

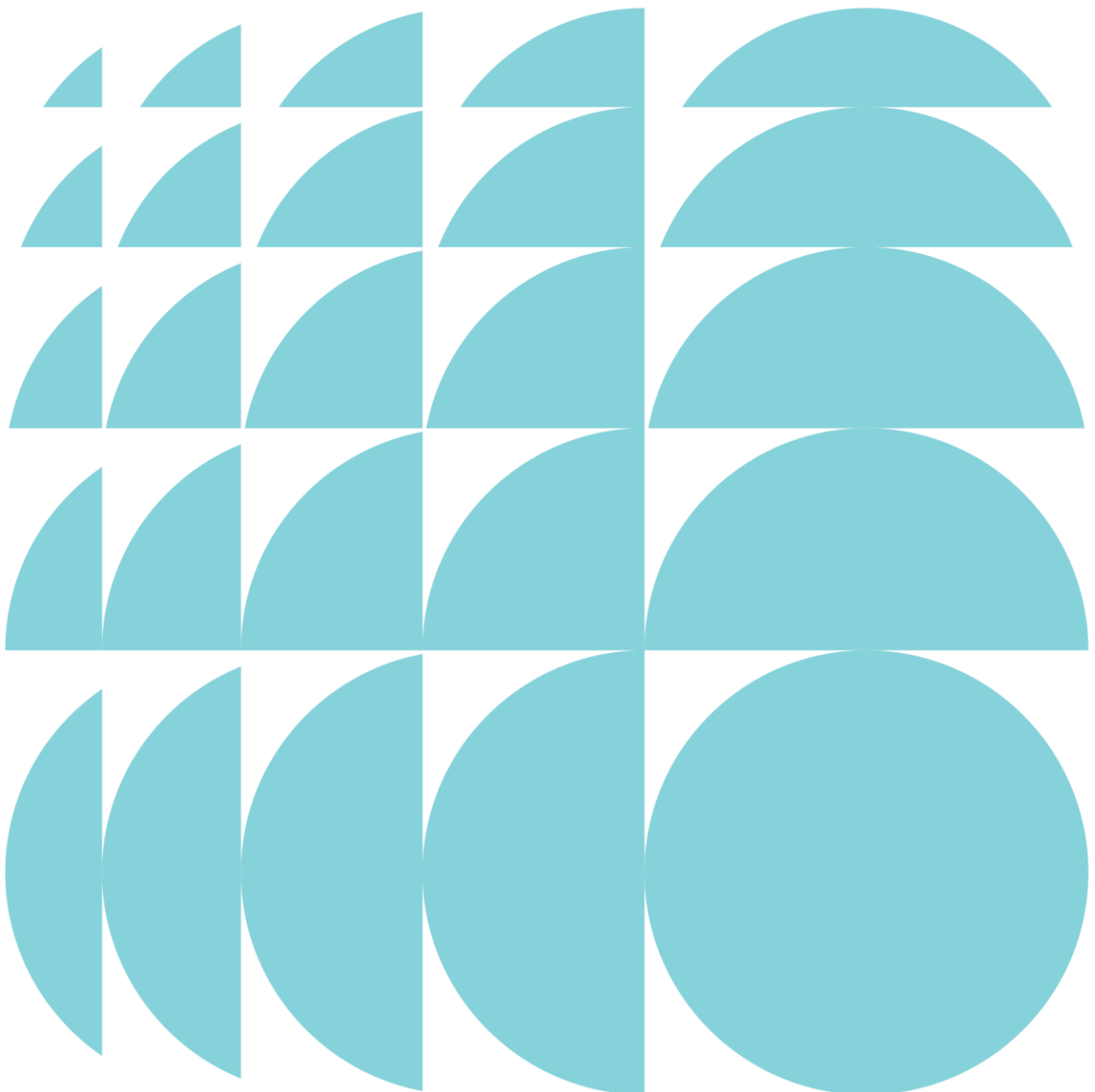
**ETHOS  
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# **Fraser Coast Rural Residential Strategy Project**

## **VOLUME 1: Fraser Coast Rural Residential Strategy**

Prepared for Fraser Coast Regional Council

23 May 2019



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| VERSION NO. | DATE OF ISSUE | REVISION BY                                      | APPROVED BY |
|-------------|---------------|--|-------------|
| 1.0         | 7/12/2018     | CH, AJ   | JR          |
| 2.0         | 7/02/2019     | CH   | AJ          |
| 3.0         | 14/02/2019    | CH   | AJ + JR     |
| 4.0         | 23/05/2019    | AJ<br>Ethos Urban Pty Ltd<br>ABN 13 615 087 931. |             |

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## Strategy Snapshot





### Background

On 28 January 2014, the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme commenced. The Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014 is the official document for development and planning for the Fraser Coast local government area (LGA). Since the adoption and commencement of the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014 Council has received requests/feedback relating to the following points:

- consideration of rural residential style subdivisions outside existing rural residential zoned areas;
- suggestions that there is a shortage of rural residential land in the region; and
- potential opportunity to facilitate a broader range of home-based businesses in rural residential zoned properties e.g. truck parking, light industry, pet sitting etc.

In response to the above, Council has supported the development of a rural residential land strategy, which this document represents.

To address the above points the following work has been undertaken:

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <p><i>Reviewed State and local planning policy documents to understand existing land use and settlement objectives, with a focus on residential settlement, landscape values/inter-urban breaks and home-based business.</i></p>  |
|  | <p><i>Undertook a demographic analysis of the Fraser Coast and where it might be in next 25 years.</i></p>  |
|  | <p><i>Engaged with the community, development industry and real estate agents regarding the role of rural residential land, valued characteristics, market trends and potential environmental and cultural sensitivities.</i></p> |
|  | <p><i>Undertook a supply and demand analysis to find out how much capacity exists within existing zoned rural residential areas and what this means in the context of the overall region's settlement pattern.</i></p>            |

## Summary of Data Analysis

### POPULATION



|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>The Fraser Coast Region is expected to grow, but not as large and fast as previously projected. Current figures anticipate a 30% increase in population between 2016 and 2036. Current projections are <u>well under</u> those used to inform the current planning scheme.</p> | <p>Persons aged 65+ are the only demographic projected to experience growth. These age groups are projected to grow from being 24% of the overall Fraser Coast population to 32% by 2036. This represents an increase of 18,301 persons. With retired couples representing 71% of purchasers of rural residential properties, the potential demand for rural residential properties could also increase.</p> | <p>The areas within the Fraser Coast region that are predicted to experience growth are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pialba – Eli Waters</li> <li>• Tinana</li> <li>• Urangan – Wondunna</li> <li>• Torquay – Scarness – Kawungan</li> </ul> <p>These areas are expected to grow by more than 30% from their 2016 population.</p> |
|---|--|--|

### SUPPLY AND DEMAND



Analysis of supply and demand data (over the 2006 to 2017 period) demonstrates that there is sufficient land supply for rural residential purposes within the existing zoned capacity of the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014, for within and beyond the life of the planning scheme. The existing supply of vacant rural residential properties within the Fraser Coast region is also greater when adding potential for subdivision of existing vacant rural residential zoned lots.

### PLANNING POLICY



|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>The Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014 emphasises the importance of well-managed growth in order to leverage established centres as well as existing and future infrastructure investment.</p> | <p>The State Planning Policy 2017 (SPP) identifies the need to support and strive for liveable communities. Liveable communities are well-designed, serviced and delivered in a way which enhances quality of life.</p> | <p>There are costs to the community and Council associated with dispersed settlement. Affordable 'living' that is more than the cost of the house and land needs to be factored in when thinking about appropriate land use responses.</p> |
|--|---|--|

### ENGAGEMENT – top 3 characteristics attractive to residents:

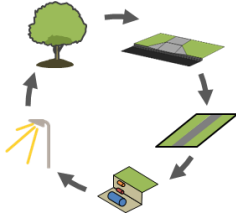
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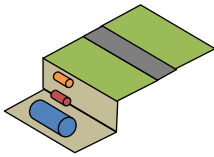
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|  |                            |                |
|--|----------------------------|----------------|
| <p>Character<br/><i>(natural values, landscape setting and scenic amenity)</i></p> | <p>Land size and space</p> | <p>Amenity</p> |
|--|----------------------------|----------------|

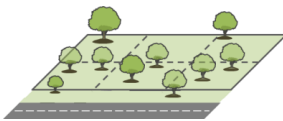
## Key observations



*A hallmark of the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme is providing sustainable development opportunities that align infrastructure delivery and land use planning. There is significant capacity within existing infrastructure networks, particularly sewer and water networks. There is a need to ensure Council's investment in this infrastructure is leveraged and protected from low-scale and dispersed development.*



*As part of feedback from the development industry, concerns have been raised about the desired standards of service for infrastructure provision in rural residential areas and have suggested alternative cost-effective solutions be considered.*



*There is no evident need for additional rural residential land, particularly in the lifetime of the existing planning scheme. This is identified through the supply and demand analysis and supported by an extensive engagement exercise with over 50 real estate agents within the region.*



*Engagement with the community emphasised the valued characteristics of rural residential areas are natural settings, scenic amenity and land size/privacy amongst others. No specific issues or trends were noted in relation to home-based business occurring on rural residential properties.*



*Based on engagement with the community, and out of the 44 survey responses there is a preference for all types of rural residential lots, including 'lifestyle' lots between 2,000m<sup>2</sup> and 4,000m<sup>2</sup>.*

## Recommended Strategy



**Confirm the overall role of rural residential land** – Rural residential land provides residents of the region with a housing choice that incorporates space and amenity amongst other valued characteristics. However, there is a need to manage the provision of rural residential land as it is land intensive, can isolate vulnerable persons and does not leverage Council’s investment in infrastructure that can be realised through urban residential opportunities.

Based on the work undertaken there is no apparent need to warrant the release of additional land for the purposes of rural residential development, especially within the life of the current Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014. As part of any future planning regarding rural residential land, Council needs to consider this in the context of the overall region’s settlement pattern. The market should be encouraged into already zoned areas where there is capacity, rather than opening up new areas. This is necessary to support the significant investment in infrastructure, to facilitate the achievement of a more consolidated urban form and also to protect the region’s important environmental and landscape values.

To achieve this strategy, key actions are to:

- 1.1 As part of any future planning scheme preparation; identify the envisaged settlement pattern for the region over the long-term having regard to desired patterns of development and housing needs and identifying lot size/housing products that appropriately reflect this.
- 1.2 Inform the above analysis through the revision and updating of the Fraser Coast Housing Needs Assessment to identify future housing requirements of the community, particularly the retired and aged population who are likely to require convenient access to a wider range of health services and the support of aged-friendly communities.
- 1.3 As part of any future planning for rural residential land undertake a principle-based assessment to ensure it supports sustainable growth in the region. These principles should include:
  - 1.3.1 Infrastructure safeguarding – Rural residential land should not underutilise highest and best use opportunities and infrastructure investment.
  - 1.3.2 High quality location and design – Rural residential development is to occur in areas that are in reasonable proximity to a full range of economic and social services and in locations which are minimally constrained i.e. risks which pose a threat to human life and feasibility of rural residential type development.
  - 1.3.3 Environmentally and culturally sensitive – Does not compromise the ecological function of mature vegetated areas and waterways, or cultural heritage assets and artefacts.

