



TOOWOOMBA REGION **FUTURES**

Regional Landscape and Urban Character Study & Regional Scenic Amenity Study

Why have we done the strategic project, and what did we want to achieve?

- To identify and define character elements that contribute to the landscape and urban character of the Region.
- To identify and map the Region's scenic amenity values.
- To inform planning scheme policy to protect and enhance these landscapes, specific to managing future growth.

What are the key components?

- Review documentation for regional context.
- Develop a Regional Landscape Character Assessment.
- Develop an Urban Character Assessment of towns and townships.
- Develop recommendations for landscape and urban character protection.
- Identify and map scenic amenity values in the Region according to community preference.
- Develop recommendations for scenic amenity protection.

Who have we consulted with?

Broad, Region-wide community engagement via a photography competition, surveys including the Scenic Reference survey and an interactive mapping tool.

What are the key findings we have learned?

- The Region has 13 Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and 53 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs).
- Urban character was defined, including essential character elements, features, qualities and sensitivities of key settlements in the Region.
- Strategy and policy options with a focus on the protection and management of landscape character, urban character and scenic amenity values across the Region are required.
- Areas in the Region of highest scenic value are:
 - vegetated and elevated peaks, ridges and plateaus
 - waterways and dams
- Strategy and policy options regarding the protection of scenic amenity values across the Region are required.



Disclaimer

The following study has been prepared as part of the Toowoomba Region Futures program. It was endorsed by Toowoomba Regional Council at its Ordinary Council meeting on 19 April 2022 as information to aid decision-making. The content of this study does not reflect an adopted policy position of Council and Council's endorsement of it does not include adoption of any policy position, action or recommendation put forward by the study.

LANDSCAPES

OF THE **TOOWOOMBA REGION**

A compilation of the findings of the:

**TOOWOOMBA REGIONAL LANDSCAPE AND URBAN CHARACTER STUDY &
TOOWOOMBA REGIONAL SCENIC AMENITY STUDY**

14th September 2021



**TOOWOOMBA
REGION**

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F	14/09/2021	Wendy Davies	Final Report

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Toowoomba Region whose song lines traverse our lands and pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the knowledge, rich traditions and bold ambitions of Australia's first peoples.



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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Term	Description
AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHD	Australian Height Datum
ATR	Air Traffic Radar
AOs	Acceptable outcomes
ARTC	Australian Rail Track Corporation
ASC	Australian Soil Classification
BCC	Brisbane City Council
BVRT	Brisbane Valley Rail Trail
CBD	Central Business District
Council	Toowoomba Regional Council
CWEALP	Charlton Wellcamp Enterprise Area Local Plan
DDRP	Darling Downs Regional Plan
DEM	Digital Elevation Model
EHQ	EngagementHQ
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
GIS	Geographic information system
GP	Growth Plan
GRISPI	Green Infrastructure Planning Scheme Integration
HLVA	High Landscape Value Areas
Hwy	Highway
HQplantations	HQPlantations Pty Ltd
IGA	Interdependent Grocers of Australia
IUB	Inter-Urban Break
km	Kilometres
KRA	Key Resource Area
LCTs	Landscape Character Types
LCAs	Landscape Character Areas
LGA	Local Government Area
LP	Local Plan
NP	National Park
m	metres
MLES	Matters of Local Environmental Significance

Term	Description
MSES	Matters of State Environmental Significance
PLA	Priority Living Area
POs	Performance outcomes
PSP	Planing Scheme Policy
QCWA	Queensland Country Women's Association
QLD	Queensland
QPWS&P	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships
Region	Toowoomba Region (Local Government Area)
RFGM	Regional Framework for Growth Management
RLA	Regional Landscape Area
RLRPA	Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area
RLOSAC	Regional Landscape and Open Space Advisory Committee
RoL	Reconfiguring of Lot
RSL	Returned and Services League of Australia
SA	Scenic amenity
SAM	Scenic amenity methodology
SEQ	South East Queensland
SEQRP	South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005-2026
SF	State Forest
<i>ShapingSEQ</i>	South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017
SP	Scenic preference
sp.	Species (used when the actual specific name cannot or need not be specified)
SPP	State Planning Policy
spp.	Species (indicates several species of the same genus)
SPR	Scenic Preference Rating
SSC	State Suburbs
SUA	Significant Urban Area
TRPS	Toowoomba Regional Planning Scheme
TRUFF	Toowoomba Regional Urban Form Framework
UC	Urban Centre
UCL	Urban Centre and Locality
USQ	University of Southern Queensland
UQ	University of Queensland
VE	Visual exposure

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Term	Description
Annual Average Daily Traffic	The total volume of traffic passing a roadside observation point over the period of a calendar year, divided by the number of days in that year (365 or 366 days).
Australian Height Datum	The datum that sets mean sea level as zero elevation. Mean sea level was determined from observations recorded by 30 tide gauges around the coast of the Australian continent for the period 1966 - 1968. Refer to www.ga.gov.au for more information.
ArcGIS	A geographic information system for working with maps and geographic information maintained by the Environmental Systems Research Institute.
Brownfield	Areas of land previously used for industrial or other purposes available to be redeveloped for alternative purposes.
Central Business District	Toowoomba CBD is bounded by Herries St, Clifford St, Russell St, Scholefield St, Ruthven St, Chalk Dve and Hume St.
COVID-19	A highly contagious respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
Digital Elevation Model	A digital model or three dimensional (3D) representation of a terrain's surface created from elevation data.
EngagementHQ	A digital community engagement platform.
Environmental Impact Assessment	A process of evaluating the likely environmental impacts of a proposed project or development, taking into account inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts, both beneficial and adverse.
Environmental Impact Statement	The primary tool used within Queensland legislation to allow the state government to assess the effect that a proposed development has on the surrounding environment.
Geographic information System	A framework for gathering, managing and analysing data using location information to reveal deeper insights to help users make smarter decisions.
Greenfield	Areas of undeveloped land free from existing infrastructure that are potentially suitable for urban development e.g. rural areas adjacent to existing urban areas. <i>Defined in the TRPS as "land within the Low Density Residential Zone, Low-medium Density Residential Zone, Emerging Community Zone or Township Zone and designated by the planning scheme as a 'Greenfield Area'."</i>
Growth Plan	A study currently being prepared as part of Council's Toowoomba Region Futures program. The plan will set out planning principles and policy goals that protect, maintain and respect our region's natural environment, community, lifestyle and heritage values.
Green Infrastructure Planning Scheme Integration	A study currently being prepared by Council to consider the integration of Green Infrastructure within the TRPS.
High Landscape Value Areas	Areas which are considered by the applicable local planning authority to be of particular landscape value to the regional or local area. Also known as 'Areas of High Landscape Value' or 'Areas of High Landscape Quality'.
HQplantations Pty Ltd.	HQplantations manage State forest areas within the Region under a 99-year Plantation Licence granted by the State under the Forestry Act 1959.
Inter-Urban Break	A 'non-urban land area separating major urban development areas' as defined in <i>ShapingSEQ</i> .
Jump-ups	A slight or abrupt low stony rise occurring within otherwise relatively flat country.
Key Resource Area	Key Resource Areas (KRAs) are applied to locations across Queensland that contain extractive resources of State significance.
Landscape Feature	A component, part or feature of the landscape that is prominent or eye-catching, e.g. hills, buildings, vegetation.
Landscape Character Types	Distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country or State, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern.
Landscape Character Areas	Single unique areas that are discrete geographical areas of a particular LCT.
Landscape Subtypes	Defined for the purpose of this study to recognised variations in land use and land cover within each LCT/LCA.
Local Government Area	A spatial unit which represents the whole geographical area of responsibility of an incorporated Local Government Council, an Aboriginal or Island Council in Queensland (ABS, 2006).
Local Plan	A tool to manage this change and accommodate growth and better protect valued environments at a local level.
Mesas	An isolated, flat-topped elevation, ridge or hill, which is bounded from all sides by steep escarpments and stands distinctly above a surrounding plain.
National Park	An area dedicated under the Nature Conservation Act 1992.
Priority Living Area	An area of regional interest under the Regional Planning Interests Act 2014 (RPI Act). PLAs are identified through the regional plan making process under the Planning Act 2016 and are shown on a map in a regional plan. A PLA is an area that includes the existing settled area of a city, town or other community and other areas necessary or desirable for the future growth of the existing settled area or as a buffer between the existing or a future settled area and resource activities. The purpose of establishing PLAs as areas of regional interest is to provide greater certainty for investment in the development of a region's towns or urban growth areas.

Term	Description
Public viewing locations	Defined as <i>"Publicly accessible outdoor locations such as roads, walkways, beaches, picnic areas, lookouts or viewing platforms. Significant and popular viewpoints are elevated public viewing locations where people can safely stop and rest to admire the view"</i> (QG, 2007).
Regional Framework for Growth Management	A study currently being prepared as part of Council's Toowoomba Region Futures program to explore future growth scenarios.
Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area	An area that provides important values that help sustain the SEQ region socially, economically and environmentally. This area protects the values of this land from encroachment by urban and rural residential development, protects natural assets and regional landscapes, and ensures their sustainable use and management and supports development and economic growth of rural communities and industries as defined in <i>ShapingSEQ</i> .
Rural Area	Defined in the TRPS as <i>"land, other than a road reserve, within the Rural Zone (excluding the Heinemann Road Transport Precinct), Open Space Zone (State Government Conservation and Forestry Precinct) or Rural Residential Zone (all precincts)"</i> .
Scenic Amenity	A calculation of the public appreciation of visible landscape quality. Defined as <i>"a measure of the relative contribution of each place in the landscape to the collective appreciation of open space as viewed from places that are important to the public"</i> as defined in <i>Implementation Guideline No 8 - Identifying and protecting scenic amenity values</i> (QG, 2007). The two key factors in the calculation of scenic amenity value are scenic preference and visual exposure.
Scenic Amenity Methodology	A regional scenic amenity methodology that was first established through the SEQRP in <i>Implementation Guideline No 8 - Identifying and protecting scenic amenity values</i> (QG, 2007).
Scenic Preference	The public preference for a particular type of landscape. Defined as <i>"A rating of the community's liking for scenery of open space compared to areas occupied by built structures, measured using images"</i> as defined in <i>Implementation Guideline No 8 - Identifying and protecting scenic amenity values</i> (QG, 2007).
Scenic Preference Rating	A value assigned to an area based on the public's preference for it, which can be used as an indicator of scenic amenity.
Scenic Value	A measurement of the aesthetic quality and importance of a landscape based on human perception of the intrinsic beauty of the landscape, as well as any visible human additions or alterations to the landscape.
Significant Urban Area	Defined by combining one or more adjacent Statistical Areas Level 2 (SA2s) that include one or more Urban Centres using the criteria identified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
State Forest	Land dedicated under the Forestry Act 1959 which provide for the permanent reservation of forest for producing timber and other forest products (e.g. quarry materials), protecting watersheds, and having regard to conserving water and soil quality. State forest's are the property of the Crown.
State Planning Policy	State planning policies are planning instruments that the planning minister (or any minister in conjunction with the planning minister) can make to protect things that are of interest to the state.
State Suburbs	An ABS approximation of localities gazetted by the Geographical Place Name authority in each State and Territory.
State-controlled roads	Road classification is an indication of the functional role a road plays with in a region. The Department of Transport and Main Roads has jurisdiction over roads of State or regional significance and has four administrative classifications in its hierarchy of roads, herein all referred to as State-controlled roads.
Toowoomba Regional Urban Form Framework	A study currently being prepared as part of Council's Toowoomba Region Futures program to investigate future urban form.
Urban Centre and Locality	An ABS term for areas of concentrated urban development with populations of 200 people or more.
Urban Footprint	Identifies land within which the SEQ region's urban development needs will be met in a way consistent with the goals, elements and strategies of <i>ShapingSEQ</i> .
Visual Exposure	The visibility of elements in the landscape. Defined as <i>"A measure of the extent to which a place in the landscape is seen from important public viewing locations (e.g. roads, recreation areas, schools, golf courses)"</i> as defined in <i>Implementation Guideline No 8 - Identifying and protecting scenic amenity values</i> (QG, 2007).
View corridors	Defined as <i>"Three-dimensional spaces that connect public viewing locations with seen landscape areas. Important view corridors connect significant and popular viewpoints with areas of high scenic amenity"</i> as defined in <i>Implementation Guideline No 8 - Identifying and protecting scenic amenity values</i> (QG, 2007).
1% AEP	A flood that occurs on average once every 100 years.
+/-	With or without

INTRODUCTION

OUR REGION

The Toowoomba Region is situated in South East Queensland (SEQ), approximately 125km west of Brisbane and covers an area of 12,975.3 km² (DES, 2021). The Toowoomba Region contains a broad range of diverse landscapes, from flat agricultural plains to steep mountainous regions, many of which are valued for their scenic beauty and outstanding views.

The population of the Toowoomba Region is anticipated to grow by more than 55,000 over the next 30 years. The current population of the Toowoomba Region is 160,779 (ABS, 2016), with approximately 62% of the population living within Toowoomba City, which is the 'capital' of the Darling Downs and is regionally renowned as "The Garden City" based on the green and colourful setting provided by trees and planting within its streetscapes, parks and gardens. In addition, many of the rural towns across the Toowoomba Region are experiencing pressure to accommodate growth, which is particularly evident in those towns situated in close proximity to Toowoomba City.

It is therefore imperative to manage growth and development within the Toowoomba Region to ensure that the unique and diverse landscape, cultural and scenic amenity values of the Toowoomba Region are protected, in recognition of the significant roles these have in contributing to the health, livelihood and identity of the Toowoomba Region and its communities.

