

Queensland Agricultural Land Audit

Annual Addendum 2014

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Contents

Introduction	4
New Audit tools and information	4
Web Mapping Tool	4
Agricultural Values Assessment	5
Guide for Local Government	5
Agricultural climate risk information	5
Statewide updates	7
Queensland's agriculture strategy	7
The State of Queensland Agriculture Report	7
State Planning Policy	7
Vegetation Management Act 1999	9
Protected Plants Framework	9
Biosecurity Act 2014	10
Map layer updates	10
Regional updates	12
Chapter 4: Cape York	12
Chapter 5: Gulf and North West	13
Chapter 6: Far North Queensland	13
Chapter 7: Charters Towers	14
Chapter 8: Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday	14
Chapter 9: Central West and South West	15
Chapter 10: Central Queensland	15
Chapter 11: Wide Bay Burnett	17
Chapter 12: Darling Downs	17
Chapter 13: South East Queensland	20



Introduction

Since its release in May 2013, the Queensland Agricultural Land Audit (the Audit) has been used as a key reference tool to guide investment decisions and has been increasingly relied upon to support a range of government policy. As a result of the influence of the Audit, periodic updates to the Audit information were deemed necessary to ensure the Audit accuracy and currency is maintained.

The purpose of the annual addendum is to highlight major information updates at the state and regional scale. The annual addendum will cover major:

- Policy changes;
- Proposed, on-going and completed infrastructure projects and issues;
- Data updates and resource studies;
- Changed or proposed changes to regional plans;
- Changed or proposed changes to water resource plans; and
- Changes to relevant socio-economic data.

It is not intended that any current or potential agricultural land use maps will be generated or updated¹ in this or any future annual addendum. New spatial datasets and analysis will be generated when the Audit is reviewed in 2018.

New Audit tools and information

Since the release of the Audit, there have been a number of projects which have produced new tools and information. These projects have focused on:

- Communicating the results of the Audit;
- Influencing government wide strategies;
- Integrating the Audit results into a range of planning processes; and
- Maintaining the relevance of Audit information.

Web Mapping Tool

WALI, the Web-based Agricultural Land Information mapping tool, is a user-friendly online mapping tool which allows people to visualise information contained within the Audit. WALI displays current and potential agricultural land use as identified in the Audit, alongside other important datasets such as agricultural infrastructure, water resources, mining tenures, planning interests and regulated vegetation. WALI also allows users to print professional maps, import shape and csv. files, and to measure and draw over the map layers.

WALI has a broad range of applications from local government planning and protection of important areas for agriculture, to informing investors of an area's suitability for particular agricultural land uses. It provides GIS capability to non-GIS users.

WALI does not require the download of specialised software and can be accessed from <http://www.daff.qld.gov.au/environment/ag-land-audit/web-mapping-tool>.

¹ New or updated agricultural land use datasets are displayed in the Web-based Agricultural Land Information (WALI) online mapping tool. This applies to both current land use and potential land use datasets.

Agricultural Values Assessment

An Agricultural Values Assessment (AVA) collates agricultural information from over one hundred data sources, including the Audit, into a concise and easy to understand report with maps. An AVA includes:

- Baseline information regarding agricultural land classes within an assessment area;
- Calculated areas (expressed as hectares and percentages) for current and potential agricultural land uses, and other land use interests such as water resource planning; and
- Proximity of the assessment area to processing facilities and major infrastructure.

An AVA can inform investment opportunities, due diligence assessments, business and property planning, opportunity and constraint analysis and risk assessments.

An AVA can be tailored to anywhere in the state. Requesting an AVA is a simple, one step process which involves entering central coordinates for the area of interest and an email address. A customised AVA will be emailed to the supplied email address within an hour.

An AVA can be obtained from <http://www.daff.qld.gov.au/environment/ag-land-audit/request-an-agricultural-values-assessment>.

Guide for Local Government

The Guide for Local Government is an online step by step guide to help planners understand, access and utilise information contained within the Audit. The guide can help show planners the statutory and non-statutory applications of the Audit.

The Guide for Local Government can be accessed from <http://www.daff.qld.gov.au/environment/ag-land-audit/guide-for-local-government>.

