

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014

The Honourable Jeffrey Seeney MP  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning  
Level 12, Executive Building  
100 George Street  
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Deputy Premier

**Preliminary submission to SEQ Regional Plan Review - Moreton Bay to Sunshine Coast Regional Inter-urban Break**

We refer to your letter to our councils dated 19 September 2014 and note that you have extended the program for the release of the draft South East Queensland (SEQ) Regional Plan until mid-2015 to allow further time to investigate important regional issues, including potential additional areas to accommodate urban growth.

Firstly, we support the State government's planning reform process as a means to drive economic development, new investment and greater prosperity for SEQ (and Queensland as a whole). For both of our local governments (which combined represent the largest population base outside Brisbane), this is a priority which we share with the Queensland Government. We also strongly believe this priority needs to be an important driver for the next iteration of the SEQ Regional Plan.

One of the key policies in the current SEQ Regional Plan is to "*protect, maintain and enhance the function of inter-urban breaks*". Planning for regional green spaces around cities has been common practice for centuries. Green belt policy was pioneered in the United Kingdom in the 1930s resulting in the protection of fourteen green belt areas throughout England. Other notable examples are the greenbelts in Ottawa and Ontario in Canada. In Australia, inter-urban breaks exist around capital cities including Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne. For example, Melbourne's green wedges circle the city from the coast at Werribee to the Mornington Peninsular.

These green spaces have many varying names; however the concept of these regional parks is similar. Research indicates that these green spaces are valued for a range of reasons including protection of character, recreation and tourism values, environmental values and landscape values. These spaces are often called the "lungs" of the adjoining city.

Regional planning in SEQ has recognised an inter-urban break between Greater Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast for approximately 20 years. The *SEQ Regional Plan 2009* currently protects the Moreton Bay to Sunshine Coast Inter-urban Break (Inter-urban Break) as "a valuable non-urban space separating Greater Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast".

Similarly, the Inter-urban Break in its current extent is recognised in the *Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme 2014* and the draft Moreton Bay Region Planning Scheme as a critical non-urban space separating the Sunshine Coast from the Greater Brisbane and Moreton Bay urban area which protects the environmental, landscape and recreation values of the area including the Ramsar protected Pumicestone Passage and the heritage listed Glass House Mountains.

It is important to note that the value of the Inter-urban Break lies in the sum of its parts. The Inter-urban Break is not simply the view of the pine forests as seen from the Bruce Highway. Its true value lies in the inter-connectedness of all of its parts from the hinterland rural areas surrounding the majestic Glass House Mountains to the riparian and biodiversity corridors flowing to the spectacular Pumicestone Passage. The loss of part of the Inter-urban Break would significantly reduce its overall value and the opportunities it will provide for future generations in SEQ.

In this regard, it is understood that the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning is giving consideration to new urban growth areas within the Inter-urban Break at Elimbah and Halls Creek which could significantly erode the size, integrity and values of this area. This proposal is of significant concern to both councils because of the potential impacts on the Inter-urban Break as well as broader impacts on planning for growth in the region.

In response, we have recently completed a number of investigations to document the values of the Regional Inter-urban Break and to demonstrate the potential impacts of development in this area. The outcomes of these investigations have determined that the Regional Inter-urban Break in its current form (size and extent):-

- makes a contribution of **at least \$5 billion per annum to the regional economy** with significant opportunity for higher contributions in the future;
- provides an invaluable tourism opportunity for SEQ which could play an even more important part in the branding of the region;
- provides a range of scenic amenity and recreation opportunities which contribute to active lifestyles and healthier communities;
- provides opportunities for local agricultural production and forestry, increasing food security and local employment;
- plays a key role in protecting water quality in the Pumicestone Passage with development in this area more expensive and riskier than development in other more suitable locations; and
- is valuable for the sum of its parts, meaning that erosion of parts of the Regional Inter-urban Break will have a significant impact on the values of this area for the region.

For these reasons, **Moreton Bay Regional Council and Sunshine Coast Council are jointly committed to the protection of the *Moreton Bay to Sunshine Coast Regional Inter-urban Break* and seek the state government's commitment to mapping and protecting this space in the revised SEQ Regional Plan.** A map of the recommended extent of the Inter-urban Break is included as **Attachment A: Inter-urban Break Map** to this letter.

We seek your support to formally recognise this undervalued asset. Protection of the Moreton Bay to Sunshine Coast Regional Inter-urban Break at its current extent through the *SEQ Regional Plan* and other relevant mechanisms would be a legacy decision that would add to the many achievements of your government and be entirely consistent with the *Queensland Plan*.

Whilst it is intended that these provisions will provide protection for this area, it is not intended that the provisions would undermine the existing use rights of landowners within the Inter-urban Break. In fact, both councils support the continued use of this area for the range of existing uses as these activities are integral to the combined value of the Inter-urban Break. The provisions are not intended to include the Inter-urban Break in open space or parkland but rather to identify this area as an active, working landscape.

Further evidence in support of the Councils' position in respect to the Regional Inter-urban Break is included in **Attachment B: Summary Paper** and **Attachment C: Project Report and supporting Technical Papers**.

### Planning for growth to 2041

Having agreed to jointly advocate for this policy position, our councils also recognise the need to give further consideration to alternative growth areas outside the Regional Inter-urban Break to inform the SEQ Regional Plan review. These considerations are being undertaken in the context of broader strategic planning for each area.

As a starting point, the *draft Moreton Bay Regional Council Planning Scheme* caters for future growth in Moreton Bay to 2031 and beyond including a long term growth area at Caboolture West.

The *Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme 2014* caters for future growth with new growth areas at Maroochydore, Palmview and Caloundra South and a longer term growth opportunity in the Beerwah to Caloundra South Corridor.

Beyond these planning schemes (2031 to 2041), our councils are considering opportunities for a range of growth options including infill in and around centres as well as new growth areas which build on existing and proposed transport and services.

The outcomes of this work will be forwarded to the State government by the respective councils in separate submissions to the SEQ Regional Plan review. However, **it is noted that both councils can demonstrate that projected growth to 2041 can be accommodated in each region without the need for development in the Inter-urban Break.**

Thank you for your consideration of this preliminary submission and the accompanying evidence provided in support of our position. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss any matters further with you or relevant staff in your department. In this regard, please feel free to contact Linda Bradby (Moreton Bay Regional Council) on 54332017 or Stephen Patey (Sunshine Coast Council) on 54208953.

Yours sincerely



CR Mark Jamieson  
Mayor Sunshine Coast Council



CR Allan Sutherland  
Mayor Moreton Bay Regional Council

### Attachments:

Attachment A: Inter-urban Break Map

Attachment B: Summary Paper – outlining the key findings of the recent investigations

Attachment C: Project Report and supporting Technical Papers.

CC Hon Mark McArdle (MP)  
Member for Caloundra  
Minister for Energy and Water Supply

Hon Andrew Powell (MP)  
Member for Glass House  
Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection