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## Citation and commencement<sup>1, 2</sup>

This planning scheme may be cited as the Toowoomba Regional Planning Scheme (planning scheme).

A notice was published in the Government Gazette No. 69 on 23 March 2012 for the planning scheme for the Toowoomba Regional Council.

The commencement date for the planning scheme was 1 July 2012.

Amendments to the planning scheme are included at Appendix 2.

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<sup>1</sup> Amended on 3 July 2017

<sup>2</sup> Amended on 4 August 2014

## Community Statement

In the year 2050 . . .

The Toowoomba Region has the best of city and country - it is a place in which we love to live!

Toowoomba City is a prosperous place with a cosmopolitan heart that retains its “rural heritage” and services the Darling Downs and beyond. A network of vibrant towns, each with their own character and identity, embraces a relaxed country lifestyle and rural qualities.

Our family friendly and safe communities are defined by their resilience, a spirit of collaboration and a rich cultural life. Good quality services and infrastructure equitably meet the diverse needs of our healthy communities. We care for our people!

Our region’s natural and built environmental assets and scenic landscapes are valued by our community and managed sustainably.

Toowoomba is a thriving region with a robust and adaptive economy that provides opportunities for all. We take advantage of opportunities presented by our unique position as a gateway to the east and west.

Our governance structure supports local community leadership and decision-making, and our communities actively participate in Council decision-making processes.

Our region’s future is guided by the understanding of the interconnection of all aspects of our communities.

*(Toowoomba Regional Community Plan, July 2010)*

## Strategic Vision

In the past, successive planning schemes within the Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) area have sought to direct and control the development of land to mitigate land use conflict, address the challenges facing communities and take an active role in creating the future, not passive one.

In many ways the outcomes sought by the new regional planning scheme will be a continuation of the planning schemes that have preceded it, as the core issues they have sought to address and the core outcomes they have sought to achieve continue to be relevant today.

Those core issues and outcomes are:

- Prevention of conflict between incompatible land uses.
- Provision for sustainable growth.
- Efficient and equitable supply of infrastructure.
- Conservation of our heritage.
- Preservation of urban character and rural landscapes.
- Protection of the environment.
- Development that makes a positive contribution to the urban landscape.
- Management of natural resources.
- Sustainable agricultural production.
- Ongoing economic diversity and prosperity.

However to mark a new direction for the region there will be three key outcomes sought in this planning scheme. These outcomes will change the landscape of Toowoomba City and our rural towns over the next 20 years. They are:

### **1. Increase residential densities in Toowoomba City and Highfields and to a lesser extent the rural towns.**

#### Why?

- To accommodate the projected growth of Toowoomba City and Highfields by 65,000 people over the next 20 years.
- As a more cost-effective approach to infrastructure provision to reduce the need to extend infrastructure into new areas, many of which require expensive sewerage pumping.
- Outward expansion opportunities in Toowoomba City are limited by The Range to the east and existing rural residential development to the south and west.
- Outward expansion of many rural towns requires the development of agricultural land. Increased densities within existing urban areas will reduce pressure on the surrounding agricultural land.
- Increased densities require different forms of housing which will improve housing diversity, choice and affordability and respond to our changing demographic. Housing in the TRC area has long been dominated by the three-bedroom, two-garage house with a substantial front and backyard on 600 – 700m<sup>2</sup> lots. This form of housing has met the needs of the dominant household type of two parents and two children across Australia for many years, however single and two-person households, many of which are occupied by the aged, are now the dominant type of households and therefore the types of dwellings we build must be more diverse to respond to these changes.
- To support and grow existing business.
- To make more efficient use of existing services.

#### How?

By:

- Designating areas in appropriate locations where higher density forms of housing will be supported, i.e. in the Toowoomba City Centre, within and close to major activity centres, open space and transport routes.

- Supporting increased building heights outside the Toowoomba City Centre.
- Encouraging greater diversity of lot sizes in greenfield development areas, including smaller lots down to 350m<sup>2</sup> and below.
- Limiting outward expansion of the existing urban area.
- Encouraging the provision of secondary dwellings on appropriate lots within existing residential areas.

## 2. Create greater diversity in housing

### Why?

- To respond to our changing demographic profile e.g., aging population and changing household type.
- To better provide for the housing needs of the existing community.
- To assist in stemming the loss of our young people to other places and to attract young people from outside our area to the region.
- To address housing affordability needs.
- To assist residents in maintaining social and community links as housing needs change.

### How?

#### By:

- Many of the measures that will increase residential densities will also create greater housing diversity.

## 3. The creation of neighbourhoods where residents can walk/cycle to work, school, shops and services and parks.

### Why?

- Address affordability issues.
- Improve community health and wellbeing.
- Encourage social interaction that builds communities.
- Reduce car dependency, air emissions and fuel consumption.

### How?

#### By:

- Investing in new pedestrian and cycle paths in existing and developing areas.
- Maximising the opportunities for people to live close to existing services and facilities and ensuring that these services and facilities are also provided in developing areas.
- Providing 'end-of-trip' facilities such as showers and bicycle parking in key destinations such as shopping centres and employment areas.
- Providing pedestrian-friendly urban environments that are safe and pleasant to be in.