Agricultural climate risk information

To help inform decision making, important climate information has been compiled to complement the information contained in the Audit. A number of gridded (raster) datasets have been created which calculate a range of climate indices throughout Queensland. Online supporting material has also been produced to help potential investors understand, access and utilise the climate datasets.

Table 1 outlines the major climate data series produced.

Climate series	Further information
Rainfall	Gridded datasets showing the likelihood of the occurrence of various rainfall events relevant to agriculture. This is based on historical rainfall data and includes datasets relating to the timing of the break of season and occurrence of light or failed wet seasons.
Temperature	Gridded datasets showing the likelihood of the occurrence of various temperature events relevant to agriculture. This is based on historical temperature data and includes datasets relating to the occurrence of frost days, occurrence of exceeding a given temperature for 3 or 5 days in a row and the occurrence of very high temperatures.

Climate series	Further information
Wheat and sorghum production	Datasets showing modelled wheat and sorghum production as well as various measures of deviation in the yield based on 100 years of data. A simple agro-climatic modelling approach for predicting shire (statistical local area) wheat and sorghum yield was utilised.
Pasture growth	Gridded datasets showing pasture growth probability. These datasets show the percentage chance of growing different quantities of pasture measured in kg per hectare. Datasets are based on the AussieGRASS model.
Extreme weather events	Datasets related to the occurrence of extreme weather events that may impact agriculture. This includes datasets relevant to cyclone wind gust speed and the occurrence of fire.
Cumulative evaporation	Datasets showing the cumulative evaporation (mm) of water in the summer period in Queensland (October to May).
Solar radiation	Datasets showing the median number of low solar radiation days over the summer period (October to May). Low solar radiation is when the daily average is less than 200 watts per metre. The median is calculated over all years from 1957 to 2013.

Table 1: Major climate data series

The climate datasets are available to download from the Queensland Government Information Service ([QGIS](#)) and the Queensland Government Open Data portal ([Open data](#)). Climate datasets can also be viewed using WALI. For more information, go to <http://www.daff.qld.gov.au/environment/aq-land-audit/agricultural-climate-risk-information>.



Statewide updates

This section outlines major information updates that apply to the whole of Queensland and can subsequently affect all chapters of the Audit.

Queensland's agriculture strategy

Queensland's agriculture strategy is part of the government's vision for an efficient, innovative, resilient and profitable agriculture sector. The strategy outlines a framework for the growth of the sector based on four key pathways:

1. Securing and increasing resource availability;
2. Driving productivity growth across the supply chain;
3. Securing and increasing market access; and
4. Minimising the costs of production.

In support of this vision, the Queensland Government has set a clear, ambitious target to double Queensland's agricultural production by 2040.

For more information on Queensland's agriculture strategy, go to <http://www.daff.qld.gov.au/business-trade/development/queenslands-agriculture-strategy>.

The State of Queensland Agriculture Report

The State of Queensland Agriculture Report provides agricultural industries with baseline information to inform investment decisions and plan for the future. It was launched in June 2014 and will be the primary tool through which the sector's trajectory towards achieving government's vision of doubling agricultural production will be measured.

The State of Queensland Agriculture Report focuses on resource availability, productivity, markets and production costs. The report also addresses, through statistical analysis, the key challenges that need to be addressed in order for Queensland to take advantage of the growth of global food demand. Medium-term forecasts for Queensland's main primary industries, including a brief summary outlining past trends, along with some key opportunities and challenges that may impact on the final outcome for each industry are also discussed in the report.

For more information on the State of Queensland Agriculture Report, go to <http://www.daff.qld.gov.au/business-trade/development/state-of-queensland-agriculture-report>.

State Planning Policy

The Queensland government established the single State Planning Policy (SPP) in December 2013. The SPP is a key component of Queensland's land use planning system, providing clarity to local governments when making and amending local planning instruments and assessing development applications.

Under the State Planning Policy, local government planning instruments must appropriately reflect the state's interest in agriculture. Audit information, in particular the identification and mapping of Important Agricultural Areas (IAAs) and Agricultural Land Class (ALC) class A

and B land, as used by the Audit, has been used to support the various policy elements of the SPP.

