



HIA Submission

Draft Wide Bay – Burnett Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE DEVELOPMENT,
INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING**

2 SEPTEMBER 2026



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About HIA

As the voice of the residential building industry, HIA represents a membership of 60,000 across Australia. Our members are involved in delivering more than 170,000 new homes each year through the construction of new housing estates, detached homes, low and medium-density housing developments, apartment buildings and completing renovations on Australia's over 11 million existing homes.

HIA members comprise a diverse mix of businesses, including volume builders delivering thousands of new homes a year through to small and medium home builders delivering one or more custom built homes a year. From sole traders to multi-nationals, HIA members construct over 85 per cent of the nation's new building stock.

The residential building industry is one of Australia's most dynamic, innovative and efficient service industries and is a key driver of the Australian economy. The residential building industry has a wide reach into the manufacturing, supply and retail sectors.

Contributing over \$100 billion per annum and accounting for 5.8 per cent of GDP, the residential building industry employs over one million people, representing tens of thousands of small businesses and over 200,000 sub-contractors reliant on the industry for their livelihood.

HIA exists to service the businesses it represents, advocate for the best possible business environment for the building industry and to encourage a responsible and quality driven, affordable residential building development industry. HIA's mission is to:

"promote policies and provide services which enhance our members' business practices, products and profitability, consistent with the highest standards of professional and commercial conduct."

HIA develops and advocates policy on behalf of members to further advance new home building and renovating, enabling members to provide affordable and appropriate housing to the growing Australian population. New policy is generated through a grassroots process that starts with local and regional committees before progressing to the National Policy Congress by which time it has passed through almost 1,000 sets of hands.

Policy development is supported by an ongoing process of collecting and analysing data, forecasting, and providing industry data and insights for members, the general public and on a contract basis.

The association operates offices in 22 centres around the nation providing a wide range of advocacy, business support services and products for members, including legal, technical, planning, workplace health and safety and business compliance advice, along with training services, contracts and stationery, industry awards for excellence, and member only discounts on goods and services.



Introduction

The Wide Bay Burnett region, like many parts of Queensland, continues to face a severe housing crisis characterised by declining affordability, rapidly rising housing costs, constrained rental supply and increasing workforce accommodation shortages. These pressures are not only affecting households but are increasingly acting as a constraint on economic growth and workforce attraction across the region.

Current market conditions highlight the scale of the challenge. Housing prices have experienced significant growth over recent years, with median house values across the Fraser Coast increasing by approximately 89% over the past five years and more than 167% over the past decade. House prices increased by a further 16.2% in the year to 2026 alone, demonstrating that affordability pressures continue to worsen despite recent increases in building activity.¹

Rental market conditions remain similarly constrained. Vacancy rates are continuing to sit below levels generally considered necessary for a balanced rental market, with rates of just 1.4% in Gympie, 1.4% in Maryborough, 2.2% across the Fraser Coast and 2.3% in Hervey Bay. These figures remain below the REIQ's healthy market benchmark of 2.6% to 3.5%, indicating that rental supply remains under considerable pressure across much of the region.²

At the same time, the region continues to experience substantial demand for new homes driven by its lifestyle appeal, coastal amenity and relative affordability compared to South-East Queensland. Areas such as Hervey Bay have become increasingly attractive to retirees, downsizers and interstate migrants, driving growing investment in both traditional residential communities and emerging housing products such as land lease communities.

This presents a significant opportunity for the region's future economic growth. Regional planning has a critical role to play in ensuring sufficient land in desirable locations is identified to meet demand, attract investment and support workforce growth. Accordingly, the Regional Plan should establish a robust framework to ensure future planning schemes facilitate housing supply and supporting infrastructure in a timely manner.

