

# Potential Mackay State Development Area

Overview August 2023



# Table of contents

The Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning connects industries, businesses, communities and government (at all levels) to leverage regions' strengths to generate sustainable and enduring economic growth that supports well-planned, inclusive and resilient communities.

## Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, the department acknowledges the First Nations peoples in Queensland: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their connections to the lands, winds and waters we now all share. We pay our respect to Elders, past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the continuous living culture of First Nations Queenslanders – their diverse languages, customs and traditions, knowledges and systems. We acknowledge the deep relationship, connection and responsibility to land, sea, sky and Country as an integral element of First Nations identity and culture.

The Country is sacred. Everything on the land has meaning and all people are one with it. We acknowledge First Nations peoples' sacred connection as central to culture and being. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of First Nations peoples and commit to shaping our state's future together. The department recognises the contribution of First Nations peoples and communities to the State of Queensland and how this continues to enrich our society more broadly.

The Department recognises the traditional custodians of the lands that make up the Mackay region, the Yuwibara People. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who call the Mackay region home.

## Copyright

This publication is protected by the *Copyright Act 1968*.

## Licence



This work, except as identified below, is licensed by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works

(CC BY-NC-ND) 4.0 Australia licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit: <http://creativecommons.org.au/>

You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this publication, as long as you attribute it as follows:

© Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, August 2023.

Third party material that is not licensed under a Creative Commons licence is referenced within this document. All content not licensed under a Creative Commons licence is all rights reserved. Please contact the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, the copyright owner if you wish to use this material.

## Translating and interpreting service



The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding this publication and need a translator, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 13 1450 and ask them to contact the Queensland Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning on 07 3328 4811.

## Disclaimer

While every care has been taken in preparing this publication, to the extent permitted by law, the State of Queensland accepts no responsibility and disclaims all liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses (including direct and indirect loss), damages and costs incurred as a result of decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, expressed or implied, contained within. To the best of our knowledge, the content was correct at the time of publishing.

Any references to legislation are not an interpretation of the law. They are to be used as a guide only. The information in this publication is general and does not take into account individual circumstances or situations. Where appropriate, independent legal advice should be sought.

Copies of this publication are available on our website at [www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/mackaysda](http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/mackaysda) and further copies are available upon request.

## Contact us

Phone: 1800 001 048  
Email: [sdainfo@coordinatorgeneral.qld.gov.au](mailto:sdainfo@coordinatorgeneral.qld.gov.au)  
Web: [www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/mackaysda](http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/mackaysda)  
Post: PO Box 15517 City East Queensland 4002  
Address: 1 William Street Brisbane QLD 4000 (Australia)

<b>Potential Mackay State Development Area .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Investigation areas .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Racecourse Mill .....	6
Rosella .....	7
<b>Considerations .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Economic .....	8
Infrastructure .....	10
Cultural heritage, social and environment .....	11
<b>Potential land uses - emerging industries .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Draft precincts .....	14
<b>Have your say .....</b>	<b>16</b>

# Potential Mackay State Development Area

The Coordinator-General and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (the Department) have been investigating the growing emerging industries market, including biomanufacturing and bioenergy sectors to drive jobs and economic growth in the Mackay region.

The Mackay region has historically been built on the back of agriculture, resources and service industries and is a strategically significant location for emerging industries given its abundant feedstocks, a favourable tropical climate, efficient mature and modern agricultural industry, strong manufacturing base, world-class expertise in research and development, reliable and efficient transport infrastructure and proximity to global markets.

A number of studies have been undertaken by the Queensland Government to identify and quantify industrial opportunities in the Mackay region. Following this, the Coordinator-General identified areas as potentially suitable for regionally significant industrial development, providing an opportunity for an established biofutures precinct and preserving land for the long-term development.

The potential Mackay State Development Area (SDA) would provide a unique opportunity to diversify the range of economy-boosting industrial development in

the Mackay region, creating jobs and strengthening the Greater Whitsunday economy.

A draft boundary for the potential Mackay SDA is now available and can be viewed at [www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/mackaysda](http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/mackaysda)

Community and stakeholder feedback is being sought to help decide whether an SDA should be established in these areas.

This document outlines the considerations which have informed the location of the potential Mackay SDA. It also describes how you can provide feedback to the Coordinator-General about the potential Mackay SDA.

Figure 1 shows the process of investigating, declaring, planning for, and obtaining stakeholder and community feedback on this potential SDA. It also shows where we are currently in the process. Additional stakeholder and community feedback will be sought during the development scheme preparation should an SDA be declared.

## SDAs are established to:

- create jobs and strengthen regional economies
- cluster industries together to generate economies of scale and scope
- provide guidance and greater development certainty for industry by providing a 'one-stop-shop' or major development approvals
- control development in a way that considers existing industry and surrounding development
- provide access to land when needed for development
- manage incompatible land use and protect environmental values.

