# Engagement Report

Planning scheme review
Engagement summary report

Ethos
Urban

'Gadalung Djarri'
Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gadalung Djarri' – translates to Hot Red Country. Representing Queensland.

The use of reds, purples, pinks and oranges illustrate the tones and natural hues of the Queensland environment, a place of ancient warmth against a backdrop of fluctuating terrains. Pink hues along with a criss-cross of patternings illustrate a sense of playfulness, with correlating lines of pink magenta and fuchsia moving into reds to represent the blood of Country. Along with the use of oranges these colours cultivate a strong visual link between all life and the immediacy we carry with nature.

Ethos Urban acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We acknowledge the Turrbal, Jagera and Yugara peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land where this document was prepared, and all peoples and nations from lands affected.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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1.0 (DRAFT)	10/10/2023	KM	NW
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1.0   Executive Summary

1.1   Overview

Ethos Urban has prepared this report on behalf of Gympie Regional Council, providing an overview of the feedback received during the 'Stage 2 Strategic Options Detailed Engagement' to inform the development of the new Gympie Region Planning Scheme.

The engagement was guided by the overarching objectives to:

- Provide information to the public about what a planning scheme is and why a new scheme is being prepared
- Keep all stakeholders informed of the plan making process in a simple and meaningful way
- Consult stakeholders to understand key planning and development issues within the Gympie Region, and other social, economic, and environmental influences
- Ensure stakeholders can interpret the new draft planning scheme in a way that is user-friendly and simple
- Involve relevant stakeholders in identifying regional opportunities and threats to Gympie and how the planning scheme can best respond to these
- Work collaboratively with the public to resolve policy issues, apply appropriate regulation to development and set clear expectations
- Maintain a collaborative relationship between Council and the State agencies to share knowledge, coordinate state interests and incorporate feedback on state requirements.

The purpose of Stage 2 engagement was to present and interrogate key issues, topics, or directions with the community to help inform the new planning scheme.

1.1.1   Engagement delivery

Feedback was proactively sought from **5 April 2023** until **7 August 2023**, with communications and engagement activities including:

- Information and FAQs provided on the website
- Draft policy position papers available to review, with supporting summary fact sheets
- Social media posts to promote the project and opportunities to get involved
- Emails to stakeholders, community groups, and interested community members
- Mini surveys on each draft policy position paper (10 in total)
- Community, business and industry stakeholder workshops held across the Region
- Pop-up listening posts, across the Region, providing intercept opportunities
- Meetings with key stakeholders
- Ongoing, iterative engagement with internal Council stakeholders
- Gathering submissions

This process provided a wide range of opportunities for community and stakeholders to learn about the project, get involved and provide feedback, resulting in almost 1,000 active touchpoints (where feedback was provided), and over 48,000 passive touchpoints[1].

1.2   Key findings

The engagement process revealed a range of key observations about the current regional context to be contemplated in the drafting of the new planning scheme.

- **A need to balance a range of competing priorities** across the Region. These include:
  o Protecting biodiversity and facilitating development. Respondents indicated that Gympie Region's biodiversity is highly valued for its environmental, community/social, and economic (tourism) benefits. There is an appreciation of the need for growth and development, but findings reflected that respondents would prefer to see biodiversity protected rather than later rehabilitated.
  o Rural production and development. Respondents value the agricultural heart of the Region and prioritise its protection, particularly the scenic amenity and economic benefits. Rural landscapes also offer appealing lifestyle and tourism opportunities, which need to be carefully managed to leverage benefits while not impacting the agricultural industry.

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[1] *Note: Does not represent the total number of individuals engaged, with some people likely to have had multiple touchpoints.*

- **Housing availability, affordability, and suitability** was seen as a critical issue to facilitate the Region's sustainable population growth, economic development, and community wellbeing.
  - Appropriate densification to provide better housing choice for residents, particularly for ageing in place. Sentiment was generally supportive of medium density options of appropriate scale and place.
  - Key worker accommodation was identified as an emerging issue, both to staff local services, and for future economic development.
  - Housing types to meet the specific needs of a range of residents, such as accessibility needs, lower maintenance properties, affordability concerns, different household types, tenures.
  - Dwelling mix in the CBD/town centres, to bring people physically closer to business and services, contributing to the vibrancy of the Region's centres.
- **Economic development** appeared to be a key priority for community and stakeholders across the Region.
  - Tourism and particularly eco-tourism opportunities that leverage Gympie Region's natural environment and rural landscapes, with concern that these values are carefully protected.
  - Bolster retail and commercial centres, bringing a range of uses and vibrancy at different times of day.
  - Commercial and industrial development, in the right locations, providing quality jobs, and with a focus on maintaining and enhancing amenity in surrounding areas.
- **Natural environment is highly valued** by community and is a key drawcard for the Region.
  - Informal recreation opportunities supported by infrastructure that bring people closer to nature, such as a rail trail, mountain biking, trail running, hiking.
  - A significant asset of the Region, drawing people for tourism or lifestyle, and a priority to carefully protect and manage in the context of growth and development.

2.0   Introduction

2.1   Project overview

The current Gympie Planning Scheme was adopted on 1 July 2013 and was prepared under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*. Since its first adoption, amendments have been made to the Scheme to recognise the *Planning Act 2016* (the Act), the *Planning Regulation and State Planning Policy* of 2017. The current planning scheme is reaching the end of its intended 10-year review period and Council is undertaking an engagement process to support the development of a new planning scheme for the Gympie Region.

Ethos Urban has prepared this report on behalf of Gympie Regional Council, to provide an overview of the feedback received by Council in delivering Stage 1, the 'soft launch' phase of the Gympie Planning Scheme Engagement Strategy (the engagement strategy).

Community engagement for the Gympie planning scheme review project is being delivered in the following stages:

1. **Soft launch** to start the conversation with key stakeholders, and preparing the community for upcoming, more involved engagement.

2. **Strategic options detailed engagement** to present and interrogate key issues, topics, or directions with the community to help inform the new planning scheme.

3. **A new planning scheme preparation targeted consultation** with key industry and community stakeholders, state government stakeholders and representatives, council officers and councillors, to help inform drafting of the planning scheme.

4. **Formal engagement on, and exhibition of**, the draft new planning scheme.

5. **Change management and implementation consultation** to close the loop on the outcomes of the planning scheme consultation and provide opportunities for Council staff and key users to better understand the new planning scheme.

The current report provides a summary of feedback received in **Stage 2 'strategic options detailed engagement'**, which was open for feedback from **5 April 2023** until **7 August 2023**.

3.0   Engagement approach

Engagement with the Gympie community and other relevant stakeholders is a statutory requirement when preparing a planning scheme under the Act. The engagement strategy is being delivered in accordance with the requirements of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (the Department) as set out in the Department's advice to Council dated 29 September 2021.

The engagement approach was also developed in alignment with Council's *Gympie Engagement Policy 2019*.

3.1   Engagement principles

The six core principles of community engagement identified in the Department of State Development, Infrastructure Local Government and Planning's (DSDILGP) Community Engagement Toolkit for Planning have guided this engagement process to ensure it reflects contemporary best practice and meets the State's expectations: -

1.   engagement focuses on the best interests of the community,

2.   engagement is open, honest, and meaningful,

3.   approaches to engagement are inclusive and appropriate,

4.   information is timely and relevant,

5.   information is accurate, easy to understand, and accessible, and,

6.   decision-making is transparent.

The DSDILGP's Community Engagement Toolkit for Planning includes reference to the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) is Public Participation Spectrum (see Figure 1). This framework helps to define the purpose of engagement and define the role of various stakeholders in a project to inform the selection of appropriate consultation techniques. The application of the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum is based on a detailed appreciation of stakeholders' key issues, ability to influence and impact the project. This communication strategy also references and reflects the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum.

The Stage 2 strategic options detailed engagement is at involve on the IAP2 Spectrum.

Figure 1 IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

3.2   Engagement objectives

The overarching objectives of engagement for the development of the new Gympie planning scheme are to:

1. provide information to the public about what a planning scheme is and why a new scheme is being prepared by Council,

2. keep all stakeholders informed of the plan making process in a simple and meaningful way,

3. consult with stakeholders to understand key planning and development issues within the Gympie Region, and other social, economic, and environmental influences,

4. ensure stakeholders can interpret the new draft planning scheme in a way that is user-friendly and simple,

5. involve relevant stakeholders in identifying regional opportunities and threats to Gympie and how the planning scheme can best respond to these,

6. work collaboratively with the public to resolve policy issues, apply appropriate regulation to development and set clear expectations, and,

7. maintain a collaborative relationship between Council and the State agencies to share knowledge, coordinate state interests and incorporate feedback on state requirements.

3.3   Who we consulted with

Table 1 identifies the key stakeholders to be engaged during the preparation of the new planning scheme. For each stakeholder group the IAP2 level of engagement (Figure 1 IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation and their role in the project is defined. This table has been updated from the Engagement Strategy to reflect the current Stage 2 Strategic Options Detailed Engagement.

Table 1 Stakeholder list

Group	Stakeholders	IAP2 level	Role
Internal Council Stakeholders	Internal officers and leadership	Collaborate	• Strategic input and project management • Specialist advice • Decision-making
	Gympie Planning Scheme Review Reference Group		
Local and State representatives	Federal Member for Wide Bay	Consult	• Strategic input • Share information
	State Member for Gympie State Member for Nanango		
	Gympie Regional Council Mayor and Councillors	Empower	• Strategic input • Leadership and project champions • Decision-making
Government agencies and authorities	Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DSDILGP)	Collaborate	• State Interest review • Collaborative decision making • Information sharing, data, and mapping
	Other departments and agencies (as needed, through DSDILGP)	Involve	
Education	Primary and secondary schools	Consult	• Youth perspective • Input on issues and opportunities • Future aspirations
	TAFE Gympie		
	University of Sunshine Coast - Gympie		
Industry groups	Sector peak bodies, including LGAQ, UDIA, Property Council, Real Estate Institute, Agricultural Industry	Consult	• Input on issues and opportunities • Advise on industry trends and growth • Future aspirations
	Tourism groups, including Mary Valley Rattler		
	Local development industry, including developers, planners, real estate agencies.		
	Local shopping centres and retail associations		

Group	Stakeholders	IAP2 level	Role
	Chambers of Commerce (Gympie, Tin Can Bay, and Mary Valley)		
Housing	Housing Industry Association (HIA)	Consult	• Input on issues and opportunities • Advise on industry trends and growth • Future aspirations
	Community Action Inc		
	QLD Homes & Housing		
	Aged care providers		
	Industry groups		
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Groups	Including Kabi Kabi, Wakka Wakka, and Butchulla Land and Sea Group	Consult	• Cultural insight and knowledge • Input on issues and opportunities • Future aspirations
General community	Residents and ratepayers	Consult	• Input on issues and opportunities • Future aspirations
	Organised community groups, environmental groups, and social services organisations		

4.0 Engagement delivery

This section details the communication tools and engagement activities used to implement the engagement process.

4.1 Communication tools

Throughout the engagement period, from **5 April 2023** until **7 August 2023**, Gympie Regional Council offered opportunities to find out about the project and provide feedback. These are summarised in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2 Communications tools

Activity	Description	Target audience	Reach (approx.)
Project website	A dedicated page on Council's website, including a project overview, how to provide feedback, key dates, links to surveys and workshop registrations, and documents to download for more information.	• Broad community • Key stakeholders	3,878 views (2,099 users)
Project overview fact sheet with FAQs	An overarching fact sheet explaining the planning scheme review project and how to provide feedback, available on Council's website and in hard copy at Council's customer service centres and libraries.		
Draft policy summary fact sheets	A summary fact sheet was created for each of the 10 draft policy position papers, available on Council's website, and in hard copy at in person engagement and Council's customer service centres and libraries.	• Broad community • Key stakeholders	1,707 views
Draft policy position papers	The full draft policy position papers were made available on Council's website.		
Social media posts (organic)	Council's comms team posted to Council's Facebook page on 26 May, 22 June, 27 June, 12 July to promote the project and opportunities to get involved.	• Council's social media followers	11,640 (total)
Social media posts (paid)	Council's comms team boosted a post on Council's Facebook page on 2 August to promote the final week to provide feedback.	• Broad community	30,700
Email list	Regular updates were provided to the project's registered email list about opportunities for input.	• Broad community	207

4.1.1 Stakeholder outreach

Table 3 Stakeholder outreach summary

Stakeholder	Outreach summary	Outcome
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Groups	Outreach undertaken by Council's CEO Office to the following groups: • Kabi Kabi • Wakka Wakka • Butchella	• Groups were provided an opportunity to discuss the planning scheme and provide feedback but were unavailable.
Youth	Email outreach to local schools to inform them about the planning scheme project and encourage them to share information and online feedback links with their community.	• Schools were informed of the planning scheme project and opportunities to provide feedback.
Emails to community stakeholders	An email update advising the status of the project and providing information and links regarding engagement opportunities.	• 241 individual emails were sent to provide a project update and encourage participation.

4.2 Engagement activities

Table 4 summarises the community and stakeholder engagement activities conducted.

Table 4 Engagement activities

Activity	Description	Target audience	Reach
Mini community surveys	10x mini surveys provided the opportunity for feedback on each draft policy position paper. **See 5.1 Community Survey findings.**	• Broad community • Key stakeholders	669 survey completions
Community workshops	4x workshops held across the Gympie Region to gather qualitative data on key issues and the desired approach to a range of key topics. **See 5.2 Community workshops feedback.**	Community members in: • Mary Valley area • Gympie area • Cooloola Cove / Rainbow Beach • Goomeri and surrounds (held as a meeting with Council staff)	48 attended
Industry stakeholder workshops	1x workshop held for Business, Commercial & Tourism and 1x workshop held for Development Industry stakeholders.	• Local businesses • Local industry • Tourism operators • Developers, planners, real estate • Peak bodies	35 attended
Pop-up listening posts	5 pop-ups held across the Gympie Region to gather qualitative data on key issues and the desired approach to a range of key topics. **See 5.3 Pop-up listening posts feedback.**	• Mary Street Easter market attendees • Cooloola Cove community intercept • Goomeri community intercept • Gympie community intercept • Mary Valley community intercept	96 conversations
Stakeholder meetings	11 small group or 1:1 meetings with key stakeholders from across the Gympie Region. **See 5.4 Stakeholder meetings feedback.**	• Biodiversity Reference Group 12/6 • Gympie Region Housing and Homelessness Forum • Elected representatives • Key community groups and bodies • Other stakeholders	104 individuals / stakeholders
Council officers who work with the scheme, or in related areas.	Internal staff engagement to gather input to the specialised studies and draft policy position papers. **See 5.5 Internal engagement**.	• DA planners • Engineers • Building team • Infrastructure team • Environment team • Compliance team	N/A
Gympie Planning Scheme Review Reference Group	Meets monthly or as required to discuss the planning scheme review project and provide guidance. **See 5.5 Internal engagement**.	• Internal Council leadership – Managers and Coordinators – across functional areas regarded as stakeholders.	N/A
Councillor workshops	6 workshops with Councillors to discuss and confirm the draft policy position statements. **See 5.5 Internal engagement**.	• Mayor • Deputy Mayor • Gympie Region Councillors	N/A
Submissions (via email or letter)	Community and stakeholders were invited to make submissions during the engagement period. **See 5.6 Submissions**.	• Broad community • Key stakeholders	43 received

5.0   Engagement outcomes

5.1   Community survey findings

Draft policy position papers on a range of topics were published on the Gympie Regional Council website, including a summary fact sheet for each and a brief community survey to provide feedback on the proposed approaches.

Information was made available progressively as each draft policy position paper was established. Table 5 summarises the survey open dates and the number of responses received for each topic.

Individuals were invited to complete all surveys of interest to them, it is a limitation of this approach that the total number of individual respondents is obscured. Age groups of respondents is shown in Figure 4, the greatest number of responses came from the 35-49 age group. There were few respondents under age 25.

