





3.8 Natural environment and landscape



3.8.1 Strategic Outcomes

- (a) Natural areas of national and international significance such as Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Strait (which together form part of the Great Sandy Biosphere) are highly valued for their biodiversity values as well as for their contribution to the overall image and landscape character of the region.
- (b) Vegetation, biodiversity values and areas of significance are identified and protected to maintain biodiversity and contribute to the image and character of the Fraser Coast, unless it is demonstrated to be in the community interest that they not be protected.
- (c) Where an overriding community need is demonstrated for development which will adversely impact on environmental values, those adverse impacts are minimised as far as practicable and, where appropriate, suitable offsets are provided.
- (d) The form of development and pattern of settlement of the Fraser Coast has regard to biodiversity values and minimises impacts on ecosystems, habitats, vegetation and corridor connectivity.
- (e) The image, landscape character and scenic amenity values of the Fraser Coast are recognised, including elements and features which contribute to views to and from areas of high scenic amenity.
- (f) The physical condition, ecological health, environmental and scenic values, and water quality of the region's groundwater, wetlands and waterways is maintained or enhanced where practicable.
- (g) Risks to people, property and the environment from the predicted impacts of climate change are avoided or minimised as far as practicable.
- (h) Wherever practicable, degraded areas are enhanced and rehabilitated to improve ecological processes, ecosystem functionality and connectivity.



3.8.2 Elements and specific outcomes

3.8.2.1 Element 1 Protection of important habitat and biodiversity

The Fraser Coast is internationally recognised for its unique environmental values. The area contains important habitat and biodiversity values at an international, national, state and local level, including coastal dune systems, wetlands and remnant vegetation. Protection of these ecologically important areas is vital in order to maintain biodiversity values within the region, including near-threatened species such as the koala, humpback whale and migratory birds.

Specific outcomes

- (a) Development minimises adverse impacts on ecologically important areas including those areas identified conceptually on **Strategic Framework Map 4 (SFM-004) (Natural environment and landscape character)**, which includes areas containing Matters of State Environmental Significance (MSES).
- (b) Development is not located in an ecologically important area as mapped on the Biodiversity Overlay, unless:-
 - (i) on the balance of social, economic and environmental considerations, it is demonstrated that the development is in the interests of the community⁴; and
 - (ii) any adverse impacts on the ecologically important area incurred are minimised and, where appropriate to the circumstances, compensated by an offset in accordance with applicable State or local planning policy.
- (c) Development supports and or contributes to a network of ecological corridors throughout the Fraser Coast where connection and wildlife movement internally within cities, towns, villages and communities can be satisfactorily achieved and an ecological benefit can be demonstrated.
- (d) Where practicable and appropriate, having regard to the scale and nature of development, degraded areas within strategically important areas of connectivity (between ecologically important areas) identified conceptually as **Strategic rehabilitation corridors on Strategic Framework Map 4 (SFM-004) (Natural environment and landscape character)** are rehabilitated to positively contribute to the habitat and biodiversity values of the Fraser Coast.
- (e) Buffers or other suitable protective measures are incorporated in development to minimise edge effect and impacts on remnant vegetation, waterways, wetlands and corridors.
- (f) Rivers, waterways and wetlands are predominantly maintained in their natural state with development not adversely impacting on their ecological function and water quality.

4. In determining whether development has satisfied this test, Council will consider such matters as:-

- (a) whether alternative options are available;
- (b) the size, type and condition of the ecologically important area affected;
- (c) the extent to which the ecologically important area has hydrological, biodiversity, landscape or character values;
- (d) any requirements for the provision of an offset under a State or local planning policy; and
- (e) whether the development proposed is reasonably anticipated by and consistent with the planning scheme.

3.8.2.2 Element 2 Scenic amenity and landscape character

The significant role that scenic amenity and landscape character plays in defining the unique character and identity of the Fraser Coast, including its individual communities, is recognised.

Specific outcomes

- (a) Development does not adversely impact upon the landscape character elements identified conceptually on **Strategic Framework Map 4 (SFM-004) (Natural environment and landscape character)** which includes strategic views, scenic corridors and routes, and other significant landscape areas and features.
- (b) The following areas and features are recognised for their high scenic amenity value and are protected through the general exclusion of development or sensitive development that incorporates built form elements that are designed to minimise disruption to the landscape:-
 - (i) Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Strait;
 - (ii) coastal foreshore areas and streams;
 - (iii) rural peaks and ridgelines particularly those visible from the main transport routes and strategic view points;
 - (iv) Mary River and its tributaries including riparian areas;
 - (v) undeveloped parts of the Ghost Hill ridgeline;
 - (vi) other features, attributes and values of landscape character and scenic amenity that contribution to regional image, including:-
 - (A) significant views, viewpoints and scenic corridors;
 - (B) areas of visually significant vegetation; and
 - (C) agricultural land class A and B and other rural lands.
- (c) Inter-urban breaks between Maryborough and Hervey Bay, Hervey Bay and River Heads and Hervey Bay and Toogoom are maintained and preserved so as to provide a clearly defined edge between urban areas and green space, rural living and rural areas.
- (d) Intra-urban breaks within cities and towns are established, maintained and where practicable enhanced to create distinct neighbourhoods. These areas are integrated with ecologically important areas and form part of the publicly owned urban open space network.
- (e) Development which relies upon the Fraser Coast's lifestyle and economic development opportunities preserves the significant outdoor recreation values and the diverse landscape, scenic amenity and natural resources available in rural areas of the Fraser Coast.
- (f) Development maintains or enhances public access to landscape character areas, scenic amenity areas and significant viewpoints.

