

Consultation report

Mackay State Development Area Draft Development Scheme and State Development Areas Draft Development Assessment Process

August 2024

The Department of State Development and Infrastructure, 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

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.

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Executive Summary

The Mackay State Development Area (SDA) was declared on 22 February 2024. In accordance with section 79 of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*, as soon as practicable following the declaration of an SDA, the Coordinator-General is to prepare an SDA Development Scheme.

The Coordinator-General prepared the Mackay SDA draft Development Scheme (Development Scheme) and SDA draft Development Assessment Process (Development Assessment Process) for public consultation which commenced on 10 June 2024 until 15 July 2024.

During consultation, community information sessions were held in Mackay, and briefings provided to industry stakeholders and state agencies. Meetings were also held with Mackay Regional Council (Council), Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) and landowners from within the SDA.

A total of eight submissions were received during the public consultation period and grouped into the following submitter categories:

- landholder/resident within the SDA
- landholder/resident outside the SDA
- business or industry group.

Key themes from submissions related to:

- industry precinct boundary alignment in Rosella
- impact to agricultural land, including removal of high-quality land and impacts to the cane rail
- amenity concerns
- support for lower order industrial development
- flooding and water quality
- infrastructure provision
- minor and administrative changes.

In response to submissions received, amendments were made to the final Mackay SDA Development Scheme. There were no submissions in relation to the SDA draft Development Assessment Process.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project background

The Queensland Government is committed to facilitating industry growth to attract investment in new and emerging industries, including sustainable food, fibre, feed and fuel products. On 22 February 2024, the Mackay SDA was declared to support these new and emerging industries, including bioenergy and bio-food production that value add to the sugar cane industry.

The Mackay SDA is 907 hectares and consists of two non-contiguous areas, located at Racecourse Mill (137 hectares) and Rosella (770 hectares).

The Racecourse Mill area offers an opportunity for projects to collocate with an established industry precinct, including the existing sugar mill and refinery and the cogeneration power plant. The Rosella area is a greenfield location suitable for larger footprint and higher impact industries close to Mackay, in the medium to long-term.

Preparation of the Mackay SDA Development Scheme has been underpinned by a range of technical studies, including traffic impact assessment, flood modelling, stormwater strategy and infrastructure planning.

The approval of a development scheme for the Mackay SDA will mean that planning and development of the SDA will be regulated and administered by the Coordinator-General. To the extent stated in the development scheme, local and State planning instruments do not apply.

1.2 Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to provide a high-level summary of the submissions received through the public consultation process and the Coordinator-General's response to relevant matters raised.

Each submission received through the process has been reviewed and informed the report recommendations and amendments to the Mackay SDA Development Scheme.

2. Consultation overview

2.1 Methodology

A comprehensive stakeholder management and communications plan (communications plan) was followed to identify the relevant project stakeholders and determine the communication strategy, engagement protocol, and communication and engagement action plan. The key phases of the process are identified in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1 Key phases of the consultation process

2.2 Consultation material and approach

The formal public consultation period commenced on 10 June 2024 and closed on 15 July 2024 (five-week period). The consultation approach and activities undertaken are described in **Figure 2**.

	Website and Citizen space online consultation	10 June 2024 – 15 July 2024
	Public notices in local and State newspapers	10 June & 14 June 2024
	Letter to stakeholders and landholders	Commenced 7 June 2024
	Mackay Show Community information sessions	18-20 June 2024 24 June 2024
	Industry briefing Update to Urban Development Institute of Australia	19 June 2024 11 July 2024
	State agency briefing	6 June 2024
	Project teams in Brisbane and Mackay available for general enquiries	Throughout

Figure 2 Consultation activities

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2.3 Media exposure

The Development Scheme and Development Assessment Process received the following media exposure during the public consultation period:

- Television – Seven News, Mackay (11 June 2024)
- Radio – ABC Tropical North, Mackay and Star 101.9 Mackay Radio (11 June 2024).

3. Consultation outcomes

3.1 Responses

The community was invited to have their say on the Development Scheme and Development Assessment Process from 10 June 2024 until 15 July 2024.

A total of eight submissions were received during the consultation period:

- 6 submissions through the 'have your say' website (Citizen Space)
- 2 submissions via email.

Most of the submissions related to the Rosella area or the Mackay SDA in general rather than the Racecourse area.