Table 5 Overview of mini community surveys

Topic	Open date	Close date	No. days open[2]	No. Responses
Biodiversity	7 June 2023	7 August 2023	44	103
Bruce Highway Upgrade Response	26 May 2023	7 August 2023	52	77
Bushfire Hazard	12 July 2023	7 August 2023	19	23
Flood Hazard	20 July 2023	7 August 2023	13	32
Heritage	7 June 2023	7 August 2023	44	37
Industrial Development	23 April 2023	7 August 2023	74	31
Open Space and Recreation	12 July 2023	7 August 2023	19	74
Residential Development	9 May 2023	7 August 2023	65	105
Retail and Commercial	13 April 2023	7 August 2023	81	96
Rural Areas	9 May 2023	7 August 2023	65	91

In each survey, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with key policy directions. These results are displayed using graphs based on the key shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6 Key for policy directions graphs

Key		
Strongly Disagree		1
Disagree		2
Neutral		3
Agree		4
Strongly Agree		5

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[2] Business days from open date to close date, inclusive
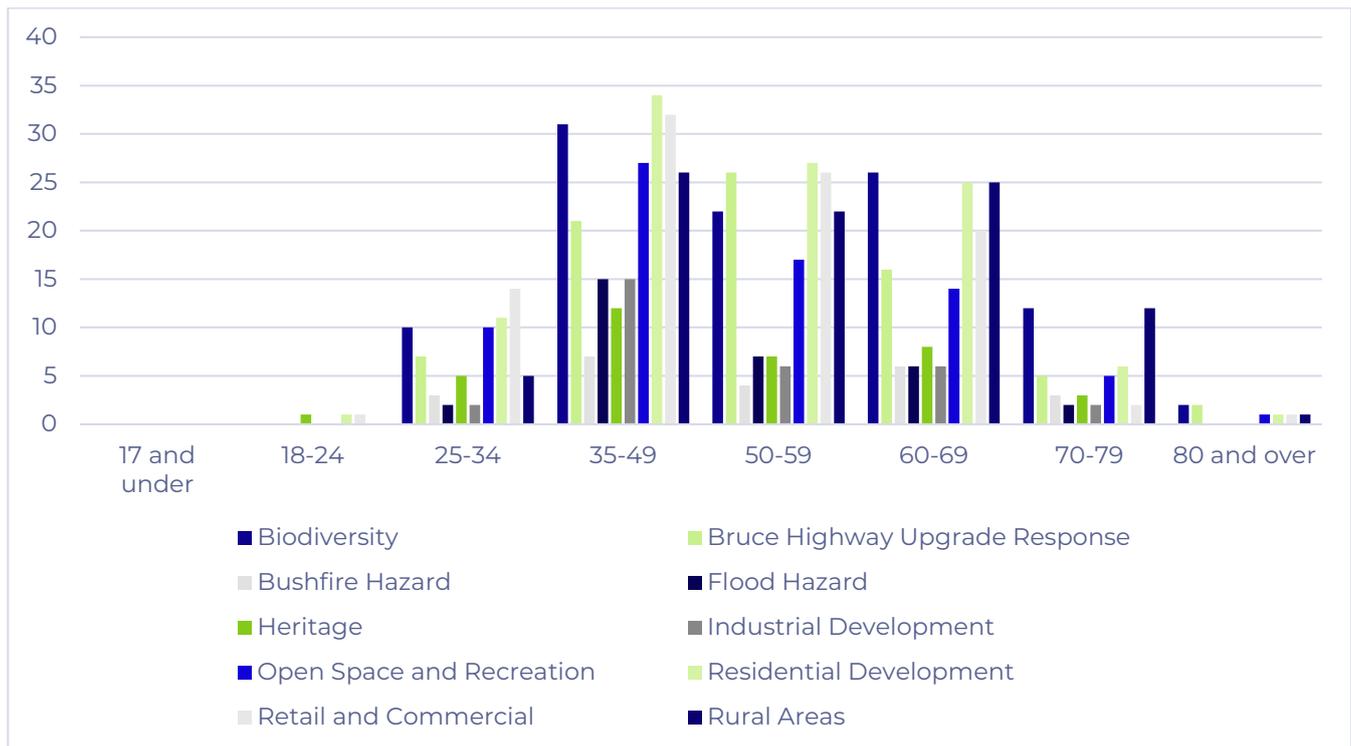
Figure 2 Respondent age group per survey

5.1.1   Biodiversity survey findings

Key issues in biodiversity

The biodiversity draft policy position statement identified 8 key issues for the planning scheme to consider (Refer to Appendix 1). Survey respondents identified their top 3 priorities from these key issues.

> **Top 3 priorities for biodiversity**
> 1.   **Regional koala conservation**
> 2.   **Ensuring development design does not result in residual adverse impacts on biodiversity values, negating the need for biodiversity offsets.**
> 3.   **Resilience to climate change**

Other issues raised by respondents in the biodiversity survey include the following key themes:

- **Environmental management** – more wildlife corridors and connectivity, habitat conservation and rehabilitation, weed and feral animal management, incorporating native flora and fauna and removing introduced species, and decrease habitat fragmentation, focus on infill development rather than greenfield.
- **Incentives and policies** – incentivising landholders to protect biodiversity on their property and regenerative agriculture; introduce a framework for best practice sustainable development, tree protection, speed limits to protect wildlife, and prevent development of tourism structures in National Parks, and transparency around SPP State Interest Guidance Material compliance.
- **Pets** – registration of cats, subsidise de-sexing pets, and promote responsible pet ownership to protect wildlife from introduced species and predators.
- **Community benefits** – foster the unique diversity and amenity of localities such as Tin Can Bay and Cooloola Cove, preserve Gympie's country atmosphere, and community education around indigenous flora and fauna species.
- **Infrastructure** – concerns about the biodiversity impacts of new infrastructure, e.g., solar energy transmission lines.

Proposed policy directions

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the proposed policy directions for each of the key issues identified in the biodiversity draft policy position paper. The percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (1); disagreed (2); were neutral (3); agreed (4); and strongly agreed (5); are displayed in the graphs in Figure 3 below.

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with most of the proposed policy directions for biodiversity in the planning scheme. Views were slightly mixed on incorporating Council's 2021 Climate Change Policy, with 39% selecting 'neutral'.

Figure 3 Level of agreement with proposed policy directions for biodiversity

Avoid development in areas where it is likely to negatively impact biodiversity.

Protect and enhance koala populations by preventing development from encroaching into koala habitat.
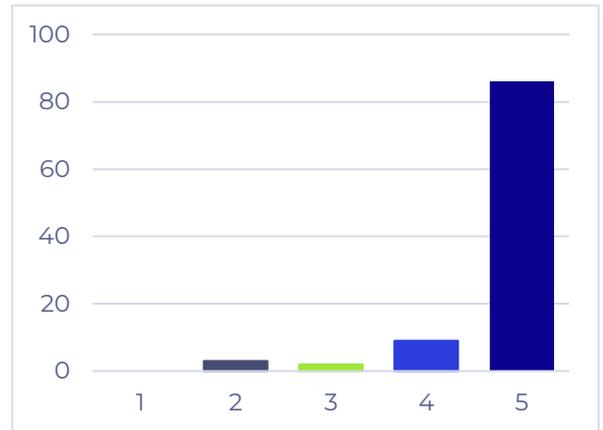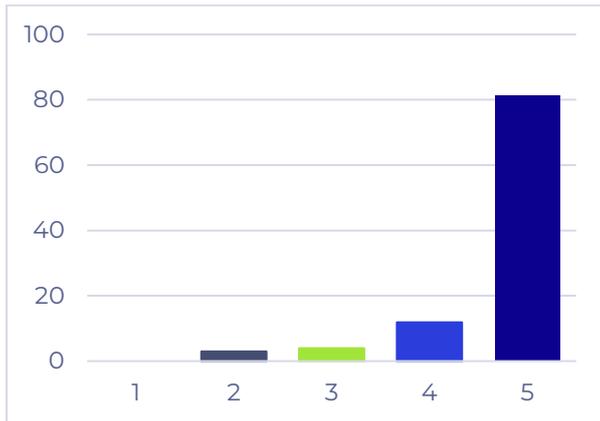
Ensure development design does not create adverse impacts to biodiversity, rather than relying on biodiversity offsets.

Incorporate biosecurity management considerations into the development assessment process.
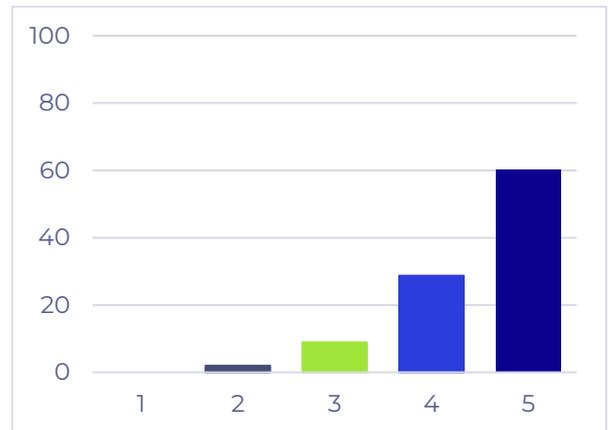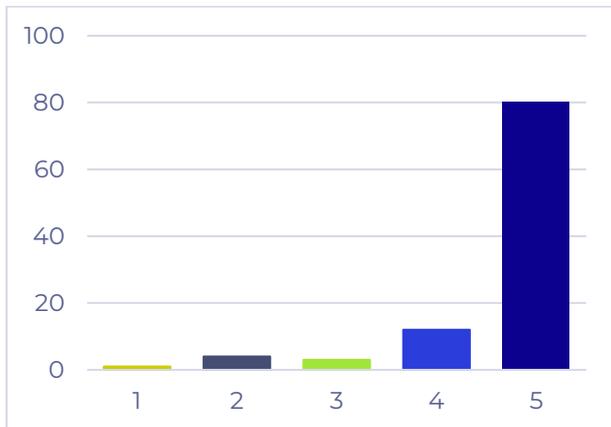
Biodiversity impacts of asset protection measures in bushfire prone areas need to be considered.
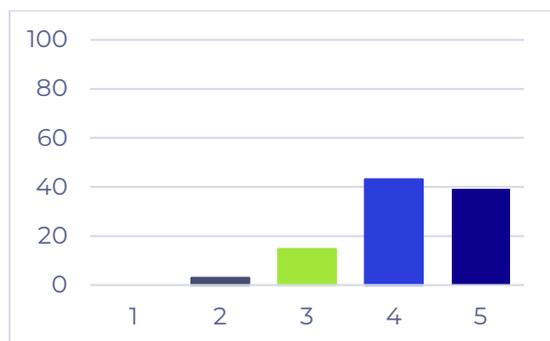
Improved water quality management measures to enhance the water quality of the Mary River catchment.
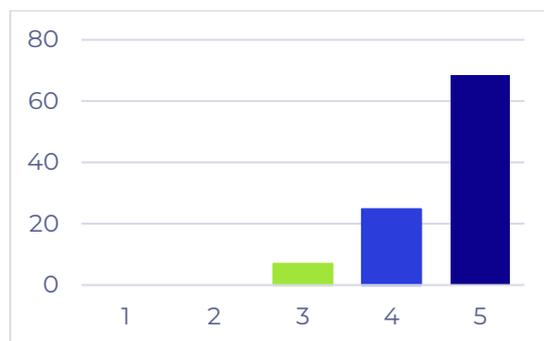
Minimising areas of wildlife-human conflict through the planning and development assessment process.
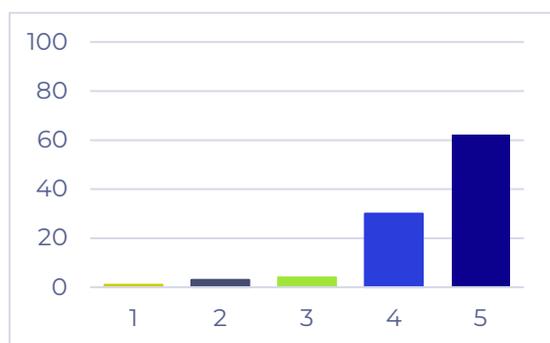
New planning scheme reflects Council's 2021 Climate Change Policy.
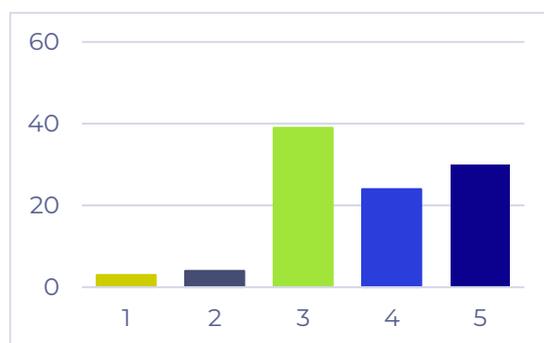
Balancing trade-offs

Well managed development requires balanced trade-offs between protecting biodiversity and facilitating urban growth, with both offering community benefit in different ways. Respondents were asked to use a sliding scale from 0 to 100 to indicate where they would like to see this balance in the Gympie Region, where:

- 0 = facilitating urban growth
- 50 = an even balance
- 100 = protecting biodiversity

Overall, respondents leant towards protecting biodiversity in how they would like to see trade-offs balanced with facilitating urban growth, as shown in Figure 4. The average score was 75.

Most scores occurred towards the upper end of the range, with 74 respondents assigning a score of 60 or higher, including 22 who selected 100, indicating a high priority towards protecting biodiversity. A small cluster of 12 responses assigned a score under 30, indicating a high priority towards facilitating urban growth.

Figure 4 Respondent scores for facilitating urban growth vs protecting biodiversity
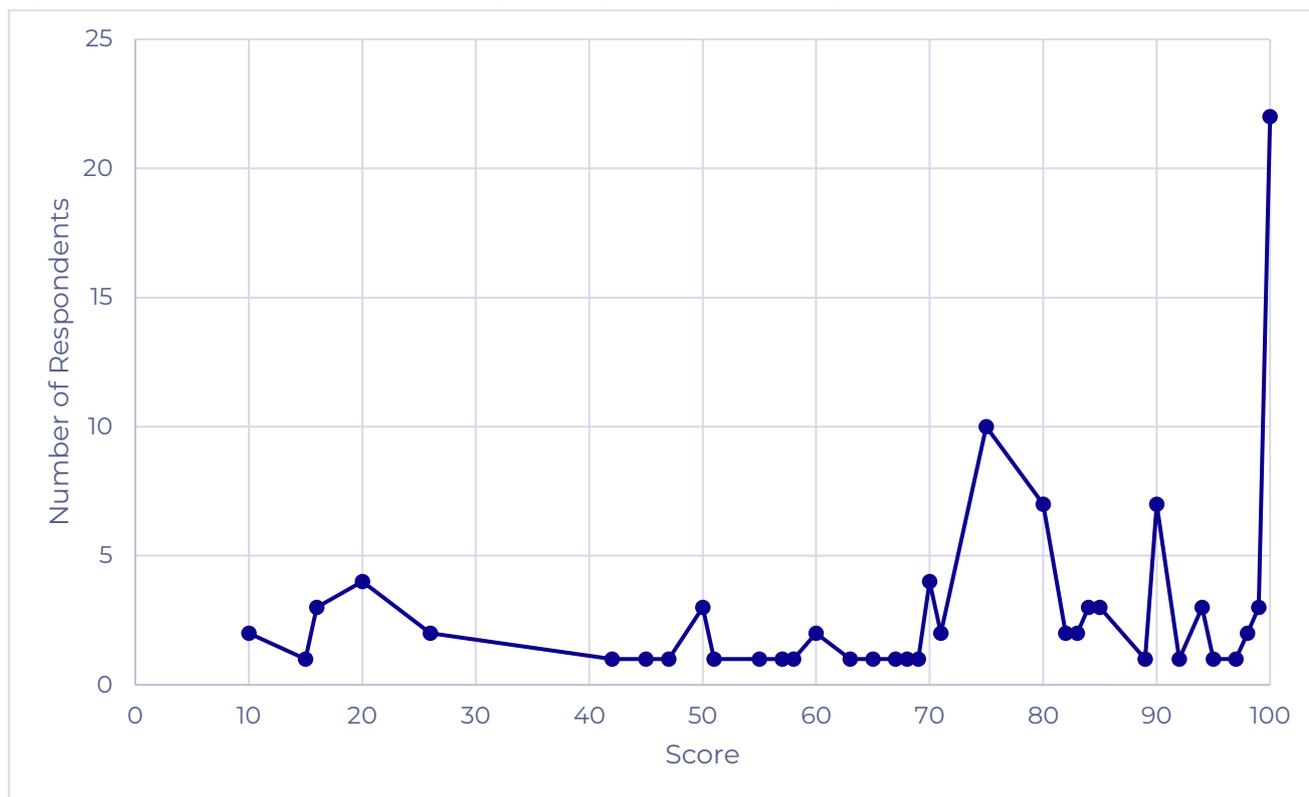
General comments and feedback

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments related to biodiversity in the Gympie Region. These are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7 Biodiversity summary of general feedback

Theme	Summary of feedback
Environmental management	Protect and restore biodiversity and areas of high ecological value.
	Protect water quality and waterways.
	Establish green/native wildlife corridors.
	Eliminate invasive species including invasive weeds.
	Preservation of trees and incentivisation of tree planting, particularly along waterways.
	Protect wildlife habitats on the Southside.
	Protect koalas and koala habitat.
	Conserve bushland.
	Implement buffer zones.
	Introduce wildlife friendly fencing.
	Protect riparian zones and remnant vegetation.
Managing the interface of development and natural environment	Concern for renewable energy zones and transmission lines impact on biodiversity.
	Encourage development in areas of low environmental value/significance.
	Provide landowner education.
	Support for infill/brownfield development.
	Introduce requirements for green spaces in new housing estate developments.
	Increase affordable housing supply.

Theme	Summary of feedback
	Incentivise developers to plant trees along waterways.
	Desire for lot sizes and setbacks to be larger.
	Against expanding the urban footprint.
Community and social value of the natural environment	Prioritise the amenity of the natural ecology of local areas.
	Offer incentives to local environment groups to encourage conservation activities.
	Offer support to existing and future Nature Refuge landholders.
	Protecting biodiversity has benefits for the whole region.
	Protect Cooloola National Park from development.
	Protect Rainbow Beach from development.
	Protect Gympie's environmental values.
	Educate local community.
Council and natural environment governance	Desire for Council to allocate more resources towards environmental conservation.
	Foster relationships with adjacent Councils including Sunshine Coast and Noosa Councils.
	Implement Land for Wildlife program across the local government area.
	Desire for Council to define who is responsible for ongoing care and enhancement of natural areas between and adjoining developments.
Road safety	Lower speed limits and enlarge signage on country roads to better protect wildlife.