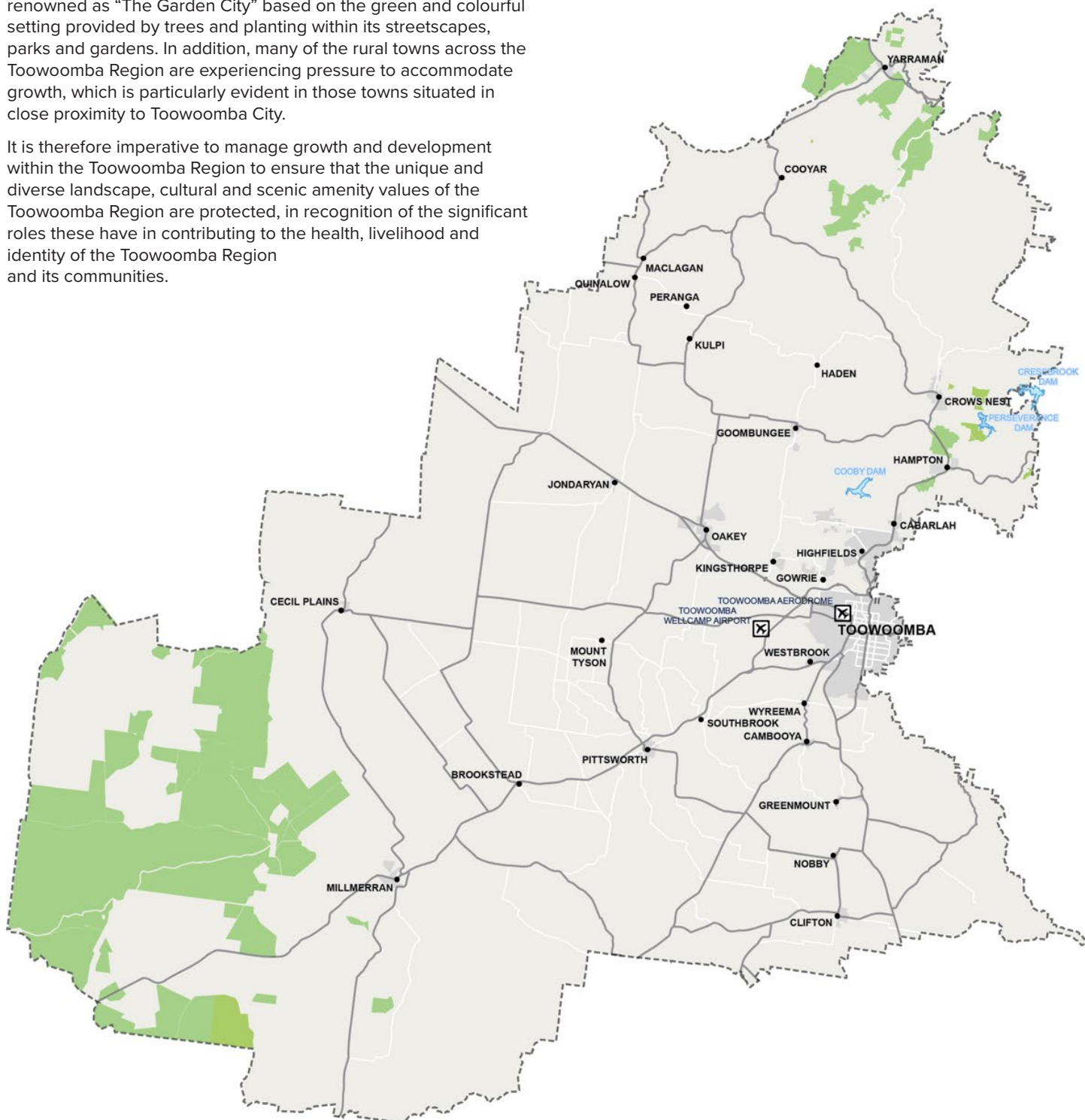


Figure 1: The Toowoomba Region

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report is a compilation of work undertaken for two studies commissioned by Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) as part of the Toowoomba Futures program:

- **Toowoomba Region Landscape and Urban Character Study (TRLUCS)**
- **Toowoomba Region Scenic Amenity Study (TRSAS)**

These studies have been prepared by a team of consultants working closely with Council led by Lat27, including Trace Visual (GIS and mapping), The Comms Team (community consultation and engagement), PSA Consulting (statutory planning) and Extent Heritage (heritage advice for the TRLUCS study).

Purpose of the TRLUCS study

The purpose of the TRLUCS is to identify and define the existing character elements that contribute to the landscape and urban character of the Toowoomba Region. This will, in turn, inform development of a policy framework and recommendations for planning scheme code provisions for the protection and enhancement of the character and landscapes of the region, particularly in regard to managing future growth across the Region.

The key objectives of this study are to:

- **Identify what makes each place special**
 - Define regional landscape character types and sub-types across the region.
 - Identify the essential character elements (urban/built form) of Toowoomba City and regional towns across the region.
 - Define place-specific landscape character (landscape setting) of settlements across the region.
- **Consider how to protect identified values**
 - Propose potential planning scheme provisions to protect identified landscape character values.
 - Identify essential character elements that need further investigation or development in the Toowoomba Region Urban Form Framework Study.

Purpose of the TRSAS study

The purpose of the TRSAS is to identify and map the scenic amenity values of the Toowoomba Region and provide recommendations for planning scheme code provisions for the protection and enhancement of the scenic amenity values of the region, particularly in regard to managing future growth across the Region.

The key objectives of this study are to:

- **Identify scenic amenity values**
 - Map and identify existing scenic routes and lookouts within the region to understand which are the most accessible, visible and least visible landscapes.
 - Understand community perceptions and preferences with regards to the scenic value of landscapes within the Toowoomba Region in order to determine a scenic preference map and understand which landscapes are most (and least) preferred by residents and visitors to the region.
 - Generate a scenic amenity map to understand how scenic preference values and visibility combine to determine scenic amenity values across the region.
 - Identify important views and vistas and areas of high scenic amenity value that require protection in regards to their moderate or high scenic value.
- **Consider how to protect and manage identified values**
 - Propose potential planning scheme provisions to protect identified areas with high scenic amenity value.
 - Identify the areas that may benefit from improvement and intervention to increase their scenic value.
 - Consider potential planning scheme provisions to improve identified areas with low scenic amenity value.

Scope of these studies

These studies address the landscape character, urban character and scenic amenity values of the entire Toowoomba Region (refer Figure 1) through:

- A review of the regional context including relevant planning and policy documents and guidelines (refer Part A).
- The identification of Landscape Character Types (LCTs), Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) (refer Part B-1).
- The consideration of the urban and landscape character of key settlements within the region (Refer Part B-2).
- The identification of scenic amenity values across the region based on consideration of the landscape character types and values of the region and the extent to which these are valued by the community (Refer Part C).
- The identification of recommendations for the protection of landscape character, urban character and scenic amenity values (including policy options) (refer Part D).

LANDSCAPES

OF THE **TOOWOOMBA REGION**

PART



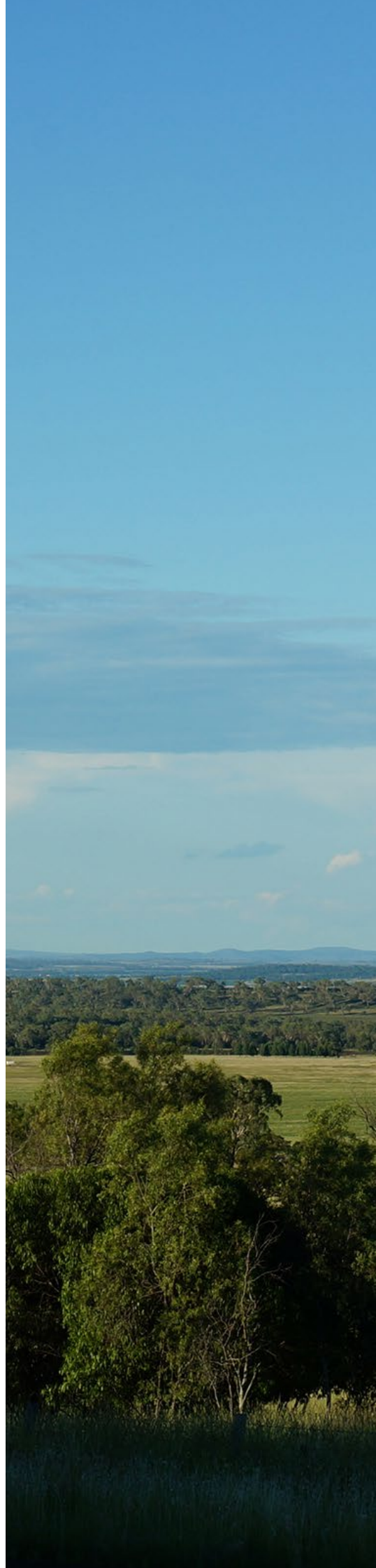
REGIONAL CONTEXT

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Part A provides background information relevant to both the TRLUCS and TRSAS studies.

It describes:

- The planning context for the studies at the State, regional and local scale.
- Existing strategies and previous studies that provide context to the landscape and scenic values of the Toowoomba Region.
- Mapped physical elements that contribute to landscape character and scenic amenity including geology, landform, soils, hydrology, land use and settlement pattern.
- Identified landscape and scenic amenity values including aspects protected within the regional and local planning scheme and in the planning schemes of adjoining Local Government Areas.
- Scenic routes across the Toowoomba Region, based on desktop identification of published routes, review of brochures and evidence of signage in the field.
- Scenic lookouts throughout the Toowoomba Region, based on desktop identification and field assessment.





Rossvale

Image: Inge Gajczak - - 'Love Your Local Landscapes' photography competition entry 2021

PLANNING CONTEXT

The protection and management of landscape and urban character and scenic amenity values are essential in order to maintain a sense of community identity, sense of place, promote stewardship of environmental and heritage values and support the physical and mental health of residents. However, character and scenic values are often seen as subjective, which can make them harder to incorporate into planning policy frameworks than other more easily quantifiable values.

Whilst there are currently no national guidelines regarding the protection of landscape character, urban character or visual values in Australia, the need for Toowoomba Regional Council (Council) to protect these values is required by a number of planning instruments at the State and regional level, including the *State Planning Policy 2017* (SPP), *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017* (ShapingSEQ) and *Darling Downs Regional Plan 2013* (DDRP).

State planning context

State Planning Policy 2017

The SPP requires that development is designed to:

- a) Value and nurture local landscape character and the natural environment
- b) Maintain or enhance important cultural landscapes and areas of high scenic amenity, including important views and vistas that contribute to natural and visual amenity.

Specifically the SPP requires the following measures to integrate the policy:

- 3.1 Consider measures in the planning scheme that encourage new development to respect and respond to local context, physical features, cultural significance, views and vistas, and connections to existing facilities and movement networks.
- 3.2 Identify local landscape, heritage and cultural assets of value to the local community and appropriately integrate new development.
- 3.3 Consider identifying areas of high scenic amenity and important views and vistas and include provisions to protect these areas from development that would detract from these values. This could include identifying the strategic outcomes (including mapping) and inclusion of development requirements in zone codes/local plans or an overlay.



View from Mount Kingsthorpe Bushland Reserve towards Gowrie Mountain, a distinctive local mesa.

Regional planning context

Darling Downs Regional Plan 2013

The Darling Downs region includes part of the Toowoomba Regional Council Local Government Area (LGA), with the Darling Downs Regional Plan, forming one of the key relevant statutory regional plans.

The plan's regional policies address emerging regional issues, including the need to protect areas required for the growth of towns.

The plan highlights the importance of the region's landscape and scenic amenity values, stating *"The region has some of the State's best assets, with high value scenic and natural amenity, vibrant towns and strong communities underpinned by a diverse range of cultural values. The region encompasses a variety of regional landscapes, including urban and rural holdings, agricultural production, resource and mine sites, and protected areas."*

Key regional outcomes and policies aim to protect Priority Agricultural Land Uses while supporting co-existence opportunities for the resources sector and provide certainty for the future of towns in the region.

Priority living areas

The plan identifies Priority Living Areas (PLAs) to preserve areas for expansion for those towns likely to experience growth in the next 20 years. Towns identified as PLAs within the Toowoomba Regional Council LGA comprise:

- Cambooya
- Cecil Plains
- Clifton
- Crows Nest
- Goombungee
- Greenmount
- Millmerran
- Oakey
- Pittsworth
- Southbrook
- Yarraman

Tourism

The plan addresses the increasing importance of the region for tourism, noting increasing growth with visitors coming to experience the region's scenic, natural, cultural and heritage attractions, festivals and events.

The region's significant natural values, scenic, environmental and lifestyle characteristics are identified as offering a range of opportunities to diversify and strengthen its tourism sector.

The plan highlights the balanced approach that needs to be taken to managing the environmental, community and economic values of the Darling Downs.

Healthy Waters

The plan identifies opportunities to enhance the ecological health and environmental values and promote the outdoor recreation and nature conservation benefits associated with significant waterways within the region, including the nationally significant Condamine River.

Cultural Heritage

The Darling Downs region encompasses many natural and structural heritage values, with the region's towns and communities each maintaining its own unique heritage and sense of identity.

The structural heritage of the Darling Downs region is represented in the region through its historic towns, which represent some of the oldest inland settlements in Queensland.

The Darling Downs region currently has 169 places listed on the Queensland Heritage Register, the majority of which are located in the Toowoomba LGA.

The cultural heritage of the region presents many economic and social opportunities, with visitors coming to experience its rich history and culture. It is in a position to capitalise on its cultural and built heritage values to attract domestic and international tourists.

