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Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan Review Feedback  
Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning  
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## Submission – Review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan

To whom it may concern,

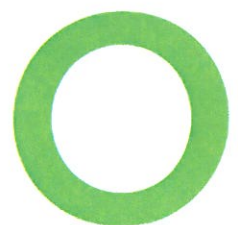
QORF (Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation Incorporated) is a member-based, not-for-profit association charged with representing a coalition of outdoor recreation groups to advocate on behalf of the outdoor community. A key reason for establishing QORF in 1996 was to facilitate communication between different user groups and levels of government on outdoor recreation related issues.

QORF affirms the value of outdoor recreation, and encourages all people to recreate outdoors. QORF is recognised as the peak body representing the interests of the outdoor recreation sector in Queensland, which incorporates both nature-based recreation, outdoor education activities, adventure therapy, and adventure racing.

QORF members consist of outdoor industry stakeholders including not-for-profit community organisations, club-based outdoor recreation providers, commercial outdoor recreation service providers (including equipment manufacturers and retailers), independent recreation participants, private and public schools, and outdoor recreation and education centres. The **outdoor sector contributes over \$2 billion per year to the Queensland economy**, however remains an industry that is largely unseen.

Good planning across Queensland is a critical part of ensuring that people have access to opportunities to experience the outdoors for recreation activities. In August 2016, QORF made a submission to the State government in an attempt to help shape the drafting of the South East Queensland Regional Plan before its release. This submission restates some of the points made in previous submissions to again put these forward as matters that must be considered as part of the good planning process.

Outdoor activity is an economic force that is dispersed in time and in location. This results in the advantageous situation whereby revenue is generated across a wide range of stakeholders in the landscape, rather than only benefitting major players.



Outdoor activities improve lifestyles of communities and deliver positive outcomes to local areas within the region. The outdoor sector provides jobs for locals, as well as facilitating healthy options for things to do in local areas, keeping people (including youth) engaged in their local communities.

In 2009, QORF made a submission to the Department of Infrastructure and Planning in relation to the draft South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031. Our 2009 submission included the following:

In general, the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF), supports the development of the Draft SEQ Regional Plan 2009-2031 with its recognition of outdoor recreation as a valued part of the regional landscape. In practice, however we have concerns regarding:

- the lack of detail for the implementation of parts of the plan, and
- the performance indicators for proposed targets.

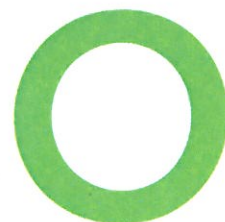
Without a clear commitment to explicit targets and allocated responsibilities, or mechanisms required to achieve these outcomes, the document will fail to fulfill its goals.

To progress this draft plan further however, greater commitment of budget is needed in achieving the desired regional outcomes - in particular the budgetary outcomes for outdoor recreation. Further, it is our opinion that detail is needed on how results will be achieved and/or implemented, particularly in relation to the regulatory provisions for the plan, and the acquisition of more land to cater for the growing population base, and increased demands for open space.

A collaborative, integrated approach will be required to resolve the complex issues and oversee the outdoor recreation specific implementation of the Plan's strategies, including the regional Outdoor Recreation Strategy. It is therefore suggested that a strategy be added to the Plan, indicating that a cross agency Outdoor Recreation Advisory Board (inclusive of government and industry/community) be established as a priority. In the short term, the Advisory Board would oversee the implementation of the Plan's outdoor recreation-specific strategies. However, in the long term, the Advisory Board could oversee the management of the regional trails network and regional parks, as it is envisaged these could be cross tenure and not the responsibility of any one existing agency.

QORF stands by our 2009 submission, and we again request that those previous comments be taken into account in this review.

The inherent values of natural areas and the appeal of nature-based activities must be recognised in the review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. These values and the appeal apply to make the region more liveable for residents and for





attracting visitors to this region, whether that be to beaches, bush, mountains, lakes or rivers.

The Quick Poll results released by your department as part of the Shaping SEQ community consultation process indicated that the respondents rated recreation services (46%) ahead of health (15%), education (23%) and social services (15%), when asked “What services are most important for you to connect to in your local area?”