5.1.2   Bruce Highway Upgrade Response survey findings

Key issues in Bruce Highway Upgrade Response

The Bruce Highway Upgrade draft policy position statement identified 7 key issues for the planning scheme to consider (Refer to Appendix 2). Survey respondents identified their top 3 priorities from these key issues.

> **Top 3 priorities for Bruce Highway Upgrade Response**
> 1.   **Advocate to State Government for improvements to the Gympie interchange to town centre to current Bruce Highway route.**
> 2.   **Review land use zoning along the old highway to improve business and community outcomes.**
> 3.   **Walkability, pedestrian, and active transport connections to points of interest and local services.**

Other issues raised by respondents in the Bruce Highway Upgrade survey include the following key themes:

- **Road upgrades and traffic:** Concerns were raised about the Noosa Road/Brisbane Road intersection upgrade and Stewart Terrace/Horseshoe Bend. Requests for improved phone reception, repairs, and upgrades to the old highway road surface, and to minimise the impacts of increased traffic in residential areas.
- **Air quality and noise:** Concerns associated with heavy industry on Noosa Road.
- **Biodiversity:** Request for remediation of work sites for native flora and fauna as well as request for increased public art and landscaping.
- **Town vibrancy and amenity:** Concerns were expressed about Gympie becoming a ghost town and requests for increased public art and landscaping.

Proposed policy directions

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the proposed policy directions for each of the key issues identified in the Bruce Highway Response draft policy position paper. The percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (1); disagreed (2); were neutral (3); agreed (4); and strongly agreed (5); are displayed in the graphs in Figure 5.

Most respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with most of the proposed policy directions for the Bruce Highway Upgrade Response survey in the planning scheme. Feedback was more mixed about the development of the Curra industrial area, with more neutral responses.

Figure 5 Level of agreement with proposed policy directions for Bruce Highway Upgrade Response

Advocate to State Government for Flood Road upgrade to better accommodate heavy vehicle traffic.
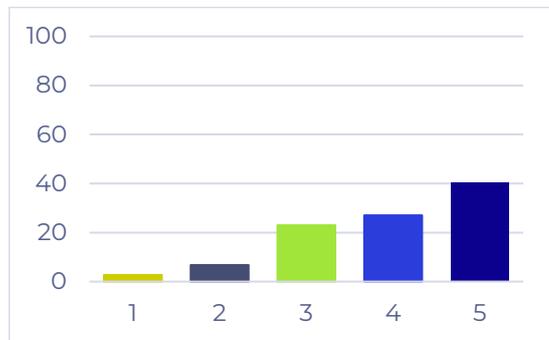
Advocate to State Government for Hall Road railway overpass bridge upgrade to accommodate two-way traffic, heavy vehicles, and provide an alternative route in flood events.
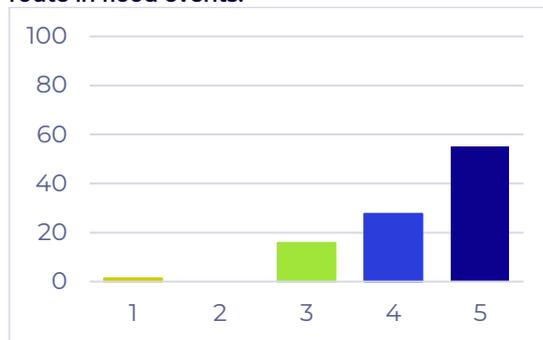
Develop the Curra industrial area to take full advantage of the new highway interchange.
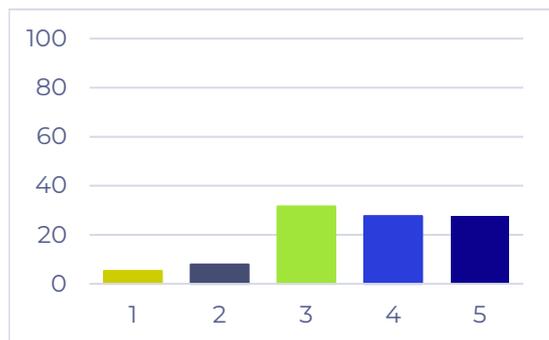
Safe walking and active transport routes to be available along the 'old' highway route, connecting points of interest and local services.
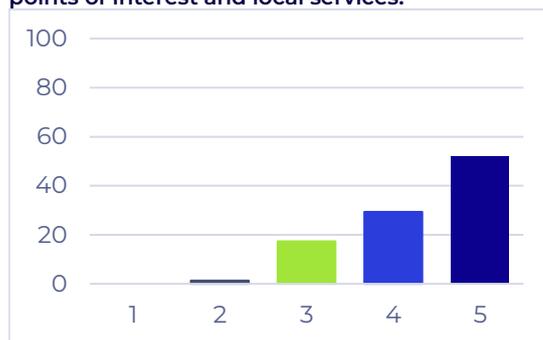
Improved landscaping and wayfinding methods are needed along the 'old' highway route through town.
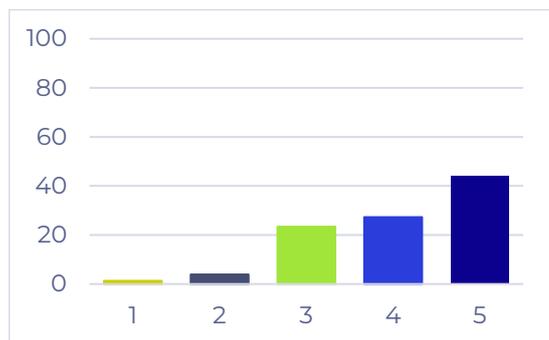
Land no longer needed should be zoned and subdivided to create useable lots of a suitable size and shape.
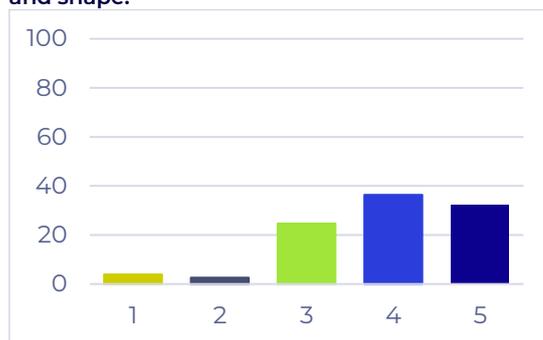
Land uses along the 'old' highway route should be reviewed to improve business and community outcomes.
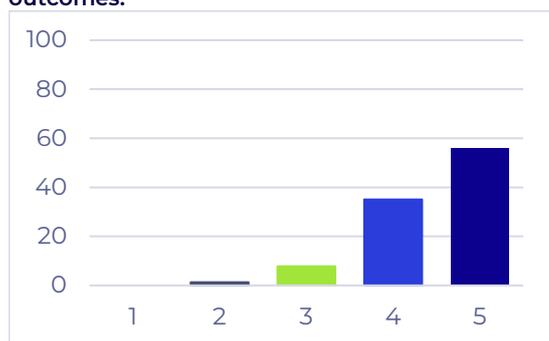
General comments and feedback

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments related to the Bruce Highway Upgrade Response in the Gympie Region. These are summarised in Table 8.

Table 8 Bruce Highway Upgrade summary of general feedback

Theme	Summary of feedback
Connectivity and active transport options	The old highway should be converted to cycle, car, and pedestrian to connect the precincts.
	Implement wayfinding signage to support landmarks and attractions.
Community safety	Communicate with residents regarding traffic.
	Improve the safety of major roads such as Stewart Terrace and Bath Terrace.
	Improve the quality of major roads and determine their capacity.
Environmental management	Identify and preserve green spaces and corridors.
	Remediate native wildlife corridors to avoid death of wildlife from vehicles.
	Incorporate wildlife fencing.
	Plant more trees.
Tourism promotion	Improve marketing Gympie as a destination for tourism.

5.1.3   Bushfire Hazard survey findings

Key issues in Bushfire Hazard

The Bushfire Hazard draft policy position statement identified 6 key issues for the planning scheme to consider (Refer to Appendix 3). Survey respondents identified their top 3 priorities from these key issues.

Top 3 priorities for bushfire hazard

1.   Protection of biodiversity values.
2.   Bushfire prone areas mapping to reflect the latest available State Government mapping.
3.   Bushfire protection and management for new development.

Other issues raised by respondents in the Bushfire Hazard survey included the following themes:

- **Rezoning cleared land:** disagreement amongst respondents about rezoning cleared land for other purposes once bushfire risk was minimised.

- **Bushfire buffer area:** Requests to maintain and/or increase the bushfire buffer zones.

Proposed policy directions

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the proposed policy directions for each of the key issues identified in the bushfire hazard draft policy position paper. The percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (1); disagreed (2); were neutral (3); agreed (4); and strongly agreed (5); are displayed in the graphs in Figure 6.

Most respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with all proposed policy directions for the Bushfire Hazard survey in the planning scheme. There was a low level of disagreement about the mapping approach (4.5%) and development outside of intolerable bushfire risk (8.7%).

Figure 6 Level of agreement with proposed policy directions for Bushfire Hazard

Bushfire prone areas mapping reflects the latest available State Government mapping and include provisions to manage bushfire risk.
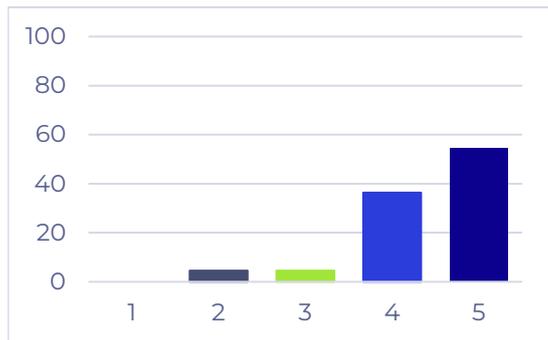
New development is not to occur in areas of intolerable bushfire risk.
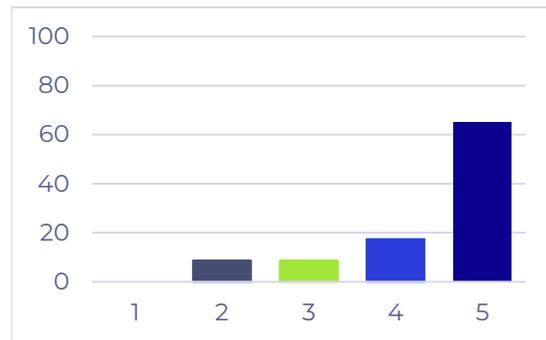
New development proposed in bushfire prone areas will be subject to site-specific risk assessment and management provisions
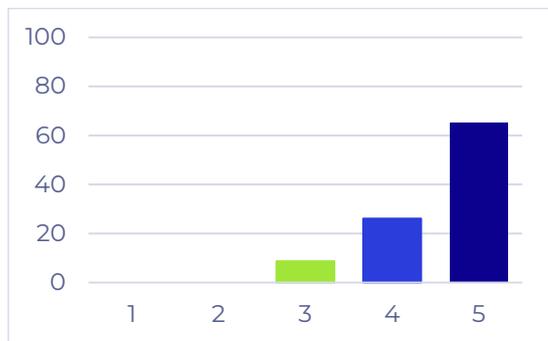
New subdivision is designed to protect life and property by facilitating design outcomes that provide maximum protection from bushfire fuel sources and vehicle circulation for access, evacuation, and emergency response.
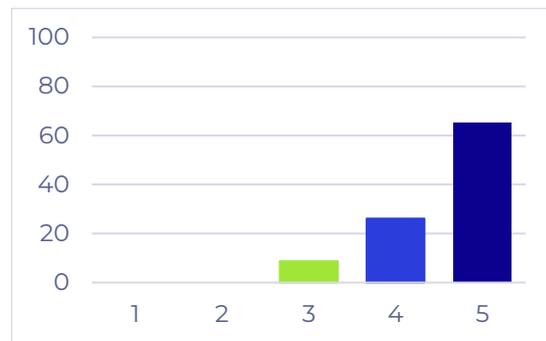
Implement an avoidance approach to bushfire risk for vulnerable uses and community infrastructure for essential services.
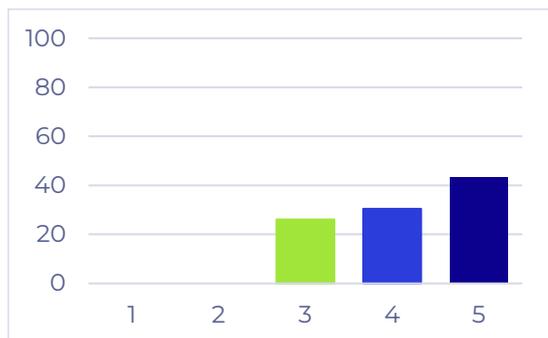
Asset protection is achieved without adverse impacts to the biodiversity of the Gympie Region.
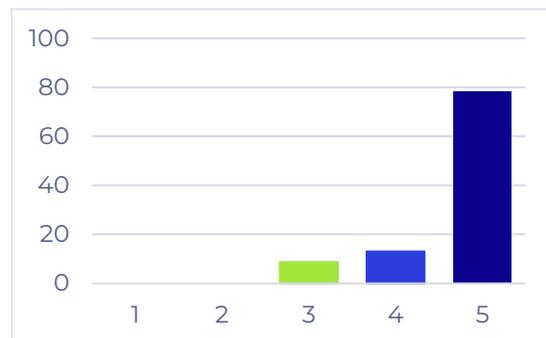
General comments and feedback

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments related to the Bushfire Hazard in the Gympie Region. These are summarised below in Table 9.

Table 9 Bushfire Hazard summary of general feedback

Theme	Summary of feedback
Council governance of bushfire risk	Request for Council to ensure that bushfire management plans are upheld and maintained.
	Request for Council to have a dedicated bushfire hazard team / resources.
	Request for more controlled burns in low-risk seasons.
	Request for Council to avoid the risk rather than mitigate the outcomes of the risk.

5.1.4   Flood Hazard survey findings

Key issues in Flood Hazard

The Flood Hazard draft policy position paper identified 7 key issues for the planning scheme to consider (Refer to Appendix 4). Survey respondents identified their top 3 priorities from these key issues.

> ### Top 3 priorities for flood hazard
>
> 1.   **Determining flood risk categories to define and map risk and reduce exposure of new development.**
> 2.   **Overland flow paths are considered in development design, to be maintained and not diverted to upstream or downstream properties.**
> 3.   **Development does not result in an increase in the number of people needing to be evacuated from flood islands.**

Other issues raised by respondents in the Flood hazard survey include the following key themes:

- **Environmental management:** native vegetation and land regeneration in the Riparian Zone
- **Soil quality:** impact of flooding on soil quality and health

Proposed policy directions

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the proposed policy directions for each of the key issues identified in the Flood Hazard draft policy position paper. The percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (1); disagreed (2); were neutral (3); agreed (4); and strongly agreed (5); are displayed in the graphs in Figure 7.

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all proposed policy directions for managing flood hazard in the planning scheme. There was some disagreement with the new risk-based approach to flood hazards (9.4%), and filling and excavation thresholds (15.6%).