The proximity of Darling Downs to Brisbane provides further opportunities for international and domestic tourists to enjoy the natural and built heritage of the region, including heritage listed examples of the rural lifestyle of the Darling Downs region.

It is this cultural and structural heritage which connects the Darling Downs community to the past and strengthens the unique character and lifestyle of the region.

Conservation of these structural and natural heritage values and their integration into an evolving community is critical in retaining this region's cultural identity.

ShapingSEQ 2017

A small part of the Toowoomba Region comprising the Toowoomba Urban Area and immediate surrounds is included within the South East Queensland region. *ShapingSEQ* includes landscape character as a key consideration of regional planning and is referred to by a number of elements and strategies.

Goals

There are five goals which align with the five themes identified in *ShapingSEQ*, each of which is supported by several elements that provide more specific outcomes, some of which are relevant to this study including:

Goal 1: Grow supports the sustainable growth of existing rural towns and villages, including those located outside the Urban Footprint. While these areas are not intended to accommodate significant growth to 2041, local governments may undertake detailed planning to ensure they can grow sustainably, be resilient, and respond to change over time.

Planning for these areas must be consistent with the goals, elements and strategies of *ShapingSEQ* and, where reflected in planning schemes, these areas may be considered as an urban zone for the purposes of the SEQ regulatory provisions.

Meringandan/Kleinton and Mount Kynoch are identified as Potential Future Growth Areas that may be needed to accommodate long-term urban growth. These areas are not currently required to accommodate growth, with the intent being to *"protect their future potential, not to promote or support their investigation for urban purposes"*. As such, these areas are currently located in the Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area to limit development and protect them from further fragmentation that would prejudice their ability to accommodate future urban development.

Element 5: Growing rural towns and villages seeks to *"provide for sustainable growth and community development in rural towns and villages, in a way that reinforces local identity"*.

Goal 4: Sustain highlights the importance of “*valuing and protecting our greatest assets – our regional landscapes and natural systems that sustain us.*”

This theme is the most important in terms of guiding the regional context for landscape and visual amenity values stating “*Our regional landscapes contain a wide range of values, including biodiversity, rural production, natural economic resources, scenic amenity, cultural landscapes and outdoor recreation. These values contribute to SEQ being one of the most biodiverse and liveable regions in Australia.*”.

In addition, the protection and importance of cultural heritage values is supported and recognised, with the plan stating that “*Cultural heritage is important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as it provides present and future generations with a sense of identity and connection to Country. Traditional Owners in SEQ have an important role to play in sustainable management of the region’s cultural heritage landscapes*”.

Element 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples seeks to “*engage with Traditional Owners to enable their cultural knowledge and connection to land and seascapes to be included in planning for communities and the sustainable management of cultural and natural resources*”.

Element 4: Regional landscapes seeks to:

1. Protect the values of inter-urban breaks, while providing for a range of activities compatible with their predominantly rural or natural character
2. Protect and rehabilitate culturally significant places in the regional landscape
3. Protect regional scenic amenity areas from development that would compromise their value.
4. Protect and enhance the regional greenspace network, including through innovative approaches, to meet the recreational and outdoor needs of the community.

Goal 5: Live is also relevant in terms of landscape and scenic amenity. In particular **Live Element 3: Inspiration from local character** requires that “*The communities of SEQ demonstrate a strong respect for their heritage, distinct context and local character*” with the associated strategies including to:

1. Identify and conserve local landscape, heritage and cultural assets, including Indigenous landscape values, and where appropriate, integrate or adaptively re-use them in building, streets and spaces.

2. Work respectfully with natural topography to create development that contributes positively to the environmental and visual experience of a place.
3. Explore the appropriate use of building materials to create contemporary design that adds to a local area’s character and diversity.
4. Work with the characteristics, traditions and values of the local community to create a distinctive local character and contributory community value.

Map 6 Live - Some great places, identifies Toowoomba City centre as a ‘great place’, while the city of Toowoomba is included within the Western Subregion which is characterised by features including “*a predominantly regional and rural lifestyle supported by spectacular open space, hinterland and natural landscape settings*”.

Regional Landscape and Production Areas

Parts of the Toowoomba Region are identified as falling within the Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area (RLRPA), the intent of which is to protect the values of this land from encroachment by urban and rural residential development and protect natural assets and regional landscapes and ensure their sustainable use and management.

Urban Footprint

The Urban Footprint identifies land within which the region’s urban development needs to 2041 can be accommodated in a way consistent with the goals, elements and strategies of *ShapingSEQ*.

ShapingSEQ acknowledges that land within the Urban Footprint may be unsuitable for urban purposes for reasons including constraints such as scenic amenity and the need to protect significant vegetation.

ShapingSEQ acknowledges that landscape character and scenic amenity underpin SEQ’s lifestyle and identity and support a wide range of recreational and tourism activities and seeks to protect regionally significant scenic amenity. However, the background papers to the Regional Plan acknowledge that strategies for the management of neighbourhood and private landscape values (particularly in the Urban Footprint) in the face of potential change and development pressure will need to be considered in further detail by planning schemes to address these issues at a more local scale.

Regional scenic amenity values

The State of Queensland has assessed the Toowoomba Urban Area (which falls within the South East Queensland Regional Plan planning area) using the SEQ regional amenity methodology identified in the SEQRP Implementation Guideline No 8 Identifying and protecting scenic amenity values (State of Queensland, 2007).

Regional scenic amenity values were calculated using GIS analysis which combines visual exposure (least visible to most visible) and visual preference (least preferred to most preferred) to give a value between 1 and 10.

ShapingSEQ includes mapping of areas of areas of ‘regionally significant scenic amenity’, which are areas with a scenic amenity value of 9 to 10, on ‘Map 5c Sustain – regional landscape values’ (refer Figure 2).

As the majority of the Toowoomba Region is not included within the *ShapingSEQ* planning area, regionally significant scenic amenity mapping is not available across the whole region.



View from Coventry Court lookout towards landscapes identified as having regionally significant scenic amenity value



View from Katoomba Point Lookout, which is situated within the regionally significant scenic amenity value overlay area

Map 5c: Sustain - Regional landscape values

ShapingSEQ - August 2017

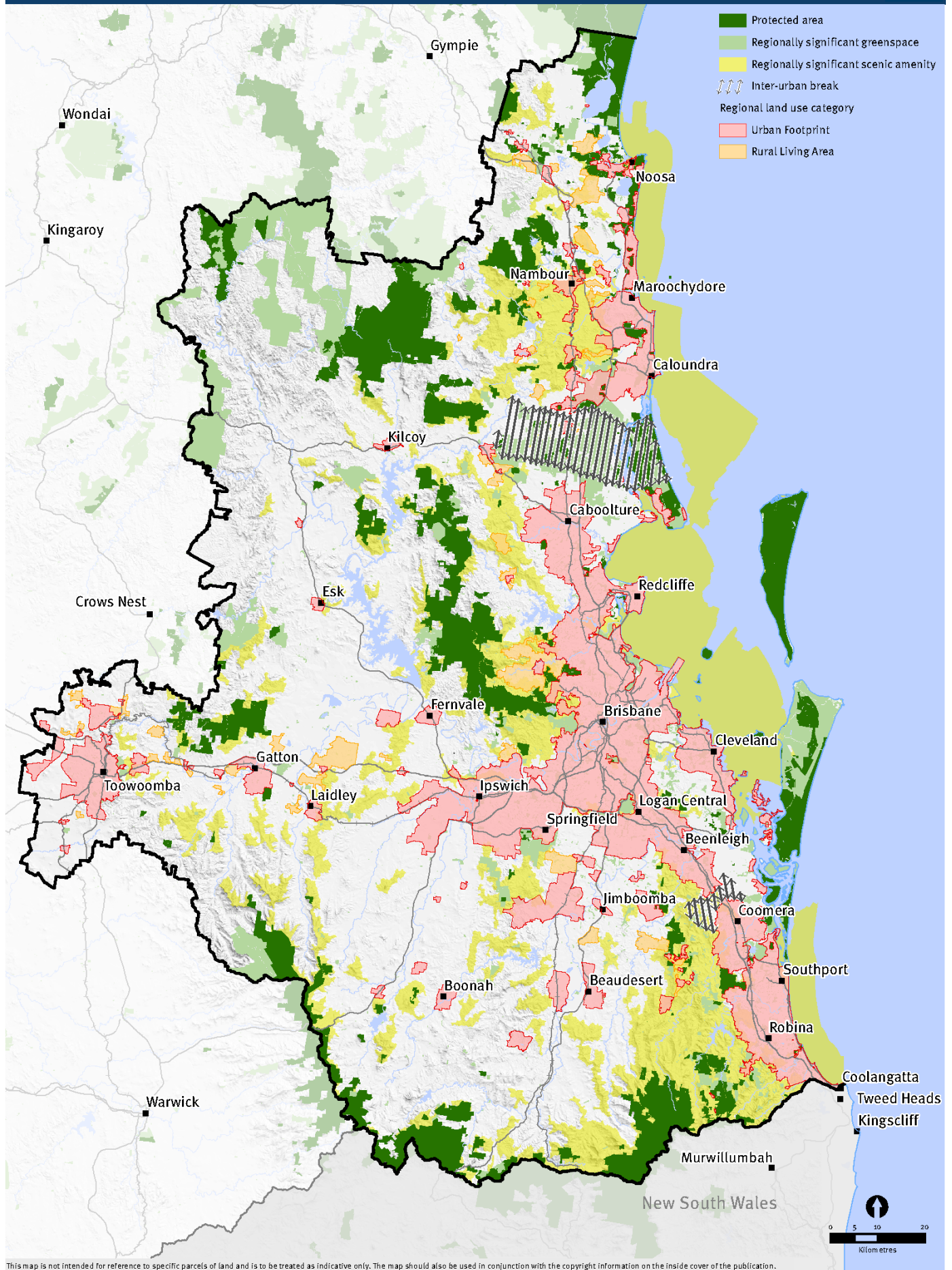


Figure 2: Map 5C: Sustain - Regional landscape values of SEQ

Local planning context

Toowoomba Region

Toowoomba Regional Planning Scheme 2021

The Toowoomba Region is known and enjoyed for its 'Rich Traditions' that are showcased through its diverse landscapes.

Council's bold ambition and assertion that **"we will never compromise on protecting and maintaining our highly valued and sustainable natural environment, and respecting community and heritage values"** underpins the need for this study to fully evaluate and articulate these values in order to determine a framework for their future protection.

The *Toowoomba Regional Planning Scheme* (TRPS) is the relevant assessment benchmark for assessing development within the Toowoomba Region.

Whilst there is a specific scenic amenity overlay code, a recent review of the TRPS has highlighted that the current planning scheme lacks adequate:

- Guidance on the consideration of landscape character elements and values.
- Definition and coordination of urban form and urban character elements.

The strategic vision for the Toowoomba Region identifies the following core issues and outcomes, many of which are relevant to this study:

- Prevention of conflict between incompatible land uses.
- Provision for sustainable growth.
- Efficient and equitable supply of infrastructure.
- Conservation of our heritage.
- Preservation of urban character and rural landscapes.
- Protection of the environment.
- Development that makes a positive contribution to the urban landscape.
- Management of natural resources.
- Sustainable agricultural production.
- Ongoing economic diversity and prosperity.

In addition, three key outcomes are identified that will 'change the landscape of Toowoomba City and our rural towns over the next 20 years' and act as key forces for change that have the potential to impact on landscape and urban character values:

1. Increase residential densities in Toowoomba City and Highfields and to a lesser extent the rural towns.
2. Create greater diversity in housing.
3. The creation of neighbourhoods where residents can walk/cycle to work, school, shops and services and parks.

The identification of appropriate locations to support higher density forms of housing and the provision of 'pedestrian-friendly urban environments that are safe and pleasant to be in' are noted as key strategies to achieve these three outcomes.

Part 3 - Strategic Framework

3.2 Strategic Intent

The strategic intent states the following relevant to this project:

- *"Our diverse communities have a strong sense of place linked to individual local heritage, character and identity. The rural qualities of our regional towns, townships and landscapes are an intrinsic part of our region's character and identity".*
- *"Toowoomba is a thriving compact city which is characterised by its rural context and its heritage. It is a principal regional activity centre that is connected to a network of attractive and vibrant rural towns by an integrated transport system".*
- *"Development is designed and sited to respond to climate and seasons, is resource wise, reinforces cultural heritage and local character, and achieves innovation and design excellence".*
- *"Our valued scenic landscapes and regional greenspaces are protected and our natural areas and resources are well managed by landholders and community. Our diversified primary and secondary production is undertaken in an efficient and sustainable manner that is adaptive to technological advances and increased climate variability".*
- *"Development within the rural landscape does not compromise primary production, and considers cultural, heritage, environmental biodiversity and water network values".*

Toowoomba Regional Community Plan 2014

The Toowoomba Regional Community Plan articulates the long-term vision, goals and priorities of the local communities of the region, with some direct relevance to the protection of landscape character and regional landscape values. The plan outlines a number of themes to guide community development in the region.

Theme 1: Settlement Pattern states that *"development within our region is undertaken in a coordinated and wise manner to avoid compromising landscape values."* and seeks the following relevant outcomes:

1. Development is designed and sited to respond to climate, is resource-wise, reinforces local character and achieves innovation and design excellence.
2. Development within the rural landscape does not compromise primary production, and considers cultural, heritage, environmental biodiversity and water network values.

Theme 5: Natural Resources and Landscape seeks the following relevant outcomes:

1. *"Scenic landscapes, regional greenspaces and landscapes of rural and heritage value are identified, protected and managed."*

Theme 6: Community states that *"the rural qualities of our regional towns, townships and landscapes are an intrinsic part of our region's character and identity."*

Theme 8: Economy supports the development of key infrastructure projects, including Toowoomba Bypass, Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport and the potential Melbourne Brisbane Inland Rail Project.