3.2 Engagement sessions

A community information session was held during the public consultation period in the evening of 24 June 2024 at the Mackay Aeroclub. A total of 16 people attended the community information session at the Mackay Aeroclub. The community was also offered the opportunity to participate in one-on-one meetings in Mackay, with one local landholder seeking a one-on-one meeting.

Team members from the Office of the Coordinator-General (OCG) and Department of State Development and Infrastructure attended the Mackay Show and spoke to approximately 40 people in the Mackay Sugar Pavilion who were seeking general information about the Mackay SDA and what it means for the Mackay region.

A summary of the key matters raised is provided in **Figure 3**.

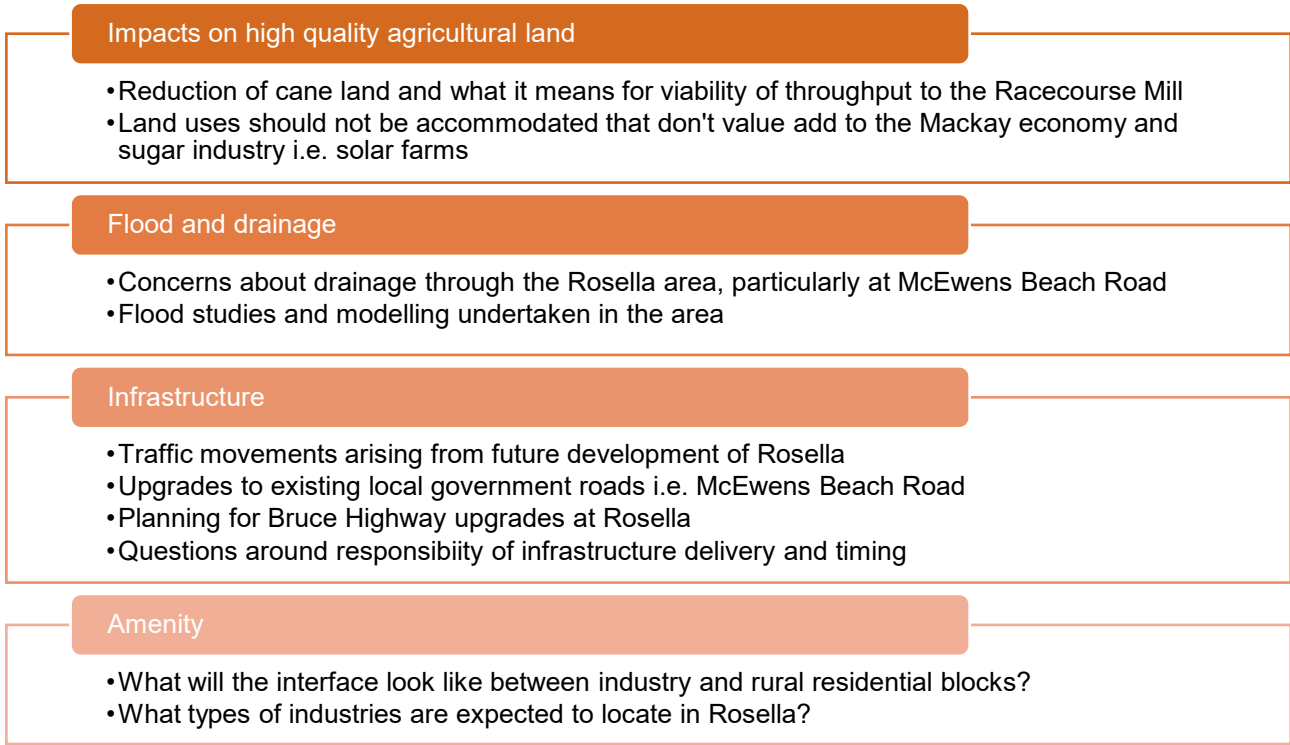


Figure 3 Community session themes

3.3 Submission summary

3.3.1 Submitter categories

Submissions were received from individuals and stakeholder groups. Submitters were broadly categorised as:

- landholder/resident within the Mackay SDA
- landholder/resident outside the Mackay SDA boundary
- business or industry groups.