2

**Protect future urban growth opportunities** – It is important future development leverages Council's investment in infrastructure within the established centres within the region to ensure a sustainable approach to development and achievement of Council and the community's overall growth expectations. Based on observations made throughout the work undertaken to support this strategy there is clear need to protect urban zoned land and land suited for future urban expansion from unserviced / rural residential scale development.

To achieve this strategy, key actions are to:

- 2.1 Review the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme to identify any policy gaps which could result in the under-development of urban land. Where there are gaps in policy, prepare amendments to the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014 which address these.
- 2.2 As part of future planning scheme preparation, clearly identify the growth fronts for urban development and protect these areas from development which would compromise their ultimate scenarios.

3

**Provide choice and diversity in product** –To support the community's interest in the spectrum of rural residential products (i.e. lot sizes) there is an opportunity to provide flexibility in the lot size mix of key areas.

To achieve this strategy, key actions are to:

- 3.1 Utilise the existing assessment benchmarks in the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme to support the intended performance-based approach to assessing proposed lot sizes as part of any future rural residential subdivision applications, including a merits based assessment on achieving outcomes consistent with the intended character of the rural residential zone, amongst other important criteria such as that for site constraints.
- 3.2 Consider amending the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme, to provide greater flexibility in minimum lot sizes, by implementing an accepted lot size range supported by an accepted average lot size.
- 3.3 Through future planning scheme exercises, seek to undertake local planning exercises for existing fragmented and prospective rural residential areas within the region, prioritising those with higher demand, and identify the community's preferred type of rural residential density.

4

**Review desired standards of service for infrastructure** – Closer consideration is to be provided to the standards of service for new infrastructure in future rural residential development. This review should appropriately balance cost effective solutions with the community's long-term needs, particularly weighed up against the risks of complaints associated with Council investment and maintenance, and potential environmental impacts including but not limited to erosion and sediment runoff.

To achieve this strategy, key actions are to:

- 4.1 Review the desired standards of service for rural residential properties with consideration to industry feedback. Desired standards of service should be fit for purpose as well as facilitating affordability, ensuring long-term infrastructure integrity and mitigating environmental impacts.



5

**Monitor the impacts of development** – Rural residential land provides residents with a housing choice that offers a unique level of access to nature. With various areas in the region accommodating mature vegetation and waterways it is important that rural residential development does not compromise the ecological function of these areas and damage the very thing people are seeking from rural residential living.

To achieve this strategy, key actions are to:

- 5.1 As part of any future planning scheme exercise, consider the cumulative impacts of rural residential development and associated on-site effluent disposal systems on receiving waters; along with provisions that could facilitate improved environmental management outcomes through development.
- 5.2 Consider opportunities outside of the planning scheme to protect flora, fauna and natural systems. Measures which could be considered include the Threatened Species Action Plan and conservation partnerships for land management.

6

**Monitor and evaluate rural residential land** – To ensure Council can effectively respond to emerging trends in relation to rural residential land supply and facilitate the suitable provision of rural residential land within the region, there is opportunity to implement a housing monitoring program. This program could also have broader application to urban areas, to obtain a holistic view of the settlement pattern and support continual monitoring of the ability for urban and rural residential zoned land to support the region's future population.

To achieve this strategy, key actions are to:

- 6.1 Implement a monitoring program that measures the supply and demand of rural residential properties and the associated capacity of rural residential land. As part of the monitoring, identify whether there are any trends which may influence rural residential land take-up such as spill-over demand from the Gympie region, ageing/retired population trends/changes and catalyst infrastructure projects such as the Cooroy to Curra Bruce Highway upgrade.
- 6.2 Establish a record system which is able to record and collate community feedback in relation to rural residential land and development opportunities.

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 About the strategy

The Fraser Coast Rural Residential Land Strategy has been prepared on behalf of the Fraser Coast Regional Council to inform and support current and future decision-making regarding the provision and regulation of rural residential properties within the Fraser Coast region.

The key purpose for the Rural Residential Land Strategy is to:

- assess and analyse rural residential land in the Fraser Coast region and present findings associated with the identified supply and demand; and
- establish clear strategies and actions for how this land is managed into the future.

This strategy is underpinned by **Volume 2: Rural Residential Strategy – Evidence Report**, which contains the supporting data and detailed analysis.

This strategy will seek to identify appropriate policy responses to ensure the community continues to have access to a range of desirable housing options and environments, whilst also supporting and facilitating the region’s overall economic and social aspirations, and growth management objectives.

As part of this project, strategy considerations associated with home-based business opportunities unique to rural residential land have been considered and addressed.

### 1.2 The process that has informed the strategy

In developing the strategy, an emphasis has been placed upon early key stakeholder and community engagement to inform the analysis of quantitative data. The following diagram shows the process that the project is following, noting the inclusion of a ‘continual monitoring’ element following finalisation of the strategy. This has been given particular emphasis in the strategy, discussed in more detail within Section 5.2.



Figure 1: Process diagram of developing the strategy

## 2.0 Background

### 2.1 Fraser Coast's current settlement pattern

The Fraser Coast region's mainland area is characterised by its combination of rural and coastal towns and villages, set within a farming hinterland and fringed by the world-renowned Hervey Bay coastline and Great Sandy Strait.

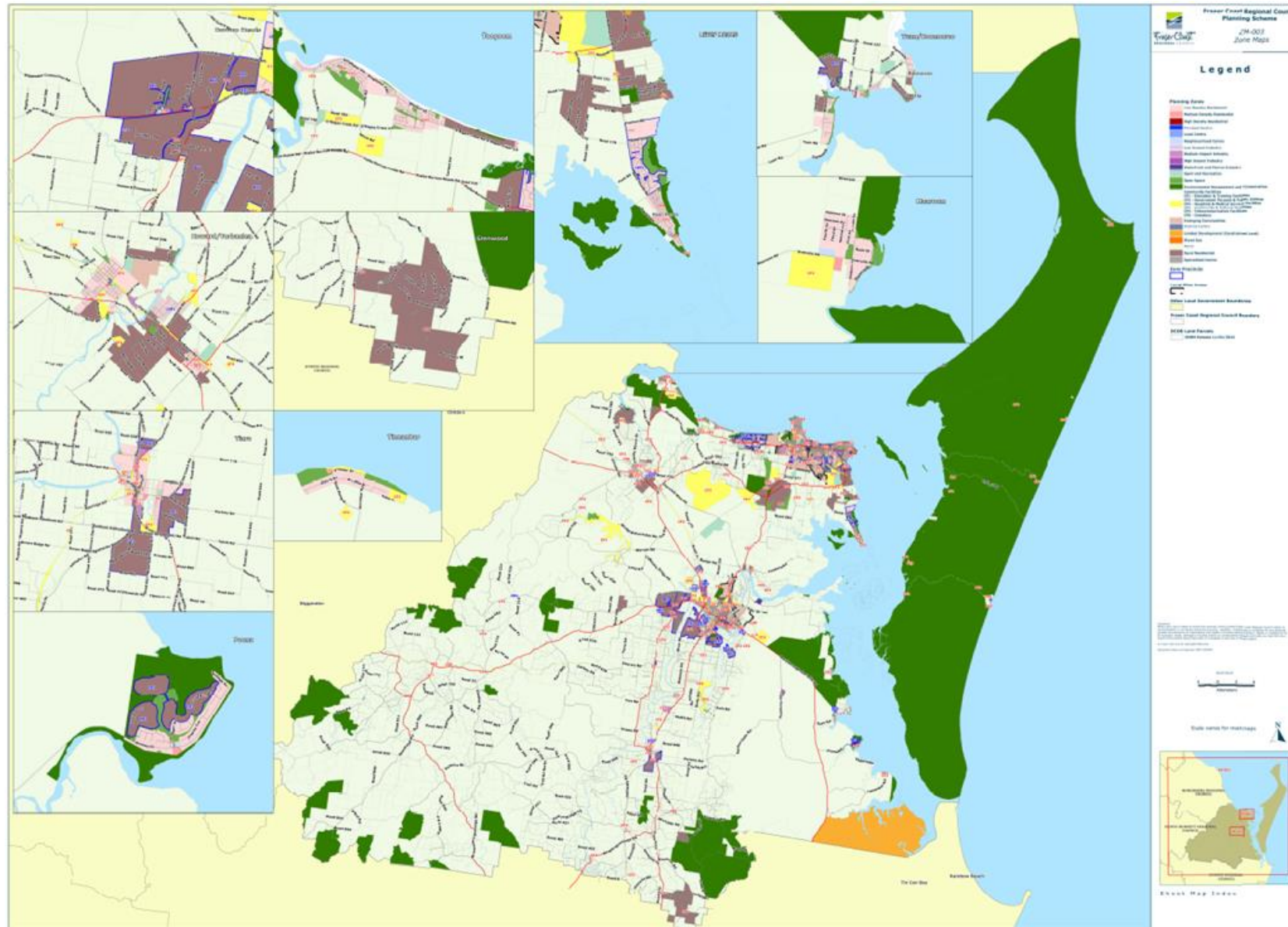
The Fraser Coast region was formed in 2008 following amalgamation of the former Hervey Bay City, Maryborough City, Woocoo Shire and the northern part of Tiaro Shire. Prior to amalgamation, strategic land use policy was set separately and relatively independently by each former local government area.

Hervey Bay and Maryborough have different though interdependent roles as principal townships in the region. Maryborough's character is a traditional heritage city with a grid-patterned CBD, and a reasonably centric settlement pattern. It is a focus for larger scale industries newly establishing in the region. The hinterland areas around Maryborough have a rich farming history and continue to support rural and agricultural pursuits.

By contrast, Hervey Bay is a coastal town that grew from the merging of four historical fishing villages (Pialba, Scarness, Torquay and Urangan), which is now a linear township along the north-facing coastline. The Hervey Bay area has experienced growth challenges associated with the 'sea change' influx of investment and development in the late 1990s-early/mid 2000s.

There are also a series of other small coastal and rural hinterland towns and villages established throughout the hinterland.

The region is characterised by long distances between its component parts and rural residential zoned locations around many of the townships and villages in the region. Rural residential zoned areas within the region are generally dispersed across the coastal and hinterland area. Figure 2 below illustrates this by providing an overview of the Fraser Coast region by zone and Figure 3 shows this by locality, and also the current lot size pattern within these areas.



**Figure 2: Map of Rural Residential Properties within the Fraser Coast Region**  
 Source: Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014



# Fraser Coast Rural Residential Land Investigation

Rural Residential and Low Density Residential (LDR1) Lot Size by Precinct

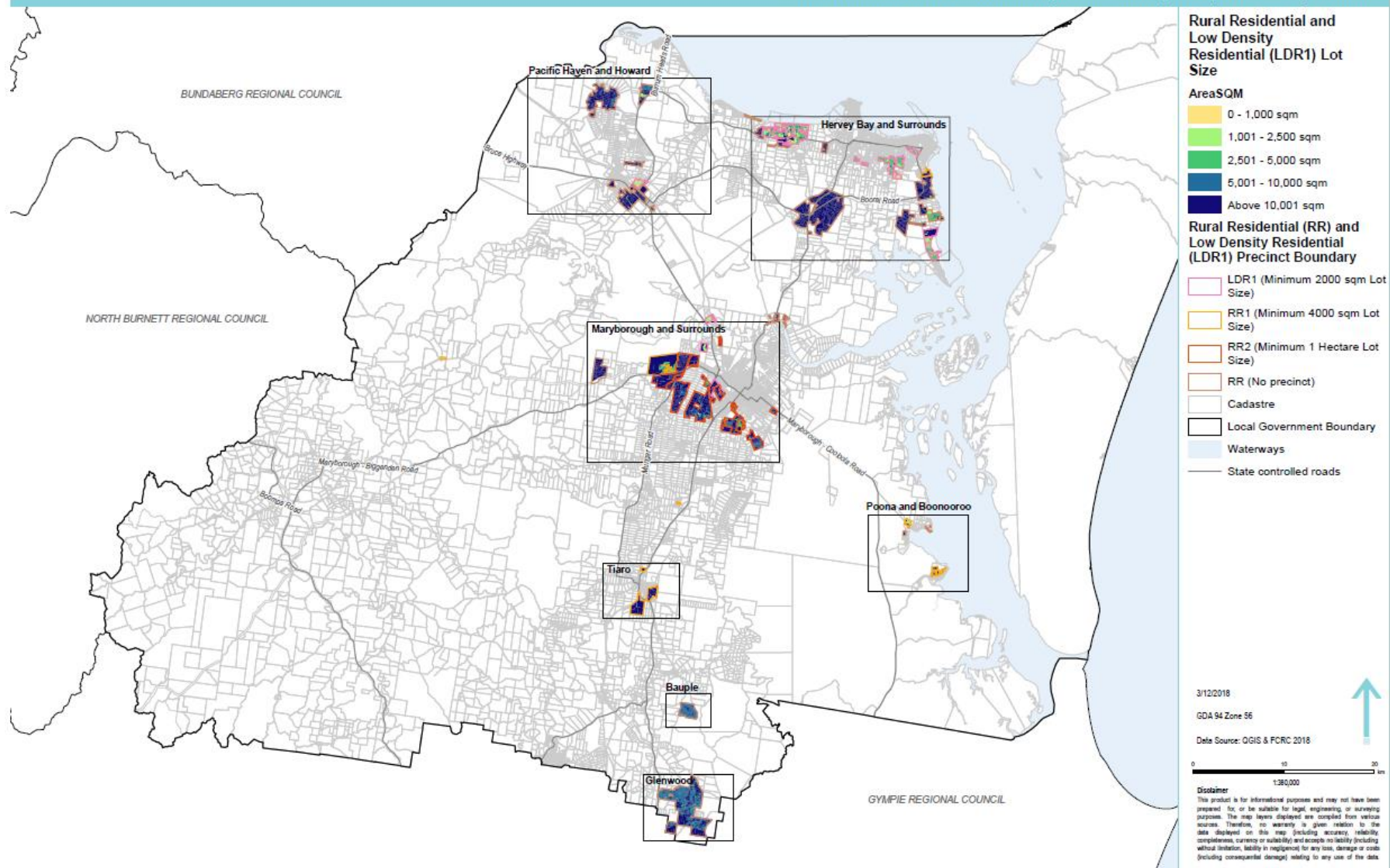


Figure 3: Map of Rural Residential Properties within the Fraser Coast Region

## **2.2 The existing role of rural residential land in the region**

Rural residential land provides for housing at a low-density scale in a semi-rural setting. It is recognised as a lifestyle choice for residents in the Fraser Coast region, in addition to other housing styles ranging from urban residential housing, duplex, townhouse and unit style development, and retirement village and aged care housing.

The Fraser Coast region, and the local government areas prior to amalgamation, have historically provided rural residential living opportunities ranging from smaller 'acreage' style allotments (formerly referred to as 'park residential') through to larger hobby farms for livestock or vegetable gardens, in rural residential zoning and precincts.





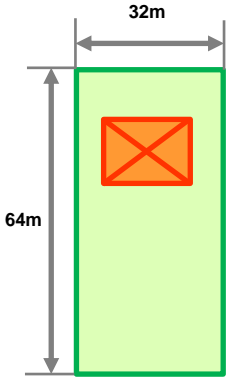
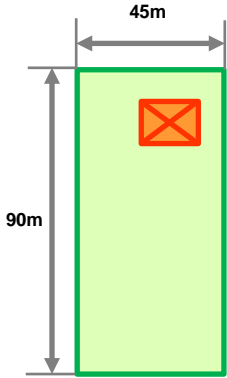
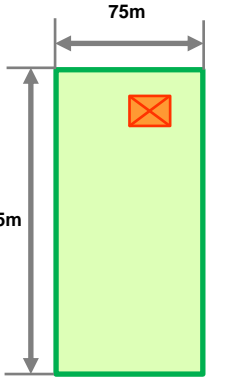
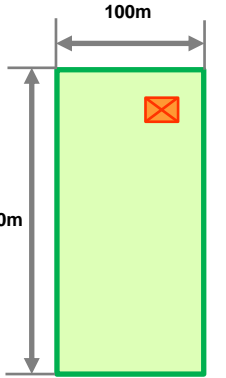
From the community engagement conducted as part of this project, this style of living appears to be valued for its character (natural values, landscape setting, scenic amenity), the opportunities for greater land size and space, and the amenity it provides. There is also a perception that it presents a more 'affordable' housing choice given that it is often cheaper when compared to urban areas (this is discussed in more detail in section 3.3).

This living style is also influenced by provisions such as local laws that require a minimum lot size of 10,000 square metres (1 hectares) to accommodate larger animals like cows, horses and the like.

The land size that is considered in this strategy, ranges from a minimum lot size of 2,000 square metres (half acre) through to 20,000 square metres (5 acres) and larger.

Figure 4 below provides an overview of the expected lot sizes for the relevant zones/precincts currently included in the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme and a visual example of their relative scale.

Importantly, the minimum lot size indications are only an acceptable outcome of the Reconfiguring a Lot Code, and the performance outcome overarching this allows for flexibility in the lot sizes that can be proposed/created. The performance outcome intends to support lot sizes that reflect the intended character of the relevant zone, and of the local area; along with being of an appropriate size to contain the intended use/s and appropriately manage site constraints.

| Low density Residential Precinct 1 (LDR1)   | Rural Residential  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
|   | RR1  | RR2   | No precinct  |
| <i>Overarching performance outcomes for lot sizes that are consistent with the intended character of the zone, and local area; and that effectively respond to intended use/s and site constraints.</i> |  |   |  |
| 2,000m <sup>2</sup><br>0.2 ha   | 4,000m <sup>2</sup><br>0.4 ha  | 10,000m <sup>2</sup><br>1 ha  | 20,000m <sup>2</sup><br>2 ha   |
|    |   |   |   |
|   |  |  |  |
| <i>Indicative lot configuration</i>   | <i>Indicative lot configuration</i>  | <i>Indicative lot configuration</i>   | <i>Indicative lot configuration</i>  |

**Figure 4: Overview of rural residential properties by envisaged lot size**

### 2.3 Rural residential land in context with the overall settlement pattern

Importantly, and irrespective of the region or locality being planned for, rural residential development forms part of an overall settlement pattern and should not be considered in isolation of other forms of housing provided within urban settlement areas. It is important that future planning and ‘need’ for this style of living is considered within this overarching context.

The Fraser Coast region is in a unique situation where significant infrastructure capacity exists within the urban zoned areas and future growth locations, well beyond the existing planning scheme growth horizon. This has been the result of significant investment in infrastructure by Council, driven by high growth demands experienced in the early/mid-2000s.

In order to maximise the investment and align infrastructure delivery with land use planning, the current planning scheme aims to direct growth into urban zoned (and serviced) areas, and to support achievement of higher development densities. This has driven a clear intention in Council’s current policy and supports Council’s financial sustainability (associated with infrastructure provision). It also capitalises on the benefits of a consolidated urban framework, including accessibility to utilities, services and facilities.

## 3.0 Planning context

### 3.1 Why plan for rural residential areas?

Planning for rural residential areas is a key part of planning for the overall settlement pattern – and how this ‘fits’ within the natural and rural environment.

As indicated at section 1.4, likely future land requirements, needs and aspirations for rural residential development are considered in context with overall urban settlement pattern and growth objectives.

Rural residential areas are often located on the fringes of towns, or in rural or coastal settings and forming part of small villages/settlements.

Planning appropriately for rural residential development supports:

- Urban structure: townships with good accessibility to services and efficient infrastructure provision which provide for:
  - economic synergies
  - infrastructure access
  - certainty for investment
- Protection of important economic resources – such as productive land for horticulture, grazing land, rural industries, rural tourism
- Protection of environmental and landscape values – and their economic contribution
- Provision of rural living opportunities in a balanced and managed way that supports the achievement of good accessibility, affordable living and high quality living environments.

To adequately understand the scope of issues when planning for rural residential land, it is useful to consider the threats and opportunities – the things that ought to be avoided or achieve protection from, and the things that ought to be facilitated and supported.

| Potential Threats   | Potential Benefits   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth pressure outside designated areas – can create demand for ‘residential type services’ which places pressure on Council to provide these.</li> <li>• Non-residential activities impacting on other residents ‘peace and quiet’</li> <li>• Environmental impacts associated with vegetation clearing / habitat removal / domestic animals and vehicles</li> <li>• Water quality impacts associated with on-site effluent systems</li> <li>• Taking up agricultural land and conflicting with nearby rural activities</li> <li>• Re-subdivision and increased densities affecting character and appearance of sprawl</li> <li>• Development occurring in areas of cultural heritage significance or bushfire (or other) hazard risk</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing choice and lifestyle opportunities</li> <li>• Home based businesses that are in keeping with an area’s character</li> <li>• Cheaper land development costs</li> </ul> |

Without appropriately managing this type of development there are risks associated with continued patterns of dispersed low density development. They can erode the natural characteristics that make a region special, result in social isolation for vulnerable parts of the population and disconnected communities, and can reduce opportunities to build consolidated townships with efficient facility and service provision.

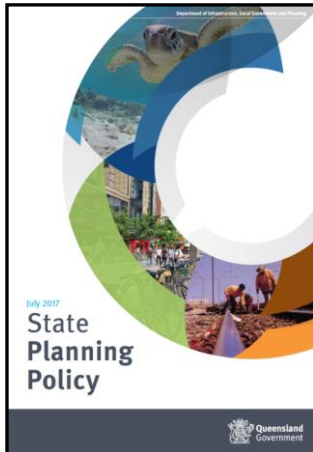


### 3.2 Legislative obligations

The State Planning Policy (SPP) 2017 is a key statutory document that overarches planning policy and decision-making in Queensland. The SPP identifies matters of state interest in land use planning and development.

