



Regional planning in Queensland

Overview

Regional plans are long-term strategic plans that support local growth and development while also protecting a region's natural resources.

Regional plans help the Queensland Government and local governments plan a region's future and, in turn, help communities adapt and build on opportunities linked to economic growth and population change; as well as meet the increasing demand for local public services.

They are prepared by the state through collaboration with local governments, interest groups and the wider community so that everyone's interests are considered.

Statutory regional plans are those that have been signed off by the Planning Minister. The policies and directions of regional plans are given effect in a variety of ways. At a regional and state level, they guide overall growth patterns. At a local level, they are given effect by local government planning schemes, which are required to demonstrate they have appropriately integrated the relevant regional plan.

Statutory regional plans are state planning instruments under the *Planning Act 2016*.

There are currently 11 statutory regional plans; and one non-statutory regional plan, and one new regional plan being prepared.

What regional plans can do

Regional planning provides the opportunity to:

- set long-term direction for regional sustainability, liveability and prosperity
- inform future planning at all levels of government for coordinated action
- help state and local government align planning to manage growth in the most environmentally, economically and socially responsible way
- reduce land use conflicts and improve land use certainty for community and industry sectors
- identify future regional infrastructure needs and opportunities to support economic and social growth
- protect lifestyle values and enhance the liveability of regional localities and communities
- manage impacts on the natural environment
- articulate and promote linkages with neighbouring regions.

Regional plans do not:

- address planning matters that fall within the responsibility of local government
- unnecessarily duplicate other planning tools, legislation or statewide policies
- attempt to deal with all planning issues in the region, such as education and health
- commit government to spending or infrastructure delivery for specific projects
- replicate another region's plan – each region has different opportunities and challenges that require tailored approach.



Current regional plans

Cape York Regional Plan

The region has outstanding natural areas of high conservation value, a diverse and rich Indigenous heritage, together with a wealth of natural assets, particularly mineral resources. The region comprises the following 11 local government areas:

- Aurukun
- Cook
- Hope Vale
- Kowanyama
- Lockhart River
- Mapoon
- Napranum
- Northern Peninsula Area
- Pormpuraaw
- Weipa Town Area
- Wujal Wujal.

The Cape York Regional Plan took effect in 2014.

Central Queensland Regional Plan

This region is one of the most prosperous regions in the state for mining and agriculture. The region comprises the following six local government areas:

- Banana
- Central Highlands
- Gladstone
- Livingstone
- Rockhampton
- Woorabinda.

The Central Queensland Regional Plan took effect in 2013.

Darling Downs Regional Plan

This region accounts for around a quarter of the state's agricultural production. Mining is also a mainstay of the economy with large reserves of thermal coal and coal seam gas in the Surat Basin; attracting international investment. The region comprises the following six local government areas:

- Balonne
- Goondiwindi
- Maranoa
- Southern Downs
- Toowoomba
- Western Downs.

The Darling Downs Regional Plan took effect in 2013.

Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Regional Plan

This prosperous region encompasses the area from Bowen in the north, to St Lawrence in the south, east to the Whitsunday Islands and west to the Belyando River. The region comprises the following three local government areas:

- Mackay
- Isaac
- Whitsunday.

The Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Regional Plan took effect in 2012.

Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan

As the gateway to the southern Great Barrier Reef, the region's economic drivers are in agriculture, fishing and tourism sectors. The region comprises the following six local government areas:

- Bundaberg
- Cherbourg
- Fraser Coast
- Gympie
- North Burnett
- South Burnett.

The Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan took effect in 2011.

North West Regional Plan

This large region stretches from the Northern Territory border in the west to the Great Dividing Range in the east. It has a multicultural heritage and a significant population of Indigenous people. Mining and mineral processing contribute to the economy; as well as agriculture, particularly beef production. The region comprises the following five local government areas:

- Cloncurry
- Flinders
- McKinlay
- Mount Isa
- Richmond.

The North West Regional Plan took effect in 2010.

Central West Regional Plan

Despite its small population and remoteness, this region hosts a number of sustainable communities. Industries include clean energy, organic agriculture, ecotourism, and mining for minerals and gas. The region forms part of the Lake Eyre catchment and comprises the following seven local government areas extending west from the central Highlands to the Northern Territory border:

- Barcaldine
- Barcoo
- Blackall-Tambo
- Boulia
- Diamantina
- Longreach
- Winton.

The Central West Regional Plan took effect in 2009.

Far North Queensland Regional Plan

This region boasts outstanding natural areas, particularly the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage areas. The region is known for its best practice environmental and natural resource management. The region comprises the following seven local government areas:

- Cairns
- Cassowary Coast
- Douglas
- Mareeba
- Tablelands
- Wujal Wujal
- Yarrabah.

The Far North Queensland Regional Plan took effect in 2009.

Maranoa-Balonne Regional Plan

Maranoa-Balonne is located in southern Queensland, taking in rich cropping and grazing lands and significant reserves of coal seam gas, conventional gas and petroleum. The region comprises the following two local government areas:

- Maranoa
- Balonne.

The Maranoa-Balonne Regional Plan took effect in 2009.

South West Regional Plan

This region is one of the most remote areas in the state. It is affected by extreme temperatures, drought and floods. The South West region's open space and abundant sunlight make it ideal for alternative energy research and development. The region comprises the following four local government areas:

- Bulloo
- Murweh
- Paroo
- Quilpie.

The South West Regional Plan took effect in 2009.

South East Queensland Regional Plan (ShapingSEQ)

The Queensland Government released the *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017*, also known as *ShapingSEQ*, on 11 August 2017. *ShapingSEQ* replaces *the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031*.

As the economic, social and cultural hub of Queensland, SEQ has been subject to sustained high levels of growth since the early 2000s. The region comprises the following 12 local government areas:

- Brisbane
- Gold Coast
- Ipswich
- Lockyer Valley
- Logan
- Moreton Bay
- Noosa
- Redland
- Scenic Rim
- Somerset
- Sunshine Coast
- Toowoomba (part only).

Current non-statutory regional plans

In addition to the above statutory plans, Queensland has one non-statutory regional plan – the Gulf Regional Development Plan

Gulf Regional Development Plan

This large and remote area has strong pastoral and tourism industries. The Gulf region comprises the following seven local government areas:

- Burke
- Carpentaria
- Croydon
- Doomadgee
- Etheridge
- Kowanyama
- Mornington.

The Gulf Regional Plan took effect in 2000.

Regional plans being prepared

North Queensland Regional Plan

Work is underway on the first North Queensland Regional Plan, with public consultation expected to occur in late-2017. The region comprises the following five local government areas:

- Burdekin
- Charters Towers
- Hinchinbrook
- Palm Island
- Townsville.

There are opportunities for the community to get involved with the development of the North Queensland Regional Plan when the draft plan is released for consultation.

More information

For more information on regional planning please call the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning on 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or visit

<https://planning.dilgp.qld.gov.au/planning/better-planning/state-planning>.