

REGIONAL PLANNING

Policy statement

The issues

Regional planning involves the placement of land use activities, infrastructure and zoning for the sustainable growth of a region. This planning incorporates the protection of land use activities such as farmland, cities, industrial space, transportation hubs and infrastructure, military bases and wilderness areas. Bad planning decisions can have negative individual business and industry impacts.

The loss of productive agricultural land has become an issue of concern in Queensland and throughout Australia. Increasing urban pressure on farming in urban fringe areas is creating land use conflict and marginalising viable farming operations. Industry is adamant that it is important to maintain a critical mass of farms and farmland.

The pressures on farming enterprises includes meeting the environmental expectations of the urban lifestyle community, who want the lifestyle of acreage properties but are not prepared to accept that normal farming practices need to be carried on around them. These landholders are often unaware of the importance of minimising biosecurity risks, observing quarantine restrictions, preventing the spread of weeds and maintaining essential farm infrastructure such as fencing. At the same time higher land prices, land taxes and Council rates induced by development and lifestyle investors make it increasingly difficult for farms to remain viable or to further develop or expand to maintain or improve productivity.

Our position

Farming is a legitimate economic and social activity in peri-urban areas that needs to be accorded specific attention in planning for the future. Regional planning activities need to take into consideration the main components of a successful local horticulture industry – reliable access to markets, water, land and labour supply.

Growcom seeks a clear commitment from government, local councils and key stakeholders to support viable primary industries, recognising that without long term security and unambiguous arrangements, primary industries do not have a profitable and sustainable future in Queensland, particularly in peri-urban areas.

Regional planning can benefit from the use of past knowledge and experiences by adapting strategies and lessons learnt from planning processes in other regions.

The undertaking of regional planning activities must not limit farmers' opportunities to either exit the industry or relocate to areas that are more suited to primary production activities. Farmers must only need to relocate as a last resort or at the farmer's discretion and must occur in a viable fashion.

Our commitment

Growcom commits to ensuring government, local councils and key stakeholders recognise and acknowledge the importance of addressing the needs of the local horticulture industry in regional planning activities. We also commit to participating in planning processes in a positive and constructive fashion.

Our expectations

Growcom expects that the government and community recognise the importance of agriculture within both urban and rural areas. This includes a commitment to developing and maintaining a strong agriculture future.

Growcom expects a coordinated, focused and strategic approach to regional planning which articulates:

- Lead agency responsibility for agricultural futures.
- Requirements for an environment in which producers can operate viably.
- Transition strategies in rapidly urbanising regions.

We expect that government will utilise a range of planning tools including land use surveys, economic assessments, benchmark studies, lot size analysis, agriculture land classification, environmental studies and landscape assessment.

We also expect that there will be streamlining of current projects and processes to ensure that all projects are working towards clearly identified common goals. Communities also need to understand that their expectations cost money and that community benefits require community payments.

Our agenda Items

- SEQ Regional Plan and Rural Futures.
- FNQ 2025 and Rural Futures Plan.
- Regional planning tools and mechanisms.
- Interstate and international examples of successful regional planning initiatives.
- Implementation of policies relating to the conservation of good quality agricultural land .
- Peri-urban agriculture.
- Accommodation for working holiday makers