

It's a blueprint for our region's future

A proposed new Mackay Region Planning Scheme to deliver fresh start for driving economy forward

THE proposed Mackay Region Planning Scheme is creating history.

Once adopted, it will be the first time there has been one planning scheme for the Mackay region.

The new scheme will replace three schemes based on the region's former local government areas.

These include the Mackay City Planning Scheme 2006, Sarina Shire Planning Scheme 2005 and the Mirani Shire Plan 2007.

The proposed new scheme is being advertised for a further round of public consultation until December 12.

Once submissions received are considered, the final proposed scheme will be forwarded to the State Government for adoption.

Mayor Greg Williamson said finalisation of the new, single planning scheme was an exciting time for council and the region.

"It is a blueprint for our future and represents a fresh start

for driving our economy forward for the next 20 years," Cr Williamson said.

"Preparation of this new scheme has been a huge and important undertaking for council," he said.

"There has previously been two rounds of comprehensive public consultation on this proposed scheme — in 2013 and 2014,

"There have since been some more changes to the proposed scheme, endorsed by the new council, which



The proposed Mackay Region Planning Scheme has a strategic horizon to 2036.

largely reflect changes in State Planning Policy.

"The changes also reflect a shift in the economic landscape and it has been timely to pause, reflect and do additional public consultation before signing off on this important document."

Cr Williamson said the scheme would replace a complex planning situation created by the amalgamation of three councils.

He said it would be resilient to economic fluctuations and would provide affordable and responsible infrastructure

planning for the region.

"This proposed single scheme supports a range of housing options that meet the needs of our residents. It also provides a network of vibrant, diverse and well-connected centres."

Mackay region 'open for business'

THE proposed Mackay Region Planning Scheme will slash red tape.

Economic Development and Planning Committee chair Cr Amanda Camm said the new scheme would make it easier to do business with council.

She said it would give business and investors certainty and confidence, allowing them to "have a go".

"Above all, it demonstrates Mackay is open for business.

"It's about doing business with council and making that easy — for developers, for mums and dads putting sheds in backyards, right through to attracting major investment in our community."

Cr Camm said the level of assessment for several types



Brook Smelscher and Jake Kirkman enjoy footpath dining in the City Centre.

of development had been lowered.

"In many cases, a development application to council is no longer required," she said.

"Therefore, the proposed scheme is much more

business friendly as the lower assessment levels also result in reduced cost and faster assessment."

Cr Camm said the proposed scheme provided greater certainty about the location, scale and intensity of developments.

"Importantly, assessment levels and codes have been reduced in the 'emerging community zone'," she said.

The proposed scheme has a flatter, more logical structure.

It has the same structure and terms as others across the

state, meaning developers, investors and consultants will be easily able to compare different planning schemes when making decisions on where to invest.

However, standardisation of the scheme has not come at the cost of individual community identity. Specific planning scheme outcomes are still sought for different towns and places throughout the region.

Cr Camm said the region's economy had changed since the first round of public consultation on the scheme in 2013.

"It has given council the opportunity to reflect and set about ensuring the scheme meets the needs of our current economic climate and sets us up for success into the future," she said.

PROPOSED NEW SCHEME AT A GLANCE

The new single scheme for our region will supersede three existing schemes for our region, including:

- > Mirani Shire Plan 2007;
- > Sarina Planning Scheme 2005; and
- > Consolidated Mackay City Planning Scheme 2006

The scheme considers planning matters for:

- > Five key growth areas (Mackay, Sarina, Wakerston, Marian and Mirani);
- > Four investigation areas for future growth (Richmond, Rosella, Sarina and Ooralea);
- > Eight rural townships (Midge Point, Calen, Seaforth, Sarina Beach, Koumala, Farleigh, Eton and Finch Hatton);

> 11 coastal villages and townships; and

> A total 41 settlements across the region

The proposed scheme maintains the eight policy pillars:

- > settlement pattern;
- > natural environment and regional landscapes;
- > strong communities;
- > natural resource management;
- > transport;
- > infrastructure;
- > strong economy; and
- > sustainability, climate change and natural hazards

Population

The high level population forecast in the proposed Mackay Region Planning Scheme is 180,000. This has been revised down from 200,000 and actual growth will be monitored during the life of the new scheme. However, the scheme can cater for rapid development and population growth if needed.

