

3.23 Planning Area No. 23 – Maroochy River Plains

3.23.1 Location and Role

This Planning Area includes the rural lands within the immediate catchment area of the Maroochy and South Maroochy Rivers east of the Bruce Highway.

This Planning Area is intended to provide for:

- the protection of good quality agricultural land as identified on the Strategic Plan map,
- the protection of the area's significant environmental values including those of the Bli Bli Wetland Sanctuary, and the Bli Bli State Forest,
- on-going ecologically sustainable rural residential development and use at appropriate locations, and
- general rural activities elsewhere in the area.

3.23.2 Vision Statement

(1) It is intended that:

the Maroochy River floodplain continue to be used predominantly for cane growing, with continued management and use of State Forest land for forestry and associated purposes, and consolidation of the existing area of rural residential development.

(2) This will be achieved by:

- (a) generally preventing the fragmentation or other alienation of good quality agricultural lands;
- (b) providing for further sustainable rural residential development which consolidates the existing rural residential area to the north-west of Bli Bli;
- (c) providing for the ongoing management of State Forest lands for sustainable forestry and related secondary uses;
- (d) allowing a consolidation of business, industry and compatible uses around the intersection of the Nambour-Bli Bli Road and the Bruce Highway;
- (e) allowing for the ongoing working of identified extractive resources in the area in ways which are environmentally responsible;
- (f) seeking development and use in accordance with best available land, and other
- (g) environmental management practices; and
- (h) protecting the amenity of adjoining urban areas.

3.23.3 Key Character Elements

(1) Rural Landscape

- (a) This Planning Area is intended to retain its key rural and open space characteristics supporting sustainable cane growing and other rural activities.
- (b) The State Forest lands are to be managed for sustainable forestry purposes and for other compatible purposes which would not prejudice the forestry activities.
- (c) The open space and low key recreation facilities at Dunethin Rocks will be maintained.
- (d) Any extractive industry should be carried out in accordance with best management practices, including effective rehabilitation of disturbed areas.
- (e) It is preferred that any intensive animal, or other high potential impact rural, industries be located away from Yandina and Bli Bli, on sites where any significant adverse environmental impact can be effectively managed.

(2) Settlement Pattern

- (a) Further rural residential development (as a consolidation of the existing area to the north of Bli Bli) should be sensitive to and in keeping with the area's natural environmental values.
- (b) Development for urban purposes is not intended in this Planning Area.

(3) Environmental Values

- (a) The eastern parts of this Planning Area include significant wetland areas and coastal lowlands with species-rich heathlands. A range of ecologically significant flora (including rare, threatened and endangered species) has been found in past studies in the remnant vegetation of lowland areas. Development is to be managed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on these wetland and lowland areas. The protection of their values through suitable conservation measures is preferred.
- (b) The environmental values of the Maroochy River system are to be protected through maintenance, enhancement and, where necessary, rehabilitation of waterway vegetation, and by seeking an acceptable quality of water entering the river. This will require effective land management practices, by both development and use, to control erosion and sedimentation and manage stormwater runoff.
- (d) Any areas of environmentally significant remnant natural vegetation, especially within the waterway corridors and on the more elevated lands surrounding and including Mount Ninderry are to

be conserved and, where necessary enhanced or rehabilitated.

- (e) Some parts of the Planning Area are either in or adjacent to a declared Fish Habitat Area. These Fish Habitat Areas are located along major waterways in the Shire and are declared by the State government as being critical breeding and feeding areas for fish. The values of Fish Habitat Areas are to be protected, and any development that could affect any such area is to meet State government requirements.

3.23.4 Statements of Desired Precinct Character

(1) Maroochy River Canelands (Precinct Class = Sustainable Cane Lands)

Description

This Precinct contains the lowlands within the floodplains of the Maroochy River, extending east from Yandina and the Bruce Highway to Marcoola. These lowlands are predominantly under sugar cane production. Much of the area has been identified as having “good quality agricultural land” which is indicated on the Strategic Plan map. The Precinct also includes the recreational facilities at Lake Dunethin which are centrally situated within the Precinct.

The Precinct includes land which is part of or adjacent to a declared Fish Habitat Area. Fish Habitat Areas are declared by the State government as critical for fish breeding and feeding. It is important that the sustainability and values of the Fish Habitat Area be retained.

Intent

The land in this Precinct is intended to be used predominantly for cane and other agricultural production. The Precinct adjoins rural residential and urban areas and there is the potential for land use conflicts to arise. It is intended that such conflict potential be addressed through use of best land management practices and through buffering measures incorporated in any new rural residential or urban development in the adjoining Precincts.

