

6. Strong communities

Desired regional outcome 6

Cohesive, inclusive and healthy communities have a strong sense of identity and place, and access to a full range of services and facilities that meet diverse community needs.



South East Queensland’s socioeconomic profile will change markedly over the next 20 years. Demographic factors, such as an ageing population, declining fertility rates and changing migration patterns, will increase the number of people living in the region, and increase the number and proportion of smaller households. Economic development, and employment, education and training opportunities will also influence the number and type of people who choose to live in SEQ.

Some sections of the community face social, cultural and locational disadvantages. The availability of affordable housing affects where different

people in the community are able to live. Many live in urban fringe locations and rural areas with limited services and high transport costs. Increasing population density and urban infill development creates opportunities for some sections of the community, but disadvantages and limits the choices of others.

Building strong SEQ communities will be assisted by:

- using community engagement and participation processes
- integrating forward planning with the provision of social infrastructure

- ensuring that all members of the community have access and mobility
- planning and developing an inclusive, safe and healthy environment.

The Queensland Government has committed in *Toward Q2: Tomorrow’s Queensland* to delivering world-class education and training, making Queenslanders Australia’s healthiest people and supporting safe and caring communities.





6.1 Social planning

Principle

Consider and respond to changing community characteristics, issues and needs in planning processes to ensure community wellbeing and quality of life for all.

Policies

- 6.1.1 Consider social and community issues and needs in planning processes.
- 6.1.2 Identify the social effects of growth and change in regional communities, and respond when preparing local planning strategies and planning schemes.
- 6.1.3 Identify and address the social and community needs of higher density development when preparing master plans for urban infill areas.

Programs

- 6.1.4 Develop a research and monitoring program for key socioeconomic characteristics and demographic trends affecting SEQ regional communities to provide an evidence base to inform planning.

Notes

Social planning involves investigating, understanding and responding to social and community issues, as well as the needs and aspirations of people and communities. Consideration of social and community trends, issues and changes in planning processes will help develop better community outcomes.

Important planning information includes current and likely future sociodemographic characteristics, the social impacts of growth and development, and current and emerging community needs. For example, the implications of an ageing population and changes to household size and composition are important land use and infrastructure planning considerations. An ageing population will need access to appropriate services, and a diverse range of housing choices and designs, to be able to 'age in place'.

Consideration of the social and community wellbeing implications of higher density urban and infill development can also inform good planning outcomes. Integrating new emerging communities with established communities is important in minimising social exclusion and building community cohesion.

6.2 Addressing disadvantage

Principle

Address issues of social and locational disadvantage in communities.

Policies

- 6.2.1 Ensure the planning and development of new residential areas avoids creating communities of social and locational disadvantage.
- 6.2.2 Ensure that adequate and appropriate social infrastructure is provided in new development and redevelopment areas.
- 6.2.3 Integrate broadhectare communities and redevelopment areas with existing or adjacent communities to prevent areas of disadvantage.

Programs

- 6.2.4 Investigate the contributing factors to, and spatial patterns of, social and locational disadvantage in SEQ, and the relationship with and implications for land use planning.
- 6.2.5 Implement best practice social inclusion, and prevention and early intervention programs to positively address social and locational disadvantage.

Notes

Many factors influence social disadvantage, including housing, income, employment, education, health and access to services. Many groups face a range of social, cultural, financial or locational disadvantages. These groups include people on low incomes, unemployed people, people living in rural areas, young people, elderly people, people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, people from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, people with disabilities, people experiencing mental illness, and people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Land use planning outcomes influence spatial patterns of social disadvantage. Groups with the highest needs are often concentrated in urban fringe locations, rural areas, and some suburbs with unavailable or inadequate public transport and services.

The rising cost of fuel is likely to become a major contributor to disadvantage, significantly affecting residents in urban fringe and rural areas because they rely on their cars for transport. Climate change in SEQ will also affect groups in various ways. Disadvantaged groups are some of the most vulnerable to climate change effects.

Preventing future disadvantage areas means meeting basic human service needs, including affordable housing, education, training and employment opportunities, adequate social infrastructure, health, recreation and leisure opportunities, public transport and community development initiatives.

