

### 3.3 Settlement pattern

#### Context

Gympie Region centres on the town of Gympie and comprises a range of settlements, including small rural towns and villages, substantial coastal settlements and substantial rural residential areas.

#### Gympie

Gympie comprises the original town, its growing suburban outskirts (notably around Southside) and a rural residential fringe. It is characterised by –

- Its moderate growth rate, which is expected to continue, mainly because of reasonable relative housing costs, local infrastructure projects and proximity to the Sunshine Coast.
- Varied topography, notably including the valley and ridges defining the town centre and the floodplains flanking the Mary River and its tributaries. The valley and hills create the town centre's distinctive setting and the hills highlight many of the town's pre-war houses, echoing relationships with the past. The floodplains – most visible from the Bruce Highway's southern approach – limit development and ensure that the strong and highly visible connection between town and country remains in perpetuity.
- A relatively low residential density. Most people live in houses on relatively large lots, with most recent development occurring on the Southside. A range of living options are available, however further opportunities exist to establish a more compact settlement pattern, comprising a range of multiple dwellings and small lot housing, in close proximity to centres, services and infrastructure. The Southside Local Development Area Precinct has the potential to accommodate significant future residential growth in the medium to longer term, however to ensure efficient use of the land, structure planning is anticipated to be undertaken prior to any significant development occurring.
- A substantial amount of rural residential development at various locations around Gympie, the availability of which as a lifestyle choice is, like large residential lots, a core Gympie value. There is a commitment toward its continuation, though by way of consolidation rather than expansion into other localities, in recognition of its capacity to erode rural production and character values as well as the difficulty in providing appropriate servicing of these areas.
- A number of industrial locations. The emerging concentration of larger scale and higher impact industry around Glanmire is logical from the perspectives of geography and transport, so its expansion is facilitated, including a logical extension to the north, following the Bruce Highway by-pass route. Land within the Victory Heights Local Development Area Precinct has the potential for low impact industrial uses to locate west of Ascot Road and medium impact industrial uses to the east. Land within the East Deep Creek Local Development Area Precinct has the potential for a mix of medium and high impact industrial uses, subject to sufficient buffering of surrounding non-industrial land uses. Structure planning is anticipated to be undertaken within the local development area precincts, prior to any significant industrial development occurring, to ensure efficient use of the land. Significant small scale industrial localities relatively close to the town centre provide useful access to more frequently used services, although only limited expansion of low impact and service industries is envisaged. Areas at Kybong and Toolara Forest have the potential, subject to further investigation and the completion of the Cooroy to Curra Bruce Highway Upgrade, to accommodate longer-term industrial growth most likely beyond the life of the planning scheme.
- A well defined and economically and socially valuable town centre supported by a series of smaller centres. The town centre is distinguished by its valley setting and the strong links it displays with Gympie's gold rush heritage, most evident in some extraordinary pre and post Federation-era buildings. Preservation of these values is important to Gympie's identity. The centre is flanked by two destination retail nodes at the eastern and western ends of the centre, on Mellor and Duke Streets respectively, consolidation but not expansion of which is facilitated. Medical related uses are consolidated and expanded upon within the Gympie Medical Precinct, surrounding the Gympie hospital. Highway related showroom and fast food activity has occurred along significant stretches of the Highway, though there is a concentration on the Bruce Highway / Lawrence Street corner, which also contains substantial local commercial services. Large retail showrooms are accommodated in the Monkland Showroom Precinct, which includes the Bunworth Park estate, off Brisbane Road.
- Constraints to development are set by flooding, relatively steep slopes that create traffic planning challenges and surrounding productive agricultural land.

## Rural Settlements

Gympie Region's rural towns – the larger of which are Imbil, Kilkivan and Goomeri – are significant more in terms of their small town character and strong communities than their capacity to generate significant growth. The residential areas of these rural towns have been included within precincts to delineate the expectation that larger lot sizes will be maintained to preserve the existing character. The towns support generally small scale rural-based industries, though Imbil is notable for its timber industry and its tourism potential, courtesy of its being on the fringe of the Sunshine Coast hinterland and the terminus for the Mary Valley Heritage Railway journey. Of the rural towns, it displays most growth potential. From a planning perspective, little growth is anticipated in the rural towns and planning for them is largely about managing character and local rural industries.

The rural residential settlements of Curra, The Palms and Widgee are sizeable but relatively isolated communities with few local services. Occasional piece-meal subdivision has occurred in recent years, but there are topographical and hazard related constraints to growth, therefore further intensification is discouraged, as the relative isolation in each case poses servicing difficulties that should not be exacerbated. The rural residential settlement of The Dawn is also sizeable, however further intensification is discouraged, given that re-subdivision of the existing development pattern would considerably detract from the distinct semi-rural character and high level of amenity. Curra, The Palms, Widgee and The Dawn have all been included in precincts to delineate the expectation that larger lot sizes will be maintained within these areas, as opposed to other more conveniently located and less constrained areas of rural residential development where consolidation and higher lot yields are foreshadowed.

