



Topic 5. Availability of Rural Residential and Rural Lifestyle Lots

Longreach Regional Council is committed to providing housing diversity and choice in the region.

The Longreach Regional Council Planning Scheme presently includes two zones offering the option of living on rural or larger lots: the Rural Zone and the Rural Residential Zone. The planning scheme also includes the following strategic outcome:

“Rural residential subdivision is limited to the existing area at Cramsie. No additional rural residential development is intended in the life of the planning scheme other than that which may be provided as part of a mix of housing options within the town’s designated greenfield residential areas.”

This policy position was consistent with planning practice at the time the planning scheme was made but may no longer reflect the views and aspirations of the community.

A priority in the Rural Zone is to preserve the agricultural productivity of the land, including protecting it from fragmentation and encroachment from incompatible uses. The main housing type envisaged is one ‘Dwelling house’ on a lot. ‘Secondary dwellings’, ‘Caretaker’s accommodation’ and ‘Dwelling unit’ (a single dwelling within a non-residential building) are also acceptable where they do not result in more than two homes on the lot. ‘Rural workers accommodation’ and ‘Community residence’ are also accepted subject to requirements in the Rural Zone. When subdividing existing rural zoned land, the minimum lot size is 5,000ha with a 500m minimum road frontage.

The purpose of the Rural Residential Zone is to provide for residential development on large lots where local government infrastructure and services may not be provided and where the intensity of residential development is generally dispersed. Presently, the Rural Residential Zone in the Longreach Region consists of 36 existing lots suited for housing at Cramsie and accessed via Cramsie Muttaborra Road. Only 3 of these lots remain undeveloped for residential purposes. Each rural residential zoned lot is intended to contain no more

than a single ‘Dwelling house’, ‘Dwelling unit’ or ‘Dual occupancy’. The minimum size for the creation of new lots in the Rural Residential Zone is 10ha with a 100m minimum road frontage. Consequently, there is no further subdivision potential within the existing Rural Residential Zone in the Longreach Region and the potential to subdivide land in other zones to create rural lifestyle lots is constrained.

The planning scheme also prevents residential development and other non-rural uses on historic subdivisions including residential scale lots within the Rural Zone on the edge of Longreach, at Emmet and historic settlements including ‘Cobb and Co’, Morella and Arrilalah, unless amalgamated to a minimum lot area of 10 hectares. There are justifiable planning grounds for imposing such limitations on historical subdivisions.

What is the difference between a rural residential lot and a rural lifestyle lot?

A rural residential lot, is an allotment of land within a mapped Rural Residential Zone. The development code for that zone and for reconfiguring a lot in that zone will set out specific parameters in terms of the minimum lot area, lot design and minimum infrastructure/servicing requirements.

A rural lifestyle lot, is an allotment of land created with a residential rather than productive intent within the Rural Zone. They are intended to cater for the housing and lifestyle aspirations of some people to live in a rural setting with reduced expectations regarding access to formalised or networked infrastructure and services. Rural lifestyle lots tend to be larger than rural residential lots and to exist in a less dense subdivision layout.

WQAC Housing Solutions Study Report

The Western Queensland Alliance of Councils in conjunction Regional Institute Australia recently undertook a study into the severe underinvestment in housing in Western Queensland, including the Longreach Region.

One of the observations reported in relation to the Longreach Region, is that the current planning scheme is a constraint to residential development, particularly for high-end housing stock on rural living/rural residential style lots. With limited vacant rural residential stock, the criteria for subdividing (reconfiguring a lot) rural land is currently an obstacle.

The WQAC Housing Solutions Study: To Building and Grow the Potential of Western Queensland (September 2021) is accessible online at: <https://wqac.com.au/news/new-western-qld-housing-study>

return on marginal land, strengthen existing social catchments and provide impetus for new infrastructure and services in the rural area. The local road network is one of the costliest infrastructure assets a local government provides and maintains. For this reason, it is important that future rural living opportunities are only realised in locations where an acceptable standard of road infrastructure can be provided and preferably at no additional cost to the broader community. Hazard reduction and disaster management are also relevant considerations when planning for housing options.

Providing rural living opportunities is about offering a lifestyle choice – it will only ever play a minor role in accommodating future population growth in the region. Urban residential development within towns remains the preferred and most cost-efficient means of housing the region’s population. Care should be taken in planning to protect urban and township areas from being encroached and constrained in terms of future expansion, by the occurrence of rural living development on their fringes.

Planning for rural living opportunities?

Rural living opportunities contribute to the diversity and choice of housing options in an area. However, if not planned appropriately rural living opportunities can have greater adverse environmental, social and economic impacts than urban residential development. These may include land use conflicts between primary production activities and the amenity expectations of residents of rural residential or rural lifestyle lots, as well as impacts on the visual, environmental or cultural values of a rural area.

