

TITLE: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

POLICY NO. 10

ADOPTED: 15 March 2006

AMENDED:

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the Landscape Character Planning Scheme Policy is to support and provide further guidance with respect to the Landscape Character Overlay Code.

This policy does not apply to self-assessable development.

Image Corridors

The Council has identified a number of roads that are considered significant in terms of the potential impact these roads may have on the image of the City as viewed by residents and tourists. These roads are defined as entry corridors which occur within or along approach roads into the urban areas of the city and Tourist corridors which are located throughout the City and which are noted tourist routes.

Landscape and Character Descriptions

Each of the Localities in the city has a distinct landscape and character which should be considered when designing and siting buildings and other works in these areas. The following provides a description of these areas to assist in formulating appropriate development for a site.

CITY CENTRE LOCALITY

Topography & Drainage

- (1) The topography of the City Centre is relatively flat, being situated in the flood plain of the Pioneer River. Much of the City Centre locality is below the level of the levee along the river bank. Consequently, this area is susceptible to flooding and inundation in major climatic events.
- (2) Drains have been constructed through the City Centre. Sandfly Creek flows from the south into the Pioneer River adjacent to the eastern boundary of the locality.

Land Use Pattern

- (1) There are several distinct land use areas in the locality. These include:
 - (a) the intense shopping and entertainment area, known locally as the 'City Heart', and focussed on the intersection of Victoria and Wood Street;
 - (b) the purpose-built major shopping centre (Canelands) on the corner of Victoria, Mangrove and River Streets and the adjacent mixed use shopping and commercial area to the east of Mangrove Road;
 - (c) the commercial and mixed use areas between Canelands and the City Heart;
 - (d) the Pioneer River riparian open space;
 - (e) the wharf and waterfront activities to the east of Tennyson Street;
 - (f) the service trades and industrial area east of Lawson Street and west of Chain Street;

- (g) the administrative, civic, institutional and commercial areas along Gordon Street;
 - (h) the entertainment, leisure, sport and recreation areas including the showgrounds and swimming pool complex on Nebo Road; and
 - (i) the mixed use areas, including residential, educational, commercial and open space, forming the transition between the intense commercial areas of the City Centre and the residential areas in the Pioneer River (Urban) locality to the south of Evan Street.
- (2) These distinctive land use areas form the bases for the different zones in the Locality.

Landscape Character

- (1) The urban landscape of many of the streets in the City Centre locality is enhanced by mature planted trees, providing shade, visual relief and interest.
- (2) The relationship between the City Centre and the Pioneer River is not well developed at present, despite the river being the dominant landscape feature in the urban area of Mackay.
- (3) The riverbank is visually obscured from the locality by buildings, levee structures and riparian and introduced vegetation.
- (4) The landscape of the western edge of the locality is diverse with open river terraces, some mature street trees, and the open spaces of the showgrounds and swimming pool complexes.
- (5) The eastern edge of the locality is framed by the strong landscape of Queens Park, in the Pioneer River (Urban) locality. In contrast, there is no landscape element defining the southern boundary of the City Centre locality.

MACKAY FRAME LOCALITY

Pioneer River (Urban) Precinct

Topography & Drainage

- (1) The drainage paths of the Pioneer River and Bakers Creek define the northern and southern boundaries of the precinct. There are small drainage paths and constructed drainage channels forming a drainage network across the precinct.
- (2) The topography of the Pioneer River (Urban) precinct is characterised generally by land with little physical relief and areas of low-lying land.
- (3) Much of the Pioneer River (Urban) precinct is subject to inundation by flood waters from either the Pioneer River or Bakers Creek. The risk of inundation is a significant constraint on the development and use of land in the precinct.
- (4) The coast is a broad sand beach with extensive tidal sand flats. Mangrove communities are located along the coast at the northern end of the mouth of the Pioneer River and at the southern end of the mouth of Bakers Creek. A mix of beach dune vegetation supports the coastal zone, including stands of mature *Melaleuca spp* at Illawong Beach.

Land Use Pattern

- (1) The Pioneer River (Urban) precinct contains the established urban areas of Mackay.
- (2) Situated beside the City Centre precinct, the land use in this precinct is pre-dominantly urban with large areas of residential, industrial, transport infrastructure and open space.

