



SUNSHINE COAST
Environment Council



Sunshine Coast Business Council
Think Tank Series 3

*Sunshine Coast Growth Opportunities and Challenges Emanating
from the ShapingSEQ Regional Framework.*

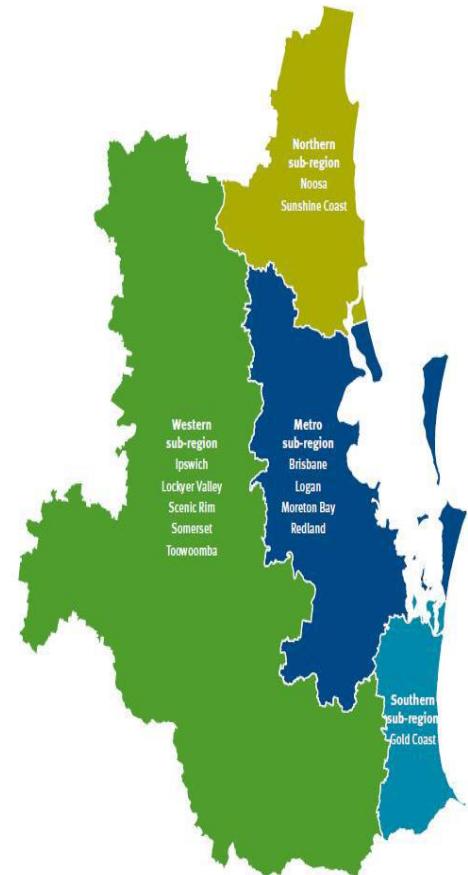
Session 2: 26 June 2017

Shaping SEQ– Kept from the 2009 Regional Plan

- The plan primarily exists to manage regional growth sustainably
 - Ensure sufficient land is available for growth
 - Facilitate integrated transport and land use planning outcomes
 - Define the development densities across the region
 - Protect the natural resources: agricultural land and sand and gravel
 - Identify key employment land: industrial, knowledge precincts, regional centres
- Plan for climate change impacts and natural hazards
- Define the major elements in the region
 - Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area (including scenic amenity and inter-urban breaks)
 - Urban Footprint
 - Rural Living Area
 - State planning regulatory provisions stay with some fine tuning

What is new in ShapingSEQ?

- Focus on economic growth, infrastructure investment, good design and housing choice
- Identifying and protecting regional biodiversity corridors
- Recognising rural areas counterbalance urban areas – food bowl, recreational activities
- Expressing regional strategies and intra-regional relationships spatially through sub-regional directions



