



Highlights for 2008–09





Far North Queensland 2031

In 2006 the Queensland Government committed to developing a statutory regional plan for Far North Queensland in response to predicted growth in the region. More than 100 000 new residents over the next 20 years will bring economic prosperity, but may place unacceptable pressures on the region's natural resources and communities.

More than 960 submissions were received in response to the draft plan, which was released in May 2008, and a further consultation report was released in October 2008. This two-stage consultation process ensured community members were given sufficient time to discuss, carefully consider and submit their feedback on the plan.

The final *Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031* and *State Planning Regulatory Provisions* were released on 13 February 2009. These documents address the issues, suggestions and improvements raised through the consultation process.

Work undertaken by the department's northern regional offices in developing this plan was recognised by the Planning Institute of Australia in March 2009—the plan won two awards including the prestigious Federal Planning Minister's Award.

Sustainable Planning Bill 2009

In August 2007 the Queensland Government released its implementation agenda for planning reform, *Planning for a Prosperous Queensland—A reform agenda for planning and development in the Smart State*.

The reform includes 80 actions relating to legislative, operational and cultural

changes, resulting in the need to prepare new legislation to replace the 10-year-old *Integrated Planning Act 1997*.

As part of the department's commitment to 'engage communities', the implementation agenda required:

- regular engagement with key stakeholder groups through the Planning Reform Reference Panel that was chaired by the Director-General or Deputy Director-General. Meetings occurred on average every six weeks from November 2007 until February 2009
- the release of a communiqué on the department's website after each meeting to publicly inform the wider community on progress and key issues
- regular engagement with key state agencies through the State Agency Reference Group to develop a whole-of-government position on planning reform actions
- a series of stakeholder workshops to give people the opportunity to contribute their views on key reform actions, especially the development of new standard planning scheme provisions. More than 150 people have directly contributed to this project.

The department's commitment to this highly collaborative process has resulted in the preparation of new planning legislation that represents the most significant reform in the last decade. The Sustainable Planning Bill was introduced into Parliament in June 2009.

The new legislation also supports an 'electronic planning' environment, creating an opportunity for many paper-based processes to move to a digital format. This will provide new opportunities for community engagement, transparency of process and significant savings through electronic transactions. The department's Smart eDA project is an example of this online operating environment.

The implementation phases also included significant preparatory work on educational and training materials that will help to deliver legislative and operational change. A partnership approach is also proposed for delivery, with the department demonstrating its enhanced role to lead and facilitate better planning outcomes for all Queenslanders.

The Queensland Housing Affordability Strategy

During 2008–09 the department worked closely with the Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA) to optimise delivery of the government's policy objectives to deliver strong, vibrant, equitable and sustainable new urban communities in Queensland. This collaboration continues to build capacity within both organisations and provides opportunities for innovative project outcomes that could not be achieved through normal government channels.

The partnership offers research and innovative urban policy approaches including on-ground trials and demonstration projects. This potentially illustrates—to communities and industry—the benefits of climate responsive design and new approaches to community building and place-making.

The Queensland Housing Affordability Strategy aims to streamline systems for planning and development, land supply and infrastructure funding to ensure that land and housing is on the market quickly—and at the lowest cost.

Addressing the issue of housing affordability necessitates a collaborative and multifaceted approach that requires:

- implementing changes to the planning and development assessment process



- designating land suitable for development in the short term
- implementing standard infrastructure charging regimes.

In July 2008 the Queensland Government declared Fitzgibbon an urban development area (UDA). Declaration of Woolloongabba, Mackay and other potential UDAs are being considered for 2009–10. A range of housing choices will be offered by the ULDA through a mix of densities, types, designs, tenures and affordability. This choice will promote community diversity and sustainability within UDAs. To complement this aspect of the strategy, the department is working with local government and industry to develop an action plan for accelerating suitable greenfield areas to meet forecast demand.

The department will continue the assessment of residential land supply to cover all key growth areas throughout the state. A consultation program will take place with local government and other key stakeholders, including the development industry, concerning the correct identification of land supply to meet forecast demand.

Ensuring that new development pays its share in relation to the building and maintenance of new infrastructure is a key element of the Queensland Housing Affordability Strategy.

Social Impact Assessment

The Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Unit was established to provide a coordinated, whole-of-government response to assessing the social impact of selected new and expanded mining and petroleum developments. The unit became fully operational during 2008–09.

The work of the SIA Unit falls into five key categories, to:

- provide input to the environmental impact statement (EIS) terms of reference in consultation with government departments and proponents
- advise proponents at various stages of the EIS to ensure SIA issues are being addressed
- analyse the social section of the draft and final EIS documents, including drawing links between social impact issues, and economic and environmental considerations
- advise the Coordinator-General on the social impacts of a project including, where appropriate, any conditions that should be attached to the project approval
- provide similar advice and input to the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) on the social impact assessment component of environmental impact statements conducted under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

During 2008–09 the SIA unit:

- supported and assisted the Minister in planning, organising and following-up outcomes of the Resource Community Summits held at Dalby, Dysart and Mount Isa in November 2008
- finalised a generic social section of the terms of reference for Significant Projects coordinated by the department under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* and projects coordinated by DERM under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- advised government agencies and proponents on the social impact of more than 15 resource development projects across the Bowen, Galilee, Surat, and Clarence basins, North West Minerals Province and Cape York

- collaborated with the Queensland Resource Council and the Local Government Association of Queensland on the development of draft guidelines and templates for social impact management plans.

Northern Economic Triangle—North West Queensland Energy Delivery Review

Since the launch of the *Northern Economic Triangle Infrastructure Plan 2007–2012*, the Queensland Government has sought to facilitate commercially viable solutions for competitively-priced and secure power to the North West Minerals Province.

While a number of proposals have reached various stages of development over recent years, none has achieved commercial agreements with customers. To advance this critical issue, the Queensland Government commissioned an independent review of potentially viable energy supply solutions for the North West. The review addressed perceived market failure resulting from a mismatch in investment horizons between mining interests—which typically establish mines on the basis of an 8 to 10-year economic mine life—and the developers of new energy infrastructure, which is typically amortised over 30 or more years.

The review was jointly funded by the Queensland Government and the Queensland Resources Council and overseen by a steering committee comprising government and industry members, and chaired by a representative of the Department of Infrastructure and Planning.

The review, which concluded in May 2009, highlighted the need for a strategic approach to resolving the North West energy supply situation. It also



highlighted the potential for this strategic approach to focus on either a local gas generation solution or connection to the National Electricity Market via construction of a dedicated electricity transmission line.

In order to achieve a private-sector driven outcome, a recommendation of the review was that the Queensland Government initiate a 12-month competitive process, inviting private-sector proponents to engage with existing and potential customers to reach commercial agreements on arrangements for the future supply of energy to the North West.

Following the review, the Queensland Government and industry, through the Queensland Resources Council, have committed to continuing to work together to implement the review findings.

Curtis Island Environmental Management Precinct's Ecological, Environmental and Heritage Study

In line with the government's vision for Queensland, more than 70 per cent of the recent extension to the Gladstone State Development Area on Curtis Island will be an environmental management precinct (EMP). The new precinct will protect land, previously used as a cattle grazing property, for nature conservation and public recreation purposes.

The EMP within the Gladstone State Development Area is approximately 4590 hectares in size and provides a substantial environmental buffer to the proposed multi-billion-dollar liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry precinct on Curtis Island.

Each of the LNG proponents establishing production and export facilities on Curtis Island will provide financial support to the on-going planning, development and management of the precinct.

The precinct will recognise, protect and maintain areas of high ecological significance and provide areas for open space, where environmental, ecological and heritage values can be enjoyed by the public.

In April 2009 the department commissioned an independent audit of environmental, ecological and heritage values within the precinct. The results of the audit will be released in the second half of 2009 as a basis for gaining feedback and ideas from the community and other key stakeholder groups within the Gladstone region. The feedback will be an important contribution to developing a long-term environmental management plan for the area.

As part of the environmental management planning process, consideration will be given to rehabilitating degraded land, protecting areas of high ecological value and identifying compatible land uses such as walking trails, scenic lookouts and recreational fishing areas.

The current assessment and planning work on the EMP within the Gladstone State Development Area represents a significant contribution by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning towards meeting the government's green ambitions under the Towards Q2 strategic agenda.

Airport Link

Airport Link is a toll road built mainly underground between Brisbane's northern suburbs, the airport and the inner city. It will connect the Clem7 Tunnel, Inner City Bypass and local road network at Bowen Hills to Gympie and Stafford roads at Kedron, and Sandgate Road and the East-West Arterial in the city's north-east.

When Airport Link is completed and opened in mid-2012, motorists will bypass 18 sets of traffic lights between Bowen Hills and the airport, providing significant travel time savings.

2008 saw the official start to construction with a sod-turning ceremony in November officiated by the Premier of Queensland, the Honourable Anna Bligh MP, and the Deputy Premier of Queensland and the former Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, the Honourable Paul Lucas. Since then more than two million hours have been worked and 1800 jobs created.

Construction is well underway at Bowen Hills, Windsor, Lutwyche, Kedron, Clayfield and Toombul. The first two of 11 roadheaders began tunnelling at the Truro Street, Windsor and Bowen Hills sites early in 2009. The 2009-10 year will see the remaining roadheaders start work, and the arrival and launch of the project's two tunnel boring machines.

South East Queensland Water Grid

The \$9 billion South East Queensland Water Grid is Australia's largest water infrastructure project since the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme. The water grid involves integrating pipelines, an advanced water treatment scheme and a desalination plant.

The water grid project is the product of outstanding leadership from government and the private sector. The challenges of drought, unprecedented growth and climate change were met and overcome through a government and industry response that delivered vital infrastructure in an innovative framework.

The water grid has been developed in two stages. The first stage of works, completed in 2008-09, includes three advanced water treatment plants producing purified recycled water, the



largest desalination plant on the eastern seaboard and 400 kilometres of large diameter pipeline, ensuring water gets to where it is needed.

The leadership demonstrated by the Queensland Government and its commercial partners delivered projects with diverse scope covering a vast geographical area. The program of works included planning, procurement, approvals, land acquisition, design, construction, commissioning and handover to operators.

Northern Pipeline Interconnector

The Northern Pipeline Interconnector has the capacity to transport 65 megalitres per day between Sunshine Coast water supplies and the South East Queensland Water Grid.

Stage one of the pipeline has connected Landers Shute Water Treatment Plant to the Morayfield reservoirs, where it links with the Caboolture and Brisbane water network.

Stage two will continue from Landers Shute Water Treatment Plant to the Noosa Water Treatment Plant.

This project will allow for future two-way capacity allowing water to be supplied to the areas most in need.

Eastern Pipeline Interconnector

The Eastern Pipeline Interconnector is a bulk water transfer pipeline that can transport water between Redland and Logan cities and can deliver up to 22 megalitres per day to the water grid. The project involved building a new reservoir, a pipeline and pump station—the pipeline and associated works are being operated as part of the water grid.

Southern Regional Water Pipeline

The Southern Regional Water Pipeline is a 94 kilometre, two-way pipeline that can move up to 130 megalitres of water a day between the Gold Coast, Beaudesert, Ipswich, Logan and Brisbane water network.

Designed to help manage South East Queensland's existing and long-term water requirements, this \$900 million pipeline can transport water sourced from Wivenhoe Dam, Hinze Dam, the Gold Coast Desalination Plant and future water sources, ensuring water can be distributed to where it is needed using the water grid.

Potential new water sources, such as Wyaralong Dam, will be connected into this network when complete.