A state interest [guideline](#) and the SPP [interactive mapping system](#) have been developed to assist local government to appropriately integrate the state's interest in agriculture into local planning instruments. An Audit [guide for local government](#) has also been developed to assist local government in understanding, accessing and utilizing information contained within the Audit to inform planning and development decisions.

For more information on the SPP, go to <http://www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/about-planning/state-planning-policy.html>.

Regional Plans

Regional plans, made under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*, form one part of a suite of policies and legislative instruments that guide land use planning and development in Queensland.

The Queensland Government is developing a suite of new generation regional plans to identify and interpret the state interests in land use planning and development for a region. Regional plans define regional outcomes and regional policies.

Three new generation regional plans have been released since the Audit was completed:

- Darling Downs;
- Central Queensland; and
- Cape York.

Details of each regional plan and its impacts on agricultural development in the region are discussed in the respective chapter update.

Regional Planning Interests Act 2014

The *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* ([RPI Act](#)) and the *Regional Planning Interests Regulation 2014* (RPI Regulation) commenced on 13 June 2014. The RPI Act gives effect to the policies regarding matters of state interest in regional plans, and seeks to manage the interface between resource activities and other regional interests, including agriculture. The Act is administered by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (DSDIP).

Under the RPI Act there are four areas of regional interest:

- Priority Agricultural Areas (PAAs);
- Priority Living Areas (PLAs);
- Strategic Cropping Areas (SCAs); and
- Strategic Environmental Area (SEAs).

Areas of regional interest are identified in the new generation regional plans, with the exception of the SCA which is identified on the [SCL trigger map](#).

Where a resource activity seeks to operate on land used for a priority agricultural land use² in a PAA, the expected impacts of the resource activity must be assessed through a regional interest development approval.

The aim is to support coexistence of resource activities and agricultural activities within a PAA by: promoting negotiated agreements with land owners and proponents of resource activities; protecting priority agricultural land uses; and managing impacts at both the property and regional scale.

Following commencement of the RPI Act, the *Strategic Cropping Land Act 2011* (SCL Act) and *Wild Rivers Act 2005* (WR Act) were repealed.

For more information on the RPI Act, go to <http://www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/infrastructure-and-planning/regional-planning-interests-act.html>.

Vegetation Management Act 1999

The Vegetation Management Framework underwent significant reform in 2013 following the publication of the Audit. These reforms have various elements and are of significant benefit to the agricultural sector. Of particular importance are:

- The introduction of self-assessable codes for routine property maintenance activities;
- The introduction of allowable purposes for High Value and Irrigated High Value Agriculture and Necessary Environmental Clearing; and
- The deregulation of high-value regrowth vegetation (Category C) on freehold land and indigenous land.

For landholders wishing to clear under the new allowable purposes for High Value or Irrigated High Value Agriculture, the Audit may be an acceptable reference for determining land suitability.

For more information on the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*, go to www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/vegetation/management.

Protected Plants Framework

The Protected Plants Framework, under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, has also undergone significant change since the publication of the Audit in 2013. Flora surveys are now only required for areas identified on a [trigger map](#) as a high risk area, reducing the regulatory burden considerably. As previously a flora survey was required prior to clearing plants across 100% of the state, no map layer was included within the Audit. The area represented on the flora survey trigger map now represents only 3.5% of the state. A clearing permit is still required for impacts upon endangered, vulnerable and near threatened plants, regardless of whether the clearing site was identified on the trigger map.

For more information on Protected Plants, go to <http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/licences-permits/plants-animals/protected-plants>.

² Priority agricultural land uses are defined in regional plans, and may include certain types of dryland agriculture and plantations, irrigated agriculture and plantations, and intensive horticulture.

Biosecurity Act 2014

The *Biosecurity Act 2014* was passed in Parliament on 6 March 2014 and will come into effect by 1 July 2016.

The Act will provide the flexibility to respond in a timely and effective way to emergency and ongoing animal and plant pests and diseases. It will also manage risks of biological, chemical and physical contaminants associated with carriers such as livestock, plants, machinery, animal feed and fertilisers.