3.8.2.3 Element 3 Coastal environment

In addition to Fraser Island, the Fraser Coast mainland takes in an extensive area of coastline extending from Burrum Heads in the north to the inlet of Tin Can Bay in the south. This coastal environment, with its associated beaches, dunes, foreshores, estuaries, rivers and coastal streams strongly influences the character, lifestyle and environment of the Fraser Coast.

Specific outcomes

- (a) Development is planned, located, designed, constructed and operated to avoid as far as practicable, or otherwise mitigate, any adverse impacts on coastal resources, processes and values.
- (b) Development maintains the natural integrity of coastal processes unless carried out in accordance with Council's Shoreline Erosion Management Plan.
- (c) Works for canals, dry land marinas, artificial waterways or marine infrastructure avoid areas where they will cause adverse impact on coastal resources or processes. Where such works are undertaken adverse impacts on coastal resources or processes are minimised and mitigated, such that:
 - (i) water quality is not degraded
 - (ii) the extent of coastal ecosystems and associated flora and fauna habitat is maintained
 - (iii) effects of construction are managed and need for ongoing dredging for maintenance purposes is minimised
 - (iv) adverse changes to tidal flows, sediment transport processes, or tidal prism volume of natural waterways are avoided.
- (d) Marina developments facilitate the installation, maintenance and availability of reception facilities for ship-sourced pollutants to prevent marine pollution.
- (e) Reclamation of land under tidal water (including in relation to land adjoining tidal water) only occurs to support specific development activities which require access to tidal waters for operation, including:
 - (i) coastal-dependent development, public marine development or community infrastructure, where there is no feasible alternative
 - (ii) strategic ports, priority ports, boat harbors or strategic airports and aviation facilities in accordance with a statutory land use plan, or statutory master plan.
- (f) Reclamation of land under tidal water may also occur where required to support the development of coastal protection works or work necessary to protect coastal resources or coastal processes.

3.8.2.4 Element 4 Surface water, groundwater, waterways and wetlands

The waterways and wetlands of the Fraser Coast provide habitats for many fauna species and an important recreational, scenic amenity and water supply resource. To protect these values, regard must be given to surface water and groundwater quality and environmental flows.

Specific outcomes

- (a) Development:-
 - (i) maintains ground and surface water quality and characteristics;
 - (ii) incorporates appropriate buffers to waterways and wetland areas;
 - (iii) incorporates sustainable integrated catchment and land management practices and safeguards to mitigate the

impacts from increased sediment, nutrient runoff and changed run off and flow characteristics; and
(iv) does not diminish groundwater recharge areas.

- (b) The region's groundwater, waterways and wetlands are protected or enhanced in a manner that ensures their long-term environmental values and sustainability. This includes ensuring that development in or adjacent to wetlands of high ecological significance is planned, designed and constructed to prevent the loss and degradation of the wetlands and their environmental values, consistent with State Planning Policy.

3.8.2.5 Element 5 Climate change

Climate change has the potential to impact on the natural and built environment and these changes should be reflected in the management of development.

Specific outcomes

- (a) Development is suitably located, designed and constructed to take appropriate account of the potential impacts of climate change.
- (b) Infrastructure networks, corridors and services are designed, located and operated to minimise the potential adverse impacts of climate change on the infrastructure itself and on communities.

3.8.3 Relevant strategic framework maps

Strategic Framework Map 4 (SFM-004) (Natural environment and landscape character) conceptually identifies elements of the strategic framework as relevant to the natural environment and landscape character theme, including:-

- (a) Regulated Vegetation (Matters of State Environmental Significance);
- (b) Koala Habitat Areas;
- (c) Fish Habitat Areas;
- (d) Ramsar wetlands;
- (e) high ecological value (HEV) waters;
- (f) regional ecological corridors;
- (g) protected areas ⁵;
- (h) strategic views;
- (i) scenic corridors and routes; and
- (j) the Ghost Hill ridgeline.

5. Protected areas include land that is owned or controlled by the State government for conservation purposes such as National Parks and Conservation Parks and land owned or controlled by Council and used or intended to be used for conservation purposes.





Maps SFM-004
Natural environment & landscape character