- (3) The residential land uses display a mix of densities and building styles, reflecting the historical growth of the City. Some areas of West Mackay and South Mackay have a distinctive residential character in terms of the combination of building styles, street trees and 'backyard vegetation'.
- (4) The Mackay Frame Locality code contains measures to retain and reinforce this residential character.
- (5) Other residential areas, particularly at Illawong Beach and along the Bruce Highway (Nebo Road) display a higher density tourist character. Nebo Road is an intense highway-related motel accommodation corridor whereas Illawong Beach is more of a longer-stay accommodation area.
- (6) The Locality code provides for the continuing use and development of visitor accommodation in these areas.
- (7) The major industrial area of the City is situated at Paget in the southern part of the precinct. The Paget industrial area provides a range of services to the City and the Mackay region, including the Mackay basin coal fields. These services include manufacturing, fabricating, servicing heavy machinery plant and equipment, packaging, storage and distribution of a diverse range of goods and products. Adequate separations between sensitive land uses and the Paget industrial area are required to maintain the operational conditions required for industries.
- (8) Access to Mackay, and the Paget industrial area, is provided through the Pioneer River (Urban) precinct by the Bruce Highway, the Peak Downs Highway, the North Coast Railway and the Mackay Airport. An integrated approach to managing the process of development is required to ensure the capacity of transport infrastructure serving Paget is maintained. Buffers to road and rail corridors and to the flight paths of the Mackay Airport are some of the measures
- (9) Some notable areas of open space in the Pioneer River (Urban) precinct include:
 - (a) the Mackay racecourse at Ooralea;
 - (b) the future botanical gardens site at The Lagoons adjacent to Lagoon Street;
 - (c) Queens Park in Shakespeare and East Gordon Streets;
 - (d) the network of playing fields in South Mackay; and
 - (e) the undeveloped riparian open space along the Pioneer River corridor.
- (10) Some parts of the riparian corridor are presently used for cane farming, providing a landscape contrast with the urban area, as well as the potential for land use conflicts between agricultural practices and the urban land uses.

Landscape Character

- (1) The Pioneer River (Urban) precinct exhibits a mostly urban landscape character incorporating some distinctive suburbs of heritage character along with some rural diversity.
- (2) The over-riding character of the urban landscape derives from the setting of the precinct in the regional context of the Coral Sea, the coastal ranges and the cane fields, particularly to the south and west of the urban area.
- (3) The urban landscape is rich in its diversity. In the east, the urban landscape is characterised by the beach or coastal vegetation communities (e.g. Illawong Beach, Pioneer River, Bakers Creek).

- (4) In the central parts of the precinct, the urban landscape is characterised by mature street trees including some formal plantings of street trees (e.g. Paradise Street, Henman Street) and the space and vegetation of public facilities (e.g. Queens Park, school sites). In the western parts of the precinct, the urban landscape is characterised by street trees and the interface with the rural and open spaces of The Lagoons and the Pioneer River.
- (5) The landscape character of the southern edge of the precinct is made up of large areas of open space (racecourse) and rural land including cane fields north of Schmidtkes Road. The cane fields provide a green or rural edge to the southern parts of the precinct.
- (6) The southern entrance to the precinct, and Mackay, is through a diverse urban landscape made up of cane fields, industrial buildings and highway-related commercial activities. The northern entrance to the precinct is via the Bruce Highway crossing of the Pioneer River past riparian open space and cane fields.

Residential Character Precincts

- (1) The Pioneer River (Urban) precinct includes a number of residential character dwellings which warrant particular care and attention to their use and development. These places are identified within three residential character areas as follows:
 - (a) Railway Station
 - (b) Queens Park
 - (c) West Mackay
- (2) These areas contain traditional tropical Queensland dwellings having an overall consistent design, use of materials and form of construction. These dwellings are characterised by the use of light-weight materials such as timber weatherboard cladding and corrugated iron roofs. The design is dominated by highly articulated building facades incorporating front verandahs, windows with awnings, overhanging eaves and pitched roofs. The buildings are predominantly high set.

Goosepond Creek Precinct

Topography & Drainage

- (1) The Goosepond Creek has its headwaters in Jane Creek which rises in the slopes of Black Mountain to the north of Farleigh, and flows generally from west to east, running generally parallel with the Pioneer River before discharging into the river just to the east of Cremorne. The other drainage system within the precinct is Fursden Creek which rises to the south-west of Farleigh and flows into the Pioneer River at a point south of Glenella.
- (2) The Goosepond Creek precinct includes extensive wetlands, streams and estuarine areas.
- (3) Through implementation of the Planning Scheme, these natural systems are to be protected from the effects of urban growth. The precinct also contains a substantial area in the Pioneer River corridor, including the wetlands and inter-tidal areas to the east of Cremorne.
- (4) The topography is undulating throughout the precinct, with low hills to the east of Farleigh, Glenella and Mount Pleasant. Some of the hills at Glenella have low but quite steep slopes.