With the commencement of the Act the *Agricultural Standards Act 1994*, the *Apiaries Act 1982*, the *Diseases in Timber Act 1975*, the *Exotic Diseases in Animals Act 1981*, the *Plant Protection Act 1989* and the *Stock Act 1915* will be repealed.

For more information, go to <http://www.daff.qld.gov.au/biosecurity/about-biosecurity/Biosecurity-Act-2014>.

Map layer updates

Table 2 outlines the map layers that have been updated since the release of the Audit.

Updated map layer	Further information
Current Forestry Plantations	The current forestry plantation layer has been updated to include more detailed and recent data provided by HQ Plantations and verified against high resolution imagery. The updated map layer affects all regions of the Audit.
Potential Native Forestry	This updated map layer shows biophysical potential for native forestry of areas of Queensland using a revised methodology from that which was originally in the Audit. This layer now shows four levels of potential and excludes area unavailable for native forestry. The updated map layer affects all regions of the Audit.
Current Poultry Farms	Since the release of the Audit, regulation and management of chicken meat farms has changed from local government jurisdiction to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Queensland) Intensive Livestock Environmental Regulation Unit (ILERU). The current poultry farms layer has since been updated to reflect the ILERU data.
<i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i>	The Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM) has released new mapping consistent with the revised Vegetation Management Framework. This includes four categories of regulated vegetation (Categories A, B, C and R) and an expanded area of unregulated vegetation (Category X). Statutory maps are available via the Queensland Government website, at www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/vegetation/map-request/ . Vegetation Management mapping is also available from the Queensland Globe.
Queensland Land Use Mapping Program (QLUMP)	QLUMP mapping data for the South East Queensland region has been updated to 2011, 2012 or 2013 depending on the catchment. This dataset was used in the Audit to show current cropping, annual horticulture, perennial horticulture, sugar cane and aquaculture.
Weather and extreme event risk datasets	Weather and extreme event risk datasets have been compiled to complement existing land use information from the Audit as per

Updated map layer	Further information
	Table 1. Note only selected datasets can be viewed using WALI.
A and B Class Land	The A and B class land layers have been updated from those used in the original Audit. The map layer now includes smaller, more detailed soil studies in some regions, including new studies undertaken in South East Queensland. As a result, this dataset may differ from the potential agriculture datasets in the Audit for some agricultural land uses in some regions.
Protected Plants	The trigger map for protected plants identifies high risk areas where flora surveys for protected plants are required under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> .

Table 2: Updated map layers

Updated versions of the map layers are available to download from the Queensland Government Information Service ([QGIS](#)) and the Queensland Government Open Data portal ([Open data](#)). The updated map layers are also displayed on the Web-based Agricultural Land Information ([WALI](#)) mapping tool.



Regional updates

This section outlines major information updates that apply to a specific region and will subsequently affect a specific chapter of the Audit.

Chapter 4: Cape York

Regional planning

The Cape York Regional Plan was finalised on the 8 August 2014 and publicly notified by Gazette on 15 August 2014.

The plan recognises the importance of agriculture through the inclusion of regional policies for agriculture and a prescribed PAA.

The Lakeland Downs area is the single identified PAA in the Cape York region, covering approximately 6,134 hectares. Priority agricultural land uses (PALUs), generally involving high value intensive agricultural land uses, are given priority over any other proposed land use within the PAA, including proposals for resource activities. Any resource activities proposed within the PAA must be assessed against the PAA assessment criteria contained in the RPI Regulation. The intent of the PAA Assessment criteria is to protect PALUs, while, where appropriate, allowing a resource activity to coexist.

SEAs are identified for the Cape York region, covering 2,671,377 hectares in total. Broadacre cropping and water storages (i.e. dams) are regulated activities within the SEAs. In designated precincts within a SEA, regulated activities are not acceptable land uses. Elsewhere in the SEA, proposed regulated activities must be assessed prior to commencing.

For more information, see the Regional Planning Interest Act 2014 section of the addendum or go to <http://www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/regional-planning/cape-york-regional-plan.html>.

Water resources

Strategy for Delivering Water Resource Management in Cape York

The Strategy for Delivering Water Resource Management in Cape York was released in July 2014. The strategy contains short and long-term plans to support future development opportunities related to water resources in Cape York.