Figure 7 Level of agreement with proposed policy directions for Flood Hazard

New risk-based approach to reduce exposure of new development to flood hazard.
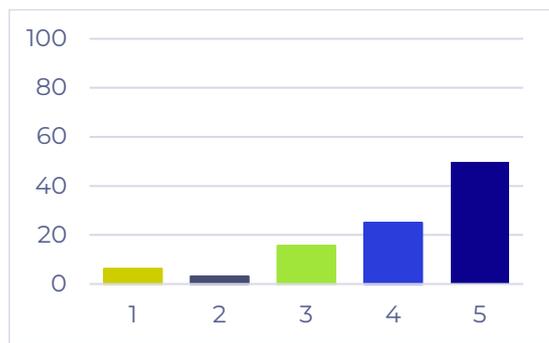
Avoid development in high-risk flood areas, except where risk is mitigated without impacting flood plain.
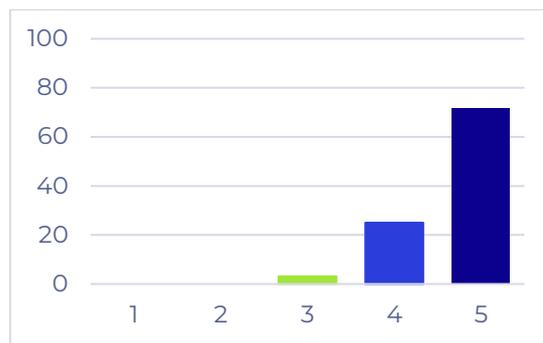
Vulnerable uses and essential community infrastructure are not exposed to flood hazard; Council will seek to ensure these are located outside the Probable Maximum Flood level.
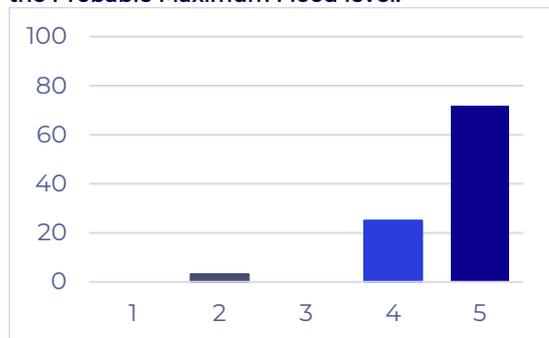
Overland flow paths are considered in development design, to be maintained and not diverted to upstream or downstream properties.
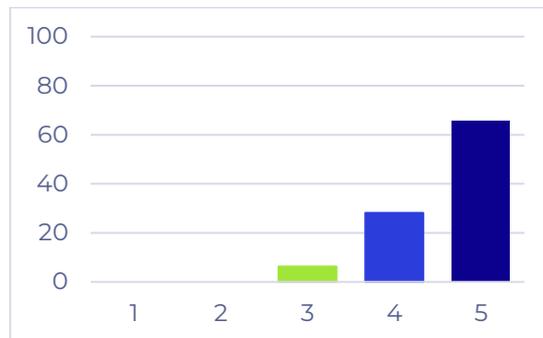
Filling of land does not adversely impact flood conveyance or flood storage, with filling and excavation thresholds to be imposed.
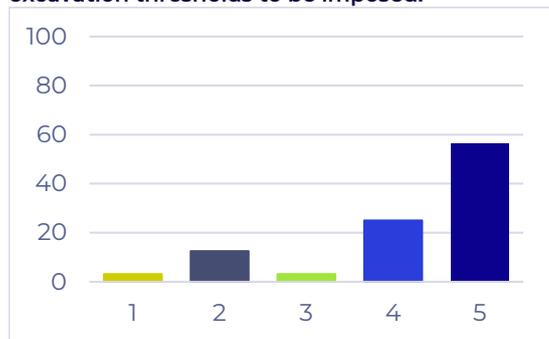
Development does not result in an increase in the number of people needing to be evacuated from flood islands.
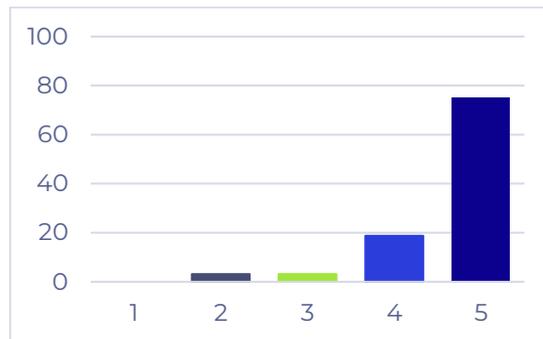
General comments and feedback

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments related to Flood Hazard in the Gympie Region. These are summarised in Table 10 Flood Hazard summary of general feedback.

Table 10 Flood Hazard summary of general feedback

Theme	Summary of feedback
Data accuracy, mapping and monitoring	Involve landholders to gain local knowledge and insights.
	Concerns around the accuracy of highest flood levels.
	Request to monitor Deep Creek flood threat.
	Request to ensure that flood maps are up to date and available to the public.

Theme	Summary of feedback
Community education	Prioritise stormwater education and management.
Environmental impacts	Assess water quality and quantity.
	Assess impacts to threatened aquatic species.
	Concerns around soil quality and fertility and the impacts on tree planting.
Policy	Request for clear policies.
	Request for all areas impacted by flooding to inhibit development, aside from areas impacted by 100-year flood events.
	Request to allow development on flood prone land due to affordability.
	Request for regulations that inhibit development on flood prone land.
	One respondent disagreed that filling of land affects flood storage.

5.1.5 Heritage survey findings

Key issues in heritage

The heritage draft policy position statement identified 7 key issues for the planning scheme to consider. Survey respondents identified their top 3 priorities from these key issues.

Top 3 priorities for heritage

1. The character and amenity of heritage buildings that define Gympie Region's local identity are conserved.
2. Council's approach to heritage conservation is consistent with best practice.
3. Identifying and managing threats to heritage buildings and places

Other issues raised by respondents in the Heritage survey included the following key themes:

- **Aboriginal cultural heritage:** identification of cultural heritage in the planning scheme.
- **Promotion and celebration:** promoting the cultural values of the area celebrating and maintaining culturally rich buildings and areas.

Proposed policy directions

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the proposed policy directions for each of the key issues identified in the heritage draft policy position paper. The percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (1); disagreed (2); were neutral (3); agreed (4); and strongly agreed (5); are displayed in the graphs in Figure 8.

Respondents mostly agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed policy directions for heritage. There was a low level of disagreement about legislated and best practice heritage conservation (5.6%) and evolving heritage places to meet contemporary building codes (11.1%).

Figure 8 Level of agreement with proposed policy directions for Heritage

Heritage sites continue to play an important role in defining the local identity of the Gympie Region.
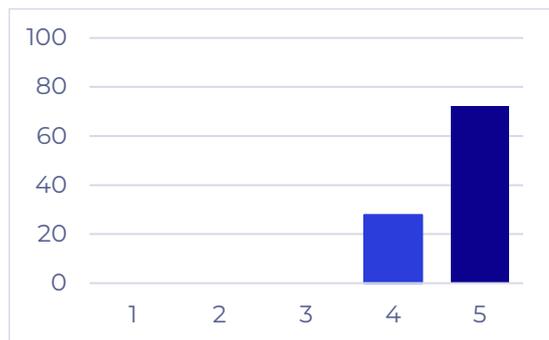
Heritage conservation in the Gympie Region remains consistent with current legislation and best practice.
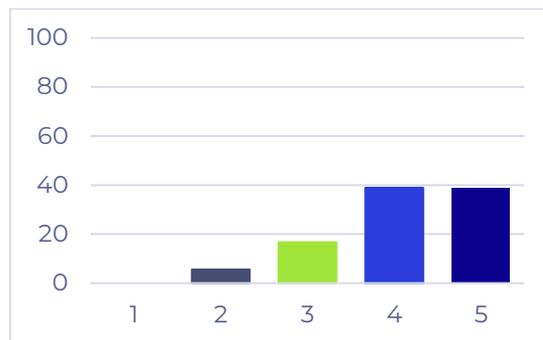
Demolition of heritage buildings is seen as a last resort option, only when all other possibilities have been explored.
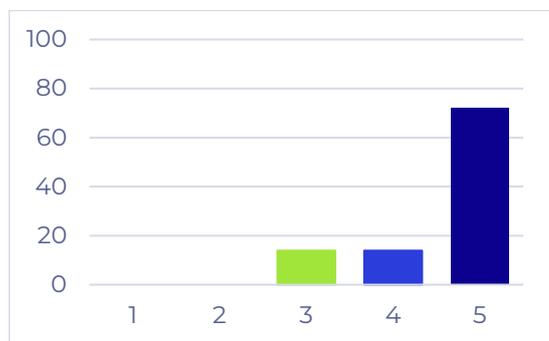
Support adaptive reuse as an approach to retain and continue using heritage places, while balancing financial realities with conservation values.
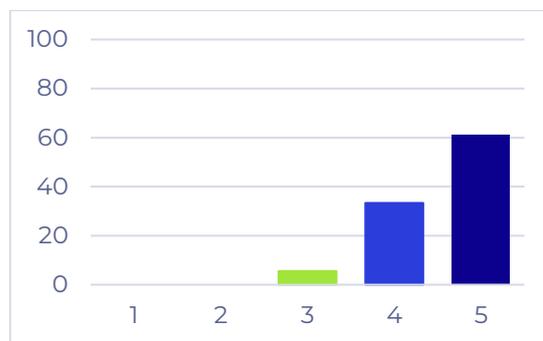
Heritage places evolve to meet contemporary building codes, making spaces safe and accessible to people of all abilities where possible, without compromising heritage values.
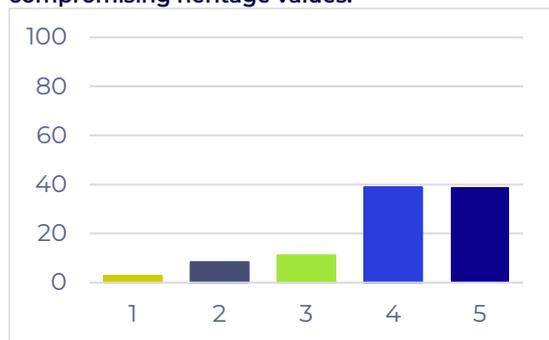
Establish an incentive scheme to recognise and support owners to conserve heritage places.
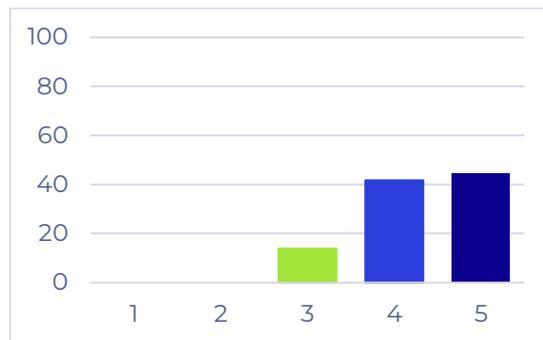
General comments and feedback

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments related to heritage in the Gympie Region. These are summarised in Table 11.

Table 11 Heritage summary of general feedback

Theme	Summary of feedback
Maintaining and celebrating heritage	Reward those who are maintaining heritage.
	Limitations on demolition potential if heritage has not been maintained over time.
	Funding for high use heritage buildings.
	Lower levels of assessment for heritage buildings to enable development.

Theme	Summary of feedback
	Heritage-based public artwork.
Protection of heritage items	Understanding the future commercial viability or safety of an item being listed.
	Protection of all pre-war buildings.
	Streetscape interface of heritage and character areas.
	Include Aboriginal cultural heritage.
	Tree protection policy.

5.1.6 Industrial Development survey findings

Key issues in industrial development

The industrial development draft policy position statement identified seven key issues for the planning scheme to consider (Refer to Appendix 1). Survey respondents identified their top 3 priorities from these key issues.

Top 3 priorities for industrial development

1. **Attracting businesses and industries that build on Gympie Region's strengths.**
2. **A high level of amenity in industrial areas, protecting human health, the environment, and creating attractive places to work, visit, and do business.**
3. **Industrial land connections are consolidated to from recognisable precincts.**

Other issues raised by respondents in the industrial development survey included the following key themes:

- **Environmental management** – protection of native old growth forests and the implementation of a tree protection policy. There is a need for assurance that industrial development should only occur on already cleared land to reduce the rate of bushland clearance. Industrial development should also be built away from natural waterways.
- **Council initiative** – would like Council to better support new industrial and business development. Gympie holds a strategic advantage over the Sunshine Coast due to its location on the Bruce Highway and cheaper land prices.

Proposed policy directions

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the proposed policy directions for each of the key issues identified in the industrial development draft policy position paper. The percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (1); disagreed (2); were neutral (3); agreed (4); and strongly agreed (5); are shown in the graphs in Figure 9.

Most respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with all proposed policy directions for industrial development. The greatest variation in responses regarded the prioritisation of urban services to industrial zoned land, where the least amount of people strongly agreed (30%) and most amount of people disagreed (6.67%).

Figure 9 Level of agreement with proposed policy directions for industrial development

Attract business and industries that build on Gympie Region's competitive strengths and comparative advantages.
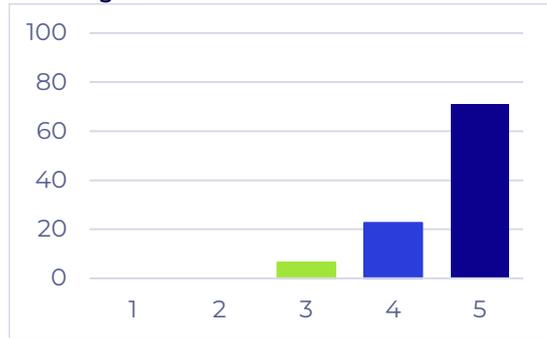
Lead and support sustainable economic development by co-locating economic activity.
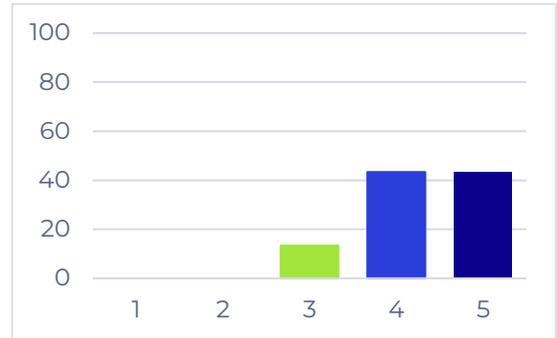
Facilitate co-location of non-retail commercial activities with low and medium impact industrial activities.
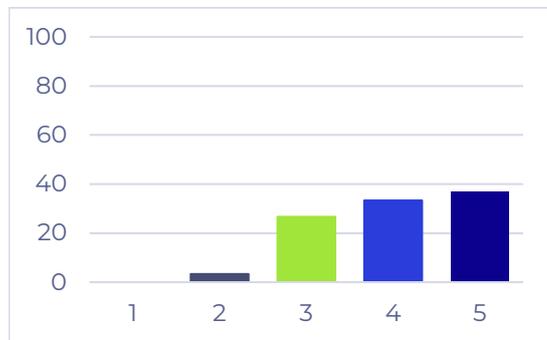
Prioritise the provision of urban services (e.g., roads, electricity, telecommunications, water, storm water, and sewerage) to industrial zoned land.
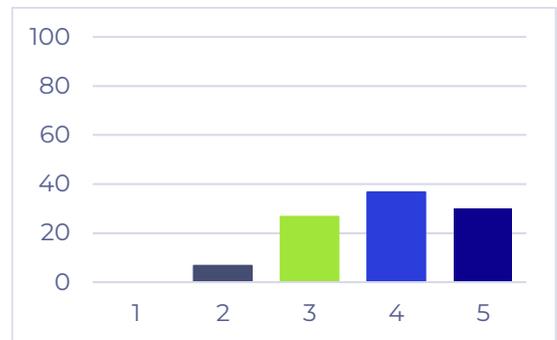
Protect the health, comfort, and attractiveness of the Region for people and the environment by buffering high impact industrial areas.
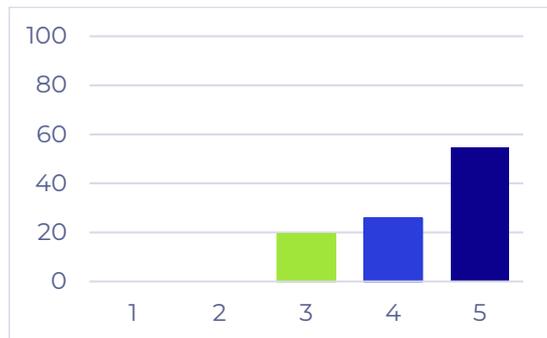
Promote industrial development that provides an attractive place to work, visit, and do business.
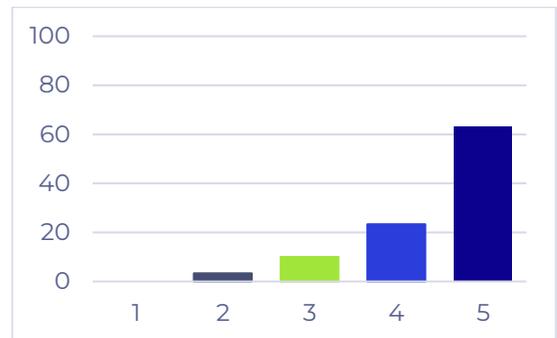
Ensure available supply of industrial land is not reduced by non-industrial development or activities.
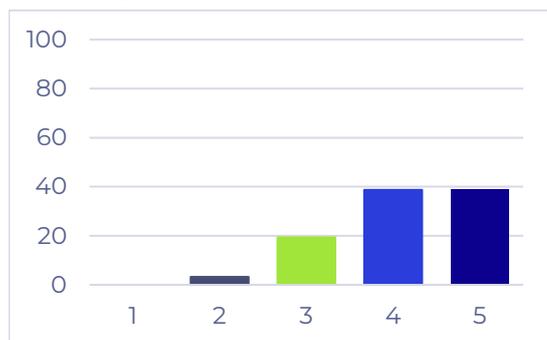
Consolidate future industrial growth into precincts that can be serviced efficiently.
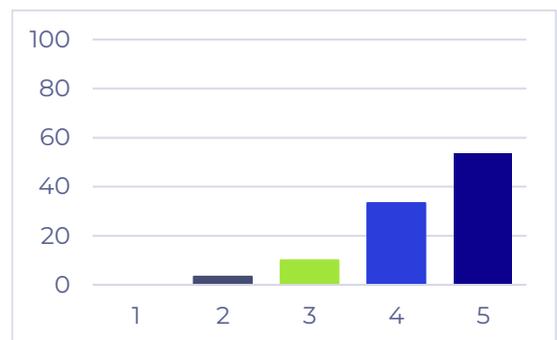
General comments and feedback

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments related to industrial development in the Gympie Region. These are summarised in Table 12.

Table 12 Industrial development summary of general feedback

Theme	Summary of feedback
Environmental sustainability	Carbon positive or neutral industries to help mitigate climate change.
Location of industry	Re-locate industrial businesses within Gympie centre to planned industrial estates on the town's fringes.
	Draw upon the centre's strength as being in proximity to the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane to attract new businesses, especially with land being more affordable.