The SPP outlines 17 state interests that must be considered and balanced in planning instruments.

Of particular relevance to this strategy, are the state interests for ‘housing supply and diversity’ and ‘liveable communities’.



The state interest for ‘liveable communities’ requires that ‘Liveable, well-designed and serviced communities are delivered to support wellbeing and enhance quality of life’.

Pivotal to the achievement of the state interest are policies that seek to facilitate:

- [Affordable living and sustainable and complete communities](#)
- [Consolidating urban development in and around existing settlements](#)
- [Efficient use of established infrastructure and services](#)

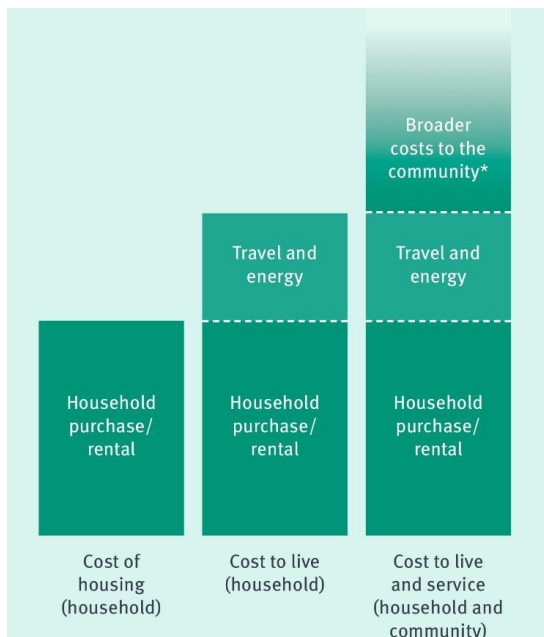
**Figure 5: State Planning Policy**

Source: State Planning Policy, Queensland Government 2017

### 3.3 Supporting affordability – and affordable living

An important concept that is raised in the SPP (noted above) and was also highlighted in the Fraser Coast Housing Needs Assessment (2010) is that of affordable living.

Affordable living is more than affordable housing alone. It shifts away from defining affordable housing in terms of the initial capital cost and instead considers the total cost of living over the longer term.



Affordable living is supported through sustainable design, which assists to reduce living costs for households and lifecycle costs for owners by supporting their access to necessary social infrastructure and transport.

The Fraser Coast Region Housing Needs Assessment prepared as part of the Fraser Coast 2031: Sustainable Growth Strategy observed that the desirability of acceding to development pressure in localities/areas that are isolated needs to be considered in the light of threats to affordable living in these areas.

This figure demonstrates the concept of affordable living in diagrammatic form showing that this concept is more than the cost of housing – it is affected by where and how people and settlements are located.

**Figure 6: Affordable living concept**

Source: Shaping SEQ, Queensland Government 2017

## 4.0 Summary of key findings

The following summarises the key data and information considered as part of developing the Rural Residential Land Strategy. This data is outlined in detail at **Volume 2: Rural Residential Strategy – Evidence Report**.

### 4.1 Key project and engagement findings

- The existing capacity of rural residential zoned land in the Fraser Coast region is sufficient to meet market demand for the short-medium term, and certainly within the life of the current planning scheme. Whilst the estimated capacity of some suburbs is envisaged to be reached within the next 1 – 5 years, the region has an appropriate supply in similar locations i.e. coastal or hinterland locations. There are areas that will likely support further managed growth for consideration as part of Council’s next planning scheme.
- The market is looking to rural residential / unserviced lots within designated urban areas to avoid higher establishment and servicing costs. Enabling this development practice to occur outside of land already zoned for such development, will result in a significant cost burden to Council and the community. By not promoting density and a more compact urban form, Council will not be able to leverage existing and planned infrastructure investment.
- The level of engagement from the community on the strategy included 44 responses to the online survey and 16 attendees to the community and development forum. Over 50 interviews were conducted with real estate agents in the region. One on one interviews were held with representatives of the Butchulla people, Burnett Mary Regional Group, Wide Bay Water and Council’s economic development officers and compliance officers. A total of 5 public submissions were received during the strategy preparation and 11 were received following release of the draft strategy.
- Based on online survey responses the top three characteristics valued by respondents in regard to rural residential properties include:
  - character (natural values, landscape setting and scenic amenity);
  - land size and space; and
  - amenity.

The above characteristics were common points of justification to support preferences for lot size for future rural residential properties within the Fraser Coast region.

- Respondents were asked (as part of the survey) if there was a particular lot size that is desired in the region. Respondents identified lot sizes between 2,000m<sup>2</sup> - 4,000m<sup>2</sup> and 4,000m<sup>2</sup> to 10,000m<sup>2</sup> as the preferred rural residential lot size that needs to be facilitated within the LGA. Based on the supply and capacity analysis of the LGAs rural residential properties there is a total of 1,427 hectares of existing vacant rural residential land or rural residential land which has subdivision potential to achieve a lot size within the 2,000m<sup>2</sup> - 10,000m<sup>2</sup> range. Based on historic land sales this supply of land has the potential to service demand for another 41 years. Furthermore, comments made about this land size were also indicating that the existing urban residential housing estates have lot sizes that are too small (i.e. approximately 500 square metres).
- Whilst real estate agent enquiry levels have increased in comparison to the past several years, interest levels in rural residential land are low overall. Most buyers in the Fraser Coast region were from outside the region according to the real estate agent feedback. Many of the agents believe retirees or active seniors comprise the majority of non-local buyers. According to real estate agents, retired couples are the largest demographic to purchase rural residential property in the Fraser Coast region.
- Based on real estate agent feedback and respondents to the online survey the following suburbs were identified as having favourable characteristics for rural residential properties: Booral, Riverheads, Toogoom, Nikenbah, and Oakhurst.
- Notably, the above suburbs were identified as being within the Burrum-Fraser, Booral-Riverheads and Maryborough SA2s. The anticipated increase in total population between 2016 and 2036 in these areas is approximately 5% - 15%. Of the above suburbs, none are predicted to see significant growth up until 2036 when compared to the projected growth areas such as Pialba – Eli Waters, Tinana, Urangan – Wondunna and

Torquay–Scarness–Kawungan. These areas are anticipated to see an approximate increase of 40% - 60% in total population between 2016 and 2036 and all include urban zoned land.

- Reducing the barriers associated with rural residential subdivision was identified as a key tool to increase lot size availability and rural residential land capacity without the need for rezoning. It was also suggested this would assist in meeting the growing demand for smaller rural residential lifestyle lots (2000-4000m<sup>2</sup>). Similarly, lowering Council rates, offering incentives to residents living in rural residential areas, and removing barriers and fees associated with establishing home based were also identified as key priorities for rural residential land;
- Whilst lot sizes are set by way of acceptable outcomes within the Rural Residential Zone and precincts, by virtue of the performance based planning approach embedded in Council’s planning scheme there is flexibility allowable for land in these zones and precincts to achieve a performance based planning solution and this is sought to be retained and facilitated through sound policy implementation.
- Based on industry feedback current Council desired standards of service (DSS) for rural residential properties is considered to be of too high a standard, with particular mention of road infrastructure. Consideration to existing DSS should be considered as part of any future updates to the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014.
- Whilst the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014 or future planning scheme preparation contains existing assessment benchmarks to support the protection of environmental and cultural heritage values, there is potential for greater protection of these values through education and other avenues. This is considered to address the observed tension between the values and on the ground practices /activities occurring on rural residential properties.
- There are considered to be several risks in providing greater flexibility for home-based business uses operating on rural residential properties. Based on professional reasoning, site observations and feedback from Council’s compliance team, enabling greater flexibility for home-based businesses than what is currently envisaged by the planning scheme is considered to result in risks such as compromising the established centre hierarchy, valued characteristics of rural residential properties and facilitating an unintended settlement pattern.

## 4.2 Market trends and issues

During the preparation of this strategy several anecdotal market trends and catalyst projects were identified which may influence future land consumption and desirability of rural residential properties within the Fraser Coast region. The market trends and catalyst projects include:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Spill over demand from the Gympie Regional Council property market:</p> | <p>There is a relatively strong market for rural residential properties within the Gympie Regional Council LGA, which is immediately south of the Fraser Coast LGA. This is understood to be primarily driven by improved access to the Sunshine Coast region via the recent (and in progress) upgrades of the Bruce Highway as well as the affordability of land. As a result, there has been spill over into the Fraser Coast LGA evident in the strong demand for land in Glenwood which is located on the southern boundary of the Fraser Coast LGA and has available rural residential land.</p>   |
| <p>Ageing population:</p>  | <p>Based on population projections for the Fraser Coast LGA as well as responses from real estate agent surveys it is understood that the predominant demographic for rural residential properties represents retired couples (71%) which are also envisaged to represent a higher proportion of the overall population within the coming years. With this demographic set to be a larger representation in the overall population, there is potential for land consumption of rural residential properties to increase. It is recommended that follow-up real-estate agent surveys are undertaken prior to preparing a future planning scheme to monitor market preferences and experiences.</p> |
| <p>Cooroy to Curra Bruce Highway upgrade:</p>                              | <p>The Bruce Highway Upgrade (Cooroy to Curra) project involves a 62km upgrade and realignment of the Bruce Highway, including a bypass of Gympie, and is one of Queensland’s highest priority road projects. The project is to be undertaken in several</p>  |

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
|                                   | sections and has been completed in some sections with others still to commence. The intended benefit of this project is to separate long distance and local traffic movements which are likely to improve travel times within the region. As a result, access to the Fraser Coast region should be improved which could see increased desirability within the Fraser Coast residential market. |
| More jobs and investment:         | Based on Council's economic development strategy and associated deliverables, there is potential for increased industrial development within the region, particularly at Maryborough. As a result, the potential increase in jobs for the region could alter population projection trends which may have an effect on demand in this part of the region.                                       |
| Generating growth and opportunity | Sometimes rural residential development can be considered by local government as an opportunity to generate growth – as it will offer a lifestyle opportunity that other regions/localities may not have. It is important that growth is jobs/economy led as any growth without the economic basis and fundamentals will compromise the region's long term sustainability.                     |

### 4.3 Supply and demand analysis

A supply and demand analysis was undertaken to provide an understanding of the current capacity of existing LDR1 and rural residential zoned land within the region. This analysis provides an insight as to what areas within the region are close to nearing full occupation and those with further growth potential.

#### 4.3.1 Supply

Firstly, the supply of rural residential zoned land was measured using two approaches.

- **Approach 1** involved calculating the total area of all vacant rural residential zoned vacant lots which were identified as being vacant via a GIS-based analysis.
- **Approach 2** considered both vacant land as well as other existing rural residential lots which have potential to be resubdivided into smaller lots. Subdivision potential was calculated by using the minimum lot size envisaged for the relevant zone and precinct, and which form an acceptable outcome of the Reconfiguring a Lot Code.