Land Use Pattern

- (1) The Goosepond Creek precinct contains a mix of established urban development, rural residential areas, village and rural areas. While much of the precinct has been established with urban activities for some years, small pockets of land suitable for urban development remain, particularly in the Glenella area.
- (2) The land use pattern in the precinct is diverse with areas of residential and other urban activities extending into the rural agricultural areas around Farleigh, Glenella and Mt Pleasant.
- (3) The Farleigh sugar mill is a prominent landmark and important land use in the western parts of the precinct. The Farleigh mill accepts cane from farms from a very large area to the north of the Pioneer River. Some of these farms are situated in the McCready's Creek precinct and will possibly come under pressure from encroaching urban development.
- (4) A key land use feature of the precinct is the Mt Pleasant – Greenfields sub-regional centre which includes the commercial activities of the Sams Road – Heaths Road intersection with the Bruce Highway. This centre (Mt Pleasant sub-regional centre) is a major focus for retail and commercial activities north of the Pioneer River.
- (5) There are other much smaller centres in the Goosepond Creek precinct, including a small local centre just to the north of the Mt Pleasant-Greenfields sub-regional centre, a mixed use centre located on Malcolmson Street, North Mackay, and a small local centre located on Harbour Road North Mackay.
- (6) There are two small industrial areas within the precinct. The industrial area off Hamilton Street North Mackay provides a range of service trades and industrial activities with a maritime bias.
- (7) This industrial area is bounded by wetlands associated with the Goosepond Creek and residential areas of North Mackay. The industrial area off Heaths Road Foulden provides a range of service trades and low impact industries. This industrial area sits adjacent to residential uses and agricultural land, requiring careful management of impacts.
- (8) Farleigh is a small village with a dispersed land use pattern based on the sugar mill. The village is surrounded by farm land and some rural residential development. The village is an important community reference point owing to its links to the sugar industry and its location on the Bruce Highway just to the north of the urban area of Mackay (Glenella, Mt Pleasant).
- (9) Recent approvals have been granted for further rural residential development to the south of the Bruce Highway on Sugarshed Road at Farleigh. Further development of this nature will be subject to the consideration of the costs of providing infrastructure and services.

Landscape Character

- (1) The Goosepond Creek precinct exhibits a mostly urban landscape character with some rural diversity. The landscape character derives from the combination of the following natural features:
 - (a) the low timbered hills and slopes of Farleigh and Glenella, including the remnant vegetation and their setting in the canefields;
 - (b) the remnant vegetation in the Pioneer River estuarine and riparian corridors framing the southern boundaries of the precinct;

- (c) the attractive open space defining the Goosepond Creek corridor which is a feature of the precinct;
- (d) the wetlands and estuaries of Fursden Creek, Goosepond Creek and Vine Creek;
- (e) the street trees and remnant vegetation within the urban areas which provide visual relief and an urban character typical of the precinct;
- (f) the areas of agriculture and particularly sugar cane farming which extend into the precinct; and
- (g) the areas of rural land which provide breathing space around the precinct.

McCready's Creek Precinct

Topography & Drainage

- (1) Much of the precinct is low lying and subject to influence by flooding. The McCready's Creek system is a significant drainage feature within the precinct. Its northern arm rises in the semi-rural areas of Rural View and Richmond whereas the southern arm originates in the *melaleuca* wetlands to the west of the Port of Mackay.
- (2) The topography of the precinct is characterised by a low, steeply sloping coastal ridge which runs for most of the coastline. Elsewhere, low hills and undulating terrain provide physical relief to the coastal plain and a visual backdrop to the estuaries of the coastal system.
- (3) The coastline is punctuated by low rocky headlands at Shoal Point, Eimeo and Dolphin Heads, and at Slade Point. The southern extent of the coastline is an elongated sandy point known locally as East Point.