Tourism and Events Strategy

This strategy identifies that Toowoomba falls within the broader destination of Southern Country Queensland, which is characterised by its 'rich traditions, regional towns and scenic landscapes'.

The strategy identifies the following relevant items as strengths of the region that are relevant to this study:

- Scenic rural landscape.
- Quantity and quality of parks and gardens.
- Escarpment and elevation of the region
- Four seasons, ability to offer a Winter experience.
- Easily accessible with several highways connecting the region.
- Lakes and Dams.
- Nature-based and soft-adventure activities.

It also identifies the following opportunities relevant to this study:

- Adventure and nature-based activities.
- New drive routes & themed itineraries.
- Increase the supply of trails – suited for both walking and cycling.

Whilst the Toowoomba Region has ample scenic drives and routes, the 'reliance on the drive tourism market' was noted as a current weaknesses and 'poor and inconsistent directional signage' was noted as an area of concern.

Toowoomba Region Green Infrastructure Strategy 2019

This strategy notes that "*the natural processes provided by green infrastructure also enhance other networks such as roads, recreation and waterway corridors by providing shade, improving air quality, slowing and filtering stormwater flows, creating habitat and adding to the character, amenity and health of these areas.*"

In support of this, **Objective 2: Protect and enhance local identity and character** aims to promote landscapes that underpin or stimulate tourism, job creation and local economic activity, by:

- Growing food and other produce in both urban and rural areas in a sustainable manner.
- Designing amenity and greener character in public spaces and key destinations.
- Linking and clustering natural landscapes and businesses to make visitor experiences unique and memorable.
- Improving resilience of built areas to the impacts of climate challenges including extreme temperatures, drought and flood risk.

Toowoomba Regional Council Open Space Strategy 2016

The Open Space Strategy maps out a new vision that recognises that 'one size does not fit all' and that a range of open spaces will be needed across our expansive region. It will deliver a connected and distinctive open space network that will enhance the unique character of each locality. In addition, it will acknowledge the social, cultural, environmental, and heritage values of these areas and create a sense of place and pride for the community.

This strategy provides a framework for protecting, enhancing and managing open spaces.

It recognises the importance of open space and includes provisions for amenity and rural landscape as follows:

1. Goal 2: Retain and integrate existing vegetation and landscape features to provide visual amenity.
2. Objective: Provide attractive environments to live and play ensuring a network of open space that integrates with existing vegetation and preserves landscape features.

Toowoomba Regional Council Street Tree Masterplan 2011

The *Street Tree Masterplan* aims to protect and enhance the diverse streetscape character of Toowoomba City and towns of the Toowoomba Region, and promote increased shade and improved aesthetic amenity by implementing high quality canopy plantings.



Typical rural setting of the Darling Downs within the Toowoomba Region

West Toowoomba Land Use Investigations 2016

The West Toowoomba Land Use Investigations is part of a series of local planning investigations by Council to guide sustainable growth and development in the Toowoomba Region.

The West Toowoomba study area is situated between Toowoomba and the Toowoomba Enterprise Hub (Charlton Wellcamp) and is bounded by the Toowoomba Bypass (now part of the Warrego Highway (A2)) to the west, Gore Highway (A39) to the south, rail line in the north and Boundary Street in the east. It includes the localities of Cotswold Hills, Torrington, Glenvale West and Westbrook.

Key drivers of the study area projected population growth, investment in major transport infrastructure including the Gore Highway (A39) and Warrego Highway (A2), Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport and Inland Rail.

The creeks, hills and western escarpment are identified as distinctive landscape character elements of the region.

The report outlines ten key strategic directions to guide development in the region, relevant extracts are noted below:

- Communities Framed by Green: Creating a Connected Greenspaces Network:
 - Establish a major greenspace network focused on the natural vegetated features of the creek corridors, the Toowoomba escarpment and hills. These features physically and visually define the communities and contribute to the West Toowoomba sense of place.
 - The greenspace network will have multiple functions including providing a high amenity setting for future residential development.
- Strategic Transport Corridor: Protecting Key Movement Networks:
 - The identified corridor is of strategic importance, accommodating the major interstate transport routes of the Warrego Highway (A2) (including recently opened Toowoomba Bypass) and railway, and potential future transport related activities.
- West Toowoomba Identity: Connecting City and Country:
 - Views to the Toowoomba escarpment, as well as the backdrop of open rural plains and scattered hills, create an identity recognised distinctly as West Toowoomba and the gateway between Toowoomba City and the Darling Downs.
 - New development contributes to the distinctive sense of place by

marking important gateways, such as key transport corridors and at major community facilities, through appropriate building, signage and landscaping and maintaining scenic views and vistas, such as along roads and open space.

The report also references significant view corridors and areas of environmental value that should be preserved and enhanced to retain the sense of place in the impact assessment area identified in the preliminary Scenic Amenity and Landscape Character Assessment (Jensen Planning and Design, 2016) described below.

The structure plan responds to recommendations in the Scenic Amenity and Landscape Character Assessment and is considered to be compatible with retaining high quality scenic amenity and landscape character outcomes, for example by:

1. Preserving important views to peaks, ridgelines and escarpment such as Gowrie Mountain.
2. Establishing connections with existing parkland e.g. Mount Peel and the Cranley Escarpment.
3. Providing open space that capitalises on view corridors.
4. Providing green networks along water courses.

The structure plan contributes to the West Toowoomba identity by:

1. Establishing distinctive compact urban neighbourhoods with a defined urban edge.
2. Maintaining scenic views and vistas, such as along roads and greenspace.
3. Marking important gateways such as key transport corridors and at major community facilities through appropriate building, signage and landscaping.
4. Establishing boulevards with distinctive tree planting along key roads and approaches.

Specific scenic views and vistas have been identified by the report. The plan seeks to preserve and enhance these vistas, which include:

1. Elevated viewpoints along the western Toowoomba escarpment – looking west across the central plains area (for example from a location west of Cotswold Hills)
2. Central plains in vicinity of Oestreich Road – looking east towards the treed escarpment.
3. Locations around Gowrie Junction Road, in the vicinity of the Toowoomba Bypass (Warrego Highway (A2)).

West Toowoomba Preliminary Scenic Amenity and Landscape Character Assessment 2016

On urban development ‘*This type of development should not encroach further into the hills due to the adverse impact this will have on landscape character when considering the above.*’

This report stresses that planning for future development should preserve, wherever possible, the existing sense of place and avoid transforming the entire area into an urbanised landscape by:

1. Preserving ‘important’ views to peaks, ridgelines and the escarpment.
2. Not allowing or carefully limiting development on the hills face/ escarpment and protecting this environment.
3. Promoting and retaining where possible small scale agricultural uses, especially on the western ‘plains’ of the study area.
4. Establish new neighbourhoods around existing urban centres and avoid sprawl throughout the area.
5. Ensure built form utilises a mix of building materials, colours and formats.
6. Establishing parklands along tracts of land within view corridors to key features such as Gowrie Mountain.
7. Establishing green networks along watercourses.
8. Ensuring that parks and reserves comprise of both native/natural landscape.
9. Areas/elements and more controlled/ maintained spaces.
10. Promoting the use of native vegetation and tall native trees.
11. Retaining elements of rural character throughout.
12. Re-establishing areas of native vegetation and further protecting areas of remnant vegetation.
13. Carefully reviewing the need for large scale infrastructure along roadways and at gateways to the West Toowoomba study area.
14. Carefully reviewing areas of future industrial development and extents.

West Toowoomba Land Use Investigation Study Compendium – Background Information 2016

The report summarises the findings of the Scenic Amenity and Landscape Character Assessment (Jensen Planning + Design, 2016), and recognises the importance of the significant natural environment features of ridgelines, vegetated peaks and water courses, as well as unique views and vistas. The rural landscape character is also identified as being significant within the area.

Highfields, Meringandan & Meringandan West Local Plan Report 2013

The report prepared by Deicke Richards in 2013 has a section titled 'Scenic Amenity & Greenspaces', that states: "...the area contains significant scenic amenity with rural uses and views in the west and greenspace views in the east. It also contains some regional greenspace in TRC ownership, with several large blocks along the eastern escarpment containing important biodiversity values. Development in greenfield areas must ensure that views and vistas are maintained to protect the scenic values of the locality. The preservation of existing and planned biodiversity corridors will contribute to maintaining the scenic amenity within the area."

Section 4 Vision and Principles includes the following Vision 2: Cradled by Green:

- *The identity and character of Highfields, Meringandan and Meringandan West is reinforced by maintaining rural and vegetated buffers between these existing communities. Maintaining a separate identity was identified as important to both communities. Creek corridors, rural landscape, natural areas with significant vegetation and other green links are used to define these localities by providing physical separation. The escarpment is an important natural area of the Highfields and Greater Toowoomba locality. Proposed bridle and walking trails capitalise on the natural beauty of the area and enable both regional and local connection.*

Vision 3: Green fingers:

- *A network of parks and open spaces are created through Highfields, Meringandan and Meringandan West. This includes a range of spaces from local and regional parks to multipurpose vegetation, drainage corridors, and protected natural areas. These parks and open spaces promote an active lifestyle and contribute to scenic amenity.*

Vision 5: Country Boulevards:

- *Street trees and public realm landscape works reinforce the character of the place and provide a gateway to the locality. Important gateways and entries are reinforced through enhanced signage and landscape treatments. Key streets in the local plan area act as boulevards with enhanced street tree planting reinforcing the rural aesthetic of the locality.*



View across the rural landscape to the west of Westbrook

Mapping Matters of Local Environmental Significance (MLES) for the Toowoomba Region 2020

This technical report documents the refinement of the category definitions, mapping methodology and mapping layers of the MLES across the Toowoomba Region.

Special Features were nominated for inclusion as a MLES. The following features are relevant to the protection of landscape character, cultural and scenic amenity values.

- MLES04 – Basalt Hilltops SE Downs contain high visual amenity and are characteristic of Toowoomba Region in the Darling Downs.
- MLES05 – Sandstone Wildflower Outlier contains intact regional ecosystems with a floristically diverse heath understorey on unusual geological formations in the Toowoomba Region.
- MLES09 – Muntapa Tunnels contains significant remnant vegetation, unique geological features including exposed white rock features and cultural significant features.
- MLES11 – Toowoomba Escarpment and landscapes associated with the Great Dividing Range and escarpment landscapes contain significant natural features, identified as having significant visual amenity values that need to be preserved and acknowledged for the role they play in providing a buffer to the SEQ and the Darling Downs.
- MLES15 – Mountain Coolibah ecosystem gives the eastern Downs high visual amenity. The Pittsworth Hills could be considered the same and are being relentlessly subdivided and overgrazed.

Toowoomba Regional Council Heritage & Urban Character Study 2010

This study prepared by Brannock & Associates in 2010 from Council examines the non-indigenous cultural heritage and character values and resources of the Toowoomba Region.

Recommendations and options arising from the study were used to inform the TRPS.

The purpose of the 'Code setting out assessment benchmarks' (in Schedule 2 of the Queensland Heritage Act Regulation 2015) is to provide for the conservation of local heritage places by (amongst other things): (c) protecting, as far as practicable, the materials and setting of local heritage places.

Toowoomba Regional Council Scenic Amenity Study 2009

This document prepared by Conics in 2009 provides a comprehensive inventory and assessment of scenic quality within the Toowoomba Region, to identify areas of strategic significance with respect to their visual contribution to the regional image. This study has been based on the approach detailed in the *SEQ Regional Plan 2005-2026 Implementation Guideline No. 8 – 'Identifying and protecting scenic amenity values'* (QLD Government 2007) and has applied a quantitative method to the process of assessment of scenic values.

This document includes recommendations and strategies for the management of scenic amenity, designed to inform the preparation of the TRPS, described above.

Section 10.2 Protecting areas with high scenic amenity includes proposed management objectives for each constraint category defined by the study.

The study identifies the following natural and rural assets that contribute to the Toowoomba Region's unique identity:

- Picnic Point Parkland.
- Queens Park.
- The Condamine River.
- High quality agricultural land within the Darling Downs.
- Mountains and mesas e.g. Gowrie Mountain.
- Lake Cooby and Perseverance Creek Dam.

In addition, the study identifies the following within the Toowoomba Region as having high scenic amenity value:

- Water bodies such as Perseverance Creek Dam and Cooby Creek Reservoir.
- The mesas, hills and mountains across the central plains and the north eastern ranges (i.e. elevated areas near Toowoomba, Kingsthorpe, Gowrie Mountain and Pittsworth).
- The isolated peaks of Captains Mountain, Commodore Peak and Mount Domville.
- Rural landscapes within Toowoomba Regional Council are rated as high in scenic amenity by respondents to the Toowoomba Regional Council and South East Queensland preference surveys.

Some areas of lower scenic amenity value identified include:

- Areas associated with mines, quarries and refuse facilities e.g. Acland Mine and Millmerran Mine and Power Station.

Strategies identified within Section 10.3 Managing Significant and popular viewpoints of the study, include:

1. Retaining or enhancing public access to significant and popular viewpoints by publicising its existence through maps and brochures, upgrading access to the viewing location, providing signs and signage to draw casual visitors to the site and providing additional facilities.
2. Introducing planning controls to define acceptable development within the view corridor by limiting the visibility of any proposed buildings or infrastructure.'