5.1.7   Open Space and Recreation survey findings

Key issues in open space and recreation

The open space and recreation draft policy position statement identified six key issues for the planning scheme to consider (Refer to Appendix 1). Survey respondents identified their top 3 priorities from these key issues.

> **Top 3 priorities for open space and recreation**
> 1.   **Creating more walkable neighbourhoods.**
> 2.   **Improving and embellishing the existing open network to make it the best it could be.**
> 3.   **Identifying and addressing specific open space demands, including sporting facilities.**

Other issues raised by respondents in the biodiversity survey included the following key themes:

- **Environmental management and biodiversity** – develop an action plan to improve the water quality of the Mary River for recreational use. Creation of wildlife corridors that interlinks with biodiversity areas and open space. Additional trees and plants within parks and open spaces, particularly native species, were also identified.
- **Improved accessibility and wayfinding** – a need was identified for open spaces cater to a range of different ages, backgrounds, and abilities, and to improve accessibility for people with prams and wheelchairs. A suggestion was made to create walking maps and/or a walking tour to improve wayfinding and draw people to areas of interest, including Aboriginal cultural heritage. Indoor sporting and recreational facilities and dog parks have also been highlighted as an additional need.
- **Better park management and improved safety** – some concern was raised around the condition of some parks and open space, with some poorly maintained. An identified need is for Council to prioritise the maintenance of spaces. Respondents also asked for improved safety in spaces through additional security, CCTV cameras, and lighting.

Proposed policy directions

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the proposed policy directions for each of the key issues identified in the open space and recreation draft policy position paper. The percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (1); disagreed (2); were neutral (3); agreed (4); and strongly agreed (5); are displayed in the graphs in Figure 10.

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all proposed policy directions for open space and recreation in the planning scheme. The greatest variation in responses regarded the consultation with Native Title holders and claimants, which had the least amount of people strongly agreeing (30.56%) and most amount of strongly disagreeing (13.89%). Results across the level of support for this question were more evenly distributed.

Figure 10 Level of agreement with proposed policy directions for open space and recreation

Defining open space as a public or private facility (or land) that provides recreation and leisure to the community.
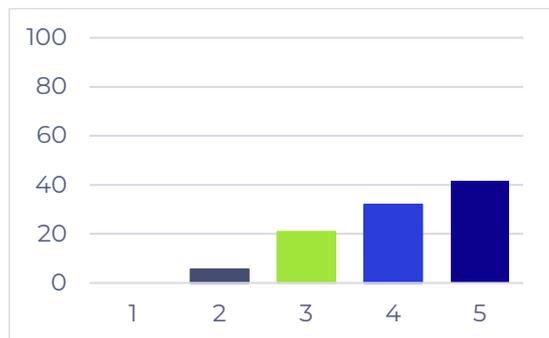
Focusing on consolidating, embellishing, and improving the existing open space network, rather than expanding the footprint.
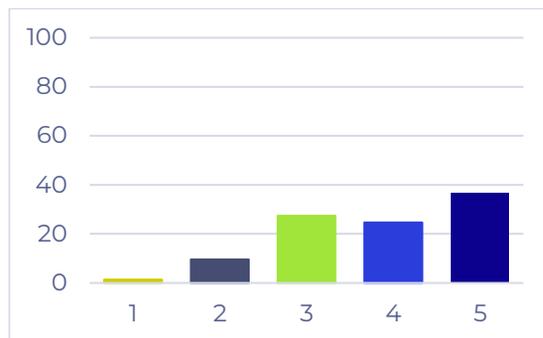
Improving the quality of recreation parks, and increasing sporting parks and facilities.
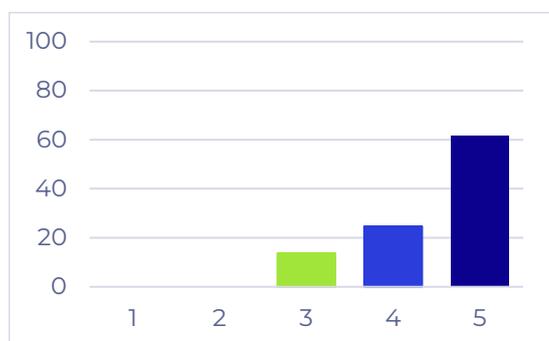
Ensuring current standards regarding accessibility and connectivity of public spaces are reflected in the new scheme.
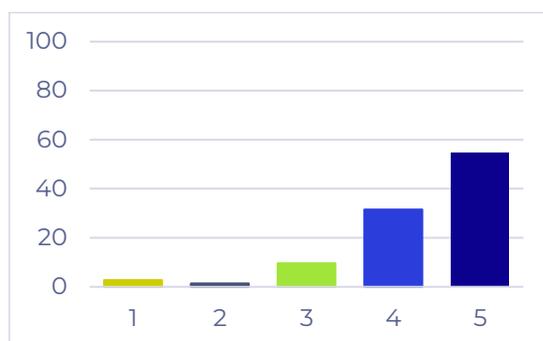
Consulting with Native Title holders and claimants in the preparation of the new scheme, to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes regarding open space.
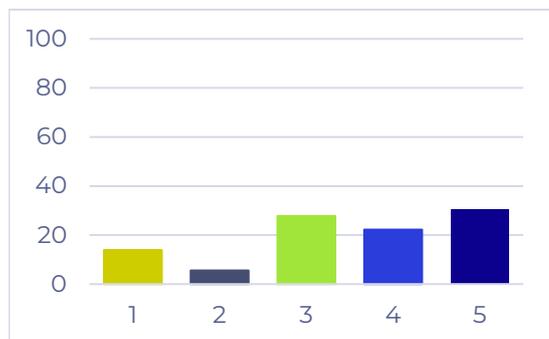
Creating more walkable neighbourhoods by imposing new requirements on subdivisions to ensure they are adequately serviced by open space.
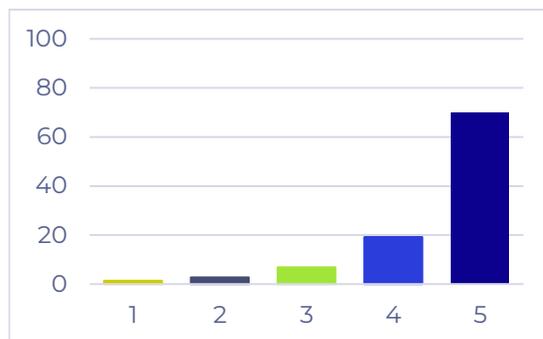
General comments and feedback

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments related to open space and recreation in the Gympie Region. These are summarised in Table 13.

Table 13 Open space and recreation summary of general feedback

Theme	Summary of feedback
Biodiversity	Additional native reserves for recreation.
	Natural play spaces and nature-based playgrounds.
	Additional trees at parks and open spaces to provide shade.

Theme	Summary of feedback
	Consideration of native wildlife and ensuring they are protected.
Active transport and recreation	Bike lanes and footpaths off main roads.
	Expanded bike and footpaths, particularly along the river.
	Explore opportunities for mountain bike trails.
Improved facilities and location	Modern playgrounds and exercise equipment that cater to people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.
	Provide additional opportunities for community interactions such as picnic areas.
	Ensure facilities are well-located and explore potential for co-location.
	Explore opportunities for public gardens, a water park, and indoor sporting and recreational centres.

5.1.8   Residential Development survey findings

Key issues in residential development

The residential development draft policy position statement identified seven key issues for the planning scheme to consider (Refer to Appendix 1). Survey respondents identified their top 3 priorities from these key issues.

Top 3 priorities for residential development

1. **Rural residential development occurs in designated areas to avoid impacts on agricultural production and rural land values.**
2. **Residential growth is in areas that are, or can readily be, serviced with infrastructure.**
3. **Residential development is provided with appropriate services and infrastructure.**

Other issues raised by respondents in the residential development survey include the following key themes:

- **Natural hazards and biodiversity:** avoiding housing developments in areas of natural hazards and biodiversity.
- **Connectivity:** connectivity within new and existing communities
- **Subdivision of rural residential:** some opinions supported facilitating ageing in place via subdivision, others supported preserving rural residential areas.

Proposed policy directions

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the proposed policy directions for each of the key issues identified in the residential development draft policy position paper. The percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (1); disagreed (2); were neutral (3); agreed (4); and strongly agreed (5); are displayed in the graphs in Figure 11.

Most respondents agreed with all proposed policy directions for residential development in the planning scheme. The greatest variation in responses regarded the avoidance of further subdivision of rural land, with 12.5% strongly disagreeing and 14.42% disagreeing.

Figure 11 Level of agreement with proposed policy directions for residential development survey

Development occurs at an order and timing in accordance with financially sustainable infrastructure delivery.
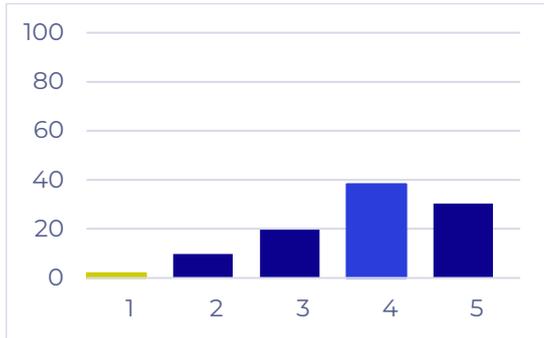
Land identified for higher density development (e.g., townhouses, units, or apartments) should not be developed at lower densities (e.g., detached houses).
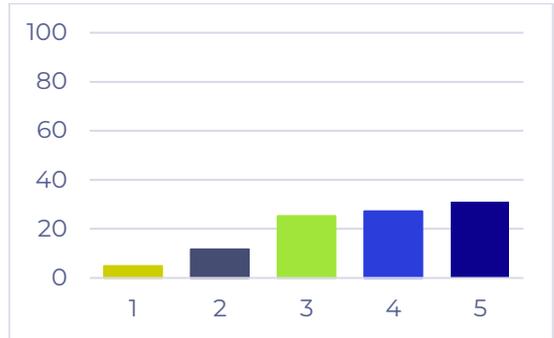
Support infill development of existing areas, at higher densities, to help minimise urban sprawl and promote choice in available housing types.
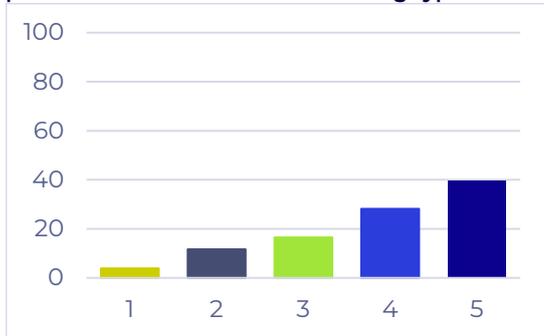
Greenfield development should be focused in areas that can be efficiently serviced by existing infrastructure.
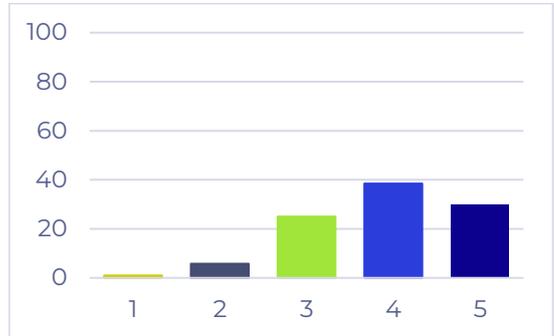
Avoid further subdivision of rural land, except where subdivision improves agricultural productivity or land management.
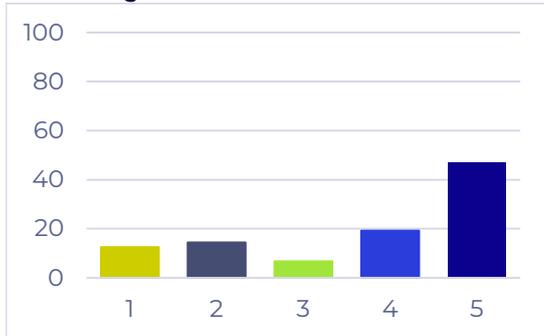
Residential development provides a variety of housing types and densities (e.g., townhouses, apartments, units, detached houses).
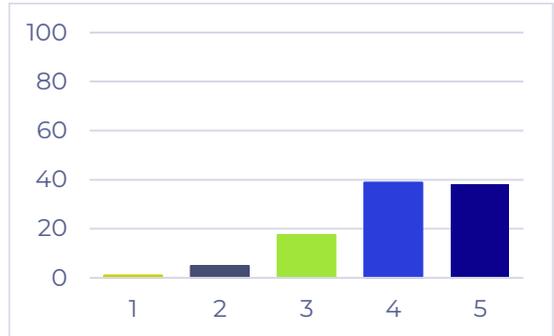
New housing developments should provide desirable and sustainable environments.
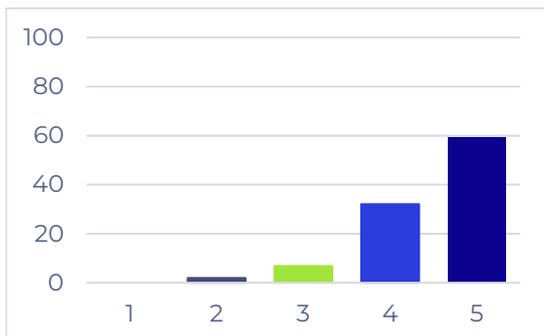
All sectors of the community are accommodated in housing that meets their needs and financial means.
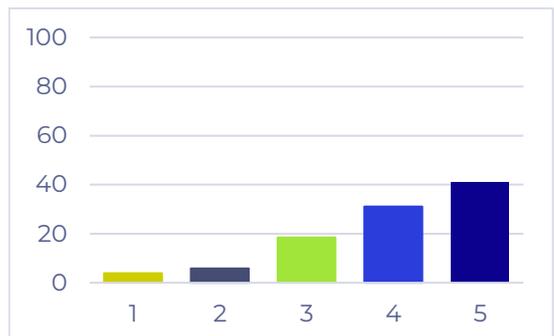
Housing for people with specific needs (e.g., low income, residents with a disability, older residents) is spread across the Region.
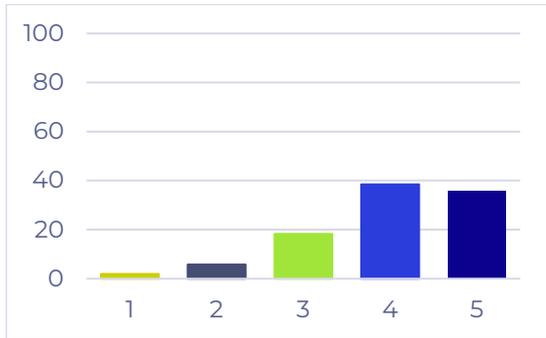
Housing diversity and housing choice

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with alternative housing types as appropriate for the Gympie Region (Figure 12). There was a high level of agreement with single- or double-storey villa unit complexes (87.6%) and townhouses or terraced houses up to two storeys (89.5%). However, there was less support for medium sized apartments, with 46.2% in disagreeing that this form is appropriate for Gympie.

Figure 12 Level of agreement with alternative housing types for Gympie Region

Single- or double-storey villa unit complexes
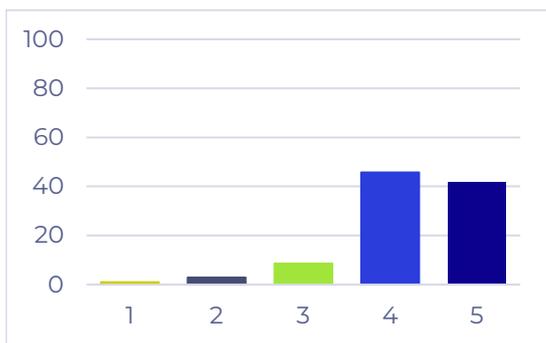
Townhouses or terraced houses up to 2 storeys
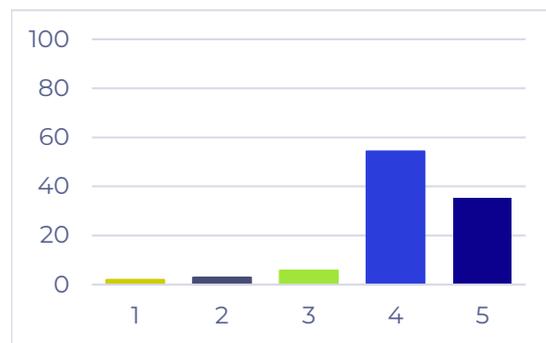
Medium-sized apartment buildings up to 4 storeys
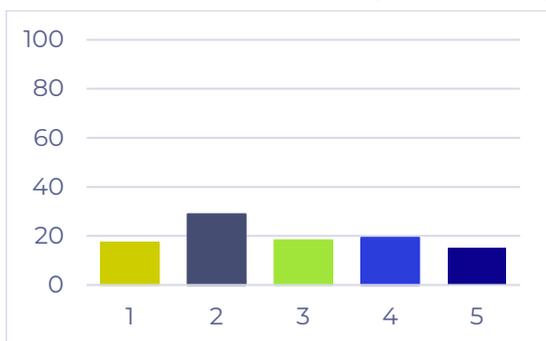
Respondents were also asked whether they could see themselves choosing an alternative housing type (e.g., townhouse, unit or apartment), were these options more available. Almost half (48.6%) of respondents felt it would suit them, or that it might in the future or could have in the past (Figure 13).

Figure 13 Could you see yourself choosing an attached housing type?
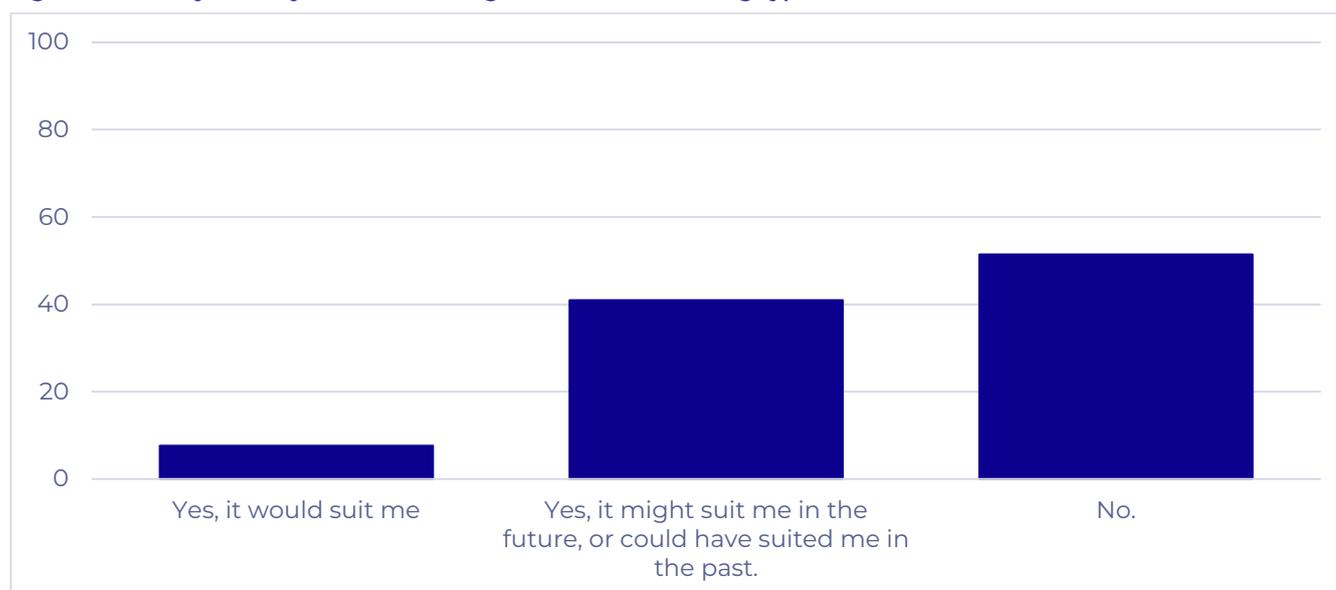
General comments and feedback

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments related to residential development in the Gympie Region. These are summarised in Table 14.

Table 14: Residential development summary of general feedback

Theme	Summary of feedback
Large lot sizes and appropriateness of zoning	Ability to subdivide rural residential land
	Ability to subdivide rural land which cannot be used for primary agriculture
	Preserve larger blocks for people looking to move to more space
	Encourage small blocks within the city areas
	Allowing subdivision in Rural or Rural Residential areas to enable ageing in place.
Housing diversity and affordability	Aged care and retirement villages
	Ability for secondary dwellings on rural residential land
	Affordable housing options for workers
	Density in main tourism areas
	More mixed-use development (residential upper floors and commercial or retail lower floors)
Development impact on natural hazards and biodiversity	Avoid developing on areas which flood
	Avoid vegetation clearing
Infrastructure provisions	Appropriate infrastructure provisions for new development
	Cost of infrastructure
Facilitating growth	Council should look to support housing and employment
Connectivity	Improved pathways
	Wildlife corridors
Urban Design outcomes	High quality streets
	Interaction with heritage items
	Appropriate building heights to the neighbourhood context

5.1.9   Retail and Commercial survey findings

Key issues in retail and commercial

The retail and commercial draft policy position statement identified five key issues for the planning scheme to consider (Refer to Appendix 1). Survey respondents identified their top 3 priorities from these key issues.

> **Top 3 priorities for retail and commercial**
> 1.   Town centre diversity that draws people for a range of reasons, creating vibrant, resilient places, beyond traditional business hours.
> 2.   Town centre design that establishes and maintains a strong sense of character and identity.
> 3.   Retail and commercial land supply available to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

Other issues raised by respondents in the retail and commercial survey include the following key themes:

- **Incentives** – there is concern that some buildings and shops within the Region are not well maintained, and there are too many empty storefronts. An option is to promote incentives for businesses that showcase attractive and vibrant storefronts, and fines for those that leave storefronts empty for too long.
- **Gympie town centre re-location** – many respondents identified the existing location of Gympie town centre along Mary Street is heavily flood prone. Many suggest relocating the town centre to higher ground such as Mellor Street to ensure viability and mitigate impacts from climate change.
- **Increased safety** – some people highlighted they felt unsafe walking along Mary Street at night. Better lighting, additional security including CCTV, and filling empty storefronts could help increase people's perception of safety.
- **Heritage** – it was identified that heritage preservation is important for retail and commercial buildings. This includes reestablishing original facades, particularly along Mary Street.

Proposed policy directions

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the proposed policy directions for each of the key issues identified in the retail and commercial draft policy position paper. The percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (1); disagreed (2); were neutral (3); agreed (4); and strongly agreed (5); are displayed in the graphs in Figure 14.

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all proposed policy directions for Retail and Commercial survey in the planning scheme. The greatest variation in responses regarded the location of residential density and short-term accommodation, where 6.25% of respondents strongly disagreed and 8.33% of respondents disagreed.

Figure 14: Level of agreement with proposed policy directions for retail and commercial

Ensure a sufficient supply of suitable and well-located land for retail, commercial, community services, and administrative purposes, at a rate that meets the needs of the population

Designate a hierarchy of Principal, District, Local and Rural Local, and Specialised centres, to guide development of shopping, community facilities, government services, education, recreation, and entertainment across the Region
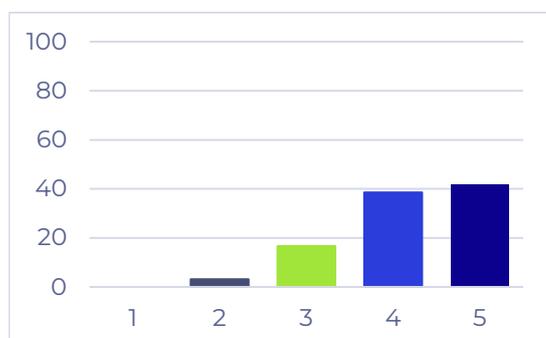
Encourage a greater mix of uses that draw residents and visitors for a variety of reasons, creating vibrant,
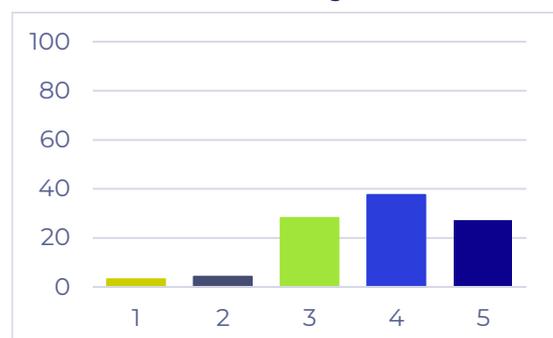
Encourage increased, appropriately scaled, residential densities and short-term accommodation close to, and within, Principal and District Centres,

resilient places, during and beyond traditional business hours
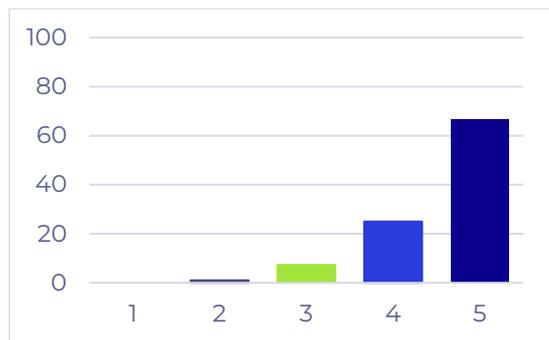
consistent with infrastructure and the surrounding environment
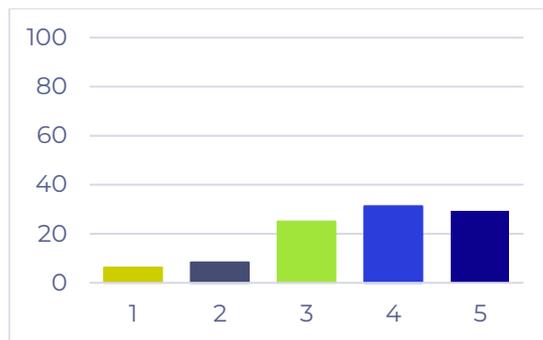
Establish and maintain a strong sense of character and identity in town centres, and well-designed development that incorporates public open spaces, and promotes public transport use
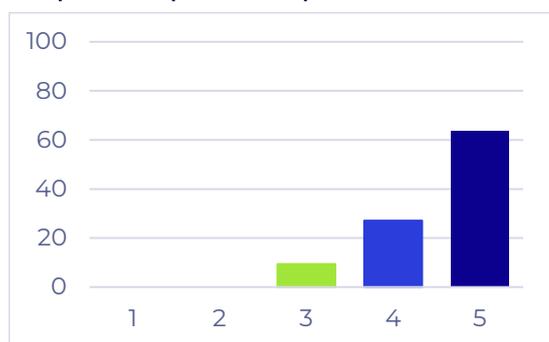
General comments and feedback

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments related to retail and commercial in the Gympie Region. These are summarised in Table 15.

Table 15 Retail and commercial summary of general feedback

Theme	Summary of feedback
Flood mitigation	Relocation of Gympie town centre to higher ground
	Cease building new businesses in flood-prone areas
	Reacquire Mary Street businesses and convert into parkland
Additional services and facilities	More parking
	A community hub and information services centre
	More opportunities for children and youth
	Establishment of an 'eat street' and pedestrian mall

5.1.10 Rural Areas survey findings

Key issues in rural areas

The rural areas draft policy position statement identified three key issues for the planning scheme to consider (Refer to Appendix 1). Survey respondents identified their top priority from these key issues, and responses were quite evenly spread amongst the three, with the top issue receiving 31 votes, second 30 and third 25 votes.

Priorities for rural areas

1.   **Rural subdivisions and fragmentation.**
2.   **Protect rural production and resources.**
3.   **Diversifying, value adding, and managing impacts in the rural economy.**

Other issues raised by respondents in the rural areas survey include the following themes:

- **Planning controls:** difficulties in subdividing, land zoned for agriculture which is no longer viable for agriculture and rural uses.
- **Protection of bushland and biodiversity:** ensuring native flora and fauna are preserved.

Proposed policy directions

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the proposed policy directions for each of the key issues identified in the rural areas draft policy position paper. The percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (1); disagreed (2); were neutral (3); agreed (4); and strongly agreed (5); are displayed in the graphs in Figure 15 below.

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all proposed policy directions for rural areas in the planning scheme. The greatest variation in responses regarded the encouragement of the rural economy to diversify and expand to new activities, where the most amount of people disagreed (11%).

Figure 15: Level of agreement with proposed policy directions for rural areas

Facilitate a highly productive, growing, and diversifying rural industry
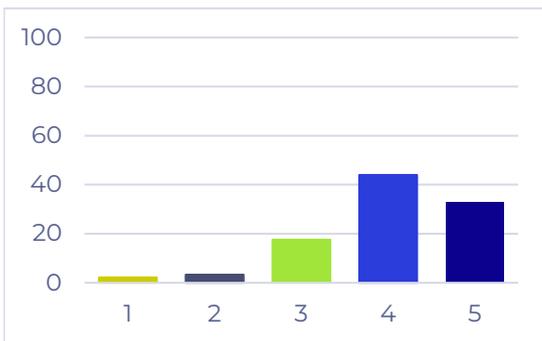
Protect rural land and other natural values and resources from loss or encroachment by activities better located elsewhere
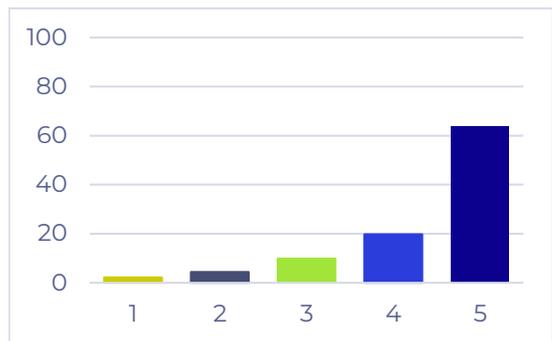
Encourage the rural economy to diversify and expand to new activities
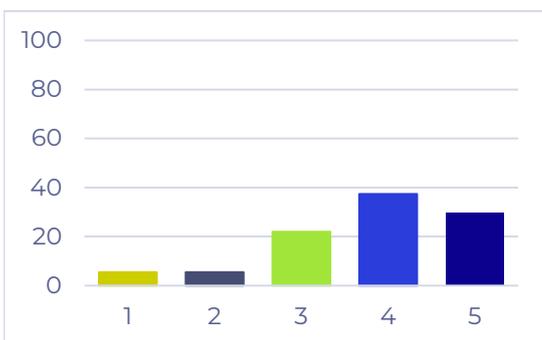
Rural production supports emerging new manufacturing industries in Gympie's key industrial precincts
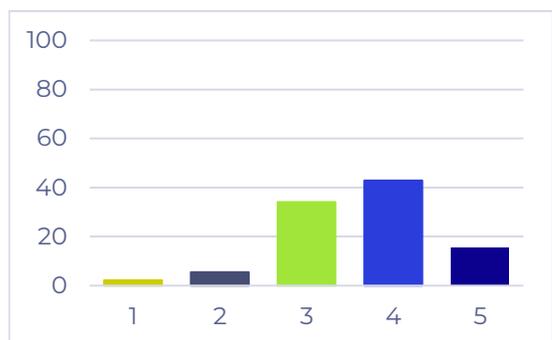
Manage the impacts of non-rural activities in rural areas to protect production, natural and landscape values, and infrastructure.
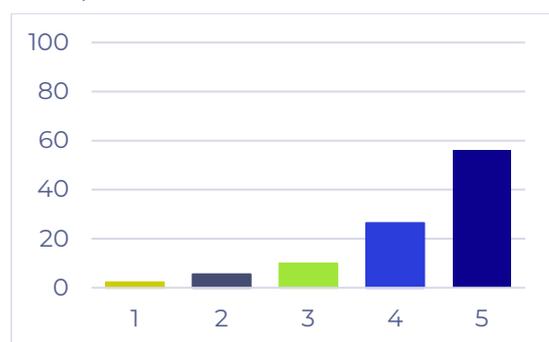
General comments and feedback

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments related to rural areas in the Gympie Region. These are summarised in Table 16.

Table 16 Rural areas summary of general feedback

Theme	Summary of feedback
Scenic amenity, tourism, and recreation	Better management of the impacts of non-rural activities in rural areas to protect natural and landscape values.
	Request for a position paper on scenic amenity as this is a major rural value which should be identified and protected, as it contributes to visitation and tourism, and better health outcomes through clear air and open space.
	Allow tourism activities such as function centres on rural properties.
	Explore ecotourism opportunities such as walking trails, mountain bike trials.
	Restrict caravan parks and campgrounds from being on rural lands.
	Keep Gympie rural; there is concern it will become like Noosa and the Sunshine Coast.
Biodiversity protection	Connect rural areas, state parks, and national parks to create wildlife corridors to enhance regional biodiversity.
	Ensure native habitats are preserved.
	Protect existing bushland from clearing.
Agricultural land protection and subdivision	Ensure rural lands are maintained and preserved, particularly agricultural
	Gympie has many farms that are primary producers for agriculture and cattle. It is important that these are maintained so they can continue to contribute to the local economy.
	Have a clear definition of what constitutes rural industry.
	The need to distinguish the difference between rural and rural residential and have clear controls about what is and isn't allowed within these areas.
	Ensure minimum subdivision remains at 100ha.
Road safety	More regular and timely repair and maintenance of rural roads, particularly unsealed roads. Widen some roads and investigate opportunities to remove blind spots.

5.2   Community and Stakeholder Workshops

5.2.1   Overview

Five workshops were undertaken across Gympie Region during the consultation period, including three with general community members, one for local business representatives, and one for the development industry. Each workshop followed a similar but tailored structure depending on the audience and their interests.