Table 1 below provides an overview of supply based on both approaches by zone and zone precinct.

**Table 1: Supply by approach of rural residential properties by State statistical suburb as well as zone and zone precinct**

|   | Rural residential properties                 |                                       |                                       |                                      |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|   | Low density residential zone (LDR1 precinct) | Rural residential zone (RR1 precinct) | Rural residential zone (RR2 precinct) | Rural residential zone (no precinct) |
| <b>Approach 1</b>   |  |                                       |                                       |                                      |
| 1. Total area of vacant rural residential land (hectares)                             | 360  | 583                                   | 351                                   | 1,417                                |
| <b>Approach 2</b>   |  |                                       |                                       |                                      |
| 1. Potential supply – Total area of land with subdivision potential (hectares)        | 432  | 197                                   | 40                                    | 546                                  |
| 2. Actual supply – Total area of vacant land with no subdivision potential (hectares) | 317  | 552                                   | 329                                   | 1,135                                |
| 3. Total supply (combination of 1 and 2) (hectares)                                   | <b>749</b>                                   | <b>749</b>                            | <b>379</b>                            | <b>1,681</b>                         |

Figure 7 and Figure 8 illustrate the current supply of rural residential properties within the Fraser Coast LGA based on the two approaches.



# Fraser Coast Rural Residential Land Investigation

Vacant Rural Residential and Low Density Residential (LDR1) Lot Size by Precinct

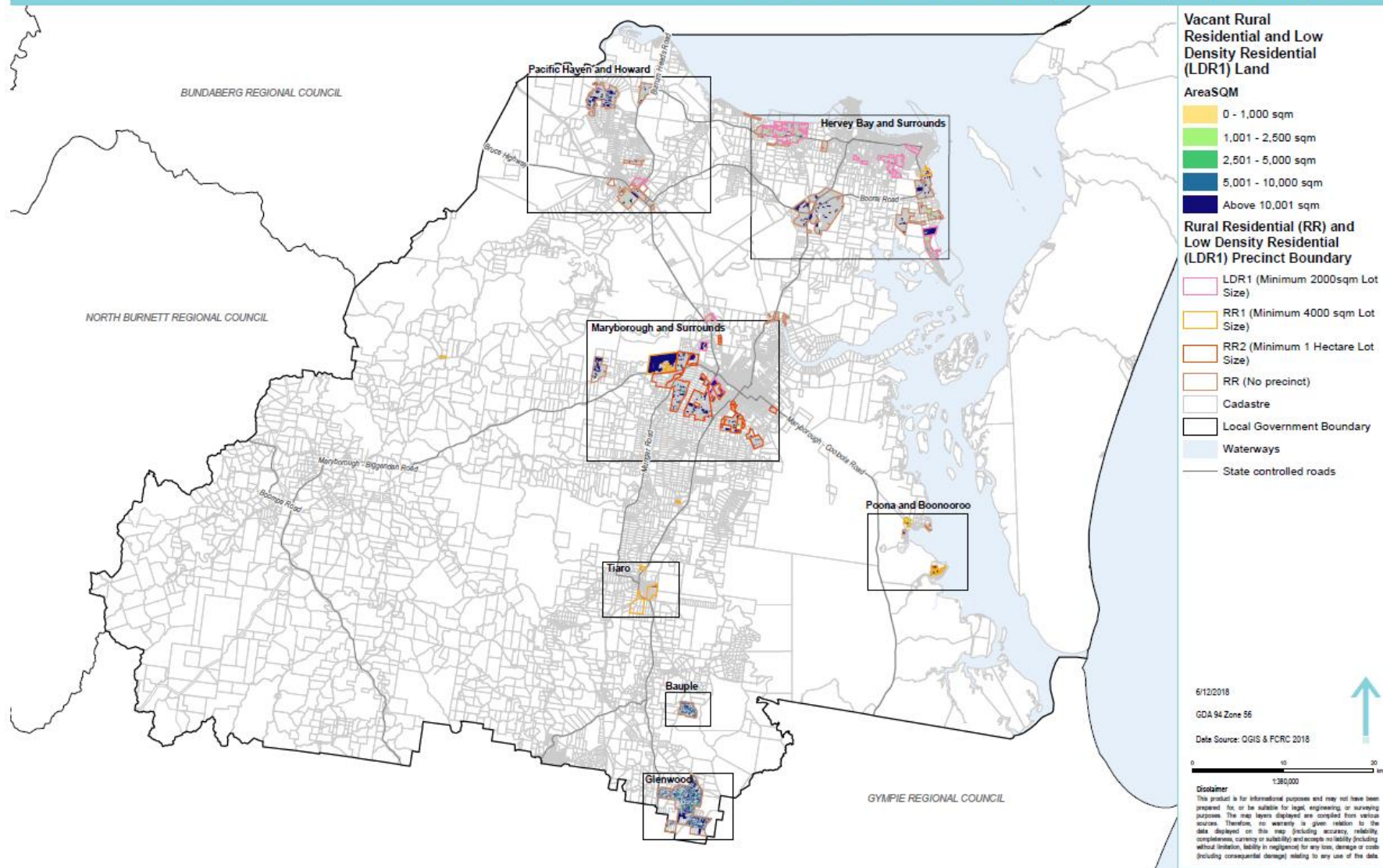


Figure 7: Map of rural residential property supply – Approach 1

# Fraser Coast Rural Residential Land Investigation

Potential Lot Yield and Additional Vacant Land for Rural Residential and Low Density Residential (LDR1) Zones

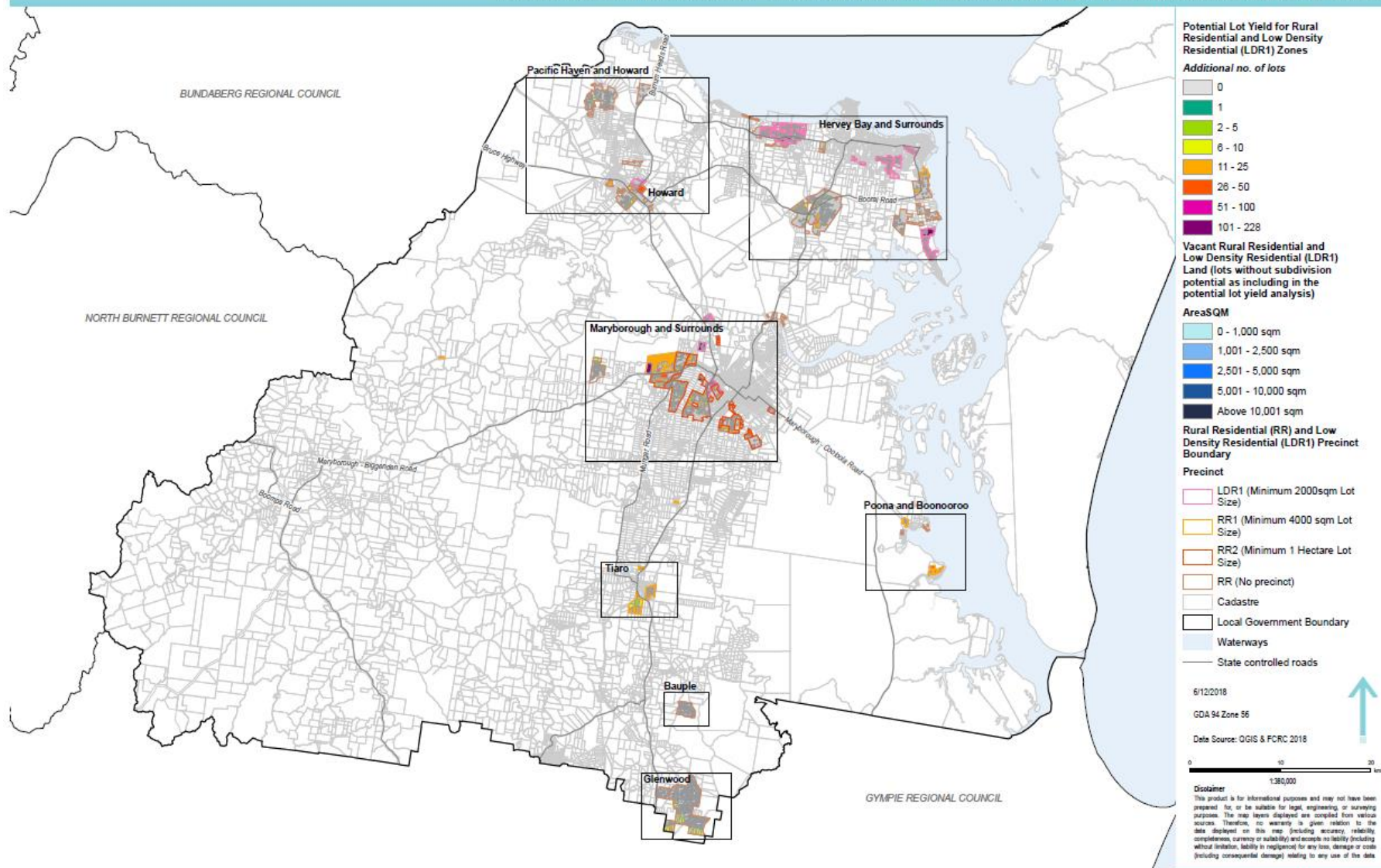
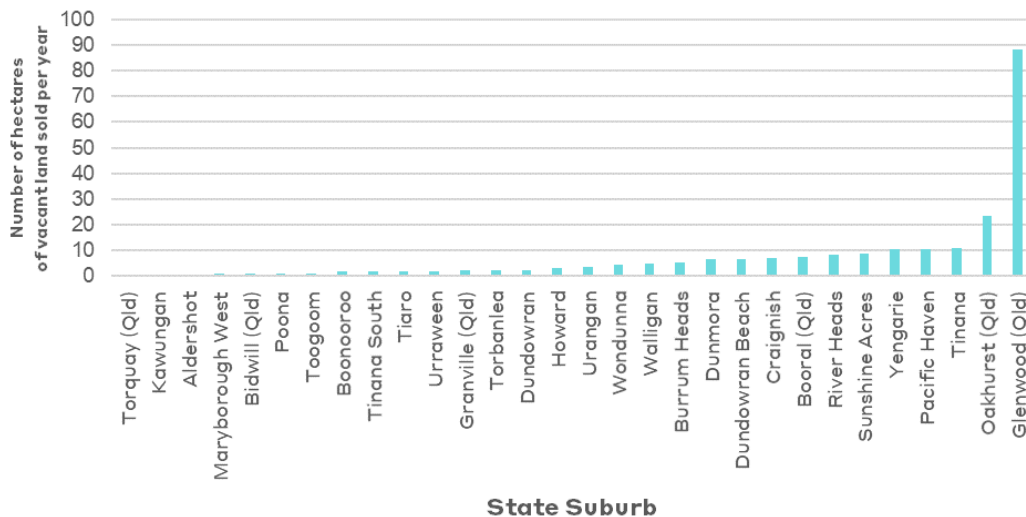