Agricultural land within the Darling Downs is noted as being an asset that contributes to the Toowoomba Regions identity



View towards Lake Cressbrook from Dam Lookout



View along the Condamine River near Cecil Plains

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Geology of the Toowoomba Region

The geological framework for Queensland identifies five geological basins and subprovinces within the Toowoomba Region:

- **Clarence-Moreton Basin:** a Triassic-Cretaceous aged sedimentary basin, that is present within the central part of the Region.
- **Surat Basin:** a Jurassic-Cretaceous aged sedimentary basin that occurs in the western part of the Region.
- **Tarong Basin:** a Triassic aged basin that occurs to the west of Yarraman in and contains significant economically important coal reserves.
- **Yarraman Subprovince:** A Late Devonian - Carboniferous aged subprovince that extends from Yarraman to near Hampton.
- **Texas Subprovince:** a Carboniferous aged subprovince occurs in the southeastern part of the Toowoomba Region near Leyburn.

Surface Geology

The geology of the Toowoomba Region provides the foundation for the character and scenic amenity of Toowoomba's landscapes.

The surface geology of the Toowoomba Region is shown on Figure 3 and includes thirty distinctive geological units, which strongly correlate to the geological basins underneath.

A large part of the Toowoomba Region is covered by thin Quaternary alluvial deposits (Qa-QLD), with Main Range Volcanics occurring in the east associated with the Great Dividing Range (Tm).

In the area to the east of the Great Dividing Range, between Cooyar, Yarraman, Crows Nest and Hampton, the surface geology is very complex and dominated by metamorphics and granites.

In the southwestern parts of the Toowoomba Region the Kumbarilla beds (JKk) are the dominant unit.

The surface geology of the Toowoomba Region and its influence on the visual character of the landscape is discussed further in the landscape and urban character assessment below.

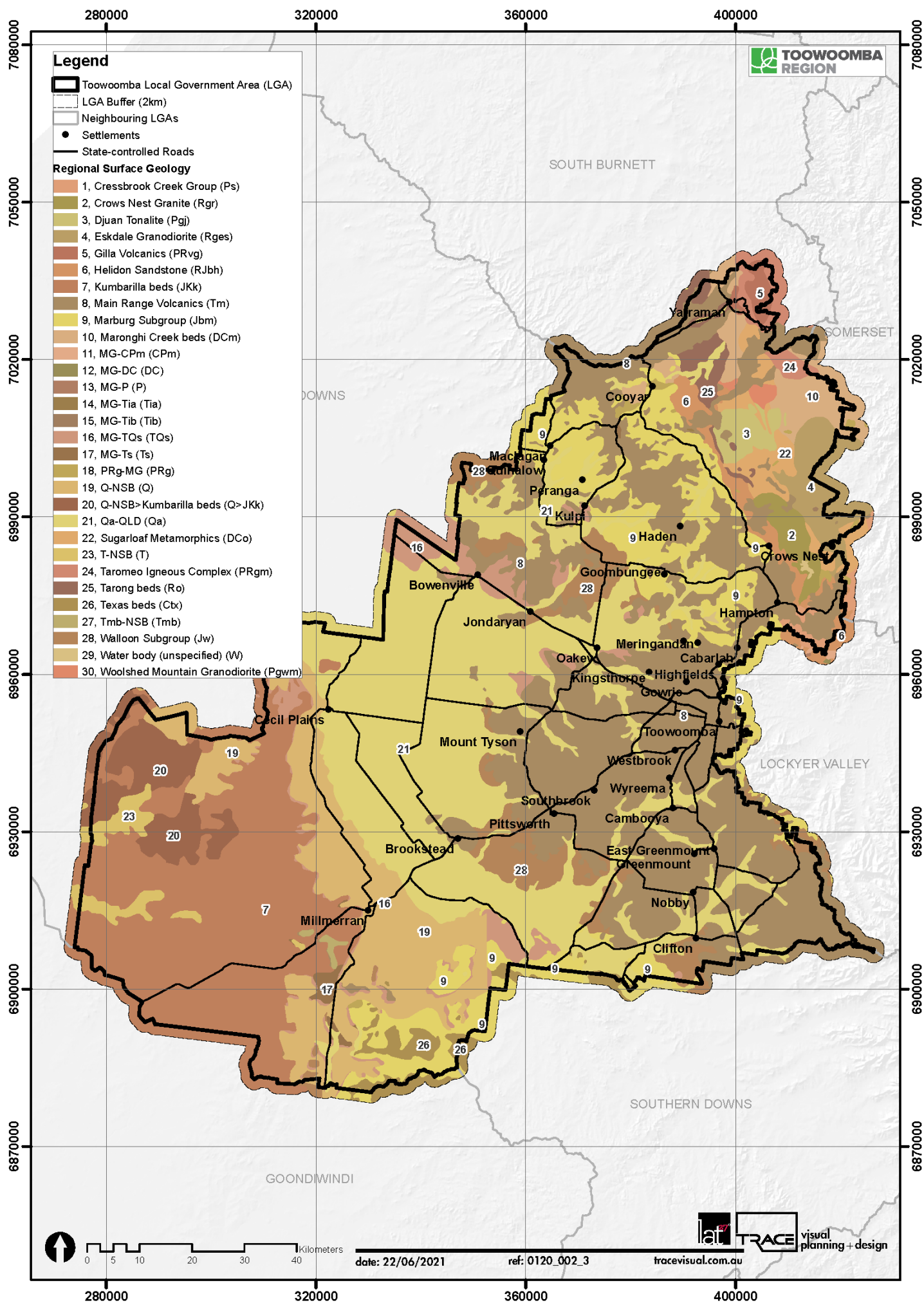


Figure 3: Regional surface geology (1:500K)

Landform and elevation of the Toowoomba Region

The Toowoomba Region includes a diverse array of landforms, as shown on Figure 4, which are described below.

The Great Dividing Range and the associated steep, hilly to sub-mountainous landscape, is a key feature of the Toowoomba Region. It forms a distinctive ridgeline running in a generally northwest to southwest direction and effectively compartmentalises the Toowoomba Region. Elevations associated with the Great Dividing Range are generally between 550m-750m AHD, but elevations of up to 960m AHD occur in the north near the Bunya Mountains and up to 990m AHD occur in the south near Main Range NP and Glen Rock SF.

To the east of the Great Dividing Range, the steep, sub-mountainous landscapes fall away quickly, with the exception of the Cooyar and Blackbutt Ranges that form distinctive ridgelines and form the boundary between the Cooyar Creek and Emu Creek Valleys. The highest elevations in this area are associated with Mount Mocatta (825m AHD) and Cooyar Mountain (752m AHD) in the west and Mount Perseverance (807m AHD). The lowest elevations within the Toowoomba Region occur within these valleys, associated with the waterways of the Brisbane River and Lockyer Creek catchments, with elevations of around 150m AHD associated with Emu Creek near the boundary to the Somerset Region.

Mount Tabletop is a key geographical feature in the east of the Toowoomba Region, due to its highly distinctive form and visibility from multiple regionally significant lookouts along the Toowoomba Escarpment.

To the west of the Great Dividing Range, the landscape is defined by the Toowoomba plateau and associated basaltic uplands, which are characterised by undulating rises and low rolling hills, typically between 400m and 600m AHD. Key features of these uplands are the prominent and often distinctive basaltic hills and mountains that occur, the highest of which is Mount Wyangapinni (679m AHD).

These uplands are dissected by alluvial valleys associated with the tributaries of the Condamine River that are associated with the extensive alluvial floodplain that occurs in the central part of the Region. The floodplain grades gently from east to west with elevations of around 400m AHD where the floodplain meets the basaltic uplands and elevations of around 340m AHD in the west.

To the west of the Condamine River, is an older alluvial plain that is gently shelving and forms a transition between the broader floodplain and landscapes to the west, which are diverse and varied. Elevations are generally between 350-450m AHD, with the lowest elevations in the north associated with the Condamine River and its floodplain.

Around Millmerran and Bringalilly, the landscape is characterised by flat to gently undulating rises and plains. Key features of this landscape are a number of prominent and distinctive basaltic hills and mountains, the highest of which is Mount Domville (644m AHD). Other key features include the West Ridge and South Ridge associated with Commodore Peak (613m AHD) and Pine Hill (504m AHD), which is a distinctive granite outlier.

To the southeast of Millmerran, near the historic township of Kooroongarra and the boundary to the Goondiwindi region, there are sandstone and traprock hills associated with the northernmost extent of the Granite and Traprock area of SEQ (which extends south and includes the settlements of Inglewood and Stanthorpe, amongst others). Elevations within this area are typically between 300-500m AHD, with the highest elevations occurring around Kangaroo Mountain (514m AHD).

To the west of Millmerran, the landscape is dominated by low sandstone hills to gently undulating plains situated between 300-500m AHD, with the lowest elevations occurring in the west associated with the Weir River and its tributaries. Key features of this landscape are the lateritic scarps and jump-ups that occur.

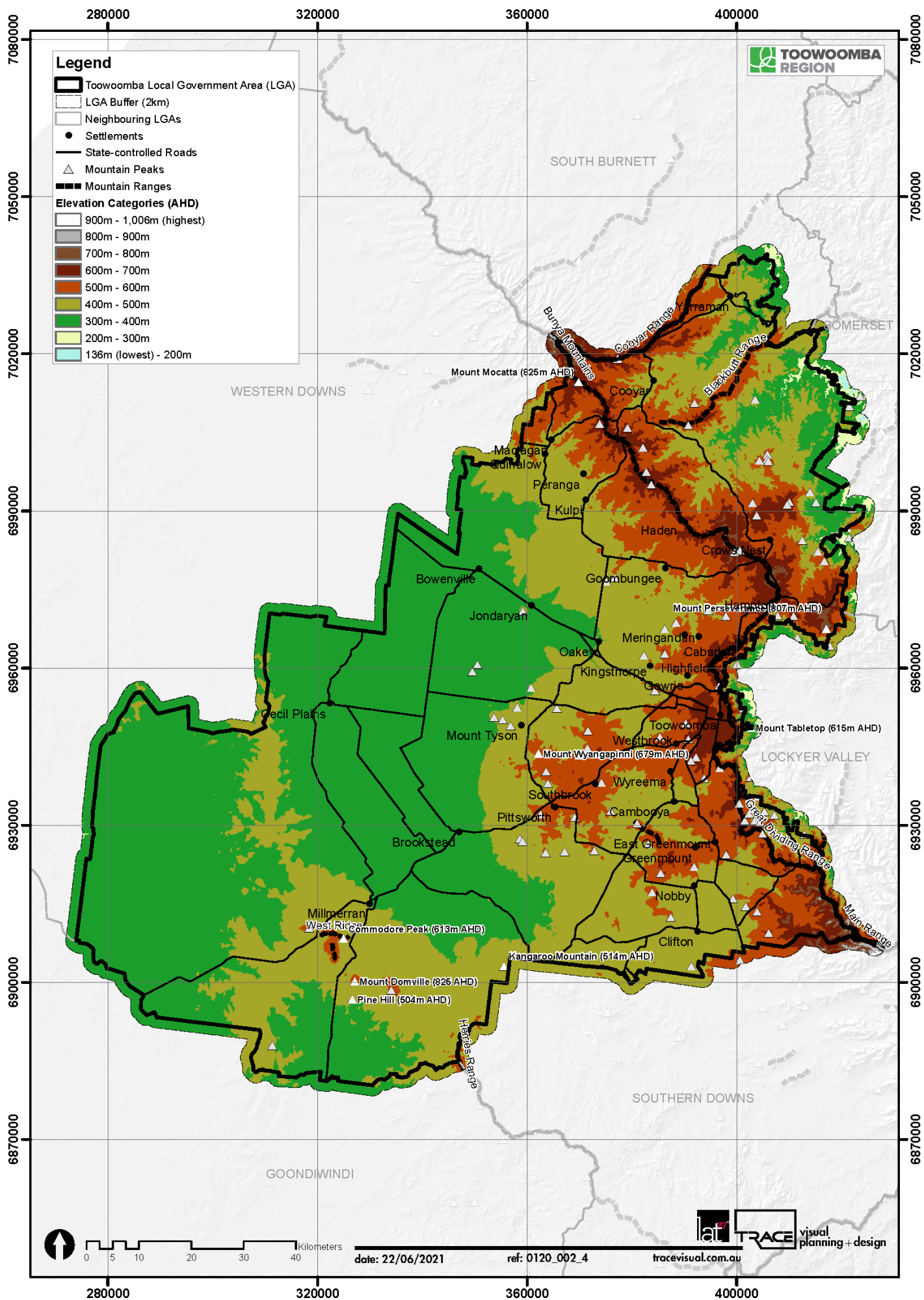


Figure 4: Landform (Digital Terrain Model) showing ridgelines and mountains

Soils of the Toowoomba Region

Soils vary across the Toowoomba Region and are strongly correlated with the underlying surface geology.

Soils are typically derived from basalt, and have either formed through the weathering of the rock in place or from the products of rock weathering, which have been transported to lower parts of the region. Small areas of soils developed from sandstone and other parent materials also occur.

As shown on Figure 5, the dominant soil orders (as per the Australian Soil Classification system) (ASC) that occur within the Toowoomba Region are vertosols, tenosols and sodosols, while chromosols, kurosols, rudosols and ferrosols, dermosols also occur to a smaller extent.

A brief description of each soil order is provided below.

Vertosols

Vertosols are the most common soil in the Toowoomba Region, and are represented by brown, grey or black soils which crack open when dry and often form areas of hummocky relief called gilgai.

These soils are very fertile, have a high ability to supply plant nutrients and have large water-holding capacity.

Historically these soils were associated with areas of Brigalow forests, much of which has been cleared to facilitate agricultural land uses, particularly cropping.

Ferrosols

Ferrosols are well-drained soils with red or yellow-brown colour and have clay-loam to clay textures and are usually associated with previous volcanic activity. These typically occur along the Great Dividing Range.