To align with best practice for strategic planning as demonstrated in other states, all Queensland Regional Plans should move beyond broad regional aspirations (narratives) and establish the following for housing:

- **Setting an overall housing target that requires planning for growth:** Any regional plan should establish a housing target that delivers a meaningful increase on recent building activity and responds to existing shortages and projected growth. Given the ambitious target (50,000 dwellings per year) set by the current State Government, HIA is concerned that the identified targets largely reflect recent delivery trends, rather than additional supply.
- **Establish dwelling diversity targets for LGAs:** Set clear housing targets for each local government area which also includes dwelling diversity targets (detached dwellings, townhouses, terrace homes and apartments) that align with different forms of housing required by the population.
- **Feasible and realisable housing capacity:** Best-practice regional planning now recognises that theoretical housing capacity does not equate to housing delivery. The Regional Plan should require LGAs to plan for 30 years feasible housing capacity (long-term target) and 5 years of

¹ Real Estate Institute of Queensland, *State of flux in Queensland's rental market* (June Quarter 2026).

² HtAG Analytics, *Fraser Coast Regional QLD Property Market 2026*



realisable housing capacity (short-term target) having regard to market demand, infrastructure availability, development feasibility, environmental constraints and planning scheme provisions³.

- **Planned and approved land supply targets:** Consistent with the SEQ Regional Plan, local governments should need to maintain a minimum of 15 years of planned residential land supply and 4 years of approved residential land supply. This will help ensure a continuous pipeline of development opportunities and reduce the risk of housing shortages caused by delays in rezoning, approvals and infrastructure delivery.
- **Identify priority housing and productivity reforms:** For state and local government (including greater consistency in planning scheme provisions, infrastructure standards and housing design requirements, and broader adoption of initiatives such as the Queensland Housing Code).
- **Infrastructure Alignment and Sequencing:** Housing growth targets should be aligned with infrastructure sequencing and investment priorities to ensure identified growth areas can be serviced in a timely and cost-effective manner.
- **Implementation, Monitoring and Accountability:** All regional plans should establish a clear implementation framework supported by regular monitoring and public reporting. This should include tracking housing approvals, commencements, completions, feasible housing capacity and land supply metrics to ensure the Plan remains responsive to changing market conditions and achieves its intended outcomes.

³ See *NSW State Land Use Plan 2026* and supporting *Feasible Housing Capacity Policy*

1. Dwelling Supply Targets

1.1 Total Dwelling Targets

The Draft Wide Bay Burnett (WBB) Regional Plan projects the region will require between 25,800 and 48,945 additional dwellings by 2046, equating to an average delivery rate of approximately:

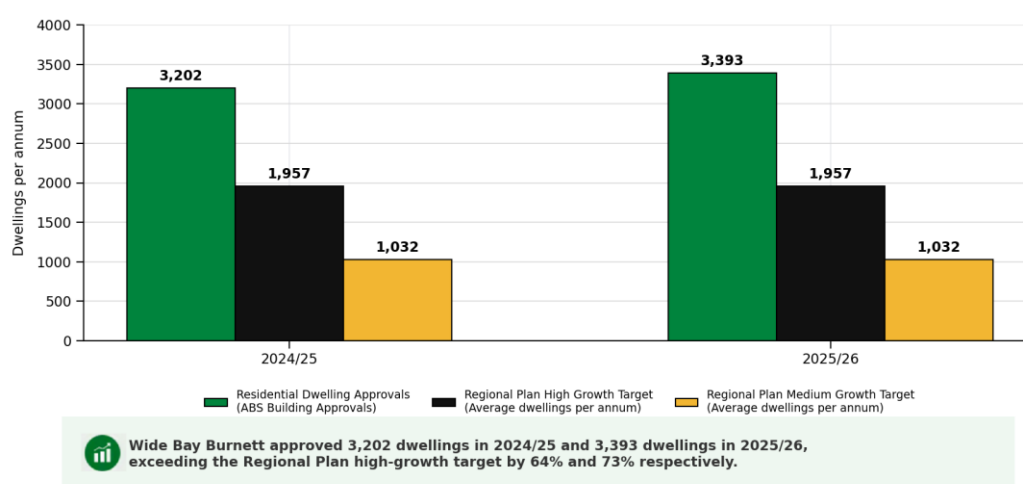
- 1,032 dwellings per annum under the medium growth scenario; or
- 1,957 dwellings per annum under the high growth scenario.