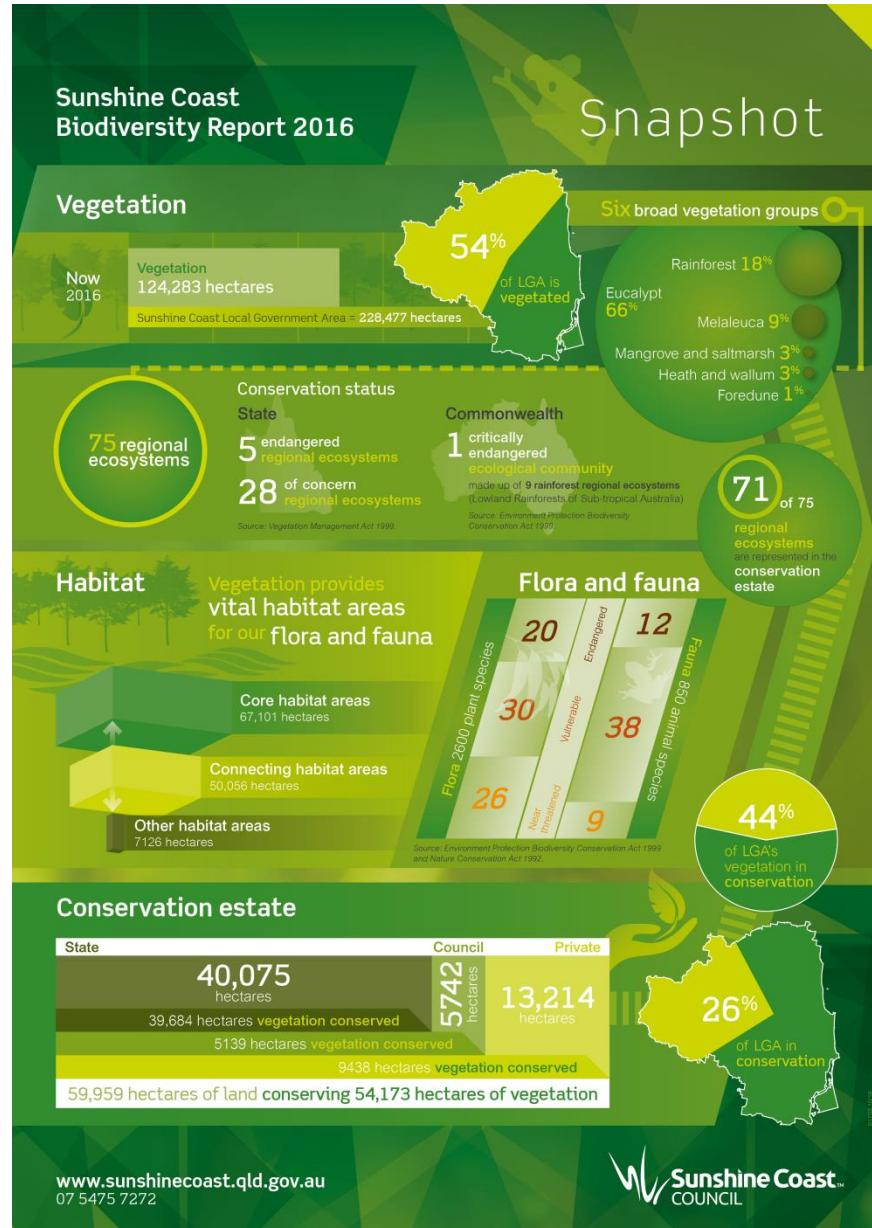
And further identifies some new components

SCEC specifically welcomes;

- The 50 year vision (most of it anyway...)
- Placing greater emphasis on public and active transport to move people around the region
- Increasing emphasis on protecting and sustainably using SEQ regional and natural assets.
- Identifying and mapping regional biodiversity corridors and values to support the protection of these values.
- Valuing design as a way to create more housing choice, and memorable and liveable urban places and spaces to benefit our communities socially, economically and environmentally.
 - We suggest addition of ‘culturally’
- Improving ways to monitor land supply and development activity, and the plan’s performance over time

A BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

The Sunshine Coast is consistently regarded for its impressive natural landscape whether it is waterways, volcanic landforms, coastal foreshores, rainforests, or the incredibly diverse plant and animal species. This 'biodiversity' is not to be taken lightly; it is the beating heart for both our region and our planet.



Can we hold onto our natural advantage?



As a popular tourism destination marketed as '*Naturally Refreshing*,' the Sunshine Coast region attracts close to **8.2 million visitors annually**.

Visitors are attracted to the diverse mix of experiences, natural landscapes and beautiful beaches.

Population pressures

- *ShapingSEQ* identifies an ‘expected’ SEQ population of 5.35 million people by 2041. In this same period, the population of the Sunshine Coast LGA is projected to more than double to 495,000
- A doubling of population every 20 years is not something to be heralded as some ‘great achievement’
- It demonstrates the policy vacuum needed to stabilise population-both globally and domestically.
- Carrying capacity assessments and studies need to be undertaken to determine what level of population is sustainable (or not).
- Increasing impacts of climate change, water scarcity, peak resources, ecological collapse and worsening inequity demands responsible and contemporary practices and policies – not BAU

We've been here before...



Are our natural assets losing value?

