

State Planning Policy review - assessment benchmarks changes

September 2026

Overview

Under the State Planning Policy 2017, assessment benchmarks are planning requirements used to assess certain development applications where a state interest in the State Planning Policy has not been integrated into a local planning instrument. They help ensure state interests continue to be considered during development assessment. Local governments use the assessment benchmarks in their role as assessment manager for development applications. The State Planning Policy 2017 currently includes assessment benchmarks for several state interests, including:

- Liveable communities – fire hydrants accessed by common private title
- Mining and extractive resources – development in Key Resource Areas (KRAs)
- Water quality – water quality and water supply buffer areas
- Natural hazards, risk and resilience – development in natural hazard areas
- Strategic airports and aviation facilities – development affecting strategic airports and aviation facilities.

Under the Planning Regulation 2017 (Planning Regulation), assessment benchmarks in the State Planning Policy 2017 apply when:

- the local government is the assessment manager
- the relevant state interest has not been appropriately integrated into the local planning instrument
- they apply alongside other assessment benchmarks
- they only prevail where they are inconsistent with the local planning instrument.

What is changing?

As part of the review of the State Planning Policy, the Queensland Government is proposing to move the assessment benchmarks to the Planning Regulation. This would bring state interest assessment benchmarks together in a single location, making them easier to access and apply.

By moving the assessment benchmarks to the Planning Regulation, local governments will apply the same statewide requirements regardless of whether the benchmarks have been integrated into their planning scheme. This creates a simpler and more consistent approach to development assessment across Queensland.

The assessment benchmarks are intended to be structured in a similar way to Schedule 12A *Assessment benchmarks for particular reconfiguring a lot* in the Planning Regulation.

The proposed change will allow the State Planning Policy to focus on guiding regional planning and local government plan-making.

Will the assessment benchmarks change?

Most assessment benchmarks will transition to the Planning Regulation largely unchanged from the State Planning Policy 2017. Some benchmarks will be updated to reflect current technical information and improve clarity for users.

The Strategic airports and aviation facilities assessment benchmarks now include strategic helicopter sites, which aligns with new policies for strategic helicopter sites in the revised State Planning Policy.

It is intended that amendments to the Planning Regulation commence alongside the final revised State Planning Policy, to give effect to the assessment benchmarks. Following public notification, the draft assessment benchmarks will be subject to minor wording and structural changes as they are drafted for the Planning Regulation.

What about natural hazard assessment benchmarks?

The natural hazard assessment benchmarks included in the draft revised State Planning Policy are based on the currently State Planning Policy 2017 assessment benchmarks.

Following public notification, these benchmarks will be reviewed and updated as part of the broader review of the natural hazards policy to align with the final revised State Planning Policy.

What does this change mean for local governments?

Planning schemes need to use the assessment benchmarks in the Planning Regulation to the extent of any inconsistency.

The revised assessment benchmarks will apply through development assessment in all instances, not only where a local planning instrument does not integrate State Planning Policy state interests. However a local government may include extra requirements expanding on the Planning Regulation provisions. This is similar to the operation of Schedule 12A *Assessment benchmarks for particular reconfiguring a lot* in the Planning Regulation.

A local government assessment benchmark is not inconsistent with the assessment benchmarks in the Planning Regulation to the extent it contains extra requirements. For example, the Planning Regulation may include statewide assessment benchmarks to protect a Key Resource Area. A local government could also apply additional local requirements, such as transport, road network or buffer provisions, provided they do not conflict with the statewide assessment benchmarks.

In addition to these assessment benchmarks, the Local Government can also use any other relevant assessment benchmarks such as traffic codes, or relevant overlay codes from the planning scheme to assess the development application.

Do planning schemes need to include assessment benchmarks?

No. Assessment benchmarks will apply directly through the Planning Regulation, so local governments will be able to use them when assessing relevant development applications without needing to include them in a planning scheme. Local governments may still choose to integrate assessment benchmarks into their planning scheme or to include equivalent or additional requirements in their planning schemes to address local circumstances,

Further information

Draft assessment benchmarks are available in [State Planning Policy 2017 Review: The future of assessment benchmarks](#).

The assessment benchmarks will be included in a Planning Regulation commencing with the revised State Planning Policy.