



Draft Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2025

Rusty's Markets, Cairns. Supplied by Tourism and Events Queensland

Far North Queensland's (FNQ) population is growing and changing. To accommodate this growth, the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (DSDIP) has released the draft FNQ Regional Plan 2025, a proposed strategic plan for the region.

The draft FNQ Regional Plan 2025 aims to deliver more homes; support a thriving regional economy; protect and enhance the region's unique biodiversity and natural assets; improve quality of life, health and wellbeing for FNQ communities; and plan for the delivery of efficient and resilient infrastructure that will last for generations.

The draft plan outlines the Queensland Government's long-term vision to support growth and prosperity. The draft plan is being developed alongside the FNQ Infrastructure Plan (FNQIP), which is provided as a dedicated appendix to ensure an integrated approach to guiding infrastructure investment and statutory planning across the region.

What's in the plan?

- > Facilitate delivering between 34,455 and 48,485 new homes in FNQ by 2046 – in well-located, infrastructure-supported areas.
- > Contribute towards Queensland's goal of delivering one million new homes by 2044.
- > Support a thriving and diverse regional economy that meets industrial and agricultural land and employment needs while managing natural economic resources.
- > Support economic and employment growth by strengthening agriculture and ecotourism, while continuing growth in defence, marine, aviation, health and knowledge-intensive industries.
- > Protect and enhance the region's unique biodiversity and natural assets, which are critical to the region's lifestyle and economy.
- > Provide economic and social opportunities for the region.
- > Enhance a sense of regional identity and improve quality of life, health and wellbeing for FNQ's communities.
- > Support efficient and resilient transport infrastructure, manage more affordable and reliable water and energy systems, and improve liveability by linking communities to services.



Photo supplied by DHPW

What's changed?

The current FNQ Regional Plan was released in 2009. Since then, legislative and policy changes have occurred as well as population growth and development. The draft FNQ Regional Plan 2025 retains fundamental elements of the FNQ Regional Plan 2009, such as an updated version of the regional growth pattern, with key changes proposed to respond to the region's evolving opportunities, challenges and needs and the broader planning framework.

What area does the FNQ Regional Plan cover?

Local governments within the draft FNQ Regional Plan 2025 include:

- > Cairns Regional Council
- > Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- > Douglas Shire Council
- > (Newly included) Etheridge Shire Council
- > Mareeba Shire Council
- > Tablelands Regional Council
- > Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- > Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council



A key change in the draft FNQ Regional Plan 2025 is the inclusion of Etheridge Shire into the FNQ region, following requests from local governments. Feedback on this expanded FNQ region is welcome during the public consultation period.

Who was involved in the preparation of the draft?

Consultation has occurred with key stakeholders. Peak bodies (including Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils), industry groups, interest groups, First Nations representatives and local governments have been involved in the preparation of this draft to help guide future growth and ensure the plan is fit for purpose and beneficial for the region.

Areas of Regional Interest

The *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* (RPI Act) identifies Areas of Regional Interest (ARIs) and provides for their identification under a regional plan. ARIs are a new aspect included in the draft FNQ Regional Plan 2025.

The RPI Act aims to manage the impact of resource activities and regulated activities on those identified areas of the state that contribute, or are likely to contribute, to Queensland's economic, social and environmental prosperity.

There are three ARI relevant to the draft FNQ Regional Plan 2025:

- > Priority agricultural areas (PAAs)
- > Priority living areas (PLAs)
- > Strategic environmental areas (SEAs)

Regional Land Use Categories

The draft FNQ Regional Plan 2025 includes updates to the allocation of land into Regional Land Use Categories (RLUCs) including the Urban Footprint, Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area and the Rural Living Area to accommodate the region's growing population.

Since their introduction in 2009, RLUCs have proven generally effective at balancing growth management, while protecting environmental and agricultural values.

Projection for the FNQ region

The FNQ region is forecasted to grow to a population of between 341,360 and 378,340 people by 2046 (from 264,550 people in 2021). Analysis of the current urban land supply indicates that the FNQ region retains sufficient capacity to accommodate growth to 2046 and that significant changes to the Urban Footprint are not required under the current review.

5 key themes of the plan

The draft FNQ Regional Plan 2025 is structured around five key themes, each with defined policy outcomes:



Housing – Facilitates residential land supply in well-located areas supported by infrastructure. The plan identifies a new Priority Development Area at Mount Peter, which is critical to fast-tracking the supply of housing and infrastructure for the region.



Thriving economy – Supports a growing FNQ economy driven by tourism and agriculture, and complemented by growing defence, marine, aerospace, health and knowledge precincts, and mining projects.



Ecotourism and biodiversity – Protects FNQ's unique natural environment and biodiversity, enhancing ecotourism and quality of life. FNQ includes parts of the Wet Tropics, Einasleigh Uplands, Gulf Plains, Cape York bioregions and the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Areas (WHAs).



Healthy and liveable communities – Preserves FNQ's lifestyle and enhances a sense of regional identity while building resilience against natural hazards.



Infrastructure (draft FNQ Infrastructure Plan 2025) – Guides infrastructure investment and planning across the region by integrating land use and infrastructure policies within the FNQ Infrastructure Plan (FNQIP). The FNQIP is included as an appendix within the regional plan outlining policy outcomes and future planning considerations for transport, water, energy, digital connectivity, and social and community infrastructure.



Photo courtesy of Tourism and Events Queensland

Have your say

We want to hear your feedback on the draft FNQ Regional Plan 2025.

You can have your say by:

- > Talking to a planner at an online session (booking required)
- > Talking to a planner at an in-person session (booking not required)
- > Lodging a formal submission online, via email or post while consultation is open
- > Providing informal feedback during consultation

Consultation is open until 11:59pm

Monday 5 January 2026.

Details on how to participate in consultation are available online.

Find out more

To review the draft and find out more about how to participate in consultation, scan the QR code or visit our website:



Scan here or visit
qld.gov.au/fnqregionalplan

Submissions can be sent via:

Email: FNQRSubmissions@dsdip.qld.gov.au

Post: **PO Box 15009, City East QLD 4002**

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