HIA is concerned that the Draft WBB Regional Plan effectively sets a housing target below the level of home building the region is already achieving.

Recent ABS data shows residential building approvals across the Wide Bay Burnett Region over the past two years have been approximately 73% higher than the annual dwelling requirement under the Plan's high growth scenario (see Figure 1 below). This means the region is already delivering substantially more homes than the Plan identifies as necessary.

This raises serious concerns about whether the proposed dwelling target is sufficient to respond to the region's future housing challenges. The evidence is clear, housing affordability has continued to deteriorate, house prices have increased significantly, and rental vacancy rates remain critically low despite recent improved levels of housing construction. In this context, it is difficult to justify a regional housing target that plans for fewer homes than are currently being delivered.

In HIA's view, regional plans should set ambitious but achievable housing targets that require local governments to plan for increased housing supply, helping to address housing shortages and affordability pressures.



Source: ABS Building Approvals, Australia (8752.0) – Wide Bay Burnett region.
Note: Data shown is for financial years. Regional Plan targets are expressed as average annual dwellings.

Figure 1: ABS Building Approval Data for Wide Bay Burnett vs Regional Plan Target



1.2 Absence of dwelling diversity targets for local government areas

The WBB Regional Plan identifies a desire for greater urban consolidation and a more diverse housing mix. However, it is unclear how these outcomes will be achieved or measured in the absence of dwelling diversity targets.

The Wide Bay Burnett Region remains a predominantly detached housing market and increasing levels of urban consolidation will require a significant increase in housing types such as townhouses, terrace homes, duplexes and low-rise apartments.

Importantly, increasing housing diversity will require more than planning aspirations alone. Medium-density and alternative housing products often face significant feasibility challenges in regional markets. If greater consolidation is to be achieved, the Regional Plan should also identify planning and regulatory reforms that support the feasibility of these housing types, including consideration of lot size requirements, infrastructure charges, parking provisions, housing design standards and assessment pathways.

If the WBB Regional Plan seeks to increase housing diversity and consolidation, it should establish measurable dwelling diversity targets for each local government area and identify how progress will be monitored over time. However, these targets must be informed by market feasibility and reflect the likely contribution of different housing types, rather than assuming a substantial shift away from detached housing that may not be commercially achievable.

Recommendations for Housing Supply Targets

HIA recommends:

- 1. Overall Housing Target** - Set a dwelling target that exceeds recent building activity which is necessary to address current housing shortages, affordability pressures and constrained rental market conditions. A housing target below recent activity could embed previous under-performance into the long-term planning framework for the region.
- 2. Dwelling Diversity Targets for LGAs** - Establish dwelling diversity targets for each local government area to guide reform targeted at increasing the delivery of townhouses, terrace homes, apartments, retirement living, land lease communities and other alternative housing forms.



2. Incorporating Feasibility into Housing Capacity

The WBB Regional Plan identifies future housing demand and broad growth directions across the region. However, simply identifying land for future growth does not necessarily translate into housing delivery.

Housing outcomes are influenced by a range of factors beyond zoning, including market demand, infrastructure availability, construction costs, development feasibility, servicing requirements, natural hazards and environmental constraints, and often forgotten, local industry capability. As a result, there can be a significant difference between the results of undertaking a theoretical desktop analysis of housing capacity and the amount and type of housing that can realistically be delivered by the market.

This issue is particularly relevant in Queensland, where significant development capacity already exists across many local government areas through existing zoning and planning approvals. Despite this, delivery outcomes continue to fall well below approved capacity. Previous HIA analysis has found that less than 35% of planning approvals for apartments in some parts of South-East Queensland ultimately progress to construction, demonstrating a significant disconnect between planning capacity and housing delivery.