Any development of premises within the vicinity of the Bruce Highway should set any buildings and structures well back from the road and maintain the road’s generally rural setting. No direct property access should be obtained from the highway.

No further significant fragmentation of land holdings is intended in this Precinct.

Any new development should provide for the protection of the environmental values of the Maroochy River. This is intended to include preservation of the quality of

water in and entering the river, preservation of the river banks from erosion, and maintenance of a sustainable vegetation corridor along the river.

Development is to have regard to the declared Fish Habitat Area within, or close to, the Precinct. Development over or near the declared area is to protect the area’s ecological integrity and comply with the relevant requirements of the State government.

The Lake Dunethin area is intended to continue to be used for nature-based recreation.

Preferred and Acceptable Uses

Preferred uses within this Precinct are those referred to in the Table of Development Assessment (refer Vol 1) for the Sustainable Cane Lands Precinct Class, provided they are undertaken in a manner which avoids or minimises land use conflicts and retains or enhances the area’s environmental values. Development for nature-based Outdoor recreation purposes may also be acceptable where suitably sited and designed, mainly in the Lake Dunethin area.

Neither urban nor rural residential uses are considered consistent with the intent and desired character of this Precinct.

(2) East Nambour State Forest (Precinct Class = Special Purpose)

Description

This Precinct comprises the State Forest adjoining the Bruce Highway to the immediate north-east of Nambour.

Intent

It is intended that forestry activities continue in ways which respect and maintain the important biodiversity and other environmental values of the area. These values include remnant areas of rainforest. State forest lands should be managed in accordance with the intent and provisions of the State Government’s Management Plans for Forestry Reserves and the provisions of relevant legislation, principally the Forestry Act (or any subsequent equivalent Act).

It is further intended that the conservation values of the remnant native vegetation communities be protected through management measures that include avoiding clearing of native vegetation having core environmental value, using a conservative fire regime and minimising other forms of disturbance.

Preferred and Acceptable Uses

Preferred uses within this Precinct are those uses referred to in the Table of Development Assessment in a Special Purpose Precinct Class, in this case State forestry and nature conservation.

(3) Rocky Creek Uplands North (Precinct Class = General Rural Lands)

Description

This Precinct contains mainly steeply sloping and elevated forested lands extending north-eastwards out of the adjoining Bli Bli State Forest. Very small pockets of “good quality agricultural land” (suited to sugar cane growing) have been identified, mostly in the southern part of the Precinct, and are indicated on the Strategic Plan map.

This Precinct also includes a small established residential area, located on the eastern foothills to the Bli Bli State Forest, and situated close to the urban services and facilities provided at Nambour and Bli Bli. The Precinct is highly visible from the Nambour Bli Bli Road and is effectively fully developed with large residential lots. Gallery Drive is the principal local road serving the area.

The Precinct is in an area which contains significant, if somewhat fragmented, areas of remnant upland forest, including rainforest and blackbutt areas. The preservation and longer term restoration of this vegetation mosaic would strengthen the broad corridor linkage between the State Forest areas in the west and the coastal lowland areas around the Maroochy River in the east. This represents a broad-scale connectivity for fauna movement and representation of the different vegetation communities across the Shire.

Intent

Most of the land is too steep to allow for commercial rural production of any significance.

It is intended to allow for a wide range of rural activities within this Precinct, while favourable consideration could be given to other “broadhectare” activities that are compatible with a rural setting and do not require urban services and infrastructure.

The existing residential area around Gallery Drive is intended to remain but not expand or intensify.

Any new development should provide for the protection of rainforest and blackbutt areas, and the maintenance and/or enhancement of the existing diversity of vegetation types and desired ecological linkages. It should also provide for the protection of the environmental and resource values of the adjoining State Forest through the preservation of a high quality of water discharging from the land, retention of sustainable areas of remnant native vegetation, effective management of declared and other environmental weeds, and bushfire management measures.

Preferred and Acceptable Uses

Preferred uses within this Precinct are those referred to in the Table of Development Assessment (refer Vol 1)

for the General Rural Lands Precinct Class, provided they are undertaken in a manner which respects or enhances the environmental values of the area.

(4) Kirra Road (Precinct Class = Rural Residential)

Description

This Precinct comprises an expanding rural residential area contained by the Yandina-Bli Bli Road and focused on Kirra Road. It is situated along the north-eastern spur line running east from the Bli Bli State Forest.

The Precinct rises up from the lands on the Maroochy River floodplains used for cane production. The Precinct comprises sloping land located in a highly visible area within easy commuting distance of Bli Bli town.

The area is characterised by houses interspersed with remnant vegetation and some rural activities.

Intent

The intent for the area is that it remain predominantly used for rural residential purposes having a bushland character which contrasts with the adjoining flatter, more open and cleared canefields.

The intent for the area is that it remain predominantly used for rural residential purposes in ways that are sustainable in terms of the area’s environmental values and physical capacities. This requires consideration of issues of:

- environmentally sustainable waste and effluent management;
- protection of sensitive habitats;
- minimisation of landform alteration, potential for groundwater contamination, bushfire hazard, vegetation clearing, and erosion; and
- management of declared and other environmental weeds.

The Precinct is intended to provide for semi-rural living in a bushland setting which is easily accessible to commercial, community services and other urban facilities at Bli Bli and Nambour.

The Precinct adjoins existing and preferred cane farming lands. As a result, there is a potential for land use conflicts to arise. It is intended that such conflicts be avoided or minimised through the incorporation of adequate buffering measures in development which creates additional lots or new premises on land adjoining productive rural land.

Preferred and Acceptable Uses

Preferred uses within the Precinct are those referred to in the Table of Development Assessment (refer Vol 1) for the Rural Residential Precinct Class. Detached

housing and ancillary uses, including domestic-scale rural activities, on lots generally without reticulated water and sewerage, are expected to predominate.

Urban and rural uses are not considered consistent with the intent and desired character of this Precinct because of their potential for unacceptable impacts on landscape values and rural residential amenity.

Landscape and Built Form

The location, siting and design of premises should provide for the ecologically sustainable development and use of land by providing that:

Environment

- development is sympathetic to the characteristics and capacity of the physical and natural environment through environmentally sensitive design and construction techniques,
- development occurs as much as possible in existing cleared areas and minimises further fragmentation of remnant native and other mature vegetation,
- significant areas of remnant and habitat vegetation are retained as far as practical, particularly on steep slopes, slip prone areas and along ridgelines, roadways and waterways,
- fragmented vegetated communities are progressively restored;

Amenity and Character

- rural residential amenity is maintained,
- development remains unobtrusive when viewed from major roads ,
- landscape treatment to the Yandina-Bli Bli Road screens development and retains the bushland character currently experienced along this scenic route,
- colours and building materials minimise visual contrast and reflectivity;

Hazard Management

- adequate measures are incorporated in the design and construction of lots, buildings and roads, to avoid or minimise the risk of bushfire,
- development on lands with slopes of more than 20% or otherwise prone to erosion and landslip is limited to that established as sustainable by competent geotechnical and engineering assessments,
- earthworks are minimised, and erosion and sediment controls prevent unacceptable off-site impacts,
- effective visual buffering, noise attenuation and other separation measures are used to minimise the impact of nearby major roads, incompatible uses, and sensitive landscapes and environments;

Access and Servicing

- any new roads contribute to achieving a safe and efficient road network that is respectfully set within the landscape,
- wastewater and runoff treatment and disposal is by way of on-site or communal systems which are environmentally sustainable,
- provision is made for a reliable potable water supply with adequate reserves for fire fighting purposes,
- power and telecommunication services are provided to premises, preferably underground.

(5) Central Coastal Lowlands (Precinct Class = General Rural Lands)

Description

This Precinct includes coastal lowlands along the western side of the Maroochy River, immediately north of the Bli Bli wetlands sanctuary.

While adjoining cane lands, the lands in this Precinct are low lying and support extensive areas of remnant native vegetation.

The remnant vegetation areas in the Precinct are in core conservation areas that contain highly restricted vegetation communities including mangrove, waterway corridor and paperbark forest. These are mainly associated with the Maroochy River corridor and provide a diverse habitat for fauna, contribute to waterway health and support aquatic species.

Intent

It is intended to provide for the continuation of the existing level of use of land in this Precinct. This Precinct is intended to remain largely in native vegetation cover, with the area's environmental values protected.

Any development for should be sensitively integrated into its environmental and landscape setting. It should provide for the protection of the environmental values of the Maroochy River and adjoining wetlands. This is intended to include preservation of the quality of water in and entering the river and wetlands, preservation of the river banks from erosion, and maintenance of a sustainable vegetation corridor along the river and wetlands area.

Preferred and Acceptable Uses

Preferred uses within this Precinct are nature conservation management and those uses referred to in the Table of Development Assessment (refer Vol 1) for the General Rural Lands Precinct Class, provided they are undertaken in a manner which respects or enhances the environmental values of the area.

Neither urban nor rural residential uses are considered consistent with the intent and desired character of this Precinct.