Mechanisms to achieve integration include physical links between, and access to, neighbouring communities, shared access to services and facilities, and community development and capacity-building programs.

Consideration of social justice principles, including access, equity, participation and inclusiveness, in development and infrastructure planning will help prevent disadvantage, social polarisation and displacement. It can also increase social diversity and inclusion in new developments. The implementation of prevention and early intervention programs is crucial to prevent intergenerational disadvantage.



6.3 Healthy and safe communities

Principle

Develop healthy and safe environments that encourage community activity, participation and healthy lifestyles, and prevent crime.

Policies

- 6.3.1 Integrate health and community safety considerations in the design and delivery of new broadhectare and redevelopment projects.
- 6.3.2 Implement best practice urban design to create walkable built environments that enable and enhance healthy and safe communities.
- 6.3.3 Ensure adequate and appropriate provision of open space, recreation and sport spaces and facilities, and community facilities and spaces to enable community activity and healthier lifestyles.
- 6.3.4 Plan for broadhectare and infill development using the Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) guidelines for Queensland to maximise community safety.
- 6.3.5 Apply a health and social impact assessment framework to planning processes to identify and manage likely health and community wellbeing effects of development.

Programs

- 6.3.6 Research and monitor major broadhectare and redevelopment projects to evaluate their health and community wellbeing outcomes.
- 6.3.7 Develop an implementation guideline on the development of healthy communities in strategic and statutory land use planning processes.

Notes

There are key links between health, community wellbeing and the physical environment. The health of a community is determined by a range of factors including social disadvantage, population characteristics, social cohesion and sense of community, access to social infrastructure, safety and perceptions of safety, housing affordability and density, transport and accessibility, physical activity and the availability of open space, exposure to pollutants and hazards, and climate change.

Best practice planning and design of the built environment encourages physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices, provides a sense of community safety, and assists in preventing crime. Communities that comprise a range of housing choices, efficient public transport systems, sufficient employment opportunities, appropriate local support services, adequate social infrastructure and strong community networks tend to be safe communities. Community safety is also enhanced through provision of good access and connections to places, adaptability and versatility, pedestrian-focused approaches, sight lines and surveillance, appropriate lighting, and variety of places.

Sedentary lifestyles and poor diets result in high obesity levels and poor health. Physical activity through everyday life, including work, travel, recreation and sporting activities, leads to improved mental health and reduces the risk of preventable diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Protecting agricultural land and developing urban gardens and local markets will increase access to fresh, local, seasonal, high quality produce.

The *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* targets for health involve making Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people, with the shortest public hospital waiting times, and cutting by one-third obesity, smoking, heavy drinking and unsafe sun exposure.

Healthy and safe communities:

- use best practice urban design to create built environments that foster and enhance community safety
- apply the principles and strategies of Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) guidelines for Queensland to improve safety
- establish safe, convenient and legible pathways and movement systems with good connectivity between activity locations
- provide access and mobility for all community members
- encourage increased physical activity through cycling and pedestrian pathways and networks, open spaces, informal and formal sport and recreation spaces and facilities, and community spaces and facilities

6.3 Healthy and safe communities—continued

- maximise walkability by providing safe, accessible walking routes and footpaths that link to local destinations and facilities, such as shops, schools, public transport and local parks
- provide inclusive public spaces for community interaction and activity
- provide access to community services, including health services
- develop and maintain healthy buildings for home and work
- provide adequate shade and shelter to protect people from unsafe sun exposure
- provide accessible and appropriate public transport services that link residential areas with employment, education, services and commercial areas
- conserve agricultural land for food production, and enable access to fresh, quality, seasonal local produce
- address social and locational disadvantage, particularly for high-needs groups
- consider environmental health issues, including noise, odour, air quality and waste management, in natural and built environment planning
- consider major emergency situations, such as floods, chemical hazards, fires and traffic accidents, which require efficient emergency services.

Improving community health and safety requires good working partnerships between all levels of government, the development industry and the community.





