



# Shaping Our Community

*A Blueprint for Growth*

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## *A Blueprint for Growth*

This document provides a snapshot of Mackay Regional Council's Regional Sustainability Strategy. This ground-breaking blueprint ensures future development delivers the best outcomes for the region and its residents. The strategy focuses on liveability, sustainability and our community's financial capacity to support sustainable growth as we head towards a population of more than 180,000.





## Who's involved?

The Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS) is the result of an 18-month collaborative project involving council officers from across many programs and specialist consultants who provided independent advice. The strategy brings together the Draft Mackay Regional Council Planning Scheme, strategic infrastructure planning and the Long Term Financial Forecast (LTFF). The alignment of these tools support, planning for regional growth, infrastructure identification and prioritisation and long term financial management.





## the result

Shaping Our Community – A Blueprint for Growth will shape our region by directing community funds, forecast to be nearly half-a-billion dollars to deliver new infrastructure over the next 10 years, in a defined development footprint, known as a Priority Infrastructure Area (PIA).

**This footprint supports between 12,000 and 19,000 new households, new industrial development and new commercial development.**

The strategy prioritises future growth locations where Mackay Regional Council can deliver future infrastructure and services for the community sustainably. The Blueprint is our map that provides clear direction, ensuring future development delivers enhanced liveability for our region and is achieved while keeping future rates rises to a minimum.



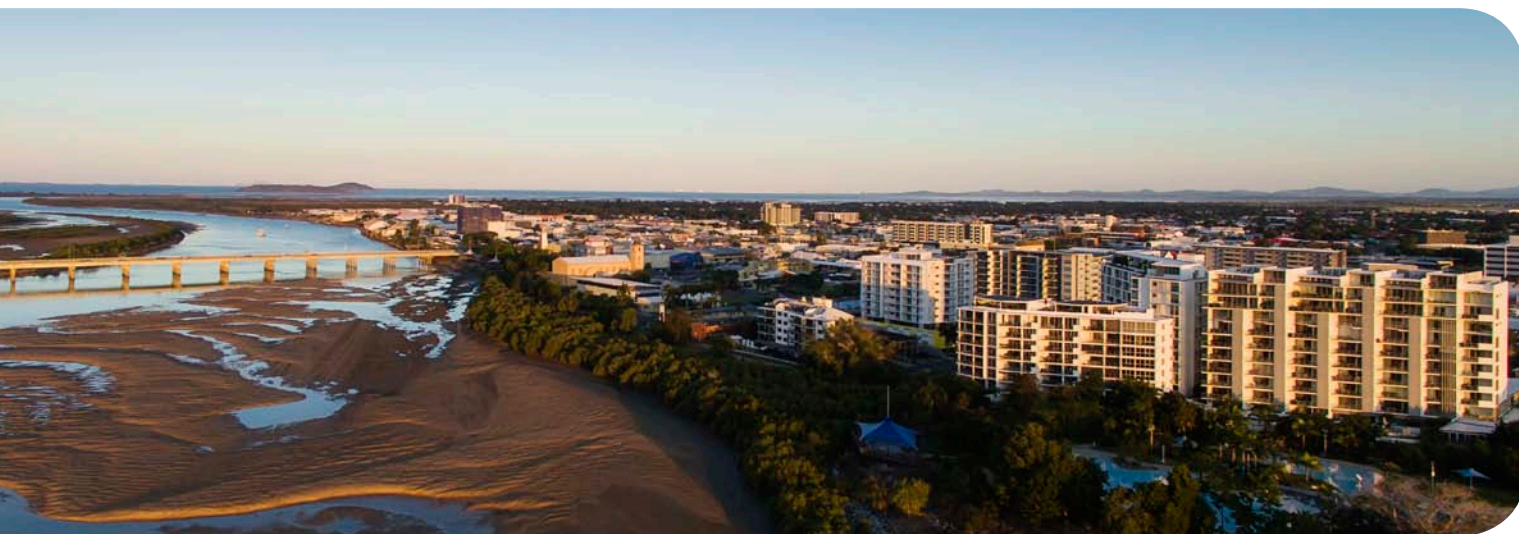
## Key messages:

Our commitment to sustainable development across the Mackay region continues, we are outcome-driven to ensure liveability, affordability and prosperity for our community.

No longer is it acceptable to continue to ask residents to subsidise development in high-cost areas, therefore spreading our infrastructure dollars too thinly and inefficiently.

