

16 January 2014

Reference LU6.4 & LU6.9 DK

The Research Director
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Email: sdiic@parliament.qld.gov.au

Submission No. 038

17 January 2014

11.1.14

Dear Sir/Madam

INQUIRY INTO THE REGIONAL PLANNING INTERESTS BILL 2013

I refer to the invitation to interested individuals and organisations to make a submission to the inquiry by the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee into the *Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013* and enclose the following comments on behalf of Gladstone Regional Council.

Council acknowledges that this Bill provides the ability to manage the impacts of resource activities and regulated activities in areas of regional interest that contribute, or are likely to contribute, to Queensland's economic, social and environmental prosperity through a planning instrument that requires resource activities to align with the policies of a regional plan. The Central Queensland Regional Plan released in October 2013 identifies and contains land use policies that protect areas of regional interest in Central Queensland (i.e. priority agricultural areas, priority living areas and strategic environmental areas) with regards to the Gladstone Regional Council local government area.

Priority Agriculture Area's (PAA's) were a main interest addressed in Gladstone Regional Council's submission regarding the draft Central Queensland Regional Plan. PAA's are identified in the new generation regional plans, and consist of the region's strategic areas containing productive agricultural land uses identified for protection from potentially incompatible resource activities. The introduction of land use polices in the Regional Plan also provides opportunity to maximise co-existence of resources and agricultural land use within PAA's. It should be noted that there are no identified PAA's within the Gladstone Regional Council area in the Central Queensland Regional Plan. Council takes the opportunity to reiterate again points from the original submission on the draft Central Queensland Regional Plan that in determining PAA's the term "agriculture" defines cropping land uses well but perhaps does not give enough weight to good quality grazing land to qualify as a PAA. Grazing on native pasture and modified pasture (QLUMP categories 2.1.0 and 3.2.0) in areas of the region east of the Great Dividing Range may well be worth being considered as a Priority Agriculture Area or classed as "other areas of regional interest". With agriculture being one of the four pillars of the State's economy, it is imperative that the value of grazing is not undersold. "Good Quality Grazing Land" needs to have a greater identification in the Priority Agriculture Area's (PAA's). The probability for PAA's to be recognised within the Gladstone Regional Council area may exist if it was so.

In reviewing the purposes of this Bill it is recommend that the wording of Section 3 on Page 8 be made clearer, particularly the reference to co-existence, which may be open to misinterpretation and is ambiguous to the reader. Please refer to the bolded section below.

1. The purposes of this Act are to—
 - a. Identify areas of Queensland that are of regional interest because they contribute, or are likely to contribute, to Queensland's economic, social and environmental prosperity; and
 - b. Give effect to the policies about matters of State interest stated in regional plans; and
 - c. Manage, including in ways identified in regional plans—
 - i. The impact of resource activities and other regulated activities on areas of regional interest; and
 - ii. **The coexistence, in areas of regional interest, of resource activities and other regulated activities with other activities, including, for example, highly productive agricultural activities.**

The Regional Planning Interest Bill 2013 does not appear to recognise regional water supply and catchment areas as being an area of regional interest. Council acknowledges that water resource and water supply planning are undertaken through a number of other processes however it is also suggested that stronger provisions be introduced to protect the catchment areas of regional water supply infrastructure to avoid inappropriate co-existence issues with resource activities.

In summary, Council request that consideration be given to introducing "other areas of regional interest" particularly the consideration of good quality grazing land and regional water sources as an additional area of regional interest in the Bill and adopted into the new generation regional plans.

Should you have any queries in relation to this matter, please contact **Council's Regional Strategy Section** on **07 4975 8131**.

Yours faithfully



RUSSELL SCHULER
MANAGER REGIONAL STRATEGY