Vast swathes of the coastal lowlands lost to urbanisation

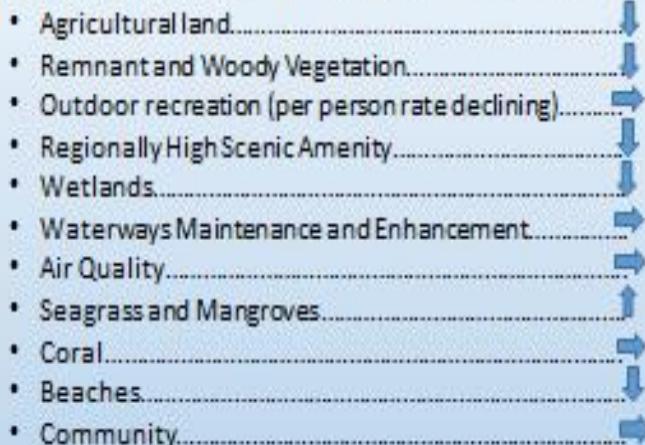


Maroochy River high rise construction contrasts with stunning sunset across this magnificent waterway.



12 years of statutory regional planning and.....

- Key targets for the 2016 version of the SEQ NRM Plan:



- Some matters in the SEQ NRM Plan have been incorporated into planning by some local governments
- Few (two) have used the framework provided by the SEQ NRM plan and implementation of the regional plan has very patchy with land speculation in inappropriate areas continuing unabated

Natural Assets

- The 2005 and 2009 versions of the SEQ Regional Plan contained substantial and specific policy covering many of the aspects associated with our region's natural assets
- Despite this policy, the overall condition and trend of these assets continues to decline as indicated by the slide above. There are likely to be many factors for this result; although, we believe the main factor was the lack of emphasis on implementation and follow through on the policy in the previous plans.
- 12 years of statutory planning has not resulted in the overall maintenance or improvement of our natural asset base.
- These trendlines have occurred during a time when the growth from 2006 to 2016 was 22.6% on 2006 levels. This plan anticipates a growth of 91.7% on 2006 levels to its 2041 planning horizon.
- The challenge of keeping our natural assets in a condition our community desires for its food security and quality of life over this planning horizon will be easily **4 times more difficult** to that of the past decade.
- Add climate impacts to this decline, and the stated policy aspirations for the achievement of the SEQRP will likely not be achieved unless care and attention is given to their achievement and new thinking is applied to implementation.

Measures that matter – support the inclusion of a mechanism for measuring progress against the goals in the draft SEQRP, through 'measures that matter'.

However, much more work must be undertaken to improve this section, to ensure that monitoring, assessment and reporting of progress against goals is at all meaningful.

Environmental claims in *ShapingSEQ*

The draft lists environmental achievements as:

Protection for the regional greenspace network

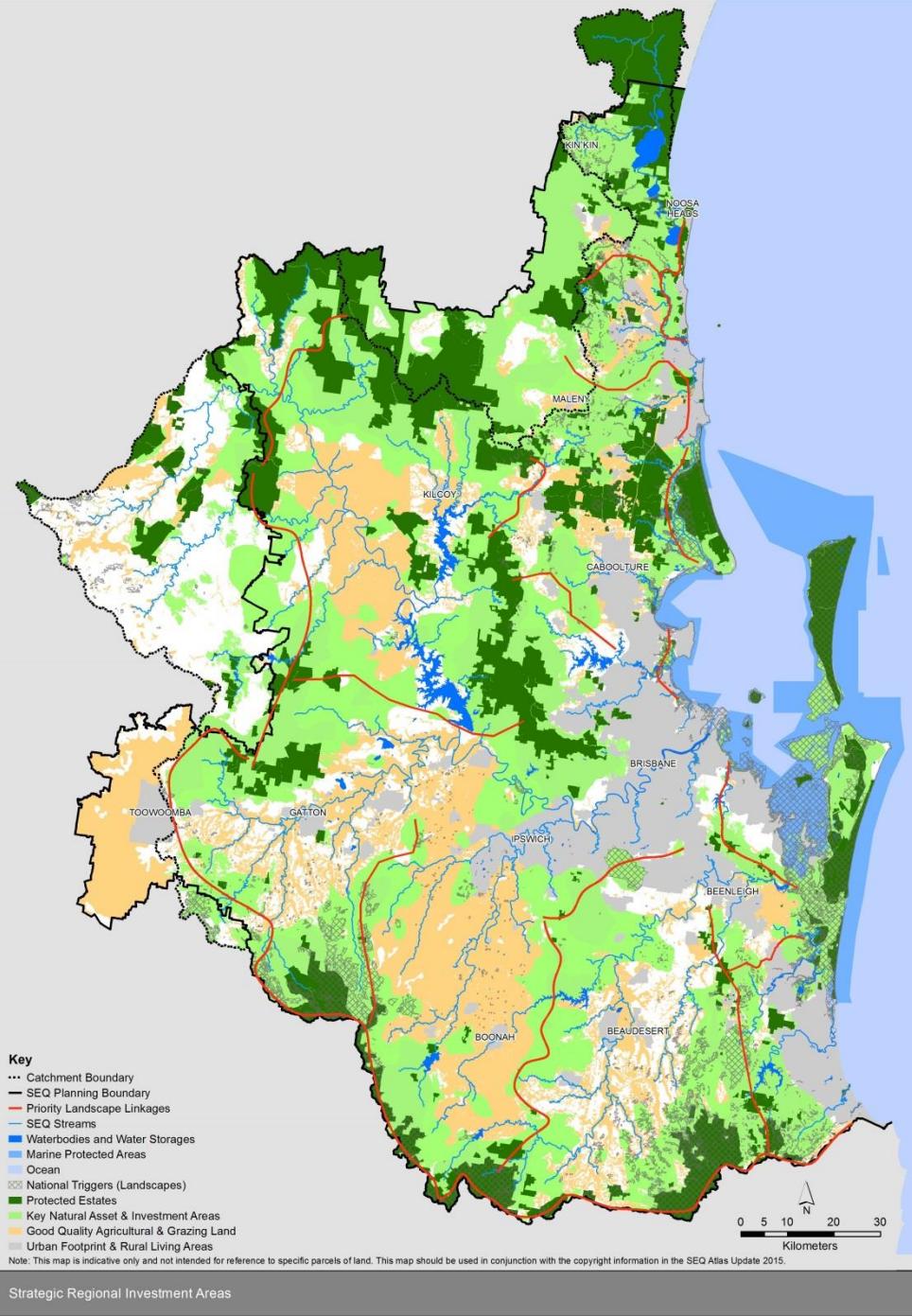
- The area of land included in the protected greenspace network is increasing in line with regional planning policies. Between 2006 and 2015, an extra 21,300 ha of land was added to the protected greenspace network.

Protection for the region's biodiversity

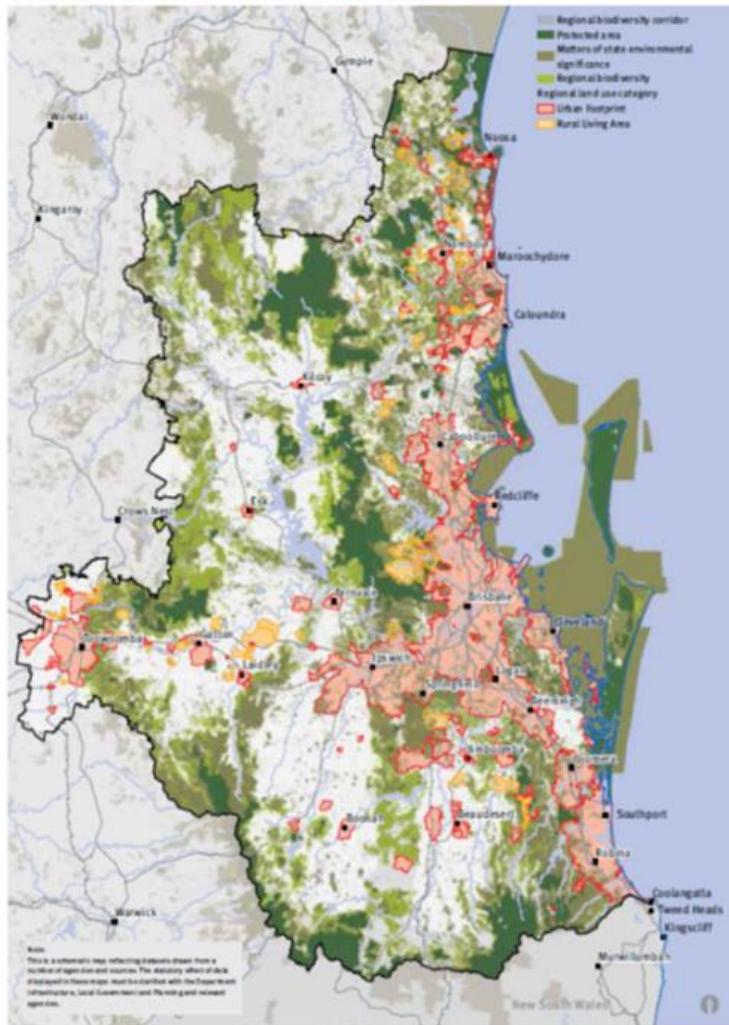
- Since the introduction of statutory regional planning, vegetation loss in SEQ has decreased from 7700 ha per year to 3600 ha per year on average. However, vegetation is still being lost every year.

