

Part B

Growth management

Population growth

SEQ has experienced high and sustained population growth since the 1980s, growing at an average of 55,300 persons each year between 1986 and 2004. The estimated resident population of the region in 2004 was 2,666,600 people.

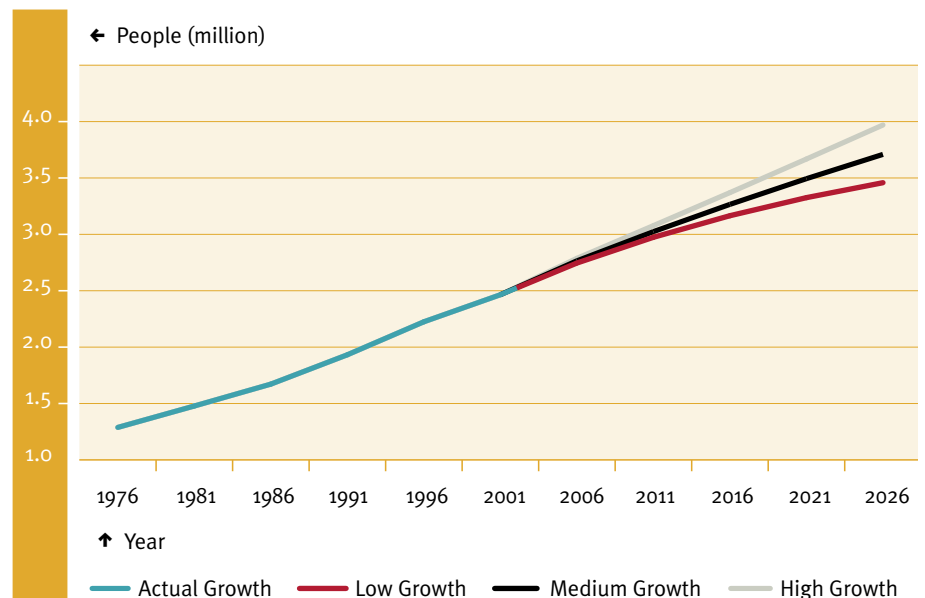
The current population projections for the SEQ region are set out in Table 1 and shown graphically in Figure 1. In order to encompass the range of possible outcomes three series were produced: low, medium and high projections.

The Regional Plan is based on the medium series projections, which are considered at this time to be the most likely outcome. Population growth in the region will, however, be monitored and kept under review to ensure future planning utilises the most up-to-date information.

Year	Population projection series (million)		
	Low	Medium	High
2001	2.46	2.46	2.46
2006	2.75	2.77	2.79
2011	2.97	3.03	3.08
2016	3.17	3.27	3.37
2021	3.33	3.49	3.67
2026	3.46	3.71	3.97
Average increase per year 2001 to 2026	40,000	50,000	60,000

Source: Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation, Planning Information and Forecasting Unit, 2003.

Figure 1 – SEQ region actual and projected population growth (1976 to 2026)



Source: Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation, Planning Information and Forecasting Unit 2003.

Population distribution

The region's population is heavily urbanised and is generally concentrated along the coast between Noosa and Coolangatta. The metropolitan areas of the Brisbane Statistical Division, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast Statistical Districts account for 90 per cent of the region's population. The six predominantly rural shires of Beaudesert, Boonah, Esk, Gatton, Kilcoy and Laidley account for 55 per cent of the region's land area but only 4.3 per cent of the population.



Table 2 – SEQ region population growth distribution (1986 to 2004)