Trends relating to our community’s activity need to be taken into account in the drafting of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. We draw attention to the trends identified in the research report titled “Queensland Sport, Exercise and Recreation Survey Adults” (QSERA), prepared by Colmar Brunton for the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing, dated 25 May 2016.

The information within the QSERA report confirms that adult Queenslanders are trending toward outdoor recreation for their physical activity needs, rather than organised sports. The Executive Summary of that report concludes with a statement regarding reducing the key barriers to physical activity by increasing awareness and availability of affordable options (including those that are free for participants), increasing awareness and availability of physical activities appropriate for the elderly or less physically able, and motivating people to start participating. The SEQ Regional Plan can directly address the availability barrier.

QORF submits that **outdoor recreation should be recognised as a planning policy matter in its own right**, due to the impact on what people do, the places people value, and its direct and indirect economic contribution.

QORF notes that the current South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031 includes specific reference to the principle of providing “a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities to meet priority community needs, while protecting other regional landscape values”<sup>1</sup>.

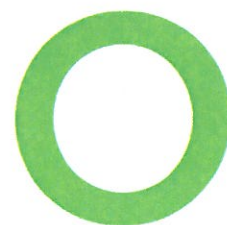
In section 3.7.2, the current SEQ regional plan sets out the policy to “Develop and implement the South East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Strategy (SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy) to coordinate outdoor recreation services – including policy, planning, development, management and regulation – across the region.”<sup>2</sup>

The notes on page 66 of the current SEQ regional plan refers to the fact that the continued implementation of the South East Queensland Regional Recreation Trails Program will help to achieve the targets of protecting more land for nature conservation and public recreation.

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<sup>1</sup> South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031, Section 3.7 page 66

<sup>2</sup> South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031, Section 3.7.2 page 66



QORF submits that the South East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Strategy and the South East Queensland Regional Recreation Trails Program should be included in the new South East Queensland Regional Plan.

The trend for smaller lot sizes in residential subdivisions and increased population density across South East Queensland creates a greater need for public spaces, whether that be sports fields, parks and protected areas. A critical component in planning for these public spaces is the **connectivity for humans and for nature**. Population growth and increased density will create equal demand upon outdoor infrastructure as on transport, housing, health, education and sporting infrastructure. The needs of the community in relation to outdoor infrastructure should be considered on an equal basis with other critical infrastructure.

The provision of isolated islands of greenspace within urban and peri-urban areas through allocating land to be used as pocket parks does not meet the needs of outdoor recreation as a stand-alone measure. As the region's population increases, **more usable natural areas will be required** to accommodate appropriate outdoor activities, and it is critical that a whole of landscape approach is taken.

We note that "Measures that matter" have been included in Chapter 4 of the draft South East Queensland Regional Plan. QORF support the inclusion of "Greenspace" within the Measures that matter. However, to link to livability, it is important to measure not only the amount of greenspace in the region, but also measure the amount of **greenspace that is accessible** for outdoor activities. A red "down" arrow or a green "up" arrow does not provide a measurable target to inform planning instruments that will be based on the South East Regional Plan.

While people may be prepared to travel to undertake outdoor activities, QSERSA confirms that a key way to increase participation (at both individual and community level) is to reduce the distance people need to travel. Provision for outdoor activity spaces and places should be made at the local level across South East Queensland, rather than concentrating activities in specific regional level locations and expecting the community to travel across the region.

Many outdoor recreation activities and events are temporary and secondary uses of land for which the primary use is one, or more, of the following - agricultural production, forestry, water catchment and storage, nature conservation, and/or eco-tourism.

Access to government owned/controlled land plays a vital role in outdoor activities. While information is available based on tenure for reserve land that is held for community purposes and for most of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife estate, issues arise in relation to freehold land that is acquired by local government and State government. **Connections to government owned freehold land** may be lost both to other government agencies and for the community only because it is





not known that the land is owned by government. It is suggested that this issue should be examined and a mechanism developed to address the problem.