Land Use Pattern

- (1) The McCready's Creek precinct will contain much of the future urban growth and urban expansion to occur in the City over the life of the Planning Scheme and beyond. Anticipated urban growth will occur in areas able to be serviced with development infrastructure for the least cost and generally not constrained by natural features and natural hazards. The urban areas within the precinct will be supported by a number of multi-purpose centres established at convenient locations in the transport network.
- (2) The dominant land use in the precinct is residential, and mostly standard density residential. Residential areas are separated by extensive areas of wetland along the coast, and agricultural land, particularly in the northern suburbs of Rural View and Bucasia.
- (3) The Port of Mackay is situated within the precinct and is the major activity centre.
- (4) There are several small centres situated within the precinct, including the local centres at Andergrove/Beaconsfield, Rural View and Bucasia. In addition to these facilities, there are convenience shopping facilities throughout the urban area and there are also some isolated commercial activities, such as the Andergrove tavern.
- (5) There are several tourist facilities providing accommodation along the coast at Dolphin Heads, Blacks Beach and at the Harbour, in a development known locally as Port Binnli. There is also a disused tourist facility at Bucasia.

Landscape Character

- (1) The McCready's Creek precinct exhibits a landscape character of considerable diversity and high local value. The landscape character derives from the combination of the following natural features:
 - (a) the coastal systems such as the beaches, bays, low rocky headlands, estuaries and inlets, wetlands, and small rocky islands;
 - (b) the low timbered hills and slopes of the coastal ridge systems;
 - (c) the remnant vegetation in the estuarine and riparian corridors extending through the precinct;
 - (d) the areas of agriculture and particularly sugar cane farming which extend into the precinct;
 - (e) the discrete areas of urban development separated from each other by lowlands and the drainage system; and
 - (f) the areas of rural land which provide breathing space between the other activities in the precinct.

MACKAY HINTERLAND LOCALITY

Reliance Creek Precinct

Topography & Drainage

- (1) Reliance Creek is the major drainage system in the precinct. One arm of Reliance Creek rises on the south-eastern slopes of Mt Gabrovo and Mt Xeromero, while the other arm rises on the northern slopes of Mt Mandurana (The Leap). Armhurst Creek is a major tributary of Reliance Creek, rising in the low rolling hills to the west of Farleigh.
- (2) Leila Creek is a significant drainage system within the Reliance Creek precinct. It flows to the east and outfalls with Reliance Creek to the Coral Sea to the west of Shoal Point.
- (3) There are a number of other minor streams and other drainage systems which shape the precinct boundary. They include Constant Creek on the north-western boundary and Denman and Paget Creeks which flow off the eastern slopes of Black Mountain in the eastern parts of the precinct.
- (4) The coast is made up of the estuaries and wetlands of Reliance Creek and Constant Creek, together with some isolated rocky headlands. Also, there are quite a number of intricate coastal drainage channels through the extensive tidal wetlands along the northern boundary of the precinct.
- (5) The topography of the precinct is varied, with a number of locally prominent hills and ridges providing physical relief. Black Mountain, Mt Mandurana, Mt Gabrovo and Mt Xeromero provide contrast and the foundation elements of the rural and coastal landscapes. Apart from some telecommunications facilities at their summits, these mountains are mostly forested with open woodland and some thickets of vine rainforest.
- (6) The average slopes of some land in the precinct exceed 20% which presents the potential for site impacts and landscape impacts if inappropriate development was to occur.

Land Use Pattern

- (1) The land use pattern in the Reliance Creek precinct is characterised by rural activities including cane farming and grazing, and rural residential living.
- (2) The predominant land use in the precinct is agriculture, and in particular, sugar cane farming. The cane lands are serviced by a network of tramways and haul-out roads.
- (3) There are extensive areas of rural residential development in the precinct in the vicinity of Habana, Yakapari and Nindaroo. There is no overall pattern to such development other than that determined by a major road system comprised of the Yakapari-Habana Road and the Mackay-Habana Road. Rural residential lots in the precinct to the north of the Bruce Highway generally are in excess of 1 hectare in area.
- (4) In some places in the precinct there is a direct interface between rural residential activities and agriculture (cane farming and the infrastructure associated with cane farming).
- (5) There are three small settlements in the precinct at Nindaroo, Conningsby and The Leap. These settlements provide limited or no convenience services for the communities in their localities.
- (6) There is a large hard rock quarry (Frost) situated on the Farleigh-Habana Road.