## The role of the Coordinator-General

Queensland's Coordinator-General is responsible for the planning, establishment and ongoing management of SDAs throughout Queensland.

An SDA is an area of land declared under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* (SDPWO Act) for industry, infrastructure corridors and major public works.

Planning and development within an SDA is controlled through a development scheme, which is a regulatory document prepared in accordance with the SDPWO Act.

There are currently 12 SDAs throughout Queensland.

### In an SDA, the Coordinator-General:

- undertakes land use planning and establishes the development assessment process for regulated development through the relevant development scheme
- implements the development scheme
- assesses and decides applications and requests that can be made under the development scheme
- has compulsory land acquisition powers.

The declaration of an SDA does not change land tenure or ownership, and existing uses are not affected. Land owners may choose to sell their land to developers. Sometimes, the Coordinator-General needs to acquire land to facilitate development within an SDA using the *Acquisition of Land Act 1967*.



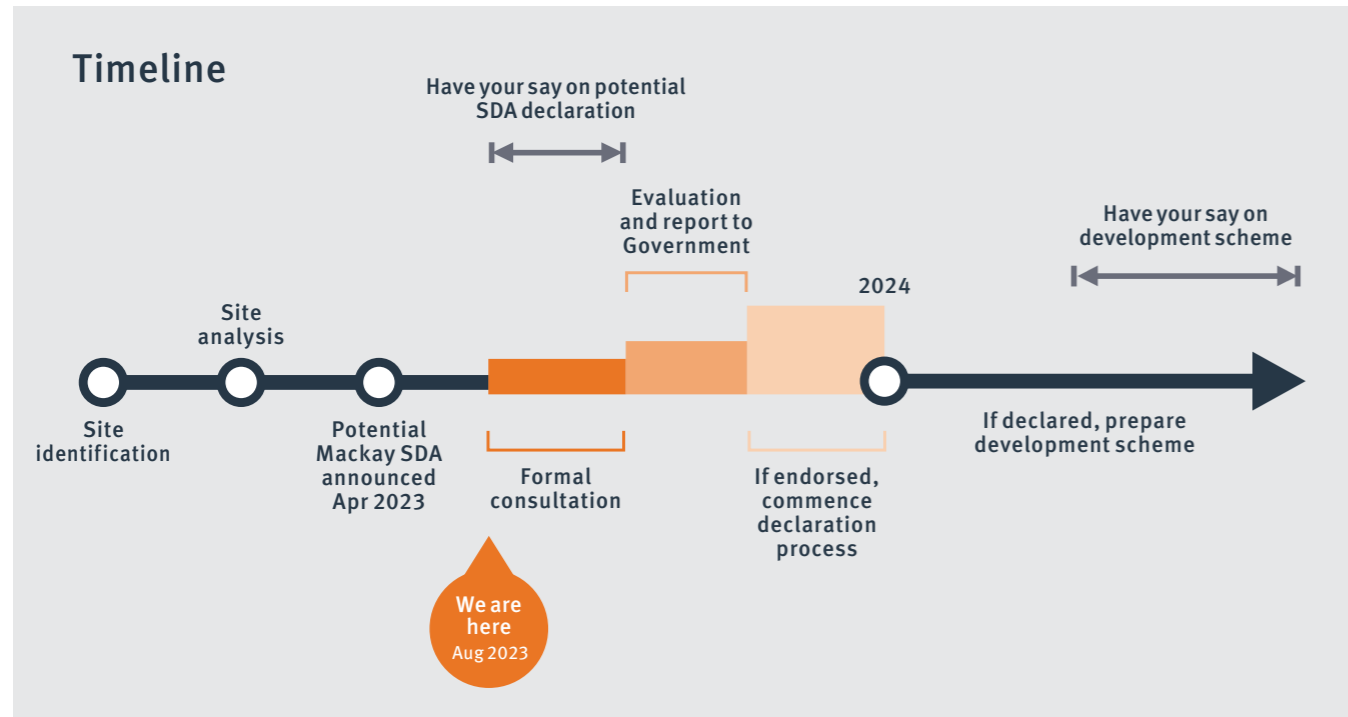


Figure 1 Potential Mackay SDA declaration timeline

### Benefits of the potential Mackay SDA

- industry attraction and project facilitation
- managing incompatible land use
- create strategic land for emerging industries
- promoting a diversified regional economy
- providing employment and growth opportunities
- state supported planning for commercial-scale industries
- preserving land for future growth opportunities
- ready access to significant rail and road networks



# Investigation areas

The potential Mackay SDA investigation area relates to two disaggregated investigation areas with a total area of approximately 1019 hectares (ha) at the Racecourse Mill and Rosella. Both areas offer their own unique opportunities.

## Racecourse Mill

The Racecourse Mill investigation area (Figure 2) covers approximately 154 ha and is centred around the established Racecourse Mill, approximately 5 kilometres (km) west of the Mackay central business district (CBD). The area has direct access to the Peak Downs Highway and is adjacent to the Mackay Ring Road.