Except for the Mitchell Water Resource Plan which partly covers the south-west area of the Cape, there is no water resource plan for Cape York. As a long term action plan for Cape York, the strategy has outlined the commencement of a water resource planning process under the *Water Act 2000*.

The Cape York Peninsula moratorium on water licence applications, in place since 2008, was removed on 28 May 2014. Removal of the moratorium allows new water licence applications to be considered for the Jardine, Jacky Jacky, Ducie, Olive-Pascoe, Watson, Holroyd, Coleman and Jeannie catchments.

For more information on the Strategy for Delivering Water Resource Management in Cape York, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/strategy-cape-york>.

Chapter 5: Gulf and North West

Water resources

Gulf Water Resource Plan

In May 2013, three new water allocations totaling 80,000 megalitres (ML) in the Flinders catchment and three new allocations totaling 14,200 ML in the Gilbert catchment were finalised. These water allocations will facilitate the establishment of new irrigated agriculture, in line with government's North Queensland Irrigated Agriculture Strategy.

The Gulf Resource Operations Plan was amended on 11 July 2014, making licences permanently and seasonally tradable.

A Statement of Proposals proposing a targeted review to amend the Gulf Water Resource Plan to identify additional volumes of unallocated water reserves for the Flinders and Gilbert river catchments was released for public comment on 13 March 2014. The review was in response to the findings of the Flinders and Gilbert Agricultural Resource Assessment, which identified the potential for irrigated agricultural development in these catchments. A draft amendment to the Gulf Water Resource Plan is anticipated later this year.

For more information on the Gulf Water Resource Plan, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/catchments/gulf>.

Further studies

The Flinders and Gilbert Agricultural Resource Assessment (FGARA) is a comprehensive and integrated evaluation of the feasibility, economic viability and sustainability of agricultural development in the Flinders and Gilbert catchment. The assessment was led by CSIRO with some components undertaken by the Queensland Government and TropWater (James Cook University).

The assessment, for each catchment:

- Identified and evaluated water capture and storage options;
- Identified and tested the commercial viability of irrigated agricultural opportunities; and
- Assessed potential environmental, social and economic impacts and risks.

The assessment found that in the Flinders catchment, farm dams could support 10,000 to 20,000 ha of irrigation in 70 to 80 per cent of years, whilst irrigation may not be possible in very dry years. In the Gilbert catchment, it was found that large instream dams could support 20,000 to 30,000 ha of irrigation in 85 per cent of years. The precise area under irrigation will, in any year, vary depending on factors such as irrigation efficiency, water availability, crop choice and risk appetite.

For more information on the FGARA, go to <http://www.csiro.au/Organisation-Structure/Flagships/Water-for-a-Healthy-Country-Flagship/Sustainable-Yields-Projects/Flinders-and-Gilbert-Agricultural-Resource-Assessment-overview.aspx>

Chapter 6: Far North Queensland

Water resources

The Wet Tropics Water Resource Plan

The Wet Tropics Water Resource Plan was completed and released in December 2013. The plan establishes a framework for the allocation and management of surface and groundwater in the Daintree, Mossman, Mulgrave-Russell, Johnstone, Tully, Murray and Herbert catchment areas. A draft resource operations plan is intended to be released for public consultation later this year.

For more information, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/catchments/wet-tropics>

Chapter 7: Charters Towers

There are no major updates for the Charters Towers region.

Chapter 8: Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday

Water resources

Whitsunday Water Resource Plan

A total of 28 500 ML of general reserve unallocated water has been made available from the Kelsey Creek-Lethe Brook, Thompson Creek, O'Connell River and Andromache River subcatchment areas. The unallocated water may be used for increased agricultural production or for new agricultural enterprises.

Submissions closed on 30 July 2014 and tenders are currently being assessed.

For more information, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/unallocated-water>

Fitzroy Basin Water Resource Plan

The new Fitzroy Basin Resource Operations Plan was finalised on 26 September 2014. The plan implements the Water Resource (Fitzroy Basin) Plan 2011 by:

- Establishing tradeable water allocations in the Callide Valley Water Supply Scheme aligning nominal volumes with a more responsible level of extraction;
- Amending water licences in the Upper Callide and Prospect Creek groundwater sub-areas to align with a more responsible level of extraction;
- Converting existing authorisations in the Nogoia River, Dawson River, Comet River, Retreat Creek and Theresa Creek areas to unsupplemented water allocations;
- Amending water licences to state volumetric terms that better define existing water rights in the Don and Dee rivers and Alma Creek area, and on the Comet River;
- Facilitating the distribution of treated coal seam gas water in the Upper Dawson Valley in a way that maximises the use of the resource by landholders;
- Facilitating the sharing of water amongst water users, and providing water for the environment;
- Providing for the release of unallocated water to support economic development; and
- Setting monitoring requirements for surface and groundwater.

Through these mechanisms, the Fitzroy Basin Resource Operations Plan provides significant opportunity for additional agricultural development in the region.

For more information, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/catchments/fitzroy-basin>.



Galilee Basin State Development Area

Declared in June 2014, the Galilee Basin State Development Area (SDA) will support the development of the Galilee Basin and provide for rail transport of coal to the Port of Abbot Point. The 247,000 square kilometre Galilee Basin is located about 200 kilometres west of the Bowen Basin, extending north past Hughenden, south to Charleville and west beyond Winton and Middleton.

The Galilee Basin SDA will enable a coordinated approach to developing multi-user common rail corridors whilst minimising impacts on landholders and the environment. The SDA generally comprises two 500 metre-wide corridors from the Galilee Basin to the Port of Abbot Point – one rail corridor designed to service the central Galilee Basin and a second corridor will service the southern Galilee Basin.

It is expected that the Galilee Basin SDA will reduce in size further in the future as projects progress to construction through more detailed approvals processes, including their final rail designs. Exact impacts to agricultural land use during rail development and ongoing operations will depend on the final alignment of the rail corridor in the SDA.

For more information, go to <http://www.dsdp.qld.gov.au/coordinator-general/galilee-basin-state-development-area.html>.

Chapter 9: Central West and South West

Water resources

Great Artesian Basin Water Resource Plan

On 30 May 2013, the Chief Executive of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines started a process to make available unallocated water from the general reserves in the Surat, Surat North and Surat East management areas. A combined total of 785 ML of unallocated water has been granted to successful tenderers, with the majority (765 ML) for feedlot production. A total of 6,415 ML remains available in these management areas.

For more information, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/unallocated-water>.

Galilee Basin State Development Area

See Galilee Basin State Development Area under Chapter 8: Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday.

Chapter 10: Central Queensland

Regional Planning

The Central Queensland Regional Plan was made on 14 October 2013 and publicly notified by Gazette on 18 October 2013.

The plan recognises the importance of agriculture to the region through the inclusion of regional policies for agriculture and prescribed PAAs.

The Central Queensland Regional Plan has identified three PAAs covering 1,029,543 hectares in total. Priority agricultural land uses, generally involving high value intensive

agricultural land uses, are given priority over any other proposed land use within a PAA, including proposals for resource activities. Any resource activities proposed within the PAA must be assessed against the PAA assessment criteria contained in the RPI Regulation. The intent of the PAA Assessment criteria is to protect PALUs, while, where appropriate, allowing a resource activity to coexist.

For more information, see the Regional Planning Interest Act 2014 section of the addendum or go to <http://www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/regional-planning/the-central-queensland-regional-plan.html>.

Water resources

Fitzroy Basin Water Resource Plan

See Fitzroy Basin Water Resource Plan under Chapter 8: Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday.

Boyne River Basin Water Resource Plan

The Boyne River Basin Water Resource Plan and the Resource Operations Plan commenced on 20 December 2013. The new Boyne River Basin Water Resource Plan replaces the repealed water resource plan from 2000.

For more information, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/catchments/boyne-river-basin>.

Baffle Creek Basin Water Resource Plan

On 21 June 2013, the Chief Executive of the DNRM started a process to make available 11,600 ML of unallocated water from the general reserves in the Littabella Creek, Baffle Creek, Broadwater Creek, Eurimbula Creek, and Worthington Creek catchment areas. One water licence was granted from the Littabella Creek catchment for the volume of 33 ML per year for irrigating sugarcane.