Landscape Character

- (1) The Reliance Creek precinct exhibits a mostly rural landscape character with some diversity provided by the rural residential and small settlements of Nindaroo, Conningsby and The Leap.
- (2) The landscape character derives from the combination of the following natural features:
 - (a) the extensive canelands which extend throughout the precinct, but which are particularly dominant in the landscape along the Bruce Highway corridor;
 - (b) the steep timbered hills slopes of Black Mountain, Mt Mandurana, Mt Gabrovo and Mt Xeromero;
 - (c) the incursions made in the coast by the estuaries of Reliance Creek and Constant Creek and the wetlands in between; and
 - (d) the contrasts of the settlements and rural residential areas with the rural landscape; and
 - (e) the timbered ridgelines around Habana and Nindaroo.
- (3) The evidence of quarrying activities at Habana, when viewed from the Bruce Highway and other vantage points, is significant in the precinct landscape. While the quarrying has adverse landscape impacts, it also provides a landmark and reference point.

Other Valuable Features

- (1) The Reliance Creek precinct includes an extensive interface with the marine environment, with estuaries and tidal waters extending into the precinct along its northern boundaries.
- (2) In addition to the filtering of sediments and nutrients from run-off, these wetlands and the tidal waters adjacent to them have fisheries values.
- (3) The waters adjacent to the northern boundary of the precinct also are part of the Dugong Protection Area declared under the Fisheries Act. Land uses need to be managed carefully if the intentions of the Dugong Protection Area are to be achieved.

O'Connell River and Northern Streams Precinct

Topography & Drainage

- (1) O'Connell River is the major drainage system in the precinct. Other smaller drainage systems in the precinct include the following streams:
 - (a) Blackrock Creek, Alligator Creek and Zamia Creek;
 - (b) Dempster Creek, Waterhole Creek, Julian Creek;
 - (c) Murray Creek, St Helen's Creek, Sawyer Creek, Jolimont Creek, Macquarie Creek;
 - (d) Plantation Creek, Seaforth Creek; and
 - (e) Constant Creek.
- (2) The O'Connell River rises in the Clarke Range to the west of Calen. The Clarke Range rises from the relatively low-lying coastal plains to elevations of 800 to 900 m AHD. The coastal plain lies between the Clarke Range and the low ranges and ridge systems adjacent to the coast.
- (3) These systems include the Tonga Range, the Conder Hills and the Whiptail Range. The coastal plains are also punctuated by a number of low but steep hills including Mt Ossa, Mt Pelion, Mt Lewis, Mt Sweetland, Pinnacle Rock, Mt Catherine and Mt Bullock.

Land Use Pattern

- (1) The land use pattern in the O'Connell River precinct is characterised by rural activities including cane farming and grazing, small coastal villages and holiday destinations, and some rural residential living.
- (2) The predominant land use in the precinct is agriculture, and in particular, sugarcane farming. The cane lands are serviced by a network of tramways and haul-out roads which need to be recognised in the future development of other parts of the precinct. In some places in the precinct there is a direct interface between rural residential activities and agriculture (cane farming and the infrastructure associated with cane farming).
- (3) Other rural activities include some limited forestry and grazing. Elsewhere in the rural parts of the precinct, land is held in public ownership as national park (Eungella National Park, Mt Beatrice National Park, Mt Adder National Park, Mount Jukes National Park, Mt Blackwood National Park), State Forests and other reserves.
- (4) There are a number of villages and small coastal and rural settlements in the precinct.

They include:

Villages	Coastal & Rural Settlements
Bloomsbury	Ball Bay
Calen	Haliday Bay
Kuttabul	Hampden
Midge Point	St Helen's Beach
Seaforth	Yalboroo

- (5) The villages provide a limited range of services to the communities residing in their 'precincts'. Some of them (Bloomsbury, Calen, Kuttabul) also provide services to travellers on the Bruce Highway. Others provide limited services to holiday-makers and tourists in locations such as Midge Point and Seaforth.
- (6) Seaforth offers a range of housing choices in an elongated and somewhat fragmented settlement pattern.
- (7) The coastal and rural settlements offer limited services to the surrounding communities. They offer attractive sites for holiday-makers and tourists to enjoy the scenery and other aspects of the coastal environment of the O'Connell River precinct.
- (8) The more northern communities in the precinct are able to access the facilities and services in the neighbouring Whitsunday Shire as well as from the highly developed regional facilities situated in Mackay.
- (9) The major integrated tourist resort of Laguna Quays is situated just to the north of Midge Point.
- (10) This facility includes a range of visitor and residential housing, sport and recreation facilities, and marina and boating facilities. Laguna Quays is serviced for air transport by the Proserpine Airport.
- (11) There are some areas of rural residential development in the precinct in the vicinity of Bloomsbury, Midge Point, Kuttabul, and the Mount Jukes / Seaforth area. There is no overall pattern to such development other than that determined by the road system serving each of these localities. Rural residential lots in the precinct generally are in excess of 1 hectare in area. Many of these lots, particularly in the Midge Point area, are not developed with housing and are not being used for rural residential purposes.

