

APPENDIX 5: Theme 2 A Healthy and Resilient Environment Review Of The Environment And Liveability Strategy 2017-2041 Against The Proposed Planning Scheme

OSCAR, September 2025

Introduction

The Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017-2041 supports the Sunshine Coast Regional Council's (SCRC) vision to be *"Australia's most sustainable region. Healthy. Smart. Creative"*¹

The document details:

"The strategy is based on three interdependent sections:

1 The natural environment

2 The environment we create – the built environment

*3 Living in the environment."*²

The SCRC Planning Scheme (PS) must address all these equally without giving more weight to development over the natural environment including the amenity associated with living in the environment.

OSCAR recognises the proposed PS aligning closely with the Sunshine Coast Environment and Liveability Strategy (ELS) 2017-2041, with both documents setting a coordinated vision for a sustainable, resilient, and liveable region. Both documents emphasise the protection of natural assets, climate resilience, sustainable growth, and inclusivity. However, OSCAR submits that further strengthening on the environmental factors will underpin a healthy and resilient current and future population, avoiding the traps of increased density development which leads to social and health welfare being diminished. Of the five strategic pathways detailed in the ELS³, this submission will focus on those transformational actions associated with two pathways, below, as they relate to the PS.

1. A resilient region shaped by clever planning and good design.

2. Protection and enhancement of our natural assets and distinctive landscape.

Strategic Pathway 1: A resilient region shaped by clever planning and good design.

¹ [24025A ELS 2023 PART A Web-FA.pdf](#) P.24

² [24025A ELS 2023 PART A Web-FA.pdf](#) P.9

³ [24025A ELS 2023 PART B Web FA.pdf](#) P.19

2.1 A better built environment through sustainable design: Embed sustainable, liveable and affordable design into our built environment that celebrates the subtropical lifestyle of the Sunshine Coast and supports our growing community.

2.2 Develop and implement relevant guidelines including climate resilient and subtropical sustainable design, tools and standards to complement the Sunshine Coast Design Strategy.

The design principles developed by the SCRC, and promoted in the Sunshine Coast Design Strategy, are commendable but are guidelines, not mandated by the PS.

OSCAR recommends:

1. Further incentives for developers to adopt the guidelines. These incentives may include financial or reputational benefits along with *"2.8 Explore potential partnerships and work with industry, community and research institutions to recognise and promote excellence in sustainable urban and building design"*
2. Tracking of, reporting and publicising the incorporation of the guidelines in developments.

2.7 Investigate the establishment of a pilot eco-neighbourhood that incorporates sustainable design that advances liveability, neighbourhood sustainability and affordable living options.

3.3 Create a street-scale demonstration project to showcase sustainability, good urban design and the benefits of medium density living in partnership with government and industry.

Whilst not directly governed by the PS, both 2.7 and 3.3 are yet to be realised. If they were realised, the adoption of sustainable design would likely be further encouraged. It would also lead to great community acceptance of density.

OSCAR recommends:

1. Increasing the focus on the delivery of these transformational actions.
3. Sustainable and affordable living through urban transformation
- 3.1 Facilitate sustainable and affordable living options through urban transformation and self-contained communities supported by essential infrastructure in our urban footprint.

Successfully implementing this transformational action requires the delivery and acceptance of an updated Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP). Whilst we are informed that the LGIP is currently under review, a new Planning Scheme is predicated on it.

OSCAR recommends:

1. Delaying the finalisation of the Planning Scheme until the revised LGIP is accepted, with concomitant changes to the PS returning for community consultation.

4.5 Develop an urban cooling plan that incorporates urban greening initiatives and targets to respond to risks associated with increased heat.

5.1 Implement the Street Tree Master Plan.

5.3 Investigate the role and function of urban greening and incorporate into planning and decision making.

5.4 Investigate feasibility of identifying 'green infrastructure' as a new appreciating asset class derived from the multiple benefits it provides to our community.

5.5 Develop canopy cover targets and increase urban greening to support community health and wellbeing.

OSCAR notes that both documents highlight protecting the unique landscape, biodiversity, waterways, and green spaces as a core regional value and future priority.

OSCAR also welcomes the inclusion of deep plantings in the PS. These, alongside the other transformational actions, have the capacity to significantly improve the liveability of the Sunshine Coast.

OSCAR recommends:

1. Removing the ability for residents to object to street trees on the basis of view reduction.
2. Additional emphasis on 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 to quickly deliver improved greening.
3. In relation to PS SO1 Essential Environmental Infrastructure, SO2 Biodiversity:
 - 3.2.1 Providing a definition of 'essential', including maps detailing where they currently exist.
 - 3.2.2 Defining the measures attached to this strategy, the frequency of measurement and detailing the process of reporting (a) within SCRC and (b) to the community

Liveability and Housing:

OSCAR notes that maintaining liveability through diverse and affordable housing options, strong communities, and high amenity open space is a key theme in both, with the Planning Scheme focusing on zoning and built form and the ELS providing the strategic vision, with annual reviews and five-year targets to be undertaken.

The following ELS target is included “ *Neighbourhoods and housing: Increase the diversity of affordable living options by 2041. Other ‘indicators of change’ may include monitoring the delivery of different housing types seeking to increase the percentage of semi-attached,*

attached and medium density, affordable, adaptable and social housing in self contained neighbourhoods.⁴

OSCAR recommends:

1. The table below as a starting point to measure and review annually to ensure that a staged and monitored approach enables the realisation of 2041 targets.
2. All measures should comply with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) with reporting against each.

Summary Table: Strategic Housing Outcomes

Outcome/Target	Details/Approach
Diversity of affordable living options	Recognized and measured target for 2041
Compact, self-contained neighbourhoods	Focus urban growth around centres, enable walkability, and reduce resource use
Mix of housing types (medium, attached, social, etc.)	Increase supply and diversity, innovate delivery
Sustainable and inclusive design	Support adaptability, universal access, ageing in place
Infrastructure to support housing	Link with transport, social infrastructure planning
Continuing monitoring & annual reporting	Track against targets, adjust implementation

Strategic Pathway 2: A Protection and enhancement of our natural assets and distinctive landscapes.

⁴ 24025A ELS 2023 PART B Web FA.pdf P. 28

6.2 Develop and implement conservation/management plans for key threatened and iconic species.

OSCAR acknowledges the PS measures for protection of marine turtles and would like to see this increased for all EPBC threatened species.

6.6 Develop and implement a vegetation offsets management and delivery program.

Whilst a management and delivery program is essential for vegetation offsets, OSCAR supports the use of offsets as a last resort.

PS SO7.1 Floodplain map Table 2.6A does not mention the Pumicestone Passage as a significant natural asset, despite it being a RAMSAR declared area.

OSCAR recommends:

1. The inclusion of PS measures to protect all EPBC listed threatened species in the Sunshine Coast Local Government area. These include water mice, acid frogs etc.
2. Offsets in Development applications being refused, as a starting point.
3. Include Pumicestone Passage in PS Table 2.6A.