

#### 3.26 Planning Area No. 26 – Northern Hinterland

##### 3.26.1 Location and Role

This Planning Area comprises the rural lands and forests in the northern part of the Shire, extending west from the Bruce Highway to the hilly, steep terrain of the eastern end of the Mapleton State Forest. It includes areas shown as “good quality agricultural land” on the Strategic Plan which (in the south-eastern parts of the Planning Area) are used mainly for sugar cane growing.

This Planning Area includes the north-eastern part of the Mapleton State Forest, Mt Eerwah, the North Maroochy River, Eerwah Creek, a large remnant vegetation area at Gneering and other waterways such as Running, Browns and Bunya Creeks. These areas provide important habitat for fauna. Many rare and threatened plant and animal species exist in these areas which represent the largest areas of remnant native vegetation in the Shire. The remnant vegetation mosaic, especially the native vegetation along the waterways, is also of significance for the protection it offers to aquatic plants and fauna and migratory birds. It also provides for the movement of other fauna between the larger areas of remnant vegetation in the State Forest and the Maroochy River in the east and the Tuckechnoi Conservation Park (in the adjoining Noosa Shire) to the north.

The Planning Area is intended to remain an important area for cane growing, other rural uses and forestry, while conserving its significant environmental values (including those of the Mary River itself).

##### 3.26.2 Vision Statement

(1) It is intended that:

*the lower-lying parts of the Northern Hinterland continue to be used for cane growing and other rural activities, with continued use of steeper lands for State Forest and conservation purposes.*

(2) This will be achieved by:

- (a) generally preventing the fragmentation or other alienation of good quality agricultural land;
- (b) providing for the ongoing management of State Forest lands for sustainable forestry and related secondary uses;
- (c) seeking development and use in accordance with best available land, or other environmental , management practices;
- (d) recognising and protecting the integrity and viability of waterways and any other environmentally significant areas; and
- (e) protecting the amenity of the Yandina and Eumundi townships.

##### 3.26.3 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 rural activities.
- (b) The significant area of State Forest is to be managed for sustainable forestry purposes and for other compatible purposes (eg. wilderness recreation) which would not prejudice the forestry activities.
- (c) It is preferred that any rural industry having high impact potential be located away from Yandina, Eumundi and the Highway generally, and on sites where, any significant adverse environmental impacts can be effectively managed.
- (d) Any extraction of sand and gravel resources should be carried out in accordance with best management practices, including effective rehabilitation of disturbed areas.

###### (2) Settlement Pattern

- (a) Lands within this Planning Area are more suited to productive rural and forestry purposes or are too remote from social and infrastructure services, to allow for rural residential development.
- (b) Development for urban purposes is not intended in this Planning Area.

###### (3) Environmental Values

- (a) Any areas of environmentally significant remnant natural vegetation are intended to be conserved, including riparian vegetation along the river and creeks in the area which should be maintained, enhanced and, where necessary, restored.
- (b) The maintenance and strengthening of viable ecological corridors between the Mapleton State Forest east towards the Maroochy River and north to Mt Eerwah and the Tuckechnoi Conservation Park in the adjoining Noosa Shire are intended.
- (c) The protection of rainforest areas and other vegetation communities containing rare or endangered species, including the Mt Eerwah summit complex, will be sought.
- (d) An acceptable quality of water entering the area’s waterways is sought by Council. This will require best land management practices to be adopted for all activities and uses within the area.
- (e) More generally, roadside and major natural drainage line vegetation should be retained as much as possible to enhance the visual amenity of the Highway and other road corridors and to protect water quality.

**3.26.4 Statements of Desired  
Precinct Character**

**(1) Belli Foothills East**  
*(Precinct Class = General Rural Lands)*

*Description*

This Precinct comprises the foothills of that part of the Blackall Range along the northern boundary of the Shire extending west from the Bruce Highway. It includes a mixture of remnant native forest areas and degraded pastures. Low intensity, generally non-commercial, rural activities predominate.

The Precinct includes some small pockets of land shown on the Strategic Plan map as “good quality agricultural land”.

*Intent*

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. Any development for non-rural purposes should provide for the development to be sensitively integrated into its rural setting.