Ferrosols are often used for intensive crop production.

Dermosols

Dermosols are red, brown, yellow, grey or black and have loam to clay textures, and are usually associated with previous volcanic activity.

Dermosols generally have high agricultural potential with good structure

Sodosols

Sodosols are texture-contrast soils with impermeable subsoils due to the concentration of sodium. These soils occupy a large area of inland Queensland and occur throughout the Toowoomba Region, particularly in the southwest.

Generally Sodosols have a low-nutrient status and are very vulnerable to erosion and dryland salinity when vegetation is removed. Generally, sodosols have very low agricultural potential and typically support native vegetation or grazing.

Chromosols and Kurosols

Both Chromosols and Kurosols are texture-contrast soils, however Kurosols are strongly acid, with a pH below 5.5.

Chromosols generally have moderate agricultural potential, while Kurosols have very low agricultural potential.

Rudosols and Tenosols

These soils orders both generally have a low fertility and low water-holding capacity.

Rudosols and Tenosols are poorly developed but widespread and can be shallow and stony.

Generally, tenosols have a very low agricultural potential.

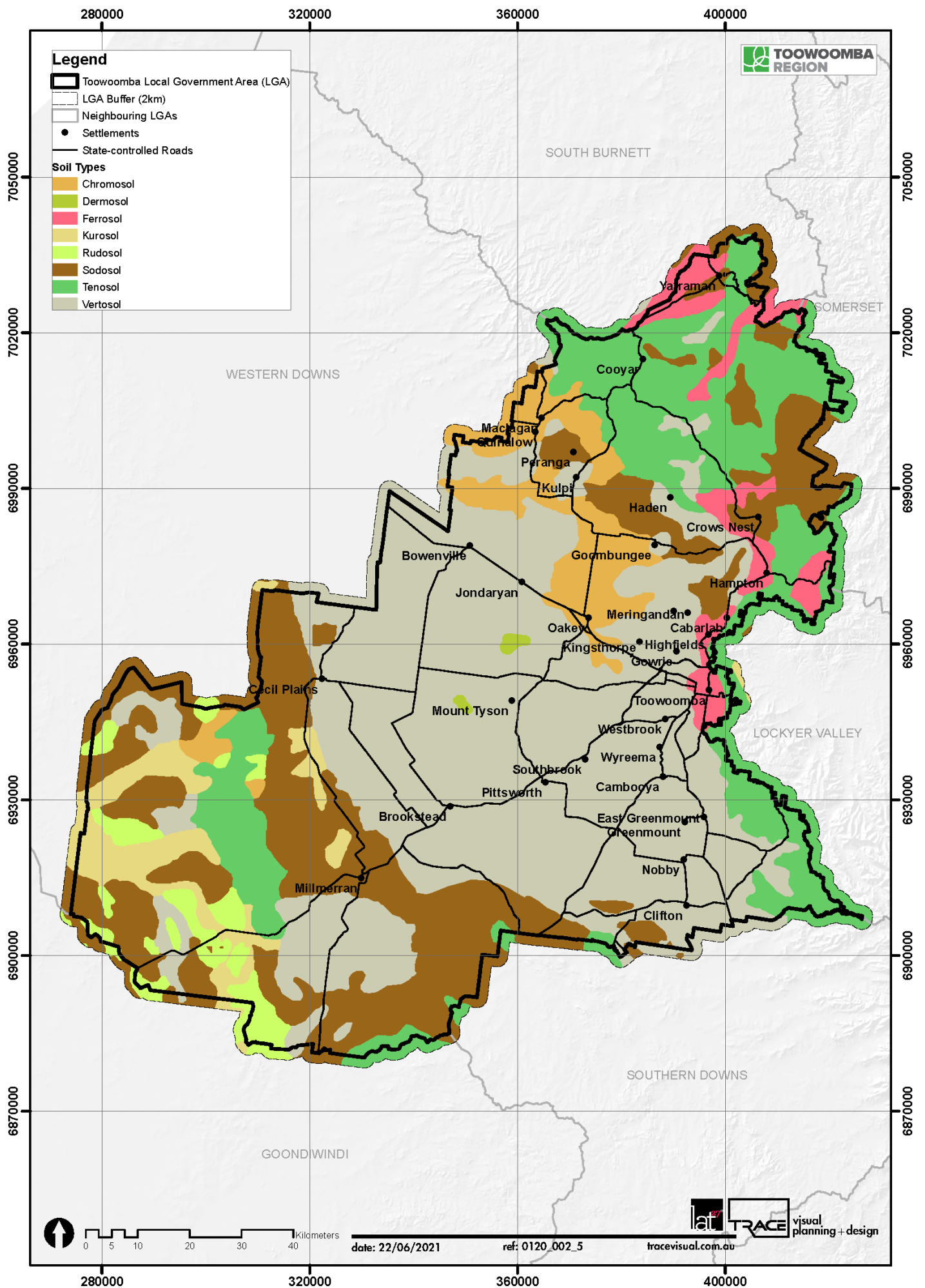


Figure 5: Dominant soil orders

Hydrology of the Toowoomba Region

The Toowoomba Region contains landscapes within five river catchments, the key hydrological features of which are discussed below and shown on Figure 6. While most of these waterways are temporary, with ephemeral or intermittent surface water flows that vary between seasons and years, they also experience periods of flooding.

Condamine River catchment

The majority of the Toowoomba Region is within the Condamine River catchment, which contains several sub-catchments associated with the major tributaries of the Condamine River which include Myall Creek, Oakey Creek, Hodgson Creek and Kings Creek. The headwaters of these waterways start in the Great Dividing Range and these waterways drain in a generally northwesterly direction.

Brisbane River catchment

Landscapes to the east of the Great Dividing Range, in the northern part of the Region, are within the Brisbane River catchment, which contains several sub-catchments associated with the major tributaries of the Brisbane River including Cooyar Creek, Emu Creek, Maronghi Creek, Ivory Creek and Cressbrook Creek. The headwaters of these waterways start in the Great Dividing Range, Cooyar Range and Anduramba Range and these waterways drain in a generally northeasterly direction, before meeting the Brisbane River.

Lockyer Creek catchment

Landscapes to the east of the Great Dividing Range, in the southern part of the Region, are within the Lockyer Creek catchment, which contains several sub-catchments associated with the major tributaries of Lockyer Creek, including Ma Ma Creek. The Toowoomba Region only contains the upper parts of this catchment, which are typically very steep, with the majority of the Lockyer Creek catchment falling within the Lockyer Valley LGA. The headwaters of these waterways start in the Great Dividing Range, and these waterways drain in a generally northeasterly direction, before meeting the Brisbane River.

Macintyre Brook catchment

Landscapes to the west of the Condamine River catchment, in the south-eastern part of the Toowoomba Region are within the Macintyre Brook catchment. Canning Creek that is within the Toowoomba Region flows in a southwesterly direction and is a major tributary of the Macintyre Brook and Macintyre River.

Macintyre and Weir Rivers catchment

Landscapes to the west of the Condamine River catchment, in the south-western part of the Region, are within the Macintyre and Weir Rivers catchment. The headwaters of the Macintyre River and its major tributaries, Western Creek, Paddy Creek and Bora Creek are within the Toowoomba Region, and flow in a southwesterly direction.

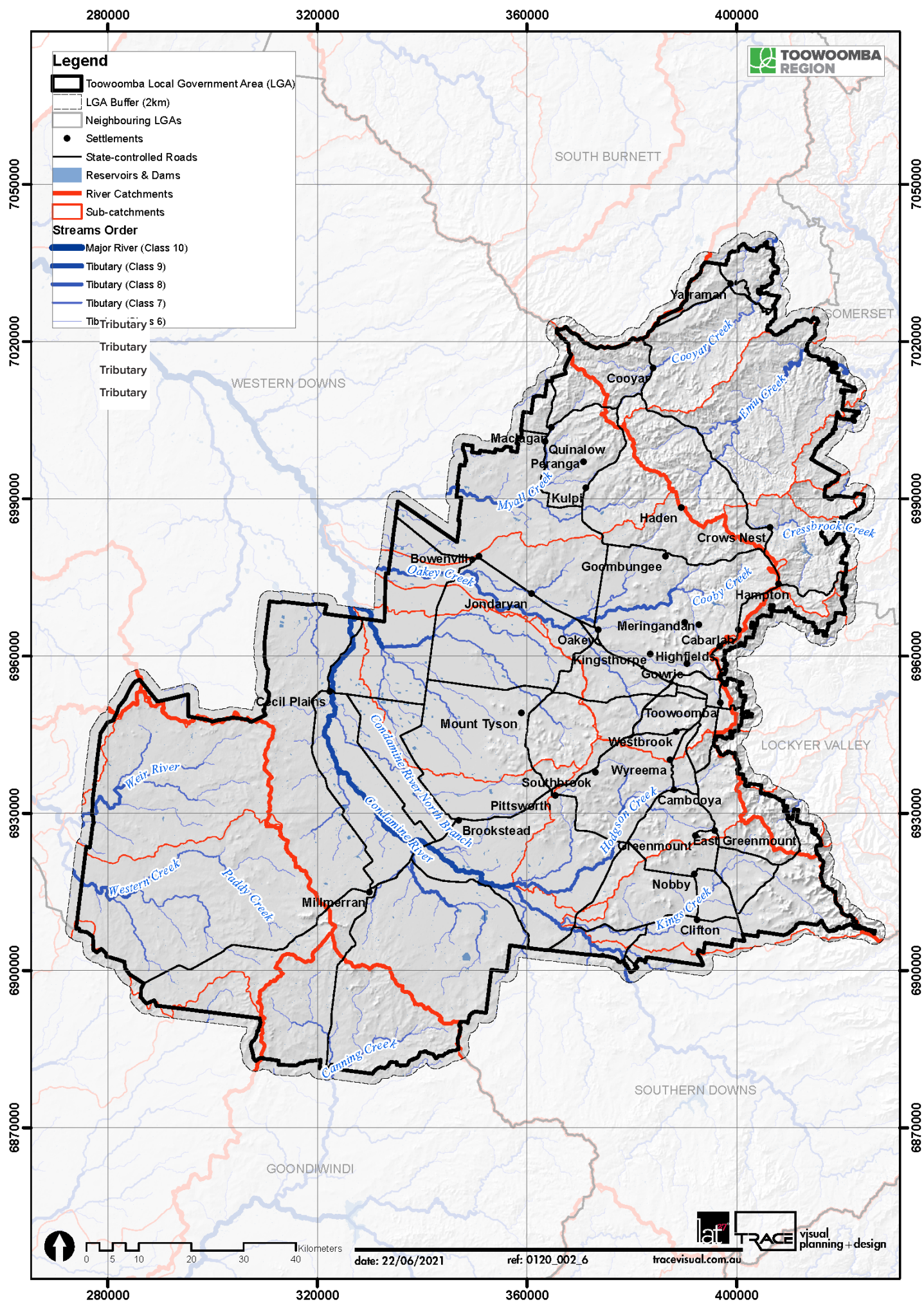


Figure 6: Hydrological features

Landscapes of the Toowoomba Region - Part A: Regional Context 23

Land use, settlement and infrastructure within the Toowoomba Region

The Toowoomba Region covers an area of 12,975.3 km² (DES, 2021), and is recognised for its strong rural character.

The dominant land within the Toowoomba Region based on primary land use categories (refer Figure 7) is production from relatively natural environments, which includes grazing on native vegetation (the most common land use by area in the Region) and production from native forests, which is generally associated with State forest areas, particularly in the southwestern part of the region.

Production from dryland agriculture and plantations is the second most dominant land use and includes dryland cropping, plantation forests and grazing on modified pastures, which occurs to a much lesser extent. Production from dryland agriculture and plantations occurs throughout the region, but is most common and intense on the floodplains associated with major waterways and gently rolling landscapes that contain highly fertile vertosols.

Plantation forests are common in the northern part of the Toowoomba Region near Yarraman, associated with Yarraman SF, Pidna SF, Googa SF and Mount Binga SF, and also occur to a limited extent near Crows Nest and Hampton within Pechey SF and Geham SF.

Production from irrigated agriculture and plantations includes irrigated cropping, and intensive and irrigated horticulture, which are typically associated with the floodplains of the major waterways within the central part of the region, however also occur to a limited extent along Cooyar Creek in the northern and elevated parts of the Toowoomba Region where fertile soils support these land uses.

Some limited areas of conservation and natural environments occur, generally associated with national parks, conservation parks and nature refuges, as well as steep, mountainous landscapes that have been protected due to their inaccessibility. Crows Nest NP, Ravensbourne NP and The Palms NP all provide facilities and opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Intensive animal husbandry occurs across the region and includes feedlots, piggeries, poultry farms and dairy sheds and yards. Horse studs also occur, particularly in the vicinity of Brookstead and Westbrook.

Urban areas within the Toowoomba Region are generally confined to the Toowoomba City, regional towns and townships, however some peri-urban areas are also found. Rural residential development is generally limited to isolated rural residential properties, with the exception of the area in the vicinity of Millmerran Woods, which supports a relatively large rural residential community.

The Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport is situated on the western outskirts of Toowoomba and provides both passenger and freight services.

Other key freight and logistics infrastructure in the Toowoomba Region includes the Wellcamp Business Park, Toowoomba Enterprise Hub, InterlinkSQ, Witmack Industry Park, Charlton Logistics Park and Pittsworth Industrial Precinct

Urban areas are connected by a network of State-controlled and local roads, including the Warrego Highway (A2), New England Highway (A3), D'Aguilar Highway (A3/A17), Toowoomba Connection Road (A21), Toowoomba-Athol Road (A139), Esk-Hampton Road (S85), Gatton-Clifton Road (S80), Dalby-Cecil Plains Road (S82), Millmerran-Inglewood Road (S82) and Toowoomba-Karara Road (S48). Many of these roads provide gateways to the Toowoomba Region and connections to adjacent LGAs, including the Locker Valley, South Burnett, Somerset, Goondiwindi and Western Downs regions.