Workshop	Target audience	Date and time	Venue	Attendees
Mary Valley community	General community in Mary Valley area	Wednesday 28 June, 6-8pm	Imbil RSL Memorial Hall	15
Business, Commercial and Tourism	Local business reps and groups from across the Gympie Region	Thursday 29 June, 10am-12pm	Gympie Senior Citizens Centre	23
Gympie community	General community in Gympie area	Thursday 29 June, 6-8pm	Gympie Senior Citizens Centre	16
Development Industry	Professionals involved in the development industry across the Gympie Region (e.g., developers, planners, real estate)	Thursday 13 July, 11am-1pm	The Gympie Pavilion	12
Cooloola Cove community	General community in the Cooloola and Ranbow Beach area	Friday 14 July, 10am-12pm	Cooloola Cove Veterans Hall	13

A fourth workshop was scheduled for community members in the Goomeri area but was cancelled due to staff illness. Council staff held an informal meeting with 4 registered participants on **21 July 2023**.

Gympie Regional Council staff members participated at each small group discussion to help groups explore the topics, answer any questions, and assist with data capture.

5.2.2   Community workshop findings

The structure of the three community workshops included:

- Overview of the planning scheme project and progress to date.
- Current engagement program overview and how feedback contributes to the process.
- Deep discussion on 3-4 topics that attendees were most interested in.
- Whole group discussion to report back on what was heard in the small groups, on each topic.

Attendees voted for the topics of most interest to them, with each session focused on the topics that received the most dots. Table 17 summarises the topics chosen in each session.

'Housing and Population Growth' and 'Open Space and Recreation' attracted a high level of interest in all three workshops. Mary Valley and Cooloola workshops both selected 'Biodiversity and Natural Environment' as the third topic.

Cooloola was the only workshop to identify Natural Hazards as a key topic of interest, though it did not receive enough votes to be in the top 3. Topics of interest in the Gympie workshop differed to the other two areas, with 'Business and Industry' and 'Agriculture and Rural Living' both receiving more interest.

In the Gympie Community Workshop, interest was evenly divided between 'Agriculture & Rural Living' and 'Open Space & Recreation', so this session covered four topics.

Table 17 Community Workshops topic voting outcome

	Agriculture & Rural Living	Housing & Population Growth	Open Space & Recreation	Business & Industry	Heritage, Culture & Character	Biodiversity & Natural Environment	Natural Hazards
Mary Valley Community Workshop	4	**10**	**7**	6	5	**7**	1
Gympie Community Workshop	**8**	**9**	**8**	**11**	7	1	1
Cooloola Community Workshop	0	**12**	**13**	2	1	**10**	7

Key findings summary

Key themes identified as opportunities and challenges in relation to each topic through the community workshops are summarised in Table 18.

Table 18 Community workshop key findings

Topic	Opportunities	Challenges
Agriculture and rural living	• Preserve rural allotments • Encourage micro-farming and non-traditional methods • Leasing of rural land instead of sub-dividing	• Rural v Rural residential if land is not being utilised for agriculture or other rural uses. • Conflict between agricultural uses and tree change residents due to lack of understanding of rural activities
Housing and population growth	• Lot sizes in rural residential areas • Affordable and social housing options (caravan park) • Higher density in appropriate areas • Maintenance of character areas • Walkability • Housing choice for ageing population • Potential for granny flats	• Subdivisions in regional townships • Local sentiment against density • Connectivity issues • Infrastructure provisioning • Density v appeal of larger blocks • Development Approval process • Traffic • Servicing provisions (e.g., healthcare, public transport)
Open space & recreation	• Rail trails and canoe trails • Promoting eco-tourism opportunities (biking, hiking, picnics) • Additional facilities (indoor sporting / exercise facilities, local pools) • Working with community groups to facilitate activities • Non-sporting recreation (e.g., arts and culture) • Fishing facilities • Facilities align with demographics (ageing population)	• Lack of access to national parks • Facilities requiring upgrades and maintenance (skate parks) • Cost of maintenance
Business & industry	• Diversity in local business offerings • Use natural resources • Adaptive reuse of buildings / areas	• Skill shortages • Lack of diversity

Topic	Opportunities	Challenges
	• Tourist accommodation • Heritage aspect	
Biodiversity & natural environment	• Facilitating eco-tourism activities • Increased vegetation protection • Campground controls and maintenance • Potential for offset locations	• Pest controls (weed species) • Tourism growth • Waterway and water quality management (new development) • State controlled land • Population growth • Fragmentation of natural areas

Feedback from Goomeri residents

Council officers met with 4 Goomeri residents on **21 July 2023** (10am-12pm) in lieu of a workshop, which was cancelled due to staff illness. The attending officers provided the following summary of feedback:

- Concerns about the impacts of renewable energy projects on rural areas, including battery storage facilities, solar farms (scenic amenity), and transmission lines.
- Conservation of biodiversity and koalas.
- Roads to be repaired more quickly.
- Bushfire mapping coverage is restricting development.

5.2.3   Industry stakeholder workshop findings

The structure of the Business, Commercial and Tourism and Development Industry workshops included:

- Overview of the planning scheme project and progress to date.
- Current engagement program overview and how feedback contributes to the process.
- In the Business, Commercial and Tourism workshop, small group discussions on the central question "*How can the planning scheme best enable economic development in the Gympie Region?*"
- In the Development Industry workshop, small group discussions on the central question, "*How can the planning scheme best enable development in the Gympie Region?*"
- Top 3 priorities and top 3 challenges identified in each group, then discussed as a whole group.

The seven key topics were introduced to attendees as prompts to consider in exploring how the planning scheme may contribute to economic development, rather than providing a deep dive on these topics of interest.

Key findings summary – Business, Commercial and Industry workshop

The top 3 opportunities and top 3 challenges, identified in each group, for the planning scheme to best enable economic development in the Gympie Region are summarised in Table 19.

Key themes arising across the 4 small group discussions were:

- Need for more housing diversity and housing types to suit a wide range of people.
- Industrial land availability and the opportunity for industry growth in Gympie Region.
- Planning constraints, particularly zone flexibility, and the time and cost of the DA process.
- Opportunities for tourism growth and need for more purpose-built accommodation.

Table 19 Business, Commercial and Industry workshop key priorities

Group	Opportunities	Challenges
Group 1	**Housing** • Flexibility in zoning to help facilitate social housing • Access to core services (e.g., healthcare)	**Housing** • Costs and affordability • Limited flexibility within zones

Group	Opportunities	Challenges
	• Costs and housing affordability • Opportunities to age in place • Balance density and sprawl • Tourism – day traffic and accommodation (business opportunities)	• Tourism (temporary accommodation impact on housing availability)
	Rural land • Maximise agriculture • Maintenance of existing properties • Balance rural and rural residential	**Economic development** • Agriculture and rural lands • Natural hazards • Heritage protection • Open space • Changing demographic and lack of skills
	Industrial land • Business growth opportunities at Kybong • Options of road and access improvements	**Industrial land** • Not developed or accessible • No areas to grow • Flooding • Lack of connectivity
Group 2	**Attractiveness to younger demographics** • Access to beaches, rural areas, and river • Availability of jobs in health and education • Vocational training • Expand universities to draw more young people	**Economic Development** • Draw cards for business • Marketing of the Region
	Tourism opportunities • Accommodation • Rural lifestyle	**Connection** • Mobile and internet • Limited public transport
	Industrial land • Availability of land • Close to Sunshine Coast	**Planning** • Current planning department culture • Change approach to attract business • Need for an adaptive scheme to cater to business needs
Group 3	**Housing** • Greater housing diversity • Services to support remote working • Infrastructure projects (Bruce Highway) • Rural residential lifestyle blocks	**Development Application process** • Time and cost • Amount of information required • Not future-focused
	Land uses / provisions • Land availability • Development provisions (building height) • Industrial lands at Kybong / Curra • Land for carbon offsets	**Lack of services** • Supermarkets etc.
	Development application process • More flexibility in zones	**Current zoning and development** • Minimum lot size vs density • Cost of development • Housing density and diversity • Housing to attract younger demographics • Infrastructure costs • Rural residential land v rural land allocation
Group 4	**Housing diversity** • Diversity in accommodation types for workers • Rental diversity (affordable / social options) • Ageing demographic	**Housing** • Dwelling mix in CBD • Tourist accommodation (Air BnB) • Social housing • Lack of diversity in offering
	Flexibility in zones	**Flexibility in zones**

Group	Opportunities	Challenges
	• Diversify rural lands • Allowable uses in various zones	• Lack of flexibility in accommodation types in particular zones.
	Infrastructure projects • Benefits of the Bruce Highway Upgrade project and bypass	**Infrastructure and transport** • Car orientated community mindset • Leveraging Olympics infrastructure and other infrastructure • Site servicing constraints

Key findings summary – Development Industry workshop

The top 3 opportunities and top 3 challenges, identified in each group, for the planning scheme to best enable development in the Gympie Region are summarised in Table 20.

Key themes arising cross the 2 small group discussions were:

• The right development in the right places.

• Consider appropriateness of zoned land for the proposed use, including viability and physical characteristics (slope).

• Housing diversity for a range of demographics and land use mix in new developments.

Table 20 Development Industry workshop key findings

Topic	Opportunities	Challenges
Group 1	**Appropriate identification of land** • Ensuring zoned land is actually viable for the proposed uses (particularly rural and industrial)	**Retaining and attracting development** • Need for revitalising CBD and Mary Street
	Better usage of rural lands • Rural lands not used for agriculture- agritourism opportunities • Higher economic outcomes can be dependent on land size	**Diverse demographics** • Different expectations
	Planning framework • Clearer and simpler framework • Ground-truth overlays • Minimise time and cost of process • Overlays changing, better adapting to change (e.g., TLPI)	**Commercial development in housing estates** • E.g., corner stores, take away food, hairdresser • Create communities, not 'bedroom suburbs'
Group 2	**Create an emerging community zone**	**Constraints** • Commercially zoned land is highly constrained by slope • Flood restricts development
	Appropriate locations of rural land • Close to town and serviced- transition to better uses • High demand for medium density in these areas	**Density and diversity** • Height restrictions limit ability to densify • ICN discounts and incentives for density • Small lot sizes where appropriate • Retirement village
	Old Bruce Highway • Opportunity for new commercial uses	**Developers** • Duplexes • Mixture of lot sizes • Density within developments

5.3   Pop-up listening posts

Gympie Council officers held several pop-up sessions throughout the engagement period, to inform the community about the planning scheme and gather feedback.

Table 21 Overview of pop-up listening posts

Town / Region	Venue	Date and time	No. conversations
Gympie	Mary Street Easter Market	5 April 2023, 5pm-8pm	16
Goomeri	Outside Foodworks	22 June 2023, 3pm-6pm	10
Mary Valley	Friends of Amamoor	16 June 2023, 5:30pm-8pm	20
Cooloola Cove	Outside Woolworths	30 June 2023, 10am-2pm	30
Gympie	Gympie Central Shopping Centre	23 June 2023, 10am-2pm	20

Feedback gathered across these sessions is summarised in Table 22.

Table 22 Summary of feedback from pop-up sessions

Theme	Summary of feedback
Agriculture & rural living	• Queries about, and requests for, rural subdivision • Concerns about the viability and protection of impacts on production
Housing & population growth	• Concerns about housing supply and affordability • Comments about residential lot sizes, some felt they are too large. Others concerned about excessive site coverage in new residential estates. • Mixed feedback about supporting or limiting growth. • Interest in supporting 'tiny homes' • Design of new residential estates – excessive site coverage, lack of open space
Business & industry	• Impacts of tourism on locals was raised. • Need for more shops at Southside.
Heritage, culture & character	• Heritage conservation
Biodiversity & natural environment	• Concerns about loss of wildlife and development within National Parks • Requests to do more to protect the environment and biodiversity. • Concerns about water quality in local creeks and Mary River • Noted the need to balance environment and housing needs.
Natural hazards	• Concerns about how bushfire and flood risk is managed. • Interest in flood response/prevention – e.g., buy backs, house raising, flood proof Mary Street, flood impacts on housing land/supply.
Infrastructure	• Maintenance of drainage infrastructure and roads • Concerns about water infrastructure and supply; access to and leaks from water meters.

5.4   Stakeholder meetings

5.4.1   Biodiversity Reference Group

Council officers attended the Biodiversity Reference Group meeting on **12 June 2023** to share information about the planning scheme review project, the draft policy position papers (with a focus on biodiversity) and gather feedback.

The meeting was attended by 12 members. Survey links, fact sheet and draft biodiversity policy position paper were emailed to this group following the meeting.

The attending officers provided the following summary of feedback:

- Prevent biodiversity impacts rather than 'cure'. A multi-species recovery plan is required – not just for koalas, smaller animals are also important.
- Requiring offsets on site is a good approach.
- Protection of old growth forests, e.g., prevent them from being cut down for housing on rural blocks; tighten restrictions or prevent construction where old trees are impacted.
- Move towards integrated water management. Consider impact of runoff from development once established as well as during construction.
- Feedback about the current TLPI:
    - More guidance needed for resolving conflict that arises with residential development.
    - Impose conditions on existing approvals to reflect the TLPI.
    - Dedicate more resources to compliance.
    - Do not rezone areas of the TLPI to residential.
    - Clarify the level of ecological impact assessment required in the TLPI code.

5.4.2 Gympie Region Housing and Homelessness Forum

Council officers attended a workshop on the planning scheme held by the Gympie Region Housing and Homelessness Forum on **15 June 2023**. The Forum comprises around 15 members and discussion was focussed on the draft housing policy position paper. Notes were provided by Gympie Regional Council.

The top 3 issues in housing that emerged from the discussion were:

- Housing diversity
- Housing must be serviced
- Housing that is appropriate to the specific needs of residents.

A summary of the key issues discussed and how these were prioritised by members is provided in Table 23 and general feedback is provided in Table 24.

The Forum members indicated:

- Strong support for 1-2 storey villas/townhouses
- Some support for 3-4 storey apartment buildings.

Table 23 Key issues summary - Gympie Region Housing and Homelessness Forum

Key issues	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Total
Housing diversity and choice	3	2	3	8
Residential development is serviced with appropriate infrastructure and services.	4	0	6	10
Appropriate housing for specific needs of residents.	2	10	0	12
Good Urban Design	3	0	1	4
Supply of residential land to meet needs	1	3	0	4
Residential growth in areas that are or can be readily serviced	2	1	1	4
Rural residential development occurs on designated areas and does not impact on rural production	0	0	3	3

Table 24 General feedback - Gympie Region Housing and Homelessness Forum

General feedback
- Aging in place will require appropriate dwellings to be available
- Diversity in dwelling size, type and price
- Aging population will need smaller houses

- Housing types should be mixed throughout residential areas not clustered
- Affordable housing for larger families
- Be efficient in locations with infrastructure/services
- Need public transport to replace car as population ages
- Social connection important
- Proximity to work, long travel is not affordable
- Connot continue to develop rural land
- Single dwelling waste land, need well designed medium density development with green spaces
- Energy efficiency to reduce operating costs
- Designed to suit climate and local geography
- Access to support services
- Smaller lots are more affordable
- Housing such that residents can live with their means

Stage 2 Engagement materials and update slides were provided to the Secretary to distribute to members, and members were encouraged to review materials online and complete the relevant surveys.

The attending officers provided the following summary of feedback:

- Generally supportive of Council's proposed policy settings related to creating opportunities to improve housing availability, affordability, and diversity in dwelling stock.
- Encouraged Council to do more to ensure that more new dwellings are accessible to those with disabilities.
- Discussion on the alignment of Council's Local Housing Action Plan with the planning scheme project.

5.4.3   Gympie Rotary Club

Council officers attended a Gympie Rotary Club meeting on **25 July 2023** to share information about the planning scheme review project, the draft policy position papers and gather feedback.

The meeting was attended by around 30 members. A link to Council's website, with survey links, fact sheets, and draft policy position papers, were provided.

The attending officers provided the following summary of feedback:

- Overall positive feedback about content presented.
- Concerns about housing supply and affordability – lots are too small and houses too big. Infrastructure charges are too high and seen as a disincentive to development.
- Mixed views about rural residential subdivisions.
- Concerns about flooding.
- Good opportunities for economic development – well placed to be the next Sunshine Coast; need to work on business attraction and younger people to stay in Gympie.

5.4.4   Rainbow Beach Community Information and Resource Service Association

Council officers attended a meeting on **26 June 2023** (2pm-4pm) at the Rainbow Beach Community Centre to share information about the planning scheme review project, the draft policy position papers and gather feedback.

The meeting was attended by around 40 community members. A link to Council's website, with survey links, fact sheets, and draft policy position papers, were provided.

The attending officers provided the following summary of feedback:

- Main issue of concern was the future use and zoning of the 'centre' block, owned by Council and rezoned in 2013 from community use to commercial use.
- Requests for traffic improvements, including passing lanes on the main road and traffic calming measures.
- Request for a dog park.
- Rainbow Beach is unique and requires local area planning.
- More engagement by Council with Rainbow Beach residents is needed.

5.4.5 Elected representatives

Council officers met with State and Federal elected officials during the engagement period to share information about the planning scheme review project and gather feedback. These meetings are summarised in Table 25.

Table 25 Summary of meetings with State and Federal elected officials

Stakeholder	Date	Notes
Tony Perrett MP Member for Gympie (State)	19 June 2023	• Discussed the Region and the need for the scheme to be flexible and not constrain economic development.
Deb Frecklington MP office manager Member for Nanango (State)	5 July 2023	• Noted community concerns around Borumba Pumped Hydro transmission lines.
Llew O'Brien MP Member for Wide Bay (Federal)	5 July 2023	• Noted concerns around the impacts of renewable energy on agricultural production, scenic amenity and lifestyle in the Wide Bay region.