Surrounding the Racecourse Mill and its associated

infrastructure, the predominant land use in the investigation area is sugarcane cropping. There are also several houses within the locality.

The Racecourse Mill area offers short to medium term opportunities for more pilot and potentially demonstration type projects to collocate with an established biofutures precinct, building on the existing sugar mill and sugar refinery, the 38MW cogeneration plant and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Renewable Biocommodities Pilot Plant.

Mackay Sugar Limited owns a large proportion of land within the Racecourse Mill investigation area. This consolidated land ownership provides opportunities for master planning and development.

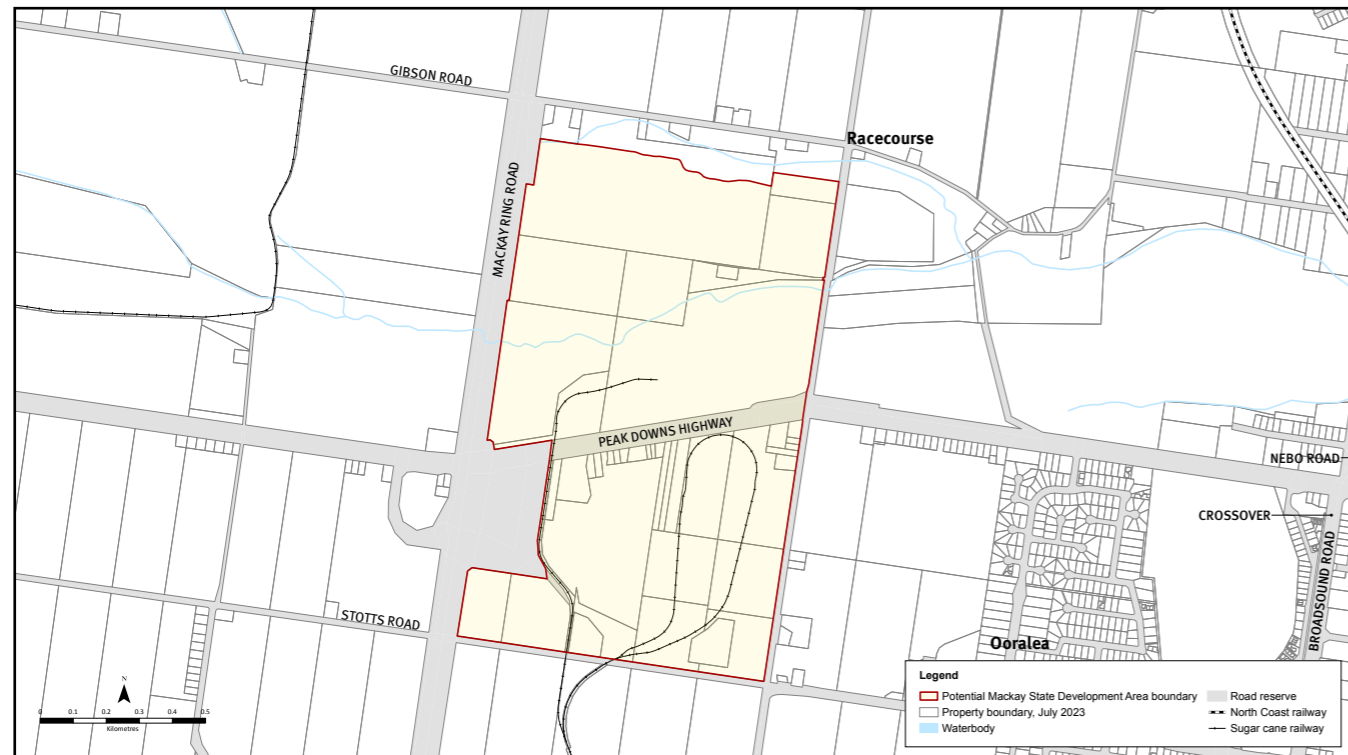


Figure 2 Racecourse Mill investigation area

## Rosella

The Rosella investigation area (Figure 3) is located 10 km from the Mackay CBD and covers an area of approximately 865 ha. The investigation area is south of Paget.

The predominant land use in the investigation area is sugarcane cropping with a small number of houses, which complement the farming operations.

Rosella is located in close proximity to the road and rail network, with the North Coast Rail Line intersecting to the west and the Bruce Highway bisecting the investigation area. The area is relatively flat with

only minor contouring. This strategic location has been acknowledged in both Council and State Government planning frameworks for medium to long term industrial development. It offers a greenfield location suitable for larger footprint and higher impact industries that is well separated from established sensitive land uses and areas of environmental significance.

Economic Development Queensland (EDQ), the Queensland Government's land use planning and property development agency, owns approximately 211 ha within the Rosella area.