(6) Maroochy River Wetlands Environmental Area (Precinct Class = Special Purpose)

Description

This Precinct includes the Wetland Sanctuary along the Maroochy River adjoining the north-eastern corner of the Bli Bli township. This sanctuary protects fauna habitat and contributes to river health and aquatic fauna. It is a major component of a riparian ecological corridor that extends south to the Eudlo Creek Conservation Park and mouth of the Maroochy River and north to Lake Weyba and into Noosa Shire.

The Precinct includes land which is part of or adjacent to a declared Fish Habitat Area. Fish Habitat Areas are declared by the State government as critical for fish breeding and feeding. It is important that the sustainability and values of the Fish Habitat Area be retained.

The Precinct also includes a small area used as sports fields.

Intent

The wetlands should be managed in a manner which:

- provides, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's ecological resources and values;
- presents the area's cultural and natural resources and their values;
- ensures that the only use of the area is nature-based and ecologically sustainable.

To this end, the primary goal for management of land within the Precinct will be nature conservation. Management will be specifically aimed at protecting species diversity, populations of wildlife (particularly species listed as rare or threatened), rare or threatened bio-regional ecosystems and habitat values.

Development is to have regard to the declared Fish Habitat Area within, or close to, the Precinct. Development over or near the declared area is to protect the area's ecological integrity and comply with the relevant requirements of the State government.

The wetlands management objectives will be best achieved by the exclusion of most forms of development from this Precinct. Low intensity nature-based recreation, educational and scientific uses may be favourably considered, along with uses connected with fire management and ecosystem monitoring.

The continued use of the sportsfields and recreational area at the David Low Way Bridge as recreational open space is intended.

Preferred and Acceptable Uses

Preferred uses within this Precinct are those referred to in the Table of Development Assessment (refer Vol 1) for the Special Purposes Precinct Class, in this case natural environmental management of a wetlands and outdoor recreation.

(7) East Maroochy Canelands (Precinct Class = Sustainable Cane Lands)

Description

This Precinct contains the lowlands within the floodplain of the Maroochy River on the eastern (Marcoola) side of the river. These lowlands are predominantly under sugar cane production. Much of the area has been identified as having "good quality agricultural land" which is indicated on the Strategic Plan map.

Some fragmentation of land holdings has occurred in the southern part of the Precinct in riverside locations. A small residential settlement has established immediately west of the Sunshine Motorway around Godfreys Avenue and Waterview Crescent. A strip of housing also exists along the David Low Way extending west from the Motorway to Finland Road. The precinct also includes four existing riverfront residential dwellings along Cooks Road.

A small node of tourist and recreational facilities has established beside the river at the David Low Bridge in the south-west corner of the Precinct.

The remnant vegetation areas in the Precinct are part of a core conservation area that contains highly restricted vegetation communities including mangrove, waterway corridor and paperbark forest. These are associated with the Maroochy River corridor and provide a diverse habitat for fauna, contribute to waterway health and support aquatic species.

The Precinct includes land which is part of or adjacent to a declared Fish Habitat Area. Fish Habitat Areas are declared by the State government as critical for fish breeding and feeding. It is important that the sustainability and values of the Fish Habitat Area be retained.

Intent

The land in this Precinct is intended to be used predominantly for cane and other agricultural production. While the existing small residential areas along the David Low Way, Cooks Road and at the southern end of Godfreys Road are recognised, they are not intended to be expanded nor supplied with urban

services. Generally, no further significant fragmentation of land holdings is intended in this Precinct.

Any development of premises within the vicinity of the Sunshine Motorway and the David Low Way should set any buildings and structures well back from the road and maintain the road's generally rural setting. No direct property access should be obtained from the Motorway.

Any new development should provide for the protection of the environmental values of the Maroochy River. This is intended to include preservation of the quality of water in and entering the river, preservation of the river banks from erosion, and maintenance of a sustainable vegetation corridor along the river.

Development is to have regard to the declared Fish Habitat Area within, or close to, the Precinct. Development over or near the declared area is to protect the area's ecological integrity and comply with the relevant requirements of the State government.

Preferred and Acceptable Uses

Preferred uses within this Precinct are those referred to in the Table of Development Assessment (refer Vol 1) for the Sustainable Cane Lands Precinct Class, provided they are undertaken in a manner which avoids or minimises land use conflicts and retains or enhances the area's environmental values.

Neither urban nor rural residential uses are considered consistent with the intent and desired character of this Precinct outside the established settled areas at the eastern end of the David Low Way and the southern end of Godfreys Road.

Development for public parkland and nature-based Outdoor recreation purposes may also be acceptable where suitably sited and designed, mainly in the vicinity of the David Low Bridge.