Figure 8: Map of rural residential property supply – Approach 2

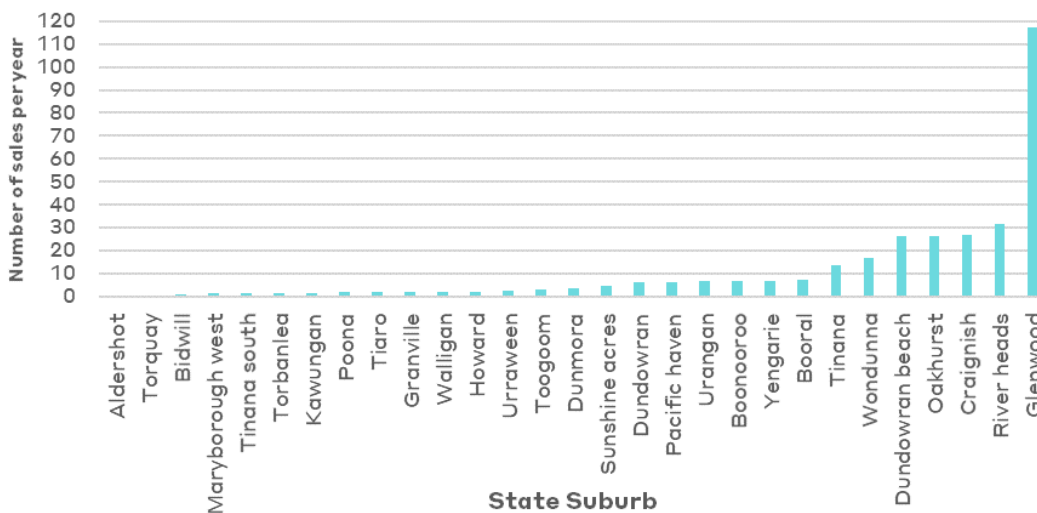
**4.3.2 Demand**

For the purposes of this strategy report and project, demand is characterised as the average annual land consumption by State suburb between 2006 – 2017, for sites with an area of 2,000m<sup>2</sup> - 30,000m<sup>2</sup> as well as the average number of land sales with the same attributes. Assessing demand is often best quantified by giving consideration to historical data that covers a minimum of one cycle. The period from 2006 to 2017 was chosen to represent the past decade which includes the peak leading up to the pre-GFC peak as well as the period which proceeded this event and which was close to a recession. Refer to Figure 9, for the average number of hectares of vacant rural residential land sold between 2006 – 2017, by State suburb.



**Figure 9: Graph of the average consumption of land by State suburb between 2006 – 2017 of properties between 2,000m<sup>2</sup> - 30,000m<sup>2</sup>**

The number of sales is also a useful metric in understanding the further capacity which could be realised based on further subdivision of rural residential properties.



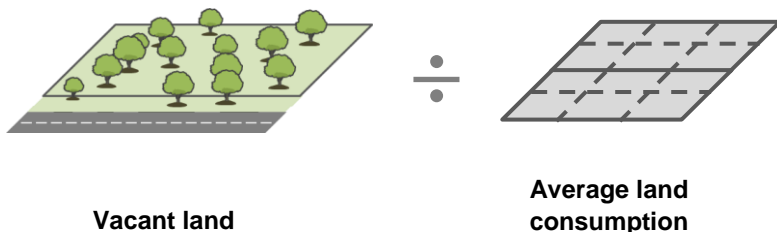
**Figure 10: Graph of the average number of land sales by State suburb between 2006 – 2017 of properties between 2,000m<sup>2</sup> - 30,000m<sup>2</sup>**



**4.2.3 Capacity**

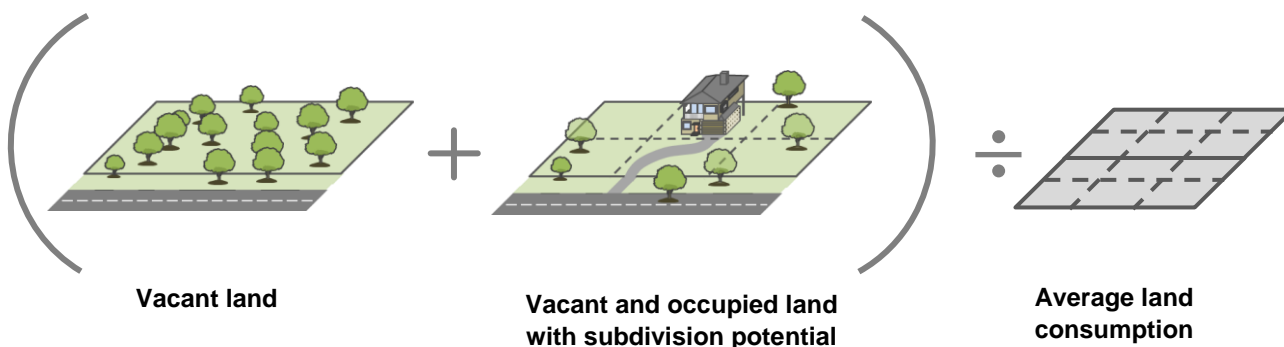
Given the various supply and demand metrics the capacity of rural residential properties was characterised in three ways.

**1. APPROACH 1 – AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS CAPACITY**



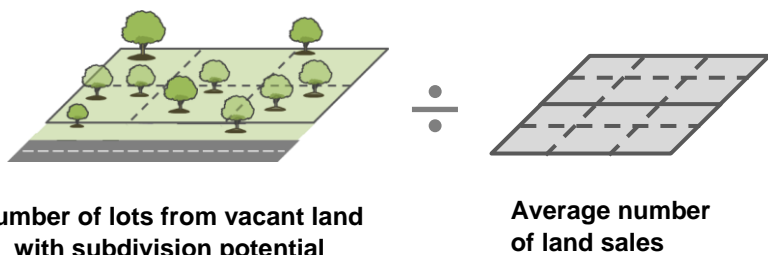
Capacity represents vacant land within the region as supply and the average number of hectares sold each year as demand. This measure of capacity is a useful baseline and assumes that no further subdivision within the rural residential zoned areas occurs.

**2. APPROACH 2 – AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS CAPACITY WITH SUBDIVISION POTENTIAL REALISED**



Capacity represents vacant land and occupied land with subdivision potential as supply and the average number of hectares sold each year as demand. This measure of capacity is useful to understand the greater capacity the region has in terms of properties that are (a) vacant and perhaps more likely to have subdivision potential realised and (b) those which could be brought to the market through further infill subdivision.

**2A. EXTRACT OF ZONED VACANT LAND WITH SUBDIVISION POTENTIAL (I.E. NO INFILL)**



***Vacant land with subdivision potential is land which is easier to bring to the market as there are generally fewer barriers in preparing lots for development.***

Capacity represents vacant land with subdivision potential as supply and the average number of land sales each year as demand. This measure of capacity is useful to understand what additional capacity could be realised through the subdivision of vacant land.

Figure 11 to Figure 13 illustrate the capacity of rural residential properties by State Suburb as per the above figure. Table 2 below provides the estimated average number of years each zone and zone precinct has until it is exhausted based on each approach.

# Fraser Coast Rural Residential Land Investigation

Potential Timeframe of Vacant Rural Residential and Low Density Residential (LDR1) Lots

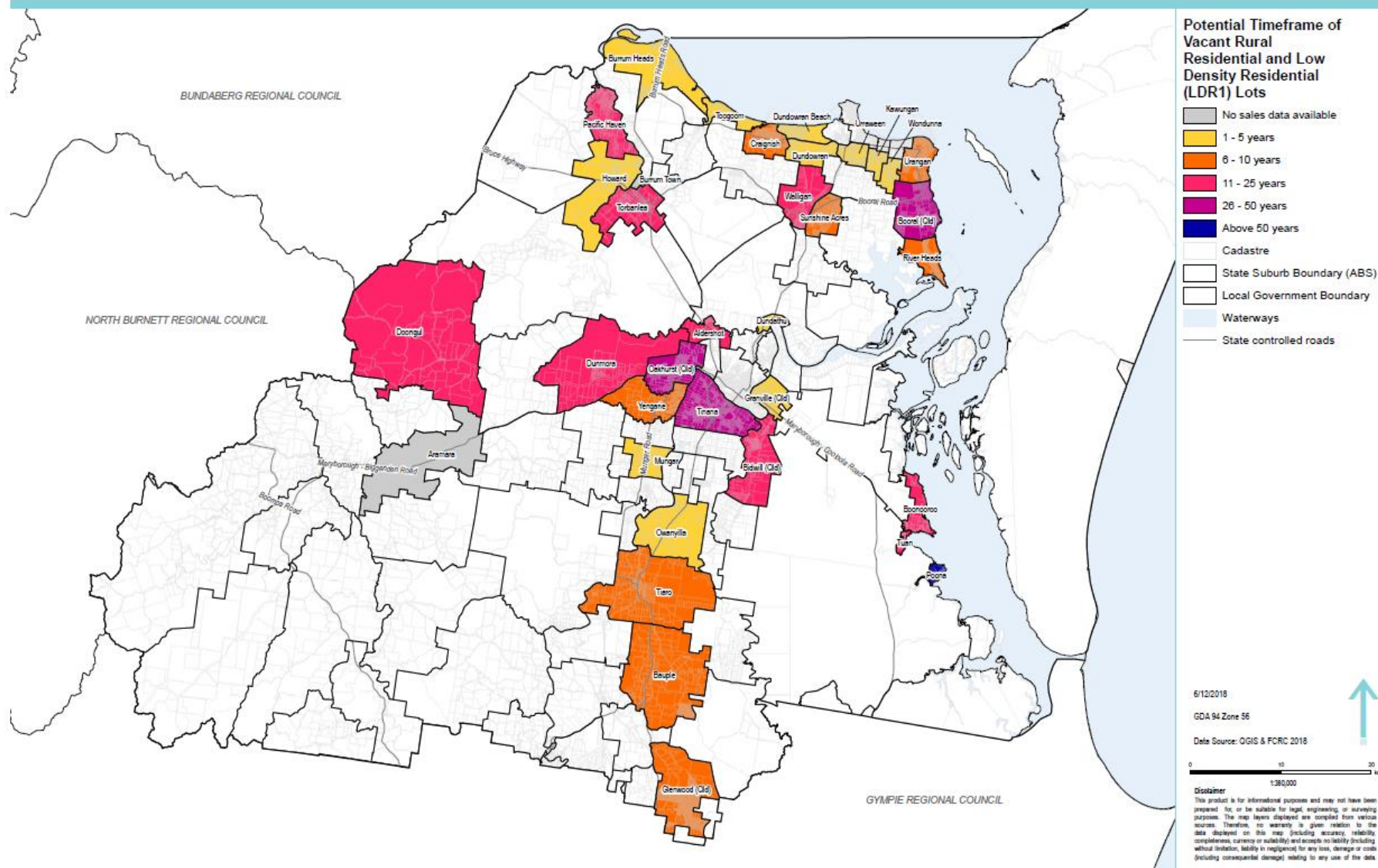


Figure 11: Map of Rural Residential Property Capacity – Approach 1

# Fraser Coast Rural Residential Land Investigation

Potential Timeframe of Available Rural Residential and Low Density Residential (LDR1) Zone with Subdivision Potential and Additional Vacant Rural Residential and Low Density Residential (LDR1) Lots

