to protect both the use and adjacent land uses of environmental features
- providing appropriate infrastructure commensurate to the risk (e.g. appropriate water supply, locating out of NHMAs)
- locating hazardous and high impact industries away from areas likely to be sensitive to the potential impacts of the use.

2. Environment

A healthy and resilient natural environment supports the region's rich biodiversity and ecosystem services which contribute to the economic development and social and cultural identity of the region.

The natural environment encompasses all living creatures and plants, as well as naturally occurring processes that cleanse and produce fresh water and clean air. Ecosystem biodiversity includes flora and fauna, regional landscapes and natural resources (water and air, as well as mineral and energy deposits).

The region encompasses a broad range of natural environments, owing to its distinctive geographic location and extensive landmass. Each of the region's local government areas contribute toward the landscapes that make up the Wide Bay Burnett's delicate coastal environs, hinterland and inland environments. Providing valuable services and opportunities to the region and assets to be embraced and protected, these natural environments also bring with them a range challenges for the region to address over the next two decades.

Some of the region's distinct natural environmental features include:

- Woongarra Marine Park, containing Mon Repos turtle rookery and other turtle nesting sites
- spectacular fringing coral reefs
- major annual transitory routes for humpback whales
- significant feeding and roosting locations for migratory birds
- relatively undisturbed stream systems of Baffle Creek, Elliot River and Tin Can Bay Inlet, which support near-natural estuaries and constitute some of the few remaining watercourses in Queensland without major impoundments
- significant dugong populations and seagrass beds
- the majority of the world's complex rainforests growing on sand
- the largest unconsolidated coastal sand mass in the world
- the Bunya Mountains National Park, the second oldest national park in Queensland, containing deep moist gullies, and mountains covered with ancient conifer rainforest that co-exists with a number of other unique natural features, 'balds' (open grasslands), vine and sclerophyll forest
- Cania Gorge, which preserves a valuable remnant of the Brigalow Belt natural region, provides a spectacular landscape of prominent sandstone cliffs, caves, eucalypt and cypress pine woodland, dry rainforest and grasslands
- rich soils and productive agriculture lands
- landscape values of the hinterland and rural areas.

Threats to these regionally distinctive and special environmental features include the implications of development, climate change and resource demands on the coastal zones; land-use development and management decisions. Such impacts may cause adverse impacts on water quality in waterways, estuarine systems and the Great Barrier Reef Lagoon; fragmentation of important habitats and effects from the urban fringe; and the spread of invasive pest weed and animal species.

Balancing growth with appropriate management of these environments and the ecosystem services they provide (such as provision of food, water and energy, climate regulation, cleansing of water and air systems, recreation opportunities and social engagement, as well as scientific contributions) is fundamental to the prosperity of the region. As the population grows, the demands on these natural resources and environments increase.

While many aspects of the natural environment are protected in conservation areas and national parks, a significant proportion of the region's environment contributes silently to the ongoing success and vibrancy of its communities.

Population growth and climate change pose immediate and significant threats to the region's natural assets, highlighting the imperative for sustainable management and use. The regional plan provides the framework to address the potential issues resulting from growth and associated development on the region's environmental and natural resource areas and values.

2.1 Biodiversity

Principle

2.1.1 The region's natural assets, biodiversity values and ecological services are protected, managed and enhanced to improve their resilience to the anticipated effects of climate change and other threats.

The region has rich biodiversity values that are to be managed to preserve the integrity of the natural environment into the future. Population growth and accompanying development within the region has delivered economic and social benefits; however, this has also increased pressure on the region's natural environment.

Loss or reduction in the extent of environmentally significant habitat poses a serious threat to the biodiversity of the region. Improper management of the natural environment, coupled with the anticipated effects of climate change and

other factors such as population growth, will put the region's biodiversity at risk. It is essential that biodiversity networks and corridors at both regional and local scales are identified and managed to reduce the impact on wildlife habitats. These networks include:

- existing waterway corridors and biodiversity corridors, including mosaic, contiguous or stepping stone corridors
- existing broadscale areas with intact biodiversity values.

Policies

2.1.2 Development in non-urban areas maintains the integrity of significant biodiversity areas.

2.1.3 In urban areas, impacts from development on areas with high biodiversity values, where they cannot be avoided, are offset in accordance with established policies, codes and frameworks.

2.1.4 The values of regional biodiversity networks are protected for the long term through improved ecological connectivity, enhanced habitat extent and condition, and rehabilitation of degraded areas.

Programs

2.1.5 Integrate the identification, rehabilitation and management of local and regional biodiversity networks through coordination mechanisms, in partnership with private and public landholders.

2.1.6 Undertake pest and disease control programs to protect biodiversity values.

2.1.7 Prevent and monitor exposure to exotic and introduced pests, weeds and diseases in the region, through the combined efforts of government, industry and landholders.

Notes

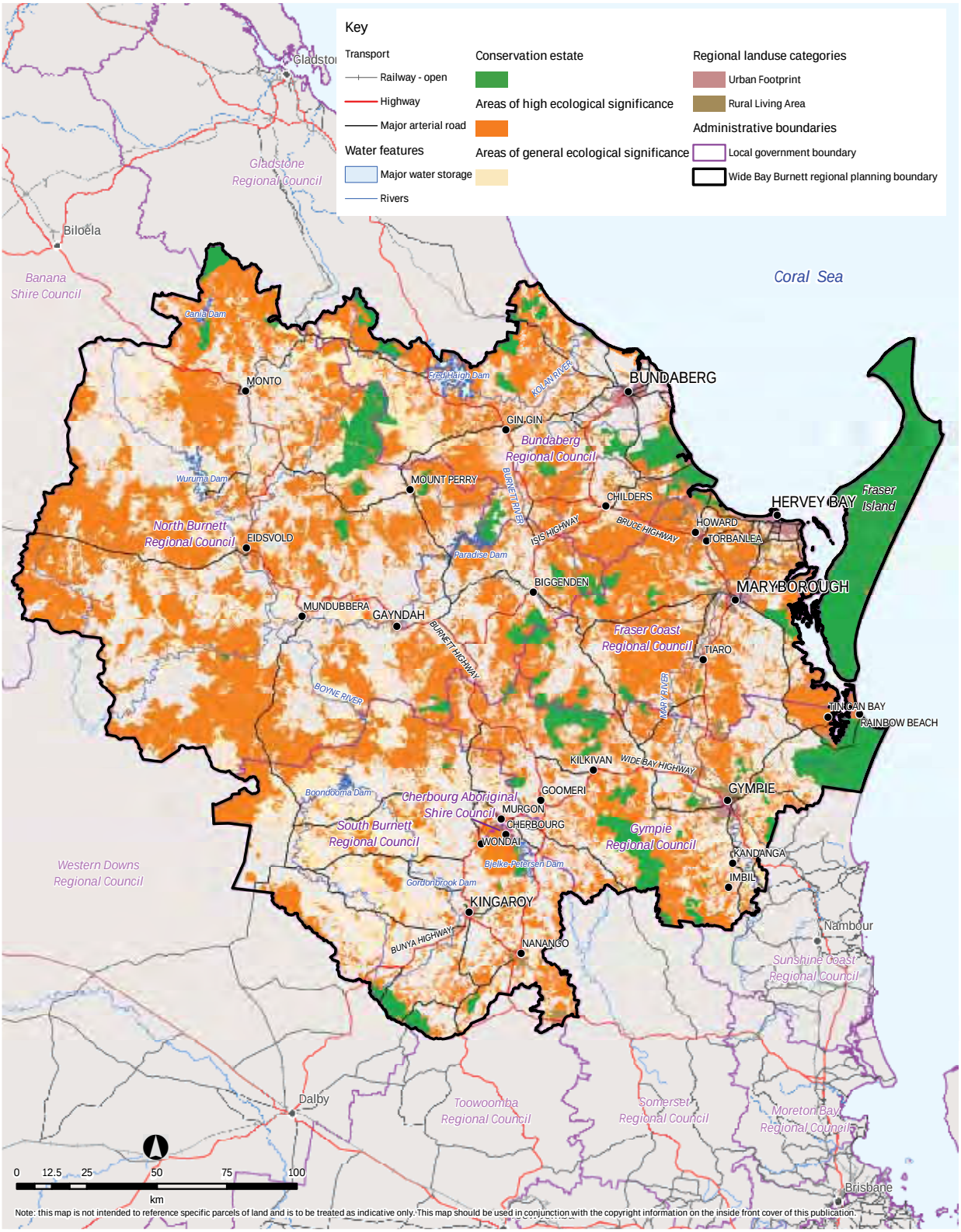
Areas of ecological significance across the region are indicatively shown on Map 4. Areas with biodiversity values may also be identified in local government planning schemes and the natural resource management plan. These documents should be used to inform and guide the application of regional biodiversity policies. Biodiversity areas may also include terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems.

In order to achieve the desired outcomes for biodiversity protection, the overall condition, extent, diversity and connectivity of areas with biodiversity values need to be considered during land-use planning, including the potential on-site and off-site impacts from development. The management of these areas should include protection, enhancement and rehabilitation considerations.

Some habitat areas have been extensively fragmented by past development. The challenge is to reconnect wildlife habitats by identifying and protecting biodiversity networks and corridors at both regional and local levels to repair or improve the habitat values of these fragmented landscapes. The identification of biodiversity networks should consider:

- existing waterway corridors and biodiversity corridors, including mosaic, contiguous or stepping stone corridors
- existing areas with biodiversity values
- future biodiversity corridor and habitat areas that could be identified, rehabilitated and protected to restore connectivity.

Map 4: Areas of ecological significance



Queensland's biodiversity strategy

Science tells us that the state's biodiversity is in decline.

As the population continues to grow, so too do the associated pressures on our unique natural environment. The major threats to biodiversity in Queensland result in a reduction in the extent of habitat, as well as impacting on habitat health and natural resilience.

Climate change will exacerbate the severity of current threats and create new pressures on many ecosystems.

Building Nature's Resilience: A Biodiversity Strategy for Queensland puts the conservation of biodiversity at the centre of the state's conservation efforts, and provides for an integrated and comprehensive conservation strategy.

Queensland's strategic approach to biodiversity conservation covers marine, freshwater and terrestrial environments, and promotes a whole-of-landscape approach to achieve resilient ecosystems.

As a key outcome from Shaping Tomorrow's Queensland: A response to the Queensland Growth Management Summit, Queensland's biodiversity strategy provides focus and priority for biodiversity conservation for the whole of Queensland.

Our protected areas form conservation cornerstones, and when well connected in healthy landscapes, provide resilience for species and their habitats to withstand and recover from change.

As a custodian of some of the world's most important and irreplaceable natural treasures, Queenslanders have the responsibility to manage these now and in trust for future generations.

For more information visit www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildlife-ecosystems/biodiversity/biodiversity-strategy.html.

Strategic expansion, connection and rehabilitation of biodiversity networks will require an understanding of anticipated ecosystem vulnerability to climate change-induced increases in natural hazards (e.g. flooding, sea level rise, bushfire, higher temperatures and heat waves).

Species response and survival will depend on their capacity to adjust or adapt to the anticipated effects of climate change. Species are likely to shift ranges and habitat in response to increased temperature, altered rainfall patterns and sea level rise. Many species are already under severe pressure from development, and many ecosystems are degraded from previous urban and rural land uses and development. Reducing threats and pressure from these land uses will be critical to improving the health and function of ecosystems to increase adaptive capacity. Significant habitats, such as the Mon Repos turtle rookery, coexist in close proximity to urban development, providing a refuge for endangered turtles.

Environmental offsets may be used to counterbalance negative environmental impacts that might result from an activity or development. The *Queensland Government Environmental Offsets Policy* establishes a framework for using environmental offsets in Queensland. The policy guides the appropriate use of environmental offsets across terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, based on the ESD principles.

The prevention of pests is an integral part of managing biodiversity in the region. Regional pest and disease management offers an opportunity for coordination of biosecurity risks across a variety of land tenures that are linked to regional natural resource management.

The *Wide Bay Burnett Natural Resource Management Plan* is a non-statutory framework currently being prepared for the region that provides a guide for natural resource management. It will articulate measurable targets for the condition and extent of the environment and natural resources that are aligned to the desired regional outcomes.

Mapping areas of ecological significance

DERM prepared mapping that represents the state's biodiversity interests for statutory planning purposes. While much of the region is already protected as national parks and reserves, many areas of ecological significance are not afforded statutory protection. These areas are most at risk from the impacts associated with urban development. By either directing future development outside areas of ecological significance, minimising the impact development has on these areas, or implementing environmental offsets as per the policies of the *Queensland Government Environmental Offsets Policy*, there is the opportunity to maintain and enhance the region's present biodiversity. Of particular importance is the need to identify and enhance critical habitats and strategic wildlife corridors to assist species' resilience and migratory needs in response to longer term threats such as climate change.

Areas indicatively shown as having high ecological significance on Map 4 represent areas the state recognises to be of international, national, state or regional importance.

2.2 Coastal environment

Principle

2.2.1 Coastal resources are managed while protecting human life and property from the hazards of natural fluctuations in coastal processes.

Coastal resources and values include the foreshore, coastal wetlands, estuaries, marine waters, fringing reefs, dunes and coastal processes. The management of delicate and significant coastal resources and values includes actions such as maintenance, protection, rehabilitation and enhancement.

The region's coastal areas include the World Heritage area of Fraser Island, the Ramsar-listed Great Sandy Strait wetland, and numerous declared fish habitat areas. There are many human influences, and an escalating demand for residential growth on the coast, that continue to place immense pressure on these values and processes, increasing potential degradation of coastal areas.

Naturally occurring coastal processes may be impacted on by the anticipated effects of climate change. These impacts may include sea level rise, storm tide inundation and cyclonic activity, which could increase risks to coastal development, and potentially extend the effects further inland.

Allowing coastal processes to occur naturally, such as the build-up and erosion of beach sands, and the associated migration of plant and animal species within the coastal zone, protects coastal values. The effects of climate change on these changes are unknown, but it is anticipated that significant changes to coastal landforms may result. Land uses within the coastal zone should allow for, or be protected from, this natural fluctuation to assist the protection of human life, infrastructure and coastal values.

Policies

2.2.2 Impacts on coastal values and processes are avoided or minimised through the appropriate location, design and management of coastal development.

2.2.3 Development does not prevent or constrain safe public access to the foreshore and coastal waters and it does not compromise maritime security.

2.2.4 Areas that provide for the landward retreat of coastal habitats and species at risk from projected sea level rise are identified and protected.

2.2.5 Erosion-prone areas and storm tide inundation areas are identified, and their associated risks to life and property are managed.

Programs

2.2.6 Identify locations for marine development that avoid or minimise adverse impacts on coastal resources and processes.

2.2.7 Develop and implement regional targets for coastal, estuarine and marine ecosystems and processes.

Hervey Bay *Courtesy of MWA Viewfinder*

Notes

The coastline displays a dynamic and diverse range of values and processes, supporting high levels of biodiversity. Increases in population and a desire to live on the coast have placed immense pressures on these values and processes, with rising potential for degradation of significant areas if appropriate measures are not put in place.

Climate change is anticipated to have a significant impact on the coastal zone. Changes in climatic events, coastal processes and parameters—such as sea level rise, storm surge inundation and increased intensity and frequency of cyclonic activity—may increase the risk to development from coastal hazards, and potentially extend the effects of these hazards further inland, and result in irreparable damage to these fragile ecosystems.

The *Queensland Coastal Plan*

The Queensland Coastal Plan proposes to protect biodiversity by identifying significant coastal areas requiring conservation; protecting such areas from the impacts of development; and providing direction for coastal landholders and managers to ensure land-use and management activities are sustainable and rehabilitation works are effective.

The Queensland Coastal Plan identifies a sea level rise figure of 0.8 metres by 2100 to guide future decision-making about development in areas potentially vulnerable to coastal hazard impacts. This is based on the projections of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report (2007).

The State Planning Policy for Coastal Protection will ensure the objectives of the *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995* are considered in the development assessment and land-use planning process within the coastal zone under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*. The identification of erosion-prone areas and storm tide inundation areas will assist in the planning and management of areas at risk.

For more information visit www.derm.qld.gov.au/coastalplan.

Man and the Biosphere program

Man and the Biosphere was launched in 1970 and initiated work in 14 project areas, covering different ecosystem types from mountains to the sea, from rural to urban, as well as more social aspects such as perceptions of the environment.

The biosphere reserve concept was developed initially in 1974, and was substantially revised in 1995 with the adoption by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation General Conference Seville Strategy and the statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).

Today, with more than 500 sites in over 105 countries, the WNBR provides context-specific opportunities to combine scientific knowledge and governance models to:

- reduce biodiversity loss
- improve livelihoods
- enhance social, economic and cultural conditions for environmental sustainability.

Biosphere reserves can also serve as learning and demonstration sites in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

Reef Water Quality Protection Plan

The Reef Water Quality Protection Plan is a commitment to protecting the immense and diverse values of Queensland's coastal and marine environment. It seeks to improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef Lagoon.

The reef plan has two primary goals:

1. an immediate goal—to halt and reverse the decline in water quality entering the reef by 2013
2. a long-term goal—to ensure that by 2020, the quality of water entering the reef from adjacent catchments has no detrimental impact on the health and resilience of the Great Barrier Reef.

The reef plan focuses on broadscale land-use in catchments adjacent to the reef. It builds on existing government policies, and government, industry and community initiatives that assist in halting and reversing the decline in the quality of water entering the reef lagoon.

For more information visit www.reefplan.qld.gov.au/about/rwqpp.shtm.

2.3 Air quality and noise

Principle

2.3.1 The environment is protected to maintain the health and wellbeing of the community and the natural environment through effective management of air and noise.

Protection of communities and individuals from the impacts of air, noise and odour emissions caused by activities such as agricultural spray drift, burning, extractive industries, and industrial and manufacturing sectors will improve their health, wellbeing, amenity and safety.

Policies

2.3.2 Development minimises air, odour and noise emissions and potential impacts of any minor residual emissions on sensitive land uses through its location, design, construction or operation.

2.3.3 Adequate separation distances, amelioration measures or appropriate design ensure more intensive land uses (such as those involving activities that may potentially generate air, odour and noise emissions) have limited impact on sensitive receivers.

2.3.4 Existing regionally significant, noisy outdoor recreational activities are protected from encroachment by sensitive land uses.

Programs

2.3.5 Identify and protect lands suitable for accommodating significant air quality-impacting and noise-emitting activities from incompatible development.

2.3.6 Plan and manage the interface between land zoned for industry and land used for sensitive land-use to support and protect industrial land uses in appropriate locations.

Notes

Eliminating or reducing the impacts from significant air and noise emissions is not always possible. Separating sensitive land uses such as residential development, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, childcare facilities and shopping centres from these hazards can reduce the impacts on health, amenity, quality of life and the natural environment. Appropriately designed and constructed industrial uses will not automatically have a negative influence on residential and commercial areas.

Air and noise pollution and separation distances are currently managed through state regulation and policy including:

- *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- *Environmental Protection Regulation 2008*
- *Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 2008*
- *Environmental Protection (Noise) Policy 2008*
- State Planning Policy 1/92: Development and the Conservation of Agricultural Land
- Planning Guidelines – Separating Agricultural and Residential Land Uses
- State Planning Policy 2/07: Protection of Extractive Resources
- State Planning Policy 5/10: Air, Noise and Hazardous Materials
- Environmental Code of Practice for Queensland Piggeries
- Separation Guidelines for Queensland Piggeries
- Reference manual for the establishment and operation of beef cattle feedlots in Queensland.

2.4 Regional landscapes

Principle

2.4.1 Regional landscape values and areas are managed to maintain or enhance their ability to contribute to the region's liveability, lifestyle, health and economy.

The regional landscape contributes significantly to the region's economy and liveability. The community recognises this by taking part in the use and management of these areas, both passively and actively. Some of these regional landscape values include:

- areas of significant biodiversity value
- rural production and primary industry
- scenic amenity
- landscape heritage
- outdoor recreation.

Any part of a landscape may have one or more of these identified values associated with it. These values exist on different tenures of land, with no single jurisdiction responsible for their protection or management. For example, highly valued scenic landscapes occur both on privately and publicly owned land within the region. Areas of significant biodiversity value, and the biodiversity networks that join these areas, can also be found on privately owned land. It is therefore a responsibility to be shared across all levels of government, non-government organisations, community and industry groups to collectively and cooperatively protect and manage these areas.

Policies

2.4.2 Development complements, protects and enhances landscape values and areas of significance, limiting impacts on these regional assets.

2.4.3 Regional landscape areas are appropriately managed to optimise economic, social, recreational and ecosystem services to the region.

2.4.4 Inter-urban breaks are protected from development that diminishes their function.

Programs

2.4.5 Develop a consistent methodology for identifying regional landscape values across the region.

2.4.6 Identify and map regional landscape areas to inform land-use planning and decision-making.

2.4.7 Identify current and potential landscape corridors, including regional and local biodiversity corridors and networks, to connect priority regional landscape areas.

2.4.8 Develop a consistent approach to the assessment, approval and management of rural, nature-based and ecotourism facilities that ensures such facilities do not degrade the values of the regional landscape area.

Notes

It is important that landscapes with recognised natural, cultural, social and economic value within the region are identified, protected and managed to meet current and future community and environmental needs.

Residents and visitors to the region value the extensive and diverse range of environmentally, culturally, socially and economically significant landscapes that underpin the region's many values. These values and landscapes can be some of the main reasons that people move to, and stay in, the region.

The regional landscape is made up of multiple components, each with its own specific value and significance to the environment and residents of the region. These components include:

- core landscape areas—areas of multiple landscape value and ecosystem services such as Fraser Island, Great Sandy Strait and the Bunya Mountains
- inter-urban breaks—areas separating urban development, which can have a variety of uses such as productive agricultural land, environmental reserves, and sport and recreational activities
- regional offset areas—strategically identified areas to manage the offset of negative impacts from development
- regional community green space network—areas of land publicly owned that facilitate community health and wellbeing through physical activity, social interaction, liveability and direct interaction with the environment
- rural towns—scenic amenity of rural towns in rural and natural environs
- coastal waters and foreshores—which provide a significant service and maintain environmental, community and economic integrity within the region
- biodiversity networks—wildlife habitats and associated connecting corridors that are managed to maintain biodiversity values at a regional scale
- natural economic resource areas—sections of the landscape that support agricultural production, extractive industry, forestry, fisheries and rural industries.

To remain a competitive, functional and attractive place, the natural environment qualities of the regional landscape must be maintained to support values such as biodiveristy, rural production, scenic amenity, landscape heritage and outdoor recreation.

Any part of a landscape may have one or more of these regional landscape values associated with it. These values exist on different tenures of land, with no single jurisdiction responsible for their protection or management. Scenic landscapes, as an example, occur both on privately and publicly owned land.

It is also important to recognise that landscape values are not limited only to natural environmental features. Rural towns and rural activities, such as cropping and grazing, contribute to the character of the region, and illustrate their importance, not only to the economy, but also to the regional landscape. The patchwork of greens and rich soil in the undulating landscape of the South Burnett, or the cane fields around Bundaberg, provide a backdrop to the picturesque region, as much as its natural environs.

Open space and rural lands contribute to a sense of place and to the scenic amenity of the region, and play a role in creating inter-urban breaks. The benefits of inter-urban breaks can be enhanced by compatible land uses and activities. Local government may undertake an investigation into the benefits and contribution of inter-urban breaks which will provide clarity and certainty by ensuring:

- the long-term viability of maintaining inter-urban breaks through effective management and use by supporting appropriate rural industries, including agricultural production, tourism and recreational opportunities
- the clear identification of the important landscape value, planning and management functions of inter-urban breaks.

2.5 Green space network

Principle

2.5.1 An integrated green space network caters for a range of community and environmental needs.

Attractive, safe and accessible green space and land for public recreation contribute positive social, economic and environmental benefits, improving public health, wellbeing and quality of life. Green space is a vital part of delivering a sustainable and prosperous state.

The majority of the region's green space network is owned and managed by state or local government, including national parks, state forests, marine parks, beaches, major waterways, water storage areas and major urban parks. This network preserves and protects regionally significant areas for public access, and provides diverse values and uses, including nature conservation, outdoor recreational activities, forestry production, water catchment management, education and scientific research.

To maximise the multiple benefits of green spaces, it is necessary to integrate, manage and plan green space networks to provide for a range of community and environmental needs, now and into the future.

Policies

2.5.2 Existing green space networks are expanded to meet current and future environmental and community needs.

2.5.3 State, regional and local biodiversity networks are protected and promoted to maintain ecological services, and the intrinsic landscape values and settings provided by the regional green space network.

2.5.4 Development is located and designed to contribute to, and integrate with, the green space network.

Programs

2.5.5 Define, identify and map a preferred future regional green space network that meets community, biodiversity and ecological service requirements.

2.5.6 Investigate development of a recreational rail trail along the decommissioned Kingaroy to Theebine rail corridor.

Notes

The draft Queensland Greenspace Strategy focuses on the expansion of land for public recreation, where public use and access are the priority, rather than biodiversity values. Green space represents places where people play, recreate and socialise. It includes council parks, public gardens, playing fields, children's play areas, foreshore areas, bushland and linear reserves, national parks, state forests and conservation reserves. The definition excludes roads and marine areas.

As the population increases, retention of land for green space, including for nature conservation and public recreation, will become more important.

Five key planning actions have been identified. These proposed actions are to:

1. promote additional green space
2. introduce better planning processes, tools and instruments to increase green space
3. remove arbitrary barriers that limit public access to state-owned land
4. encourage recreation opportunities on private land
5. investigate the potential to use surplus state-owned land as green space.

Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland

On 27 March 2010, the Queensland Government released draft Queensland Greenspace Strategy to support delivery of the government's Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland target to protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation by 2020. The policies and programs of the region plan will help achieve this target.

For more information visit www.towardq2.qld.gov.au/tomorrow/index.aspx.

Early morning visitors to the beach at Bargara *Courtesy of Ray Cash Photography*

3. Natural resource management

Regional natural resources and primary production areas continue to provide cultural, social, economic and environmental values to the region, while being protected, managed, enhanced and used sustainably.

The region's natural resources include productive agricultural land, fresh water, air, forests, native plants and animals, minerals and marine waters. These resources underpin the region's economy, and support the diverse range of industry and business opportunities that rely on their quality and accessibility.

Population growth can place significant stress on the condition and availability of natural resources. Sustainably managing these resources ensures availability for current and future generations. Natural resources underpin employment and recreation opportunities, and contribute to the social stability of the region.

3.1 Natural resource management

Principle

3.1.1 The management and use of natural resources enhance community, economic and landscape values.

The region derives a significant proportion of its wealth from the use of natural resources, including farming of high quality agricultural lands, mining and extractive industries, native and plantation forestry activities, and fisheries.

Natural resources located throughout the region provide crucial employment and economic advantages for local business and industry, and they must be managed accordingly.

Many of the region's natural resources are non-renewable. Without appropriate consideration of these factors in land-use planning, there are risks to the longevity and utility of the region's resources, which may result in significant economic implications. Left unmanaged, these risks will have implications for the long-term welfare of residents, and for opportunities to realise the region's growth potential.

Policies

3.1.2 Impacts on the region's natural resources through the appropriate location, design and management of development are avoided or minimised.

3.1.3 Natural resource management, planning, investment, monitoring and reporting is coordinated to improve the quality and contribution of the resource to the region.

Programs

3.1.4 Develop reporting and spatial mapping systems to implement a strategic and coordinated process for capturing, analysing, managing and monitoring natural resource management information and landholder knowledge.

3.1.5 Develop and implement regional targets for natural resource management.

Notes

The region's natural resources are experiencing escalating pressures from economic and environmental threats. These resources are increasingly being threatened by climate change, water scarcity, pollution, land clearing activities, the prevalence of feral animals and spread of invasive weeds, the conduct of unsustainable farming practices, and incompatible land-use and development within sensitive areas.