It lists the region as having:

- 2400 fauna species and 6000 flora species and creates a vision about SEQ being a model of sub-tropical living



Sustain Map 4a – Regional biodiversity network



What's *not* in ShapingSEQ?

WATER

- The draft makes little mention of the need to optimize the use of our limited water supplies.
- The need to treat our water as a precious and limited natural asset is critical given the anticipated growth. The plan and its associated background papers are silent on the future of this critical asset.
- Do we assume that the SEQWater for life South East Queensland's Water Security Program 2016-2046 is the instrument for managing the growth in our water use and needs?
- If so, it needs to be scheduled into the implementation phase and be checked and integrated into the planning system to ensure all options for future water needs are taken into account, including re-use.
- Average daily residential consumption (L/person) for Sunshine Coast: 166
- Unplanned and inappropriate population increases on the Sunshine Coast puts unnecessary pressure on already stretched utilities and resources eg SH proposal for Yaroomba cites the estimated population of the proposed development is approx 2378 equivalent persons for water

What does the community want for SEQ

- Koala mapping – expert panel recommendations will be tabled after the SEQRP is completed
- Rich biodiversity of the region – World Heritage, biosphere reserves, RAMSAR
- Ecosystem Services valuation and protection including carbon offsets
- Valuable farmlands protected
- Landscape constraints and protection – slopes, waterways and flood
- Water sustainability
- Whole of landscape approach to greenspace including inner city
- Better coordinated infill development
- Heritage and character housing
- Climate impacts, flooding
- Protecting our standard of living
- The criteria for decision making for the various policy elements

What else does the community want for SEQ?

- Carrying capacity
- Encourage idle land use outside the urban footprint – peri-urban lifestyle versus agricultural production
- Diversity of landscape amenity and natural areas and experiences
- Ecosystem service valuation
- Road network and active transport more sustainable
- Built environment which recognises and capitalises on environment
- Improved waste management
- Protected areas vs recreation areas and conflicting uses
- Unmanaged use of sensitive environmental areas (specifically provide for recreation)
- Socially diverse and cohesive communities
- Traditional owner heritage and culture protected
- Recognising and protecting Moreton Bay
- Maintaining quality of building

SUSTAIN is the goal: So?

BIODIVERSITY:

- Protect regional biodiversity values (including koala habitat), and ecological processes that support them, from inappropriate development
- Focus coordinated planning, management and investment, including offset delivery, in regional biodiversity corridors
- Avoid fragmentation of regional biodiversity corridors
- Maintain and enhance the value of biodiversity corridors to optimise biodiversity conservation outcomes.

REGIONAL LANDSCAPES:

- Protect the values of inter-urban breaks, while providing for a range of activities compatible with their predominantly rural or natural character
- Protect and rehabilitate culturally significant places and landscape heritage areas in the region
- Protect regional scenic amenity areas from development that would compromise their value
- Protect and enhance regional greenspace network to meet the recreational and outdoor needs of the community

Biodiversity blues

- There are many important biodiversity values outside of Protected Areas, such as National Parks. There is a risk that such values won't be mapped and therefore afforded the necessary protection.
- There is an imperative to allow local government to have Matters of Local Environmental Significance adequately recognised. Currently, MLES are being 'lost' due to them having been supposedly already mapped as MSES – Sustain Map 4a is an example
- Compounding the loss is the 5ha trigger in the UF meaning we are losing our MLES as they are not afforded regulatory protection.
- This spatial trigger for clearing must be dramatically reduced to under 2ha minimum to recognise the accelerating loss of local biodiversity values in the UF.