## Coastal Settlements

The coastal settlements comprise Rainbow Beach, Tin Can Bay and Cooloola Cove, each of which perform distinctive roles.

Rainbow Beach is a significant seaside resort town in its own right and tourist gateway to Fraser Island, the Cooloola National Park / Double Island Point and Inskip Point. As the town's main role is to support beach visits and camping, tourist activity is relatively low key, mainly limited to shops and food and beverage outlets. There is a range of accommodation types, including houses, holiday apartments, motels and caravan parks, but the vast majority of visitors camp, either in Cooloola National Park or Inskip Point. Campers can number in the thousands in high periods like Easter. Local industry is associated with local development and support services for the local tourist population and the tourism industry.

There are no current influences suggesting any change to current growth trends. However, the possibility of improved access to the Sunshine Coast, such as through an upgrade to the existing Cooloola Way, poses the prospect of a significant increase in both tourist and population growth; it is noted that there is no current proposal. It is significant that Rainbow Beach's growth is moderately constrained by surrounding National Park, State land and coastal hazards.

Tin Can Bay sits in a serene waterfront setting focusing on a partial peninsula formed by Snapper Creek and the southern end of the Great Sandy Straits. Its origins are in a combination of timber, fishing and boating industries, but tourism has assumed greater prevalence in recent years, with dolphin feeding, fishing and boating holidays prominent attractions. Mainly because of the geographical constraints of the town's early development, commercial development has occurred in a relatively haphazard manner. More recently, a clearer distinction has emerged between tourist and marine related development in the peninsula section and along Snapper Creek and commercial development on Groper Street and that has worked practically.

The Wide Bay Training Area to the north and west of Tin Can Bay is a significant Defence facility that is to be protected from the adverse impacts of development.

Like Rainbow Beach, current growth trends are likely to continue. Low-lying land and waterways prevent expansion in any direction other than southward, but that aside, expansion is relatively unconstrained.

Cooloola Cove is a relatively modern residential community south of Tin Can Bay. Originally a stand-alone residential subdivision, it has more recently acquired commercial development, so that it effectively provides support commercial facilities to the wider community that includes Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach. Growth trends are likely to continue and that is facilitated by a relative lack of development constraints. The historical 'regulated subdivision' area of Cooloola Cove has been included within a precinct to delineate the expectation that larger lot sizes will be maintained.

### 3.3.1 Strategic outcomes

- (1) Gympie will accommodate the majority of the estimated 22,000-person population growth in the Region for the next 20 years at Southside and Victory Heights, providing access to commercial and community services, major employment opportunities and urban infrastructure. The Cooloola Coast district will continue to attract substantial growth in population as a result of the coastal lifestyle, with opportunities for access to local community services, employment and shopping. Opportunities for urban expansion of Imbil, Kilkivan and Goomeri are anticipated within the capacity of urban infrastructure.
- (2) The urban form establishes a clear hierarchy of commercial centres, facilitates an increase in the density and diversity of residences, enhances opportunities for industrial expansion and diversity, is compact and promotes self containment and walkable neighbourhoods and integrates built form and land use distribution with green space.
- (3) Rural towns and settlements continue to provide alternative lifestyle options, access to services, opportunities for employment and economic activity at a local level.
- (4) The risk to life and property from natural and man-made hazards is avoided or mitigated.

**Table 3. 1 Theme components - Settlement pattern**

<b>3.3.2 Elements</b>	<b>3.3.3 Specific outcomes</b>
<p>(1) Growth – the established urban areas of the Gympie Region are expanded to accommodate the Region's projected growth for the next 20 years.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Broad-hectare land in locations identified on the Strategic Plan Map is protected to accommodate significant proportions of residential and industrial growth;</li> <li>(b) Areas in Southside, Victory Heights, East Deep Creek, Cooloola Cove, Tin Can Bay, Rainbow Beach, Kilkivan, Goomeri and Imbil that are contiguous to existing serviced areas develop in an orderly fashion for residential and/or industrial activities taking into account local circumstances and constraints;</li> <li>(c) Structure planning of the local development areas at Southside (residential purposes), Victory Heights (employment purposes) and East Deep Creek (employment purposes) is undertaken in the short term to ensure that medium to long term growth occurs in an efficient and logical manner.</li> <li>(d) Consolidation of urban centres is encouraged through in-fill and re-development in appropriate locations;</li> <li>(e) Undeveloped sites within existing urban areas are investigated to realise their best land use potential;</li> <li>(f) Opportunity to subdivide allotments in existing urban areas is maximised, while ensuring that there is no adverse impact on amenity or character;</li> <li>(g) The use of land in close proximity to town centres facilitates an increase in population density;</li> <li>(h) Higher density residential development that is designed to minimise its impact on amenity and character is preferred on serviced lots in close proximity to the Gympie City centre and key suburban centres;</li> <li>(i) Use of land for urban purposes in areas affected by natural hazards is avoided;</li> <li>(j) Coastal-dependent land uses are located adjacent to tidal water in preference to other land uses;</li> </ol>