Appropriate management of land, water and native vegetation, and the ecosystems they support, will contribute to the community's future economic and social wellbeing.

Management programs and strategies developed over time to manage the protection and use of the region's natural assets are to be established in a coordinated, collaborative and integrated manner. Effective partnerships between all stakeholders, including government, community and industry organisations, as well as landowners and Traditional Owner groups, will deliver benefits for the community as a whole, and the for long-term management of these resources.

Wide Bay Burnett Natural Resource Management Plan

Effective natural resource management is made more challenging for communities already accommodating significant population growth, in addition to managing the anticipated impacts of climate change.

The region has a large number of government, community and industry organisations involved in planning and investing in the local environment and natural resources. By coordinating the priorities and activities of all levels of government and stakeholders, the community will be better placed to plan for, and deliver, positive outcomes throughout the region.

To contribute positively to local environment and natural resource management, the Environment and Natural Resources Working Group, a subgroup of the Regional Managers Coordination Network, is coordinating the development and implementation of the Natural Resource Management Plan.

The *Wide Bay Burnett Natural Resource Management Plan* will articulate measurable targets for the condition and extent of the environment and natural resources aligned to the objectives and policies in the regional plan. The *Wide Bay Burnett Natural Resource Management Plan* will also aim to coordinate monitoring and reporting activities to measure the outcomes and results of combined efforts to protect the overall condition and extent of the environment and natural resources over time.

The *Wide Bay Burnett Natural Resource Management Plan* will provide the opportunity to allow individual and collective land managers and regional decision-makers to work collaboratively with investors to guide future investment in environment and natural resources in the region. The framework will be accompanied by a program of actions designed to capture existing effort and investment against the targets, and the existing condition and extent of the environment and natural resource assets, and may include details about potential investment and further delivery of programs to achieve the targets.

For more information visit www.bmrg.org.au/information.php/2/118.

3.2 Ecosystem-dependent economic resources

Principle

3.2.1 Ecosystems are sustainably managed, ensuring their cultural, social, economic and environmental services and values are protected.

The region possesses a diverse array of natural assets and environmental features that are also linked to economic resource values and contributions for the region. These assets play a significant role in supporting the social, cultural and settlement patterns of the community. They may also include direct and indirect contributions to the local economy.

The variety of economic advantages gained from the region's natural resources are diverse, and encompass tourism, recreation and amenity benefits, as well as filtering through to business and industry enterprise, agricultural and primary production activities. Where it is deemed appropriate to undertake economic development of these assets, those activities should not unnecessarily use or deplete the landscape values associated with the resource without remediation works.

Management of the region's natural ecosystems is essential to protect the long-term economic and social benefits of these features, and preserve the intrinsic environmental services provided by these assets, for example, provision of food, water and energy, climate regulation, cleansing of water and air systems, recreation opportunities and social engagement, and scientific contributions.

Policies

3.2.2 The economic resource value of ecosystems is identified and protected from fragmentation, isolation, encroachment and inappropriate land use that may compromise their existing and future viability.

3.2.3 Terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems that generate endemic species products are identified, protected and sustainably managed to preserve their integrity, while recognising their commercial and ecosystem service importance to the region.

3.2.4 Effective management strategies for native ecosystem production values are put in place so that ecosystem structure, species composition and ecological processes are sustained for the long-term use of the resource and maintenance of its environmental values.

3.2.5 Natural resource management frameworks include assessment of multiple use opportunities and associated benefit objectives for existing and future resource areas.

3.2.6 Fisheries resources and fish habitats are managed in consultation with all stakeholders, including commercial fishers, Traditional Owners, recreational fishers and conservation groups.

3.2.7 Exposure to terrestrial and aquatic pest plants, pest animals and diseases in the region is to be minimised, through combined efforts of government, industry, community and landholders.

Programs

3.2.8 Promote the social, economic and ecological roles natural ecosystems play in the region, and the benefits of ecological sustainability.

Notes

Primary production based on harvesting and using ecosystems is an integral component of the economy. This includes the existing and potential economic resource value resulting from both natural and modified systems, such as:

- natural ecosystems
  - native forestry (e.g. Tiaro, Maryborough, Coastal Burnett, Gympie and Yarraman)
  - wild fisheries (e.g. Burnett Heads, Theebine and Yandaran)
  - native plant and animal harvesting
- modified ecosystems
  - plantation forestry (e.g. Biggenden and Mount Perry)
  - aquaculture (e.g. Lake Monduran)
  - intensive agricultural production.

The region accommodates an estimated 60 per cent of the total Queensland state plantation estate area, and includes native hardwood forests and plantations of both soft and hard woods. These estates include state-owned and private plantations. Outputs of the plantations include an extensive range of building materials and products for the local Queensland construction industry, as well as supplying goods nationally.

These established industries provide a range of value-adding opportunities that will complement the ongoing conduct of plantation timber activities. The Queensland Timber Plantation Strategy 2020 has an objective of securing sustainable growth in the timber plantation sector to deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits to Queensland. This includes strategies to establish timber plantations as a legitimate primary production activity that will result in opportunities for local employment and management participation in the industry, and administration of the sector in a similar manner to traditional cropping activities.

The management and reduction of invasive pest and weed species reduce their impact on the productivity of the primary production sector. Landholders have a responsibility to identify, and where found, eliminate pests and weeds from their properties.

Commercial fisheries are a significant contributor to the region's economy. Between 2000–01 and 2007–08, the commercial fishing catch was worth approximately $26–$36 million annually to the regional economy.

Most of the catch is sold as fresh seafood locally, interstate or overseas. In areas where tourism and dining are economic contributors, fresh, locally caught seafood features heavily on menus—an indication of the advantages to tourism of a viable local commercial fishery.

Recreational fishing also plays an important part in the lifestyle and economy of the region. Recreational fishing has many flow-on effects throughout the region's businesses, including tackle stores, boat sales and maintenance, and tourism fishing charter operators, as well as local accommodation and retail shops.

3.3 Mineral resources and extractive industry

Principle

3.3.1 Minerals and extractive resources are managed for current and future use, and their extraction, processing, transport and downstream value-adding continue to contribute to the economy.

Mineral and extractive resource industries are significant components of the region's economy, in particular quarrying and sand extraction. Mining and mineral exploration activities are increasing in the region, particularly in Kingaroy, Gayndah and Murgon. Exploration into coal resources is prominent within Tiaro, Gayndah, Monto and Kingaroy. Petroleum exploration occurs most significantly through the region in two arc formations—from Bundaberg to Maryborough, and Monto to Mundubbera.

Current mineral production and identified resources include gold, silver, kaolin, limestone, coal, ilmenite, apatite, scandium, feldspar, siltstone, silica sand, black granite and clay. There is also mounting industry interest in investigating underground coal gasification, and in exploration for coal seam gas and geothermal energy.

Given the importance of the agricultural industry for the region, it is critical to also consider the implications of the expanding mineral, petroleum or extractive resource industry development on areas of good quality agricultural land.

Policies

3.3.2 Identified valuable mineral and extractive resource areas within the region are protected from development that might prevent or severely constrain current or future extraction.

3.3.3 The operation of extraction and processing activities does not compromise current and future resource use opportunities, regional landscape values, ecosystem function and services, or human health, and minimises its impact on primary production.

3.3.4 At the cessation of mineral and extractive resource activities, those former mining and extractive resource areas are rehabilitated to facilitate multiple end-uses of sites, ensuring their continuing contribution to the economic, social and environmental values of the region.

3.3.5 Innovative practices are encouraged, including local processing and value-adding activities for mineral and extractive resources, to maximise eco-efficiencies and further support their contribution to the region's economy.

Notes

Mining and extractive industries often produce significant noise, dust and heavy vehicle movement impacts on nearby land uses. Urban development can impose on existing or identified future extractive industry sites by locating or expanding close to separation areas.

State Planning Policy 2/07: Protection of Extractive Resources identifies those extractive resources of state or regional significance where extractive industry is appropriate in principle. The policy aims to protect those resources from development that may prevent or constrain current or future operations. The state government will continue to identify Key Resource Areas throughout the region, and progressively update the statewide database.

Development of the Queensland mining, petroleum and geothermal resources sectors is primarily regulated through the *Mineral Resources Act 1989*, the *Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004*, the *Petroleum Act 1923*, the *Geothermal Exploration Act 2004* and the *Environment Protection Act 1994*. These provide for grant of tenure and issuing of environmental authorities.

Eco-efficiency

The term eco-efficiency is based on the concept of creating more goods and services, while using fewer resources and creating less waste and pollution.

This concept describes a vision for the production of economically valuable goods and services, while reducing the ecological impacts of production.

According to the World Business Council of Sustainable Development, critical aspects of eco-efficiency include:

- a reduction in the material intensity of goods or services
- a reduction in the energy intensity of goods or services
- reduced dispersion of toxic materials
- improved recyclability
- maximum use of renewable resources
- greater durability of products
- increased service intensity of goods and services.

Extract from www.wbcsd.org.

3.4 Planning and managing agricultural land

Principle

3.4.1 The region's primary production areas are protected and sustainably managed to ensure their continuing contribution to the economy, and to mitigate the anticipated effects of climate change.

The region enjoys a mild climate, and has access to water resources and soils suitable to cultivate a wide range of agricultural commodities. It has established infrastructure in place to support a diverse cropping and livestock sector. Small ground crops, tree crops (such as macadamias, peanuts, mangoes, lychees, avocados and citrus), sugarcane and livestock production make a significant contribution to the regional economy.

Land suitable for primary production is a valuable, finite commodity that is to be managed to ensure its long-term protection for future generations. Areas with biodiversity values should not be used for primary production, unless it can be demonstrated that there are mutually beneficial outcomes for both the biodiversity values and primary production enterprise.

The viability of agricultural production areas is related to the sustainability of rural industries, water resource management and sound land-use planning. Involvement of community and stakeholder groups in planning decisions will critically impact on the success of land-use management, and will assist in delivering sustainability processes. Beyond this, there is an emerging emphasis on protecting ecosystem services, alternative commercial uses, and value-adding or multiple use opportunities for local produce industries.

Good quality and highly versatile agricultural land is a valuable asset to be recognised and protected. Alienation and loss of this resource through fragmentation, urban development or other high impact development will not be supported, unless there is an overriding need in the public interest for the proposed use, and there are no alternative locations available.

Policies

3.4.2 Land suitable for primary production is identified, protected and managed to provide for the continued profitable and sustainable use of the resource. Use and management programs build resilience to, or mitigate, the potential impacts of climate change.

3.4.3 The region's good quality agricultural land is protected from weeds and pest animals, inappropriate land uses and further fragmentation that lead to its alienation or diminished productivity.

3.4.4 Sustainable land management practices and effective property scale planning are implemented to respond to market forces and provide resilience to the anticipated effects of climate change.

3.4.5 Climate change mitigation practices such as carbon offsets, farm forestry and increased efficiencies in production activities are implemented whenever possible.

3.4.6 The contribution of sustainably managed agricultural land to regional ecological services and the social character of the region are encouraged through best practice land management and incentive programs.

3.4.7 Exposure to pest plants, pest animals and diseases in the region is minimised, through combined efforts of government, industry, community and landholders.

3.4.8 The community's ability to manage (and where possible, eliminate) weeds and pest animals in a manner consistent with any relevant or endorsed pest or biosecurity management plans or strategies is improved.

3.4.9 Tourism opportunities that are compatible with, and support, sustainable primary production are identified and encouraged.

Programs

3.4.10 Investigate and implement viable options for the restoration of degraded primary production areas.

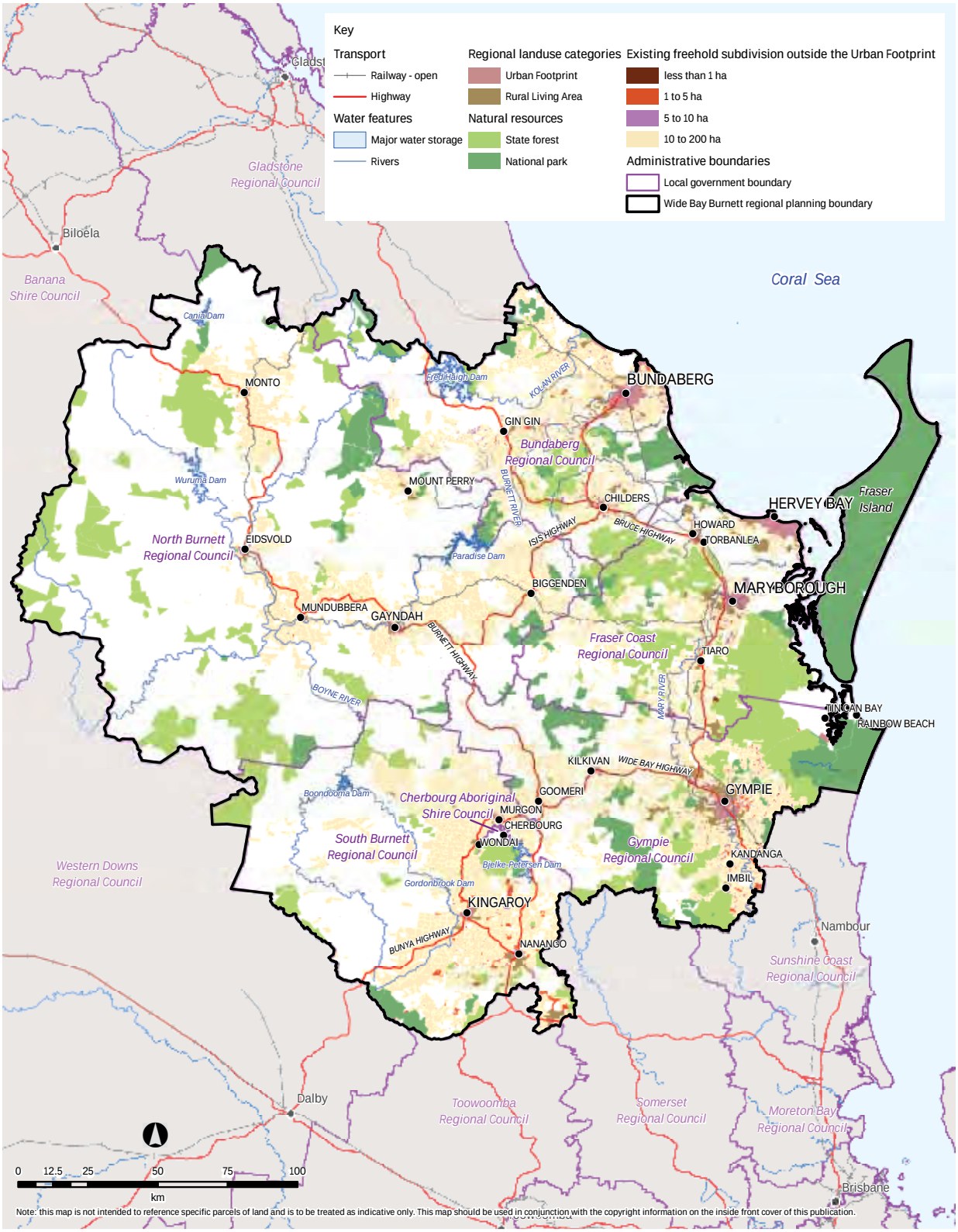
3.4.11 Undertake a review of current mapping of good quality and strategic cropping lands within the region, and improve these systems where necessary to clearly identify valuable food and primary production areas, protecting them from fragmentation and inappropriate land use.

Notes

Identifying, protecting and managing important agricultural land will be critical to the regional economy into the future. These lands had an historical role in the development of the region's rural areas, and provide support systems through food supply, employment and economic benefits stemming from the supply of goods to areas outside the region. Map 5 depicts the existing fragmentation of agricultural lands within the region.

Avocado farming, Meadowvale *Courtesy of Adam Creed*

Map 5: Existing subdivision outside the Urban Footprint



In addition to farming for food production, forestry is a significant agricultural practice in the region. There is a need to identify and protect land suitable for long-term forestry, having regard to a range of environmental, social and economic factors that promote and inhibit activities.

Forestry operations can assist in meeting environmental objectives through reforestation and rehabilitation of natural areas, and sustainable harvesting practices. Importantly, it also offers opportunities in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through carbon sequestration. In the context of SPP 1/92, plantation forestry projects do not alienate land from other agricultural uses in the future; therefore, plantation forestry is considered compatible with the objectives of the policy.

The abundance of invasive weed species and pest animals is a growing concern for rural areas, particularly in the agricultural sector, and reactive management often involves significant expense to land managers in the region. Weeds and pest animals can cause significant economic, environmental and community difficulties. Designing and implementing a coordinated approach to pest management practices can minimise the detrimental effects of invasive weeds and pest animals on the region's agriculturally productive lands.

Draft State Planning Policy – Protecting Queensland's Strategic Cropping Land

Currently, State Planning Policy 1/92: Development and the Conservation of Agricultural Land (SPP 1/92) protects agricultural land as an economic resource. As part of the State Government's strategic cropping land (SCL) policy, there will be two types of areas protecting SCL from mining and other types of development—Strategic Cropping Protection Areas and a Strategic Cropping Management Area. Part of the Wide Bay Burnett Region—the South Burnett Region—will fall into the Strategic Cropping Protection Area (Southern).

Some other parts of the Wide Bay Burnett Region will fall into the Strategic Cropping Management Area. New legislation and a new statutory planning instrument under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* to implement these provisions is planned to be introduced in 2011.

For more information visit www.derm.qld.gov.au.

Agricultural production in the Wide Bay Burnett region

Over half of the value of agricultural production in the Bundaberg Regional Council area was from vegetables in 2005–06, with an additional 23 per cent from sugar cane and 15 per cent from fruit and nuts. Fruit and vegetables grown in the region include tomatoes, capsicums, zucchini and button squash, macadamia nuts, avocados, cucumbers, snow peas and sugar snap peas.

Fruit and nut production is a large component of agriculture in the North Burnett region. In 2005–06, over half the value of fruit and nut production in the North Burnett was from mandarins.

Cattle and calves formed the largest enterprise in the North Burnett in 2005–06 in value terms, accounting for around 45 per cent of the value of agricultural production.

Agriculture in the South Burnett region is largely focused on livestock, with cattle accounting for over 60 per cent of the value of agricultural production in 2005–06, and pigs 13 per cent of the value. Crops, comprising mainly pasture cut for hay, cereals for grain, and cotton, also accounted for around 13 per cent.

Cattle accounted for the largest proportion of the value of agricultural production (around 44 per cent) in the Gympie region. Milk production accounted for around 17 per cent, vegetables for around 15 per cent, and fruit and nuts 12 per cent. Fruit and vegetables grown in the region include macadamia nuts, French and runner beans, zucchini and button squash, and ginger.

The value of agricultural production in the Fraser Coast area is lower than for other areas in the region. However, agriculture in the region is quite diverse, with enterprises including cattle (which accounted for around 28 per cent of the value of production), sugar cane (25 per cent), fruit and nuts (16 per cent) and nurseries, flowers and turf (15 per cent).

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census data, Agricultural commodities

3.5 Regional water supply planning

Principle

3.5.1 Water, as a valuable and finite regional resource, is planned and managed on a total water cycle basis.

Fresh water is a precious, fundamental and limited resource, vital for building a strong regional economy and maintaining the health of all living systems. Risks to the region's existing water supply network are related to an increase in demand through population growth, the uncertainty of climate change impact on water reliability, and competing uses for potable supplies. These risks can be mitigated by sustainably managing current water supplies and seeking new alternative sources.

Harnessing growing community awareness of the importance of water quality and quantity to assist in resource protection is also a beneficial strategy for local government and water authorities to employ.

Planning will need to consider the forecast demand of water into the future, ensuring that demand does not exceed the available supply, given the significant delay between the planning and construction of water supply infrastructure.

Catchment-based water resource plans are currently in place for surface water and major groundwater resources in the region (Map 6).

Policies

3.5.2 Water supply and infrastructure sequencing and delivery respond to planned and actual demand.

3.5.3 Existing and proposed water infrastructure sites and buffer areas are protected from encroachment by development that may compromise their viability.

3.5.4 Development is designed to incorporate best practice demand management, efficiency of use, recycling opportunities and re-use of water opportunities.

3.5.5 Water resource planning and allocation, including the provision of water for the environment, protects the biodiversity values and health of aquatic ecosystems.

3.5.6 Climate change assessments and adaptive strategies for the development and review of water resource plans and regional water supply strategies are integrated with land-use planning to provide resilience against anticipated climate change impacts on water resources.

Programs

3.5.7 Address the region's future water supply–demand balance through the development, implementation and review of regional water supply strategies.

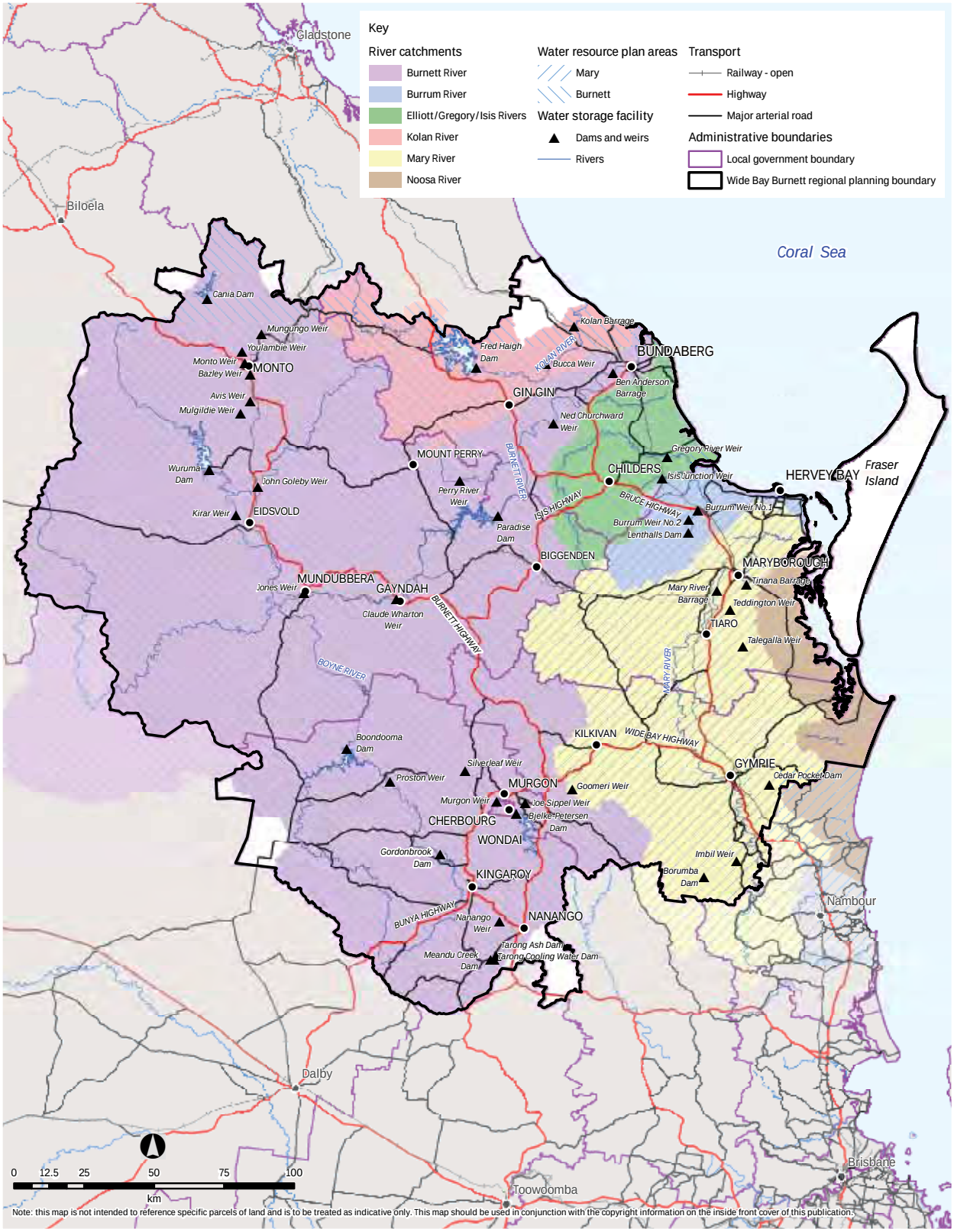
3.5.8 Address the region's future water allocation, management and use frameworks through the development, review and amendment of water resource plans and resource operations plans that secure access to water entitlements, provide for water trading and ensure water for the environment.

Notes

The Wide Bay Burnett Regional Water Supply Strategy is currently being developed with a range of stakeholders to optimise the use of existing available supplies, while identifying potential water supply shortfalls in the longer term and possible options for meeting that demand.

Climate change scenarios should be incorporated into long-term water planning so that appropriate strategies for achieving security of supply are developed.

Map 6: River catchments and water resource plan areas



Water resource planning in the region

The Water Resource (Burnett Basin) Plan 2000 was released in December 2000, and included the surface water catchments of the Burnett, Barker–Barambah, Boyne, Nogo, Kolan, Gregory, Elliott and Isis rivers. It was recently amended in 2007 to include the Coastal Burnett Groundwater Management Area. DERM is currently undertaking the required 10-year review of the plan.

The Mary Basin Water Resource Plan was finalised in 2007, and includes the surface water catchments of the Mary, Burrum, Noosa, Maroochy and Mooloolah Rivers, and the Cooloola Sandmass subartesian area.

There are currently 25 key surface water storages within the region, which have a total capacity of about 1 660 000 ML. Supplemented surface water is managed through eight water supply schemes operated by water service suppliers throughout the region. The current water service providers in the region are SunWater Ltd, Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority trading as SEQWater, and Wide Bay Water.

For more information visit www.derm.qld.gov.au/water/strategy/index.html.

3.6 Total water cycle management

Principle

3.6.1 Water is recognised as a valuable and finite resource which is managed on a total water cycle basis.

Total water cycle management recognises the interrelationships between the human uses of water and its role in the environment. Key principles of total water cycle management include:

- natural cycles—minimising the alteration of natural flow regimes and water quality attributes that sustain ecological processes
- sustainable limits—ensuring the volume of water extracted from a source is sustainable for future generation use and the environment
- demand management—reducing the demand on water supplies by minimising urban water use and losses, and maximising rural water efficiencies and re-use
- diversity in supply—considering all potential alternative supplies of water when new supplies are required, including water re-use, stormwater harvesting and alternative technologies and opportunities, such as desalination plants and coal seam gas waters
- water quality—managing the water cycle at all phases to preserve water quality for the community and the environment.

It is important to recognise the role that urban demand management and rural water use efficiency play in reducing the demand on scarce water resources.

Policies

3.6.2 Total water cycle management principles are incorporated in land-use and infrastructure planning decisions.

3.6.3 Water supply infrastructure is planned, designed and constructed to take into account the anticipated effects of climate change.

3.6.4 Demand management principles are incorporated into the planning, design and construction of water cycle infrastructure, including water supply, sewerage and drainage.

3.6.5 The predicted impacts of climate change are incorporated into regional and subregional water management and infrastructure planning, including any water use targets.

3.6.6 The planning, design and operation of diversified supply sources, wastewater and stormwater collection, treatment and re-use, and discharges to receiving waters, use best practice integrated water management principles to protect or enhance environmental values and to meet water quality objectives.

Programs

3.6.7 Develop and implement local total water cycle management plans, incorporating any subregional total water cycle management plan recommendations.

3.6.8 Promote water use efficiency by encouraging water efficient technology and practices through information and incentives.

3.6.9 Investigate opportunities to provide recycled water for rural irrigation.

Notes

Local governments are required to develop total water cycle management plans under the Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 2009. These plans include the management of stormwater and sewerage, and incorporate the principles of water sensitive urban design (WSUD), which integrates total water cycle management into the built form. The aim of WSUD is to minimise the effects of development on the natural water cycle and environmental values, and to address water supply and use.

Where subregional water supply plans are not identified, local governments should consider developing total water cycle management plans that address their core responsibilities for the water cycle, while considering how they integrate with other facets of the water cycle managed by other entities.

3.7 Water quality, waterway health and wetlands

Principle

3.7.1 The ecological health, environmental values and water quality of coastal, surface and ground waters are protected.

Several waterways, wetlands and estuaries located in the region are identified as being of high ecological value and superior quality aquatic environments. These features provide important amenity and environmental services to the region. The diversity of these water bodies includes riverine and dam environments, groundwater systems and coastal environs (including the Great Sandy Strait).

Avoiding or minimising impacts on these systems from development within, and close to, waterways and wetlands will help to preserve the water quality, natural hydrological processes, ecological functions and ecosystem services of these important landscape elements.

In particular, waters in national parks, conservation reserves or remote areas should be protected by minimising urban and other intensive development adjacent to, or upstream from, these highly valued systems.

Policies

3.7.2 Development is located, designed and managed to protect the environmental values and water quality of surface water and groundwater, wetlands and their associated buffers and coastal waters.

3.7.3 The quality of raw drinking water supplies are ensured by protecting existing and potential drinking water supply catchments from inappropriate land uses.

3.7.4 Recreational use of the region's waterways and catchments are facilitated and managed to avoid or minimise impacts on the ecological health and consumptive values of the water resources.

3.7.5 Education and marketing campaigns aid in improving the community's understanding of the interaction between human activities and water quality, and support actions which contribute to improved local water quality.

3.7.6 Strategies to protect, manage and rehabilitate riparian areas and wetlands are incorporated into land-use planning to maintain and enhance their water quality, scenic, biodiversity, ecological, recreational and corridor values.

Programs

3.7.7 Support land management practices that protect waterway health through voluntary uptake of industry-led programs and incentives.

3.7.8 Develop and implement regional targets for water quality and waterway health.

Notes

Impacts on waterways need to be avoided or mitigated to retain waterway health. There are numerous waterways in the region identified under Schedule 1 of the Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 2009. Legislative and management decisions must take the environmental values and water quality objectives into account when setting detailed objectives for key water quality objectives.

Some of the key natural water assets contained within the region include:

- the Great Sandy Marine Park
- Fraser Island's perched dune lakes and waterways
- numerous stocked impoundments throughout the region used for recreational and competition fishing
- waterways of the Mary, Burnett, Kolan, Gregory, Elliot, Isis, Burrum and Noosa catchments
- identified groundwater resource areas, including the Cooloola Sandmass subartesian area and the Coastal Burnett Groundwater Management Area.

Environmental water quality objectives are currently managed through the:

- *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- *Environmental Protection Regulation 2008*
- *Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 2009*
- State Planning Policy 2/02: Planning and Managing Development Involving Acid Sulfate Soil
- State Planning Policy 4/10: Healthy Waters.
- Drinking water quality objectives are managed through the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*.

Wetlands and waterway riparian ecosystems play an important role in filtering overland flow waters before they enter receiving waters, effectively reducing the impact from run-off. Intensive development within these areas should be avoided. Where it is unavoidable that infrastructure be built within a wetland or riparian buffer area, impacts should be minimised.

Wetlands

Section 81A of the Environmental Protection Regulation 2008 sets out the environmental values that support and maintain the qualities of a wetland as:

- the health and biodiversity of the wetland's ecosystems
- the wetland's natural state and biological integrity
- the presence of distinct or unique features, plants or animals and their habitats, including threatened wildlife, near-threatened wildlife and rare wildlife under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*
- the wetland's natural hydrological cycle
- the natural interaction of the wetland with other wetlands.

Temporary State Planning Policy 1/10: Protecting Wetlands of High Ecological Significance in Great Barrier Reef Catchments ensures development in, or adjacent to, wetlands of high ecological significance in Great Barrier Reef catchments is planned, designed, constructed and operated to prevent the loss or degradation of wetlands and their values.

An assessment of wetlands of ecological significance in the region using an aquatic biodiversity assessment and mapping methodology was completed by DERM in 2010. The result of this assessment spatially identifies natural wetlands of high ecological significance and natural wetlands of general ecological significance.

For more information visit www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildlife-ecosystems/ecosystems/wetlands.html.

Healthy waters

The State Planning Policy for Healthy Waters (SPP 4/10), effective from May 2011, will ensure that development for urban purposes under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* is planned, designed, constructed and operated to manage stormwater and wastewater in ways that protect identified environmental values under the Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 2009. In addition, the Urban Stormwater Planning Guideline contains details about stormwater management design objectives.

For more information visit www.derm.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/water/environmental_values_environmental_protection_water_policy/urban_water_quality_and_flow_management.html.

4. Rural futures

The region's rural community is strong and resilient, with a sustainable economy that contributes to the overall liveability of the region.

A strong rural community with a sustainable economy will contribute to the health, wealth, character and liveability of the region. Rural communities, industries and environments make an important contribution to people's quality of life within the region. The region's rural sector is a major contributor to Queensland's economy, providing diverse agriculture, grazing, forestry and fishing opportunities.

The future of the region's rural areas requires long-term planning and management that supports diversification of rural industries. Reliable and efficient use of land and resources will underpin land and environmental management, decision-making processes and strategic land-use planning activities.

To support a strong and sustainable rural economy, the productive lands in the region must be appropriately protected and managed to preserve their heritage and landscape values, while embracing changing circumstances.

4.1 Sustainable rural economy

Principle

4.1.1 The rural economy capitalises on the region's advantages and responds positively to changing circumstances.

The region is underpinned by a wide range of abundant natural resources, including productive agricultural land, fresh water supplies, clean air, natural forests, a diversity of native plants and animals, minerals and marine waters. These resources strengthen the region's economy and support the diverse range of industry and business opportunities that rely on their quality and accessibility.

The conservation and appropriate management of rural areas and natural assets is important to ensure that these areas continue to provide an ongoing contribution to the economy, associated industries, environmental quality (including biodiversity) and the regional landscape. Achieving more efficient use of water, land and energy in rural communities, agriculture and industries of the rural environs will support their long-term viability, resilience and adaptability to change.

Diversification of rural areas and industries can develop new opportunities for the continued growth of the rural community, including mining, ecotourism, carbon sequestration and green energy production, development of new agricultural products, sport and recreation activities, the region's unique cultural and heritage values, and local arts and crafts. Value-adding opportunities that help to diversify farm and subregional economies, and reduce transport requirements, should be supported in appropriate locations.

Emerging opportunities in natural resource management, such as ecological services, carbon trading and 'green' energy, can be supported by:

- identifying productive rural land
- preventing inappropriate fragmentation of rural land
- improving infrastructure and investment opportunities for agriculture
- protecting farming operations from conflict with non-farming or rural lifestyle residents
- enabling rural industries to diversify, adjust, innovate and value-add
- identifying preferred uses of unproductive land, recognising that some forms of agricultural production are not necessarily constrained by soil type or fertility
- protecting and enhancing productive rural lands and their associated environmental and landscape value
- maintaining benefits to the community that are derived from the natural environment.

It is important that future planning for the region supports the rural sector to be resilient to, and take advantage of, the potential impacts of climate change; managing the risks associated with these changes and developing strategies to diversify and enable change over time for the benefit of the region.

Policies

4.1.2 Opportunities for economic activity related to the region's natural resources and primary production are investigated and maximised to support the viability of rural communities.

4.1.3 The urban–rural interface is appropriately managed to reduce potential land-use conflicts.

4.1.4 Rural businesses and industries are strengthened through adaptability, productivity, diversification, value-adding and connectivity, including improved access to markets.

4.1.5 Competitive rural businesses and industries are supported and assist others to make the transition to new activities including through education, training and skills development.

4.1.6 Initiatives that attract and retain young skilled people to rural communities are promoted within the region.

4.1.7 The potential contribution of places of cultural heritage significance to rural economic development are recognised and protected.

4.1.8 Agriculture, agribusiness, aquaculture, and appropriate ecotourism and recreation opportunities are planned for and developed in rural areas.

4.1.9 Education, training and skills development that reflect the current anticipated needs of rural industries and enterprises are supported where they promote the self-sufficiency and sustainability of rural communities.

4.1.10 The development of rural business networks within the region is encouraged.

Programs

4.1.11 Identify opportunities to develop regional and local food economies to promote local food consumption and community-supported agriculture.

4.1.12 Promote and support the development of best practice farming initiatives and sustainable farm management practices.

Notes

The Queensland Government seeks to promote best practice land management, including in rural areas, through the *Reef Water Quality Protection Plan* and the *Biosecurity Strategy 2009–2014*.

The *Reef Water Quality Protection Plan* provides a framework for the state and federal governments to work together, along with local government, industry, regional natural resource bodies and other stakeholders, to improve the quality of water flowing through the region into the reef.

The *Biosecurity Strategy 2009–2014* seeks to manage risk from pests and disease on a range of agricultural, service and tourism industries, the natural and built environment, and human health.

The following mechanisms support and advance the initiatives for sustainable development in the region's rural areas:

- developing adaptation strategies across the broader range of business areas affected by climate change, including financial risk management, on-farm income strategies, and drought preparedness and management
- identifying mechanisms and optimal locations for carbon bio-sequestration
- identifying regional biodiversity corridors and priority rehabilitation areas for habitat and landscape protection, rehabilitation and reconnection
- improving the ecological health and resilience of waterways to adapt to the adverse impacts of a changing climate
- regularly reviewing water resource plans and consistently monitoring stream health to identify possible climate change impacts on the security of rural water supplies.

Rural business networks are to be encouraged and enhanced. Building positive relationships between producers and consumers will potentially improve local market acceptance and demand, reduce food miles travelled, strengthen the rural food industry sector, help sustain a strong local economy, develop a sense of community and promote land stewardship. For example, in areas such as viticulture and horticulture with on-farm processing of niche market products, close relationships occur in the form of direct sales to customers.

Education, training and skills initiatives should be developed to support successful and sustainable rural enterprise in the areas of finance, business administration, succession planning, environmental management and diversification.

4.2 Rural growth

Principle

4.2.1 Rural communities benefit from growth and are serviced by appropriate levels of infrastructure and support services.

Appropriate expansion of rural towns such as Monto, Murgon and Tiaro is supported where it increases their sustainability and consolidates growth around discrete and serviceable centres.

Rural towns like Childers, Gayndah, Gin Gin, Kilkivan, Kingaroy, Nanango and Mundubbera act as service centres, and play a vital role by supporting social interaction for the rural community. The larger centres of Gayndah, Kingaroy, Mundubbera and Nanango are also key employment hubs, with established industrial enterprises that support growth in local employment and tourism opportunities.

The rural tourism sector is attracting increasing visitor numbers, which supports growth in local employment and service provision. There is a need for out-of-area labour at seasonal times of the year, which is filled by the region's visitors, including picking and packing citrus and mangoes near Gin Gin, citrus at Mundubbera, tomatoes at Murgon, and tomatoes and vegetables around Bundaberg[3]. Over time, strategies will be developed to help rural communities capitalise on their rural character and local attributes.

The number of seasonal workers and backpackers in some rural communities can be significant. Many of these short-term residents have a variety of support requirements, such as affordable accommodation and health services, which need to be considered in forward planning. New or improved public open space and sport, public transport, recreation and community facilities in rural areas will help enable opportunities for greater community activity and healthier lifestyles. The diversity of people moving around and into communities needs to be recognised in service planning and delivery across the region.

Policies

4.2.2 Growth is supported by an appropriate mix of land uses and housing types that ensure the viability and liveability of rural townships.

4.2.3 Development does not detract from the established character and role of rural townships.

4.2.4 Development in rural areas is supported by the timely delivery of suitable communication, transport and service infrastructure.

4.2.5 Rural townships incorporate open space, and sport and recreation opportunities that facilitate community interaction and healthier lifestyles.

4.2.6 Land-use and water management policies and regulations for the region seek to protect and support existing and future agriculture, agribusiness, and appropriate tourism and recreation opportunities.

4.2.7 The risks associated with pest, disease and contaminant penetration into local agricultural service, tourism industries and the community are planned for and managed where they are known to occur.

Programs

4.2.8 Update and implement the *Wide Bay Burnett Rural Futures Strategy 2007* (rural futures strategy).

[3] National Harvest Guide (2011) National Harvest Labour Information Service (http://jobsearch.gov.au/harvesttrail/default.aspx).

Notes

The rural futures strategy will assist in achieving strong and sustainable communities. The review of the rural futures strategy will focus on:

- economic development, including tourism
- infrastructure and services
- healthy and productive rural landscapes
- water resources
- community development
- leadership and collaboration.

Planning for human services in a region with many small towns and dispersed areas of settlement requires consistent approaches in responding to population growth. Rural communities generally have reduced access to infrastructure services and employment opportunities compared to larger urban communities. Considerable distances to major centres and a lack of public transport compound this situation.

A key community issue facing rural areas (notably the North and South Burnett) is the significant increase in the occurrence of mental health issues, and loss of life through suicide, predominantly within the younger male demographic.

Increased levels of accessible, locally based community health services (including counselling and post-suicide support) are urgently required, particularly for rural communities. State and local governments, along with community groups, will need to work together to improve infrastructure and support services to rural areas.

Working in partnership, and under the principles of community engagement, will achieve better flexibility, coordination and efficiency in service planning and delivery. Initiatives that would benefit from such partnerships include:

- assisting rural communities to respond to changing primary production, agricultural and other rural activities, industries and economic circumstances
- improving community involvement and capacity to contribute to planning and other regional engagement processes
- investigating alternative strategies for economic development and growth in rural communities
- identifying and implementing flexible, accessible, ongoing, locally based prevention and early intervention programs to address key social issues in rural areas.

Strategies to attract private and public investment and reinvestment in rural communities are important for the continued health of the region, and investment partnerships could identify and target:

- opportunities to strengthen existing enterprises and industries
- development of new enterprises and industries
- exploring export development options
- product and market innovation opportunities for investment attraction.

ClimateQ

The Queensland Government has commenced the *ClimateQ: toward a greener Queensland* initiative to help primary producers adapt to climate change. This initiative provides information and tools to help primary producers in Queensland manage climate change risks and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

For more information visit www.climatechange.qld.gov.au.

5. Strong communities

The region has vibrant, inclusive, safe, active and healthy communities, where a range of social services are accessible by all, and where unique cultural heritage and diversity is acknowledged, valued and celebrated.

Continued population growth in the region presents many challenges in supporting existing local communities and their capacity to deal with change. Demographic factors such as a significantly higher than average ageing population and the dispersed settlement of the population mean supporting growth within the region is a complex task.

Community wellbeing is influenced by geographic location, access to transport, appropriate and affordable housing, family and social support, adequate income and employment, a quality built environment, community safety and optimal health.

Many residents live in rural areas, where essential community services are often provided via outreach from key centres. The dispersed urban form in the region results in many residents travelling some distance to access health and education services, business and employment opportunities, and social and cultural experiences. Due to their location, residents in rural areas have limited access to timely and affordable transport options, further inhibiting access to such services. Differing government agency service boundaries also make holistic service delivery difficult.

Well-planned growth in a more compact urban form will help reduce social and locational disadvantage. Providing opportunities in employment, education and training will influence and support changes in the demographic age profile, and result in a more balanced social mix, enabling communities to prosper.

5.1 Social planning

Principle

5.1.1 Social planning is incorporated into planning processes to manage and respond to changing communities, and support community wellbeing and quality of life.

The negative impacts of social change in the region over time can be minimised through the use of community-focused policies to identify current and future community and social needs, trends and solutions. Key components to the wellbeing of the region include a commitment to monitoring levels of social and locational disadvantage, providing support and services for the ageing population, and delivering programs aimed at the retention of young people in the region.

A strong community can have positive impacts on the actual and perceived liveability of the region. Liveability factors have flow-on effects for the local residents by assisting in the attraction of new business and migration to the region, and drawing greater diversity of services and community activities.

Policies

5.1.2 Land-use and community infrastructure planning decisions incorporate social and community needs assessments.

5.1.3 Planning outcomes that support an ageing population, including appropriate housing, retirement and aged care options, and access to services and facilities, are actively pursued.

5.1.4 An accessible and high quality public realm is achieved by allocating or revitalising open space and creating well-designed public spaces.

5.1.5 An evidence-based approach, which identifies social characteristics and demographic trends, is used to inform planning processes.

Programs

5.1.6 Profile and respond to the social impacts of in-migration patterns (including people from other cultures), and incorporate in planning frameworks.

Burnett Heads Rural Fire Station
Courtesy of the Department of Community Safety

Notes

Key considerations for the region include high levels of social and locational disadvantage, an ageing population, retaining young people, and the influx of seasonal workers into communities. Potential social impacts of growth and change (such as those resulting from mining) can be identified and mitigated as necessary through the implementation of social planning principles.

The *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* requires that community wellbeing issues be integrated into the preparation of planning schemes. It states that the cultural, economic, physical and social wellbeing of people and communities is maintained if:

- well-serviced and healthy communities, with affordable, efficient, safe and sustainable development, are created and maintained
- areas and places of special aesthetic, architectural, cultural, historic, scientific, social or spiritual significance are conserved or enhanced
- integrated networks of pleasant and safe public areas for aesthetic enjoyment and cultural, recreational or social interaction are provided.

Social impact

Social impacts, including social change (e.g. the potential impacts of mining), should be considered in the development of planning schemes and policy decisions. This consideration should be undertaken in partnership and consultation with affected communities and stakeholders.

Positively Ageless – Queensland Seniors Strategy 2010–20

The *Positively Ageless – Queensland Seniors Strategy 2010–20* identifies priority areas and key initiatives that will benefit older Queenslanders (including those living in this region), particularly those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or socially isolated.

For more information visit www.communityservices.qld.gov.au.

Toward Q2

The Queensland Government has committed to delivering world-class education and training, making Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people, and supporting safe and caring communities in *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland.*

For more information visit www.towardq2.qld.gov.au.

5.2 Addressing social and locational disadvantage

Principle

5.2.1 Social and locational disadvantage in communities is recognised and addressed.

Disadvantage concerns any unfavourable circumstances or conditions affecting an individual or group of people. The dimensions of disadvantage within the broader community may include a lack of access to affordable, diverse and age-appropriate housing, education and health services, or an inability to participate in, or have access to, a variety of employment, recreation, family support or social network opportunities.

Traditionally, people living in rural or fringe areas often find it difficult to access a diversity of services such as health, recreation, education or employment. Owing to the existing highly dispersed settlement pattern, these circumstances are exacerbated for many in the region. Barriers preventing community members from accessing these opportunities include a lack of public transport options and limited availability of desired services within the local area. In order to reduce the likelihood of further disadvantage occurring as a result of future decision-making, social planning principles and strategies that enhance community participation and engagement will be implemented.

Identification of development locations for community infrastructure and services will build on the strength and self-containment of subregional communities. Co-location opportunities for sharing infrastructure and facilities with neighbouring communities will improve efficiencies in providing and operating these services, and will contribute to the reduction of disadvantage.

Policies

5.2.2 Appropriate social services and community facilities are cost-effective, sustainable, accessible and responsive to community need.

5.2.3 Strategies to respond to identified pockets of social and locational disadvantage are developed and implemented.

5.2.4 Accessible and affordable transport options that enhance connectivity and level of service to remote or locationally disadvantaged communities are investigated.

5.2.6 Establish partnerships across community, government and business to provide more proactive, community-driven, coordinated and sustainable responses to social and locational disadvantage.

Programs

5.2.5 Implement and evaluate flexible, integrated, client-driven and sustainable prevention, promotion and early intervention strategies to pre-empt and address social and locational disadvantage.

Notes

Many factors influence the degree of social disadvantage experienced by individuals, including relative ease of access to housing, employment, income, education, health status and service access. Many residents of the region experience multiple disadvantages, particularly those living in smaller rural areas.

Community servicing and support needs in rural communities are quite different to urban areas. Outreach services are the norm for rural and coastal communities; however, higher service demands in larger communities can mean outreach service provision to these rural and coastal areas is reduced.

The region's migrating and existing resident community includes, in part, the socially disadvantaged that relocate from other areas. This is due to factors such as rising housing costs or reduced housing availability in nearby areas such as South East Queensland. This trend increases the demand for local services and support facilities.

The development of strong, supportive social networks, the provision of affordable housing, education, health, high-speed and reliable internet access, recreation opportunities and accessible public transport play a central role in responding to regional disadvantage and minimising exclusion.

A strong socially inclusive community is about all residents being able to fully participate in community life. This can be a significant challenge in some communities (notably rural settlements), as geographic location often restricts social participation and leads to feelings of isolation.

Technological advances (for example in telemedicine and videoconferencing) are useful tools that enhance access to specialist health and support services. The major public hospitals located in Hervey Bay, Maryborough and Bundaberg already have videoconferencing facilities that provide access to specialist practitioners within the broader Queensland health care network.

Sustainable community planning outcomes will only be achieved where all levels of government and community stakeholders participate in working partnerships to respond to current and emerging issues of disadvantage.

5.3 Healthy and safe communities

Principle

5.3.1 Quality of life is enhanced by offering healthy and safe environments that promote active living and healthy lifestyles, and provide accessible health services.

The relative health of communities is underpinned by a range of considerations, including social disadvantage, population characteristics, social cohesion, access to key social infrastructure, housing affordability, transport, availability of open space, physical activity and climate change.

It is important to recognise that 'health' not only refers to a physical state, but also to mental health and psychological wellbeing. Appropriate community-based planning specifically addressing the needs of each community will provide safe, accessible open space and health services to enable the communities to enjoy active lifestyles and participation.

The community will be strengthened by an increase in housing choice and diversity, accessible and reliable infrastructure (including information communication technology), appropriate motorised and non-motorised transport options, and strong and supportive social network prospects.

Policies

5.3.2 Physical activity and healthy lifestyles are supported through appropriate location and design, including facilitating the provision of active transport infrastructure such as pedestrian and bicycle paths, and appropriate sport and recreation facilities.

5.3.3 Crime prevention through environmental design principles is applied to enhance community safety in public areas.

5.3.4 Biting insect mitigation strategies are developed and implemented.

Programs

5.3.5 Develop a collaborative framework that requires multi-strategy and multi-tiered prevention and promotion programs to address community health and safety issues.

5.3.6 Undertake a health service planning program across the region, addressing inpatient and preventative health to provide a coordinated and holistic forward service planning approach which maximises the health and wellbeing of care recipients.

Notes

Regular physical activity and appropriate nutrition is required to prevent a range of negative health and wellbeing impacts, including chronic diseases. Community wellbeing is optimised by the provision of open space, sport and recreation opportunities, walk and cycle paths, and supporting infrastructure that makes physical activity and participation safe. Supporting infrastructure includes seating, lighting, toilets, shade and water fountains.

Biting insects

The health of communities (notably in coastal areas) requires responsive planning and mitigation of the effects of biting insects. This can be achieved by limiting residential developments within insect habitat areas, putting management plans in place to mitigate impacts, and ensuring appropriate water-flow design. Monitoring programs will continue to be important in identifying increases in biting insect numbers to ensure mitigation strategies are appropriately deployed.

Toward Q2

Making Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people is a key theme in the Queensland Government's *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland.*

For more information visit www.towardq2.qld.gov.au.

Wide Bay Burnett Regional Recreation and Sports Strategy 2010

The *Wide Bay Burnett Regional Recreation and Sports Strategy 2010* identifies future regional recreation and sporting requirements, and builds on existing government recreation and sport planning work. It assists local government, state agencies and sporting organisations to plan for future land and facility provision.

For more information visit www.wbbroc.org.au.

Crime prevention through environmental design

Urban planning and design policies that incorporate safer design or *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design* (CPTED) *Guideline for Queensland* principles will lead to buildings and public spaces designed to create safer communities. While such principles focus on key aspects of design relating to personal safety from a crime perspective, pedestrian safety from vehicular traffic also needs to be considered. To reduce crime and antisocial behaviour, specific considerations include access and connectivity, links to open space and natural areas, flexibility and adaptability, pedestrian presence and approaches, sight lines, and natural surveillance and lighting.

For more information visit at www.police.qld.gov.au.

Healthy Spaces and Places

Healthy Spaces and Places is a national guide for planning, designing and creating sustainable communities that encourage healthy living. This guide provides a range of practical information, including design principles for built environments. CPTED is incorporated into these principles.

For more information visit www.healthyplaces.org.au

Active, healthy communities

Active, healthy communities: A resource package for local government to create supportive environments for physical activity and healthy eating is a complementary tool, specifically designed for Queensland councils. It provides practical and easy-to-use ideas for councils to consider and incorporate into their various planning approaches.

For more information visit www.activehealthlycommunities.com.au.

5.4 Community engagement, capacity building and identity

Principle

5.4.1 Strong, connected and functional communities exist as a result of grassroots community development, engagement and participation, and maintaining and improving a community's sense of shared identity.

Community engagement refers to the connections between governments, residents and broader social networks on a range of policy, program or service issues. It includes a variety of community interactions, including information sharing, to actively participate in decision-making processes.

In the region, there are a variety of community groupings and established networks that have unique needs for interaction, relationship building and social connectivity that differ from other places. The capacity of all residents and community stakeholders (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as people from other cultures) to actively participate and have their say in the future of their communities is important to community empowerment and participation.

Capacity building strategies will contribute to the development of the strengths of people and communities to engender a strong regional identity. Actions and opportunities for community members to build additional skills, networks, knowledge, and a sense of belonging will improve the community's ability to meet their own needs, be resilient in times of change, and have the capacity to influence decision-making and effect positive change for their region.

An important marker of a strong community is the proportion of residents engaged in volunteering across the region. Currently, the community receives volunteering services from many older people. At the time of the 2006 Census, there were 42 519 volunteers in Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division. This represented 21.0 per cent of the total people aged 15 years and over. In comparison, Queensland recorded 568 230 volunteers, or 18.3 per cent of the total people aged 15 years and over. The Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division represented 7.5 per cent of the total volunteers in Queensland[4].

The ongoing need for volunteers is a critical consideration for the region, given its ageing population and future projected demand on the aged care sector. Opportunities for enhancing volunteer numbers should be considered where appropriate in future planning activities.

[4] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2006, Basic Community Profile - B18.

Policies

5.4.2 Local government and community planning activities incorporate, value and build on the unique local characteristics and history of the area to ensure a strong sense of place, belonging and community identity.

5.4.3 The capacity of communities to identify and respond to community need is built through their involvement and engagement in land-use decisions, and aligns with evidence relating to community issues, needs and solutions.

5.4.4 Key regional networks are supported and encouraged to participate in, and inform, planning development processes.

5.4.5 Genuine community engagement principles and programs relevant to community and cultural considerations are implemented in consultation programs.

5.4.6 Community organisations and agencies are supported in efforts to increase the numbers of volunteers involved in community activities.

Notes

Strong, meaningful community engagement leads to more empowered communities that are more willing and able to identify community issues and work toward solutions. The advantage of taking the time to develop relationships with communities leads to positive planning outcomes and program delivery.

An understanding of community engagement principles and the integration of effective engagement principles and practices are essential in planning for communities. For example, community engagement techniques for engaging with Aboriginal communities, or people from other cultures, are quite different to techniques used in other communities. Involving residents in government planning and decision-making is critical to the legitimacy and responsiveness of these processes, the quality of public policies and programs, and the effectiveness of services.

As has been evidenced in the region's recent history, the community regularly faces losses caused by natural disasters such as bushfires, floods or storms, which can challenge a population's sense of purpose, identity and future plans. Such events can have devastating impacts on communities, the economy, infrastructure and the environment. Given the increasing regularity and severity of natural disasters, such as recent flood and storm events across the region, coordinated and cooperative efforts are required to enhance the region's capacity to withstand and repair following these traumatic events. These efforts should include the recovery of the built environment, as well as the community's general physical and emotional wellbeing.