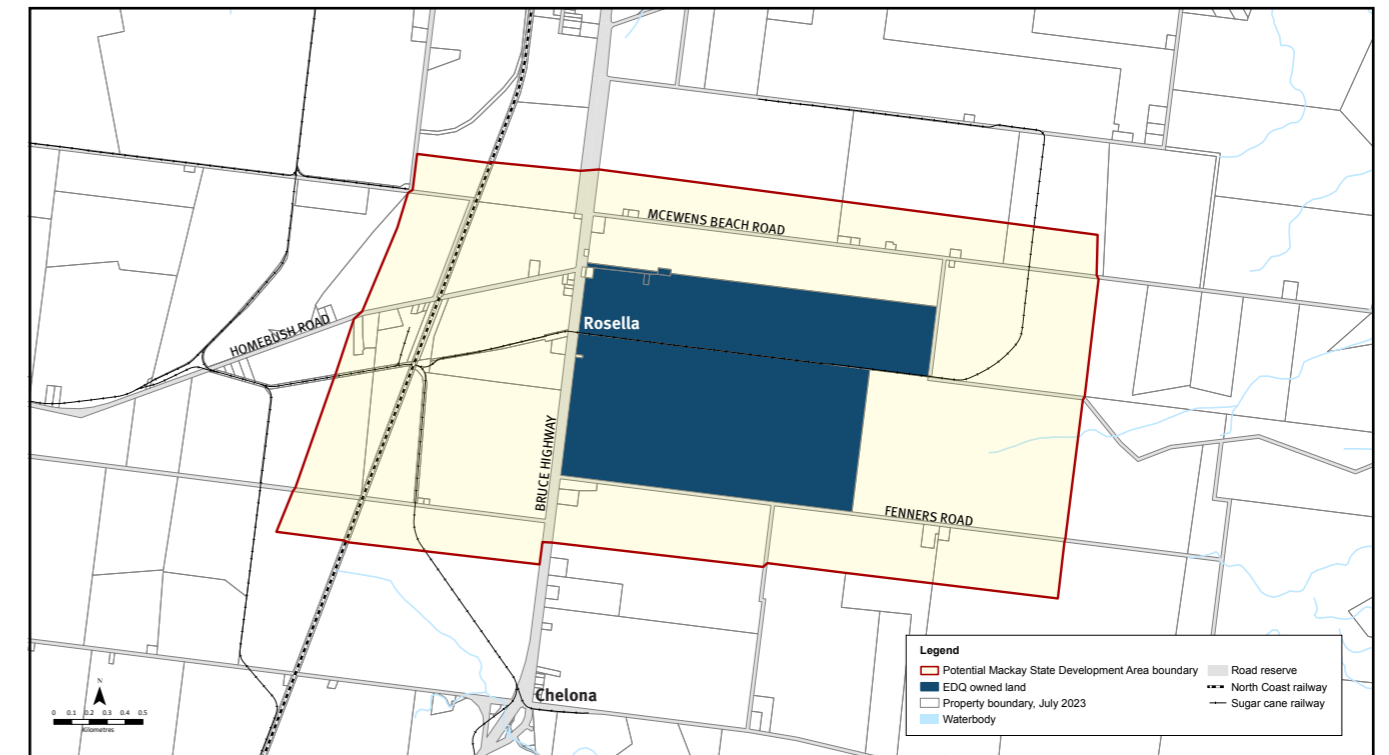


Figure 3 Rosella investigation area

# Considerations

In considering a potential SDA in this location, the Coordinator-General is looking at:

- economic, environmental and social values
- regional economic growth and supply chain opportunities
- land to establish industry diversification and provide employment opportunities
- long-term strategic patterns of development
- site level constraints and opportunities
- regional infrastructure capacity
- integration of state and local planning.

Based on these considerations, the potential Mackay SDA has been selected because of its strategic location, size of the available area, access to significant rail and road networks, proximity to employment catchments, and suitable topography. The locations for the potential Mackay SDA provide the best option to maximise opportunities, while managing potential cultural, environmental and social constraints.

## Economic

### Regional overview

Mackay was established as a pastoral area in 1862 and prospered through the growth of sugar plantations along the Pioneer River. With consistent climate and rainfall, the diverse agricultural industry includes fruit, vegetables, nuts and grazing. More recently the Mackay region has been dominated by a thriving resources industry that includes a significant mining equipment, technology and services (METS) industry cluster.

The Mackay region is one of Australia's fastest growing regions and plays a strategic role as a service centre and logistics hub. Unlocking more industrial land in Mackay will produce substantial economic benefits and leverage the region's traditional strengths in resources and rural industries, while diversifying

into sustainable economic growth that embraces new industries, technologies and markets.

Mackay is well suited to biofutures opportunities with world-class expertise in research and development, access to feedstock, a strong manufacturing base, efficient transport infrastructure and access to global markets.

