

APPENDIX 1 Theme 1 Shaping Sustainable Growth

Scenic Amenity Overlay Code

OSCAR, September 2025

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6.14 Scenic Amenity Overlay Code

2.6 Theme 3: A strong and creative community of communities

SO1.5

The scenic, environmental, landscape, cultural and character values of the following key features are not diminished by development, including inappropriate signage:

- (a) the Regional Inter-urban Break;
- (b) sub-regional intra-urban breaks;
- (c) Mountain View Major Greenspace;
- (d) regionally and locally significant landscape features (including views to and from these features);
- (e) scenic routes (including views from the scenic route);
- (f) high prominence scenic areas;
- (g) regionally significant landscape buffers;
- (h) regional gateways; and

- (i) regional and locally significant views and vistas.

6.14.2 Requirements for accepted development

Development in the major escarpment protection area

R1.2

No part of a building or structure protrudes above the ridgeline.

R1.3

Development does not involve vegetation clearing, other than:

- (a) clearing for the purposes of property maintenance activities in the Rural Zone;
or
- (b) clearing that falls within the following categories of exempt vegetation clearing: ...

3.12 Scenic Amenity Overlay Planning Scheme Policy - Major escarpment protection area

(19) Inappropriate development can adversely affect the scenic amenity values of major escarpments in a number of ways, including through: (a) removal of skyline vegetation (including “notch clearing” for linear infrastructure);

The acceptable development conditions have not fully addressed the policy issue of (19)(a) skyline vegetation. AS7.3(a) is more appropriate.

Recommendation:

No part of a building or structure is located on ridgelines or protrude above ridgelines when viewed from key access routes and viewpoints, and otherwise obstruct regionally or locally significant views.

R1.3 does not specifically preclude the clearing of skyline vegetation referred to in (19)(a) of the policy.

Recommendation:

Development avoids clearing skyline vegetation and does not involve clearing of other vegetation, other than:...

6.14.3 Assessment benchmarks for assessable development

Scenic routes

PO1

Development does not detract from the visual amenity of a scenic route by providing

for development design that:

- (a) maintains or enhances the landscape amenity values of the site;
- (b) is visually unobtrusive and integrated with the rural or landscape character of the local area, when viewed from the scenic route;
- (c) maintains or enhances important view corridors or distance views from the scenic route to significant landscape features or high value scenic areas; and
- (d) is low key, both visually and in scale, so as not to detract from the scenic amenity offered from the scenic route.

3.12 Scenic Amenity Overlay Planning Scheme Policy - Scenic routes (3)

Inappropriate development may adversely affect the scenic amenity values of a scenic route in a number of ways, including through: (b) diluting the values which contribute to the setting and character of the scenic route through actions such as: ...

3.12 Scenic Amenity Overlay Planning Scheme Policy - Scenic routes (4)

Such impacts may be immediate or cumulative over time and are often irreversible.

As we understand it, Theme 3: A strong and creative community of communities SO1.5 addresses the scenic amenity values of the Sunshine Coast. This list should be referenced in PO1 to make it clear that individual professional opinion is not sufficient.

Recommendation:

PO1 Editor's note: scenic amenity values in this instance can be found in Strategic Framework Theme 3: A strong and creative community of communities SO1.5

AS1(d) to read: does not impede visual amenity and distance views or view corridors from the scenic route in terms of: ...

PO1(c) refers to views to "high scenic areas". Unless we have misunderstood, this refers to SO1.5 (f) high prominence scenic areas. If this is so then "high value" should be "high prominence"; if not then "high value" needs to be defined.

Recommendation:

PO1(c) maintains or enhances important view corridors or distance views from the scenic route to significant landscape features or high prominence scenic areas

During a recent PEC case recently involving OSCAR, scenic views from a scenic route was an important issue. The Respondent spent some time arguing that:

- there was a very extensive length of scenic routes in the Sunshine Coast region and the loss

of a small portion did not contribute to a significant impact;

- current scenic routes elsewhere presented views to non-rural and open space landscapes; their proposed development improved on these views
- locally, buildings not consistent with the rural nature of the area already existed, were approved for construction or were proposed; again their development was as good as or better visually than the other projects.

The Scenic Amenity Overlay Planning Scheme Policy statements of (3) and (4) of Scenic routes referencing dilution of values and cumulative impacts oppose the above arguments. To make it more clear we recommend an amendment to the definition of scenic routes the following.

Recommendation:

The definition of scenic routes references connecting segments as follows: Scenic route means an area identified as a scenic route on the Scenic Amenity Overlay Map and which are major transport routes that provide views, or a sequence of views connected along the same route, to landscapes or landscape features which contribute to the unique character and identity of the Sunshine Coast and its communities.

While AS1(b) requires screening vegetation to not impede distance views or view corridors from the scenic route, AS1(d) only requires the building to “minimise” its impact on visual amenity. AS1(b) is consistent with PO1 requiring the development to maintain or enhance the amenity value and views, but AS(d) is not consistent. Scenic Amenity Overlay Planning Scheme Policy 3.12.3 (4) warns that impacts can be cumulative over time and are often irreversible while strategic outcome SO1.5 requires scenic, environmental, landscape, cultural and character values of key features are not diminished by development. An acceptable solution should not be inconsistent with the PO and policy.

Recommendation:

AS1(d) to read: does not impede visual amenity and distance views or view corridors from the scenic route in terms of: ...

Inter-urban breaks

PO4

The scale, siting, design and external finish of buildings, structures and other works (including but not limited to signage, external lighting, access and parking areas), associated with any development on a site within the Regional inter-urban break or a sub-regional inter-urban break ensures that built form and any outdoor use area:

- c) is screened from view and does not appear as a prominent feature, particularly

when viewed from key access routes and viewing points; and

d) does not detract from the preferred non-urban character and scenic amenity values of the inter-urban break.