Recovering from severe natural disasters and meeting the day-to-day needs of particular community groups and individuals rely on the generosity and time of volunteers. Volunteering involves people of all ages, provides opportunities for residents to be active and involved in their local communities, and will become a more critical issue in coming decades. The need for volunteers is a key consideration for this region, given its significant proportion of ageing residents, which will see the demand for volunteers to support the aged care sector continue to increase. It is also recognised that many older people in the region work as volunteers. As they retire or are no longer able to participate in these programs, demand for new volunteering services are anticipated to escalate.

Wide Bay Burnett Human Services Working Group

The Wide Bay Burnett Human Services Working Group is recognised as a key network in the region. It identifies regional human service issues and considers appropriate responses. It is also a very valuable network for relationship building, information sharing, recognising partnerships and professional development between all levels of government and the community sector.

Community plans

The *Local Government Act 2009* requires all local governments in Queensland to prepare a long-term community plan. It is prepared in a community engagement and capacity building framework. Community plans are developed alongside local government corporate and operational plans, and express the community's vision, its aspirations and key priority areas.

The community plan, developed in accordance with a comprehensive community engagement process, will provide the basis and context for:

- local government input to the regional planning process
- local government strategic land-use planning and priority infrastructure planning in accordance with the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*
- local government corporate plans
- local government long-term financial planning and sustainability strategies.

For more information visit www.dlgp.qld.gov.au.

The Queensland Compact

The Queensland Compact was developed by the Queensland Government, and outlines expectations and commitments for government and the non-government sector to contribute to better outcomes for Queenslanders. It commits stakeholders to actions to strengthen working relationships, drives engagement in planning and policy processes, and strengthens sector capacity and service quality.

For more information visit www.communityservices.qld.gov.au.

5.5 Heritage, arts and cultural development

Principle

5.5.1 The region's unique heritage places and experiences are identified, protected and valued, with further opportunities for arts and cultural development provided.

Cultural heritage relates to those places that have a unique claim on our landscapes, lifestyles, community history and identity. Conserving this heritage is an important part of protecting and building on an established sense of place and social practices, contributing to a strong and connected community.

The region's heritage is embodied in its archaeological sites, cemeteries, historic homes, landmark structures, wide street formation, and rural and urban landscapes. They are important and highly valued features that strengthen and bind the community to their local area, and create a shared sense of the region for all resident Queenslanders, as well as tourists.

The significant heritage themes of Gympie, Hervey Bay and Maryborough and regional townships provide a comprehensive understanding of the historic use and development of the region. The patterns of development within these themes have defined and shaped the region and encompass important heritage places.

Policies

5.5.2 Heritage places, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage (such as archaeological sites, landscapes, places or objects) are appropriately recognised and protected.

5.5.3 Accessible public spaces exist for cultural activities, events and festivals.

5.5.4 Arts and cultural infrastructure, facilities and programs are provided to meet community need.

5.5.5 Arts workers are supported at local levels through regional initiatives and programs.

5.5.6 Business opportunities based on culture, heritage and the arts are recognised and promoted to attract investment and diversity to the region.

5.5.7 Historical and contemporary cultural information, artefacts and sites significant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are identified, protected and preserved, including the development of local agreements and protocols as required.

5.5.8 Initiatives are developed aimed at raising the profile of the region and enhancing pride by increasing awareness of heritage, culture and the arts.

Programs

5.5.9 Build the capacity of government, community and industry groups to recognise and protect heritage and sites that are important to the region.

Notes

Many heritage places across the region are listed in the Queensland Heritage Register. Places that are important at a local level, but which do not necessarily meet state heritage requirements, can be recognised by local governments in their own heritage register, or directly in planning schemes.

The major historic themes for the region provide a comprehensive perspective on the heritage of the region, and a guide for assessing heritage significance. The patterns of development within these themes have defined and shaped the region, and encompass important heritage places for the region.

The following should be considered when developing guidelines and identifying heritage places and precincts.

Historic themes:

- pastoral industry (1840s to 1880s)
- settlement from 1880s
- dairy industry
- sugar industry and South Sea Islanders' role in establishing the industry
- timber industry
- mining (including gold)
- secondary industries (e.g. manufacturing, engineering works, factories, sawmills)
- Aboriginal history, including the establishment of Cherbourg.

Heritage cities in the region include Maryborough, Gympie and Bundaberg, which have each retained significant elements of heritage character over time.

Heritage places in Bundaberg include the Burnett River Bridge, weeping figs in Bourbong Street, and Fairymead House. Maryborough has numerous historical homes, hotels and other heritage buildings, while Gympie's heritage places include the war memorial gates, and buildings such as the school of arts and the courthouse.

Townships in the region that have retained significant historical places include Kingaroy, Nanango, Wondai, Murgon, Goomeri, Gayndah, Monto, Childers and Kilkivan. Of particular note are the Eidsvold homestead in North Burnett, Gayndah racecourse, Mount Perry Masonic Lodge, Kingaroy peanut silos, Nanango butter factory, and the Boondooma Homestead in Wondai.

The built environment is not the only location where the region's heritage value is stored. The surrounding rural areas preserve and enhance historical and regionally important landscape features including:

- contour farming in the South Burnett Regional Council area
- mining landscapes in the Gympie and North Burnett regional council areas
- dairying and fruit growing landscapes in the Gympie, Bundaberg and South Burnett regional council areas.

The region has a diverse mix of cultural opportunities provided by entertainment, arts, museums, recreation and leisure pursuits. Multiculturalism and the relocation of new residents to the region enable diversity, and often bring new ventures, cultural and artistic opportunities and energy. Cultural facilities provide public places to hold festivals, events and functions. Existing facilities should be maintained, and new ones established, to ensure cultural and artistic opportunities and avenues continue to stimulate wealth, community spirit and belonging.

Queensland Heritage Strategy

The *Queensland Heritage Strategy* establishes a framework for managing Queensland's heritage over the next 10 years to allow for growth and development of the state, while preserving its valuable heritage places.

For more information visit www.derm.qld.gov.au.

The Burra Charter

The Burra Charter is a nationally accepted standard for conserving places of cultural significance. It outlines best practice principles necessary to identify, care for and manage heritage places.

For more information visit www.derm.qld.gov.au.

Queensland Heritage Act 1992

The *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* provides for the conservation of the state's cultural heritage by protecting all places and areas entered onto the Queensland Heritage Register. This Act requires local governments (unless exempt) to keep a local heritage register.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003

The *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* provides for the recognition, protection and conservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage. This Act requires the maintenance of a cultural heritage register that records significant sites and provides guidelines for protection. The Act also requires local governments (unless exempt) to keep a local heritage register of places of significance within their boundaries. Evidence suggests that custodianship and confidentiality issues exist with recognising and registering sites and artefacts on databases presently available. Development and growth must not cause inappropriate harm or change to cultural sites or landscapes, as these need to be retained for future generations to enjoy.

6. Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including Traditional Owners and Elders, are actively engaged in business about their Country, and enjoy high levels of community participation and support.

Aboriginal people are situated within their Country emotionally, spiritually and metaphysically. When Country is well, people are likely to be well. A sense of belonging is vital to an individual's cultural and spiritual identity. Through music, art, dance, laws/lore and creation stories, a living culture is maintained. This is not dissimilar to Torres Strait Islander culture.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a proud and long history in the region. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture has the ability to contribute greatly to the social, spiritual and economic wellbeing of communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of thinking, working, reflecting and incorporating values, beliefs and priorities are unique, and need to be understood and embraced to safeguard the region's prosperity for all its residents.

Although only 3.5 per cent of the region's residents are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, they are some of the most disadvantaged. The community of Cherbourg accommodates a significant proportion of the region's Aboriginal population, which comprises Traditional Owners who identify as direct descendants of original Country inhabitants, as well as those who have migrated to the region.

6.1 Traditional Owner and Elder engagement

Principle

6.1.1 Traditional Owners and Elders are actively engaged in planning and development processes, and their connectivity with Country is understood, considered and respected.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a unique connection to their ancestral Country as a result of passing down histories and place awareness through generations. Traditional Owners and Elders are considered the most appropriate stakeholders to identify Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, and early involvement of the members of these communities is critical to community ownership of, and successful participation in, planning and development processes.

Responses to consultation fatigue by these groups can be overcome with targeted, culturally specific consultation.

In all cases, consultation must include people who are entitled to speak for Country, usually the Traditional Owners or Elders.

The region contains several recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within Traditional Owner group areas. These groups are acknowledged as having a representative voice and an interest in the use of land within the boundary of the region (Map 7).

It is essential that, as part of these processes, the Traditional Owner group land boundaries are recognised and clearly understood as part of any engagement and consultation process. In specific cases such as in Cherbourg, despite it being acknowledged as Wakka Wakka Country, other Aboriginal representatives may also be required to be engaged in consultation and involved in planning processes. During the establishment of this community, many people from other traditional groups settled in the area, leading to a range of community representatives that need to be considered when identifying stakeholders.

Policies

6.1.2 Traditional Owners and Elders are actively consulted and engaged in planning decisions for their Country, ensuring their interests are considered and integrated.

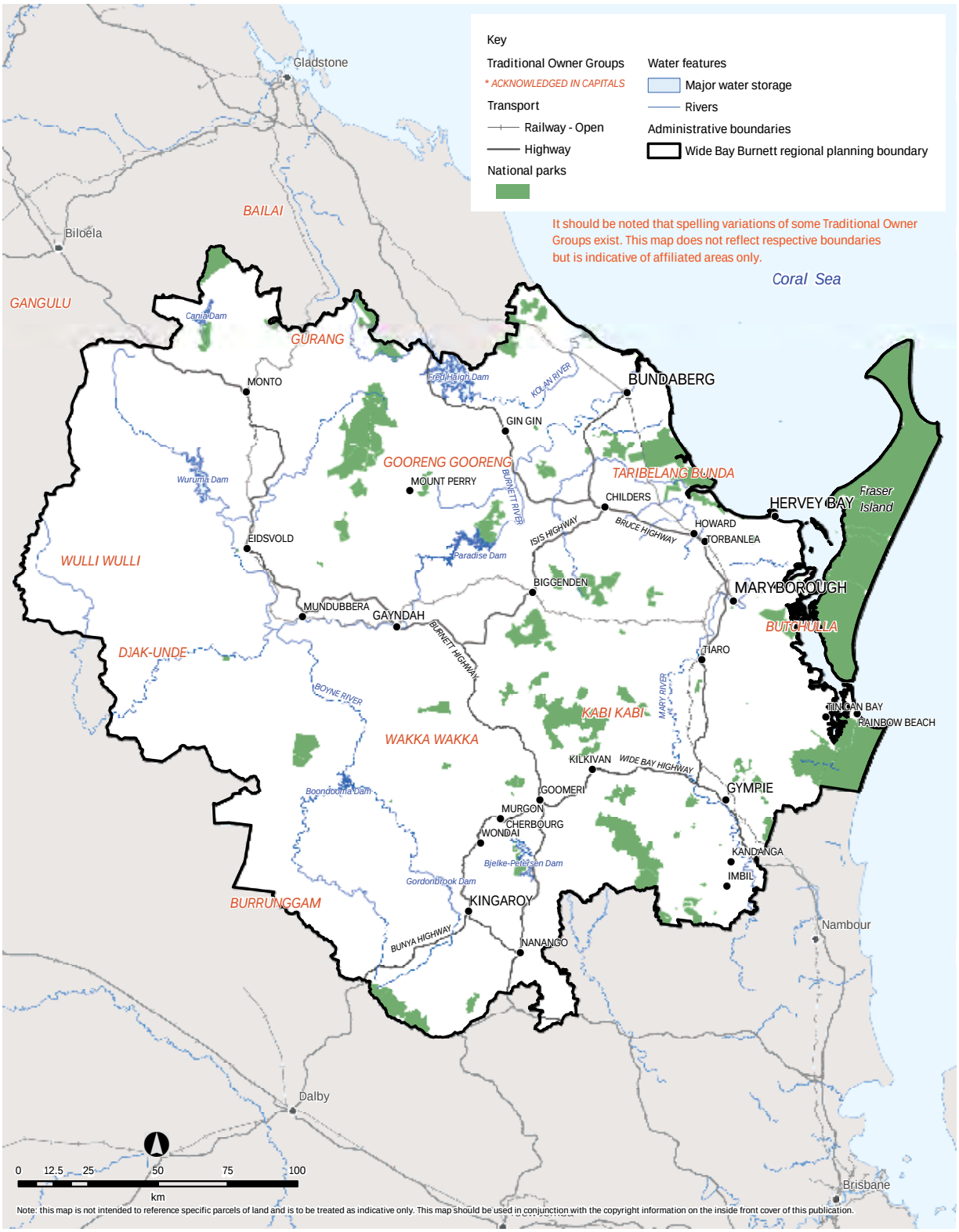
Programs

6.1.3 Recognise, record and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and interests.

6.1.4 Identify and engage with Traditional Owners and Elders early in planning and decision-making processes in a genuine and respectful manner.

6.1.5 Identify opportunities for formal partnership agreements to identify and resolve Traditional Owners' and Elders' interests, such as memorandums of understanding or Indigenous land-use agreements.

Map 7: Traditional Owner groups



Notes

Through regional plan consultation processes, Traditional Owners and Elders have voiced their desire that the interests of their people are recognised and addressed in land-use and other planning processes, and that they are actively engaged in such processes.

Consultation with Traditional Owners and Elders is most effective when undertaken in a culturally appropriate, genuine and respectful manner. When entering communities (notably at forums and events), organisations and agencies should recognise and acknowledge Traditional Owners and Elders of Country, or invite a Traditional Owner or Elder to undertake the welcome to Country.

6.2 Community engagement

Principle

6.2.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' views are valued, and opportunities exist for their participation and input in planning processes in the region that impact on their interests.

Robust community engagement and interaction relies on establishing strong communication flows and connections between state and local government, communities and individuals on a range of topics. It can include basic information sharing and distribution, consultation processes, or active participation opportunities.

The approaches and methods that are used to conduct community consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are unique. Engagement with members of these communities requires an understanding of their interests and connection to Country, and the significant role this plays.

Based on historical policy, contact and decisions made between, and involving, government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people require particular consideration to ensure genuine, inclusive, respectful, non-tokenistic engagement and relationship building. The importance of taking the time to build trust, mutual respect, reciprocal relationships and true partnerships cannot be underestimated.

Partnerships and negotiation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives are essential given the unique nature of culture and connection with Country. Cultural awareness training is a valuable tool to assist government and community workers in understanding and working toward ensuring that mainstream services are responsive, inclusive and accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Policies

6.2.2 Opportunities and support for the effective engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are provided.

Programs

6.2.3 Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in land-use planning processes.

6.2.4 Provide adequate and culturally appropriate opportunities that promote participation and meaningful input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in proposed development and planning.

6.2.5 Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives to seek and obtain broader community feedback or endorsement of consultation outcomes to ensure that views are accurately recorded.

6.2.6 Seek opportunities across local and state government to jointly undertake consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and communities.

Notes

The use of effective methods of consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will lead to improved participation, higher quality planning and community development decisions, and delivery of solutions at local and regional levels. Cultural awareness training is a necessity for both government and community workers. Such training needs to be undertaken regularly, but outcomes need to be successfully applied to work practices. This will assist in ensuring that mainstream services and participation are responsive, inclusive and accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

An appropriate response to opportunities to conduct consultation with the community contributes to the development of shared social confidence, skills, knowledge and experience. Active participation recognises a role for individuals and communities in not only raising issues, but identifying and implementing solutions about issues affecting a particular community's interests or region.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS) is part of the Department of Communities, and is responsible for working toward improving service delivery and government coordination of policy issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The team actively involved in this region is also responsible for coordination of government activity in Cherbourg. ATSIS can also provide advice regarding effective engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The capacity of government (including local government) to actively and productively engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people needs to be substantially improved to ensure effective recognition and address meaningful dialogue shortfalls. This is particularly crucial for Cherbourg as, due to its broad ranging responsibilities from a community perspective, the council portfolio includes housing and other social supports.

6.3 Social and economic equity

Principle

6.3.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equitable access to opportunities that promote a high standard of living, good economic prospects and general wellbeing.

Many members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community experience social disadvantage as a consequence of locational or cultural access constraints. Meaningful, responsive change will require commitment and action from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, with support from government and non-government sectors and the general community. Breaking the cycle of social disadvantage will only be achieved through combined efforts.

Aspects of disadvantage of specific concern for these community members include low levels of employment, school and tertiary participation, access to appropriate health services, income, home ownership and business ownership. All of these factors limit economic prosperity, social inclusion and general wellbeing. Improvements and access to opportunities in these areas will benefit the individual and wider community.

Policies

6.3.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' equitable access to employment and business opportunities, community services and social facilities is improved.

6.3.3 Affordable housing and options for home ownership for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are readily available.

6.3.4 Youth unemployment issues, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, are actively addressed through apprenticeships, traineeships and employment pathways.

6.3.5 Early intervention and prevention programs to enhance community wellbeing and improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are supported.

6.3.6 Partnerships that recognise and address education gaps for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the region are encouraged.

6.3.7 The collection and quality of data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is improved to better inform planning processes and to allow for more effective reporting and monitoring processes (such as reporting on Closing the Gap targets).

Programs

6.3.8 Identify and encourage employment and business development needs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through education, upskilling, training and links to employment, market and business opportunities and investment, including exploring opportunities in cultural tourism and cultural products.

Notes

It is critical that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equivalent levels of access to a range of essential services and employment opportunities. Culturally specific services may not always be required, but mainstream services need to be readily accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Cultural awareness training needs to be not only undertaken, but outcomes need to be successfully applied to work practices, which will work toward ensuring that mainstream services are responsive, inclusive and accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Levels of employment, school participation, tertiary participation, access to health services, income, home ownership and business ownership are all significantly lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, which limits economic prosperity and general wellbeing. Improvements and access to opportunities in these areas would benefit the individual and wider community, from an economic and social wellbeing perspective.

Looking After Country Together

Looking After Country Together is a Queensland Government strategy that recognises past dislocation from land and sea as contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social, economic and cultural disadvantage. It is expected that greater access to, and management of, traditional land and sea country will improve the overall wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, and achieve better natural resource management outcomes.

This strategy will deliver positive outcomes by developing coordination across government agencies, stimulating policy development, improving service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, building the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies and organisations, and developing effective performance measurement tools.

For more information visit www.derm.qld.gov.au/indigenous.

Closing the Gap

Indigenous reform—and closing the gap in life opportunities and outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—is one of COAG's key priorities. As a member of COAG, the Queensland Government is committed to addressing the economic and social disparity experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, while acknowledging and building on the strengths, achievements and capabilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, leaders and organisations.

A key driver of the Indigenous reform agenda are the six 'closing the gap' targets, which include:

1. closing the life expectancy gap within 25 years
2. halving the gap in infant mortality rates within 10 years
3. ensuring all four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education by 2013
4. halving the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in reading, writing and numeracy within 10 years
5. halving the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment rates (or equivalent) by 2020
6. halving the gap in employment outcomes within 10 years.

For more information visit www.coag.gov.au.

Indigenous community members Jennifer Hart, Venus Rabbit and Robert Langton, Cherbourg *Courtesy of Ray Cash Photography*

7. Managing growth

An efficient and sustainable settlement pattern that supports the efficient use of land and infrastructure, supports housing choice and affordability and provides opportunities for well-planned growth now and in the future.

It is anticipated that by 2031, the population of the region will reach 425 200, with an additional 131 700 people calling the region home. This will require approximately 57 300 new dwellings.

The anticipated growth in the region presents challenges for the efficient use of land in terms of function, density, location and the provision of infrastructure to meet demand. Sustainable growth is achieved through a balance between economic prosperity, meeting the needs of current and future generations, and the responsible use and protection of the environment and natural resources.

The capacity of land that is available for infill and broadhectare growth opportunities within and outside the Urban Footprint will be determined through local government planning schemes. Growth that is consolidated around urban areas will enable greater diversity of housing forms and density, as well as opportunities for mixed-use development, including industrial uses, in appropriate locations. Detailed analysis and assessment of the relative constraints and opportunities presented by land will be necessary to guide strategic land-use decisions.

The majority of population growth anticipated for the region will be accommodated around existing towns and cities. Regional centres such as Bundaberg, Maryborough, Hervey Bay, Gympie, Gayndah and Kingaroy have capacity to accommodate further growth using future planned infrastructure and existing networks, which have the potential for expansion.

A large proportion of projected growth can be accommodated on land already zoned for urban and residential purposes. In addition, large land areas have been designated as Development Areas due to their potential to accommodate growth and to protect against fragmentation and inappropriate land-use.

Identified Growth Areas included in the plan recognise those places that have attributes that may support long-term growth beyond 2031. Further studies will be required to determine their true capacity to accommodate development, and the form that development will take.

Historically, rural residential subdivision has had a significant role in the growth pattern of the region. Sufficient land is available to accommodate the projected demands for this low-density residential form to 2031. It is recognised as offering a lifestyle choice for people moving to the region. The planning for further rural residential growth will provide for a transition from urban to rural activities, and will be supported in appropriately designated locations where there is evidence of demand for this form of residential housing.

Providing opportunity for a diverse and affordable range of housing will support growth and development in the region. Appropriate residential choice enables residents to remain within their community through all stages of their life cycle, in familiar suburbs close to existing social networks. This includes affordable housing options created through a diverse range of housing that enables an individual, couple or family to obtain housing appropriate to their life stage and accommodation requirements.

7.1 Efficient use of land

Principle

7.1.1 Land and infrastructure are used efficiently, while impacts on the environment and the use of natural resources are appropriately managed.

Strategic planning identifies long-term outcomes for land, ensuring that infrastructure will be available to support existing development as well as future planned expansions. Urban consolidation strategies ensure that development capitalises on these opportunities through improving accessibility, self-containment and efficient use of infrastructure. The appropriate management of natural resources and environmentally significant areas includes the consideration of potential future urban development.

Urban consolidation contributes to the management of urban centres, and seeks to positively influence the region's approach to climate change. A consolidated urban form limits the frequency, duration and distance required to be travelled by private vehicles. It also improves the variety of, and access to, alternative transit forms, and reduces local greenhouse gas emissions and financial costs for consumers and the local community.

Existing urban areas in the region are generally well serviced with infrastructure. Potential exists to increase density in adjoining urban centres to maximise the use of existing infrastructure capacities before investment in new networks is required. New urban areas are located to take advantage of existing infrastructure networks and the efficient provision of future infrastructure.

Policies

7.1.2 Urban growth is consolidated in a compact settlement pattern within areas identified for this purpose.

7.1.3 Development includes an appropriate mix of uses in broadhectare and infill areas, while taking infrastructure availability into account.

7.1.4 Development is located and sequenced to make the best use of existing infrastructure, and ensure efficient and cost-effective investment in new infrastructure.

7.1.5 Development avoids or seeks to mitigate impacts of hazards such as flooding, bushfire, noise and other emissions.

7.1.6 A mix of uses, including diverse housing opportunities, employment opportunities and community uses are provided to create more accessible and self-contained communities.

7.1.7 Sufficient land for industrial development and other employment uses is identified in appropriate locations, ensuring land-use conflicts are minimised and accessibility is enhanced.

7.1.8 Land required for future urban growth is protected from fragmentation and inappropriate land-use.

Programs

7.1.9 Undertake integrated land-use and infrastructure planning for all urban areas to achieve coordinated outcomes and timely delivery.

7.1.10 Monitor the rates of development, the diversity of housing and the availability of land stocks on a regular basis.

Notes

Compact settlement pattern

Local planning outcomes include a range of strategies to improve the efficiency of land-use including clear decisions on how housing and other land uses will be accommodated and provided with appropriate infrastructure. This includes strategies to facilitate a range of housing types and densities, and the integration of a mix of land uses in appropriate locations.

A net dwelling density of 12 to 15 dwellings per hectare in major towns will ensure an appropriate land supply in urban areas beyond 2031. These dwelling density targets should be considered an average, or overall, density that is achieved for each subregion over time.

This approach provides flexibility in how each place will develop and locate growth to best achieve a consolidated settlement pattern for their community. For example, higher densities will be promoted in locations close to town centres, with lower densities to be achieved in areas containing environmental values, or areas likely to be affected by the future impacts of climate change, in particular, coastal townships. A consolidated settlement pattern also caters for the provision of a diverse housing choice and the provision of affordable housing within an established urban fabric.

Some areas within the Urban Footprint are currently used for rural residential purposes. If appropriate, measures to transition these areas to urban uses over time should be considered. However, in many cases throughout the region, the use of Urban Footprint land for rural residential purposes rather than higher density urban uses may be the most efficient and responsive land-use form to deliver appropriate development outcomes.

Determinations about the most appropriate use of land will need to be made following rigorous, detailed planning and analysis by either government, through planning scheme review or structure plans, or the private sector, through development applications.

Increasing density, encouraging development diversity and accommodating more growth through infill and redevelopment requires commitment from all levels of government, the development industry and the community.

Residential 30 – Guideline to deliver diversity in new neighbourhood development

The Urban Land Development Authority's Guideline No. 01 *Residential 30 – Guideline to deliver diversity in new neighbourhood development* provides a guide to planning and design of mixed-use residential developments. The goals of the guideline are to:

- create diverse and affordable communities
- promote planning and design excellence
- protect ecological values and optimise resource use
- provide economic benefits.

While the guideline was created for use in Urban Development Areas, its principles can be incorporated into planning frameworks across Queensland.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure incorporates all supporting services to a community, including water, sewerage and roads, and social infrastructure like hospitals, schools, community halls, parks and sporting facilities, as well as access to support services. It is important that development is located where physical and social infrastructure can be appropriately sequenced, funded and delivered.

Development that is not considered in planning schemes, or is difficult to service, may be cost prohibitive for the provision of infrastructure, and should generally be avoided.

Broadhectare development

Broadhectare land will accommodate a significant proportion of the region's future residential and industrial growth.

Detailed land-use and infrastructure planning is required to ensure development of broadhectare land results in a high quality urban form, and provides opportunities to accommodate services commensurate with demand. Planning also needs to consider the efficient delivery and timely provision of infrastructure.

Redevelopment opportunities

Focusing growth in and around town centres will reinforce the role of the town centre, and provide greater accessibility to services for residents. This reduces the pressures on new broadhectare lands (often located on the fringe of existing towns) to accommodate residential growth.

Redevelopment opportunities within existing urban areas will also play an important part in the achievement of a more compact settlement pattern, the efficient use of infrastructure, and the delivery of housing close to existing employment and social activities. The targets for the redevelopment of existing sites in Table 1 anticipate that existing urban environments will accommodate a progressively higher proportion of growth. Given the extent of broadhectare land available within the region, it is likely that these targets will take a significant period of time to be met.

Local areas may deliver redevelopment opportunities through:

- identifying the capacity of existing urban areas to accommodate additional growth
- identifying appropriate responses to integrate new development
- establishing appropriate policies to accommodate timely delivery and levels of infrastructure.

Table 1: Dwelling targets 2010 to 2031 by local government area

Local government area	Target percentage of new dwellings from redevelopment of existing urban lands
Bundaberg Regional Council	20%
Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council	Not applicable
Fraser Coast Regional Council	20%
Gympie Regional Council	20%
North Burnett Regional Council	Not applicable
South Burnett Regional Council	20%

Employment opportunities

The adequate provision of employment opportunities is fundamental to supporting projected residential growth for the region. Opportunities to integrate employment within residential areas should be investigated. These include low impact business and industry, centre activities including administration and professional services, retail, hospitality, tourism and social services.

The region supports a strong agriculture and primary production sector. Prospects to build on the sector through value-adding enterprises and activities that benefit from co-location with rural activities should be provided.