6.4 Building strong communities

Principle

Develop and support strong, functional and connected communities through the process of growth and change in SEQ.

Policies

- 6.4.1 Incorporate community engagement in planning processes, enabling local communities to identify, articulate and contribute their views.
- 6.4.2 Identify, reflect and maintain unique and important local characteristics to enhance a strong sense of place and community identity.
- 6.4.3 Provide adequate and accessible public spaces and places for a diverse range of community uses and activities in broadhectare and infill development.

Programs

- 6.4.4 Implement community development and capacity building strategies and programs in newly developing areas and areas undergoing significant change.

Notes

Planning and developing new communities involves not only the built environment, but how people will live and work together, form relationships, develop their community over time, and deal with and respond to change. Strong, functional, connected communities provide a great social and economic benefit to SEQ.

Community engagement refers to the connections between governments and communities regarding policy, program and service issues. This includes information sharing, community consultation and, in some instances, active participation in government decision making.

Community engagement is a powerful mechanism to identify new approaches and solutions for managing growth and development. Involving people in planning and decision making processes can create improved planning outcomes, and a greater community understanding and ownership of those outcomes.

Community capacity describes the set of skills, relationships and networks in a community. These capacities provide social support, particularly when people need assistance. The more capacity a community possesses, the more likely it is to participate in, and influence decisions and processes for, change.

Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland sets a target of a 50 per cent increase in the proportion of Queenslanders involved in their communities as volunteers. Volunteering is an important part of building capacity and resilience in communities.

Developing community and building capacity are both particularly important in newly developed areas, and areas undergoing significant change and redevelopment. Community capacity building events and activities enable people to participate in their community life and create a strong sense of identity and belonging. The *Strong Communities Handbook* provides advice on building community capacity.

Sense of place is found in the distinctive features of an area's physical landscape, built environment, population characteristics, economy, arts and cultural heritage. It is also based upon the relationships, connections and networks between the people who live and work in a community. A sense of belonging to and identifying with a place is an essential part of building a community.

The provision of public spaces and places available for a diverse range of community uses is also essential in building a community. Accessible and informal public space enables people to interact, connect and participate in community activity. All new residential development should include a vital public domain that welcomes and accommodates diverse users and uses.

The success of any greenfield, infill or redevelopment process depends on making changes to the built environment, as well as building inclusive and diverse communities that reflect local character, identity and values.

6.5 Cultural heritage, arts and cultural development

Principle 1

Identify, protect and manage the region's unique cultural heritage, including historic places and landscapes of significance to the community.

Principle 2

Support the arts and cultural development through the planning and provision of cultural infrastructure and spaces.

Policies

- 6.5.1 Identify and protect local heritage places in planning schemes.
- 6.5.2 Plan for the future provision of arts and cultural infrastructure and facilities, including cultural precincts in new developments.
- 6.5.3 Provide appropriate public spaces for cultural activities, events and festivals when planning communities.

Programs

- 6.5.4 Identify local heritage places of cultural significance through a heritage survey utilising key historical themes for SEQ.

Notes

South East Queensland has diverse cultures that demonstrate the unique values, beliefs, ideas, knowledge, symbols, ways of life and traditions of our many different communities. Architecture, crafts, design, festivals, multimedia, tourism, heritage, leisure, sport and recreation, and the arts, including public art, all represent culture. Spaces, facilities and infrastructure for cultural activity are focal points for communities to develop cohesion, cultural identity and sense of place.

South East Queensland has many distinctive places that reinforce local communities' sense of place and identity through historical and cultural associations. These places, including landscapes, landmarks, streetscapes, buildings and other structures, form an integral part of the region's appeal, image and identity.

Places of significant cultural heritage should be protected and conserved for future generations. Processes of growth and change must not cause important places to lose the history, meaning and community identity that they capture and reflect.

Redevelopment involving heritage places is particularly complex, but offers the opportunity to bring a vitality and character to communities which is difficult to replicate through new development alone. Any redevelopment's planning and design processes should recognise and reflect an area's unique character, historic fabric and potential contribution to the life of the new community.

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