



## **COOLUM RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION SUBMISSION TO SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL NEW PLANNING SCHEME PROJECT**

The Coolum Residents' Association Inc (CRA) has about 70 members and represents a broad cross-section of the Coolum community. CRA members have reviewed the draft planning scheme material provided for community input through the Have Your Say process.

CRA generally supports the proposed regional and local visions and planning directions. CRA offers the following additional comments and suggestions for consideration (using the same structure as the consultation documents).

### **Guiding Principles**

After "effectively plan for local areas" add "and ensure that development is consistent with the reasonable expectations of local communities".

### **Proposed Vision and Regional Planning Directions**

#### **Shaping Sustainable Growth**

##### *Proposed regional vision*

Para 1: add specific reference to "protected environmental areas" as a key element of the "green mosaic".

Para 2: simply say "The Sunshine Coast is renowned for the sensitive balance and connection between the natural and built environment." No need for detrimental comparison with other parts of the SEQ region.

Para 4: add to final sentence "... and low-rise tourist accommodation."

Para 7: after "...would undermine" add "environmental values". Suggest add specific reference to the five major green spaces previously identified.

##### *Proposed regional planning directions*

RPD(f)(i) This para currently appears to exclude Urban Living areas outside the Maroochydore to Caloundra coastal corridor and Sippy Downs, such as around the Coolum mixed use centre which certainly has the potential to be a "well defined, compact urban village providing a range of housing options..."

Other matters that should be specifically addressed in the RPDs are the nature, role and function of mixed-use centres, and the need for active transport connections between communities and from communities to employment nodes and major environmental and recreation areas.

#### **A Smart Economy**

##### *Growing the Economy*

Suggest the second dot point read "focussing large-scale business and residential growth within the Enterprise Corridor...", so as not to exclude other centres, business and industry areas etc.

### *Proposed RPDs*

Reading this gives the impression that the only thing of value north of the Maroochy River is the airport (other than a brief reference to mixed use residential at Nambour). The RPDs should acknowledge that many high value economic activities are footloose and are attracted to smaller, high amenity locations such as Coolum Beach.

### **A Healthy and Resilient Environment**

#### *Proposed RPDs*

RPD (a): Suggest this be revised to strengthen intent as follows: “Areas with important environmental values are identified, protected and linked to form part of a connected regional network.”

Also suggest addition of a new RPD: “Environmental values are protected where they occur. Environmental offsets are used rarely and only where there is a clear, significant and immediate net environmental benefit.”

### **Connected People and Places**

#### *Proposed Vision*

Para 2: Suggest change text to “... more diverse housing focussed around mixed use centres and high frequency...”.

#### *Proposed RPDs*

Current RPDs do not adequately address active transport. Suggest the following new RPD be added: “A safe and convenient active transport network is provided within and between communities, and provides access to major employment areas, community facilities and recreation opportunities.”.

### **Coolum Peregian LAP**

#### **LAP Area**

CRA understands that the current LAP boundaries aim to keep the Maroochy River floodplain within a single LAP. However, this approach undermines the entire purpose and intent of local area plans. In any case there are other ways to maintain the integrity of the Blue Heart in the planning scheme such as through the use of an overlay and specific codes for the Blue Heart.

CRA proposes that the Coolum-Peregian LAP area should be expanded based on accessibility and community of interest issues. The Maroochy River forms a significant boundary between the northern part of the Blue Heart and the balance of the Bli Bli – Maroochy River Plains LAP. This northern part is more closely linked to Coolum now, and offers the potential for significantly enhanced linkages to the Coolum Peregian LAP in the future. It forms a natural part of the broader Coolum-Peregian area of interest and influence.

Therefore, CRA strongly recommends that the northern part of the Blue Heart should be excised from the Bli Bli – Maroochy River Plains LAP, and added to the Coolum-Peregian LAP. The western boundary of the Coolum-Peregian LAP would then adjoin the eastern boundary of the Yandina-Maroochy Valley LAP which would more accurately reflect the current and longstanding relationship between these two communities. The southern boundary of the expanded LAP would be formed by the Maroochy River and the southern boundary of the Coolum Creek Environment Reserve where it adjoins the Sunshine Motorway.

The following comments are based on the amended LAP boundary.

## **Description**

Add: "This proposed local plan area also includes that part of the Blue Heart Sunshine Coast major green space located north of the Maroochy River."

### **Draft vision statement**

Amend para 2 as follows: "The Coolum Town Centre remains the largest coastal centre north of the Maroochy River, providing a wide range of facilities and services for a substantial catchment extending from Marcoola to Peregian Springs. The ...".

Add a new para after para 2: "Coolum is a key centre servicing and providing access to the Sunshine Coast Blue Heart. Safe and convenient active transport routes link the coastal urban areas to the Blue Heart, the major industrial area at Quanda Road and the other educational, low intensity tourism and agricultural activities that have established in the western part of the LAP."

Add the following (adapted from the draft vision statement for the Bli Bli – Maroochy River Plains LAP) in response to the proposed expanded LAP boundary:

"The Maroochy River and its northern floodplain with its significant cultural, environmental, flood storage and recreational values, dominates and defines the role and character of the western part of the local plan area. Within this area, part of the Sunshine Coast Blue Heart, a significant complex of wetland and floodplain ecosystems is thriving and has boosted climate resilience through adaptive and sustainable floodplain management. Innovative land use initiatives ensure the most critical areas of the floodplain are protected, whilst providing community and recreation opportunities through regional parkland, open space and trails and establishing new uses for existing rural and agricultural lands, including economic opportunities for landowners.

Residents in the rural residential areas of Maroochy River and Yandina Creek continue to enjoy a quiet, semirural lifestyle close to the amenities of Coolum and the broader coastal urban area."

### **Proposed planning directions**

Add Lows Lookout specifically to the Protect Local Features dot point.

Add new PDs as follows:

- Investigate opportunities to enhance the function and amenity of the Coolum Town Centre including:
  - Activation of Park Street between the cultural centre and Elizabeth Street
  - Further enhancement of the cultural centre precinct through the provision of art gallery/workshops.
- Investigate opportunities to encourage greater local employment diversity within or close to the Coolum town centre.
- Safe, convenient and efficient intersections are provided for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.
- The new Coolum LAP will include the proposed South Coolum Road extension to Suncoast Drive with associated bike paths.

Add other planning directions relevant to the expanded LAP area.

### **Hot Planning Topics**

**Reasonable expectations of the local community** – The Court of Appeal in the recent case *Development Watch Inc v Sunshine Coast Regional Council & Anor [2022]* found that the height of buildings and structures in the proposed development was required to be consistent with the reasonable expectations of the local community. This is an important provision of the current planning scheme (in the particular case the only protection from inappropriate development given the failure of the Council to properly apply the

planning scheme) that must be retained, strengthened and expanded to cover more aspects of development than just height (for example development density and parking provision).

**Dual Occupancies and Secondary Dwellings** – The approval of these is administered by Private Certifiers some of whom use very liberal interpretations of the allowable Performance Outcomes in the Dwelling Code. Could the Performance Outcomes be redrafted to reduce unreasonable flexibility.

**Short Term Accommodation** – According to the information sheet *“Short-term accommodation uses are not supported in the Low density residential zone or Rural residential zone, which cover most residential areas on the Sunshine Coast.”* However, the availability of Airbnb and similar in the low-density areas around Coolum (and other parts of the Sunshine Coast) is quite widespread and seems to be largely ignored by Council – resulting in the sorts of problems listed. Proposed remedies seem too vague and need strengthening before the existing properties start to become treated as ‘as of right uses.’.

**Intensive agriculture and transitioning of former cane lands** - a specific ‘Agri-business’ development code with appropriate and relevant overlays should be developed to address the following issues:

- the transitioning of former canelands to agri-business (for example, in the Coolum Peregian region this is occurring in the Valdora area),
- the difficulty in accommodating Intensive horticulture (for example the current development proposal for intensive horticulture in the High impact industry zone of the Quanda Road industrial area),
- protection of local amenity and landscape values in areas identified for high intensity agricultural uses.