Local government area	1986	2004		Growth 1986 to 2004	
	Population	Population	per cent	Population	per cent
Brisbane City	737,418	957,010	35.9	219,592	22.1
NORSROC					
Caboolture Shire	48,731	126,729	4.8	77,998	7.8
Caloundra City	36,277	86,468	3.2	50,191	5.0
Kilcoy Shire	2,705	3,467	0.1	762	0.1
Maroochy Shire	61,480	141,069	5.3	79,589	8.0
Noosa Shire	18,778	47,606	1.8	28,828	2.9
Pine Rivers Shire	76,748	139,228	5.2	62,480	6.3
Redcliffe City	45,829	52,303	2.0	6,474	0.7
Total	290,548	596,870	22.4	306,322	30.8
SouthROC					
Beaudesert Shire	26,641	59,393	2.2	32,752	3.3
Gold Coast City	214,949	469,214	17.6	254,265	25.6
Logan City	121,223	173,331	6.5	52,108	5.2
Redland Shire	60,231	127,777	4.8	67,546	6.8
Total	423,044	829,715	31.1	406,671	40.9
WESROC					
Boonah Shire	7,341	8,567	0.3	1,226	0.1
Esk Shire	10,763	15,206	0.6	4,443	0.4
Gatton Shire	12,653	16,288	0.6	3,635	0.4
Ipswich City	103,952	135,579	5.1	31,627	3.2
Laidley Shire	7,178	13,351	0.5	6,173	0.6
Toowoomba City	79,067	94,043	3.5	14,976	1.5
Total	220,954	283,034	10.6	62,080	6.2
Total SEQ region	1,671,964	2,666,629	100	994,665	100

Source: Prepared from Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Regional Population Growth, Australia and New Zealand, 2003-2004*, Cat No 3218.0 and companion data; ABS, *Regional Population Growth (various editions)*, Cat No 3218.0; unpublished data; and Planning and Information Forecasting Unit sources.

Housing demand

The projected population increase, combined with the continuing trend towards smaller households, will require an estimated 575,000 new dwellings in the region by 2026. There will also be a greater demand for a diversity of housing forms to match the needs of changing household structures, particularly an increase in one- and two-person households.

The average household size in SEQ in 2001 was 2.6 people. This is expected to decline to 2.45 people by 2011 and 2.29 people by 2026.

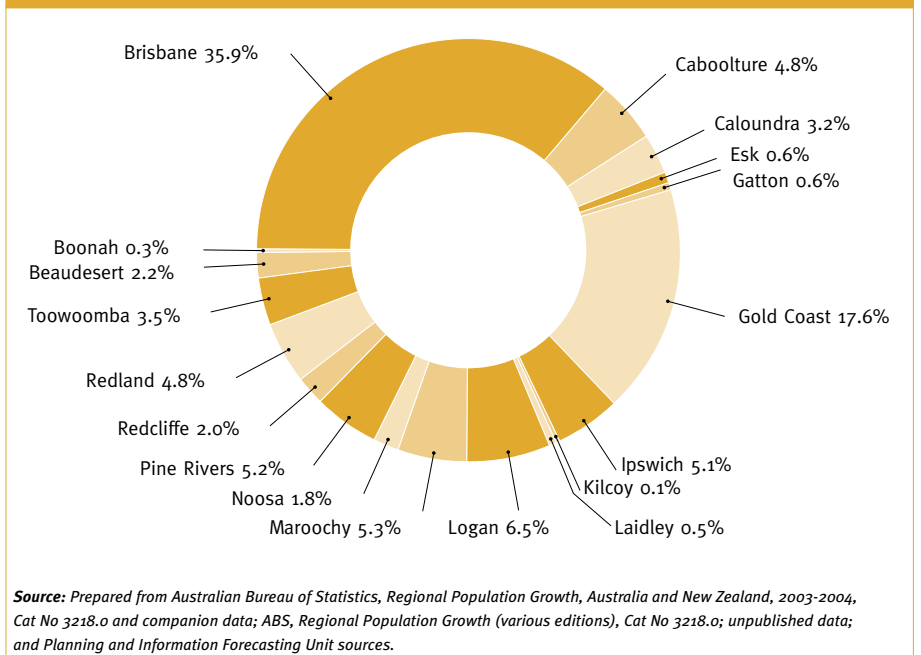
The falling household occupancy rates result from changes in the household structure in the region. By 2026, one- and two-person households are expected to account for around 60 per cent of all households. This compares to around 50 per cent in 2001. This trend will impact on the housing projections and type of dwellings required for the future and has been considered in the estimate of new dwellings.

The changing household structure and resulting reduction in average household size will mean the percentage growth in housing demand will continue to be higher than the population growth rate.

Employment and services

The increased population in SEQ will generate demand for around 425,000 new jobs by 2026. There will also be a wide variety of supporting infrastructure and services required, ranging from arterial roads, public transport and water storages to local parks, shops and community facilities. These demands will continue to create opportunities and also impose significant social, economic and environmental pressures on the region.

