FACT SHEET 1: URBAN FOOTPRINT

Major changes to the urban footprint for the Sunshine Coast are not supported. The identification of a potential new urban growth area to the south of the proposed Caloundra South master planned community is contrary to the preferred settlement pattern for the Sunshine Coast as outlined in the Sunshine Coast Growth Management Position Paper 2008. It is considered that the Caloundra South Extension is likely to have significant impacts on the interurban break between the Moreton Bay subregion and the Sunshine Coast subregion as well as potentially negative impacts on the coastal wetlands of the Pumicestone Passage.

Therefore, Council recommends that the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031:

- delete all reference to the ‘Caloundra South Extension’ investigation area and keep the land classified in the land use category of Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area.

Basis for this response

The draft SEQ Regional Plan’s Caloundra South Extension Investigation Area is located south of Bells Creek Road, Bells Creek and covers an area of approximately 1,400 hectares. As part of previous strategic planning, this area has been dismissed as an area potentially suitable for urban development for the following reasons.

The Caloundra South Extension Investigation Area is located in the Halls and Mellum Creek Catchments that drain to the mid-reaches of Pumicestone Passage which is of high ecological value. Under Schedule 1 of the Environment Protection (Water) Policy 1997, water quality objectives for these receiving waters require no reduction in existing water quality and no change from ambient conditions. These objectives are difficult to achieve because of the delicate ecosystem of the Pumicestone Passage.

Approximately 40 per cent of the investigation area is subject to flooding under a 1:100 year Average Recurrence Interval (ARI) plus climate change scenario.

There are known high levels of bioavailable iron within the catchment which is of concern as recent studies have shown that iron is one of the major elements supporting the growth of Lyngbya. Lyngbya is toxic and has a range of negative impacts on aquatic life and local recreation and tourism economies.

Wetlands of state significance and essential habitat for threatened species are located within the investigation area and are connected through the investigation area to other wetland areas. These wetlands provide habitat of national and international importance.

The investigation area is located close to major saltmarsh mosquito breeding grounds. Mosquitoes can reduce quality of life and pose a potential threat to community health and safety in terms of transmission of Ross River virus and other infections.

The investigation area forms part of a regional inter-urban break that separates the greater Brisbane metropolitan area from the Sunshine Coast sub-region. This inter-urban break plays an essential role in defining the character and identity of the Sunshine Coast and is an important component of the non-urban landscape. It provides a setting for the iconic Glasshouse Mountains and Pumicestone Passage.
The former Caloundra City Council considered the suitability of the investigation area for urban development as part of background work undertaken to inform preparation of Caloundra City Plan. This work concluded that land south of Bells Creek Road was ‘not suitable for urban development, either now or in the future’. This position was supported by feedback provided during community consultation and state government endorsement of Caloundra City Plan at all plan-making stages.

The draft Caloundra City LGMS identified the whole of the investigation area as either ‘Ecologically Important Area’ or ‘Rehabilitation Focus Area’. These open space categories recognised the sensitivity of the Halls Creek and Mellum Creek catchments and the need to enhance and reconnect existing environmental areas in order to increase the ecological value, viability and resilience of coastal ecosystems within the Caloundra South area. Limiting urban development to north of Bells Creek Road and setting aside open space for ecological protection and rehabilitation south of Bells Creek Road was also considered important in buffering the mid-reaches of Pumicestone Passage. This position was supported by feedback provided during community consultation and state government endorsement of the draft LGMS at all plan-making stages up to final submission to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning.

The environmental benefits derived from the protection and restoration of the investigation area was a critical trade off underpinning council’s decision to support the Caloundra South Urban Growth Area and was recognised as one of the solutions necessary to facilitate the sustainable development of the Caloundra South Urban Growth Area in accordance with the objectives of the draft SEQ Regional Plan.

Due to the characteristics of the investigation area, the outcomes of previous planning projects and the principles of sound planning practice there is a strong case to exclude the investigation area from the final version of the SEQ Regional Plan.

Retention of the investigation area would cut across carefully formulated planning proposals contained within Caloundra City Plan, the draft Caloundra City LGMS and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council Growth Management Position Paper and would put at risk the achievement of the preferred development outcome for the Caloundra South Urban Growth Area as envisaged by these documents.

Council’s submission

To view council’s submission on the draft SEQ Regional Plan visit [www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](http://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)

Have your say

For details on how to make a submission to the Department of Infrastructure and Planning on the draft SEQ Regional Plan visit [www.dip.qld.gov.au](http://www.dip.qld.gov.au).

Submissions must be received by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning by 5 pm, Friday 1 May 2009.

Further information

For more information on the draft SEQ Regional Plan (including the draft state planning regulatory provisions) visit [www.dip.qld.gov.au](http://www.dip.qld.gov.au)