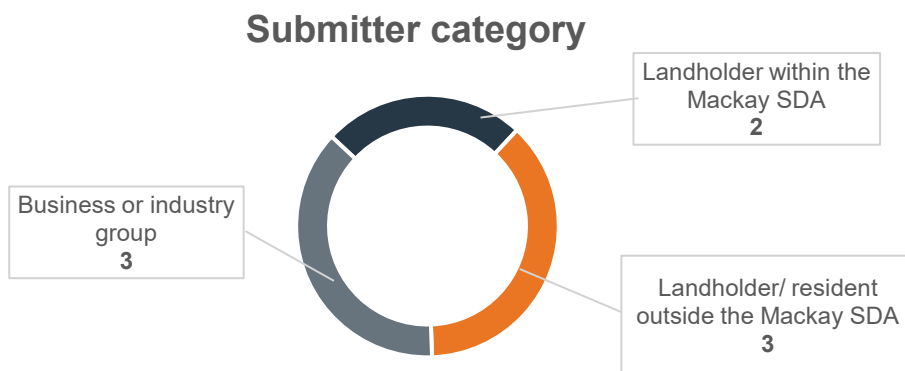


Figure 4 Number of submissions received in each submitter category

3.3.2 Submission themes

The key themes from the submissions received during the public consultation period included:

- industry precinct boundary alignment in Rosella
- impact to agricultural land, including removal of high-quality land and impacts to the cane rail
- amenity concerns
- support for lower order industrial development
- flooding and water quality
- infrastructure provision
- minor and administrative changes.

3.4 Submissions analysis

The submissions and general feedback received through public consultation and stakeholder engagement informed the final recommended changes to the Development Scheme. The key themes raised in the submissions and the Coordinator-General's response are detailed below:

1 Precinct designation changes

Submissions requested precinct boundary changes to Rural Use Precinct and Industry Precinct at Rosella.

Response

In consideration of the submitters feedback, changes have been made to transfer a lot in the Rosella area from the Industry Precinct to the Rural Use Precinct. This change was supported to ensure the continued operation of cane farming, as intended by the landowner. This precinct designation change will further support the continued operation of the cane rail.

Further changes to increase land in the Industry Precinct were not supported due to limitations on servicing infrastructure and management of amenity impacts relating to existing sensitive uses in the area.

2 Impacts to agricultural land and cane rail

Submitters raised concerns about the removal of agricultural land, impacts to the existing cane rail and subsequent viability of the Racecourse Mill.

Response

The potential regional benefits from industrial development linked to cane production were considered during investigation and declaration of the Mackay SDA. It is understood that areas are currently used for cane production and several technical assessments have been undertaken to inform the Development Scheme and precincts.

The technical assessments identify limited impacts on agricultural production due to recycled water being removed some years ago and long-term intrusion of salt water at Rosella. The overall reduction in agricultural land equates to approximately 0.75% which would occur over several stages in a 20–30-year period and has been anticipated in planning documents for over 10 years.

In terms of impacts on the existing cane rail network, technical studies confirmed that development can occur around the existing cane rail. Future road upgrades to the Bruce Highway, undertaken by the

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Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR), may require some cane rail realignment in the Rosella area in the long term.

No changes were made to the Development Scheme.

3 Amenity impacts

During the community information sessions, several community members raised concerns about the amenity of rural residential areas and impacts resulting from future industrial development.

Response

Amendments have been made to the Development Scheme, particularly the assessment criteria, to strengthen amenity provisions specifically addressing visual impacts and managing the interface with residential dwellings. The spatial extent of the proposed Industry Precinct considered the impacts on existing clusters of rural residential lifestyle blocks by locating development exclusively on the eastern side of the Bruce Highway.

Further consideration and assessment of amenity impacts will be undertaken by the Coordinator-General when assessing and deciding an SDA development application.

4 Lower order and traditional industrial uses

A submission was received requesting that the strategic intent of the Mackay SDA be amended to support a range of lower order industrial development, such as low impact and services industries, and traditional industries in the Mackay region.

Response

The Mackay SDA was declared to support the establishment of new and emerging industries critical to the global shift to net zero, such as biomanufacturing, renewable energy and sustainable aviation fuel, as well as significant hard-to-locate industries requiring a large footprint.

The Development Scheme currently supports lower order industries when providing a complementary relationship to significant industries in the Mackay SDA.

No changes were made to the Development Scheme to support the request for lower order industrial development given the strategic intent of the Mackay SDA and the role of other industrial areas in the Mackay region to provide opportunities for lower order development.

5 Flooding and water quality

Although no formal submissions were raised in relation to this matter, community members raised concerns of stormwater management in the Racecourse Mill and Rosella area, and water quality.

Response

Several technical assessments were undertaken to inform the Development Scheme and associated precincts, including flood modelling and stormwater modelling. A range of SDA wide assessment criteria further address the management of stormwater quality and quantity.