AS4.7

All external lighting associated with the development:

- (a) does not involve floodlights;
- (b) is directed downwards; and
- (c) is otherwise designed to minimise light spill.

Scenic Amenity Overlay Planning Scheme Policy 3.12.3 (8)

It is important that inter-urban breaks are protected from uses that may detract from the darkness that characterises non-urban areas.

OSCAR recently was a co-respondent in the PEC where landscape lighting along a scenic route was an issue. The consultant for the applicant argued that the lighting selected in effect met the criteria of AS4.7 while the consultant for the respondent argued that reflected light from the pavement and buildings and internal lighting of buildings had not been considered. We note that this argument is consistent with the scenic overlay policy but is not transparent in PO4 and not considered in the acceptable solutions.

Recommendation:

PO4 (d) to read: does not detract from the preferred non-urban character including darkness and scenic amenity values of the inter-urban break.

AS4.7 (d) does not detract from the darkness that characterises non-urban areas.

OSCAR supports the scheme's inclusion and value of inter-urban breaks and applauds the more formal definition of these breaks in the proposed scheme than the indicative bands of the current scheme. We note however that two current breaks being between Ninderry and Eumundi and around Palmview to Sippy Downs have been removed. We also note that current identified inter-urban breaks do not separate all distinct urban areas especially between the coastal communities and Nambour and the railway villages.

We do not believe point (12) of the Scenic Amenity Overlay Planning Scheme Policy sufficiently reflects the apparent importance of these breaks at a strategic level.

To meet this strategic aim, current rural areas that intersect scenic routes should be afforded the inter-urban break protection. If strategic planning identifies an area that affords other benefits to the region, the layer can be amended to remove that area.

Recommendation:

Include rural lots contiguous with a scenic route and rural lots adjoining identified lots as inter-urban breaks on the overlay map.

Regionally significant views

PO6 and AS6 while consistent do not provide sufficient direction.

The policy provides a better overview and policy statements should be included as a PO and AS if required.

Recommendation:

PO6 Development does not adversely impact upon regionally significant views by:

- a) buildings or structures blocking or intruding upon views and vistas; or*
- b) development affecting the context, setting and/or value of a significant view, including through:*

AS6 Development maintains or enhances regionally significant views, including features of the view as identified in the Scenic Amenity Overlay Planning Scheme Policy including:

- (a) inadequate spaces between buildings;*
- (b) inappropriate height, scale, siting and design of buildings, structures and internal roads and driveways;*
- (c) inappropriate fencing placement or design;*
- (d) filling and/or excavation and retaining walls;*
- (e) vegetation clearing, or planting of vegetation (for example, trees blocking views);*
- (f) insensitive location or design of infrastructure;*
- (g) inappropriate use, size and placement of signage;*
- (h) lighting; and*
- (i) inappropriate design, materials, finishes and colour schemes.*

Major escarpment protection area

PO7

Development minimises adverse impacts on the rural and natural landscape character and visual amenity values of the major escarpment protection area by providing a

design that:

(g) avoids or where avoidance is not possible, minimises vegetation clearing and provides for rehabilitation works.

AS7.8

Development provides for the retention of existing mature trees and native vegetation areas.

OR

Where the clearing of existing mature trees and vegetation is unavoidable, the clearing or disturbance of vegetation is limited to clearing and disturbance which:

- (a) is necessary for the construction of access driveways;
- (b) minimises canopy clearance or disturbance; and
- (c) minimises riparian clearing or disturbance.

There is insufficient guidance in PO7 and too much latitude in AS7.8 with respect to clearing. The retention of sufficient vegetation along the escarpment is paramount to its protection.

Recommendation:

PO7(g) avoids or where avoidance is not possible, vegetation clearing is limited to essential clearing and provides for rehabilitation works.

AS 7.8(c) refers to “minimises riparian clearing”. Acceptable solution AS8.2(a) states: Development provides for: (a) any building, structure or works to be separated from essential environmental infrastructure comprising a natural waterway or wetland:

- i. for the full width of the mapped riparian protection area; or
- ii. where no riparian protection area is mapped, a minimum of 10m from each high bank of a waterway or wetland;

These requirements are better suited to protect riparian vegetation and should be applied here.

Recommendation:

Amend AS7.8(c) to include requirements of AS8.2(a).

AS7.2

Buildings are visually unobtrusive, small scale and separated from each other to reduce visual intrusion into the landscape.

Any separation distance would satisfy this acceptable solution. A better requirement would to

ensure that separation is half a crown width of the dominant vegetation to ensure partial softening of outlines and provide the visual cue of separation.

Recommendation:

Buildings are visually unobtrusive, small scale and separated from each other by half the prevalent tree or shrub crown width to reduce visual intrusion into the landscape.

AS4.7

All external lighting associated with the development:

- (a) does not involve floodlights;
- (b) is directed downwards; and
- (c) is otherwise designed to minimise light spill.

As discussed above for inter-urban breaks AS4.7, the above criteria do not consider reflected light.

Recommend:

(d) avoids reflected light from lightly coloured walls or horizontal surfaces.

There was a telling observation from the recent court case with OSCAR in attendance in which scenic amenity played a prominent role. The same development in the same context elicited completely different conclusions from the experts to the court. In part, we suggest this reflects on the ambiguous nature of some of the outcomes. We believe the overlay and policy should assist council, applicants and consultants to have a more consistent view of requirements.

We note that of the 9 performance outcomes of the Scenic Amenity Overlay Code, 2 directly include “minimise” while 4 other acceptable solutions offer “minimise” as part of the solution.

We have addressed some of these above and strongly recommend improved clarity in the intent of the overlay to better enable the delivery of the strategic outcomes.