The development and investment opportunities that the Rosella and Racecourse Mill investigation areas present for new and emerging industries will further diversify the Mackay region's economy and will complement Mackay Regional Council's land use and infrastructure planning, particularly in relation to existing industrial areas such as Racecourse Mill and Paget.

### Developments relevant to the potential Mackay SDA

#### Racecourse Mill

Racecourse Mill is one of the largest sugar facilities in Australia. The mill began operations in 1889 and the Racecourse Refinery was commissioned in 1994. It is owned by Mackay Sugar Limited in a joint venture arrangement with Wilmar and Sugar Australia. The sugar refinery is powered by Racecourse Mill's cogeneration plant and produces about 400,000 tonnes of refined white sugar annually.

Mackay Sugar currently provides over a third of Mackay's electricity through their cogeneration electricity plant fuelled by bagasse, a waste product from sugar cane. They also have a 20-year diversification plan that seeks to build on current operations and further utilise milling product and by-products.

#### Paget Industrial Estate

Paget is home to Australia's leading METS, recognised as a skills and innovation incubator for engineering,

manufacturing and services. The Paget Industrial Estate forms the largest mining services industrial precinct in the southern hemisphere and is home to over 500 mining and manufacturing businesses which form part of an integrated supply chain. The proximity of the Rosella and Racecourse investigation areas to Paget provides opportunities to extend this industrial hub in Mackay and support economic development.

### Relevant policy initiatives

#### Queensland Biofutures 10-year Roadmap and Action Plan

The *Queensland Biofutures 10-year Roadmap and Action Plan* provides a vision for Queensland to be an Asia-Pacific hub in biomanufacturing and biorefining, enabling global efforts to decarbonise and build diverse local industrial capabilities.

#### Queensland New-Industry Development Strategy

The *Queensland New-Industry Development Strategy* supports a new wave of sustainable economic growth by focusing attention on unlocking the opportunities presented by decarbonisation and the State's competitive advantages in the priority areas shown in Figure 4. Mackay as a region is well positioned to transition its economy to become more decarbonised and take advantage of the opportunities that the priority areas represent.

#### Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan

The *Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan* outlines how Queensland's energy system will transform to deliver clean, reliable and affordable energy to provide power for generations. The plan will grow the demand for renewable energy, decarbonising industry and advance new industry growth to modernise bioenergy generation and use waste products for bioenergy.