Detailed consideration of flood and stormwater quality will be undertaken by the Coordinator-General when assessing and deciding an SDA development application.

6 Infrastructure provision

Although no formal submissions were received in relation to infrastructure, community members asked about the staging of infrastructure delivery and significant capital works required to deliver infrastructure, particularly in Rosella.

Response

Technical assessments confirmed, subject to new and augmented infrastructure, the proposed Industry Precinct in the Mackay SDA can be developed and serviced over stages. Indicative staging has been developed to understand timing, which is reflected in the vision of the Mackay SDA (i.e., Racecourse Mill developed in the short-medium term and Rosella in the medium-long term).

The OCG is preparing an infrastructure plan, in consultation with Council and other key stakeholders, to further understand the infrastructure needed to service the Mackay SDA in a timely and cost-efficient manner and support activation of the Mackay SDA.

7 Minor and administrative amendments

Request for amendments to development definitions to support the establishment of biofutures industries, including the addition of a biorefinery facility definition.

Response

Existing land use definitions accommodate biorefineries, and the vision, objectives and preferred development intent of the Industry Precinct provide the certainty for bioindustries to locate in the Mackay SDA.

No changes to land use definitions are recommended in response to this submission.

4. Agency and stakeholder feedback

Feedback was invited from State agencies, government owned corporations, Council and other key stakeholders on the Development Scheme. Feedback received from key stakeholders indicated no major concerns. Key considerations are outlined in **Table 1**.

Table 1 Key stakeholder feedback

Key items	OCG response
Council	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly recommend the development scheme include a 100 hectare minimum lot size in the Rural Use Precinct to avoid any further fragmentation of land in the rural areas of the SDA. Strategic vision for the Mackay SDA should acknowledge the SDA's proximity to the North Coast Rail and proximity to the Mackay Airport and Port of Mackay. Minor administrative amendments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amendments have been made to the Development Scheme to reflect Council comments and suggestions.
Planning group – Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarification of the term 'small scale' when referencing expansions to dwelling houses in the Rural Use Precinct. Concern about the prohibition of single dwelling houses on rural land Clarification about workforce accommodation in the Rural Use Precinct, when supporting a legitimate rural activity Feedback on SDA wide assessment criteria, specifically about cultural values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amendments have been made to the Development Scheme to address concerns about cultural heritage and to clarify intent in relation to sensitive uses and extension of existing dwelling houses. No further amendments required.
EDQ	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requests to be included as self-assessable for Reconfiguring a Lot applications in the Rosella area Clarification about permanent plantation in the Environmental Management Precinct (EMP) Clarification about flood immunity standards being 1% flood amenity with a 300mm freeboard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No changes made to the levels of assessment for Reconfiguration of a Lot as it is important that issues associated with subdivision of land (i.e., flooding and stormwater, infrastructure and traffic) are considered early to prevent unintended consequences in later stages of development. The EMP is suitable to receive offsets if required, which may fall under the land use definition of 'permanent plantation'. Flood immunity provisions align with Council expectations and is a typical requirement for all industrial development. Flooding to be dealt with on a site-by-site basis. No changes proposed.
Emerging Industries – Department of State Development and Infrastructure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor amendments to the vision and preferred development intent of the Industry Precinct to facilitate the establishment of new and emerging industries broader than just emerging industries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amendments made to the Development Scheme to reflect comments and suggestions.