**We now have a better understanding of growth patterns and what infrastructure the community needs to underpin sustainable growth.**

“Sustainable growth” will allow council to deliver liveability outcomes that support a prosperous region that keeps rate rises to a minimum.

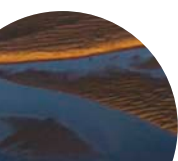


## what we'll look like under the blueprint

**The Mackay region's population is predicted to grow to 180,000 by 2036.**

The Mackay region's population is predicted to grow to 180,000 by 2036 from its current population of around 120,000.

The focus of that population will be in urban areas, particularly in Mackay, and also Sarina, Marian, Mirani and Walkerston.





The Shaping Our Community strategy has identified that sufficient development can be accommodated within the defined development footprint.

It can be achieved through some fine tuning to expand the PIA boundary and promote modest increases in densities in targeted areas in a way that means planned infrastructure investment is targeted, efficient and affordable.

This removes the need for opening up more new development fronts over the next 10 years.

**Imagine more choice of housing, including townhouses, units and some taller buildings in the City Centre and key centres like North Mackay, as well as continuing to provide a range of traditional housing development in new areas.**

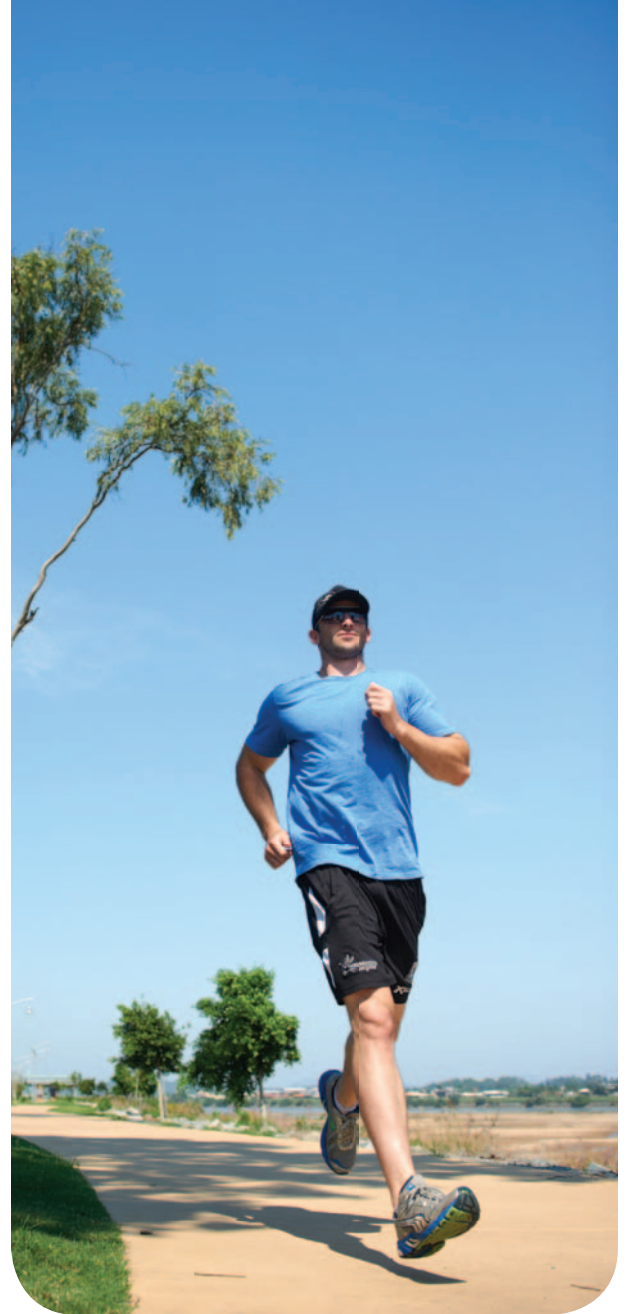


The vision creates a much more liveable region, with a greater range of housing and lifestyle choices to suit our region's changing population in the future.

There will be better use of community facilities, including parks, with innovative urban design.

More residential development near existing commercial precincts will provide more lifestyle choices.

More residents will be able to live closer to where they work, so they can choose to walk or ride to work via quality shared pedestrian/bicycle paths.





**Importantly, it is a vision our region and its residents can afford.**

It is also about environmentally-sustainable development.

Shaping Our Community is a vision for the region that residents can be proud of as they live, work and play.



## Background

Mackay is a thriving regional city underpinned by a strong economy and enviable lifestyle. In recent decades we have transformed from a successful sugar industry based town to a thriving provincial city.

Mackay is an integral mining services hub, with the resources sector exporting more than \$16 billion through the region's coal ports, or 63 per cent of the state's coal exports. Our sugar industry provides one-third of Queensland's production.

We're also well positioned as a tourism destination, with the Whitsundays and Great Barrier Reef on our doorstep, nestled in the picturesque Pioneer Valley between the coast and rainforest.



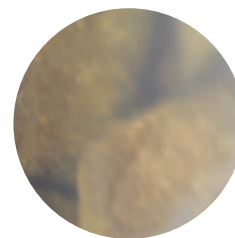
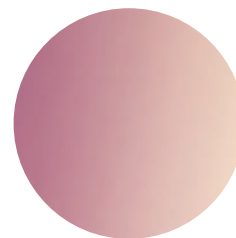
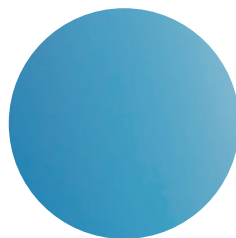
In the past few decades the region has experienced unprecedented growth, resulting in large numbers of new jobs, significant improvements in amenity and exciting new facilities, such as the Artspace Mackay art gallery, Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre, Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens and Bluewater Lagoon, which is Australia's only three-level, multi-dimensional water park.

Planning for the infrastructure demands and housing needed to keep pace with this transformation has been challenging and resulted in many major urban development fronts, which require a high level of community subsidy.

Council identified the need to be focused on ensuring future development is liveable, sustainable and affordable for the community.

The focus on affordability and sustainability ensures council and its ratepayers are able to fund the infrastructure needed, such as roads, water, sewer, stormwater, parks and community facilities, to service future developments.

Council is committed to continually driving down operating costs while keeping future rates rises to a minimum, and at the same time investing in facilities and services that improve our community.



**Ensuring a more efficient pattern of urban development in the next 10 years and beyond will help do that.**



Shaping Our Community provides a blueprint for the future development of our region. It will ensure a lot of that development occurs in areas in close proximity to, or already serviced by, existing and planned infrastructure.

The strategy also envisages infilling of existing urban development areas. That will, in turn, improve the liveability of our region by providing a wider range of housing and lifestyle choices.

The Shaping Our Community strategy will bring together council's land use planning with its Long Term Financial Forecast (LTFF) and Local Government Infrastructure Plans (LGIP).

It was also the basis for amendments in late 2014 to the Draft Mackay Regional Council Planning Scheme, which, once approved by the State Government, will be the new planning scheme for the region.






## Where we've come from

The Mackay region's economy has evolved from the foundation industry of sugar manufacturing and port exports into a diverse service hub for mining-related heavy industry, regional event tourism and professional services as a Regional Capital.

The region's liveability has increased with council's increased investment in community infrastructure and has attracted many people who choose to live in Mackay and commute to the Bowen Basin or other areas for work.



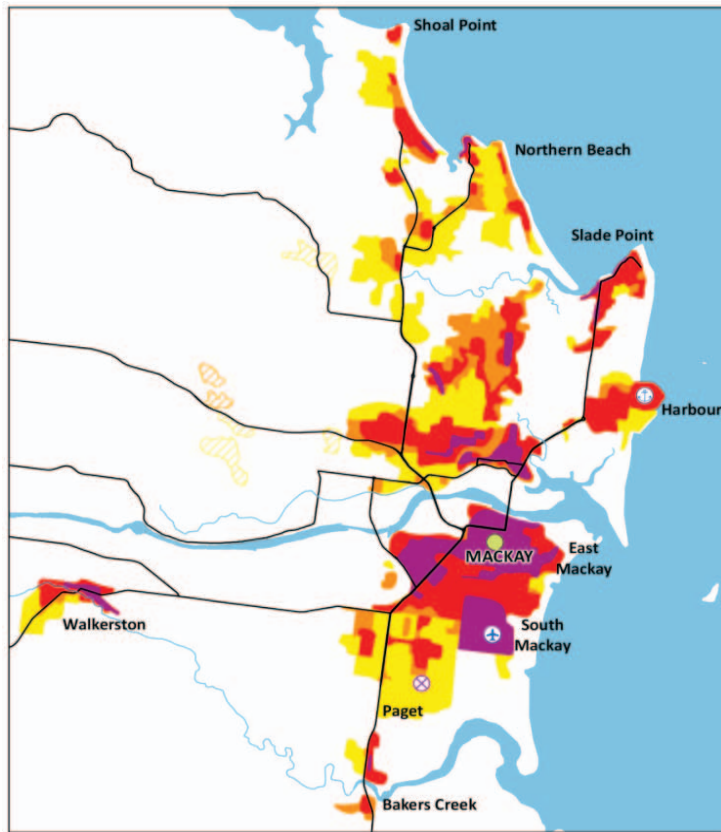
**Mackay Regional Council  
was formed in 2008 after  
the amalgamation of  
Mackay City Council,  
Sarina Shire Council and  
Mirani Shire Council.**

Prior to 2008, Mackay City Council amalgamated with the former Pioneer Shire Council in 1994.

