

**Queensland Government Response to recommendations in the
Review of the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* Assessment Process
by the GasFields Commission Queensland**

In February 2020, a Queensland Audit Office report recommended that the Queensland Gasfield Commission review the assessment process identified under the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* to determine whether the process adequately manages coal seam gas activities in areas of regional interest. This should take into consideration stakeholders' concerns about inconsistent definitions of land and exceptions to the assessment process

In October 2021, the Gasfields Commission presented the outcomes of this targeted review to the Queensland Government in the "Review of Regional Planning Interests Act 2014 Assessment Process Report". The Queensland Government response to the recommendations of this report is detailed below.

In considering the report, the Queensland Government reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that as a cardinal principal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, tradition and heritage is recognised, protected and conserved as part of the assessment of resource activities.

Recommendation 1

Replace exemption provisions with a self-assessment process informed by a code that clearly articulates acceptable development outcomes.

Queensland Government Response

Support.

The Queensland Government will work to replace the s22 of the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* (RPI Act) exemption (exemption-agreement of land owner) with a compliance-assessment process informed by a code.

Rather than referring to a self-assessment process it is proposed that the process be referred to as a compliance-assessment process to distinguish it from a typical self-assessment process. The proposed compliance-assessment process is different from a self-assessment process as there will be a requirement to notify of compliance with the code and provide other details to the administering authority (Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning) and this is not a typical requirement of self-assessment processes.

Recommendation 2

When utilising the proposed compliance-assessment option, the resource authority holder should be required to make a declaration that they have consulted with relevant landowners and notified neighbouring landowners of utilising the self-assessment option.

Queensland Government Response

Support.

The Queensland Government will work to establish a framework for the resource authority holder to make a declaration that they have consulted with the relevant land owners and neighbouring properties, when using the new compliance-assessment process.

Recommendation 3

Required outcomes for a regional interest and any related self-assessment code conditions should address the same risks (with the code conditions clear and prescriptive and required outcomes appropriately flexible).

Queensland Government Response

Support.

The Queensland Government will work to ensure that the new compliance-assessment code and required outcomes (with their prescribed solutions) address the same interests/risks.

Recommendation 4

Regionals Plans that relate to priority agriculture areas or strategic cropping areas under the RPI Act should be reviewed and updated where required, to clearly articulate the specific risks associated with those regional areas.

Queensland Government Response

Support in principle.

The Queensland Government is committed to better planning for all of Queensland through the integrated and coordinated policy responses that are delivered through contemporary regional plans.

The decision about when to review a regional plan is influenced by the government's current economic recovery work and the consideration of factors including:

- a region's need for assistance from a next generation regional plan's economic focus
- the need to resolve competing state interests at a regional level
- local government interest in review of their regional plan, particularly where councils in the region intend to progress new planning schemes
- age and currency of the existing regional plan.

Future reviews of regional plans that relate to priority agricultural areas or the strategic cropping area will incorporate methodologies which address the specific risks associated with each regional area.

Recommendation 5

The administering authority should work alongside assessing agencies to allow earlier lodgement and assessment of Regional Interests Development Approval (RIDA) assessment applications.

Queensland Government Response

Support in principle.

The Queensland Government will investigate opportunities for amendments to internal processes that would allow for the earlier lodgement and assessment of RIDA assessment applications.

Recommendation 6

The State Government should identify and task the appropriate and relevant state agency to lead a review of the agricultural land use classifications as they related to coexistence outcomes.

Queensland Government Response

Support in principle.

The Queensland Government has tasked the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to lead the review of the agricultural land use classifications.

Recommendation 7

Guidelines for the RPI Act should be reviewed and updated to ensure they provide sufficient detail for all stakeholders. This includes providing specific guidance for land owners of their expected interactions with the application process.

Queensland Government Response
Support.

Guidelines will be amended, and where appropriate new guidelines produced, to cater for all stakeholders.