5.4.6 Other stakeholders

Council officers met with other key stakeholders in the Gympie Region to discuss the planning scheme review project. These meetings are summarised in Table 26.

Table 26 Summary of other stakeholder meetings

Stakeholder	Date	Notes
Pumped Hydro Imbil	14 June 2023	• Interested in opportunities for legacy projects that could result from their major project with a particular emphasis on local infrastructure, sporting / community, and tourism projects
SEQ Forestry Hub	30 June 2023	• Two main issues raised – development encroaching on forestry assets; and opportunities for a circular economy approach to their currently underutilised waste stream.
Gympie Grow Alliance	21 June 2023	• Discussed the needs of business in terms of flexibility in the new scheme and the zoning of appropriate land for business and industry, measures to attract and retain the younger demographic, lack of worker accommodation as a constraint to investment, town centre revitalisation.
Gympie CBD Alliance	7 August 2023	• Broad discussion on town centre business needs, town centre revitalisation, heritage and character conservation, flood response open space/public domain planning.

5.5   Internal Council engagement

Council officers are undertaking extensive engagement across the organisation throughout the project, including in preparing the draft policy position papers and as part of the current engagement process. This section provides a snapshot of the approach.

5.5.1   Council officers

Council officers have worked iteratively with specialist colleagues in areas such as planning, environment, economic development, infrastructure, to inform the development of the draft policy position papers and throughout the project.

5.5.2   Gympie Planning Scheme Review Reference Group

The Reference Group was established to ensure key internal stakeholders are kept informed throughout the project, to provide guidance and discuss any emerging issues throughout the project.

The Reference Group meets monthly, or as required, and has provided iterative feedback throughout the preparation of the draft policy position papers and will continue throughout the planning scheme review process.

5.5.3   Councillor workshops

A series of 6 workshops was held with councillors to discuss and confirm the draft policy position papers. Feedback from these sessions was incorporated into the draft papers. Engagement with Councillors is ongoing throughout the planning scheme review process.

5.6   Submissions

Gympie Regional Council accepted submissions via email or post throughout the engagement period, and 43 submissions were received. Council officers reviewed submissions and provided the issues summary shown in Table 27.

Table 27 Summary of issues raised in submissions

Issue	Frequency
Request rezoning rural to rural residential	17
Request to reduce minimum lot size in rural zone, or excise an additional lot	7
Suggestions/requests for local area planning	7
Other rezoning requests	2
Protection of environmental values	5
Housing supply	3
Housing affordability	3
Housing diversity	2
Need for more/improved Open Space and Recreation facilities	2
Need to manage impact of short-term accommodation	2
Request to change minimum lot size in a rural residential zone	1
Need a zone between rural and rural residential	1
Land use in rural zones	1
Protection of rural amenity	1
More control over temporary land uses/events	1
Ensure the scheme is flexible	1
Other issues (not planning scheme related)	*5*

6.0 Summary of feedback

An overall summary of feedback related to each draft policy position paper is provided and project response is provided in Table 28. This feedback considers findings from the survey, workshops, pop-ups, and stakeholder meetings.

Feedback gathered through this engagement process has been considered by Gympie Regional Council's planning scheme project team in considering the finalisation of policy position papers. Overall, there was a high level of support for Council's proposed policy directions across all 10 key topics.

Table 28 Summary of feedback

Draft policy paper	Key messages	Project response
Biodiversity	• There was a high level of support for the proposed policy directions. • Respondents valued Gympie Region's biodiversity and are keen to see it protected. • Respondents acknowledged the importance of biodiversity, for its environmental, community / social, and economic benefits. • Integrating the existing TLPI was supported, with some suggestions made to strengthen it. • Population growth was seen as a key challenge for biodiversity, and the need for proactive measures for protection rather than renewal.	• Feedback noted.
Bruce Highway Upgrade Response	• There was a high level of support for the proposed policy directions. • Respondents were interested in the opportunities for urban renewal resulting from the project, particularly in terms of economic development, community safety, active transport, and greening.	• Feedback noted.
Bushfire Hazard	• There was a high level of support for the proposed policy directions. • An avoidance approach to bushfire risk, paired with proactive management and mitigation by Council.	• Feedback noted.
Flood Hazard	• There was a high level of support for the proposed policy directions. • Respondents wanted to see informed decision making based on accurate mapping. • Development decisions to be appropriate to the level of flood risk, with a view to avoiding, not worsening, and mitigating impacts.	• Feedback noted.
Heritage	• There was a high level of support for the proposed policy directions. • Respondents valued Gympie Region's heritage and character. Heritage places should be appropriately used, protected, and celebrated.	• Feedback noted.
Industrial Development	• There was a high level of support for the proposed policy directions. • Respondents were interested in economic development opportunities in the industrial sector, while managing potential impacts to ensure the Region remains an attractive place to live, work, and visit. • A key challenge was land constraints and accessibility / connectivity of industrial areas.	• Feedback noted.
Open Space and Recreation	• There was a high level of support for the proposed policy directions. • Respondents were particularly interested in informal / nature-based recreation opportunities, walkability, and high-quality, well-maintained community facilities.	• Feedback noted.
Residential Development	• There was a high level of support for the proposed policy directions. • Residential development should be focused in areas that can be readily serviced. • Respondents were concerned about housing availability, affordability, and diversity, particularly for ageing in place. • Attached housing types were supported, particularly villa units, townhouses or terraced housed. Medium-sized apartment buildings were less supported.	• Feedback noted.

Draft policy paper	Key messages	Project response
Retail and Commercial	• There was a high level of support for the proposed policy directions. • The character and heritage of town centres is valued, but respondents would like to see more mixed uses to draw people for a range of reasons, improved vibrancy. • Concerns about the impact of flooding on businesses, particularly in Mary Street.	• Feedback noted.
Rural Areas	• There was a high level of support for the proposed policy directions. • Scenic amenity is a highly valued feature of the Gympie Region's identity and character. • Respondents were concerned with balancing tourism opportunities and potential impacts on rural values. • Rural residential development to be carefully sited to minimise conflicts and protect rural land from inappropriate subdivision and development.	• Feedback noted.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Key findings

The engagement process revealed a range of key observations about the current regional context to be contemplated in the drafting of the new planning scheme. Please note these key findings consider items that arose across a number of themes and activities.

- **A need to balance a range of competing priorities** across the Region. These include:
  - Protecting biodiversity and facilitating development. Respondents indicated that Gympie Region's biodiversity is highly valued for its environmental, community/social, and economic (tourism) benefits. There is an appreciation of the need for growth and development, but findings reflected that respondents would prefer to see biodiversity protected rather than later rehabilitated.
  - Rural production and development. Respondents value the agricultural heart of the Region and prioritise its protection, particularly the scenic amenity and economic benefits. Rural landscapes also offer appealing lifestyle and tourism opportunities, which need to be carefully managed to leverage benefits while not impacting the agricultural industry.
- **Housing availability, affordability, and suitability** was seen as a critical issue to facilitate the Region's sustainable population growth, economic development, and community wellbeing.
  - Appropriate densification to provide better housing choice for residents, particularly for ageing in place. Sentiment was generally supportive of medium density options of appropriate scale and place.
  - Key worker accommodation was identified as an emerging issue, both to staff local services, and for future economic development.
  - Housing types to meet the specific needs of a range of residents, such as accessibility needs, lower maintenance properties, affordability concerns, different household types, tenures.
  - Dwelling mix in the CBD/town centres, to bring people physically closer to business and services, contributing to the vibrancy of the Region's centres.
- **Economic development** appeared to be a key priority for community and stakeholders across the Region.
  - Tourism and particularly eco-tourism opportunities that leverage Gympie Region's natural environment and rural landscapes, with concern that these values are carefully protected.
  - Bolster retail and commercial centres, bringing a range of uses and vibrancy at different times of day.
  - Commercial and industrial development, in the right locations, providing quality jobs, and with a focus on maintaining and enhancing amenity in surrounding areas.
- **Natural environment is highly valued** by community and is a key drawcard for the Region.
  - Informal recreation opportunities supported by infrastructure that bring people closer to nature, such as a rail trail, mountain biking, trail running, hiking.
  - A significant asset of the Region, drawing people for tourism or lifestyle, and a priority to carefully protect and manage in the context of growth and development.

7.2 Recommendations and next steps

Based on the feedback gathered and reviewed, Ethos Urban provides the following recommendations for Gympie Regional Council to progress the planning scheme review project.

1. The draft policy position papers should be finalised with only minor necessary changes. There was generally a medium to high level of support for the proposed policy directions from community and stakeholders.

2. Prepare the draft planning scheme in alignment with the policy position papers, supported by targeted stakeholder engagement where needed.

3. Broad community engagement / workshops are not required to further inform the development of the draft scheme. Stage 2 engagement was thorough and gathered detailed and specific feedback on a wide range of topics. The next stage of community-wide engagement should present the draft scheme and demonstrate how the draft scheme content has been extrapolated from the data obtained within the position papers. This would close the loop on stage 2 and demonstrate the iterative approach to community involvement in the process.

Appendix A.   Respondent priorities – draft policy paper key issues

A.1   Biodiversity Survey Respondent Priorities
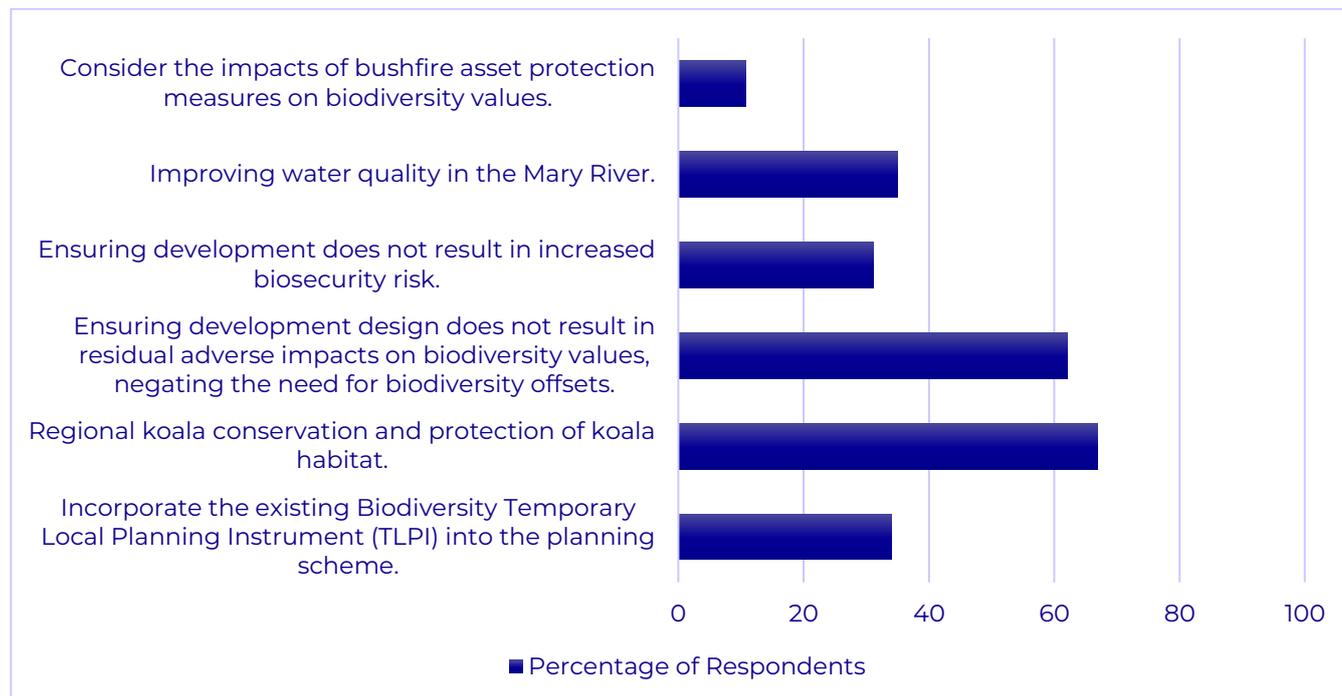
A.2   Bruce Highway Upgrade Response Survey Respondent Priorities
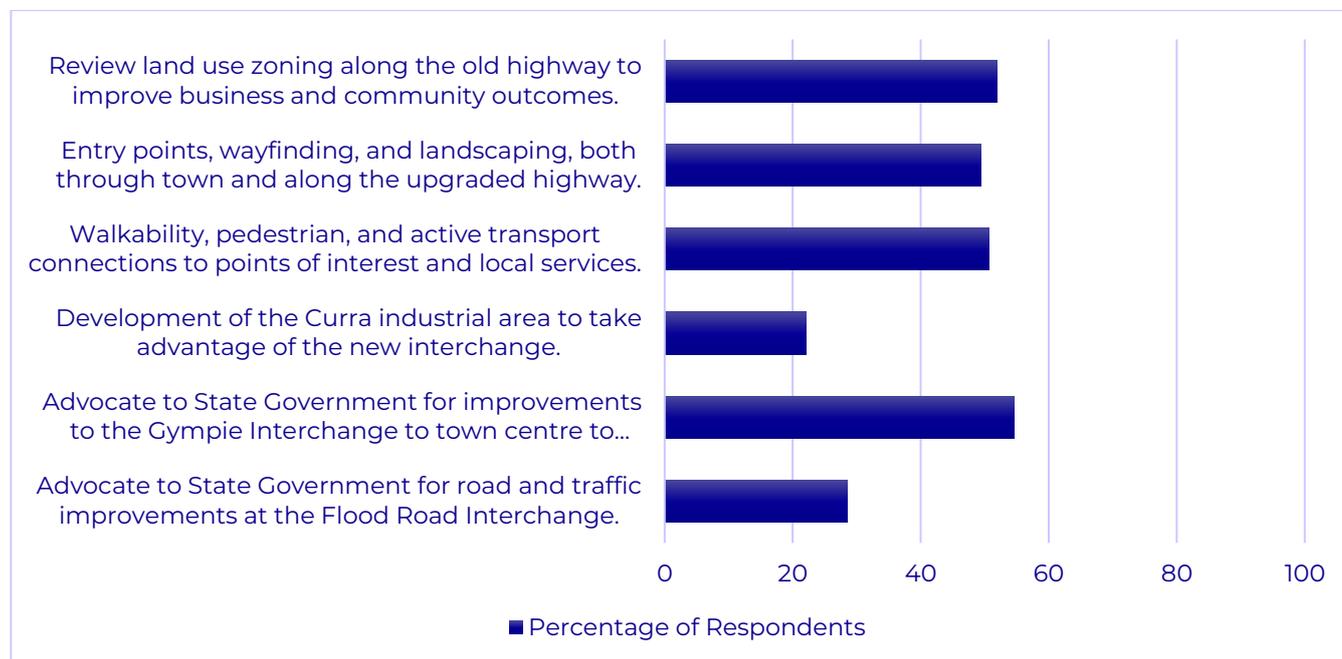
A.3   Bushfire Hazard Survey Respondent Priorities

A.4   Flood Hazard Survey Respondent Priorities

A.5 Heritage Survey Respondent Priorities

Incentives to support owners to preserve our shared heritage.

Evolving heritage places to meet current building codes without compromising heritage values.

Adapting/reusing heritage buildings to support ongoing conservation.

Continue expanding knowledge and opportunities for heritage conservation.

Identifying and managing threats to heritage buildings and places

Council's approach to heritage conservation is consistent with best practice.

The character and amenity of heritage buildings that define Gympie Region's local identity are conserved.

■ Percentage of Respondents

A.6 Industrial Survey Respondent Priorities

Industrial land locations are consolidated to form recognisable precincts

Preserving industrial land for future economic development

A high level of amenity in industrial areas, protecting human health, the environment, and...

Servicing industrial land (e.g. basic utilities, water, sewer, internet, road, rail)

Integrating industrial activities and supporting business activities

Attracting business and indsutries that build on Gympie Region's strengths

Industrial land supply to enable ongoing economic growth

■ Percentage of Respondents

A.7   Open Space and Recreation Survey Respondent Priorities

Creating more walkable neighbourhoods

Addressing Native Title considerations and consulting with Native Title holders and claimants

Identifying open space gaps in local neighbourhoods

Identifying and addressing specific open space demands, including sporting facilities

Improving and embellishing the existing open space network to make it the best it could be

Defining 'open space' holistically by recognising the value of all public and private facilities and giving...

■ Percentage of Respondents

A.8   Residential Development Survey Respondent Priorities

Residential land supply is suitable to growth needs and well-located.

Residential growth is in areas that are, or can readily be, serviced with infrastructure.

Residential development is provided with appropriate services and infrastructure.

Rural residential development occurs in designated areas to avoid impacts on agricultural production and rural land values.

Residential development is provided with appropriate services and infrastructure.

Residential growth is in areas that are, or can readily be, serviced with infrastructure.

Residential land supply is suitable to growth needs and well-located.

■ Percentage of Respondents

A.9   Retail and Commercial Survey Respondent Priorities

A.10   Rural Areas Survey Respondent Priorities