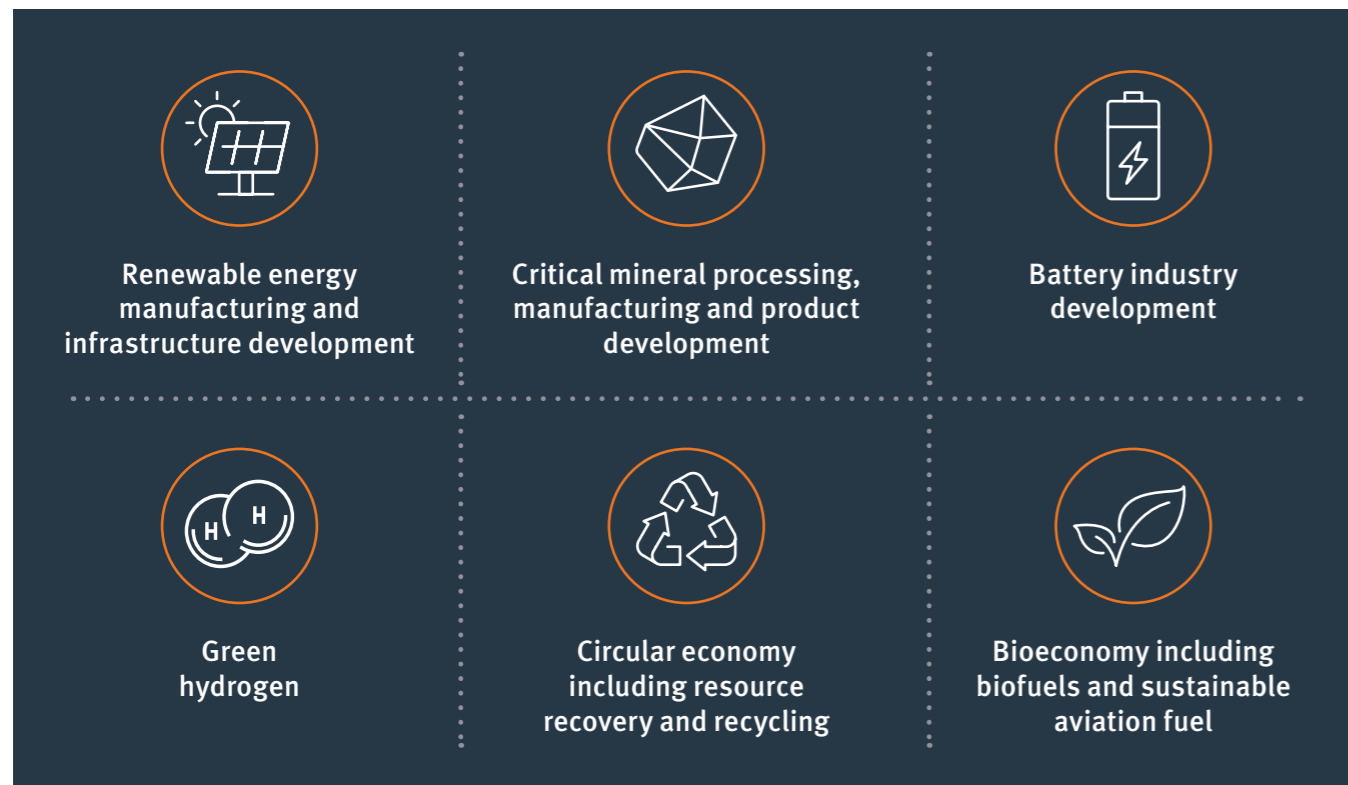


Figure 4 Global decarbonisation opportunities

## Infrastructure

The extent of infrastructure required to support the potential Mackay SDA would depend on the location, type and scale of development. The capacity of regional infrastructure networks is an important consideration to activate industrial land.

### Supply chain infrastructure

Mackay has excellent supply chain infrastructure and accessibility to local and regional markets, via a combination of road connectivity (Bruce Highway, Peak Downs Highway), rail (North Coast Line) and port (Port of Mackay and Hay Point) connections to key markets, provides a strong foundation to support industrial growth.

The Port of Mackay is a multi-commodity port with a combined import/export cargo making Mackay one of the major servicing centres for the Greater Whitsunday mining and agricultural industries.

### Trunk infrastructure

Industrial land at Racecourse and Rosella is limited by existing power, water supply and wastewater infrastructure capacity. The Coordinator-General is working with infrastructure providers to identify the trunk infrastructure required to activate development and put in place long-term planning to support development in the potential SDA.

One of the advantages of the Racecourse investigation area is pressurised steam and power are potentially

**On 2 June 2023 the Deputy Premier announced a \$45 million investment in the Regional Industrial Land Improvement Program (RILIP), over three years to enable trunk infrastructure and strategic land in Mackay and Gladstone.**

The RILIP delivers catalytic infrastructure, like roads, energy, and water infrastructure, and boosts industrial land supply.

available to developments. The existing cogeneration power plant at Racecourse Mill that exports excess “green” electrical power to the grid and creates opportunity for direct sale of power to co-located industries.

### Renewable energy infrastructure

As the energy system shifts to renewables, the Greater Whitsunday Region has significant potential for new renewable energy projects and the decarbonisation of mining and other existing industries. Since 2015 the region has established more than \$1 billion in renewable energy projects, including the completed Lotus Creek Wind Farm and Clarke Creek Wind and Solar Farm. Many existing mills, including the Racecourse Mill produce electricity from cane fibre. These projects will complement the development of the potential Mackay SDA, leading the way in facilitating new and emerging industries powered by renewable energy.

## Cultural heritage, social and environment

### Cultural heritage

The Yuwibara People are the original custodians and Traditional Owners of the Land and Sea Country

surrounding the investigation areas and continue to maintain strong cultural and traditional affiliations with Land and Sea Country.

The investigation into a potential Mackay SDA recognises the stories, traditions, knowledge systems and living culture of the Yuwibara people and their contribution to shaping and enriching the Country and society across the investigation areas. The Office of the Coordinator-General will work with the Yuwi People as part of the investigation and recognises the Rosella investigation area includes the former Bakers Creek Aboriginal Reserve.

The Office of the Coordinator-General also recognises the significance of the South-Sea Islanders contribution to the sugar industry in Mackay.

### Social

Mackay is an established modern, regional city with a skilled workforce and proven strengths in resources and agriculture. The potential Mackay SDA presents a pathway to growing the economy, deliver jobs and long-term stability for the community.

The potential Mackay SDA is located within a rural community predominantly based on sugar cane cultivation. Industrial areas can often be associated with off-site impacts associated with visual amenity, dust, noise and air emissions and traffic movements. The Racecourse Mill investigation area is on the

fringe of the Mackay urban area and therefore any development would be required to have regard to the surrounding sensitive land uses.

Therefore, it is expected that the potential Mackay SDA will retain some existing land uses, including cane cultivation, to continue the agricultural setting and provide separation from industrial activities, which will help minimise potential impacts on sensitive uses in proximity to the potential SDA.

Any potential future road network would also have to consider the local community's transport needs as the area is developed over time.

If an SDA is declared, and demand for industrial land increases over time, the loss of agricultural and horticultural production would be offset by significant employment opportunities to the Mackay region.

## Environment

The potential Mackay SDA is located on land that has been historically cleared for sugar cane production with limited remnant vegetation and fauna habitat. Ecological values are generally associated with riparian vegetation and watercourses which connect to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

Should the potential SDA be declared, the current environmental values of the site would be managed through the establishment of environmental precincts and through the preparation of a development scheme. Following this, each development would be managed individually through an assessment process.

