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(Hon. President,
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Draft South East Qld. Regional Plan Review Feedback
Department of Infrastructure, Local Government & Planning
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sent via email to SEQRegionalPlan@dilgp.qld.gov.au

Dear SEQPR Team,

Submission on ‘Shaping SEQ’ – Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan

My name is Jeanette Locky and I have lived on Tamborine Mountain for the past thirty years. For the past twenty five years I have been a member of the central executive of the Tamborine Mountain Progress Association. This was formed in 1915 and has been the conduit for mountain residents to monitor and shape the mountain’s social and natural environment. It is a registered Community Purpose organization.

For the past two decades I have been involved with inputs to formulation of the various local area plans. I have also been involved with the many local court cases on behalf of residents where development applications conflicted with the planning schemes and posed perceived threats to the mountain’s valued character. This character has developed over the past century and encompasses our national parks, a rich natural environment and a semi-rural lifestyle. The latter has been retained, despite continual development threats due to proximity to two large cities. Lack of reticulated water and sewerage, and also (due to its size) lack of the full infrastructure available nearby on the Gold Coast and other places has also played a role.

Tamborine Mountain, the most visited day destination in South East Queensland, lies about centre of a region which must be about the most attractive region in the country. Perfect climate (most of the time), and an enviable lifestyle affording the widest range of goals people can aspire to.

With these considerations in mind, a high quality “Shaping SEQ” with its vision for how the region is to be developed over the next 50 years is hugely important.

Much rests on good planning and the regional planning hopefully will ensure better and more holistic, cohesive outcomes in planning across regions than would be provided through each local government planning schemes alone. **Care needs to be taken here because reduction to one size fits all would seriously damage a “different” area such as Tambourine Mountain.**

South East Queensland needs improved planning to protect our environment

The projected population increase must not impact adversely on the 15 national biodiversity hotspots of Australia, the Brigalow Belt and the Border Ranges. (Australian Government *Australia’s 15 National Biodiversity Hotspots*, accessed 1 Feb. 2017)

The SEQRP needs to protect this unique region for future generations – humans, flora and fauna. Each is inter-dependent and vital for the health of the broad community.

Tamborine Mt hosts to up to 80% of the flora and fauna of the Gold Coast region. (Chenowith Report).

Key environmental protections in Shaping SEQ – how they could be strengthened.

Regional biodiversity values and corridors – good idea, needs greater protection.

The draft SEQRP introduces two new concepts – regional biodiversity values and regional biodiversity corridors. These areas are to be identified, mapped and protected by the local government.

Regional biodiversity values include large tracts of vegetation, aquatic connectivity, areas of species richness and diversity, areas of ecosystem representation and uniqueness, climate adaptation zones and refugia. (*Old govt. 'Shaping SEQ': Draft SEQRT, 2016,73*)

Regional biodiversity corridors 'connect' or 'improve' connectivity through targeted rehabilitation of natural assets, including between existing areas of MSES or regional biodiversity values. (*Ibid.*)

The introduction of these two new measures for protection of biodiversity in SEQ is strongly supported.

Biodiversity corridors are particularly important in preventing further fragmentation of our ecosystems, a leading cause of biodiversity loss in Queensland.

On Tamborine Mountain, wildlife corridors are very important. Our National Park is divided into segments and there is a large Conservation area adjoining Palm Grove National Park on the eastern escarpment. . Ease of movement supports the rich assortment of creatures that call the mountain home.

Need to include urban footprint in mapping of regional biodiversity values

Under the draft SEQRP regional biodiversity values are only to be identified, mapped and protected in regional landscape and rural production areas and rural living areas, and not in the urban footprint.

On Tamborine Mountain residents in the urban footprint also encounter wildlife – koalas, snakes, lyre birds, many bird species etc.

The SEQRP mapping should be broadened to include the urban footprint which still contains valuable and vulnerable ecosystems and environmental features.

I support protecting regional biodiversity values and regional biodiversity corridors as matters of state environmental significance.

Both these new concepts should be extended where applicable to state level of environmental significance. Such protection would encourage better understanding of remaining biodiversity across Queensland.

3.

Protection of Koalas

The serious decline in our koala populations needs urgent addressing. The recommendations of the Koala Expert Panel should be accepted in full and implemented in the planning framework immediately.

Residents of Tamborine Mountain are frequently delighted by sightings of koalas in or near their properties. Many are sighted near Guanaba Gorge, a deep and forbidding gorge on the eastern side of the mountain, zoned Conservation land. The Progress Association is currently appealing a Council approval for an extreme sporting venture for 500 acres of this Conservation land adjoining Palm Grove National Park. With 29 k of bike trails criss crossing and fragmenting forest cover, there is a very serious problem for biodiversity here.

Climate change

I support adaptation action, including mapping and protection of ideal renewable energy sites to improve mitigation activity.

SEQRP should map and protect ideal renewable energy sites from incompatible land uses, thus supporting the growing renewable energy sector.

Scenic amenity areas

SEQ boasts some of the most spectacular scenic areas in the country. These need to be strongly protected. Apart from community benefit, these features are what attract so many visitors to these areas.

Tamborine Mountain's western escarpment has two viewing areas of impressive expansive views to the west. Views to the west are rare in South East Queensland. Two State Government reports have recommended they be preserved.

Inter urban breaks

Whilst these provide benefit on a regional scale, the same principle, with early town planning advice, has been applied to Tamborine Mountain. It has a population of 7,000 – a sizeable town. Yet its semi-rural character has been achieved by separating the three village nodes and the several residential estates by open space. The 1997 Development Control Plan, upgraded in 2009, endeavoured to achieve this. This principle has not been understood by some distant planners who have been responsible for poor decisions unacceptable to the local residents. Battles have been fought in the P & E Court. The mountain's unique character is valued by both residents and the vast numbers of visitors it receives annually.

Urban Footprint

Tamborine Mountain does not have reticulated water, sewerage or robust infrastructure. It is critical that the Urban Footprint is not enlarged or extended beyond its current boundaries.

4.

Some measures that matter need strengthening and clarification.

More work needs to be done to ensure that monitoring, assessment and reporting of progress against goals is at all meaningful.

The measures that matter relevant to environmental outcomes are currently very vague.

It is recommended that the measures that matter be overhauled, to provide:

- more measures which capture all intended goals within the SEQRP adequately to ensure we have a good indication of whether we are on our way to meet the performance indicators and whether changes are needed to the SEQRP in the next iteration; and
- more specific, tangible goals for our 'preferred future', to ensure we have motivation and direction to achieve strong outcomes to improve SEQ.

SEQ strategic assessment – great care needed to prevent negative environmental outcomes

It is understood that the Queensland Government is investigating the undertaking of a Strategic Assessment for SEQ under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth). Please ensure that you do your utmost to ensure that the biodiversity and ecosystems of SEQ are adequately protected when providing for this Strategic Assessment. While providing a strategic assessment for SEQ gives the advantage of forward-consideration of the cumulative impacts the region is likely to face from expected development cumulative impacts, it also may remove a level of individual project assessment normally provided through EPBC referral assessment. It is expected the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments are to undertake this process with much care and precision to ensure it does not lead to increased development impacts on our environment.

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Lockey