For more information, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/catchments/baffle-creek-basin>.

Infrastructure

Yeppen South project

The Department of Transport and Main Roads is constructing a high-level flood access between the Burnett Highway and Yeppen Roundabout, south of Rockhampton, called the Yeppen South project. The Yeppen South Project is designed to integrate with the completed Yeppen North project to improve flood immunity across the Yeppen floodplain. Construction is expected to be completed by 2016.

Increasing flood resilience in this stretch of highway will better facilitate uninterrupted freight and livestock movements north and south during flood events, assisting to minimise disruptions to market.

For more information, go to <http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Projects/Name/Y/Yeppen-South-Project.aspx>.

Chapter 11: Wide Bay Burnett

Water resources

Baffle Creek Basin Water Resource Plan

See Baffle Creek Basin Water Resource Plan under Chapter 10: Central Queensland.

Burnett Basin Water Resource Plan

The Burnett Basin Water Resource Plan commenced on 22 August 2014 and replaces the repealed water resource plan from 2000. The plan:

- Provides for the establishment of tradeable water allocations in the Coastal Burnett Area;
- Establishes unallocated water reserves for future water needs;
- Addresses issues arising from the deflation of the Claude Wharton Weir fabric dam;
- Implements new water sharing and operating rules in three water supply schemes;
- Expands the management of groundwater;
- Manages overland flow in coastal areas; and
- Deals with outstanding water licence applications.

For more information, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/catchments/burnett-basin>.

Chapter 12: Darling Downs

Regional planning

The Darling Downs Regional Plan was approved on 14 October 2013.

The plan recognises the importance of agriculture through the inclusion of regional policies for agriculture and prescribed PAAs.

The Darling Downs Regional Plan has identified four PAAs, covering 2,933,909 hectares in total. Priority agricultural land uses, generally high value intensive agricultural land uses, are given priority over any other proposed land use in a PAA, including proposals for resource activities. Any resource activities proposed within the PAA must be assessed against the PAA assessment criteria contained in the RPI Regulation. The intent of the PAA assessment criteria is to protect PALUs, while, where appropriate, allowing a resource activity to coexist.

For more information, see the Regional Planning Interest Act 2014 section of the addendum or go to <http://www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/regional-planning/the-darling-downs-regional-plan.html>.

Water resources

Burnett Basin Water Resource Plan

See Burnett Basin Water Resource Plan under Chapter 11: Wide Bay Burnett.

Borders Rivers Water Resource Plan

On 15 September 2014 a draft amendment to the Border Rivers Water Resource Plan to include groundwater not connected to the Great Artesian Basin and an overview report explaining the proposed amendments were released for public comment.

The amendments propose to:

- Provide certainty and a strong level of investment security for long-established existing water licences;
- Provide clearer management of groundwater resources by transitioning existing arrangements to the water resource planning framework;
- Progress towards future accreditation under the *Commonwealth Water Act 2007* Murray Darling Basin Plan by identifying Basin Plan compliant groundwater units and sustainable levels of diversion;
- Support economic growth in identified groundwater units with the establishment of unallocated water reserves; and
- Provide strategies for dealing with outstanding groundwater licence applications.

The management of surface water will not be changed by the draft plan as the amendments deal solely with the management of subartesian groundwater.

For more information, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/catchments/border-rivers>.

Condamine and Balonne Water Resource Plan

On 15 September 2014 a draft amendment to the Condamine and Balonne Water Resource Plan to include groundwater not connected to the Great Artesian Basin and an overview report explaining the proposed amendments were released for public comment.

The amendments propose to:

- Provide certainty and a strong level of investment security for long-established existing water licences;
- Provide clearer management of groundwater resources by transitioning existing arrangements to the water resource planning framework;
- Progress towards future accreditation under the *Commonwealth Water Act 2007* Murray Darling Basin Plan by identifying Basin Plan compliant groundwater units and sustainable levels of diversion;
- Support economic growth in identified groundwater units with the establishment of unallocated water reserves; and
- Provide strategies for dealing with outstanding groundwater licence applications.

The management of surface water will not be changed by the draft plan as the amendments deal solely with the management of subartesian groundwater.