7.2 Planning for growth

Principle

7.2.1 Development Areas (DAs) and Identified Growth Areas (IGAs) are secured for delivering medium- and long-term growth opportunities, achieving employment and dwelling targets through comprehensive planning and infrastructure delivery.

DAs are fundamental to the delivery of dwelling and employment targets in the regional plan. Their identification in the regional plan means that the state government is committed to ensuring they can be delivered through timely planning processes.

IGAs located throughout the region have been nominated as they present long-term development opportunities to accommodate future population growth and supporting infrastructure, subject to detailed future assessment and confirmation of capacity to accommodate growth.

Planning and delivery of DAs and IGAs are to be coordinated to ensure that the local environment is protected, land uses are optimally distributed, and infrastructure is provided in an efficient and timely manner.

Policies

7.2.2 DAs and IGAs are protected from inappropriate and pre-emptive development.

7.2.3 DAs accommodate regionally significant growth through:

- development that is consistent with comprehensive land-use and infrastructure plans for the DA
- coordinated delivery of DAs, with the provision of infrastructure and services.

7.2.4 Comprehensive investigations and planning are undertaken to determine the suitability and extent of developable area of nominated IGAs for inclusion in the Urban Footprint.

Notes

Development Areas

Development Areas (DA) are likely to require infrastructure augmentation, including water or sewerage, or road and public transport infrastructure.

Planning of DAs may be initiated by councils, developers or the state government as appropriate. It will include analysing the location and its context, considering local, state and federal government policies and requirements, and examining infrastructure needs, staging, timing and funding.

Planning outcomes and requirements will vary in form and content, depending on the scale, intent, infrastructure demands and significance of each DA. They can be categorised as:

- regionally significant–likely to require substantial state infrastructure, and expected to yield regionally significant dwelling or employment yield
- locally significant–in the delivery of dwelling targets and employment for particular local government areas.

The approvals framework is illustrated in Figure 4.

Where possible, planning for state interests will be scoped and resolved in the initial planning stage, reducing the role of the state in subsequent detailed planning processes.

DAs are gazetted by the regional planning Minister, and further details (including boundaries) can be found in the relevant gazette notice and subregional narrative.

Additional DAs may be identified over time. Assessment of additional locations for designation as an DA will consider the following criteria:

- scale of the proposed development, in particular if it requires specialised planning and investment at a regional or state level
- level of risk to the locality from inappropriate development
- status of comprehensive land-use and infrastructure planning for the area.

Figure 4: Approvals framework for development areas

Consideration and delivery of *Identified Growth Areas* and *Development Areas*

Where an *Identified Growth Area* is identified in the *Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan*, the following applies–

Consideration of an *Identified Growth Area*

Step 1 – Local government, landowner/s or state submit information to the Department of Local Government and Planning (DLGP) for review against –

- capacity of existing Urban Footprint and urban areas to accommodate projected growth
- other Urban Footprint principles
- regional landscape and rural production area principles
- relevant considerations within DRO 7 (Managing Growth)
- Part B of the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan (Regional framework)
- Part C of the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan (Desired regional outcomes and Notes).

Step 2 – DLGP to report to the regional planning Minister and planning Minister on its assessment.

Step 3 – the regional planning Minister and planning Minister to determine if all, part or none of the IGA to be included within a *Development Area* for the purposes of the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan and Wide Bay Burnett state planning regulatory provisions.

Where a *Development Area* is identified in the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan or gazetted for the purposes of the Wide Bay Burnett State planning regulatory provisions, the following applies–

Delivery of a *Development Area*

Local government, landowner/s or state submit a detailed plan of development for consideration under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* as either a –

- planning scheme amendment or review
- master plan area
- development application

The plan of development will include all lands contained within the gazetted Development Area addressing all relevant state interests including the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan, and in particular –

- intentions and other consideration noted for the Development Area where described within the relevant subregional narrative
- Part C of the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan (Desired regional outcomes and Notes).

Infrastructure provision

Where new major infrastructure is required to lead regional development ahead of full anticipated demand, landowners and developers who will benefit must contribute to infrastructure provision (e.g. through an infrastructure agreement).

The Queensland Government and developers or landowners will determine if agreements are required, and negotiate agreements on an area-by-area basis, taking into account the particular circumstances and exact nature of each infrastructure commitment.

Identified Growth Areas

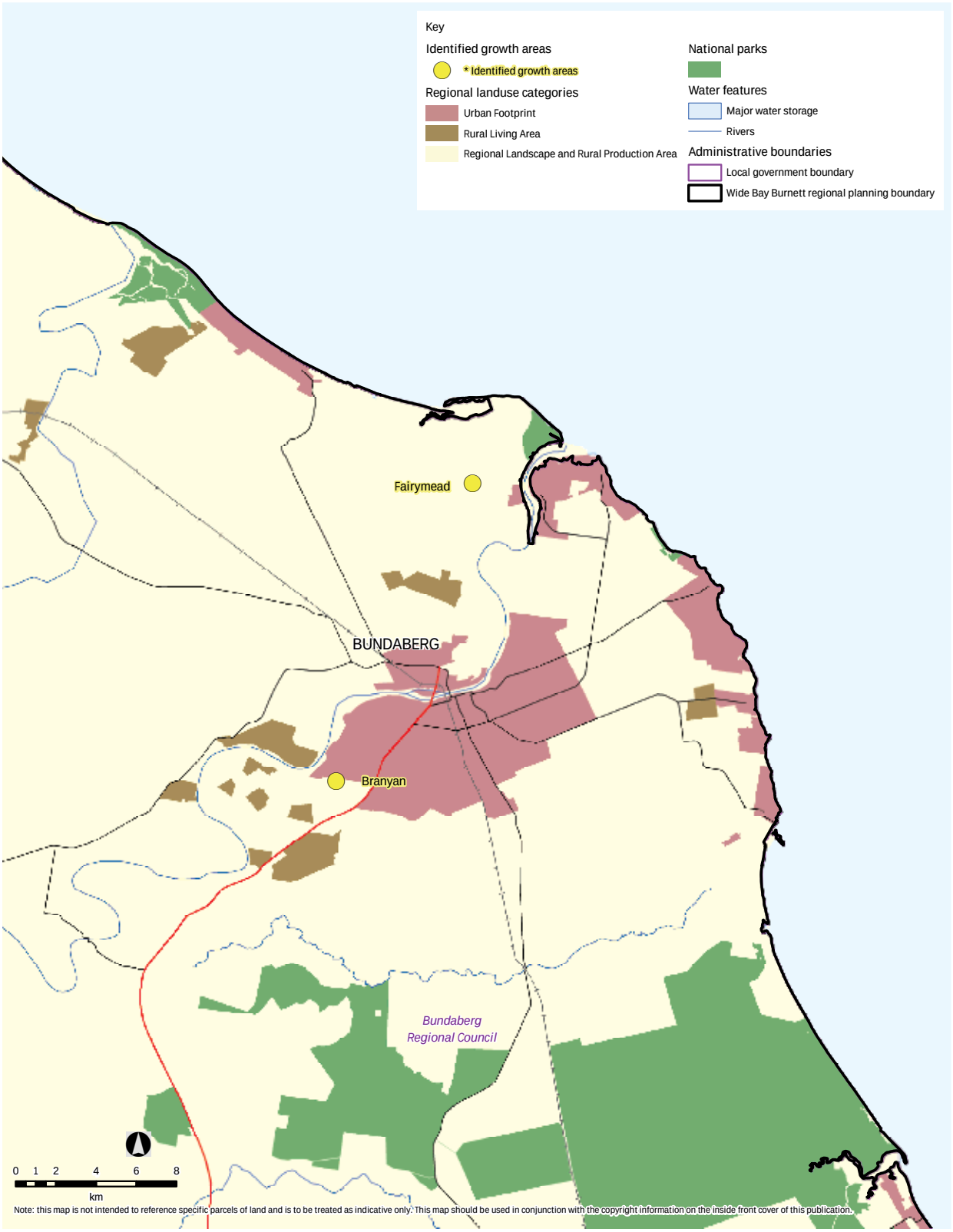
Significant population growth is projected for the region well beyond 2031. Consequently, additional lands are identified in the regional plan to accommodate growth in the long term. It is anticipated that they will not be required within the life of the regional plan, and further detailed investigations will be required before they can be further considered for urban development.

IGAs are intended to assist in accommodating regional growth beyond 2031, and are protected for this purpose through their inclusion in the Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area (RLRPA) designation under the regional plan State Planning Regulatory Provisions. They also provide an opportunity for the Minister to respond to emerging needs for additional areas to accommodate unanticipated growth within the life of the regional plan, should it be required.

The IGAs are indicated on Map 8, and are described in the relevant subregional narrative. They will be subject to further review before their boundaries are finalised and further consideration by the Minister for inclusion in the Urban Footprint. An IGA designation does not automatically confirm lands for future inclusion in the Urban Footprint.

Urban development within an IGA before 2031 will only occur in exceptional circumstances, subject to relevant investigations referred to in the subregional narratives. Any consideration of an IGA for urban development will also take into account proximity to existing and planned urban infrastructure networks, and associated costs of expanding the network to accommodate growth in the IGA. These decisions will be based on the goal of achieving a compact settlement pattern in the region.

Map 8: Identified growth areas Bundaberg Regional Council



7.3 Rural residential development

Principle

7.3.1 Rural residential development is planned and delivered, ensuring efficient delivery of services and infrastructure, preventing further fragmentation of agricultural land, and avoiding loss of areas with biodiversity and landscape values.

Rural residential development is large lot residential subdivision in a rural, semirural or conservation setting. Allotments usually have sealed roads and power supply, but a limited range of other services. Given the nature and intensity of development in the rural residential areas, supporting infrastructure—such as road networks—may not be consistent with urban infrastructure standards. Future rural residential development will be limited to ensure that a range of regional planning objectives can be achieved.

Approximately one-fifth of all lots in the region are less than five hectares. There are more lots under five hectares in the rural zone than rural residential lots in rural residential zones. This has resulted in unplanned development in often remote locations, increasing the cost of providing appropriate infrastructure and services.

Policies

7.3.2 Rural residential development occurs within the Rural Living Area, rural residential zones identified in local government planning schemes, or within the Urban Footprint, where land is determined to be unsuitable for urban uses.

7.3.3 Rural residential land-use is located and developed ensuring:

- accessibility to facilities and services through proximity to existing townships
- efficient use of land and infrastructure
- fragmentation or loss of good quality agricultural land does not occur, or where it does, it does not lead to its isolation or diminished productivity over time
- impacts on environment, natural resource and landscape values are minimised
- conflicts with adjoining land uses are mitigated
- areas at risk from natural hazards are avoided.

7.3.4 Rural residential development does not compromise future urban growth by developing on land suitable for urban development.

7.3.5 Rural residential development is provided with appropriate infrastructure, consistent with, and supportive of, a rural locality.

Notes

Rural residential development can be an inefficient use of land. In the wrong location, rural residential development creates additional pressure for urban services, resulting in a range of adverse economic, social and environmental impacts. This can lead to:

- higher proportional cost of infrastructure, including road construction and maintenance
- higher transport costs
- fragmentation of land
- potential pollution over time through inefficient on-site effluent disposal
- weed proliferation due to the high cost of land maintenance
- potential cross-subsidisation of services by urban residents
- burden on infrastructure providers and community to fund and provide services
- increased social inequity due to reduced access to services.

The whole-of-life cost of rural residential development will be a major consideration in the allocation of additional land for rural residential development.

The establishment costs of purchasing residential land in rural residential areas can be comparatively cheap; however, costs of travel, access and provision of infrastructure, services and maintenance will be considerably higher than locations within towns and centres over time.

Rural residential development in the Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area

Rural residential land that is significantly constrained, or located in small isolated patches, is generally contained in the Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area. Further subdivision in these areas should be avoided to ensure additional households are not established in locations where infrastructure is not readily available. There are also additional safety concerns in remote locations as a result of natural hazards or reduced access to services.

Future management of existing rural residential land will minimise impacts on environmental and landscape values, including management of pest plants and animals, and mitigate potential risks from flooding, bushfires, landslides and other hazards.

Rural residential development in the Rural Living Area

The Rural Living Area contains the majority of existing rural residential zoned lands found in the region. Some areas that are well located with regard to urban services and facilities have alternatively been included in the Urban Footprint. Those areas in the Urban Footprint will be considered for future transition to urban use where suitable.

The Rural Living Area does not capture all areas that are currently used for, or identified in, planning schemes as rural residential.

7.4 Housing choice and affordability

Principle

7.4.1 Housing meets the needs of the community, considering all life cycle stages and varying economic circumstances.

Affordable, appropriate, safe and secure housing is a basic human need, and a critical component of community wellbeing, labour market efficiency and social cohesion. Many centres in the region suffer from a serious shortage of affordable and accessible housing, particularly low income households.

To meet housing needs, flexible land-use policies with a range of housing options and tenure in locations that are accessible to services, employment and community facilities are required.

Policies

7.4.2 A range of housing choices are accessible, sustainable, respond to demographic characteristics and will be adaptable to the changing needs of residents and households over time are available.

Programs

7.4.3 Monitor housing prices, land availability and other factors that affect housing costs as part of the *Queensland Housing Affordability Strategy*.

7.4.4 Consider opportunities for affordable housing in the disposal or redevelopment of government property and surplus land.

7.4.5 Develop and maintain local residential profiles across the region to identify specific housing priorities for each area, with links to funding allocation.

Notes

The changing demographics of the region have resulted in a significant shift in consumer housing demand. The need for affordable, accessible housing, and for housing choice for single adults, communal living arrangements and single parent families, is growing. There are a number of groups that suffer from housing stress, including working families, Indigenous families and young singles on fixed incomes. Equally, there is a growing demand for high quality, high value housing and apartments, as financially independent retirees migrate to the region.

Determining the affordability of housing requires the consideration of more than the initial purchase price to individual owners. It must also include costs of transport, proximity to employment, education and services, and the cost to the community of funding infrastructure.

State Planning Policy 1/07: Housing and Residential Development

State Planning Policy 1/07: Housing and Residential Development confirms the need for housing choice to be addressed through planning. It requires local government, in the preparation of planning schemes, to analyse and provide opportunities to respond to the housing needs of the community.

Accessible housing incorporates universal design principles, which provide for buildings that are versatile and comfortable for a diverse range of people at different stages of their lives. In a dwelling designed according to universal design principles, it is easy to move around, and the operation of fittings and features caters for people of all ages and abilities. The dwelling is also easily accessed by occupants and visitors. The Urban Land Development Authority's *Accessible Housing Guidelines* provide guidance on how developers and builders may develop accessible housing.

Housing designs should also take into account regional climatic variables, energy-efficiency initiatives, and the diversity of housing type and tenure required to satisfy community demand.

Queensland Housing Affordability Strategy

In 2007, the Queensland Government released the *Queensland Housing Affordability Strategy*. The goal of the strategy was to bring state land to market more quickly, and to help the market to respond more effectively in providing housing.

The strategy provides for a more competitive and responsive land and housing market by significantly reducing the timelines and associated holding costs of bringing new homes to the market.

For more information visit www.ulda.qld.gov.au.

8. Urban form

The towns and cities of the region are accessible and build on their heritage, character and liveability through designs that respond to the environment and the provision of high quality urban green space.

The urban form of the towns in the region provide for a pleasant environment for residents and visitors to live, work and play. It reinforces community identity and contributes to an efficient and sustainable urban structure. New development in the region should be responsive to existing urban environments, community views and identified heritage values. It will reinforce community values, existing infrastructure and green space networks.

Town and city centres underpin the economic and social activities in the region. This role will be reinforced as centres adapt over time to accommodate diverse activities, including residential development that incorporates a range of housing forms and aged care. An efficient and responsive urban centre provides greater opportunities for:

- social interaction
- use of public space
- development of walkable neighbourhoods
- climate responsive development
- assisting in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

It is important that, while accommodating growth in the region, the historic and character elements of existing towns and cities currently enjoyed by residents are protected. Historic and character values are particularly present in the rural towns of the region, and support and improve their amenity and environmental qualities.

Strengthening the role of rural towns within their communities is a key outcome of a sustainable future. Rural towns facilitate significant economic activities and social services for their residents.

8.1 Urban form

Principle

8.1.1 The urban form reflects local climate, character and identity, and supports compact, accessible, active and healthy communities.

Urban form is the combination of all urban elements, incorporating:

- building shape and design, including character and identity
- built streetscape and urban structure
- the physical layout through the subdivision pattern, including public and private space
- the interrelationship of activities and functions of centres or towns
- open space and recreation areas.

Urban form differs from place to place, and is relative to its location and function. Centres within the region have excellent examples where competing needs have been balanced to create functioning urban areas, creating strong sense of place, accessibility, safe public spaces, inviting landscaping and urban green space, and opportunities for social interaction.

New development has the opportunity to contribute positively to the urban form through a compact, well-designed development that integrates with the existing urban structure.

Mary Poppins statue, Maryborough *Courtesy of Ray Cash Photography*

Policies

8.1.2 Road and pathway networks cater for walking and cycling and facilitate operation of public transport systems.

8.1.3 Opportunities for travel by public transport, cycling and walking are provided to access major trip generators such as employment nodes, across urban communities and to schools, community facilities, open space and public transport interchanges, and include end-of-trip facilities.

8.1.4 Urban areas have an integrated, high quality, urban green space network that caters for community and environmental needs.

8.1.5 Accessible and transit oriented community principles and development practices are applied to the planning and design of centres, having regard to local circumstances and character.

8.1.6 Complementary businesses and industries are co-located within urban areas to minimise transport demand, freight movements and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as reduce the region's vulnerability to the impacts of oil dependency.

8.1.7 The built form is adaptable, allowing for change in use over time, while relating positively to the street to assist in the development of high quality streetscapes and public spaces.

8.1.8 Development of pedestrian friendly urban areas, with high levels of accessibility and integration with adjacent neighbourhoods, are actively pursued.

8.1.9 Broadhectare planning and development responds to adjacent environments, creating cohesive neighbourhoods identifiable as part of the broader community.

8.1.10 The design and siting of new development responds to the subtropical climate of the region.

8.1.11 Public spaces are robust and diverse, catering for the various needs of the community, including those of an ageing population.

8.1.12 Centres and adjacent areas are designed to accommodate residents and visitors with limited mobility, such as the aged.

Program

8.1.13 Consider opportunities to provide additional green space for community use on disposal or redevelopment of government property and surplus land, or the allocation of that land for industrial, commercial or residential development, particularly when it is located in proximity to urban areas.

Notes

The creation of well-planned, compact, self-contained, diverse and interconnected development nodes is vital for creating efficient transport systems and walkable, healthy communities. Density, housing choice, urban design and character are key components in delivering these outcomes. An appropriate mix of land uses is supported through planning schemes to achieve broader community and economic aspirations.

An efficient and responsive pattern of urban development provides greater opportunities for social interaction, for instance, through more effective use of public space. A climate-responsive urban form assists in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through various means, including the integration of passive cooling. Rural towns such as Kingaroy support high levels of walking and cycling due to a traditional grid street layout and gentle topography.

Maintaining and building on the existing character of towns, suburbs and centres is important to retain the identity of the place, particularly where community values are reflective of the location (e.g. rural or coastal). New development that integrates with, or builds on, these elements, or provides stronger links to the location, should be considered in planning decisions, and in the development of planning schemes within the region.

The inclusion of green space, public areas, and layouts that consider the historic patterns and topography are all important considerations that assist in the retention of existing character. Layouts should also enable transport considerations, both active and passive, and place public areas within nodes or accessible locations.

Integrated land use and transport planning

Integrating land use and transport is fundamental for maximising economic, environmental and social benefits for the region. These benefits include:

- enhanced community liveability and amenity, providing safer, healthier and easier access to jobs, schools and services
- better transport efficiency
- reduced congestion and greenhouse gas emissions as higher levels of self-containment limit the need to use a private car
- improved air quality due to reduced reliance on cars
- support for economically productive and energy-efficient land and infrastructure use
- enhanced accessibility to services for an ageing population.

Opportunities exist within urban areas to manage the supply of car parking in ways to promote non-car based transport. The location and design of car parking should consider the impacts on the pedestrian environment, ensuring that active uses are located on street frontages, and that vehicle entry points are minimised.

Planning for and integrating infrastructure and facilities to support active transport, like walking and cycling, also has health benefits. The Queensland Health and Heart Foundation toolkit, *Active healthy communities*, a resource package for local government to create supportive environments for physical activity and healthy eating, provides model codes for planning schemes to support more physical activity through active transport.

Shaping Up – A guide to the better practice and integration of transport, land use and urban design techniques also provides guidance on incorporating strategies to support public transport, cycling and walking into local planning frameworks and development assessment.

Transit oriented/ready communities

The population of the region is generally dispersed in low density urban areas. The projected growth of the region provides opportunities for the development of communities that are transit ready to encourage other means of transport for local trips. Specifically urban neighbourhoods and those areas within and surrounding town centres are located in larger communities of the region, such as Maryborough, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay and Gympie. Proximity to urban centres will enhance accessibility and support other means of transport for local trips, such as walking and cycling.

The principles of transit oriented/ready communities are identified in Table 2.

Applying the principles of transit oriented/ready communities is likely to support more efficient and frequent public transport services as demand increases over time.

Table 2: Principles of transit oriented/ready communities

Theme	Principle
Location	
Level of infrastructure and services	Development is focused on nodes or corridors with higher frequency transit services, and where infrastructure capacity exists or is viable to provide
Level of development	Development occurs at a higher scale, appropriate to the locality and the local government planning scheme intent
Land use	
Density	Incorporate higher densities appropriate to the location of the proposed transit oriented community
Mix	Integrate an appropriate mix of use and services
Activity	Contribute to greater activity in the location to provide a sense of vitality and security
Employment	Provide a mix of uses and services that contribute to local employment
Housing	Provide a range of housing options to meet the diverse needs of the community
Design	
Adaptability	The built form allows adaptation or redevelopment over time to adjust to changing demands, climate change impacts and greater use of low carbon transport options
Built form	Incorporate best practice subtropical design to promote character and amenity, and maximise energy and water efficiency
Open space	Create a positive sense of place, promoting social cohesion, interaction and safety
Parking	Car parking is located, designed and managed in a way that reduces the emphasis on the car as the main form of transport, supports walking, cycling and public transport, and promotes use of more fuel-efficient and low carbon vehicles
Transport	
Mode share	Facilitate higher mode shares for walking, cycling and public transport
Transport efficiency	Facilitate connections between transport modes, maximising the reliability and energy-efficiency of public transport services
Process	
Coordination	Planning requires a coordinated effort by all stakeholders, including state agencies, local government and the development industry
Community engagement	Engage with the community likely to experience change early and throughout planning and development processes to promote a sense of ownership and involvement
Timeframes	Outcomes are planned well in advance, take time to deliver and mature over time

Transit oriented development guide

Growth Management Queensland has developed a *Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Guide*. The guide outlines TOD concepts and encourages good practice for implementation in Queensland. It supports the delivery of a range of government priorities relating to climate change, housing affordability, congestion, health and physical activity. TOD supports the state government's *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* green and healthy aspirations by reducing car dependency, easing pressure to clear native vegetation for urban development, and encouraging walking and cycling.

Urban green space

Urban green space at regional, district and local levels can be achieved through careful planning and site-responsive design. Urban green space contributes to the legibility, identity and sense of place that helps build and maintain communities. Urban green space can take many forms, such as pathways through neighbourhoods, large trees in the main streets providing shade and meeting places (as are found in central Bundaberg or next to the old City Hall in Maryborough), and formal sporting facilities.

Other benefits of urban green space include opportunities to improve urban water management programs, passive cooling of urban environments, space for community gardens and community interaction.

There is a growing awareness of the need for urban green space to accommodate an expanding range of outdoor recreation activities that support a range of experiences and uses, including active and passive recreation, play, celebrations, adventures, and recreational pursuits such as walking, cycling, dog walking, mountain biking and skateboarding.

Urban green space supports the protection of biodiversity, landscapes and natural areas from probable impacts of urban growth. The biodiversity and scenic values of the region's urban areas support recreation and tourism, and help to define the character of the region. It is important that natural features and conservation areas are retained, with a balance being struck between the preservation of bushland and providing parks for active community use.

Sustainable buildings and subtropical design

The design and construction of buildings can be more sustainable and suitable for the region's subtropical environment through:

- climate sensitive design, material selection to minimise waste and greenhouse gas emissions, and efficient use of water and energy
- extensive use of appropriate native vegetation and large shade trees in private and public spaces, particularly along pedestrian and cycling corridors, and retaining existing native vegetation where possible
- access to open space and outdoor meeting places in the design of buildings and public space to reflect the proximity of nature in subtropical environments and the outdoor lifestyle
- incorporating passive cooling and wide verandas or roof overhangs to buildings.

8.2 Heritage and character

Principle

8.2.1 The region is distinctive and attractive, with a strong sense of place that reflects community values and aspirations, heritage and character.

The region's heritage and character are embodied in various elements, including its buildings, structures, streetscapes, townscapes, and places or items of Indigenous cultural heritage value such as landscapes. Heritage and character are unique, diverse and finite cultural resources that connect the community to its past. Conservation of heritage places, and their integration within new and evolving communities, is a critical consideration in planning for change.

Identifying and building on the key local characteristics that define a place is important to the community. Incorporating and reflecting important character elements in new development supports the existing urban fabric. This includes the recognition and protection of cultural heritage places and landscapes (either built or natural), and other aspects of the urban and rural environment identified over time as important to the community.

The value given to existing urban environments will need to be recognised and respected in the planning and delivery of new development. The strong character of rural townships and traditional town centres will be enhanced and integrated into future development and the planning of streetscapes and other public spaces.

Policies

8.2.2 The values, setting and context of significant heritage places are protected, supported and reinforced.

8.2.3 New development and redevelopment reinforces the existing and intended town and neighbourhood character, particularly the identity and roles of the town centre and main street.

Notes

Larger centres are characterised by central business districts with a mix of historic and modern buildings, with prominent street awnings, and several landmark buildings such as post offices and courthouses. Centres such as Gympie, Maryborough and Bundaberg historically provided a distinct retail and commercial focus through their urban form. The periphery of the Bundaberg centre is undergoing a change to include medium rise residential buildings in high quality urban settings. Towns such as Maryborough are well known for the number of pre-war houses that are relatively intact and true to their original form.

Rural towns within the region feature prominent main streets with covered footpaths and larger residential lots. These main streets typically provide a mix of uses, from retail and commercial to service industries. The North Burnett towns of Gayndah, Biggenden, Mundubbera, Eidsvold, Monto and Mount Perry are recognised as providing their own sense of character through the streetscape, and other key features such as war memorials and government buildings.

Coastal towns currently have a low rise suburban form; however, they are experiencing ongoing growth pressures, resulting in new development and the redevelopment of existing sites. Strategies to enhance a distinct coastal character in these communities can be incorporated into future planning, as well as the design of public works and open space.

Queensland Heritage Strategy

The *Queensland Heritage Strategy: a ten-year plan* establishes a framework for managing Queensland's heritage over the next 10 years to allow for growth and development of the state, while also conserving its valuable heritage places.

This strategy defines how Queensland—through the leadership of the government and the Queensland Heritage Council—will manage and coordinate heritage issues that are central to community sustainability, ethos and identity, and is built around five key directions:

1. improving the way Queensland understands and values its heritage
2. embedding heritage in mainstream policy and planning
3. strengthening Queensland's investment in managing and conserving its heritage
4. leading and partnering with government, community and industry to conserve Queensland's heritage
5. building the capacity of government, community and industry to conserve Queensland's heritage.

For more information visit www.derm.qld.gov.au/heritage.

8.3 Rural towns

Principle

8.3.1 Rural towns of the region provide local services to the broader rural community, and benefit from regional growth and development that does not diminish their individual character.

Rural towns are an integral part of the region, providing services to surrounding communities and a range of local employment opportunities.