The Toowoomba Region is also traversed by a number of railways, including the operational West Moreton System railway (Rosewood to Miles section) and South Western System railway (Toowoomba to Thallon and Millmerran Branch sections).

The proposed Inland Rail alignment traverses parts of the Toowoomba Region. The two sections within the Toowoomba Region, including the NSW/Qld Border to Gowrie Project. Comprised of approximately 146km of new dual-gauge track and 78 km of upgraded track between the NSW/Qld border near Yelarbon (within the Goondiwindi region) and Gowrie Junction, and the Gowrie to Helidon Project, a new 26km dual-gauge track between Gowrie and Helidon (within the Lockyer Valley region). The proposed alignment traverses the settlements of Brookstead and Pittsworth, and passes in close proximity to Millmerran, Southbrook, Kingsthorpe and Gowrie.

Several branch railways that once serviced the Toowoomba Region have now been dismantled or abandoned, including the Brisbane Valley branch railway, Cecil Plains branch railway, Cooyar branch railway, Haden branch railway and Crows Nest branch railway.

The Brisbane Valley Rail Trail (BVRT) is the longest rail trail in Australia and utilises the old Brisbane Valley branch railway line and provides a 161km shared user trail between Ipswich and Yarraman.

At the time of this study, Council is preparing feasibility studies regarding the feasibility of two additional rail trails in the Toowoomba Region, between Oakey and Cecil Plains and Westbrook and Wyreema.

Waterways within the Toowoomba Region and their natural water flows are generally highly modified, used for irrigation and town water supply, and contain modifications such as weirs, off-stream dams and irrigation infrastructure.

There are three major water-supply dams within the Region: Lake Cressbrook (Cressbrook Dam), Lake Perseverance (Perseverance Dam) and Lake Cooby (Cooby Dam). These are all distinctive features within the landscape and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Large rural water storage dams (typically ring tanks) are a common feature of the rural landscape, particularly within areas that support irrigated cropping, while smaller rural dams occur on hillslopes in other areas.

Some areas of mining occur throughout the region, most notably associated with New Acland Coal Mine near Oakey, Commodore Peak Mine near Millmerran, the Ravensbourne Mine, the Harlaxton Quarry, Glenvale Quarry, and Boral Quarry in the vicinity of Toowoomba.

Coal Seam Gas production currently occurs in the western part of the Toowoomba Region near Cecil Plains.

The Millmerran Power Station is a coal-fired power station situated southeast of Millmerran. High voltage electricity transmission lines and substations occur across the region.

A number of solar farms occur across the region, including Yarranlea Solar Farm, Bulli Creek Solar Farm and Oakey Solar Farm.

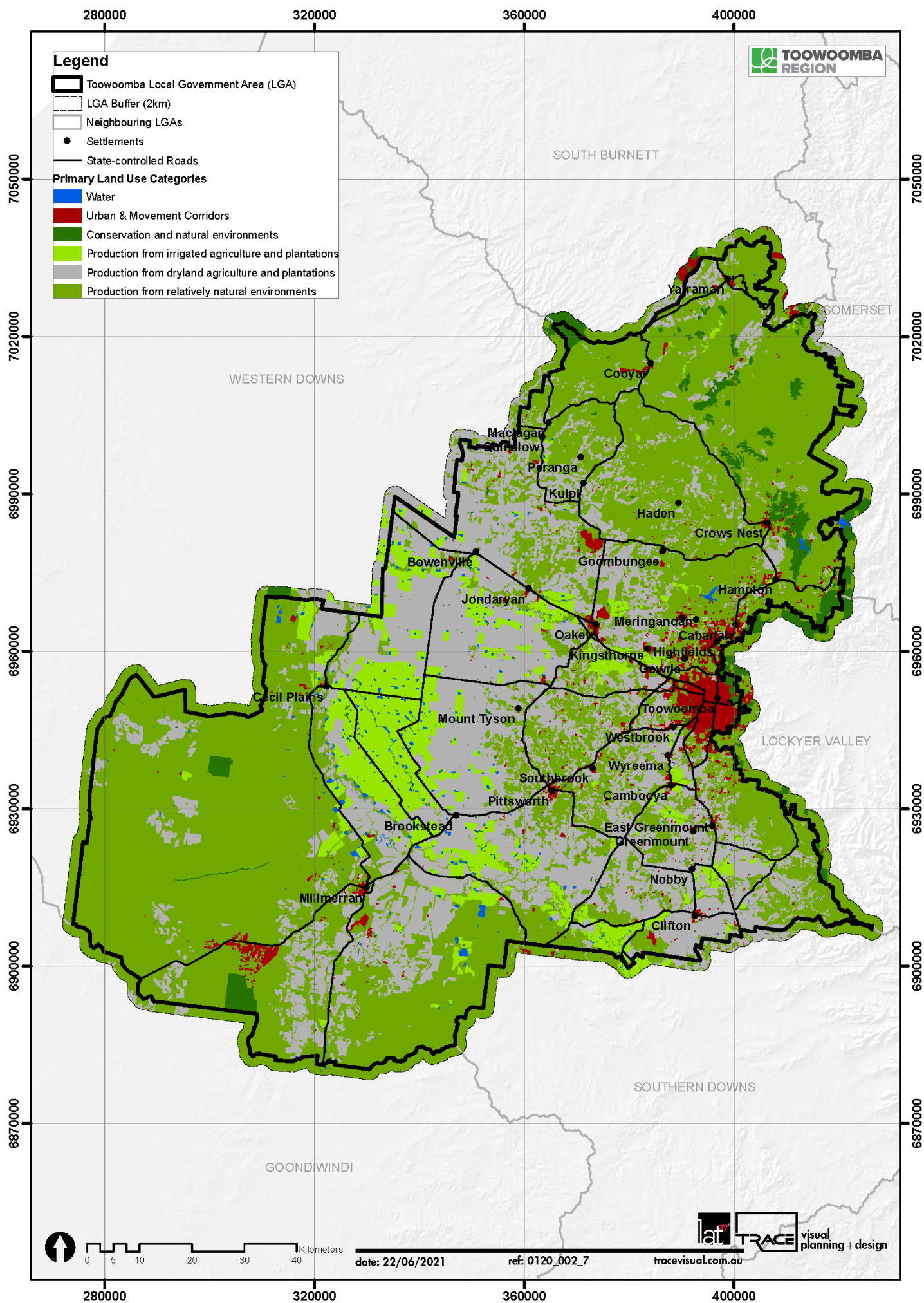


Figure 7: Land use

EXISTING VALUES

Identified landscape and scenic amenity values

Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA)

IBRA classifications

The Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA) was developed by the Australian Government as a key tool for identifying land for conservation under *Australia's Strategy for the National Reserve System 2009-2030*.

IBRA represents a landscape-based approach to classifying the land surface of Australia. The IBRA data consists of two datasets: regions, which are a larger scale regional classification of homogeneous ecosystems; and subregions, which are more localised.

These boundaries were informed by available data and information on climate, geomorphology, landform, lithology, characteristic flora and fauna and land use (Thackway et. al, 1995). Specialist ecological knowledge, combined with appropriate regional and continental scale biophysical data sets, were interpreted to describe these regions and subregions (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012).

On 5th July 2012, IBRA 7.0 was released, which delineates 89 biogeographic regions and 419 subregions, each reflecting a unifying set of major environmental influences which shape the occurrence of flora and fauna and their interaction with the physical environment across Australia.

Whilst primarily identified for the purposes of ecosystem planning and monitoring, IBRA is a useful tool for informing landscape character assessment at a high level, as it enables a high-level desktop understanding of the different landscape settings of the Toowoomba Region.

IBRA descriptions

The descriptions for the subregions that accompany IBRA 7.0 are not currently published. However, upon request, the Australian Government Environmental Resources Information Network supplied descriptions of each of the sub-bioregions in the region for the IBRA5.1 dataset (ERIN, 2012, personal communication), which follows similar boundaries.

The majority of the Toowoomba Region is located within the Brigalow Belt South (BBS) bioregion, with landscapes to the east of the Great Dividing Range typically located within the Southeast Queensland (SEQ) bioregion and a small area, near Kooroongarra and the New South Wales border located within the Nandewar (NAN) bioregion.

The Toowoomba Region contains the following subregions described in Table 1:

- Eastern Darling Downs (BBS17).
- Inglewood Sandstones (BBS18).
- Brisbane-Barambah Volcanics (SEQ5).
- South Burnett (SEQ6).
- Nandewar Northern Complex (NAN1).

Regional scenic amenity values

As noted above, the majority of the Toowoomba Region is not included within the *ShapingSEQ* planning area, and therefore consistent regionally significant scenic amenity mapping is not available across the whole region (refer Figure 2).

As a result, only a very small area within the Toowoomba Region is identified as having Regionally significant scenic amenity value - associated with the eastern escarpment and some small vegetated areas within Jubilee Park and Redwood Park in the vicinity of Prince Henry Heights, as shown in Figure 8.



Figure 8: Regionally significant scenic amenity areas within the Toowoomba Region

Table 1: IBRA regions and subregions and descriptions within the Toowoomba Region

Region	Subregion	Code	Total area	Description
Brigalow Belt South	Eastern Darling Downs	BBS17	1,639,276 ha	Eastern Darling Downs comprises spurs and foothills of Main Range along the eastern boundary of bioregion, low hills in the south and the Condamine River plain in the central and western parts. Substrates include Tertiary basalt in the extreme east, Jurassic sediments in the south– east, Triassic — Jurassic sediments in the north– east and alluvial soils of varying age along the Condamine River plain. The basalt vegetation communities are predominantly woodlands of Narrow Leaved Ironbark (<i>Eucalyptus crebra</i>), Yellow Box (<i>E. melliodora</i>), Queensland Blue Gum (<i>E. tereticornis</i>), White Box (<i>E. albens</i>) or Mountain Coolibah (<i>E. orgadophila</i>). The sandstone hills support Narrow–Leaved Ironbark (<i>Eucalyptus crebra</i>) woodland with Gum-topped Box (<i>E. moluccana/microcarpa</i>) and Poplar Box (<i>E. populnea</i>) woodland on lower slopes and valleys. There are also some areas of Semi-evergreen Vine Thicket (<i>Araucarian microphyll</i>) rainforest, particularly in the southeast and Brigalow (<i>Acacia harpophylla</i>) open forest and vine thicket in the northeast. Heavy cracking clays and black earths of the Condamine River plain supported, prior to clearing, Bluegrass (<i>Dichanthium sericeum</i>) grassland and grassy woodlands of Poplar Box (<i>E. populnea</i>) with Queensland Blue Gum/River Red Gum (<i>E. tereticornis/camaldulensis</i>), Rough-barked Apple (<i>Angophora floribunda</i>) adjacent to drainage lines. In the eastern part of the Condamine River plain, the black earths appear to have supported a grassy woodland of Queensland Blue Gum (<i>E. tereticornis</i>), and Rough-barked Apple (<i>Angophora floribunda</i>) rather than the Bluegrass (<i>Dichanthium sericeum</i>) grasslands and Poplar Box (<i>E. populnea</i>) woodlands of the central and western parts.
	Inglewood Sandstones	BBS18	1,327,718 ha	Inglewood Sandstones consists of undulating to low hilly country on deeply weathered and lateritised Jurassic–Cretaceous sandstone with associated colluvial lower slopes and alluvial plains. Major vegetation types include Narrow-leaved Ironbark (<i>E. crebra</i>) on hillsides, Narrow-leaved Ironbark (<i>E. crebra</i>), Cypress Pine (<i>Callitris glaucophylla</i>) and Bulloak (<i>Allocasuarina luehmannii</i>) on solodic soils in gently undulating parts and Poplar Box (<i>E. populnea</i>) on lower slopes and flats. There are also minor areas of Brigalow (<i>Acacia harpophylla</i>) and Belah (<i>Casuarina cristata</i>).
Southeast Queensland	Brisbane-Barambah Volcanics	SEQ5	806,790 ha	This subregion contains widespread rhyolitic and andesitic rocks and associated sedimentary rocks of the upper Brisbane Valley and parts of the Barambah Creek catchment. This is an area of rolling hills and broad stream valleys. There are also granitic intrusions associated with elevated topography in the east of the subregion. The subregion is relatively dry (800–1000mm per annum) and contains extensive Ironbark eucalypt woodlands, Araucarian microphyll rainforests and prior to clearing, Queensland Blue Gum (<i>E. tereticornis</i>) woodlands.
	South Burnett	SEQ6	563,873 ha	This subregion contains basalt flows and old land surfaces interspersed with sedimentary rocks, acid volcanics and metamorphics. The subregion is relatively elevated and contains the Bunya Mountains. The highest parts of the subregion are closely linked to the Scenic Rim province in terms of fauna and flora. In places the boundary between the South Burnett subregion and the Eastern Downs subregion of the Brigalow Belt bioregion is difficult to define.
Nandewar	Nandewar Northern Complex	NAN1	959,239 ha	Dominated by Carboniferous sediments and leucoadamellite which form flat to undulating areas, low hills and ranges at high altitudes and hilly areas adjacent to granites. Lower undulating areas carry an open forest dominated by Red Ironbark (<i>E. sideroxylon</i>), with Silver-leaved Ironbark (<i>E. melanophloia</i>) dominant in hilly areas on leucoadamellite. Open forest to woodland dominated by Silver-leaved Ironbark (<i>E. melanophloia</i>) and Cypress Pine (<i>Callitris hugelii</i>) is widespread on the sediments with White Box (<i>E. albens</i>) occurring on lower slopes and Kurrajong (<i>Brachychiton populneum</i>) on more undulating areas.