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

As much as possible, any new development should occur within already cleared areas and provide for preservation or enhancement of remnant vegetation along waterways and on steeper elevated lands. Ecological corridors linking north into the Tuckechoi Conservation Park and other areas of remnant vegetation in the adjoining Noosa Shire are intended to be maintained and strengthened.

Any development of premises within the vicinity of the Bruce Highway should site any buildings and structures so as to maintain the road’s generally forested/rural setting. No direct vehicle access should be provided to the Highway.

*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 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.

**(2) North Arm**  
*(Precinct Class = General Rural Lands)*

*Description*

This Precinct includes mostly old dairy pastures, with heavily fragmented land holdings found along the roads and ridgelines. The Precinct extends west from the Bruce Highway to the Mapleton State Forest and includes the North Maroochy River, its floodplain and tributaries.

*Intent*

Land in the Precinct is expected to continue to be used for part-time/hobby farming activities given the extent of fragmentation that has occurred.

It is intended to allow for low intensity 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. Any development for non-rural purposes should provide for the development to be sensitively integrated into its rural setting.

Any new development should provide for the protection of the environmental and resource values of the adjoining State Forest, and the environmental values of the North Maroochy River system. This is intended to include preservation of the 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.

As much as possible, remnant vegetation is to be preserved or enhanced and connectivity maintained to the vegetated areas in the adjoining Shire to the east and north. Provision is intended to be made to maintain and strengthen environmental linkages from this area northwards to the Tuckechoi Conservation Park in the Adjoining Noosa Shire.

*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 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.

**(3) Eerwah Swains**  
*(Precinct Class = General Rural Lands)*

*Description*

This Precinct includes the forested steeply sloping lands extending north-east from the Mapleton State Forest and including Mt Eerwah which is a prominent feature

of the local landscape. The area supports the Mt Eerwah summit complex which is a vegetation community spatially restricted to the summit plateau and southern cliff line of Mt Eerwah and including rare and endangered species.

#### *Intent*

Little further development is expected in this Precinct. Any new development should provide for the protection of the environmental and resource values of Mt Eerwah and the surrounding hilly, forested terrain. This is intended to include protection of vegetation communities containing rare or endangered species, retention of sustainable areas of remnant native vegetation, avoiding or minimising changes to natural landform, effective management of declared and other environmental weeds, and bushfire management measures. Particular consideration should be given to buffering measures on land adjoining the Mapleton State Forest.

As much as possible, remnant vegetation is to be preserved or enhanced and connectivity maintained to the vegetated areas in the adjoining State Forest to the south-west.

#### *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 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.

#### **(4) Northern Hinterland Canelands** *(Precinct Class = Sustainable Cane Lands)*

##### *Description*

This Precinct contains the gently sloping side-slopes and alluvial floodplain of the North Maroochy River on the western side of the Bruce Highway extending between Eumundi and Yandina. 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.

Large areas of remnant vegetation in the Gneering area provide opportunities for ecologically linkages from the adjoining Mapleton state Forest in the west towards the Maroochy River system in the east.

##### *Intent*

The land in this Precinct is intended to be used predominantly for cane and other agricultural production. The Precinct adjoins urban areas and the

State Forest 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 urban development in the adjoining Precincts, or in any new development on land in this Precinct which adjoins the State Forest.

Any development of premises within the vicinity of the Bruce Highway should set any buildings and structures well back from these roads and maintain the roads' generally forested/rural settings.

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 creeks running through the area including Running Creek, Browns Creek and Bunya Creek. This is intended to include preservation of the quality of water in and entering the creeks, preservation of creek banks from erosion, and maintenance of a sustainable vegetation corridor along the creeks.

#### *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.

#### **(5) Mapleton State Forest East** *(Precinct Class = Special Purpose)*

##### *Description*

This Precinct comprises the north-eastern part of the large Mapleton State Forest in the centre of the Shire's rural hinterland. It is intended that forestry activities continue in ways which respect and maintain the important biodiversity and other environmental values of the area.

This State forest contains notable rare vegetation communities including an importantly large representation of the restricted upland Scribbly Gum community, as well as rainforest and blackbutt areas.

##### *Intent*

It is intended that the State forest lands 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 (refer Vol 1) for the Special Purpose Precinct Class, in this case State forestry and nature conservation.