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Key items	OCG response
Major Hazard Facilities Unit – Office of Industrial Relations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional objectives and emissions criteria to address health and safety impacts and release to sensitive receptors. • Additional provision regarding flooding and climate change and flood immunity when storing significant quantities of hazardous chemicals. • Request that hazardous materials to be located outside of bushfire prone areas, and areas subject to erosion prone zones, storm tide inundation zones and landslide zones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Scheme amended to address comments about emissions. • Flood modelling accounts for climate change. A note has been added in the statewide criteria requiring proponent led modelling to include climate change. • No further changes have been made to the Development Scheme. Other concerns will be managed when assessing and deciding an SDA application.
Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further technical assessments to confirm flood behaviour and define the flood hazard area for both areas. • Fit for purpose risk assessment to identify and achieve an acceptable level of risk for personal safety in natural hazard areas. • Comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – disaster management – risk to public safety and the environment in relation to storage of hazardous materials – maintenance and enhancement of landforms and vegetation to mitigate risks associated with natural hazards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed consideration of flood modelling, including risk and impacts to properties has been undertaken. • The detailed flood modelling, including detention and water quality requirements are well understood, and will be assessed during an SDA application for reconfiguring a lot or material change of use applications. • The SDA wide assessment criteria require development to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impacts from flooding to protect people and property, and enhances the community's resilience to flooding – support, and not hinder disaster management capacity and capabilities. • With respect to engineering standards, Australian Rainfall and Runoff is already included, and further guidelines are not considered relevant for a site-based flood assessment approach. • No amendments made to Development Scheme.
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback received related to the accuracy of mapped waterways and also the EMP. Any proposed development that impacts on the waterway within the EMP should be referred for potential approval requirements for constructing or raising waterway barrier works. • The EMP is not appropriate for industrial development and the Development Scheme should reflect this position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with desktop review of incorrectly mapped waterways. For Racecourse, applications will be referred to DAF where relevant for works associated with the EMP. • Provisions in the EMP have been retained. Industrial development is not envisaged in this precinct, however whilst an access track to the Racecourse Mill bagasse area currently traverses this precinct, it is important to retain flexibility in supporting infrastructure that benefits the broader SDA and doesn't undermine the integrity of the EMP. Provisions also require adverse impacts of the infrastructure placement be mitigated.
DTMR	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the SPP Interactive Mapping System and SPP Guidance: Strategic airports and aviation facilities state interest - Example planning scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments made to the SDA wide assessment criteria for Built form to address the airport environs including:

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Key items	OCG response
<p>assessment benchmarks to identify relevant matters and assessment benchmarks to protect Mackay Airport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor administrative changes to wording. • Development Scheme should be stronger on protecting the function of State controlled roads and promoting the local road network internal to the development. • Provisions to support connected pedestrian, cycling networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – requirement to limit the height of buildings, structures and construction requirements where within the obstacle limitation surface height – management of external lighting or reflective surfaces – providing adequate measures to prevent the attraction of birds and bats into operational airspace. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments made, where relevant, to ensure the ongoing safety, efficiency and functionality of the Bruce Highway. • SDA applications proximate to State-controlled road networks, or otherwise meeting the thresholds under the Planning Regulation will be referred to DTMR for their assessment. There will be early engagement with DTMR prior to any application being lodged, to ensure access afforded to new industrial areas is safe, practicable and efficient. Development requiring multiple connections to State controlled roads is not supported. • Pedestrian and cycling networks internal to the SDA are not supported due to safety and amenity.
Department of Resources (DOR)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General comments about soils and classification of agricultural land. • No significant concerns with the proposed draft precincts in the Racecourse Mill area. • Concerns about the removal of cane land from production from Rosella. • Both areas contain strategic cropping land (SCL). Triggers may apply for resource or other regulated development. Consider assessment of SCL if any resource or other regulated development is proposed. • Recommend considering Acid Sulfate Soils in eastern part of Rosella to ensure these are avoided and to help with earthworks design etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential regional benefits from industrial development linked to cane production were considered during investigation and declaration of the SDA. • Technical work identified limited impacts on agricultural production, with the Rosella area east of the Bruce Highway facing challenges due to removal of recycled water and long-term intrusion of salt water at Rosella. • OCG will continue to work closely with Mackay Sugar to ensure ongoing viability of the Racecourse Mill. • The final Development Scheme will override local and state instruments and therefore no triggers will apply. DoR may be used as referral agency for applications where relevant. • Consideration of Acid Sulfate Soils is embedded in the SDA wide assessment criteria. • No amendments made to the Development Scheme.

5. Summary of amendments

In response to feedback received from public consultation, concerns raised at the community information sessions, and state agency and stakeholder feedback, the following amendments were made to the final Mackay SDA Development Scheme:

- minor amendments to the potential establishment of dwelling houses in the Rural Use Precinct, noting that further subdivision in this precinct is not supported
- minor changes to the vision and preferred development intent of the Industry Precinct to facilitate the establishment of new and emerging industries broader than just biofutures
- minor amendment to cultural heritage provisions to better address the management of these values
- additions made to criteria relating to hazardous activities to better protect people and the environment from any potential impacts of fire, explosion and toxic release
- amendment to development objective and SDA wide assessment criteria to strengthen provisions relating to the ongoing safety and operation of the Bruce Highway and Peak Downs Highway
- changes to the Industry Precinct to revert a lot back to the Rural Use Precinct
- additional provisions relating to amenity to address the transition of rural and rural residential to industry, including specific examples of way future industrial land uses can contribute to high quality urban design.