Landscape Character

- (1) The O'Connell River precinct exhibits a mostly rural landscape character with some diversity provided by heavily timbered slopes of the Clarke Range and the low coastal ranges and hills, and the small coastal and rural settlements. The landscape character derives from the combination of the following features:
 - (a) the steep timbered slopes of the Clarke Range and the low coastal ranges (Tonga Range, Whiptail Range, Conder Hills);
 - (b) the sweeping coastline, truncated by headlands, peninsulas, expanses of tidal lands and inshore islands;
 - (c) the numerous in-shore islands with their varied topography and vegetation cover;
 - (d) the incursions made in the coast by the estuaries of O'Connell River and the other drainage systems listed in (1) above;
 - (e) the canelands which extend throughout the precinct, but which are particularly dominant in the landscape along the Bruce Highway corridor; and
 - (f) the contrasts of the small settlements and rural residential areas with the rural landscape.
- (2) Because of the topography, the O'Connell River precinct is the least disturbed in terms of its landscape values, of all the mainland precincts in the City.
- (3) The national parks, and particularly the Eungella National Park, contribute to the strong natural landscape character of the northern and western areas of the City. These landscapes also are important in establishing a character for the City for travellers along the Bruce Highway and the North Coast Railway.

- (4) Much of the coast is inaccessible by road so that settlements are small and isolated relative to other areas in the City. The land use patterns reflect the low levels of accessibility with grazing land being a predominant land use and landscape characteristic.

Other Valuable Features

- (1) The O'Connell River precinct includes an extensive interface with the marine environment, with in-shore islands, estuaries and tidal waters extending into the precinct along its eastern boundaries.
- (2) The coast and coastal waters are important for their biodiversity and habitat values. These values are represented by:
 - (a) almost all of the coast is included in the Directory of Important Wetlands;
 - (b) the in-shore waters adjacent to the coast of the precinct and south of Ten Mile Beach being included in the Dugong Protection Area declared under the Fisheries Act;
 - (c) the Midge and Repulse Fish Habitat Reserves about the northern coast;
 - (d) known turtle nestling sites extend from near Stewart Peninsula to a point south-east of Cape Hillsborough;
 - (e) recorded sightings of rare or threatened species are located along the coast south from Midge Point; and
 - (f) several of the in-shore islands are national parks.
- (3) Other valuable features in the precinct include the good quality agricultural land, being classes A and B land, and the assigned cane land. These land units extend along the valley floors from the O'Connell River in the north to the precinct boundary at Constant Creek in the south.

Pioneer River & Southern Streams Precinct

Topography & Drainage

- (1) Pioneer River is the major drainage system in the precinct. Other smaller drainage systems in the precinct include the following streams:
 - (a) Balnagowan Creek;
 - (b) Bakers Creek, MacLennan Creek, Pleystowe Creek, Rocky Creek;
 - (c) Sandy Creek, Begley Creek, Rock Creek, Ross Creek; and
 - (d) Alligator Creek, Bell Creek, Running Creek, Sandringham Creek.
- (2) Despite the Pioneer River being the major drainage system, much of the precinct is drained by other major streams into the Coral Sea to the south of Mackay. Bakers Creek and Sandy Creek actually drain most of the precinct.
- (3) The prominent topographical feature is the Connors Range which forms the western boundary of the precinct and the City. The only other relief in the topography of the coastal plain south of the Pioneer River is provided by Mt Homebush (160m) to the south of Walkerston and Mt Vince (255 m) to the west of Walkerston.
- (4) North of the Pioneer River, the topography is more varied with the hills and ridges running east off the Clarke Range. These landforms reach elevations of 230 m (Milton's Lookout) and 259 m (Sugarloaf Peak).