This highlights a key limitation of relying on theoretical housing capacity alone. While land may be appropriately zoned for apartments or higher density housing, this does not mean development will proceed where projects are unable to satisfy market demand or achieve commercial feasibility.

Given the significant housing challenges facing the region, HIA considers the Regional Plan should place greater emphasis on ensuring future housing targets are supported by a realistic and deliverable housing supply pipeline. Importantly, this should not be a one-off assessment. Housing capacity should be continually monitored and adjustments made through planning scheme amendments and rezonings as existing capacity is taken up by the market, ensuring an ongoing pipeline of feasible housing opportunities is maintained.

Recommendations for Incorporating Feasibility into Housing Capacity

HIA recommends:

- 3. Feasible Housing Capacity Requirements** - Require local governments to maintain a minimum of 30 years of feasible housing capacity and 5 years of realisable housing capacity.
- 4. Feasibility Reviews and Rezoning** - Require local governments to regularly monitor housing capacity and identify additional development opportunities through planning scheme amendments and rezonings as feasible capacity is altered over time.

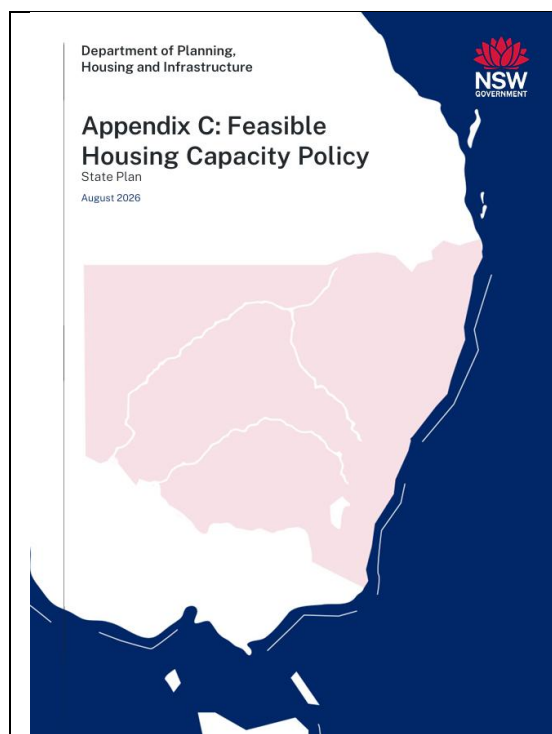


Figure 2: Feasible Housing Capacity Policy – NSW State Plan

EXAMPLE Feasible housing capacity policy (NSW)

Overview: The NSW Government's Feasible Housing Capacity Policy requires local governments to maintain a minimum of 30 years of feasible housing capacity and 5 years of realisable housing capacity.

Feasible housing capacity is the amount of housing that is commercially capable of being delivered over the long term, having regard to market demand, infrastructure availability, development feasibility, land values, construction costs, sales values and other delivery constraints.

Realisable housing capacity is the portion of that supply that is expected to be delivered over the short term under prevailing market conditions. The policy recognises that theoretical zoning capacity does not necessarily translate into housing delivery and requires capacity to be continually replenished as it is taken up by the market

Key takeaways: HIA supports a similar approach for Queensland Regional Plans which should be based on both feasible and realisable housing capacity rather than theoretical development capacity alone. This aligns with the Queensland Productivity Commission's recent findings:

"The supply of development rights needs to reflect market realities if they are to be exercised."

3. Planned and Approved Land Supply Targets

The WBB Regional Plan should establish clear planned and approved land supply targets to support the delivery of future housing needs. While dwelling targets identify the quantity of housing required, land supply targets provide an important measure of whether sufficient development opportunities exist to achieve those outcomes.

A well-functioning housing market requires a continuous pipeline of land progressing through the planning and development process. Without sufficient planned and approved land, housing delivery can be constrained by delays in rezoning, development approvals, infrastructure provision or servicing requirements, increasing the risk of future housing shortages and affordability pressures.

