

Question on Notice

No. 247

Asked on 1 April 2014

MR SORENSEN asked the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (MR SEENEY) –

QUESTION:

Will the Deputy Premier outline the areas of regional interest in the new Regional Planning Interests Act 2014 (Qld) and what benefits the new Act will have for landholders in my electorate of Hervey Bay?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Hervey Bay for his question.

On 20 March 2014, the Regional Planning Interests Bill was passed by Parliament.

The objective of the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* (the Act) is primarily to manage the impact of resource activities on areas of regional interest which contribute, or are likely to contribute, to Queensland's economic, social and environmental prosperity.

The Act requires resource activities authorised under resource Acts and other regulated activities to align with the regional land-use policies of the regional plans as well as any other areas of regional interest prescribed in the Regulation.

To achieve this alignment, the Act introduces an assessment framework to manage the impact of resource activities and other regulated activities on areas of the state identified in the Act as an area of regional interest.

Under the Act, a resource activity or regulated activity cannot occur in an area of regional interest unless a regional interest development approval has been given for the activity.

Four types of area of regional interest are included in the Act. These are:

1. a priority agricultural area;
2. a priority living area;
3. a strategic environmental area; and
4. a strategic cropping area.

The first three of these areas relate directly to policies included in the new generation of regional plans, such as the Central Queensland, Darling Downs, and draft Cape York regional plans.

The Act also integrates the policy objectives of the *Strategic Cropping Land Act 2011* by identifying the Strategic Cropping Area as an area of regional interest. The Act will repeal the *Strategic Cropping Land Act 2011* upon commencement.

Upon commencement of the Act, any resource activities proposed in the Strategic Cropping Area in Hervey Bay, and across the state, will have to meet the requirements of the Act.

Last year I made a commitment to work with the councils in the Wide Bay Burnett region to review the existing regional plan once the Central Queensland and Darling Downs plans were completed.

The review will provide the opportunity for the new plan for Wide Bay Burnett region to identify areas of regional interest where appropriate. This may include for example priority living areas and strategic environmental areas.

I am pleased that the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils recently wrote to me confirming their support for a new regional plan—one that is simplified and focuses on land-use planning for the key drivers for the region's economy.

The Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning will be holding discussions with local government representatives in the region shortly to discuss the plan review process.