Capacity building and encouraging value-adding to local rural production activities will be important factors in the long-term viability of these communities. Capturing opportunities for further economic growth should be considered to diversify employment and retain the region's youth in this sector.

Policies

8.3.2 Rural towns accommodate appropriate levels of growth, with consideration of the provision of efficient and supportive infrastructure and the intended roles of the town.

8.3.3 Economic and employment opportunities are encouraged in appropriate locations.

8.3.4 Local and district services are provided in rural towns, including commercial and social services.

Store fronts, Kilkivan *Courtesy of Ray Cash Photography*

Programs

8.3.5 Provide alternative options to maintain local access to primary health, social and educational services.

8.3.6 Encourage opportunities for value-adding to local rural production being undertaken within the local community.

8.3.7 Provide opportunities for, and encourage rural communities to participate in, planning for the region.

Notes

Towns like Monto, Childers, Kilkivan, Tiaro and Wondai are distinct rural communities that have a strong character and direct links with rural production and regional landscape values. They contain a concentration of business and employment that primarily serves local residents, primary production industries and a growing tourism market.

These assets will be enhanced in future planning decisions to ensure their long-term viability, and in particular their ability to generate local employment opportunities.

Livestock grazing, outside of Cherbourg *Courtesy of Ray Cash Photography*

8.4 Centres

Principle

8.4.1 The well-established regional centres and towns are the focal point for the provision of retail, commercial and social services, economic growth and diversity relative to the roles of each community.

The term 'centre' can refer to several different scales of activity. Within each town or city, there are likely to be a number of centres of differing size and purpose. Centres should:

- enable economic growth through including a mix of land uses
- provide appropriate locations for government investment in public transport, active transport, health, education, cultural and entertainment facilities
- integrate land use and transport to encourage reduced private vehicle use and support walking, cycling and public transport options
- provide a focus for community and social interaction
- accommodate higher density residential development, employment and trip-generating activities
- plan for and promote new development that supports and reinforces the centre's communal and heritage values and settings (i.e. the aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific and social significance).

Each town and city may have one or more centres of activity, often taking the form of the traditional town centre and main street, where commercial, administrative or employment activities occur. Regional centres are often characterised by a primary centre, as well as specialist activity nodes, e.g. industrial or service precincts, and a series of neighbourhood centres.

Reinforcing established town centres within each town and city as the focal point for commercial, retail, government services and civic activities will ensure they remain vibrant and sustainable by drawing on the additional customers that are attracted to a group of activities rather than single isolated businesses. This is further enhanced by increasing the centre's capacity to accommodate residential development in various forms, including mixed use development.

The regions' activity centres are shown on Map 9.

Policies

8.4.2 A wide range of employment opportunities and services are located in town centres to assist in their long-term sustainability and attraction for future investment.

8.4.3 Development supports and responds to the ongoing roles of town centres as the primary providers of services to the region.

8.4.4 Major employment and trip-generating activities, including residential uses, are located within the innermost areas of regional centres, in particular in Bundaberg, Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Gympie.

8.4.5 Town centres are the focal point for community interaction, commerce, social services and administration, which represent the identity of each town, cater for a wide range of compatible activities, and are characterised by a high quality and robust built form.

8.4.6 Land required for future growth of centres is protected from inappropriate fragmentation and land use.

Programs

8.4.7 Locate new regional level state government facilities for health, education, justice, community, administration and employment activities serving the region predominantly within the town centres of Bundaberg, Hervey Bay or Maryborough.

8.4.8 Locate new subregional level state government facilities for health, education, justice, community, administration and employment activities catering for the west, south and central areas of the region predominantly within the town centres of Gympie, Kingaroy or Gayndah.

8.4.9 Use centres' policies to guide government investment in infrastructure and service delivery.

Map 9: Regional activity centres

Note: this map is not intended to reference specific parcels of land and is to be treated as indicative only. This map should be used in conjunction with the copyright information on the inside front cover of this publication.

Notes

Centres will enhance the sense of community and provide a positive environment for people to live, conduct business, learn and play. For example, Gympie has a well-established town centre with a variety of government offices, community uses, businesses and other uses, including residences. There is also a significant shopping centre, with a range of businesses located close to it, and other smaller nodes such as neighbourhood centres in suburban locations.

Local planning frameworks will be consistent with centre policies by:

- spatially defining the boundaries of individual centres
- identifying the roles, functions and capacity of centres and townships
- identifying the types of centre activities that will be supported in each centre
- ensuring an appropriate mix of land uses is supported
- ensuring the appropriate provision of centres with sufficient capacity to accommodate local demands, while enhancing the role of the town centre as the primary location for commerce, social activity and regional services.

The traditional centres in most large regional communities have been affected by out of centre development, including the decentralisation of retail, industrial and government services. Further decentralisation is not supported.

However, where regionally significant levels of service exist outside a centre, consideration will be required in relation to how such developments can mature over time to accommodate the built form outcomes and the mixed use nature expected of a centre.

Centre activities should be located within defined town centres, only allowing them to occur outside of centres where:

- there is demonstrated public need and sound economic justification for its location outside a centre
- there are no alternative sites within the centre
- there would not be an adverse impact on the functionality of the existing centres, economically or socially, or on the urban infrastructure network (particularly road network)
- it does not consume land identified for commercial or industrial uses, including its buffers
- the site is readily accessible by a range of transport modes, including public transport (where available), walking and cycling.

Centre activities may include:

- retail, including large format retail, warehouses and factory outlet centres
- leisure, entertainment facilities and intensive sport or recreation uses, such as cinemas, restaurants, bars, pubs, nightclubs, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and major sports facilities
- employment, including service industries and professional offices
- key transport nodes and interchanges
- health, education, justice and emergency facilities
- arts, culture and tourism, theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities
- open space such as beaches, esplanades, botanical gardens, parks and malls
- community facilities such as libraries, halls and churches
- higher density housing
- major trip generators such as food markets.

Enclosed retail formats are generally not supported, as they connect poorly to surrounding communities, do not have streets for social interaction, and do not support sufficient non-retail jobs. Development in centres should address the street frontage, integrate with other surrounding public spaces, and minimise visual and pedestrian accessibility impacts of vehicle parking and manoeuvring areas.

Higher densities may be located within, and adjacent to, the town centres of Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Gympie and Kingaroy. Future development of centres should also include adequate provision for small businesses, expansion of existing businesses, and new business and industry that best serve the needs of local residents.

Industrial development

Additional capacity to accommodate industrial activities will need to be provided at Bundaberg, Maryborough and Gympie to satisfy demand to 2031. Other localities will also require opportunities for industrial development to provide opportunities for new investment in the region.

This will require detailed local planning that establishes appropriate locations for industrial development, particularly when current supply is inappropriately located or does not meet the desired characteristics for target industries. For example, Murgon has considerable land in the industry zone; however, this is held by one landowner and accommodates buffers for the meatworks facility. Additional industrial land will be required through the region over time to provide opportunities for a diverse range of industries.

9. Strong economy

A thriving regional economy that is sustainable, resilient and robust, and advances the prosperity and liveability of communities within the region.

The success of the region's economy will be supported by strengthening its competitive advantage, harnessing its natural resources and assets, and developing sustainable and diverse business, industry and tourism sectors. Economic development and population growth will support the development of higher order services and diverse employment opportunities within regional centres such as Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Maryborough and Gympie, contributing to lifestyle factors that help attract and retain skilled workers within the region. Establishing appropriate planning strategies would further stimulate investment and growth, and enhance liveability within communities.

With substantial natural economic resources strategically located between South East Queensland and the industrial hub of Gladstone, and rapidly developing resource regions such as the Surat Basin, the region is placed to expand its economic growth potential.

Proximity to growing markets surrounding the region also presents possible 'overflow' opportunities from adjoining regions. The region has the strong potential to introduce new manufacturing prospects to support supply chains across southern Queensland.

Economic development in the region will be supported where expansion enables sustainable investment and growth opportunities.

9.1 Strong economic leadership

Principle

9.1.1 Strong economic leadership attracts and drives regional economic development and investment.

Economic leadership is required to ensure that the region is well-placed to capitalise on investment and economic development opportunities. It will provide business and industry opportunities to:

- share information and identify new and additional opportunities
- communicate effectively with multiple audiences
- attract investment internal and external to the region.

A strong region-wide economic leadership group, focused on supporting economic development, will send a strong message to potential investors that the region welcomes new and expanding employment industries and will stimulate economic development. This needs to be supported by a willingness in the region to seek out investment and to encourage and support potential investors.

Policies

9.1.2 The region's economic voice is strengthened, and its competitive advantages and assets promoted.

9.1.3 Private and public investment and reinvestment is facilitated to strengthen the region's economy.

9.1.4 Attractive business environments are created that support business enterprise and industry and make doing business easier.

Programs

9.1.5 Improve regional economic leadership frameworks through a regional economic development organisation.

9.1.6 Encourage opportunities to leverage economic growth from adjoining regions, and at the state, national and international levels.

9.1.7 Develop and enhance strategies to attract business and industry expansion and investment opportunities within the region.

9.1.8 Identify and remove growth constraints and impediments to business to encourage new business and investment attraction.

Notes

The region is diverse and has varied economic interests (Map 10), and its competitive advantage and range of economic assets should also be protected and promoted accordingly.

Wide Bay Burnett Regional Economic Development Strategy

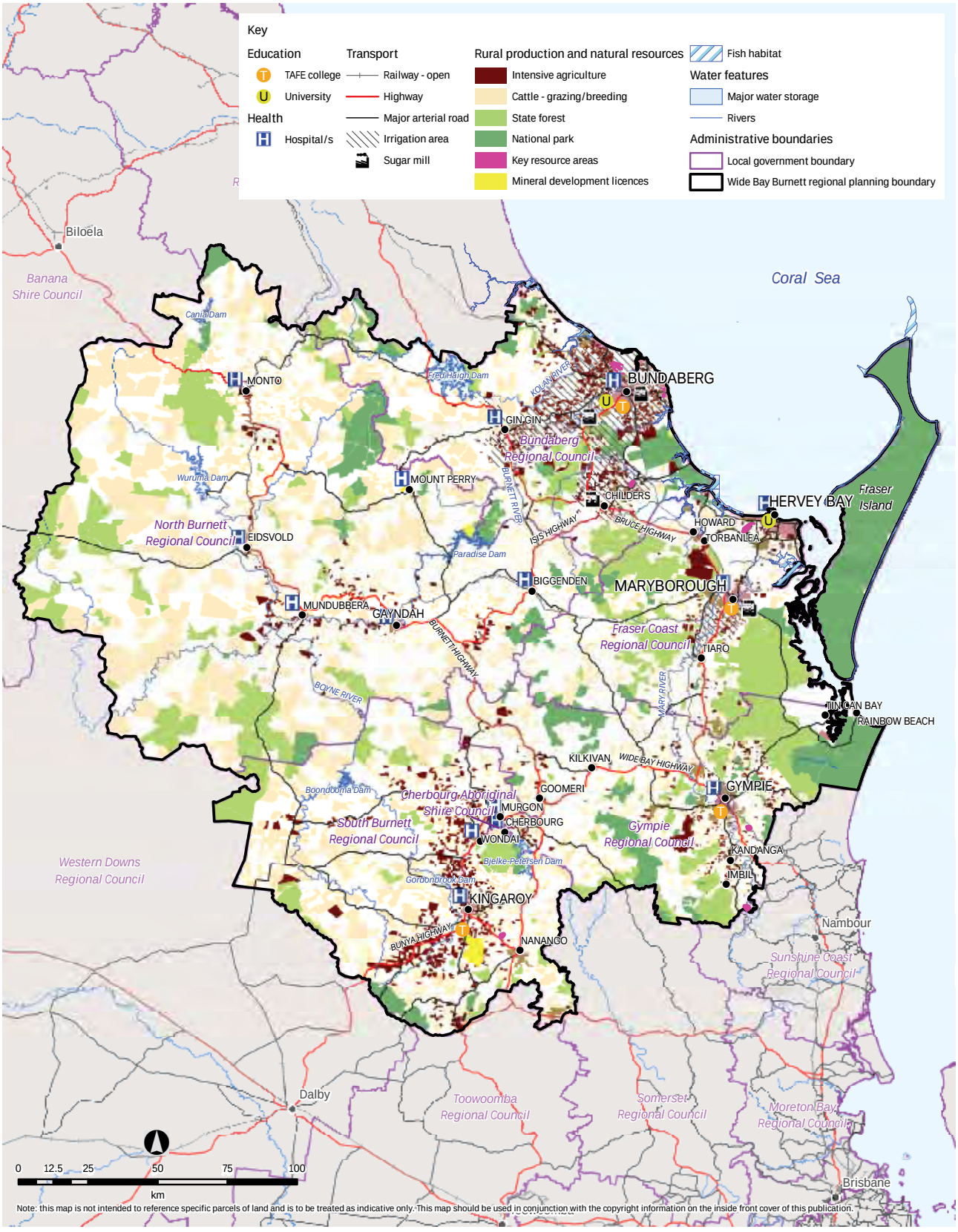
The *Wide Bay Burnett Regional Economic Development Strategy* will be a non-statutory framework that supports regional economic development. The economic vision and strategies will identify long-term growth and development opportunities to influence the historic patterns of unemployment and low labour force participation, building on work underway in industry development, provision of infrastructure, skilling and job creation. The strategy will articulate, guide and identify future business and industry investment opportunities, and establish measurable targets to align with the strong economy principles.

The region is well-positioned to take advantage of resource opportunities, including the expanding liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry within the Surat Basin and Gladstone and its proximity to South East Queensland markets. Opportunities could be explored for the development of supply chains to capitalise on industrial and resource development in adjoining regions, for example, Gladstone, the Surat Basin and the Sunshine Coast.

In the case of LNG, employment opportunities will be available in Gladstone, and there may be opportunities for supply chains to participate in contracts in both Gladstone and resource opportunities such as the Surat Basin. The industrial strength of the region in its established industrial and manufacturing sectors can also be applied to service and supply adjoining regions, particularly the northern areas of South East Queensland.

Vegetable crop, Bundaberg *Courtesy of the Department of Environment and Resource Management*

Map 10: Economic



9.2 Infrastructure supporting job creation and business opportunities

Principle

9.2.1 Suitable land, infrastructure and facilities are available to enable economic and employment growth in the region.

The settlement pattern supports the protection, expansion and enhancement of existing land and facilities, and creates the opportunity to accommodate anticipated economic and employment growth.

Strategically located land for existing and future business and industry use should be protected from inappropriate use and the encroachment of incompatible land uses. Any proposal that could erode the future use of such land for business and industry purposes should be reviewed against the long-term strategic business, industry and employment needs of the region, and requires significant justification to support its development.

Policies

9.2.2 Strategically located land and facilities for future business and industry uses are protected from incompatible development.

9.2.3 The long-term security of existing and future strategic infrastructure and services corridors (including disused corridors) is provided for in the identification and protection of those areas.

9.2.4 A mixed range of integrated, co-located employment opportunities with residential development is promoted and supported in appropriate locations.

9.2.5 Natural economic resources are identified, managed and available to support the economic development of the region.

9.2.6 New rail, port and aviation service providers are attracted to the region to support the existing industry and provide new services.

Programs

9.2.7 Investigate corridors for potential future gas pipelines from the Surat Basin to Bundaberg and the South Burnett, including Tarong.

9.2.8 Consider future employment needs and enterprise land requirements, including type, location and timing, in land-use planning.

9.2.9 Adopt a whole-of-government approach to maximising the availability of serviced industrial land around key transport infrastructure (including airports) to ensure long-term economic development.

Notes

The growth of the regional economy depends on improving the competitiveness of business and industry. Business and industry must be able to expand in appropriate locations, and have access to infrastructure and services of appropriate capacity. Strategically located land and facilities in areas with good road, port, airport and rail access should be secured for business and industry serving the wider region, and importing and exporting goods and services outside the region.

Urban consolidation and growth should support the protection, expansion and enhancement of existing land and facilities supporting business, tourist and industry activity, as well as deliver additional land to accommodate anticipated economic growth. Opportunities for new regionally significant employment growth are identified through the DAs and advanced through further planning of these areas.

Additional business and industry lands are identified adjacent to regional centres to support the region's future economic and population growth. This will enable the region to maximise its locational advantages to national and regional transport networks, regional level services, and a ready workforce. Proximity to growth opportunities and availability of suitable land are significant advantages for the region and an attraction for new investment. Potential examples of land suitable for business and industry expansion include:

- Bundaberg—strategic port land at the Port of Bundaberg, one of the last available operating ports on the Queensland coast with significant future development potential
- Gympie—land to the east of the town may be available for business and industry opportunities gained from the future bypass road, and take advantage of the lack of any substantial industrial land holdings in the adjoining Sunshine Coast subregion
- airports—there are two major airports in the region (Bundaberg and Hervey Bay), with additional capacity available at the Maryborough Airport. Bundaberg and Hervey Bay airports support commercial and non-commercial passenger operations, and opportunities exist for the redevelopment and expansion of existing airport activities. Additional development opportunities could also be explored across the region's other aeronautical facilities.

State Planning Policy 1/02: Development in the Vicinity of Certain Airports and Aviation Facilities ensures the safety and efficiency of operational airspace and the general functioning of aviation facilities. The Bundaberg, Hervey Bay and Maryborough airports and their immediate surrounds are subject to the SPP.

9.3 Diverse and strong business and industry

Principle

9.3.1 Business and industry grows through diverse and strong sectors building on the region's competitive advantages, including its extensive environmental assets.

The regional plan provides for business and industry growth by:

- setting the preconditions required to enable growth opportunities for existing and future business and industry
- strengthening economic activity around centres and facilities
- encouraging diversification within existing business and industries, and promoting new business and industry to build on regional and subregional competitive advantages
- facilitating innovation and the development of technology and skills
- identifying and securing sufficient land, marine areas and infrastructure to facilitate economic growth.

The regional economy has a number of advantages, including the region's proximity to markets and infrastructure in South East Queensland and the rapidly growing mining regions of Central Queensland and Eastern Downs, which present significant opportunities for economic growth.

Policies

9.3.2 Opportunities for clustering complementary businesses and industries are supported, with appropriate locations for future expansion of those activities planned and secured ahead of time.

9.3.3 The region is renowned for business competitiveness by establishing and maintaining links between town centres, business precincts and key transport and communication networks and other associated infrastructure.

9.3.4 Opportunities are created to leverage economic growth from adjoining regions, and at the state, national and international levels.

9.3.5 Land use and infrastructure planning facilitates the expansion of key industry sectors and existing business precincts such as aviation, manufacturing, aquaculture, agriculture, mining and marine industry sectors.

9.3.6 Port facilities, airports and other economic infrastructure that facilitate trade and expand export capacity are protected and enhanced to meet the growing economic needs of the region.

9.3.7 Opportunities for economic development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are promoted.

9.3.8 Value-added food processing and manufacturing prospects are improved and supported in the region, while encouraging the expansion of production and processing of agricultural products.

9.3.9 Suitable locations and infrastructure are identified to facilitate the development of high value-added and knowledge-based business and industries.

9.3.10 A mix of business and employment opportunities are integrated into new residential development to support local economies.

Programs

9.3.11 Raise business competitiveness by using the government's export, business improvement, sectoral development and education skills programs.

9.3.12 Identify and support value-added food processing and manufacturing opportunities, while encouraging the expansion of production and processing of agricultural products within the region.

9.3.13 Maximise opportunities for the development of supply chains to capitalise on industrial and resource development in adjoining regions, for example, Gladstone, the Surat Basin and the Sunshine Coast.

9.3.14 Support innovation, growth and profitability of the agricultural production sector through protection of land, research and development, and skilling.

9.3.15 Develop industry clusters and partnerships, targeting industries relevant to the region's competitive advantages and market opportunities.

Notes

To prepare the region for future investment, a range of approaches needs to be taken, potential investment constraints need to be addressed, and the region's readiness for investment improved.

This includes encouraging local business enterprise to secure major private sector contracts and implement local industry participation plans.

The region is identified as one that, subject to appropriate environmental safeguards, may be highly suitable for marine aquaculture. The draft *Great Sandy Regional Marine Aquaculture Plan* is at an advanced stage of development, and is set to attract investment in rack and line and ranching forms of marine aquaculture that can coexist with other activities, while maintaining environmental values in the area.

The future of land-based aquaculture in the region can be constrained by other land uses and competition for water resources. Areas of interest should be identified for further investigation. Improvements in supply chain from hatchery, grow-out, and finally transport to market are priorities for economic development of aquaculture in the region.

Fisheries and related industries are valuable to the region's economy, and port facilities that provide moorings and supply fuel, water and ice to fishing fleets and their supply chains should be protected and enhanced.

Natural advantages of the region include the high number of clear days per year, providing opportunity for solar energy generation and related industries. Other advantages include the diversity of natural environments and scenic landscapes, availability of water and agricultural land, and an amenable climate with an extended growing season.

The management of the region's natural economic resources will be critical to its economic future. One tool for management is the Wide Bay Burnett Framework for Natural Resource Management.

Agriculture

The gross value of farm gate production (GVP) of primary industries in the region was estimated at $1.1 billion in 2006–07, accounting for almost 12 per cent of Queensland's primary industry production. Total primary industry GVP in the region has grown at an average of around 6 per cent per annum since 2000–01. This growth is largely due to an expansion in horticulture (particularly fruit and vegetables); however, the lifestyle horticulture industry (nurseries, cut flowers and turf) has also shown significant growth (from $17 million in 2000–01 to just over $30 million in 2006–07).

Vegetables grown in 2006–07 provided 24 per cent of Queensland's GVP. However, for a number of specific commodities, the region was responsible for almost all of Queensland's production (e.g. snow peas and sugar snap peas—93 per cent of Queensland's production; sweet potatoes—84 per cent of production).

Sugar cane continues to be a major crop in the region, occupying approximately 53 000 hectares in 2006–07, or roughly 40 per cent of the total cropping area in the region. GVP for sugar cane was $128 million in 2006–07, and represented 11 per cent of Queensland's sugar production.

Cattle grazing is a significant rural business within the western portions of the region, and in 2007–08, it provided approximately 7 per cent of Queensland's beef gross value of commodities produced. Although the dairy industry has reduced within the region, it still produced 18 per cent of the value of Queensland's milk production in 2007–08.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Data, Agricultural Commodities

Industry – Centres of Enterprise

The state government has named six Queensland regions as Centres of Enterprise. Each region has identified key industries with significant potential to attract new investment, expand business and drive their economies forward. In the region the industries are:

Aviation—existing regional capabilities which may be further developed include design, manufacture and assembly of light aircraft and components, aircraft engines and avionics, supported by well-established local supply chains. The region also offers four major airports, new industrial estates with air site access, and opportunities for unmanned aerial vehicle testing and international pilot training facilities. The region has potential to become Australia's premier regional hub for general aviation and unmanned aerial systems.

Manufacturing—the region has developed strong capabilities and expertise in road, rail and component design; manufacturing, research and development; and precision engineering and advanced composite rolling stock structures. Further development of this capability can establish it as Queensland's regional centre for transport equipment manufacturing.

9.4 Employment and skills development

Principle

9.4.1 An entrepreneurial economy is fostered by focusing on innovation and technological capabilities to enhance existing and emerging business and industry.

A competitive economy is resilient by attracting and retaining entrepreneurs that take advantage of existing and potential opportunities. Developing a culture where individuals aspire to train and learn throughout life will assist in retaining young adults in the region, while tapping into the latent potential of the region's resident retirees.

The region has capacity to be innovative. Promoting and supporting innovation in business and industry increases the competitiveness, resilience and adaptability of the region, delivering growth and allowing the region to compete in a global environment.

A key issue for industry is developing the skills base and critical mass required to meet the increased demand for appropriately skilled workers. In many industries, there is currently a shortage of skilled and experienced workers. Matching skills training with employment opportunities and encouraging business and individuals to continually invest in skills are crucial.

Policies

9.4.2 Skills development is supported and workforce participation increased through improving access by the community, business operators and students to a range of regional education and training opportunities that are accessible and attractive to those users.

9.4.3 Sites for the development of innovative business and knowledge precincts are identified, and planning approaches to encourage the development of world-class facilities are promoted.

9.4.4 Science and technology, health, education and training infrastructure is reviewed, taking into account community needs, industry best practice, and options for delivering services more effectively where appropriate, including co-location of these activities with complementary businesses and services.

9.4.5 The region's current and future identified science and technology, health, education and training clusters are protected from incompatible development.

9.4.6 Planned and existing infrastructure and services (including telecommunications) are developed and expanded, with development of the region to underpin the competitiveness of science and technology, health, education and training clusters.

9.4.7 Support for existing and emerging clusters of science, innovation, research and development is evident in land-use planning decisions.

9.4.8 The region attracts and retains a diverse workforce, including promoting an enterprise culture in the education and training sector.

Programs

9.4.9 Provide services such as employment preparation and accredited vocational training courses to young people at risk of long-term unemployment and older workers, including initiatives to capitalise on opportunities from the proposed LNG industries, particularly the future employment opportunities from the relative proximity to Gladstone and its potential future demand for labour.

9.4.10 Implement job creation programs, such as Queensland's Green Army, that contribute to natural asset management and boost local industries such as tourism and hospitality.

9.4.11 Develop and enhance leadership and mentoring programs that promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

9.4.12 Develop training and skills initiatives that meet and respond to the requirements of business and industry in the region, particularly through Skilling Queenslanders for Work, Productivity Places programs and trade training.

9.4.13 Develop and support programs that enable the population to develop skills, targeting areas of specific need such as tourism services, trade training, training of unemployed youth and retraining older workers.

9.4.14 Promote partnership programs between research and training facilities and business and industry.

Notes

At present, the region compares unfavourably with national averages for intermediate and higher level skills. This is partly explained by the low level of adults taking employment-related training, the high level of retirees, and the low percentage of graduates and postgraduates remaining in the region. Raising skills will increase competitiveness and profitability for businesses, enhance career options, and lead to higher incomes and an improved quality of life for individuals.

A range of services that respond to the region's changing needs could include employment preparation and accredited vocational training courses. The opportunities presented by the proximity of the region to Gladstone and proposed LNG industries present a variety of employment prospects for young people at risk of long-term unemployment and older workers.

Securing enterprise opportunities is vital to regional productivity, job creation and competitiveness. It is important to encourage a culture of enterprise as early as possible, including within the school system.

Similarly, there is a real opportunity to build on, or harness, existing skills in the retired or semi-retired population. Providing opportunities for the realisation of ambition and prospects for high growth will help enterprises become major innovators. This will demand access to an effective range of business support systems and a skilled labour pool.

Skills development will be supported by improving access by community, business operators and students to education and training opportunities.

This region has excellent educational institutes from primary through to tertiary levels, as well as vocational centres serving the community. The ongoing development of the University of Southern Queensland in Hervey Bay and Central Queensland University in Bundaberg will be key factors in diversifying economic activity and increasing access to education and training in the region.

Investment in science and technology, health, education and training infrastructure would enable further growth and development within these sectors, and may assist in retaining skilled workers and youth in the region.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

The *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative has built a strong reputation for increasing the workforce participation of vulnerable individuals and communities. Facilitating local employment solutions through partnerships between government agencies, community organisations, employers and education and training providers has resulted in more than 70 per cent of participants in employment or training 12 months post-participation.

For more information visit www.employment.qld.gov.au.

Jobs First: Delivering Jobs for Queensland

The *Jobs First: Delivering Jobs for Queensland* strategy sets out a four-point plan to maintain and create jobs statewide. The strategy is also being used to engage regional economic leaders and crystallise the joint investment priorities to build strong resilient regional economies.

For more information visit www.deedi.qld.gov.au.

9.5 Tourism development

Principle

9.5.1 The existing commercial tourism market is complemented by a diverse range of new sustainable tourism opportunities to build the local economy and employment sector.