The Rosella investigation area is well separated from established sensitive receptors and areas of environmental significance.

# Potential land uses - emerging industries

The region's economy has historically been built on the back of sugarcane and resource service industries; however, Mackay is continuing to grow a sustainable and diversified economic base with a broad range of emerging industries and investment opportunities.

There is an opportunity to accelerate the growth of the economy with a cluster of synergistic bioenergy and biomanufacturing facilities. An integrated bioprecinct could include the development and manufacturing of innovative products and ingredients from sustainable resources. The products can be both intermediate and final products, and include fuels, food and feed ingredients, materials, chemicals and power.

The potential SDA can support opportunities such as a Future Foods BioHub. Future Foods will play a significant role in meeting global demand for high protein foods and ingredients, which is predicted to double by 2050. Future Foods can complement existing agricultural and cropping industries, by offering a means of diversification for producers, processors and

consumers. Through the potential Mackay SDA, the region has an opportunity to establish itself as a global market leader in advanced biomanufacturing.

The Mackay region is positioned to capitalise on this growing market given its access to biomass, notably sugarcane, access to market and established involvement in the industry.

The region is at the forefront of Australia's biofutures industries and is home to the Mercurius Pilot Plant and QUT Renewable Biocommodities Pilot Plant co-located at the Racecourse Sugar Mill. The Mercurius Pilot Plant produces valuable renewable chemicals, diesel and jet fuels from sugarcane waste while the QUT Mackay Renewable Biocommodities Pilot Plant is a common-user research and development facility that converts biomass into biofuels, green chemicals and other bioproducts. The Queensland Government is supporting its expansion through the Industry Partnership Program.



## Deputy Premier Steven Miles:

Mackay has enormous potential as a leader in the future industries finding new ways to make the food, fibre, feed and fuel the world needs.

The declaration of a State Development Area in Mackay could help leverage the region's traditional strengths in rural industries, such as cane growing and milling, and create new industries and jobs.





Potential biofutures developments that would be most suitable at the potential Mackay SDA investigation areas include:

- processes using sugar cane feedstock
- grains and oil seed (soybean, sunflower, cotton seed meals) processing and biofuel production facility
- processes using biowaste, meat by-products, including tallow and wastewater.

## Draft precincts

The Coordinator-General is considering initial concepts for how the potential SDA may develop. The actual timing of any development would be subject to market demand. The maps in Figure 5 show initial concepts regarding draft precincts, that will be further refined within a draft development scheme following this consultation process, if a Mackay SDA is declared.

The potential SDA will take into consideration the environmental considerations and necessary buffers

at each site. For example, the watercourse running through the Racecourse investigation area would include requirements to manage potential impacts from future industrial developments.

A precinct approach to attracting development presents the following advantages to industrial development:

- centralised facilities to take advantage of existing infrastructure and energy
- potential energy parks (steam and power) to support processing facilities
- sharing plant and equipment with new enterprises
- co-investment with industry to upgrade or expand existing infrastructure.

Coupled with its strategic transport infrastructure and established local supply chains, the region can play a key role for Queensland in realising these opportunities.