Providing such living options can also increase pressure on existing, often lower grade, infrastructure such as roads. On the other hand, appropriately sited and designed rural living opportunities can also provide a higher monetary

Options for Amending the Planning Scheme

The planning scheme does not presently offer much support for the supply of more rural residential or rural lifestyle lots.

This Major Amendment No. 2 project, represents an opportunity to reconsider and amend the current approach to include new rural living opportunities in the mix of housing options available in the Longreach Region.

Some options for amendment, including foreseen advantages and disadvantages, are outlined in the following table.

Planning Scheme Amendment – Option and description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>1. Amend the Strategic Framework</p> <p>For instance, to include a strategic outcome such as: To support regional population growth in all towns, living options across the Longreach Region will be diversified by allowing rural lifestyle lots or new rural residential development in rural and other defined areas where:</p> <p>(a) land is proximate to a township area;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statements and outcomes in the Strategic Framework express Council’s overarching policy position on a matter and can be applied in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unless consistent outcomes are included in the Reconfiguring a Lot Code and relevant zone codes in the planning scheme, outcomes in the

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<p>(b) appropriate access to services and facilities is provided, including reticulated water supply where possible;</p> <p>(c) land use conflicts with existing or likely future rural uses are avoided by incorporating appropriate buffers and separation distances in the siting and design of development;</p> <p>(d) there is no increased risk to persons or property from natural hazards; and</p> <p>(e) the provision of new development supports housing choice for the community.</p>	<p>assessment, conditioning and grounds for refusing impact assessable development applications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with the State Planning Policy and plan-making requirements to provide diverse, accessible and well-serviced housing options and land for housing, as well as supports affordable housing outcomes. 	<p>Strategic Framework are not applied in the assessment of code assessable development applications. A subdivision proposal will typically require a code assessable development application.</p>
<p>2. Amend the Reconfiguring a Lot Code</p> <p>For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to include overall code outcomes specifically in relation to rural lifestyle lots and consistent with the stated strategic outcome. • to include assessment criteria (performance outcomes) applying specifically to the subdivision of Rural zoned land to create rural lifestyle lots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per 1 above. • Set out criteria which can also be applied to code assessable development applications for reconfiguring a lot, such as an acceptable outcome for minimum lot size and frontage. 	
<p>3. Include an administrative definition for what is meant by a “Rural lifestyle lot”</p> <p>For instance: An allotment less than 100 hectares in area in the Rural zone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a consistent term that can be used throughout the planning scheme to refer to this type of development outcome envisaged. • Aids drafting and readability of the document. • Provides a mechanism for differentially regulating between similar types of development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an arbitrary basis for considering such proposal and any future desire to change the definition would require a planning scheme amendment process to be undertaken.
<p>4. Identify new areas to include in the Rural Residential Zone</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives clarity in relation to the land Council considers is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach would give an expanded

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<p>This would involve making changes to the zone maps in the planning scheme.</p>	<p>appropriate for rural residential development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not require the inclusion or drafting of additional assessment criteria. 	<p>development right and potential financial capital gains advantage to the owners of specific land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires the suitability of the land for rural residential development to be considered and assessed up-front in the process of amending the planning scheme.
<p>5. Identify a Rural Living Precinct in the Rural Zone</p> <p>This approach may be appropriate to limit the locations across the region where rural lifestyle lots could be created.</p> <p>The concept of including a precinct would be similar to the Stables Precinct presently included in the planning scheme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives clarity in relation to the land Council considers is appropriate for potential fragmentation and rural lifestyle development. A drafting mechanism that allows additional or modified application and/or assessment requirements to be imposed within the precinct compared with development in the zone generally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This approach would give an expanded development right and potential financial capital gains advantage to the owners of specific land. Requires the suitability of the identified area of rural land for this type of development to be considered and assessed up-front in the process of amending the planning scheme
<p>6. Identify a Rural Living Investigation Precinct in the Rural Zone</p> <p>This approach may be appropriate to limit the locations across the region where rural lifestyle lots may be considered for creation, particularly when the suitability of the land for that purpose or the availability of required infrastructure has not yet been established.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per 5 above, but holds over the need (and associated cost) to confirm and demonstrate the suitability of the land for rural lifestyle lots until sometime between when the planning scheme is amended and the development is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per 5 above, but prior to developing the land for rural lifestyle lots, the developer would need to undertake various studies to confirm and demonstrate the suitability of the land for rural lifestyle lots. The cost to the

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	undertaken.	developer may be greater than if the suitability of the land for this type of development has already been determined and accepted.

Have Your Say

There will be multiple opportunities to have your say during the process. The first of these will be in January 2022 when we release a public survey gathering feedback from our communities on all aspects of the current planning scheme. We will also be seeking to engage face to face with stakeholders on the unique issues covered in each amendment. We anticipate this process commencing in February 2022.

How Can I Keep Updated?

For more information about the proposed planning scheme amendments, or to register for email updates please visit longreach.qld.gov.au/townplan or contact us directly:

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