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NEWS

Qld government preparing for boom in housing demand



Bill Hoffman | 12th Sep 2015 5:00 AM



DEMAND GROWS: The State Government believes more land for housing will be needed in the near future.

Betnoire

THE Queensland Government's review of the SEQ Regional Plan will push for a massive increase in the urban footprint, despite housing-lot stocks being the highest in a decade.

A spokesperson for Planning Minister Jackie Trad said south-east Queensland's population was estimated to increase by 2.2 million by 2041 - a number beyond the capacity of the current plan.

The total is based on about 80,000 residents arriving in the south-east each year: a 1.9% annual growth rate.

"This is projected to drive demand for about one million more dwellings," the spokesperson said.

"This equates to an average of around 35,000 dwellings per year and will almost double the current number of dwellings in the region."

The public will be provided input but only on how the growth would be managed, not whether it was wanted.

Draft planning legislation to replace the Sustainable Planning Act, Better Planning Queensland, was released this week, with a SEQ Regional Plan discussion paper out within months.

The push to open more land for development comes at a time when the State Government Statistician's

Office figures show the number of approved but incomplete development lots in south-east Queensland has risen steadily since 2006, despite residential land sales totalling 118,372 in that period.

Projects approved to deliver more than 50 lots represented only 5% of total projects (55), but accounted for 11,461 lots or 69% of total lots approved. There are now 61,294 housing lots in the south-east Queensland development pipeline.

On the Sunshine Coast, the bank of uncompleted lots totalled 6194 of that number, with 2501 having operational works approval and being shovel-ready.

In the 12 months to December last year, 1144 residential lots were approved by Sunshine Coast Council - a 74% increase on the same period in

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2013. The Sunshine Coast has 2960ha of broadacre land suitable for development into a further 44,000 residential lots.

"This Government is committed to engaging with the community on the revised SEQ Regional Plan," the Deputy Premier's spokesperson said.

"The department will be releasing a directions paper in coming months to continue the conversation with the community about how we accommodate growth in their communities.

"This builds on the consultation the department has done across the state on planning reform, as part of the Government's engagement approach to give the community a voice in the planning issues that shape their state."

Those discussions may frame the debate as communities gear up for local government elections due in March next year.

The Urban Development Institute of Australia (Qld) has targeted corridors north and south of Brisbane, calling for land to be made available for development, warning there would otherwise be pressure on pricing that would harm affordability.

That push will put pressure on the campaign to protect the inter-urban break.

The UDIA said it was important a new SEQ Regional Plan identified "significantly more land than is projected to be required to accommodate population growth as this will allow for more competition and reduces the risk of localised land shortages if settlement patterns do not occur as predicted".

"Further, it also protects against the risk that land supply can be easily overestimated by government, both in terms of the net quantity available and the achievable density," the UDIA said.

Environmental Defenders Office (Qld) chief executive officer and principal solicitor Jo Bragg said the previous government's Better Planning Queensland legislation had said almost nothing about environmental resources, protecting biodiversity or climate change.

Ms Bragg said all were significant issues of concern as population grew.

"The concept of an urban boundary becomes a bit of a joke if it's just a temporary holding pattern," she said.

"There's no genuine commitment to keep parts of the state open and green. I think the Cabinet is conscious of concerns about extreme increases in population."