Consistent with the approach adopted in South-East Queensland, HIA considers local governments should be required to maintain a minimum of 15 years of planned residential land supply and 4 years of approved residential land supply. These benchmarks would help ensure adequate development opportunities are available to respond to future demand and provide greater certainty for infrastructure



planning and investment. Facilitating multiple opportunities also ensures competition in the market place, assisting to put a cap on price growth.

Where planned or approved land supply falls below the required benchmarks, councils should be required to identify additional development opportunities through planning scheme amendments, rezonings and other planning initiatives.

Recommendations for Planned and Approved Land Supply
HIA recommends: 5. 15 years of planned residential land supply - Require local governments to maintain a minimum of 15 years of planned residential land supply. 6. 4 years of approved residential land supply - Require local governments to maintain a minimum of 4 years of approved residential land supply. 7. Interventions when planned or approved land supply falls below benchmarks – Councils should be required to identify additional development opportunities through planning scheme amendments, rezonings and other initiatives when falling benchmarks.

4. Development and Land Supply Monitoring

Regional plans should establish clear monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure housing targets and land supply objectives are achieved over time.

HIA considers that regular monitoring should form a core component of all regional plans. Monitoring includes housing approvals, commencements, completions, feasible housing capacity, realisable housing capacity, planned land supply, approved land supply and complete development pipeline analysis.

Importantly, Queensland has historically been a national leader in growth monitoring through the former Land Supply and Development Monitoring (LSDM) program, which provided detailed information on residential land supply and development activity across the State. However, public reporting ceased in 2021 despite the growing importance of housing supply data in responding to housing shortages. Sadly, Queensland is now well behind other states.

The Queensland Productivity Commission recently highlighted the lack of consistent and timely information available to support evidence-based planning and housing policy, noting that improved monitoring is necessary to identify emerging housing supply issues, improve accountability and support better planning outcomes. The Commission recommended both the release of outstanding land supply information and the establishment of a dedicated growth monitoring function.

Best-practice approaches are increasingly moving towards publicly accessible monitoring platforms, such as South Australia's Land Supply Dashboard, which tracks land availability, development activity and

rezoning outcomes and assists government in identifying when additional land supply interventions are required.

Recommendations for Development and Land Supply Monitoring

HIA recommends:

8. **Re-establish the Growth Monitoring Program** - Establish a regional monitoring framework that publicly reports on housing approvals, development timeframes, commencements, completions, feasible housing capacity, realisable housing capacity, planned land supply and approved land supply.

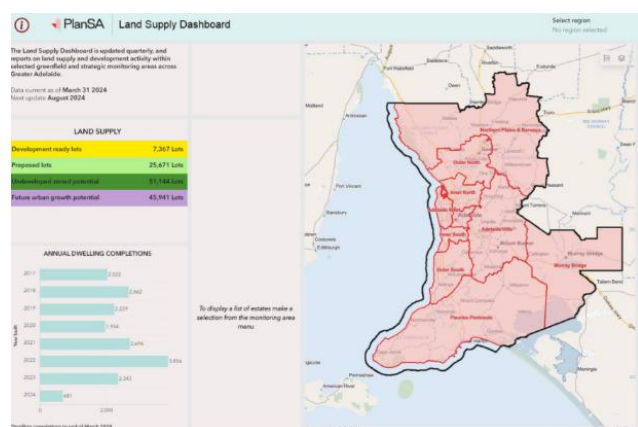


Figure 3: SA Land Supply Dashboard

EXAMPLE Land Supply Dashboard (SA)

Overview: The South Australian Government maintains a publicly accessible Land Supply Dashboard that provides regular reporting on residential land availability, development activity and rezoning outcomes across Greater Adelaide. The dashboard was established to make land supply data more timely, transparent and accessible for government, industry and the community. It supports ongoing monitoring of land supply down to an individual housing estate level and assists government in identifying when additional land release or rezoning activity may be required to support housing delivery.

