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WPSQ

issues

Oppose population growth that threatens the environment

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The Queensland Government is forcing south-east Queensland local authorities into irreversibly committing large tracts of land to development – a move that will push ecosystems to the point of collapse – in order to accommodate a million more residents.

Wildlife Queensland wants people to approach their State representative, the Queensland Government ministers responsible and their local authority to halt this action. See [Have your say](#)

Background

The Queensland Government introduced the *SEQ Regional Plan* in February 2005 and is now pushing local authorities in the region to complete Local Growth Management Strategies (LGMS). This is a State Government planning tool used to ensure local authorities implement the *SEQ Regional Plan*, in particular the growth targets of the Plan, which amount to an extra 1 million people in the region by 2026.

Once the LGMS are signed off it will be extremely difficult, almost impossible, to change the status of the areas earmarked for development.

Wildlife Queensland says.....

WPSQ's policy on population (31 May 2005) states that population must be maintained at a level that is ecologically sustainable. In addition that there is no negative impact upon Australia's biodiversity in any form both as an individual program and in its cumulative effect with other programs from any population policy directive.

WPSQ promotes the use of an ecological accounting tool, such as the ecological footprint concept and quality of life indicators, by all levels of government and particularly local authorities in planning strategies and schemes.

All Australians have a responsibility to support maintaining a population level that is ecologically sustainable. ESD principles must be met, and there must be fairness and equity for current and future generations.

The current approach in south-east Queensland adopted by the Queensland Government ignores these concepts.

There has been no attempt to define what an ecologically sustainable population for the area actually is.

Impacts on south-east Queensland

- The SEQ Regional Plan has a population target of 3.96 million people for the region by 2026.
 - This is an increase of almost 1.2 million from the 2.78 million current residents (an average growth rate of 50%)
 - Beaudesert and Ipswich face 100% growth
 - several other areas (notably the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast) also face extremely high growth rates.

- The extra 1 million residents will need 550 000 new homes causing over 60 000ha of open space and bushland to be cleared (approximately 12.6% of the total area of south-east Queensland)
- In addition to necessary housing for the increased number of residents, there will be an impact on the environment from the increased number of roads, infrastructure services, recreational use of land, pollution, noise.

Have your say

Wildlife Queensland would like you to contact the State Government and local authorities without delay to halt the LGMS process until:

1. The community is fully informed about the impacts;
2. There is an opportunity to vote on the specific issues;
3. After the proposed local government merger issue is completed;
4. Local authority elections are held.

Send your comments to your local councillor, your local Queensland Government representative and

- [Premier Peter Beattie](#)
- [Deputy Premier Anna Bligh](#)
- [Andrew Fraser, Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport](#)

Sign the [ePetition](#) to the Queensland Parliament proposing better management of population growth in south-east Queensland.

Population issues

Here are some points you may wish to raise in your communications with government representatives.

- South-east Queensland's population already exceeds the area's sustainable carrying capacity, according to University of Queensland research.
- These high population targets will reduce remnant vegetation to less 30% of the original, generally considered to be the tipping point at which ecosystems begin to collapse and biodiversity loss escalates.
- Many of the region's profitable and sustainable industries (eg tourism, agriculture) and communities rely on healthy ecosystems.
- Water use in the region is already impacting on the environment eg dam building and other infrastructure solutions. The increase in population and the predicted 40% reduction in rainfall for region by 2070 will be unsupportable for the environment.
- Consultation over the *SEQ Regional Plan* did not include consultation on population levels.
- Continued growth needs to be proven not to be damaging to the region's people and environment.

What Wildlife Queensland is doing

- Wildlife Queensland is supporting an alliance of community groups across south-east Queensland in calling for a halt to the Local Growth Management Strategy planning process until after the local government election in 2008 in order to allow communities to gain control of their

future.

- Wildlife Queensland is already campaigning for better legislative protection of native vegetation in our Protecting our Bushland Campaign.
- Wildlife Queensland [responded to the SEQ Regional Plan](#) in 2005 by criticising the proposed population increases and asking for better protection of high conservation areas.
- Wildlife Queensland has based its responses on the [WPSQ Population Policy](#).

For more information on WPSQ's campaigns, [email](#) or phone +61 (7) 3221 0194.

Wildlife Queensland, May 2007

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