Land Use Pattern

- (1) The land use pattern in the Pioneer River and Southern Streams precinct is characterised by rural activities including cane farming, grazing and two sugar mills (Pleystowe & Racecourse), the urban area of Walkerston, small coastal and rural villages, and some rural residential living.
- (2) The predominant land use in the precinct is agriculture, and in particular, sugar cane farming. The cane lands are serviced by the two sugar mills and their associated network of tramways and haul-out roads. In some places in the precinct there is a direct interface between urban and rural residential activities and agriculture.
- (3) The Bakers Creek abattoir is another significant rural-based activity and major source of employment in the precinct. The abattoir is served by both the Bruce Highway and the Peak Downs Highway. . Other rural activities include some limited forestry, horticulture and grazing. Elsewhere in the rural parts of the precinct, land is held in public ownership.
- (4) Walkerston is a township in the precinct, providing a range of community facilities and services to its residents, as well as providing a range of housing choices to the residents of the City. There is a limited range of shopping, commercial, community services and trades meeting the day-to-day convenience needs of the residents of Walkerston and the surrounding area. There is also a school and community recreation facilities.
- (5) Walkerston is situated on the Peak Downs Highway less than 20 km to the west of Mackay. There are small communities in the rural residential areas to the west and south west for whom Walkerston also is the most convenient centre in the City. Some of this rural residential settlement is situated in the environs of Greenmount Homestead, which is listed on the Queensland Heritage Register.
- (6) Walkerston is becoming increasingly convenient and attractive as an alternative to Mackay for the mining workforce engaged in the Mackay coal basin. There will be an increasing demand for housing, commercial and community facilities as Walkerston grows into an attractive rural alternative and dormitory for Mackay.
- (7) In addition to Walkerston, there are a number of villages and small coastal and rural settlements in the precinct. They include:

Villages	Coastal & Rural Settlements
Eton & North Eton	Chelona
Bakers Creek	Dunnrock
	Homebush
	McEwens Beach
	Oakenden
	Pleystowe

- (8) The villages provide a limited range of services to the communities residing in their catchments.
- (9) Eton is more developed, in terms of size and the range of facilities and services available, than Bakers Creek. Eton is situated on the Peak Downs Highway to the south-west of Mackay and Walkerston, in the south-west corner of the City. It offers a limited range of convenience shopping, commercial and community facilities and services to its residents and the residents of the rural and rural residential communities in the surrounding areas. At present the infrastructure network is limited.

- (10) The future of the village is linked directly to the future of the abattoir as many of its residents are employed there. The village is serviced by a reticulated urban water supply but is partly constrained by flooding and inundation in major climatic events. There are only limited community facilities and services in Bakers Creek.
- (11) The coastal and rural settlements generally offer limited services to the surrounding communities.
- (12) The rural settlements (Chelona, Homebush, Oakenden, Sunnyside) also offer limited community facilities or development infrastructure including State primary schools being situated at Homebush and Oakenden. These places have been settled as communities of interest during the agricultural development of the southern parts of the City.
- (13) The more southern communities in the precinct are able to access the facilities and services in the neighbouring Sarina Shire as well as from the highly developed regional facilities situated in Mackay.
- (14) There are some areas of rural residential development in the precinct in the vicinity of Greenmount and Victoria Plains, Oakenden, Pleystowe, Sunnyside and Walkerston. There is no overall pattern to such development other than that determined by the road system serving each of these localities. Rural residential lots in the precinct generally are in excess of 1 hectare in area. Many of these lots remain undeveloped and are not being used for rural residential purposes.

Landscape Character

- (1) The Pioneer River precinct exhibits a mostly rural landscape character with some diversity provided by heavily timbered slopes of the Connor Ranges on the southern border and the low hills and ridges around Greenmount and Homebush. The small rural settlements provide some diversity in the predominantly agricultural landscapes of the plains. The physical presence of the sugar mills at Pleystowe and Racecourse punctuate the landscape of the Pioneer River floodplain.
- (2) There are some stands of vegetation which contribute to a strong sense of place in the localities in which they occur. These include memorial avenues of mango trees and fig trees at Pleystowe and the street trees in Walkerston, particularly along Pleystowe Creek and around the primary school.
- (3) The coastal landscape is typical of the coast of the City, with the estuaries of Bakers Creek and Bell and Alligator Creeks at Sandringham Bay extending the marine influence well across the coastal plain.
- (4) The landscape character derives from the combination of the following features:
 - (a) the steep timbered slopes and foothills of the Connor Ranges and the low wooded hills of Greenmount and Homebush;
 - (b) the open coastline, punctuated by the estuaries of Bakers Creek and Alligator Creek, and the expanses of tidal lands;
 - (c) the canelands which extend throughout the precinct, but which are particularly dominant in the landscape of the Pioneer River and Bakers Creek floodplains;
 - (d) the physical presence of the sugar mills at Pleystowe and Racecourse; and
 - (e) the contrasts of the small settlements and rural residential areas with the rural landscape.