What can improve biodiversity?

- Take the biodiversity policy framework of the existing SEQ Regional Plan and build it into the State Planning Regulatory Provisions to give some fixed measures of protection and some assurances that biodiversity will be sustained in the new Plan, i.e;
- Avoid impacts on areas with significant biodiversity values the RLRPA, including biodiversity corridors.
- Avoid or minimise impacts on areas with significant biodiversity values in the Urban Footprint or Rural Living Area
- Avoid offsite impacts from development or other activities on adjacent areas with significant biodiversity values



Nature knows no bound(aries)

There is compelling evidence that our natural assets have value to our community regardless of whether they are within or outside the urban footprint.

The plan needs to consider the value and place of natural assets inside the urban footprint.

Since 2008, 87% of clearing of natural vegetation has occurred in Urban Footprint and priority development areas. This is the consequence of a concentration of urban development in Urban Footprint zones.

Management of vegetation and green space inside the Urban Footprint for recreation, flood mitigation and habitat values is important for a sustainable community.

Waterway Health:-Healthy Waterways Report Card: Since 2002 the region has averaged a rating of C which means some critical habitats are impacted.

[SEQC (2015) SEQ Natural Resource Management Plan 2014 Update Science Report, south east Qld catchments.]



The Northern sub-region-'our patch'

Sunshine Coast LGA

2011 population: 267,421

- 113,600 dwellings

2015 est resident population:

287,500

2015-2041 expected population growth: 207,500

- additional dwellings
2011-2041: 99,300

Noosa LGA

2011 population: 51,038

- 24,200 dwellings

2015 resident population: 53,500

2015-2041 expected population growth: 9,500

- Additional dwellings
2011-2041: 8,100



Outcomes for Grow...

Infill growth (64%)

- . Infill development is recognised as necessary to constrain a continuation of urban sprawl and note the centres identified to accommodate this infill as largely logical.
- . It is absolutely critical that not only are good, sustainable design principles applied as articulated but the scale must be sympathetic to the character and amenity of the locality and surrounds.

Greenfield Growth (36%)

Caloundra South and Palmview

- With Caloundra South questionably ‘fast-tracked’ and a good structure plan with sustainability principles embedded for Palmview prepared under the 2008-2012 Sunshine Coast Regional Council ‘unpicked’ by the subsequent Sunshine Coast Council and the developer, it can only be acknowledged that these greenfield developments are literally coming out of the ground and will therefore provide a large portion of the greenfield growth as described.

Beerwah East

Beerwah East is located towards the hinterland and the upper reaches of the Pumicestone Passage and has flat the gently undulating terrain with a number of small hills in the NW and E

Beerwah East is approx 3,662 ha in area. Approximately 68% (2,484ha) is not affected by key overlays in the SCPS2014.

Approximately 2,969ha is state owned (largely forestry) land.

SCEC maintains its long held view that comprehensive consultation and robust assessments must be undertaken to determine if Beewah East is suitable for development

While Beerwah East represents potential to consolidate development along an existing and proposed extension of the rail transport corridor, does not impact on the impact on the inter-urban break and is located higher in the Pumicestone Passage catchment, these attributes alone do not determine its suitability.



Pumicestone Passage - Water quality comparisons

An independent review of the water quality report commissioned for Halls Creek and Beerwah East

Found... It is unrealistic to be making statements about likely water quality (WQ) scenarios in Coochin Creek in 2040 and beyond, and even more illogical to be modelling these scenarios, when we don't know what the tidal regime will be like at this time.

We do know that;

- The Bribie Island breakthrough is predicted to occur well before this time and that the flushing regime in the Pumicestone Passage will change
- Sea level will rise (perhaps by 30cm) during this time and that the tidal influence will extend further upstream.
- The independent advice provided to SCEC dismissed the modelling upon which the report was based and made additional comment;

If the management of construction site runoff and WSUD at Caloundra South can (and must) go “above world’s best practice” then surely the same can apply to Beerwah East (BE). Fortunately for us, the Sunshine Coast community will have the opportunity to draw upon all the learnings from the Caloundra South development to negate any impact from any potential future development of BE. Technological advancements in porous pavements and the treatment of urban runoff are likely to assist in further mitigating potential impacts.

