

APPENDIX 6 Theme 4 A Smart and Prosperous Economy

Agricultural Land Overlay Code

OSCAR, September 2025

6.3 Agricultural Land Overlay Code

This code and accompanying Agricultural Land Overlay Planning Scheme Policy relate to the conservation of Agricultural Land Class (ALC) Class A and Class B land being a high quality but finite land resource and is defined in Guidelines for Agricultural Land Evaluation in Queensland¹ as follows:

Class A land: Land that is suitable for a wide range of current and potential crops with nil to moderate limitations to production.

Class B land: Land that is suitable for a narrow range 3 of crops. The land is suitable for sown pastures and may be suitable for a wider range of crops with changes to knowledge, economics or technology.

We recently received an agricultural land assessment report for part of the Maroochy River catchment as part of a review of a proposed development. In this report, the ALC was assessed. The definitions of Guidelines for Agricultural Land Evaluation in Queensland were reproduced excluding the qualification that Class B land “may be suitable for a wider range of crops with changes to knowledge, economics or technology”. Due to changed economics, the report proposed downgrading Class B land to Class C.

We note that economics is not included as one of the 18 limitations listed by Guidelines for Agricultural Land Evaluation in Queensland nor one of the 17 limitations listed by the Regional Land Suitability Frameworks for Queensland². The Guidelines for Agricultural Land Evaluation in Queensland does state “certain infrastructure required for an industry (e.g. a sugar mill) may no longer exist. While this does not change the specific suitability of the land, it may impact on the chosen land use.”

We do not believe downgrading the land for economic reasons is consistent with the State’s

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- 1 DSITI & DNRM (2015). Guidelines for agricultural land evaluation in Queensland (2nd edn). Queensland Government (Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation and Department of Natural Resources and Mines), Brisbane, Queensland.
 - 2 DNRM & DSITI (2013). Regional Land Suitability Frameworks for Queensland. Queensland Government (Department of Natural Resources and Mines and the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts).

definition or intent.

Recommendation:

The Agricultural Land Overlay Planning Scheme Policy should include the definitions for Class A, B and C lands accepted by Council, include or reference the accepted range of limitations and make clear whether current economics plays a part in agricultural land classes.