Planning Scheme – Climate Change Hot Topic

1.New PS must respond to the latest IPCC information and recommended actions – 2 reports released, final/third WG report expected in April or May. It must recognise the urgency of action – the narrow window of opportunity to reduce emissions so adaptation and resilience responses remain available to us.

2.All CC hazards listed in the SPP must be subject to comprehensive risk assessments at SC regional and LAP levels, and all hazard overlay mapping and codes must be updated to reflect current CC knowledge.

3.SCRC should address all CC risks and hazards that are not currently required by the SPP:

* all extreme weather events capable of causing risks to public safety, building and infrastructure damage, and adverse social and economic impacts – extreme heat, damaging wind, hail, tornado, intense rainfall, extended periods of extreme dry weather

* hazard mapping and scheme codes need to be prepared for each hazard if no State standard code exists

* SCRC should advocate for Qld and Federal Governments to address all these additional hazards in the SPP and national and state building and development codes

* extreme heat events (measured by number of days over 35 degrees) must definitely be included in the new scheme and SCRC should actively advocate for its inclusion in the SPP given likely significant impacts in QLD

*extreme heat mapping and heat island overlay mapping and an associated code must be prepared, preferably in accordance with State technical guidelines to help avoid legal challenges.

4. SCRC should advocate to Qld and Federal Governments for areas south of Hervey Bay to Coffs Harbour to be included in the Cyclonic Region in the building windspeed design standards of the National Construction Code:

* the vast majority of existing SC housing is not built to withstand damaging cyclonic winds and SCRC needs to decide what action it will take to address potentially disastrous events

*areas at high risk of damaging winds such as foreshores and elevated escarpments must be shown on overlay maps

* IPCC indicates frequency of tropical Cyclones is decreasing, but severity increasing, and that Cyclones, other extreme weather events and the warm East Coast Current are tracking further south

* wind speeds in some extreme weather events are of cyclonic intensity.

5. IPCC raises need to consider cascading, inter-related and coincident events in hazard risk assessments e.g. extended wet weather followed by extreme weather event causing high winds and rainfall, storm tides, coastal erosion, and flooding.

*SCRC should revisit the CHAS and its flood and stormwater management studies to test whether these adequately incorporate such coincident and compounding effect hazard scenarios to ensure that it is not exposing residents to unacceptable risks to life and property, and that Council minimises its legal and compensation liabilities.

6. SCRC should fully exploit injurious affection exemption opportunities arising under section 30(4)(e) of the Planning Act to amend current planning and development rights in order to reduce risks of serious harm to life and property from natural hazards.

*this should include reconsideration of land uses and development rights in locations exposed to high risk to life and property e.g. landslip and high erodibility areas, areas exposed to sea level rise, storm surge, erosion and flooding.

7. SCRC should undertake a comprehensive CC risk assessment by integrating all regional and local knowledge of CC hazards and use this to determine a long-term, sustainable settlement pattern and urban form strategy for the SC region. It should effectively engage the community in this process and advocate for the agreed outcome with the Qld and Federal Governments, including aspects of the agreed outcome that are inconsistent with the current and next SEQ Regional Plan (e.g. realistically achievable population growth and dwelling targets).

*recent extreme wet weather events have yet again demonstrated that no further urban development should occur on the various floodplains of the SC region. The only permitted uses should be those that can function despite periodic inundation by flood waters.

*Solar PV farms might be a suitable floodplain use, as that can contribute to CC mitigation (locally produced renewable energy that displaces demand for grid energy from outside the region) and is also a desirable adaptation and resilience outcome. Huge areas of former cane land remains un or under-utilised, much of which could potentially be suitable for solar farm use. This would be in addition to areas already included in The Blue Heart project on the Maroochy floodplain.

8.The ELS is out of date and often does not have obvious actions to address the strategies or actions that inadequately do so. Its inadequacies need to be addressed.

9.Wherever possible the provisions of the new scheme should attempt to achieve multiple CC responsive outcomes i.e. mitigation and/or adaptation and/or resilience.

* the current focus of the CC Hot Topic is solely adaptation and resilience. This ignores mitigation outcomes that can be achieved via the new PS.

* Council should seriously consider applying the visionary ideas of Dr Saul Griffith (see rewiringaustralia.org) through the new scheme, as they are highly relevant to our region, and apply the multiple outcome approach.

* The PS can and should be used to do much more than just address adaptation and resilience in ways mentioned on Council's website. It can play a useful and effective role in Climate Change mitigation through planning and development strategies and development assessment that require emissions reduction, energy efficiency, uptake of renewables and storage, transition to E vehicles and uptake public and active transport, supporting local energy production and distribution (reducing dependence on grid energy from outside region), CC responsive building and built environment design, raising sequestration through increased open and green space, reafforestation etc.

* the SPP includes some requirements in relation to the above, but SCRC can apply or go beyond the State requirements.

10.Despite the State having primary responsibility for SEQ regional water supply and infrastructure, SCRC can contribute to regional water security through protecting dam catchments, increasing

vegetation cover, and requiring sustainable built environment design, water use efficiency, and reuse of wastewater in development.

*Water security for rural industries and emergency services groups like rural fire brigades will be impacted by CC, as will areas without reticulated water such as the Blackall Range. SCRC should require adequate supply is available to emergency services and require development applicants or the property owner to satisfy minimum water storage storages.

*Tank storage volume requirements for residential properties on the Range need to be substantially increased above current code requirements (42,500L).

11. CC will have a major impact on regional biodiversity and ecosystem functions. It will require unprecedented intervention to protect biodiversity and facilitate transition at the landscape and local level. Council has a biodiversity strategy embedded in the ELS, which is inadequate to cope with CC impacts. Council's programs funded by the environment rate levy are generally good but also inadequate.

*The PS should not only minimise biodiversity impacts and loss through applying development assessment codes and requiring offsets. It needs to contain positive strategies and mechanisms for increasing vegetation cover, securing more and better habitat for threatened species and other wildlife, more and stronger wildlife corridors linking habitat remnants, facilitating ecosystem adaptation and resilience, and effective feral animal and invasive plant eradication.

*The new PS needs to recognise regional native vegetation and habitat as Green Infrastructure and require all development approvals to include an appropriate level of contributions to expand, rehabilitate and manage that infrastructure. Green Infrastructure provides environmental services that our urbanised region badly needs to respond to CC successfully.