An independent review of the water quality report... continued

The report claims that the distance from Beerwah East to Pumicestone Passage (PP) ‘is irrelevant’; however, we disagree because there is a large area of land east of the Bruce Hwy (i.e. Halls Creek South) which could be used to filter urban stormwater before it reaches Pumicestone Passage. The Halls Creek site does not provide this opportunity.

Like other estuaries, PP provides a variety of water quality habitats from slightly brackish to fully marine.

While everyone likes to see ‘sparkly blue water’, habitats that are not well flushed, and may not meet (inappropriate) WQ guidelines, are nonetheless highly valuable and unique habitats. It should be remembered that water quality is only one component of a healthy ecosystem and that habitat and ecological processes are also extremely important.

In terms of location, Halls Creek South is lower lying and closer to the ocean than Beerwah East. As such, the area will be subjected to rising sea levels and coastal erosion, well before Beerwah East.

Potential Future Growth Areas (PFGA)

- *The major area in the sub-region that may be suitable for future urban growth is Halls Creek. The intent of this area is set out on page 38 in the Grow theme*
- The Halls Creek IGA (now PFGA) is situated within a low lying coastal plain with gently undulating and flat terrain
- It is approximately 2,426 hectares in area
- Approximately 54% (1,311 hectares) is not affected by biophysical constraints as represented by overlays in the SCPS 2014
- Stockland Development Pty Ltd are the largest landholder with 1,242 hectares (of which 708 hectares is not affected by key constraints). The State government owns 832 hectares of forestry land within the PFGA. The balance area is freehold in private ownership (Sunshine Coast Council SEQ Regional Plan Review Planning for growth to 2041 Summary Report October 2014)
- **SCEC maintains its strong objection to Halls Creek as a PFGA and calls for it to be removed altogether from the SEQ Regional Plan.**
- Halls Creek is unsuitable for future urban development due to the significant environmental impacts and risks it would pose to the Pumicestone Passage and the remoteness of the site from planned transport corridors and services.
- The intent for PFGA's as areas not required to accommodate the dwelling supply or employment planning benchmarks of Shaping SEQ, does not provide the certainty needed to ensure the land supply and development activity benchmarks are not manipulated in a spurious manner to bring it forward. The only sure way is to have it taken out of the plan completely.

Grow...

- Ensuring sufficient land to accommodate growth (Chapter 3 pg. 35)
- *'...At all times, SEQ local governments will be required to have at least 15 years supply of land—land that has been zoned and is able to be serviced (see Figure 6b). The Queensland Government will monitor planning schemes and land stock annually to track their performance against the dwelling supply and employment planning benchmarks to ensure **at least 15 years of supply** is maintained. If the infill or other benchmarks may not be accommodated, the government will initiate a range of solutions, including adjusting the Urban Footprint boundary if required, to avoid constraining land supply and placing upward pressure on land and housing prices..'*
- **This is not supported** as it removes certainty around the defined urban footprint and essentially facilitates inappropriate 'jump-outs.' It also can be exploited by the manipulation of land supply, particularly large parcels in single ownership.

Outcomes....

- Encouraged by elements of **priority regional infrastructure**
- However....
- No mention of Light Rail project
- Great to see recognition and proposed protection of the **Inter-urban break**

Rural Prosperity

- Importance of food security and the sustainable production of food and fibre
- Particularly welcome alternative agricultural futures to be explored to help coastal lowland areas transition from traditional cane farming. This includes diversifying rural activities to strengthen resilience to market cycles and climate change
- Significance of nature based tourism, recreation and scenic amenity



Realities and Opportunities

- Australia has unsustainable levels of household debt and mortgage stress
- Affordability by reducing utility costs through renewable energy and water efficiencies
- Reinstate mandatory water tanks and solar hot water
- Tax reform not monotonous calls for ‘more land’
- Monitoring for ‘drip-feeding’ stock to market – land-banking
- Requirement to adhere to ESD
- Collaborate for truly sustainable outcomes for the region – set the benchmarks
- Don’t maintain the status-quo
- Be objective
- Heed the science



Thank you

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