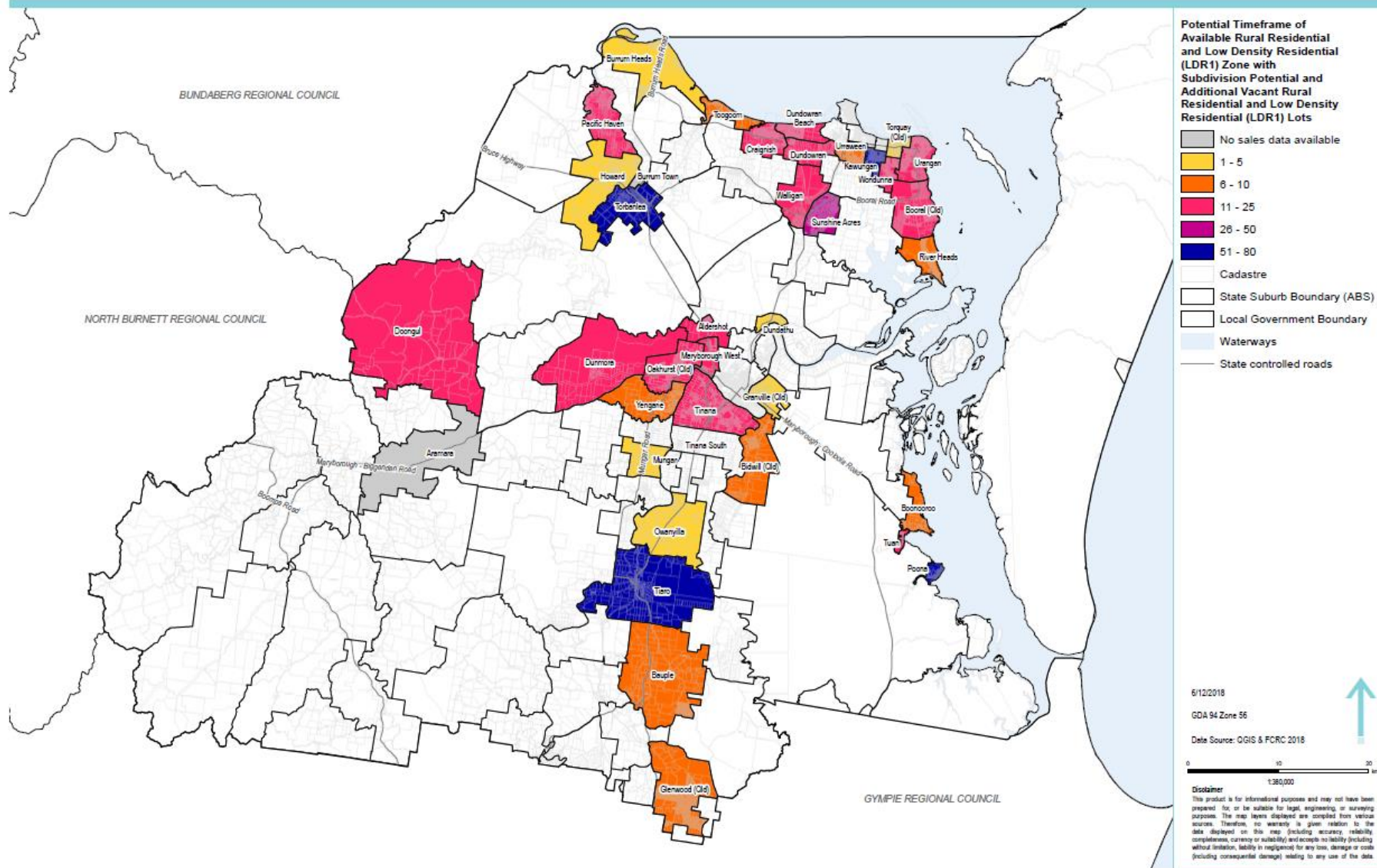


Figure 12: Map of Rural Residential Property Capacity – Approach 2



# Fraser Coast Rural Residential Land Investigation

Estimated capacity (no. of years) by State Suburb

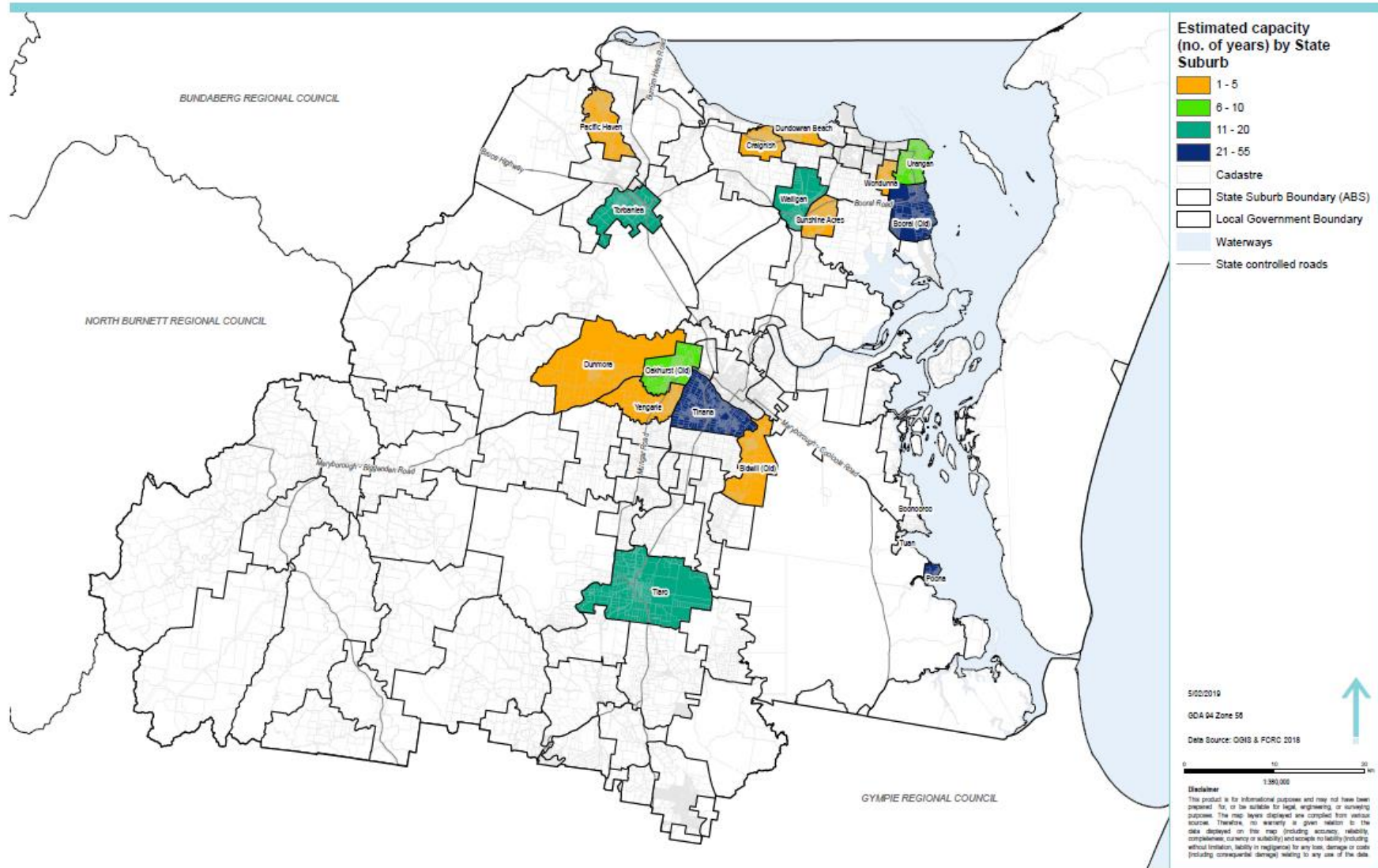


Figure 13: Map of Rural Residential Property Capacity – Capacity shown as average number of years based on vacant lots with subdivision potential against demand based on average number of sales

**Table 2: Potential capacity of Rural Residential Properties by State statistical suburb as well as zone and zone precinct**

|                                      | Rural residential properties   |   |  |   |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
|                                      | Low density residential zone (LDR1 precinct)<br>(Accepted lot size 2,000m <sup>2</sup> ) | Rural residential zone (RR1 precinct)<br>(Accepted lot size 4,000m <sup>2</sup> ) | Rural residential zone (RR2 precinct)<br>(Accepted lot size 10,000m <sup>2</sup> ) | Rural residential zone (no precinct)<br>(Accepted lot size 20,000m <sup>2</sup> ) |
| Approach 1 – Average number of years | 4  | 13  | 8  | 8   |
| Approach 2 – Average number of years | 13   | 20  | 8  | 11  |

**Rural Residential Product Catchments**

To provide a deeper understanding of capacity within the various areas of the region several rural residential product catchments have been defined. Figure 14 shows the boundaries and location of each of these precincts.

provides a breakdown of capacity by precinct as per the three forms of capacity.