Figure 2 – Population distribution in the SEQ region by local government area (at 30 June 2004)



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Growth projections

The Regional Plan is based upon current regional forecasts of population growth, household formation, demand for new dwellings, employment needs and land availability to 2026.

Successful implementation of the Regional Plan will influence decisions about where growth occurs in the region. At this time, the current projections are as accurate as possible and are considered to provide a sound basis for regional planning. Growth will be closely monitored and projections adjusted accordingly.

Some submissions on the Draft Regional Plan suggested growth should not be planned for, but rather should be redirected to alternative locations in the State. While this could be encouraged, there is no available or generally acceptable policy arrangement to direct this outcome.

Implications of current growth patterns

Many of the region's growth pressures are closely related to past and current patterns of development.

The region has experienced significant impacts from the Australia-wide 'sea-change' phenomenon, with the majority of population growth occurring along the coast. Between 1986 and 2004, the fastest-growing areas were Gold Coast City, Brisbane City and Maroochy Shire. In contrast, the western parts of the region, which include Ipswich City and Toowoomba City, have traditionally grown more slowly than the region as a whole. Since 2001, however, both cities have shown significant increases in population growth rates.

The gradual reduction in household occupancy rates and increased proportion of one- and two-person households will impact on dwelling types. Lifestyle changes may also influence housing location choices. As a result, future planning will need to provide for a greater diversity of housing type and location.

Urban densities remain very low in SEQ, with only a small increase in the proportion of attached houses, townhouses and apartments over the past decade. Across the region, attached housing comprised 37 per cent of total dwelling approvals in 2004. Brisbane City and Gold Coast City were highest at around 50 percent. The number of small lots (less than 450m²) as a proportion of all detached housing lots increased only slightly, from nine per cent in 1994 to 10 per cent in 2004.

There has been significant fragmentation of rural lands and bushland brought about by the excessive use of rural residential development on the urban fringe and in rural areas. Between 1991 and 2001, rural residential approvals accounted for more than 70 per cent of all land allocated for residential purposes, but accommodated only 15 per cent of developed allotments.

An alternative approach

As a community, it is important to ask what sort of future is desired for SEQ. It is also necessary to understand the implications of continuing the current trend of using low-density residential development as the principal means of accommodating future population growth.

The community does not, however, have to accept this future. Alternative strategies can be adopted to better manage growth.

A move towards a more compact urban form with higher densities in select areas which are ready and appropriate for change, could achieve significant benefits.

A more compact urban form would reduce travel demands, thereby reducing energy usage and emission of pollutants. It could also improve levels of accessibility and have fewer detrimental impacts on the region's environment and natural resources. It would help protect the region's rural production and regional landscape areas from urban encroachment.

Significant benefits could also be achieved if growth pressures on the coast were relieved and complemented with urban growth opportunities and broader housing choices in other less sensitive parts of the region.

To achieve shifts of this nature will require major changes in the way growth in the region is currently planned. The Regional Plan proposes a new approach, based on managing rather than responding to growth, leading the desired results through timely provision of infrastructure and assisting employment creation in identified growth areas.

Key features of the Regional Plan's approach to managing growth are:

- clearly identifying and protecting regional landscape and rural production areas from inappropriate development;
- allocating adequate land to accommodate future urban growth;
- supporting growth in the Western Corridor;
- defining principles and policies to guide growth, change and development;
- using Regulatory Provisions to prevent development that is not consistent with the intent of the Regional Plan;
- ensuring the Regional Plan is the pre-eminent plan for SEQ and is reflected in all other State and local government plans and strategies;
- giving direction to the Infrastructure Plan regarding the provision and investigation of regional infrastructure;
- linking the Regional Plan with state infrastructure and service delivery programs and budgetary processes; and
- informing local government infrastructure programs and budgets, and providing certainty to the private sector.

While the Regional Plan is intended to relieve pressure on the coastal environment as much as possible, it also acknowledges existing commitments, embedded infrastructure and community investment, and historic patterns of development.

There are no absolute or definitive answers; some trade-offs are inevitable and necessary. These are some of the choices the community can make.