Key takeaway: South Australia's approach demonstrates the value of maintaining a publicly reported land supply monitoring framework that tracks development activity, land availability and rezoning outcomes over time. This ensures emerging housing supply issues can be identified early and supports timely planning, infrastructure and policy responses.

5. Identifying Priority Actions and an Implementation Plan

One of the key limitations of the WBB Regional Plan is the absence of a detailed implementation framework identifying the specific actions with timeframes required to achieve the Plan's housing objectives.

While the WBB Regional Plan articulates housing supply, affordability and settlement outcomes, it provides very broad policy outcomes and strategies needed to achieve those outcomes. Given the scale of the region's housing challenges, HIA is of the view that the Regional Plan should include a dedicated implementation plan that clearly identifies both State Government and Local Government responsibilities.



This approach would improve accountability, provide greater certainty to industry and infrastructure providers, and help translate the Plan's housing objectives into measurable delivery outcomes (See Table 1, next page for details).

Housing Action	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Improve Productivity and Consistency in Planning Frameworks		
Action 1 - Adopt the Queensland Housing Code and remove unnecessary local variation	Local Governments	By December 2027
Action 2 – Create standardised designs for missing middle housing supported as accepted development	Queensland Government	By January 2028
Action 3 – Standardise planning scheme requirements for flood, bushfire, landslide and biodiversity overlays.	Local Governments	By December 2028
Facilitate greater housing choice and affordability		
Action 4 – Assist Local Governments in detailed land release programs for identified growth areas.	Queensland Government	On-going
Action 5 – Remove minimum lot size in Low-Medium Density Residential Zones and Reduce Minimum Lot Size to 300sqm in Low Density Residential Zones	Local Governments	By December 2028
Achieve a stable pipeline of new housing		
Action 6 – Amend planning schemes to adopt Precinct / Structure Plan for Future Growth Areas of Curra and Nikenbah Dungowan	Queensland Government & Local Government	By December 2027
Action 7 – Informed by Feasible Housing Capacity Assessments – Identify Future Growth Areas for new communities (including subdivision and land lease communities)	Queensland Government & Local Government	

Table 1: Example Implementation Plan with Actions for both State and Local Government



6. Other Matters – Dark Sky Area Overlay

The draft Regional Plan identifies a Dark Sky Overlay to guide consideration of lighting impacts in environmentally sensitive areas. HIA understands that the overlay is intended primarily as a strategic planning and guidance tool rather than a statutory development assessment overlay.

While HIA supports the protection of environmentally sensitive areas, it is unclear how the Dark Sky Overlay interacts with existing planning and environmental controls, particularly the Sea Turtle Overlay provisions already contained within local planning schemes. Given existing mechanisms already address lighting impacts in many coastal locations, further explanation of the intended role and application of the overlay would be beneficial.

More broadly, HIA notes that the development of region-wide guidance for matters such as dark sky outcomes demonstrates the value of greater State leadership in planning policy. If the Queensland Government is prepared to develop detailed guidance and model approaches for environmental overlays, similar effort should be directed towards developing standardised overlay frameworks for other common planning matters, particularly natural hazards.

Significant variation currently exists across local government planning schemes in relation to flooding, bushfire, storm tide inundation, coastal hazards and other development constraints. These variations increase complexity, create uncertainty and add unnecessary compliance costs for housing projects.

HIA considers there would be significant benefit in the Queensland Government developing standardised and mandatory hazard overlay codes and assessment benchmarks that can be adopted by councils across Queensland. This would improve consistency, simplify development assessment and support housing supply outcomes while maintaining appropriate risk management standards.



References

- ¹ Real Estate Institute of Queensland. (2026). *State of flux in Queensland's rental market: June quarter 2026*. REIQ.
- ² HtAG Analytics. (2026). *Fraser Coast regional QLD property market 2026*. HtAG Analytics.
- ³ New South Wales Government. (2026). *NSW state land use plan 2026*. NSW Government.
- ³ New South Wales Government. (2026). *Feasible housing capacity policy*. NSW Government.