Public consultation:

Council has already given extensive consideration to 1029 issues raised in 401 submissions during previous public consultation rounds in 2013 and 2014. Submissions received during the current round of consultation will be considered before a final version of the proposed Mackay Region Planning Scheme is sent to the State Government for adoption in 2017.



Flooding events form part of a new flood and coastal hazards overlay in the proposed scheme.

Natural assets protected

A KEY aim of the proposed new planning scheme is to ensure that the region's natural values are maintained.

Economic Development and Planning Committee member Cr Fran Mann said it was also important to continue to sustain high levels of biodiversity for current and future generations.

She said the scheme didn't duplicate state and federal legislation regulating environmental matters.

"But provisions aimed at maintaining a healthy natural environment are embedded throughout the scheme."

These include a conservation zone, a biodiversity overlay, and a healthy waters code to manage the quality of stormwater or wastewater to maintain the health of creeks, rivers and marine environments.



'Take an interest in your neighbourhood'

INDUSTRY groups are encouraging residents to have their say on the proposed Mackay Region Planning Scheme.

Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) Mackay-Whitsunday branch president, Mark McGrath, said the proposed scheme was important for everyone, not just developers and planning industry stakeholders.

"It is relevant for all people who own land in Mackay and also for you, as a neighbour, to know what's going to happen with the land around you," Mr McGrath said.

The UDIA was particularly keen to work with council to ensure people who wanted to develop their rural residential land had that capacity," he said.

"But it's finding that balance."

Master Builders regional manager Malcolm Hull said his group liked the direction provided by the proposed single planning scheme.

"We like to see there are lines in the sand that can and can't be done," Mr Hull said.

"We like less red tape," he said.

Have your say

How to make a properly made submission

Anyone can make a written submission about the proposed Mackay Region Planning Scheme. However, in order to be accepted the submission must be a "properly made" submission in accordance with the Sustainable Planning Act 2009.

A submission must:

- > be in writing;
- > include the full name and address of each person making the submission;
- > be signed by each person making the submission;
- > state the grounds of the submission and the facts and circumstances relied on in support of the grounds;
- > be directed to Mackay Regional Council; and
- > be received by council before 5pm Monday, December 12.

Make a submission online, by fax, post or email.



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Contact:

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Housing diversity a key of new scheme

DETACHED houses on urban lots make up the majority of housing stock in the Mackay region.

And this form of housing is expected to continue to accommodate substantial numbers of residents into the future.

But the proposed Mackay Region Planning Scheme also provides for an increased range of housing options and products.

In existing neighbourhoods, the minimum lot size increases from 300 square metres to 400 square metres in low density residential zones to maintain the character of those areas.

However, Mayor Greg Williamson said the Mackay region's demographics were changing.

He said it was important to provide a variety of housing



The proposed new scheme will encourage residents to live and work in the Mackay City Centre.

choices to suit lifestyle needs.

"It is also important we limit urban sprawl into our agricultural land and environmental areas and maximise the efficiency of existing infrastructure.

"The proposed planning scheme aims to meet those challenges by accommodating more well-designed medium and high-density housing in suitable locations," he said.

For example, the medium and high-density residential

zone has been expanded to a total area of 520 hectares. Multiple dwellings are also now possible in higher order centres and mixed use zones.

Cr Williamson said some changes made to the proposed scheme before the current round of consultation were aimed at encouraging more people to live and work in the City Centre.

"This includes some increases in building heights in the City Centre and the expansion of areas covered by those building heights," he said.