The Condamine and Balonne draft Resource Operations Plan amendment to include the Gowrie and Oakey Creek subcatchment was approved in August 2014. The amended resource operations plan converts over 200 water licenses in the Gowrie and Oakey creek subcatchment to tradable water allocations. Tradable water allocations will allow water users to tailor their water holdings to suit their business needs, including expanding agricultural production.

For more information, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/catchments/condamine-balonne>.

Moonie Water Resource Plan

On 15 September 2014 a draft amendment to the Moonie Water Resource Plan to include groundwater not connected to the Great Artesian Basin and an overview report explaining the proposed amendments were released for public comment.

The amendments propose to:

- Provide certainty and a strong level of investment security for long-established existing water licences;
- Provide clearer management of groundwater resources by transitioning existing arrangements to the water resource planning framework;
- Progress towards future accreditation under the *Commonwealth Water Act 2007* Murray Darling Basin Plan by identifying Basin Plan compliant groundwater units and sustainable levels of diversion;
- Support economic growth in identified groundwater units with the establishment of unallocated water reserves; and
- Provide strategies for dealing with outstanding groundwater licence applications.

The management of surface water will not be changed by the draft plan as the amendments deal solely with the management of subartesian groundwater.

For more information, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/catchments/moonie-river>

Murray-Darling Basin program

Under the Restoring the Balance in the Murray-Darling Basin program, the Australian Government has committed \$3.2 billion to purchase irrigation water for the environment.

Round 3 of the purchase tender in Queensland Central Condamine Alluvium closed on 14 August 2014. The Department of Environment is currently assessing applications received under this tender.

A water harvesting licence purchase tender for the Queensland Lower Balonne closes on 30 October 2014. In this tender, the government is only seeking sell offers for eligible unsupplemented and overland flow water harvesting licenses held in the Lower Balonne water management area.

For more information, go to <http://www.environment.gov.au/water/rural-water/restoring-balance-murray-darling-basin>.

Infrastructure

Wellcamp Airport

The Wellcamp Airport is on track to be operational in the third quarter of 2014. The jet-capable public airport will be available for regular passenger services, charter flights, fly in fly out and airfreight services. The airport is located approximately 15 minutes from the Toowoomba central business district.

Airfreight services may allow additional market access, including international markets, for high value products such as beef and high value horticulture.

For more information, go to <http://www.wellcamp.com.au/>.

Toowoomba Second Range Crossing

The Toowoomba Second Range Crossing is a proposed bypass route to the north of Toowoomba, approximately 41km in length, running from the Warrego Highway at Helidon in the east to the Gore Highway at Athol in the west via Charlton. The crossing will decrease travel time and increase safety in comparison to the existing range crossing. The State is currently evaluating submissions received to identify bidders to deliver the project.

The crossing will facilitate the increased movement of agricultural commodities to eastern markets and port and transport facilities.

For more information, go to <http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Projects/Name/T/Toowoomba-Second-Range-Crossing.aspx>.

Chapter 13: South East Queensland

Water resources

Logan Basin Water Resource Plan

The second revision of the Logan Resource Operations Plan to include Christmas Creek and Running Creek water management areas was approved in March 2014. The amendments:

- Convert approximately 120 water licences to tradeable unsupplemented water allocations, separate from land;
- Establish rules for permanently and seasonally trading water allocations;
- Recognise and allow for the continued day-to-day water management and sharing arrangements by local community-based water advisory committees; and
- Establishes a minimum flow threshold to ensure environmental and stock and domestic needs are met.

The tradable water allocations can promote efficiency of water use and make businesses, including agricultural enterprises, more profitable.

For more information, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/catchments/logan-basin>.

Moreton Water Resource Plan

The Moreton Resource Operations Plan amendment to include the Warrill Valley and Lower Lockyer water supply schemes was approved in May 2014.

The amendments separate the land and water assets of a property and existing entitlements are converted to tradable water allocations in the Warrill Valley and Lower Lockyer water supply schemes. The tradable water allocations can promote efficiency of water use and can make businesses, including agricultural enterprises, more profitable.

For more information, go to <http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/catchments/moreton>.



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