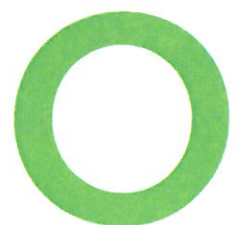
The road network and stock route network is publicly owned land that significantly contributes to outdoor activities in Queensland. Unconstructed roads provide spaces for long-distance trails and provide connectivity for animals to move between locations. The current system for permanent road closures is that the proposed road closure is gazetted and the affected local government is notified. The local government examines the need for the road in the context of its local transport plans, but may not look at the impact of the proposed road closure through the lens of the broader landscape or possible impacts on outdoor activities. To reduce the potential impact on connectivity between otherwise isolated places, **a more transparent system with a whole of landscape focus should be implemented in relation to proposed permanent road closures.**

The need for public open space, which will increase with population growth, will not be satisfied through access to government owned land alone. Unfortunately, restrictions can be placed on temporary and secondary uses of land, causing increased pressure on public land.

Several initiatives have been publicly proposed for inclusion in the South East Queensland Regional Plan by organisations such as Redlands 2030:

1. ***South East Queensland Greenspace Fund:*** QORF supports the establishment of a South East Queensland Greenspace Fund to ensure that progress is made on achieving major improvements in the acquisition and maintenance of a suitable publicly accessible regional greenspace network. The goal of the Greenspace Fund could be to secure at least 25% of the area of the region (an increase of about 8% over that provided in 2016) as publicly accessible green space by 2020.
2. ***(Regional) Landscape areas and natural assets:*** QORF supports the suggestion that the South East Queensland Regional Plan should define, delineate and gazette regional landscape areas and biodiversity corridors by cadastral boundaries to ensure these areas are protected from urban activity and other incompatible uses.
3. ***Inter-urban breaks:*** QORF supports the suggestion that the South East Queensland Regional Plan should define, delineate and gazette regional inter-urban breaks by cadastral boundaries to ensure these areas are protected from urban activity and other incompatible uses.
4. ***Sale or disposal of public lands, parks and open space:*** QORF supports the suggestion that proceeds from the sale of any parks or public assets in South East Queensland should be acquitted to the proposed South East Queensland Greenspace Fund.

It is submitted that the South East Queensland Regional Plan should include a **mechanism to better address the use of freehold land for outdoor activities.** For



example, agricultural land could be utilised for outdoor recreation and outdoor education activities, generating a supplementary income stream which could then be dispersed across communities. This complementary relationship between agriculture and outdoor activities is currently illustrated in several South East Queensland communities, including the foothills of Mount Barney within the Scenic Rim region, however that can be on an ad hoc basis with the benefit of policy settings that might be peculiar to a local council.

QORF submits that where outdoor recreation activities are temporarily (e.g. for a maximum of seven (7) consecutive days in any six (6) month period) located on a property, or properties, a Material Change of Use process should not be required.

Similarly, the development application process for infrastructure that supports outdoor activities in spaces other than the protected area estate could deal with the reality of outdoor recreation usage, rather than the “pure” farmland designation of the use of the land.

It is submitted that the South East Queensland Plan should **recognise that nature-based activities create advocates for nature to be preserved and sustained**. Outdoor recreation creates connections between humans and places, playing an important role in creating a sense of value for our natural areas within the community.

QORF supports the inclusion of both the South East Queensland Natural Resource Management Plan 2009-2031 and the South East Queensland Ecosystem Services Framework within the South East Queensland Regional Plan.

To encourage community well-being, environmental protection, connection to cultural heritage and economic values, outdoor recreation needs to be on the must-have list, rather than on the nice-to-have list within the South East Queensland Regional Plan.

We would be pleased to provide further detail on any aspects of this submission. QORF understands that this submission may be published as part of the community consultation process.

If there are any queries about this submission, please contact me by telephone on 07 3369 9455 or by email [eo@qorf.org.au](mailto:eo@qorf.org.au).

Yours sincerely,



Dom Courtney  
QORF Executive Officer