Tourism is a significant driver for growth throughout the region, with extensive flow-on effects for local economies. Opportunities exist to widen and deepen the tourist sector to promote traditional tourism, sport tourism, agritourism, enhanced lifestyle including cultural history, organic farming, recreational fishing, beach and hinterland retreats, and ecotourism activities (such as diving, cruises, whale watching, beach-combing, wilderness camping, and flora and fauna exploration at coastal and rainforest locations).

The future expansion of tourism opportunities recognises the requirement of low impact, nature-based tourism attractions to be located within, or in close proximity to, areas of high ecological significance. Where appropriate, this will allow for investment in nature-based tourism opportunities that would provide commercially viable return on investment and an economic contribution to Queensland's protected areas such as Fraser Island. These facilities play an important role in increasing visitor awareness about the values that make this a region of outstanding ecological significance and improving the overall visitor experience.

Policies

9.5.2 Global best practice design is encouraged when developing and maintaining tourism infrastructure.

9.5.3 Safe, reliable and appropriate access provides connectivity to the region's tourism accommodation, experiences and attractions.

9.5.4 A range of visitor accommodation is provided in urban, coastal and rural areas.

9.5.5 Emerging tourism industry sectors that build on the subregional and regional competitive advantages are facilitated and appropriate infrastructure and land area is provided to support new tourism ventures.

9.5.6 The region's natural economic assets are appropriately managed and used to maximise sustainable tourism and recreation opportunities that respect their setting.

9.5.7 Tourism within and adjoining areas of high ecological significance are conducted through suitable management frameworks that protect the values of the area.

9.5.8 Existing and future areas suitable for tourism accommodation, experiences and attractions are identified and protected from incompatible land uses or development.

9.5.9 Optimal locations for tourism opportunities within the region having adequate access to land, sea and air transport services are identified and preserved for the development of tourism accommodation, experiences and attractions, particularly tourism associated with Hervey Bay, Fraser Island, and the Great Sandy National Park.

9.5.10 Strategies to diversify the tourism industry are developed to actively promote tourism, lifestyle and cultural heritage opportunities.

9.5.11 New opportunities that achieve the principles of ecologically sustainable tourism, in accordance with ecologically sustainable principles and to obtain eco-accreditation, are supported.

Programs

9.5.12 Identify and use the natural environment and natural assets to maximise sustainable tourism and recreation opportunities.

9.5.13 Promote tourism opportunities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including tourism based on Indigenous culture, foods and heritage.

9.5.14 Encourage the development of tourism niches, such as horse-trail riding, recreational fishing, conferences and sporting events.

9.5.15 Facilitate appropriate levels of timely private and public investment to support and enhance the ecologically sustainable development of the tourism industry.

9.5.16 Support tourism operators and facilities to prepare management plans in accordance with ecologically sustainable principles and to obtain eco-accreditation.

Notes

The region is world famous for whale and turtle watching, access to the Great Barrier Reef and Great Sandy National Park, and as a family holiday destination. It is also the mainland access point to World Heritage listed Fraser Island, and supports a variety of domestic and internationally renowned tourism industries, including wine tourism, ecotourism, sport and recreation tourism, and agritourism. These growing markets will be a key driver of the future growth of the region. Direct flights from and to Brisbane and Sydney, with convenient transfers to Melbourne, provide major growth opportunities for the Fraser and Burnett Coast tourism industry.

The region offers a wide choice of accommodation options, from conventional hotels and apartments in the main centres, to small-scale nature-based tourism ventures focused on the natural environment.

Fraser Island, Hervey Bay and Bargara (Mon Repos Conservation Park) are key locations for existing and potential nature-based ecotourism accommodation, experiences and attractions. Appropriate land may also be identified for tourism development readily accessible from national, state and regional gateways to optimise commercially viable development and investment attraction.

Tourism opportunity plans

Tourism opportunity plans (TOPs) identify tourism opportunities within regions. TOPs identify key strategic new tourism products to meet future visitor expectations and demand, as well as infrastructure requirements, and are a focal document for the development of tourism in the region. Three TOPs apply to the Wide Bay Burnett region:

- *Bundaberg—Fraser Coast Tourism Opportunity Plan*
- *Sunshine Coast Tourism Opportunity Plan*
- *South East Queensland Country Tourism Opportunity Plan*.

10. Infrastructure

The region's communities have access to well-planned, coordinated, accessible, sustainable and reliable infrastructure.

Infrastructure is the physical and organisational structures which support communities, daily operation of activities in the region and underpin social and economic activity. It includes all transport, communication, social and energy networks and assets, and waste and recycling facilities.

The historical nature of development leading to high growth in coastal corridors and a generally dispersed regional settlement pattern has made the timely provision of accessible, well-located regional infrastructure a complex task.

Key challenges for regional infrastructure planning and coordination include:

- recognising and taking full advantage of the capacity of existing infrastructure to maximise effectiveness of previous investments in preference to building new networks
- exploring more efficient ways of prioritising, coordinating and working in partnership to plan and deliver infrastructure in line with growth
- seeking new, innovative opportunities for funding infrastructure
- considering climate change impacts and energy efficiency in planning, locating, designing, building, maintaining and operating new and existing infrastructure
- responding to changing demographic needs and economic development within the region to ensure infrastructure investments are appropriate
- building resilience to the impacts of oil dependency
- avoiding, minimising or mitigating against the impact of infrastructure on areas of ecological significance and other regional landscape values.

Water infrastructure, including considerations relating to managing demand, is predominantly considered in section 3.5.

Consolidating urban growth will help provide a more efficient and effective network of infrastructure and services for the community. Well-planned partnership approaches to the delivery of infrastructure will support existing development and the preferred settlement pattern. This can contribute significantly to strong economic growth and increasing employment opportunities within the region.

Major infrastructure and transport corridors in the region are depicted on Map 11.

10.1 Infrastructure planning

Principle

10.1.1 Efficient, well-planned infrastructure supports population growth, economic opportunities and service provision in a sustainable manner.

The region's growth, including the realisation of some local economic opportunities, is reliant on coordinated and timely planning of infrastructure. Sustainable infrastructure planning considers the funding and delivery of new infrastructure, and maximises the use of existing networks and efficiencies.

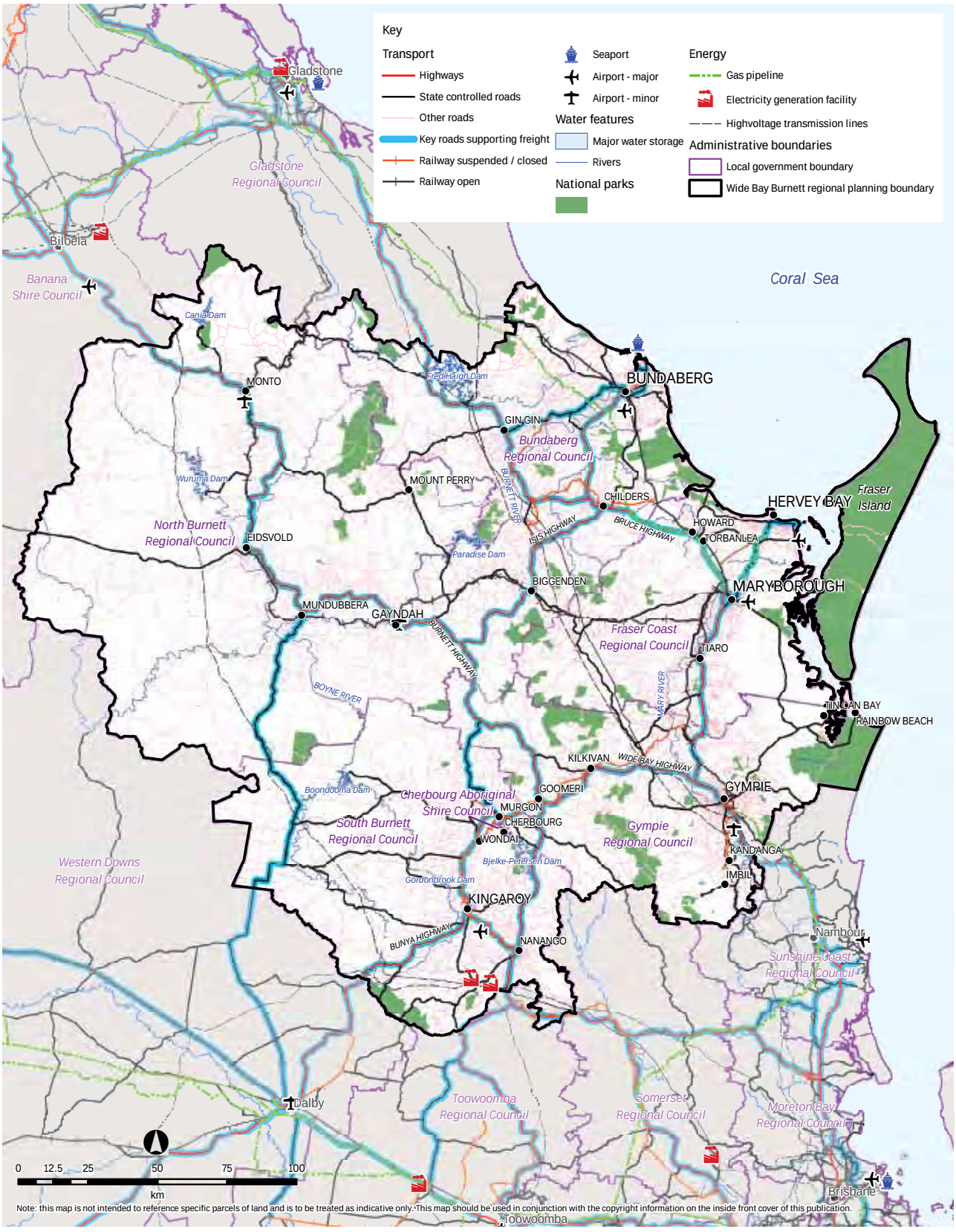
Growth should be prioritised to urban areas where infrastructure capacity exists, or where upgrades or new infrastructure can be provided in a cost-effective manner. Infrastructure supporting rural activities is designed at a scale appropriate for use. The effective and efficient planning and provision of new infrastructure, upgrades and maintenance will be achieved through improved coordination, collaboration and innovation. To achieve this, a shared level of understanding of infrastructure issues and priorities between all levels of government and private infrastructure providers is required.

Challenges facing many parts of the region are associated with connectivity and ageing road assets. These deficiencies can limit opportunities for desired local, subregional and regional interaction and self-containment.

Area strategies for transport will be prepared for a number of centres in the region, including Hervey Bay, Bundaberg, Maryborough and Gympie, to investigate future transport needs of localities within a total transport context.

Burnett River Bridge, Bundaberg *Courtesy of Murray Waite & Assoc*

Map 11: Transport and infrastructure corridors



Note: this map is not intended to reference specific parcels of land and is to be treated as indicative only. This map should be used in conjunction with the copyright information on the inside front cover of this publication.

Policies

10.1.2 Infrastructure is planned, coordinated, sequenced and delivered in a timely manner to support regional growth.

10.1.3 Growth is managed to maximise the use and benefits of existing infrastructure, and minimise the need for new infrastructure or upgrades.

10.1.4 Mechanisms and agreements for funding and charging for infrastructure are efficient, appropriate, realistic and transparent.

10.1.5 Infrastructure is located and designed to avoid or mitigate impacts from major catastrophic events such as cyclones, flooding and storm surge, and the anticipated impacts of climate change.

10.1.6 Demand management processes are designed and implemented to modify consumer behaviour, and support the transition to a carbon constrained and climate changed future.

Programs

10.1.7 Monitor and review infrastructure capacity to inform future infrastructure provision.

10.1.8 Develop, upgrade and maintain programs for managing existing and provision of new infrastructure in a timely manner.

10.1.9 Identify funding and delivery mechanisms for infrastructure projects.

Notes

The overall adequacy of infrastructure in the region needs to be assessed to confirm whether there is a shortfall in infrastructure provision to meet current population, industry and business demands. The capacity and opportunities for effective use of present infrastructure also need to be identified and considered. The delivery of new infrastructure or upgrades may not always be the most effective solution in an environment of finite resources.

Appropriate location of future development, and managing demand, should maximise use of current infrastructure through influencing consumer behaviours, rather than directing finite resources to new facilities or upgrades. Demand management initiatives can include community education, use of technology or pricing measures that reflect use.

Wide Bay Burnett Regional Infrastructure Profile – 2009

The *Wide Bay Burnett Regional Infrastructure Profile – 2009* documents and explains the state infrastructure that existed in the region at that time, and it provides a foundation for regional infrastructure planning.

Toward Q2

Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland aims for Queensland to be Australia's strongest economy by 2020, with infrastructure that anticipates and supports growth. This infrastructure refers to transport, water, energy and social infrastructure and services.

For more information visit www.towardq2.qld.gov.au.

Priority infrastructure plans

Priority infrastructure plans are an integral part of the Queensland Government's vision for the future—*Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*—making sure infrastructure is planned, funded and provides for anticipated growth.

In preparing priority infrastructure plans, local governments should consider Queensland Government infrastructure priorities. A priority infrastructure plan is the key tool in a planning scheme for integrating land-use planning and infrastructure planning. It assists in planning infrastructure in a coordinated, efficient and orderly way that encourages urban growth in areas where adequate infrastructure exists or can be provided efficiently.

For more information visit www.dlgp.qld.gov.au.

Shaping Tomorrow's Queensland

In May 2010, Queensland announced Shaping Tomorrow's Queensland as a response to the Queensland Growth Management Summit. One of the key initiatives under Shaping Tomorrow's Queensland is the development of a Queensland Infrastructure Plan (QIP), which clearly links infrastructure delivery with population and economic growth.

The QIP focuses on identifying the infrastructure to support Queensland's economic zones, providing a clear outline of short-term infrastructure projects, as well as forward planning for the longer term infrastructure needs of growing regions.

Further infrastructure planning for the region will provide a key mechanism for implementing the regional plan, and will inform future updates of the QIP.

For more information visit www.dlgp.qld.gov.au.

10.2 Protecting key sites and corridors

Principle

10.2.1 Current and future infrastructure sites and corridors are identified, protected and appropriately managed.

Sites and corridors for infrastructure such as transport, electricity, hospitals and schools need to be identified well in advance. These potential sites and corridors, and associated buffer areas, need to be recognised, preserved and acquired where necessary in the region to reduce overall costs.

Policies

10.2.2 Key infrastructure sites, related corridors and buffer areas are identified and protected.

10.2.3 Infrastructure planning seeks to avoid or, where not possible, minimise and offset impacts on areas of ecological significance and biodiversity networks.

10.2.4 Co-location of infrastructure is promoted where it will advance the efficient use of land, reduce construction and maintenance costs, and limit environmental impacts.

Programs

10.2.5 Identify opportunities for co-locating infrastructure, with an aim of reducing the need for new sites when new infrastructure is required.

Notes

Sites and corridors for infrastructure such as transport, electricity, hospitals and schools need to be identified well in advance and align with the planned location and extent of growth. Potential sites, corridors and associated buffer areas need to be recognised, preserved and acquired where necessary.

Co-locating infrastructure sites and corridors can potentially reduce the need for additional sites and therefore reduce overall costs.

Infrastructure sites and corridors required for identified growth areas will be considered as part of detailed investigations for these areas and, once identified, protected for future use.

10.3 Energy

Principle

10.3.1 Energy is reliably provided to support growth in an economically and ecologically sustainable manner.

The region's energy requirements are escalating due to population growth, industrial development and economic growth. Added pressure is occurring from changing consumer practices, such as the use of air conditioners and other high energy use items such as TVs. Long-term planning is required to meet the future energy needs of the population and enable economic growth.

It is important that the region supports growth by increasing energy efficiency per capita. The region contains significant electricity generation and transmission infrastructure in the form of power stations and high voltage lines. Tarong Energy is one of the main suppliers of energy in the region.

Opportunities for co-generation of electricity exist within the region that would contribute to waste reduction strategies and respond to rising energy demands, including potential generation at sugar mills and waste disposal sites.

Policies

10.3.2 Existing energy infrastructure and facilities are identified and protected.

10.3.3 Potential major energy infrastructure sites and corridors, which are to be explored as options for co-location, are identified, preserved and acquired.

10.3.4 The use of gas distribution networks are optimised and expanded and, where viable, the use of gas as an additional energy source is encouraged for new developments in the region.

10.3.5 Alternative energy supplies, including renewable energy, are supported.

Programs

10.3.6 Develop methods of ensuring the efficient use of energy in residential, commercial and industrial developments by influencing consumer behaviours.

10.3.7 Ensure that sufficient system capacity exists so that use of network infrastructure does not exceed levels generally accepted as good industry practice.

10.3.8 Identify areas with significant potential for renewable energy including solar, wind, geothermal and biomass generation.

Notes

The emissions intensity of electricity use in Queensland is reducing through energy efficiency and source substitution programs, such as increasing the use of solar hot water. Queensland has significant renewable energy resources, including geothermal, solar thermal, wind and biomass co-generation, which will potentially play a role in reducing Queensland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Electricity supplied by natural gas produces around half the greenhouse gas emissions of electricity from conventional coal-fired generation. Gas will therefore remain a key transitional fuel source for energy in Queensland.

Tarong Energy, established in 1997 and owned by the Queensland Government, is one of the state's most significant power generators, with the capacity to deliver 25 per cent of the state's power needs. It supplies a mix of generating and mining assets. Tarong and Tarong North power stations are co-located near Nanango in the South Burnett region. The coal power station has a combined capacity of approximately 1843 megawatts.

Sustainable housing

The Queensland Government is also investigating a number of ways to make homes more energy-efficient, such as the use of on-site solar generation, energy-efficient fixtures and fittings, natural ventilation, outdoor and indoor connectivity, and other design features. The 6 star (or equivalent) energy-efficiency standards for new homes and townhouses took effect in May 2010 across Queensland. For more information visit www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/sustainablehousing.

The sustainability declaration has been required under the *Building Act 1975* since January 2010. It is a checklist that must be completed by the vendor when selling a house, townhouse or unit. It identifies the property's environmental and social sustainability features, such as energy, water, access and safety.

ClimateQ: toward a greener Queensland

ClimateQ: toward a greener Queensland presents the next phase in Queensland's response to the challenge of climate change. The revised strategy presents investments and policies to ensure Queensland remains at the forefront of the national climate change response.

For more information visit www.climatechange.qld.gov.au.

Renewable Energy Plan

Queensland recently launched its *Renewable Energy Plan*, which aims to attract investment in renewable energy generation to Queensland under the Renewable Energy Target.

For more information visit www.climatechange.qld.gov.au.

10.4 Information and communication technology

Principle

10.4.1 All communities in the region are provided with modern, reliable, accessible and affordable information and communication services.

The provision of reliable mobile, internet and digital communications varies greatly through the region. The region's telecommunications are an essential part of the lives of the community. Opportunities to link specialist services (e.g. health and education) to the region, and the ability for the community to stay in touch, are necessities to promote liveability, economic growth and safety. Isolation and other elements of locational and social disadvantage are reduced through access to reliable communications.

Policies

10.4.2 Residents and visitors to the region have access to improved connectivity, reliability, coordination and delivery of the digital network, including telecommunications such as mobile access throughout the region.

Programs

10.4.3 Coordinate and deliver the installation of telecommunication cabling in developments when installing utilities such as underground water or electricity.

Notes

The installation of telecommunication cabling needs to be planned for, alongside other complementary utilities such as electricity.

The Australian Government has primary responsibility for the policy and regulatory environment for telecommunications.

National Broadband Network

On 7 April 2009, the Commonwealth Government announced the establishment of a new company to build and operate a new super fast National Broadband Network.

Under the Australian Government's new National Broadband Network, every house, school and business in Australia will get access to affordable fast broadband.

From 1 January 2011, the Australian Government implemented new arrangements to accelerate the installation of fibre cabling in new developments.

For more information visit www.dbcde.gov.au.

10.5 Waste and recycling

Principle

10.5.1 The region's waste is minimised, re-used or recycled, while promoting energy recovery.

Population and economic growth in the region will result in further increase in the generation of waste in the future. Finding ways for waste minimisation, and to better encourage and manage recycling, is important in responding to increasing demands for waste management.

Key challenges for the region are:

- identifying appropriate waste and resource recovery sites
- securing investment in waste recovery
- improving waste re-use and recovery of recyclables from households, business and industry
- maximising transport efficiencies
- identifying ways of reducing waste greenhouse gases
- educating consumers about waste management, minimisation and recycling.

Policies

10.5.2 Sites for future waste facilities and resource recovery precincts are identified, preserved and acquired where appropriate.

10.5.3 Waste minimisation, including the use of the waste hierarchy and good waste management principles, inform all land use and waste management policies.

10.5.4 Greenhouse gas emissions are minimised by diverting green and organic waste from landfill, and by implementing capture and re-use of landfill gas.

10.5.5 A regional integrated and coordinated system for waste management and resource recovery is developed and implemented to ensure efficiencies, economies of scale and innovation, and to recognise the total cost of waste management.

Programs

10.5.6 Use demand management and education to encourage better industry and community waste management practices.

10.5.7 Establish a coordination mechanism to improve regional information sharing and collaboration to produce more effective planning outcomes and to deliver an integrated response to waste.

10.5.8 Adopt integrated regional solutions for waste management and resource recovery, except where local facilities are more appropriate.

Notes

Continued growth places pressure on local governments in relation to waste management. The *Environmental Protection (Waste Management) Policy 2000* and the *Environmental Protection (Waste Management) Regulation 2000* were developed in consultation with local government and provide legislation for safer disposal practices and cost savings from improved planning and management of waste services.

Preferred waste management hierarchy and principles for achieving good waste management

The waste hierarchy moves from the most preferred to the least preferred methods of refuse management—waste avoidance, waste re-use, waste recycling, energy recovery from waste, and waste disposal. It also outlines principles for achieving good waste management practices, including:

- polluter pays principle—all costs associated with waste management should, where possible, be met by the waste generator
- user pays principle—all costs associated with the use of a resource should, where possible, be included in the price of goods and services developed from the resource
- product stewardship principle—the producer or importer of a product should take all reasonable steps to minimise environmental harm from the production, use and disposal of the product.

10.6 Social infrastructure

Principle

10.6.1 Social infrastructure is appropriately planned and located, accessible, adaptable and responsive to demographic change.

Social infrastructure refers to community facilities, services and networks that support individuals, families, groups and communities to meet social needs and enhance community wellbeing, including universal facilities and services such as education, health, emergency services, arts and cultural services, sport and recreation facilities, and community meeting places.

Population growth requires investment in the region's social infrastructure for the health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of communities. Facilities and physical location infrastructure enable people to be brought together and develop social capital, maintaining quality of life and developing skills and resilience essential for strong communities.

Key issues for social infrastructure planning and provision in the region include:

- maintaining existing facilities (such as health facilities or emergency facilities) in rural locations
- ensuring accessibility of social infrastructure, which covers both physical access and transportation to the facility
- ensuring that present and new social infrastructure can adapt to changing demographic need
- maximising efficiencies through partnerships, collaboration and joint funding arrangements
- responding to communities with differing needs, such as isolated rural communities and urban communities
- overcoming complexities of a dispersed pattern of settlement.

Policies

10.6.2 Social infrastructure is well located and accessible in relation to where people live, and the location of their transport, jobs and education.

10.6.3 Social infrastructure is planned in sequence with development, growth and demographic characteristics.

10.6.4 Appropriate sites for development of social infrastructure are identified, preserved and acquired in a timely manner.

10.6.5 Multipurpose community hubs are provided where appropriate, in a manner that enables co-location and integration of community facilities and services, and provides a focal point for community activity.

Programs

10.6.6 Engage in collaborative partnerships with private, public and non-government stakeholders to plan and deliver cost-effective and timely social infrastructure.

10.6.7 Develop and promote improved infrastructure and service access for those members of the community who are disadvantaged (including locational and social disadvantage).

Notes

Over recent times, the region has experienced strong population growth. This, combined with competitive funding processes for infrastructure, has left many communities with social infrastructure that is at or near capacity, with limited prospects for new investment. Measures such as clustering services, facilities and infrastructure, joint funding and planning, outreach servicing, capacity building and more collaborative planning efforts are all helping to ease this issue.

To address social infrastructure challenges, it is necessary to:

- provide timely, adaptable, efficient and coordinated social infrastructure
- ensure accessibility of social infrastructure
- secure safe and convenient sites for social infrastructure
- work in partnership with all stakeholders to identify and respond to social infrastructure needs of communities
- promote avenues and opportunities for co-location
- respond to needs of rural communities regarding new infrastructure, or maintenance or upgrades of existing infrastructure
- provide social infrastructure adaptable to changing community demographics
- ensure future growth is predominantly located within, or adjacent to, key centres.

The provision of social infrastructure is shared between local governments, Queensland government agencies, Commonwealth agencies and community organisations, with interest from others, including private sector service providers and developers. Coordination of planning and delivery between the range of responsible agencies and financiers is critical to the timely provision of social infrastructure.

10.7 Efficient, accessible and safe transport

Principle

10.7.1 An efficient and integrated transport system exists for the region that is safe and accessible.

Currently the region's integrated transport system is characterised by:

- heavy reliance on private vehicles
- minimal availability of public transport
- fragmented pedestrian and cycle networks
- minimal integration of density and transport facilities
- dislocated commercial areas
- significant areas of rural residential development.

Accessibility and transport choice should be increased by providing opportunities for people to travel by public transport and active transport to major destinations, including employment and education locations, health and welfare and support services, shopping centres and social venues.

Sustainable transport modes should be encouraged and promoted in the region to reduce reliance on private car travel. Rail and bus services provide public transport alternatives; however, they are currently underused in urban centres such as Bundaberg, Maryborough and Gympie.

Strategies that deliver appropriate facilities, improved networks and greater awareness promoting the use of these more sustainable modes should be developed and implemented. An efficient and connected urban public transport network that connects people with goods, services and each other is required to cater for the needs of larger centres in the region.

Policies

10.7.2 Development does not undermine the operational integrity, safety, efficiency or future expansion of major transport infrastructure and facilities, including airports, roads, ports, harbours and rail.

10.7.3 Appropriate walk and cycle networks result in safe and accessible communities.

10.7.4 Convenient and accessible public transport networks provide connections between significant trip generators.

10.7.5 Appropriate end-of-trip facilities for active transport users are incorporated into developments that are likely to attract or generate significant numbers of trips.

10.7.6 The transport network promotes opportunities for route and mode choice that are safe, support an efficient use of space and reduce oil dependency.

10.7.7 Improvements are made to connect within and to other communities by enhancing road and public transport networks.

10.7.8 The operational efficiency of the region's airports is maintained or enhanced through management and land-use planning decisions affecting the surrounding area.

10.7.9 Awareness of alternatives to private car travel is promoted.

10.7.10 The safety and wellbeing of road users are prioritised throughout the region.

10.7.11 The appropriate use of road networks is encouraged to improve efficiency by applying road hierarchy principles in new development.

Programs

10.7.12 Develop and support transport services and initiatives that provide access to educational, training and employment pursuits.

10.7.13 Support and promote community transport and community-based transport services that better connect communities.

10.7.14 Facilitate improved efficiency of existing transport terminals and develop new terminals at key locations to support a range of business, industry, tourism and recreation purposes.

10.7.15 Maximise existing transport assets, services and network capacity through effective investment, demand management and use of new technologies.

10.7.16 Develop and implement local area strategies for transport for key centres in the region.

Notes

Active transport (walking and cycling) should be encouraged through a connected network and enhanced community awareness of active transport opportunities. Plans and strategies should be developed to create a safer and more attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists, and optimise routes between centres or nodes, cross-town routes and major travel generators.

Disused rail and sugarcane corridors present a transport opportunity for recreational purposes, including walking, cycling or horse-riding trails, and may also provide opportunities for future public transport systems, infrastructure corridors and other alternative uses.