Each council had individual planning schemes, policies and strategies that reflected their area. The Draft Mackay Regional Planning Scheme, once adopted by the State Government, will replace the Mackay City, Mirani and Sarina planning schemes.

Shaping Our Community provides one clear sustainable development direction for the entire Mackay Regional Council area.

## our Urban growth since 1953



### Legend

- 1953 Urban Footprint
- 1986 Urban Footprint
- 1998 Urban Footprint
- 1998 Rural Residential Area
- Current Urban Footprint
- Current Rural Residential Area
- Major Waterway
- State Controlled Roads

Our region's urban growth has been fragmented, which has made infrastructure more expensive to deliver and required high levels of community subsidy.

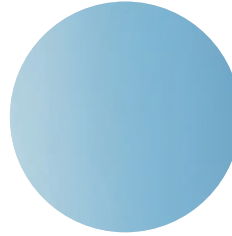
Before Shaping Our Community, our rates were rising at unsustainable levels to fund this pattern of growth. Changes needed to be made.

We have made the hard and necessary decisions to put our community first, ensuring that in the future we don't chase growth at any cost. Our priority is that growth delivers sustained improvements to the liveability of our region and our community's standard of living by supporting new and improved jobs, economic growth and investment in community facilities.





Housing is not “one size fits all”.  
Like most cities in Australia, the make-up of our communities is changing and we need to provide more lifestyle and housing choices that suit our aging population, the millennial generation and everyone in between.




Council will fund about \$470 million in new infrastructure to deliver this development footprint over the next 10 years.

Shaping Our Community provides developers certainty from a planning and infrastructure perspective and confidence that council is committed to fund the necessary infrastructure to service those developments. Between 12,000 and 19,000 new households are expected to be developed within the development footprint during this time.

## How we're shaping council

**Through the Draft Planning Scheme and Shaping Our Community, we've included a Priority Infrastructure Area (PIA) that provides the development footprint for our region.**



We'll continue to  
grow strongly,  
but in much smarter,  
more cost-effective  
and sustainable  
ways.

**The PIA seeks to consolidate urban expansion through:**

- Managing urban growth within defined boundaries in a sustainable manner;
- Enhancing liveability through access to services, functional open space and clever urban design to improve quality of life;
- Encouraging effective mobility (access and transport) through increased access to other modes of transport; and
- Encouraging development which delivers these outcomes within the broader constraints of infrastructure funding and sequencing.

The Mackay urban area (inclusive of the Northern Beaches) will continue to accommodate the majority of the region's population through a mix of identified greenfield areas, and infill development.

This will be supported by the areas of Sarina, Walkerston, Marian and Mirani, most of which are serviced by existing infrastructure.

The Shaping Our Community strategy complements the policy direction of the Draft Planning Scheme, including a settlement pattern which focuses on "urban consolidation" with the objective of:

- In the Mackay urban area, providing more employment on the north side of the Pioneer River and more residential development (particularly through infill) on the south side of the Pioneer River;
- Encouraging infill development (including more high density development in the City Centre and medium density development throughout the urban areas);

- Focusing urban development to areas where infrastructure is provided in an orderly and sustainable manner;
- This strategy will also protect good agricultural land, as well as environmentally sensitive, physically constrained and scenic land.







## Scenario one:

Where we were heading and what we don't want to repeat

- Reactive and piecemeal development created by new development fronts.
- Annual rate rises of seven to 10 per cent to fund new infrastructure for such development.
- A focus in delivery of only one type of housing. Isolated pockets of residential development poorly serviced by infrastructure and community facilities.



## Scenario two: what we want to achieve

**Annual rates rises to fund new infrastructure for such development at a maximum of three per cent and ideally lower.**

- Well-planned and sequenced development that enhances the liveability of our region.
- A broad range of housing choice for residents.
- Clever urban design delivering new development areas with supporting infrastructure and easy access to community facilities.
- Better use of existing community facilities, ranging from parks to shared pedestrian and bicycle pathways.