MACKAY OFF-SHORE ISLANDS LOCALITY

Topography

- (1) The Off-Shore Islands are comprised of a group of over 70 Islands contained within the Cumberland Group of Islands located about 25 kilometres off-shore.
- (2) The topography of the Islands varies with steeply sloping lands with peaks and ridges and low lying areas. The Islands have picturesque coastlines comprising bays and beaches interspersed with rugged headlands. Many of the Islands' peaks provide 180° views of the surrounding seascape with the highest being Shaw Peak on Shaw Island at 413 metres AHD.
- (3) The Islands contain a variety of vegetation communities and landforms. Most of the Islands are heavily vegetated and are noted for containing 'Endangered' and 'Of Concern' Regional Ecosystems. The ecological values of the Islands are however, mostly well protected as all but a small portion of the Islands is within National Park ownership. The Islands are also located within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and World Heritage Area reflecting their high level of environmental significance.

Land Use Pattern

- (1) Most of the islands in the locality remain undeveloped. Some islands may have been subject to agricultural (grazing) activity in the past however, Lindeman, Brampton and Keswick Islands are the only Islands in the precinct which contain any land uses other than open space.
- (2) Lindeman Island contains a tourist resort development including airstrip and 9-hole golf course located on the southern side of the Island. Most of Lindeman Island is dedicated as National Park with approximately 70 hectares of the 670 hectares of the island being developed.
- (3) Brampton Island contains a tourist resort located on the northern end of the island. The tourist resort is surrounded by the remnant of a coconut grove planted in the late 1800's to provide food for sailors. Most of Brampton Island is dedicated as National Park.
- (4) Keswick Island is currently undergoing development as a tourist resort and master planned community for up to 3,000 people. The development includes an airstrip, marina, commercial wharves, shops, local community facilities, resort style hotels and fully serviced residential lots.
- (5) The development is supported by a desalination plant, power station, sewerage treatment plant and road network.
- (6) The developed land on Keswick Island occupies four separate areas with the main harbour/marina retail area on the eastern bay, the residential areas located on the eastern tip, and recreation based resorts located in the northern and southern bays of the island. A significant part of the island is to be retained as a conservation area.
- (7) St Bees Island located adjacent to Keswick Island remains undeveloped. However, leasehold land over part of the island has been utilised for pastoral purposes in the past.

Landscape Character

- (1) The Off-Shore Islands Locality exhibit a largely maritime character with wilderness values in some areas. All islands have high landscape character values.
- (2) Most of the off shore islands exhibit a natural landscape character which has outstanding natural and conservation values on a global scale. The off-shore islands are characterised by the bay and beaches set within a heavily vegetated landscape with at times steeply rising hill slopes and ridgelines behind.
- (3) The landscape character derives from the combination of the following natural features:
 - (a) the marine 'wilderness' in the more remote islands;

- (b) the bays and beached skirted by dense coastal vegetation;
- (c) rocky and often steeply sided headlands jutting between the bays;
- (d) densely vegetated mountain peaks;
- (e) vegetated saddles of land linking the headlands and mountain peaks;
- (f) a series of steep gullies providing drainage channels to the beaches; and
- (g) where land is developed the built form provides a hard and contrasting edge to the soft green vegetated areas and natural landforms.

Valuable Features

- (1) There are a number of valuable features prevalent throughout the Off-shore Islands Locality.
- (2) The Valuable Features identified on the Off-Shore Islands Locality are:
 - (a) High ecological (Habitat, Remnant Vegetation, wetlands areas) significance due to the largely undeveloped state of the islands, their designation as containing 'Of concern' and 'Endangered' ecosystems and their location within a World Heritage Area;
 - (b) Moderate to High Bushfire Hazard due to the presence of heavily vegetated steep slopes;
 - (c) Erosion Prone Areas;
 - (d) Cultural Heritage Values due to the location within the World Heritage Area and high likelihood for containing 'Areas of Sensitivity'; and
 - (e) Risk of inundation from tidal inundation.