3.3.2 Elements	3.3.3 Specific outcomes
<p>(2) Urban form –towns are well-defined, serviced and provide their residents with opportunities to work, relax and socialise in close proximity to their homes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Commercial centres develop as a co-ordinated network that supports and reinforces the identified role of each centre within the network identified on the Strategic Plan Map;</li> <li>(b) The Gympie central business area and core retail area is the Principal Centre for the Region providing the highest order of commercial, community and cultural services and facilities in the Region;</li> <li>(c) Larger-scale office or commercial activities locate in the Principal or District Centres;</li> <li>(d) District Centres that do not compromise the primacy of the Gympie Principal Centre are located at Duke Street, Excelsior Road, Mellor Street, Pinewood Avenue, Southside, Imbil, Kilkivan, Goomeri and Cooloola Cove;</li> <li>(e) Opportunity to establish bulky goods outlets and retail warehousing is provided at Monkland;</li> <li>(f) The Gympie Medical Precinct consolidates as a centre providing integrated and enhanced medical services at both local and regional levels;</li> <li>(g) Local Centres at Old Maryborough Road, Tozer Street, Stewart Terrace, Crescent Road, Red Hill Road, Mount Pleasant Road, Monkland, Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach provide access to services at a local level;</li> <li>(h) Industrial, commercial and other high-employment generating activities are located in areas of high accessibility;</li> <li>(i) Industry Investigation areas at Kybong are identified to preserve land for longer term employment purposes, dependent upon detailed planning and the completion of the Bruce Highway upgrade;</li> <li>(j) Industry with high impacts establishes in areas where amenity is already compromised, particularly east of the Cooroy-Curra bypass alignment at East Deep Creek and potentially at Toolara Forest in the longer term, subject to maximum mitigation of those impacts;</li> <li>(k) Low to medium impact industry is located in existing industrial areas that represent expansion of existing areas or on identified new sites, including the local development area at Victory Heights;</li> <li>(l) Land uses that are not compatible with existing or future industrial activities are not established in industrial areas;</li> <li>(m) Higher density residential development optimises the opportunity presented by the central location of higher-order retail, employment and community facilities;</li> <li>(n) Increased residential densities are accommodated in close proximity to Principal and District Centres at a scale that accords with infrastructure capacity and the nature of surrounding development;</li> <li>(o) Residential expansion is provided in close proximity to a wide range of social, community and physical infrastructure;</li> <li>(p) Areas of urban green space are provided and maintained to create a visual break in the urban form;</li> <li>(q) Existing open space areas are connected, where practicable, through the provision of additional open space as part of new development.</li> </ul>

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<p>(3) Rural towns and settlements – the Region’s rural towns and settlements are dynamic and appealing places that are the hubs of activity for their communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The role of existing rural towns and settlements in providing local services is enhanced, while protecting local character;</li> <li>(b) Rural centres and townships include a range of small-scale retail, business and industrial activities to facilitate growth in services and provide employment opportunities;</li> <li>(c) Rural residential development provides a legitimate life-style choice in close proximity to services and infrastructure;</li> <li>(d) New rural residential development is consolidated in areas with good access to services close to Gympie, north of the City and on the Southside, and Imbil, Kilkivan and Goomeri as identified in the Regional Plan and the Strategic Plan Map;</li> <li>(e) Other existing rural residential areas will maintain existing settlement patterns but will not be expanded;</li> <li>(f) Where existing environmental or natural hazard constraints exist, no further subdivision of rural residential areas will occur.</li> </ul>
<p>(4) Hazards – the avoidance or mitigation of hazards provides for the protection of life, property and valuable infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Development, including infrastructure, is provided with the best practicable protection from the effects of natural hazards;</li> <li>(b) Areas of new urban development within coastal hazard areas is avoided;</li> <li>(c) The ability of existing urban centres within coastal hazard areas to resist those hazards is facilitated through the development of adaptation strategies that provide counter measures addressing each specific threat;</li> <li>(d) Development considers the appropriateness of land use and employs necessary built form outcomes to minimise flood risk;</li> <li>(e) Development does not increase the number of people located permanently or temporarily in areas subject to bushfire risk;</li> <li>(f) Land use activities that involve inherent off-site risks are not located adjacent to or involve an increase in the level of risk to sensitive receiving environments;</li> <li>(g) High impact industries are co-located in areas where the effects of impacts are already experienced;</li> <li>(h) Development on lots subject to man-made hazards considers the implications of those hazards on the proposed land use;</li> <li>(i) New sensitive development is separated from existing hazards or areas identified for future hazardous industries or activities;</li> <li>(j) Development of lots affected by unexploded ordnance causes no increase in the risk of exposure to any such ordinance;</li> <li>(k) Consideration is given to the compatibility of previous and proposed uses of contaminated land.</li> </ul>