**Table 3: Potential capacity of Rural Residential Properties by precinct**

| <b>Capacity of rural residential properties by product catchment by number of years</b> |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|   | <b>Approach 1</b><br>(Vacant land as supply and average land consumption as demand) | <b>Approach 2</b><br>(Vacant land and land with subdivision potential as supply and average land consumption as demand) | <b>Vacant land with subdivision potential</b><br>(Vacant land as supply and average number of land sales as demand) |
| Hervey Bay Lifestyle  | 19  | 43  | 29  |
| Coastal Towns North   | 3   | 5   | 0   |
| Hervey Bay Hinterland   | 14  | 22  | 9   |
| Maryborough Hinterland  | 34  | 35  | 33  |
| Coastal Towns South   | 44  | 44  | 52  |
| Fraser Coast Southern Corridor  | 12  | 48  | 13  |

# Fraser Coast Rural Residential Land Investigation

Precincts

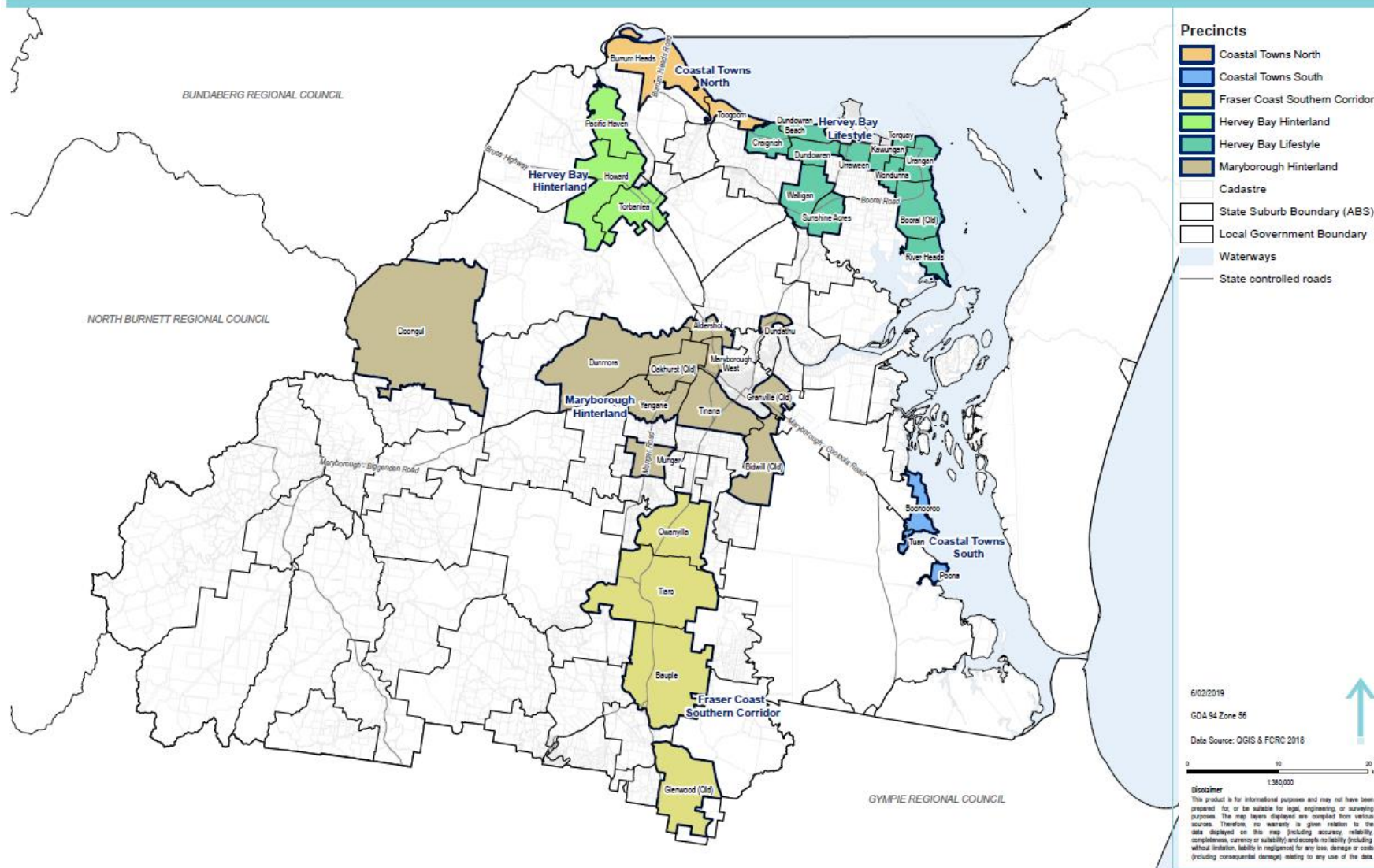


Figure 14: Map of rural residential product locations across the region

## 5.0 Recommended Strategies

### 1 Confirm the overall role of rural residential land

*Rural residential land is part of the overall settlement pattern, and its continued review and provision is undertaken within an overarching policy framework that balances lifestyle and housing needs of the whole community along with efficient provision of infrastructure and services and protection of natural resources.*

To achieve this strategy, key actions are to:

- 1.1 As part of the next Fraser Coast planning scheme process, identify the envisaged settlement pattern for the region over the long-term having regard to desired patterns of development and housing needs; and identifying lot size/housing products that appropriately reflect this.
- 1.2 Inform the above analysis through the revision and updating of the Fraser Coast Housing Needs Assessment to identify future housing requirements of the community, particularly the retired and aged population who are likely to require convenient access to a wider range of health services and the support of aged-friendly communities.
- 1.3 As part of any future planning for rural residential land, undertake a principle-based assessment to ensure it supports balanced and sustainable growth in the region. The below principles reflect and support the achievement of the SPP, and also encompass community and stakeholder feedback obtained through the preparation of this strategy:
  - 1.3.1 Infrastructure safeguarding – Rural residential development occurs only where it will not fetter ‘highest and best use’ opportunities associated with available and cost-effective infrastructure access. Furthermore, rural residential development occurs in proximity to existing and established high quality roads, and are accessible to key centres.
  - 1.3.2 High quality location and design – Rural residential development occurs in areas that:
    - a. are accessible and in reasonable proximity to a full range of community facilities, services; and
    - b. are minimally constrained by risks associated with coastal hazards, flooding, and bushfire; and values associated with biodiversity, native vegetation, and productive agricultural land; and
    - c. support the ability to create master-planned, contained nodes to promote a sense of place.
  - 1.3.3 Environmentally and culturally sensitive – Rural residential development does not compromise the ecological function of mature vegetated areas and waterways, or cultural heritage assets and artefacts.



## **2** Protect future urban growth opportunities

*Protect urban land and land suited for future urban expansion from unserviced / rural residential scale development to ensure Council leverage infrastructure utilisation.*

To achieve this strategy, key actions are to:

In achieving this strategy, key actions are to:

- 2.1 Promote urban development, of appropriate densities, in priority infrastructure areas, as defined by the Fraser Coast planning scheme. Flexibility in lot size provision can be achieved only when the overall density is not compromised. Review the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme to identify any policy gaps which could result in the under-development of urban land. Where there are gaps in policy, prepare amendments to the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014 which address these.
- 2.2 Protect Council's, and the community's investment in water supply, sewerage and road infrastructure – particularly existing serviced areas and those that will be readily accessible for very long term urban growth opportunities (including at Nikenbah and Dundowran). As part of the next Fraser Coast Planning Scheme, identify the growth fronts for urban development and protect these areas from development which would compromise their ultimate development.

## **3** Provide choice and diversity in product

*Provide choice and diversity in the lifestyle and rural residential product throughout the region within the existing rural residential zoned areas, balanced with protecting valued character, amenity and environmental values.*

To achieve this strategy, key actions are to:

In achieving this strategy, key actions are to:

- 3.1 Utilise the existing performance outcome in the Reconfiguring a Lot Code (in relation to achieving a lot size mix that reflects intended character and takes account of site constraints) to facilitate fit for purpose considerations for flexibility in lot sizes, including in locations such as Oakhurst where a minimum lot size of 4,000sqm could be seen as precluding the achievement of lot size choice and product variety.
- 3.2 Consider amending the Fraser Coast Planning Scheme, or review acceptable outcomes for minimum lot sizes as part of the future planning scheme, to provide greater flexibility in acceptable lot sizes, by implementing an accepted lot size range supported by an accepted average lot size.
- 3.3 Undertake local planning exercises for existing and future rural residential areas within the region. This will allow for finer-grained consideration of optimal lot sizes and patterns of future development. This will also assist in ensuring that future subdivision occurs in a coordinated manner and is reflective of existing and future resident needs.

**4**

**Review desired standards of service for infrastructure**

*The infrastructure requirements for LDR1 and rural residential areas are reviewed to consider a balance between cost effective construction and maintenance whilst still reflective of community expectations for service levels.*

To achieve this strategy, key actions are to:

In achieving this strategy, key actions are to:

- 4.1 Review the desired standards of service for LDR1 and rural residential zoned land with consideration to industry feedback. Desired standards of service should support fit for purpose infrastructure that has long term integrity and is considered in light of likely community expectations and future maintenance requirements.
- 4.2 Clarify the opportunities for access to all telecommunication and electricity networks when reviewing the settlement pattern and preparing the next planning scheme.

**5**

**Better understand and manage environmental impacts from rural residential development**

*The environmental impacts of rural residential development are more closely monitored and addressed with regard to impacts on water quality, habitat and wildlife protection.*

To achieve this strategy, key actions are to:

In achieving this strategy, key actions are to:

- 5.1 As part of the next Fraser Coast Planning Scheme, consider the cumulative impacts of concentrated rural residential development and associated on-site effluent disposal on the water quality of sensitive receiving environments.
- 5.2 Consider opportunities outside of the planning scheme, such as the Threatened species action plan, to further support the achievement of environmental protection in rural residential areas – associated with approaches to fencing, keeping of domestic animals, and habitat removal (including understorey vegetation).

**6**

**Monitor and evaluate rural residential land supply**

*Ongoing monitoring of rural residential land supply occurs in line with key market indicators in order to closely understand demand and resultant implications.*

To achieve this strategy, key actions are to:

In achieving this strategy, key actions are to:

- 6.1 Implement a monitoring program, that can have broader application as a comprehensive housing monitoring program for the region, that communicates key market trends and availability of land to support various residential product types. The monitoring program should inform Council’s ongoing review of planning policy and will enable Council to be responsive to significant changes in the market. Refer to the following page for an overview of the suggested metrics and sources of information to undertake this.

## Potential Monitoring Approach



**Supply and Demand** – Based on the findings of the strategy there is significant capacity in existing rural residential designated land. It is recommended the following key metrics are monitored in order to be able to anticipate any necessary planning policy changes regarding rural residential properties:

- Average land consumption by State suburb as well as by zone and zone precinct.
- Capacity of existing rural residential properties to accommodate demand by State suburb as well as by zone and zone precinct.
- Conversion rate of rural residential properties meeting development potential where allowed for by the planning scheme.

As part of future monitoring of rural residential land, it is important to recognise land for this purpose only represents part of the picture in achieving Council's intended settlement pattern.



**Product mix** – As part of the engagement undertaken to support this strategy to date, a general preference for all types of rural residential lots was noted, with favour given towards 'lifestyle' lots between 2,000m<sup>2</sup> and 4,000m<sup>2</sup>. To ensure a sufficient amount of land for various product types exists it is recommended that supply and demand is measured by zone and zone precinct as well as area.



**Market trends** – During the preparation of this strategy several anecdotal market trends and catalyst projects which may influence future land consumption and desirability of rural residential properties within the Fraser Coast LGA. As part of the supply and demand monitoring it is recommended Council consider whether the following market trends or catalyst projects have resulted in impacts to land consumption of rural residential properties in terms of location and rate of consumption. The market trends and catalyst projects include:

- Spill over demand from the Gympie Regional Council property market
- Ageing population
- Cooroy to Curra Bruce Highway upgrade



**Level of enquiry** – It is recommended that community feedback, development enquiries and development applications in relation to rural residential properties are recorded and summarised in a register to quantify the level of interest from the community. The register should consider the development outcomes sought such as lot size, locations of interest and obstacles for developers or owners not realising further subdivision potential of rural residential properties e.g. protected vegetation. This can also be extended to include home based business enquiries/issues.

### HOW ARE THESE INDICATORS MEASURED?



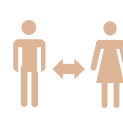
Development enquiries



Online feedback



Market data



Real estate interviews



Approval / Application data