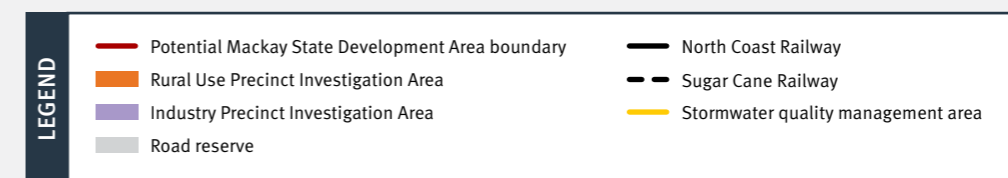
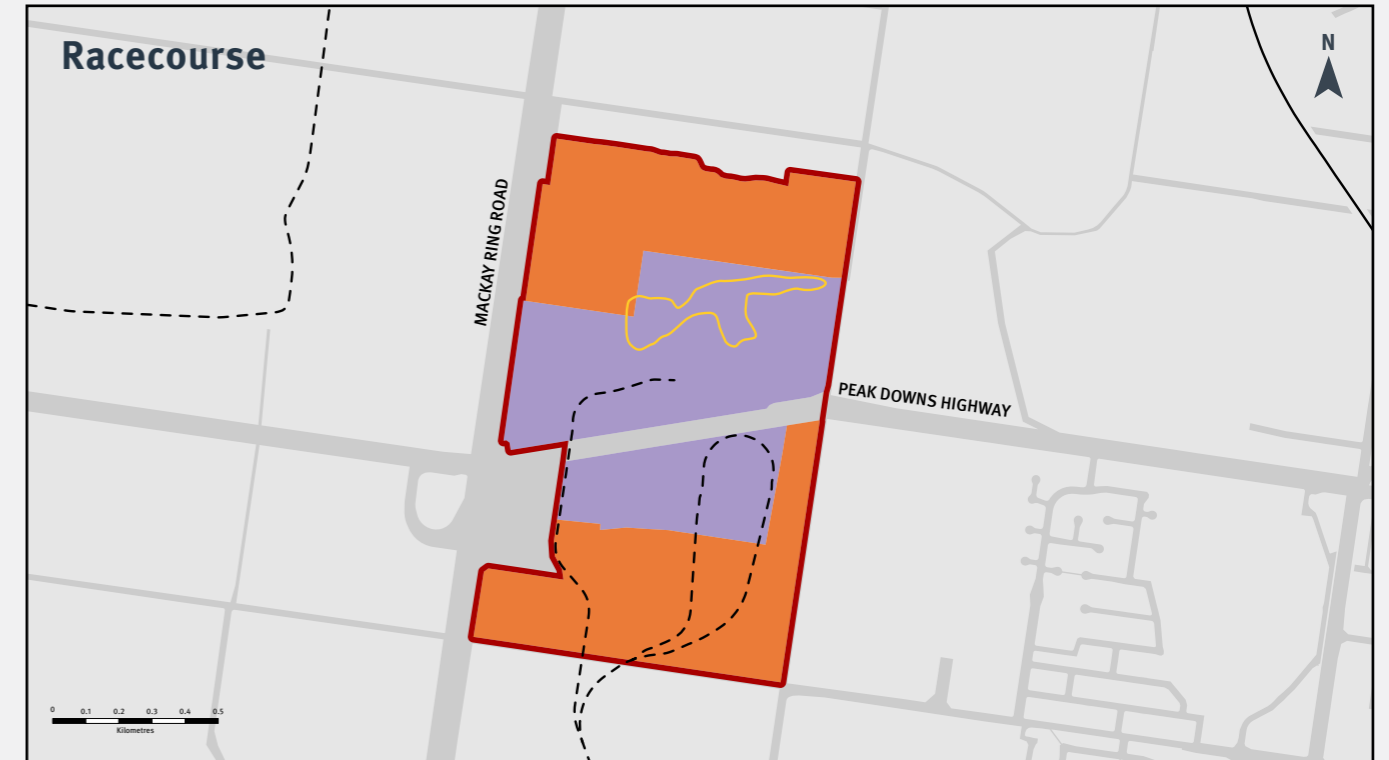


Figure 5 Racecourse and Rosella Development Precincts Investigation Areas

# Have your say

The Coordinator-General is seeking feedback on the potential Mackay SDA, including its boundary as shown in Figures 2 and 3 and online at [www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/mackaysda](http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/mackaysda)

The Queensland Government aims to strike the right balance between the interests of stakeholders, including landholders, proponents, and the community.

Your submission should:

- be made to the Coordinator-General in writing or electronically
- be received on or before the last day of the consultation period
- state the name of each person who made the submission
- clearly state the matters that you are concerned about or interested in
- provide any factual information that you have relied on, and the source of this information
- suggest measures you consider would be appropriate to inform a decision about the potential Mackay SDA.

Feedback is invited up until **15 September 2023**.

You can provide your feedback by using our online submission form at [haveyoursay.dsd.qld.gov.au](http://haveyoursay.dsd.qld.gov.au)

Or, you can provide your submission in writing and email to [sdainfo@coordinatorgeneral.qld.gov.au](mailto:sdainfo@coordinatorgeneral.qld.gov.au) or post it to:

The Office of the Coordinator-General  
Department of State Development, Infrastructure,  
Local Government and Planning  
PO Box 15517  
City East QLD 4002

## Further information

For further information on the investigation, contact the Office of the Coordinator-General on 1800 001 048 or via [sdainfo@coordinatorgeneral.qld.gov.au](mailto:sdainfo@coordinatorgeneral.qld.gov.au)

Alternatively, you can contact the local Mackay office to arrange a meeting on 4898 6800 or via [mackay@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au](mailto:mackay@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au)

Should a decision be made to declare a Mackay SDA, the Queensland Government would work closely with Mackay Regional Council, industry partners, landholders and the wider community to ensure stakeholder issues are explored and investigated through the refining of precincts and the preparation of a development scheme.

## Development scheme

SDA development schemes function in a similar manner to a local government planning scheme, by outlining the types of development that are regulated and the criteria which development is assessed against.

Further information about development schemes and SDA applications and requests is available on the Department's website at [www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/sda](http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/sda)

Office of the Coordinator-General  
PO Box 15517 City East Qld 4002 Australia  
Tel: 1800 001 048  
[sdainfo@coordinatorgeneral.qld.gov.au](mailto:sdainfo@coordinatorgeneral.qld.gov.au)  
[www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/mackaysda](http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/mackaysda)

