

Housing and infrastructure

Addressing Cairns' medium to long-term housing needs through declaration of a Priority Development Area in the Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor.

Cairns is growing. But like many communities across Australia, access to affordable housing is a complex challenge constraining our growth, liveability and economic prosperity.

Australia's housing crisis is driven by a combination of factors, including population growth (through both natural increase and immigration), limited housing supply, rising construction costs and labour shortages. Cairns is currently experiencing severe housing shortages with a rental vacancy rate of 0.7% a clear indication of an extremely tight rental and housing market.

Addressing immediate housing shortages is a multifaceted issue that requires interventions from all levels of government, the development industry and other stakeholders. Council

appreciates it has a key role to play. It is why we are actively working to ensure there is an appropriate supply of approved land available for development within our existing serviced areas right now and providing incentives (infrastructure charge waivers, fast tracked assessment) for community housing providers who build social or affordable housing and for private sector proponents delivering infill housing development within the Cairns City, Cairns North, Gordonvale and Babinda centres.

But while addressing the housing issues of today is critically important, we must also look to the medium to long term to ensure we avoid similar situations arising in future. This means taking a collaborative approach to planning and infrastructure delivery for key areas where housing and economic development will take place.

At a glance

State to declare a Priority Development Area (PDA) over the Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor and work collaboratively with Council, industry and other stakeholders on planning and infrastructure delivery within this PDA to support medium to long-term housing supply.

Electorate:

Situated in Mulgrave but with flow on benefits to the entire region

Mt Peter/Southern Growth Corridor

Approximate land area:

3,300 hectares

(around half of which is considered developable)

Estimated Housing Capacity

18,500 new dwellings

Population Growth Capacity

42,500 people



Vision

The Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor covers a total land area of approximately 3,300 hectares to the south of Cairns encompassing an area between Edmonton and Gordonvale on the western side of the Bruce Highway. Around half of that total land area is considered to be developable having regard to environmental and other hazard-based constraints. The area has the capacity to deliver around 18,500 new dwellings for an estimated 42,500 people.

The Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor is the only remaining greenfield development area of this scale within the Cairns Local Government Area (LGA) and is forecast to accommodate the vast majority of Cairns' long term population growth.

The Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) projects total population growth for the Edmonton and Gordonvale – Trinity SA2 areas (the SA2 areas within which the Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor is located) of around 25,000 people over the period 2021 to 2046 – accounting for 37% of Cairns' total projected population growth during this timeframe. This is why planning for the future development of the Mount Peter Southern Growth

Corridor will be critical if we are to support good housing and community outcomes and ensure the right infrastructure is delivered in the right place and at the right time to accommodate growth.

The dwelling mix within the Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor can support the changing demographic needs of the community and will deliver affordable housing outcomes. It is expected the Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor will continue to supply the housing needs of the region well beyond 2046 and support self-containment in the corridor with a range of jobs in well planned retail, commercial and industrial zones (including via the adjacent Cairns South SDA).

Council has formally written to the Hon Grace Grace MP, Minister for State Development and Infrastructure (the Minister responsible for the declaration of Priority Development Areas under the Economic Development Act 2012) and the Hon Meaghan Scanlon, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning requesting that the declaration of a PDA over the Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor occur as a matter of urgency. The designation of a PDA in the Southern Growth Corridor would send a clear message to the people of Cairns that the State Government and Council are working together to address our community's housing needs in a collaborative and proactive way.

Community benefits: Why a PDA?

A PDA is the most effective mechanism to plan for, and support development and infrastructure delivery within, the Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor for a number of reasons including:

- 1** Unlocks medium to long term housing development.
- 2** Provides for fast tracked development and infrastructure delivery (road networks, public transportation, utilities etc) through a simplified planning and approval process – delivering better housing and community infrastructure faster.
- 3** Facilitates an emphasis on affordable housing options - The 'Homes for Queenslanders' policy emphasises the need for affordable housing. A PDA would enable Council to partner with the State to plan and deliver diverse housing options, including affordable and social housing, to meet the needs of all residents.
- 4** Formalises a collaborative approach between State and local government for planning and infrastructure delivery to ensure this takes place in a coordinated way.
- 5** Complements (and is adjacent to) the existing Cairns South State Development Area which is earmarked for regionally significant industrial development/employment.
- 6** Considers broader economic opportunities within the southern Cairns region which complement housing development and maximise potential for 'living and working locally' shortening commute times and enhancing liveability.