The Broad Property Research and Advisory report Housing Analysis, dated May 2014, noted single detached houses on large allotments have been the predominant housing stock in the Mackay region.

Apartments and townhouses have been built within the City Centre and its fringe, as well as at Mackay Harbour.

The report also included market analysis detailing housing predictions for Mackay, with its findings summarised in Table 1.



## Industrial land

Shaping Our Community recognises the importance to the region of providing a consistent supply of land for major industry. Industry, particularly high impact and large footprint activities that support the resources and energy sector in the Bowen and Upper Galilee basins, is a significant driver of the region's economy.



Table 1: market analysis housing predictions for Mackay

Location	0 to 5 year Horizon	6 to 10 year Horizon	10+ year Horizon
Mackay City	Predominance of 3-storey walk-ups in Mackay City and City Centre fringe, some 4-5 storey lifted apartment product in Mackay City and City Centre fringe	Predominance of 4-5 storey lifted apartment product in Mackay City and City Centre fringe, augmented by additional 3-storey walk-ups	High-rise apartment projects in Mackay City Centre and additional 4-5 storey lifted apartment product
North Mackay and West Mackay		Townhouses in District Centres such as North Mackay and West Mackay	Introduction of 3-storey walkups and a limited amount of 4-5 storey lifted apartment product in District Centres such as North Mackay and West Mackay
Mackay Harbour	A very limited amount of additional medium-high rise apartment product at Mackay Harbour	A limited amount of additional medium-high rise apartment product at Mackay Harbour	Further medium-high rise apartment product at Mackay Harbour
Mount Pleasant and East Mackay	Townhouses in Mount Pleasant	Townhouses and 3-storey walk-ups in East Mackay	Introduction of a limited amount of 4-5 storey lifted apartment product in Mount Pleasant and East Mackay
Mount Pleasant, Rural View, North Mackay, Sarina and Ooralea;	Townhouses in Major Centres such as Mount Pleasant, Rural View, Sarina and Ooralea	Additional townhouse product in Major Centres such as Mount Pleasant, Rural View, Sarina and Ooralea, augmented by a limited amount of 3-storey walk-ups in Mount Pleasant	Introduction of 3-storey walk-ups in Rural View, Sarina and Ooralea
Dolphin Heads, Shoal Point and Slade Point		Townhouses in Dolphin Heads, Shoal Point and Slade Point	Additional townhouse product in Dolphin Heads, Shoal Point and Slade Point
Marian, Mirani and Walkerston	Smaller-lot housing in Marian, Mirani and Walkerston	Continuation of smaller-lot housing in Marian, Mirani and Walkerston with the introduction of townhouses in Walkerston	A mix of smaller-lot housing and townhouses in Marian, Mirani and Walkerston



Therefore, sufficient high impact land needs to be identified, planned and brought online in a timely manner.

Demand for industrial land in the region averages around 13-15 hectares annually, but fluctuates widely. Shaping Our Community recognises opportunities for development in existing industrial areas, notably Paget.

Possible new high impact areas have been identified, such as at Rosella. There will be further investigations so such land could be brought online quickly to meet demand, or as a longer-term strategy.

There are also large areas of potential industrial land under port control. Therefore, Shaping Our Community has identified the need for a coordinated approach to planning for industry in the region, involving the major stakeholders, including the State Government, North Queensland Bulk Ports (NQBPs), council, and the development industry.

## Summary

**Council is prepared to fund major new infrastructure, to nearly half-a-billion dollars, over the next 10 years through its commitment to long term financial management.**

**This vision has been accompanied by a shift in focus on how to fund infrastructure for new development.**

Mackay Regional Council is committed to “sustainable growth” of the region. Initial case studies forecast rates rises of anywhere between five and 10 per cent being required to fund new infrastructure as we head towards a population of 180,000. Council decided this was not acceptable and embarked on the Regional Sustainability Strategy, which underpins the Shaping Our Community vision.

Council is no longer prepared for ratepayers to foot so much of the bill for new development, and will ensure efficient delivery of development and infrastructure and drive down operating costs, while still supporting growth.

Future rate rises will be at a maximum of three per cent, and ideally lower than that. The Shaping Our Community strategy will ensure council and its ratepayers get the best value for money from the infrastructure investment planned. It will also make us a much more liveable and environmentally-sustainable region for the future.



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