New development should incorporate safe and convenient access for cyclists and pedestrians. End-of-trip facilities will help promote active transport and should be incorporated into existing buildings and provided as part of new developments, especially where land uses are likely to attract or generate a significant number of trips such as business centres, workplaces, community facilities, educational facilities and retail development. For example, end-of-trip facilities may include bicycle parking, showers and change rooms.

Every community has individuals and groups for whom transport choice is limited—these include the elderly, disabled, young and people without private transport. Community transport can be initiated at a local level, and provide affordable access to activities and services, reducing community isolation and encouraging social interaction.

A safe and efficient transport network requires effective monitoring and management to address network capacity, safety and effectiveness. Ongoing developments in technology will continue to improve transport networks and systems for all users. A cooperative approach between all levels of government in applying new technology will contribute to road system efficiency. Examples include managing access to the road network for higher mass limit vehicles, providing information to road users and coordinating traffic signals and other road network management initiatives.

Encouraging the right traffic on the right road promotes efficiency in the road network and limits unnecessary trips or overuse of those assets. A defined road hierarchy sets a management framework for the road network and promotes alignment between the operation and function of a road. It directs policy and planning regarding access to roads, design of roads and the designation of specific freight and tourist routes.

Long-distance, high speed traffic should use arterials and highways, which have restricted access points and are designed for a high speed environment. Higher order roads should not be required to cater for local trips to ensure that the capacity, efficiency and safety of these major routes are not compromised. It is important also to identify key freight routes as part of a road hierarchy, as freight vehicles have specific needs and operate more efficiently on roads that have been designed to support such vehicles.

Urban development should occur in close sequence with the transport system to ensure best use of the existing network and alignment with the delivery of new infrastructure and services. Not all centres in the region are able to provide a full range of community services and specialist facilities. Ensuring the region has connected communities is a key consideration in the provision of transport infrastructure and services. Investment and development should firstly be encouraged in locations which can best benefit from the existing transport network, and secondly in a sequence that aligns with the anticipated delivery of new infrastructure and services.

The transport network and travel behaviour of the region should be developed to minimise greenhouse gas emissions, vulnerability to higher oil prices and reduced oil supplies, and the risks posed by climate change impacts to the network.

Wide Bay Burnett Integrated Regional Transport Plan

The *Wide Bay Burnett Integrated Regional Transport Plan* is currently being developed. The overall aim of the transport plan is to provide a safe, efficient, integrated and sustainable transport network and services that support economic development, accessibility and the preferred settlement pattern, in line with the regional plan.

The *Wide Bay Burnett Integrated Regional Transport Plan* will seek to address changing transport challenges, respond to and integrate with the land-use planning framework established for the region through the regional plan.

Passenger Transport Network Plan

To facilitate public transport in the region the Department of Transport and Main Roads is preparing a *Passenger Transport Network Plan*. The *Passenger Transport Network Plan* will respond to future transport challenges identified to support the anticipated growth in the region. Key tasks in the *Passenger Transport Network Plan* preparation include the identification of high level route frequency and interchange locations for each region.

Principle Cycle Network Plan

To facilitate cycling in the region, the Department of Transport and Main Roads will prepare a *Principle Cycle Network Plan*. A *Principle Cycle Network Plan* is an agreed framework for cycle network planning within a region, and guides a consistent approach to delivering cycle infrastructure, primarily for transport purposes. Developed in consultation with local governments, state agencies and bicycle interest groups, it is a strategic regional-level document that identifies existing and future principle cycle routes. The plan guides local government in delivering cycle infrastructure on council-controlled roads and through parklands. It also informs planning and construction of principal cycle routes on state-controlled roads.

Action Plan for Walking

The Queensland Government's *Action Plan for Walking 2008–2010*, which is under review, advocates people from all sectors of the community choosing to walk for transport and enjoyment through the creation of practical pedestrian routes and attractive facilities. This in turn will help to create a healthier population, connected communities, and an integrated, affordable and sustainable transport system.

For more information visit www.tmr.qld.gov.au.

Active, healthy communities

Active, healthy communities: a resource package for local government to create supportive environments for physical activity and healthy eating provides model codes for planning schemes to support more physical activity through active transport. Similarly, the *Shaping Up – A guide to the better practice and integration of transport, land use and urban design techniques* also provides guidance on incorporating strategies to support public transport, cycling and walking into planning schemes and development.

For more information visit www.tmr.qld.gov.au and www.activehealthycommunities.com.au.

Bargara beach *Courtesy of Ray Cash Photography*

10.8 Freight

Principle

10.8.1 The efficient and effective movement of freight supports regional growth.

The region currently has one active sea port, two regional airports and a number of smaller airports and airstrips, a rail line that carries daily freight services, several Q-Link (QR Freight) depots and a road network with a series of freight routes, B-double and higher mass limit routes. Future economic growth will rely on the ability of the transport networks in the region to move freight easily to, through and from the region for import and export of goods and produce.

Delivery of essential goods to communities, and the economic benefits of moving materials and commodities in and out of the region, remain viable activities. Primary production such as grazing and cropping, food and beverage processing, timber growing and milling, manufacturing and the transport and logistics industry will continue to rely on efficient freight movement networks as these sectors expand and diversify.

The region also supports a strong transport-related industry, which includes manufacture of trains, sports aircraft and aero-engines.

Policies

10.8.2 Freight-dependent activities are located near, and have ready access to, strategic transport networks and facilities to maximise freight efficiencies.

10.8.3 Impacts from freight operations, including freight movement on sensitive land uses, are minimised.

Programs

10.8.4 Facilitate opportunities for freight to use the most efficient mode, or combination of modes, of transport.

10.8.5 Develop partnerships between all levels of government and industry stakeholders to improve freight efficiency and movement to, from and within the region.

10.8.6 Develop and implement regional freight and road network strategies.

10.8.7 Encourage freight movement on identified priority freight routes.

Notes

Changes in industries in recent years, notably sugar and timber, have prompted a shift in the movement of goods in the region. Freight movements that were previously regulated or restricted are now placing pressure on the freight network in ways that were not previously anticipated. An expansion in the industries requiring or preferring fast, direct transit and just-in-time delivery has seen road freight continue to grow and dominate.

Some industrial and commercial activities generate demand for significant heavy vehicles, higher mass limit vehicles, over-dimension vehicles or significant dangerous goods movements. The road and rail freight network needs to ensure that freight-generating activities (e.g. agriculture and industry) have reliable access to their destinations, such as ports, intermodal terminals and markets internal and external to the region. These corridors should be protected for these uses and buffered from sensitive uses and passenger network conflicts.

The rail network in the region is important for this purpose. There will be opportunities and challenges in improving its share of the freight task, in particular within the North and South Burnett areas where current rail infrastructure is either underused or not currently operational.

Freight movement is an essential component of transport and economy in the region. However, conflicts may occur between freight activity and other land uses, such as where high volume freight transport corridors adjacent to residential areas compromise road safety and amenity issues (including noise and air pollution).

Early planning work should be undertaken to locate transport corridors appropriately, consider the productivity or long term efficiency of the on-going use of those systems and industry, and mitigate or avoid negative impacts of freight movement on sensitive land uses, such as residential areas or fragile ecosystems.

Rail Network Strategy for Queensland

The *Rail Network Strategy for Queensland* identifies specific strategies relating to policy and planning for the future of Queensland's rail infrastructure and rail corridors.

For more information visit www.tmr.qld.gov.au.

Macadamia nut tree plantation near Childers
Courtesy of Ray Cash Photography

Part D Preparation and implementation

The regional plan establishes a series of integrated strategies and describes at a regional level how they will respond to the particular character, aspirations and environments of the region.

Separate delivery mechanisms are used to advance and refine the strategic intentions of the regional plan, including relevant state planning instruments and local government planning schemes.

Regional plan operation

Planning period

The regional plan provides the strategic framework for managing growth, change, land use and development in the region to 2031.

The regional plan also considers the region's potential needs beyond 2031 to ensure that decisions do not compromise long-term needs, and addresses issues such as climate change and oil vulnerability.

Preparation

The *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA) sets out the required procedure that the regional planning Minister must follow in preparing and making the regional plan. The key steps include:

- preparing a draft plan and state planning regulatory provisions (SPRPs)
- making the draft plan available for public consultation for a minimum of 60 business days, and the regulations for 30 business days
- considering all properly made submissions
- consulting with the Regional Planning Committee.

To comply with these requirements, the preparing and making of the regional plan included:

- preparing the *Draft Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan 2010–2031* and *Draft Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2010*, which were released on 1 October 2010
- undertaking comprehensive public consultation on the draft regional plan and regulations, which were on display until 24 December 2010
- reviewing 235 properly made submissions. Each submission was assessed and summarised, and a consultation report was prepared with recommendations for the regional planning Minister
- the regional planning Minister consulting with the Regional Coordination Committee during the draft and final regional plan.

Effect

For the purposes of the SPA, this document contains:

- the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan (Parts A-D, excluding the Notes in Part C)
- the Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2011 (Part E)
- notes (Notes in Part C).

The notes in Part C are not part of the regional plan. They provide guidance on regional plan policy to assist in the interpretation of the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan. The notes also include examples of plans and strategies that can assist in its delivery.

The regional plan identifies the regional framework in Part B and the desired regional outcomes (DROs) in Part C for the Wide Bay Burnett region. The regional plan is the pre-eminent plan for the region and takes precedence over all planning instruments, other than SPRPs.

However, the regional plan is a whole-of-region document. It is intended that, for the Wide Bay Burnett region, the regional framework and DROs in the regional plan will be further informed by more detailed and local assessment of issues by state and local governments, and more specific state planning policies (for example, *State Planning Policy 1/03: Mitigating the adverse impacts of flood, bushfire and landslide* and the *Queensland Coastal Plan*) and local government planning schemes.

The regional plan includes in Part E the *Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2011*, which must be complied with and cannot be further informed by any planning instrument.

The regional plan is established under Chapter 2 of the SPA as follows:

- for the purpose of the SPA, the regional plan is a statutory instrument under the *Statutory Instruments Act 1992* and is taken to be a state interest
- the regional plan prevails where there is any inconsistency with any other plan, policy or code, including any other planning instrument made under state legislation that has effect within the region (other than an SPRP)
- while an SPRP may prevail, the development and implementation of an SPRP will be required to take into account the regional plan's policies and principles.

The SPRP is required to be taken into account in all planning and decision-making processes. These include:

- state government plans and policies
- local government planning schemes and other plans and policies
- planning and development processes under the SPA
- development applications made under the integrated development assessment system of the SPA.

Any plans, policies and codes being prepared or amended by state agencies that relate to the Wide Bay Burnett region must reflect and align with the regional plan.

In instances where local government planning schemes are in conflict with the regional plan, local governments must undertake to amend the planning scheme or policy to ensure alignment with the regional plan.

In the assessment of a development application or an application for approval of a master plan, the application conflicts with the regional plan where it does not comply with:

- the regional framework in Part B
- the DROs in Part C.

Where there is inconsistency between the subregional narratives and the desired regional outcomes, the subregional narratives prevail.

Notes are provided within Part C to provide context and examples of current and proposed plans, strategies and programs to assist in the advancement and refinement of regional plan policy. The Notes are advisory only and are not part of the regional plan for the purposes of the SPA.

The *Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan* (the regional plan) replaces the *Draft Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan 2010*. The regional plan has effect on and from the day the notice about the making of the plan is published in the Government Gazette.

Implementation

The SPA sets out the following requirements for regional planning and regional plans:

- establish a regional planning committee (RPC) to advise the regional planning Minister on regional issues
- ensure local government planning schemes reflect the regional plan
- ensure state and local governments take account of the regional plan when preparing or amending a planning instrument, plan, policy or code that may affect a matter covered by the regional plan
- ensure development assessment processes—including referral agency assessment for development applications—address matters covered in the regional plan
- allow the regional planning Minister to exercise call-in powers
- establish processes for amending the regional plan.

The regional plan operates in conjunction with other statutory planning tools, including state planning instruments and local government planning schemes.

The regional plan provides a planning framework for a period beyond 20 years. The achievement of the regional vision will not happen immediately, and will involve the collaboration of all regional stakeholders.

The involvement of state and local governments, community groups, industry groups and other stakeholders will be pivotal to the effective implementation of the regional plan.

In addition to land-use planning and other statutory processes, the regional plan guides and informs non-statutory activities and decision-making throughout the region.

The Queensland Infrastructure Plan (QIP) will facilitate the implementation of the regional plan. The development of the QIP will clearly link infrastructure delivery with population growth, economic development and the strategies of the regional plan.

Governance

The Department of Local Government and Planning will work collaboratively with Queensland Government agencies, local government and other stakeholders to facilitate and coordinate the implementation of the regional plan. The department will continue to provide a secretariat role to the RPC, and prepare the regional plan's implementation strategy, including annual reporting on the regional plan implementation priorities program.

The RPC advises the Queensland Government, through the regional planning Minister, on the development and implementation of the regional plan. The RPC will play a key role in advising the regional planning Minister on priorities and monitoring, and coordinating the implementation of the regional plan.

The Regional Management Coordination Network, through its subcommittees, can also play a key role in coordinating the activities of state agencies' implementation of the regional plan.

The Planning Advisory Group comprises planning professionals and allied staff from the region's local governments and state agencies. The Planning Advisory Group was established by recommendation of the RPC to provide a forum for planning professionals to work collaboratively towards developing and implementing the regional plan.

Community plans

Under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2009*, councils are required to develop community plans, in consultation with their communities. These plans will provide councils with a minimum 10-year view to the future of the local government area and will inform the development and review of corporate plans, planning schemes, infrastructure plans and other council strategic documents.

The Local Government (Finance, Plans and Reporting) Regulation 2010 stipulates that a local government community plan must identify local and regional issues that affect, or may in the future affect, the local government area. Consequently, a strong link exists between a regional plan and the preparation and implementation of community plans.

Other relevant plans, policies and codes

State agencies are required to implement the regional plan and adopt its principles, policies and programs in their own planning. The review and drafting of planning instruments and policies under the jurisdiction of those agencies should reflect the regional plan.

Other groups, including regional natural resource management bodies, water management organisations and industry bodies, are also encouraged to align their planning and programs with the DROs to ensure a coordinated effort across the region.

Local government planning schemes

Planning schemes are fundamental to the implementation and advancement of the regional framework and DROs of the regional plan. When making or amending a planning scheme, a local government must advance the regional plan through refinement of regional policy to respond to local circumstance. This includes responding and expanding on the policy directions of the regional framework (in Part B) and DROs (in Part C).

Where appropriate, an amendment to the planning scheme that supports the achievement of the relevant dwelling target is to be carried out to uphold the intent of the regional plan. Any changes to planning schemes such as these should be supported by related information that details the anticipated dwelling yield of the area and how the yield is supported through relevant local policies and codes.

Importantly, dwelling densities identified in the regional plan are an average for the broader area nominated. Delivery of these densities relies on detailed planning at the local government level to identify the appropriate density for each locality.

Local government, through detailed planning processes, may designate land for urban uses outside of the Urban Footprint. This is to take account of the logic that through finer grained local analysis, designations could be changed to better reflect the outcomes sought by the regional plan. The detailed planning must be sufficiently justified against the regional framework and the DROs of the regional plan. Where this can be satisfied and the planning scheme amended accordingly, the land use designation will be recognised as an urban area for the purposes of the SPRP.

Urban Footprint principles

1. The Urban Footprint is a tool for managing, rather than simply accommodating, regional growth.
2. The Urban Footprint is consistent with achieving a compact settlement pattern, consolidating urban development within established communities, and the strategic directions and regional policies set out in the regional plan.
3. The Urban Footprint is designed to accommodate all of the region's urban development needs consistent with the policy framework of the regional plan. This includes all housing, employment and open space to 2031, based on population, housing and employment projections and reasonable assumptions available to predict future growth.
4. To amend Urban Footprint boundaries, local adjustments can be considered through the regional and local plan-making processes to reflect changed, new or better information, correct anomalies or recognise constraints.

5. Opportunities for increasing the capacity of the existing Urban Footprint should be given higher priority than expanding the Urban Footprint, which should only be done if there is insufficient capacity to accommodate the planned distribution of regional growth.
6. Areas to be considered in the Urban Footprint should:
    - be physically suitable
    - exclude areas with an unacceptable risk from natural hazards, including the predicted impacts of climate change
    - exclude areas of high ecological significance
    - exclude areas with high Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritage values that significantly conflict with urban use
    - be appropriately separated from incompatible land uses
    - be adjacent to, and a logical expansion of, an existing urban area
    - have access to the transport network and services reflective of the development type.
7. New areas of Urban Footprint land should be located to:
    - achieve an appropriate balance of urban development in the region and associated subregions
    - maintain a well-planned region of distinct cities, towns and villages
    - maintain the integrity of inter-urban breaks
    - minimise impacts on natural resources
    - maximise the use of existing and planned urban infrastructure
    - enable the efficient provision of physical and social infrastructure, including public transport
    - have ready access to services and employment
    - ensure significant non-residential activities achieve specific locational, infrastructure and site requirements.
8. Priority for new Urban Footprint areas should be given to Identified Growth Areas (IGAs) where supported by specific investigations.
9. The boundary of the Urban Footprint should be:
    - based on property boundaries or otherwise clearly defined, preferably using a major feature such as a road or stream to provide a clear boundary and buffer between urban and non-urban land uses
    - consistent with existing planning scheme designations or development commitments, where appropriate
    - continuous around each discrete urban area.

Rural Living Area principles

10. Productive rural land is preserved.
11. Rural residential areas are not located in areas of high ecological significance.
12. Natural hazards such as flooding, bushfire and landslide do not cause an unacceptable risk to life and property.
13. All weather access to a community of interest is available.
14. Rural residential areas are located in proximity to towns where a minimum of local services are available to support residents.
15. There is an identified need for additional land to be included in a rural residential area, considering both the capacity in urban areas and rural living areas.
16. Suitable infrastructure is available or can be provided to support future residents.
17. Land management practices, such as weed and pest control and bushfire management, can be practically accommodated.
18. Inclusion of land in the Rural Living Area considers the whole-of-life costs of the development.

Development Areas

The regional plan outlines Development Areas (DA) within the Urban Footprint where future growth is expected. DAs require coordinated land use and infrastructure planning. The regional planning Minister will remain part of the process to ensure the DROs are followed as the area becomes ready for urban development.

Regional plan regulations state that development that is incompatible with the land's potential use as a DA should not be approved in these areas.

Identified Growth Areas

IGAs are acknowledged and described in the regional plan. These areas are not required to accommodate projected growth to 2031; however, they will be considered for future urban development beyond the life of the plan.

These areas need further investigation to confirm their suitability for urban development consistent with the objectives of the relevant subregional narrative, the Urban Footprint principles, and relevant DROs.

The *Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2011* includes IGAs within the Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area designation to prevent urban development in the interim.

Monitoring

Regional planning is dynamic, reflecting the changing nature of the region's population growth, demographics, housing demands and development activity. To ensure the effectiveness of the regional plan and its implementation, there is a clear need to establish mechanisms to:

- monitor progress and changes in the region
- identify new and emerging issues
- monitor implementation of the regional plan DROs
- periodically review the status of the region, and initiate changes to regional strategies and priorities where required.

Regional plan review

The regional plan will be reviewed formally every five to 10 years. The regional planning Minister may amend, replace or approve minor revisions of the regional plan at any time, if required in accordance with relevant requirements of SPA.

The review process guides further policy development and assists in setting future priority projects and actions. The following information is critical to regular reviews of the regional plan:

- population projections
- employment growth
- progress on the implementation of regional strategies
- progress against regional targets
- progress against priority Queensland Government targets, such as those included in *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*
- emerging regional issues.

Any review will include input from government and the community. It will provide an open and accountable process, which will involve and inform the community of the outcome of any regional monitoring program.

Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions

The *Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2011* have been prepared under Chapter 2, Part 2 of the SPA. They have effect from the day notice of the draft instrument is published in the Government Gazette. Relevant provisions include:

- restrictions on urban development outside the Urban Footprint
- a regional land use map that indicates areas which are to be protected as Regional Landscape and Rural Production Areas (RLRPAs) or Rural Living Areas, and areas which are designated as Urban Footprint
- restrictions on development within development areas, where development is inconsistent with the future planning intent.

Wide Bay Burnett regional land use categories

The form and development of the region includes several land use categories that identify the predominant characteristics and scale and type of land development preferred for each category. The regional plan allocates all land areas into three regional land use categories, which seek to achieve the DROs. An explanation of each of these categories is provided below.

The regional land use categories are illustrated in Map 12, and more precisely defined on the regulatory maps that accompany the regional plan. These detailed maps are also contained within the *Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2011*.

Map 12: Regional land use categories

Note: this map is not intended to reference specific parcels of land and is to be treated as indicative only. This map should be used in conjunction with the copyright information on the inside front cover of this publication.

Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area

Intent

The RLRPA identifies land with regional landscape, rural production or other non-urban values. It protects this land from inappropriate development, particularly urban or rural residential development.

These areas support the lifestyle and wellbeing of the regional population, primarily located in the Urban Footprint.

Description

The RLRPA includes land with one or more of these values:

- significant biodiversity
- regional ecosystems that are endangered or of concern
- national parks, conservation parks, resources reserves or other conservation areas
- significant fauna habitats
- good quality agricultural land and other productive rural areas
- cultural and landscape heritage values (traditional and non-Indigenous)
- natural economic resources, including extractive resources and forestry plantations
- water catchments, water storages and groundwater resources
- native forests
- coastal wetlands
- land that forms strategic and regionally significant inter-urban breaks
- unsuitable for, or not required for, urban or rural residential purposes
- rural towns and associated activities.

The RLRPA does not impede existing land use rights. This ensures that existing commitments and significant activities, such as agricultural production, access to natural resources, water storage, tourism, outdoor recreation and nature conservation, can continue.

Some rural towns are identified in the RLRPA rather than the Urban Footprint. Local planning, through planning schemes, will consider growth needs for each township, including the capacity to accommodate growth and the long-term sustainability of the township. This can include accommodating further urban or rural residential lands, where justified against the policies of the regional plan.

Urban Footprint

Intent

The Urban Footprint identifies land that can meet the region's projected urban development needs to at least 2031.

The Urban Footprint is a representation of:

- large urban communities, other communities recognised as being affected by growth pressures, and other areas recognised as the preferred locations for future growth
- lands surrounded by existing or proposed urban development, but which may not be an appropriate location for development (e.g. flood plains).

Description

The Urban Footprint includes established urban areas, new and residual broadhectare lands, and areas that could be suitable for future urban development. It incorporates the full range of urban uses, including housing, industry, business, infrastructure, community facilities and urban open space.

Broadhectare lands identified within the Urban Footprint will contribute to the consolidation of the settlement pattern, and contain undeveloped lands that could potentially be developed for urban purposes, but are not currently zoned for this purpose. They are usually surrounded by urban development or near existing or planned urban infrastructure services.

The Urban Footprint boundary is defined within the maps of the *Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2011* by using cadastral or other clearly defined boundaries, such as coastline or watercourses.

The Urban Footprint does not imply that all land included can be developed for urban purposes. For example, national parks and state forests will continue to be protected and managed under state legislation, such as the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and the *Forestry Act 1959*, and remnant vegetation will continue to be protected under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*.

Land in the Urban Footprint may be unsuitable for urban development for other reasons, including constraints such as flooding, land slope, scenic amenity, and the need to protect significant biodiversity values.

Local government planning schemes are the main instrument that will establish and refine the desired use of land and the preferred timing of development within the Urban Footprint.

The Urban Footprint focuses urban growth in locations that:

- provide reliable and effective transportation choices or otherwise reduce car use, particularly for infill and redevelopment in and around existing centres
- physically connect to existing communities wherever possible, or otherwise provide new development with direct transport links to established urban areas early in the development
- promote cohesive communities that support a wide range of services and facilities
- include or have access to existing or planned employment.

The Urban Footprint includes some areas designated or already developed for rural residential purposes that are well located with respect to urban services and facilities. In many cases throughout the region, the use of Urban Footprint land for rural residential purposes, rather than higher density urban uses, may be the most efficient and responsive land use category to deliver appropriate development outcomes. Local government is required to review these areas to identify potential opportunities for developing or redeveloping them for urban purposes.

Rural Living Area

Intent

The Rural Living Area comprises locations currently designated for rural residential development in a local government planning scheme, and where further rural residential development through infill and consolidation is permitted under regional plan and the *Wide Bay Burnett State Planning Regulatory Provisions 2011*.

Description

Rural residential areas within the Rural Living Area can continue to be developed for rural residential purposes according to the relevant local government planning scheme requirements.

Significant areas of land are already developed or allocated for rural residential development in the region. Land for rural residential purposes is generally restricted to the Rural Living Area to ensure future development is appropriately located, and access to services and facilities can be provided.

Bourong Street, Bundaberg
Courtesy of MWA Viewfinder

Glossary

Active transport: Travel by non-motorised means, such as walking and cycling.

Biodiversity: The natural diversity of wildlife, together with the environmental conditions necessary for its survival.

Bio-sequestration: The removal from the atmosphere and storage of greenhouse gases through biological processes, such as growing trees and using practices that enhance soil carbon in agriculture.

Community-based transport: Transport services initiated and implemented at a community (not regional) level to meet the unique transport needs of the community; potentially includes scheduled bus services for a fare or other consideration that any member of the general community may access.

Community transport: Transport services funded by the government or a charity to provide transport to a specific group of people and include services such as Home and Community Care Services or hospice care transport provided by Blue Care or St Vincent de Paul.

Infill development: New development that occurs:

(a) within established urban areas

(b) on land that is either vacant or has previously been used for another urban purpose

(c) of a scale ranging from one additional residential lot to a multiunit and mixed-use redevelopment.

Local government area: The geographical area under the responsibility of an incorporated local government council or an incorporated Indigenous government council.

Logistics: The management of a flow of goods (e.g. freight) between origin and destination. It includes the movement and storage of goods across the supply chain.

Mode choice: The choice of travelling by a particular type of transport mode such as walking, cycling, private car and public transport (including buses, trains and ferries).

Mode share: The percentage of travellers using a particular type of transportation mode such as private motor car, freight vehicles, public transport, cycling and rail.

Multi-modal: Describes the transport system in a holistic manner through its various modes (see mode choice). For example, roads are multi-modal as they accommodate a range of transport modes: pedestrians, cyclists, cars, trucks and buses.

Net dwelling density: Measure of housing density expressed as dwellings or lots per hectare, calculated by adding the area of residential lots and the area of local roads and parks then dividing by the number of dwellings or residential lots created.

Oil vulnerability: The vulnerability of people, industries, regions or countries to changes in the supply and price of fuel oil.

Transport disadvantage: The situation where people have little or no choice regarding how or where they travel, including people who cannot drive or afford a car, or who live too far from walking or cycling routes or public transport and are dependent on a car to travel. The level of disadvantage is also affected by a person's age, capacity or social disadvantage.

Urban area: Any area identified as an urban area within a state planning instrument or local government planning scheme.

Abbreviations

CBD	Central business district
COAG	Council of Australian Government
CPTED	Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Research Organisation
DA	Development Area
DEM	Digital elevation model
DERM	Department of Environment and Resource Management
DRO	Desired regional outcome
ESD	Ecologically sustainable development
GVP	Gross value of farm production
IGA	Identified Growth Area
LNG	Liquefied natural gas
ML	Megalitres
NHMA	Natural hazard management area
PAG	Planning Advisory Group
QIP	Queensland Infrastructure Plan
QR	Queensland Rail
RLRPA	Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area
RPC	Regional Planning Committee
SCL	Strategic cropping land
SEQ	South East Queensland
SPA	*Sustainable Planning Act 2009*
SPP	State Planning Policy
SPRP	State Planning Regulatory Provisions
WBB	Wide Bay Burnett
WBBRP	Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan

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