Local scenic amenity values identified by adjoining LGAs

The Toowoomba Region is situated adjacent to the following LGAs:

- Lockyer Valley region
- Somerset region
- South Burnett region
- Western Downs region
- Goondiwindi region
- Southern Downs region.

Due to the inter-visibility between the Toowoomba Region and these regions, the provisions of these council's respective planning schemes and associated strategy documents as relevant to landscape and visual values have been reviewed.

The key policies at the local level are summarised below. These planning schemes recognise and protect areas valued for their landscape and/or scenic qualities, arising from nature conservation or rural characteristics.

Lockyer Valley region

There is a high level of inter-visibility between the Toowoomba Region and Lockyer Valley region. The landscapes of the Lockyer Valley are important to the setting of Toowoomba Region as they act as a 'borrowed landscape', contributing to the character and amenity of views from the Toowoomba Region, including popular tourist destinations such as Picnic Point.

The *Scenic Amenity of the Lockyer* (prepared by Forest Images in 2002) includes mapping of areas of high scenic amenity value within the Lockyer Valley region. This study was also based upon the approach developed by the Regional Landscape and Open Space Advisory Committee (RLOSAC), which was developed in response to the *South East Queensland Regional Framework for Growth Management 2000* (RFGM).

The study identifies the following areas within the Lockyer Valley region as having high scenic amenity value that are visible from the Toowoomba Region:

- Parts of the Great Dividing Range from Glen Rock to the vicinity of Toowoomba.
- The ranges around Mount Mistake and extending north into the Lockyer Valley.
- Parts of Helidon Hills near gorges and peaks.
- Some peaks and gorges of the D'Aguilar ranges.

Some areas of lower scenic amenity value identified include:

- Urban areas associated with townships
- Flat pastures throughout the valley
- Valleys in the ranges around Mt Mistake
- Some of the valleys to the north of the Helidon Hills
- Some of the valleys of the D'Aguilar Range.

These landscapes contribute to driver experiences when entering the Toowoomba Region along the following key roads:

- Warrego Highway (A2)
- Toowoomba Connection Road (A139)
- Murphys Creek Road
- Flagstone Creek Road
- Gatton-Clifton Road (SR80).

The *Laidley Shire Planning Scheme* (03 March 2003) and *Gatton Shire Planning Scheme* (15 June 2007) both also acknowledge the scenic values of the rural and natural environment.

Somerset region

There is a low level of inter-visibility between the Toowoomba Region and Somerset region.

The *Somerset Region Planning Scheme Version 4* (2 November 2020) includes a number of provisions relevant to scenic amenity, and identifies "*lakes and rivers set amongst rolling hills and forested mountain ranges*" as having high scenic value.

The landscape values and scenic quality of high scenic amenity areas identified on *Strategic Framework Map 3B, 3Ba, 3Bb and 3Bc - Community Identity and Regional Landscape Character*.

A key outcome relevant to the protection of landscape and scenic amenity values is that "*the dominance of natural landforms and open space in the Rural Area...and associated landscape and scenic amenity values...which provide the setting for the towns and rural areas, are maintained*".

The Scenic Amenity Overlay Map identifies the following areas within the Somerset region that are visible from the Toowoomba Region as having high scenic amenity value:

- Elevated areas in the vicinity of Lake Cressbrook and Dwongwar SF, including associated with Perkins Knob (387m AHD), Mount Sevastopol (530m AHD), and Round Mountain (459m AHD).
- Elevated areas to the south of and visible from Esk-Hampton Road, including in the vicinity of Ravensbourne NP.
- Elevated areas associated with Biarra Range and Sugarloaf (544m AHD).
- Elevated areas in the vicinity of Ringbarked Hill (471m AHD).
- Elevated areas in the vicinity of Bernarkin SF.

Landscapes within the Somerset region contribute to driver experiences when entering the Toowoomba Region along the following key roads:

- D'Aguilar Highway (A17)
- Esk-Crows Nest Road
- Bluff Road.

Goondiwindi region

There is a low level of inter-visibility between the Toowoomba Region and Goondiwindi region.

The *Goondiwindi Regional Council Planning Scheme* (16 March 2018) supports the value of rural landscapes, and contains specific outcomes relating to Scenic Amenity and Regional Landscape Character requiring protection of the productive use of rural land and the dominance of natural landforms and open space over built form in rural areas.

Landscapes within the Goondiwindi region contribute to driver experiences when entering the Toowoomba Region along the following key roads:

- Gore Highway (A39)
- Millmerran-Inglewood Road (SR82).

Western Downs Region

Typically there is a low level of inter-visibility between the Toowoomba Region and Western Downs region, however elevated landscapes associated with the Bunya Mountains and Wonga Ridges are highly visible from parts of the Toowoomba Region.

The *Western Downs Planning Scheme Version 2* (June 2017) includes a number of provisions relevant to scenic amenity.

There is additional protection for High Landscape Value Areas (HLVA) as identified on the Scenic amenity overlay maps (OM-011), including in relation to landscape character, scenic amenity and tourism values of the locality and the Western Downs region.

This overlay includes large areas of land adjacent to the Toowoomba Region, including forested uplands associated with the Bunya Mountains, Wonga Ridges and Bunya Mountains NP and forested uplands and downs within the Western Downs region immediately north of Dunmore State Forest.

Landscapes within the Western Downs Region contribute to driver experiences when entering the Toowoomba Region along the following key roads:

- Warrego Highway (A2)
- Bunya Mountains Road
- Dalby-Cooyar Road
- Bowenville-Moola Road
- Dalby-Bungil Road
- Dalby-Cecil Plains Road (SR82).

South Burnett region

There is a high level of inter-visibility between the Toowoomba Region and South Burnett Region. The landscapes of the Burnett Region, particularly the Bunya Mountains, are important to the setting of Toowoomba Region as they act as a 'borrowed landscape', contributing to the character and amenity of views from the Toowoomba Region.

The *South Burnett Region Planning Scheme Version 1.4* (4 January 2021) includes a number of provisions relevant to scenic amenity, and identifies some key landscapes and nature conservation areas, including the Bunya Mountains, as having scenic values worth protecting.

There is no scenic amenity overlay code.

Landscapes within the South Burnett region contribute to driver experiences when entering the Toowoomba Region along the following key roads:

- D'Aguilar Highway (A17)
- Kingaroy-Cooyar Road.

Southern Downs region

There is a moderate level of inter-visibility between the Toowoomba Region and Southern Downs region in the southern part of the Toowoomba Region in the vicinity of Clifton. The landscapes of the Southern Downs region, particularly landscapes associated with the Great Dividing Range and within State Forests near Leyburn, are important to the setting of Toowoomba Region as they act as a 'borrowed landscape', contributing to the character and amenity of views from the Toowoomba Region.

The *Southern Downs Planning Scheme Version 5* (14 August 2012) notes that land used for rural purposes contributes to scenic amenity values as well as cultural identity values and these are important drivers for tourism activities.

The planning scheme identifies and protects areas of high scenic amenity including the countryside adjoining the Cunningham Highway between Warwick and Cunningham's Gap and the forested granite outcrops in the southern part of the region.

Landscapes within the Southern Downs region contribute to driver experiences when entering the Toowoomba Region along the following key roads:

- New England Highway (A3)
- Owens Scrub Road
- Toowoomba-Karara Road (SR48)
- Ryeford-Pratten Road
- Upper Spring Creek Road.



The Bunya Mountains are highly visible from the Toowoomba Region and are a key regional tourism destination



View from the regionally renowned Picnic Point Lookout towards the Lockyer Valley



Distant view towards landscapes associated with the Biarra Range within the Somerset region



Distant view towards landscapes within Bringalilly SF within the Goondiwindi Region

Scenic routes and lookouts within the Toowoomba Region

Scenic routes and lookouts provide opportunities to experience and appreciate the landscape of the Toowoomba Region, in particular for tourists and visitors to the Region.

Scenic Routes

Numerous scenic routes traverse the Toowoomba Region (refer Figure 9). These routes provide opportunities for people to view the landscape and typically incorporate scenic lookouts along their journeys. Exiting scenic routes within the Toowoomba Region include:

National and State Tourist Drives

- Australia's Country Way
- Warrego Way
- Adventure Way

Regional Tourist Drives

- Cobb & Co Tourist Drive
- National Parks and Local Artisans
- Gourmet Country and Outback Stories
- Adventure Way Discovery
- Cross Country Way
- Rural Getaway

Local Tourist Drives

- Dams Tour Tourist Drive
- Farmers Country Drive
- High Country Drive
- Great Bunya Country Drive
- Open Plains Country Drive
- Spring Bluff Tourist Drive
- Steele Rudd Country Drive
- Brigalow Belt Power Station Drive
- Condamine River Flats Drive
- Historic Owen's Scrub Drive
- Rolling Hills and Scenic Lookouts Drive
- Tourist Route No. 3*
- Tourist Route No. 4*
- Tourist Route No. 41*

In addition there are numerous identified motorcycle routes, 'soft' 4WD trails and bird trails within the region (particularly within the high country), that provide opportunities to explore the area and experience views.

*Note: Some tourist drives within the region identified during field work surveys have not been mapped due to the limited availability of publicly available data of these routes.



Views across open agricultural landscapes towards basaltic hills and elevated landscapes associated with the Great Dividing Range are a common experience along rural tourist drives within the region

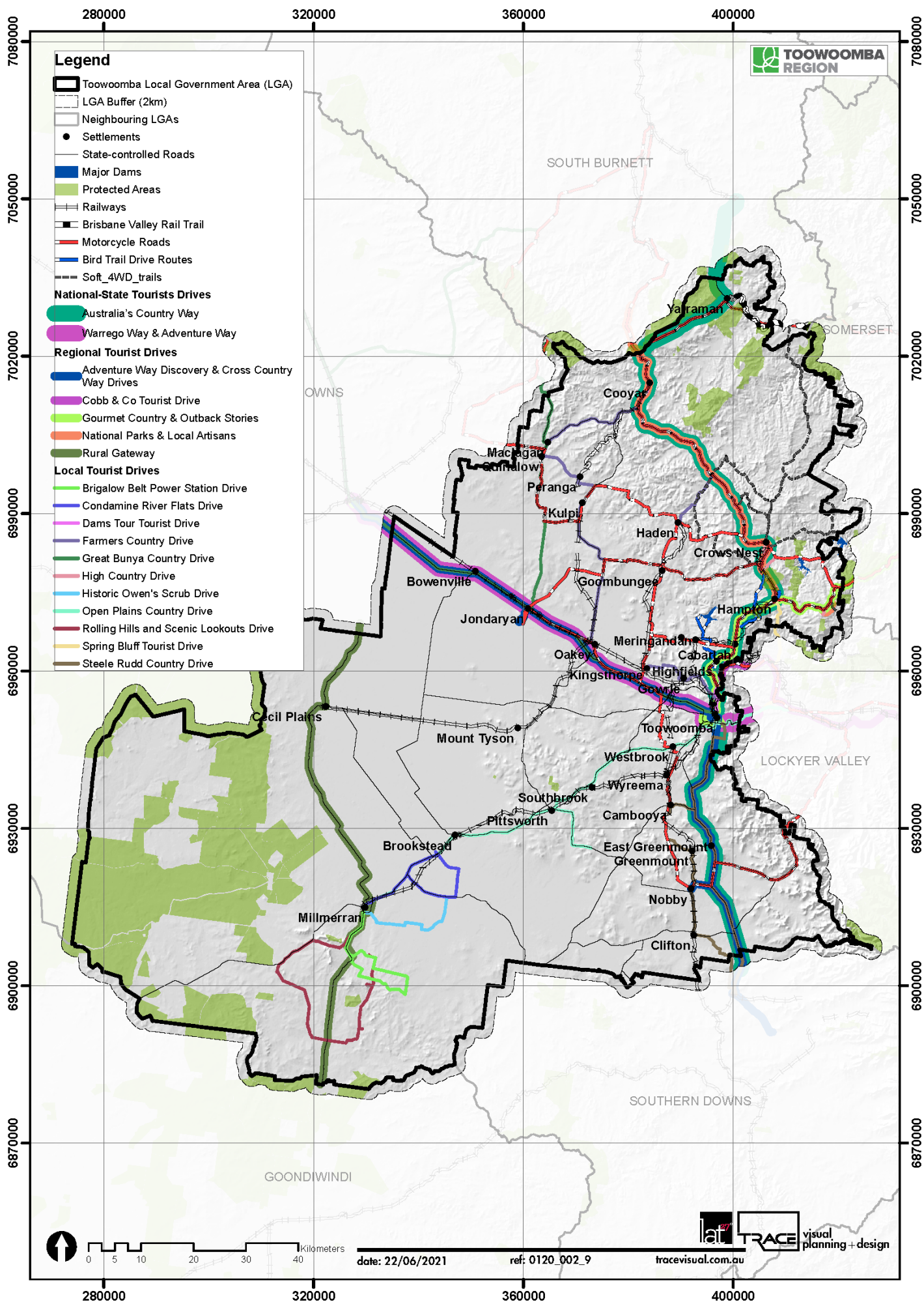


Figure 9: Identified scenic routes within the Toowoomba Region

Scenic Lookouts

The Toowoomba Region has numerous existing public lookouts, many of which are situated within close proximity to Toowoomba City on the Toowoomba Escarpment. Existing scenic lookouts within the Toowoomba Region and in the vicinity of Toowoomba City are shown on Figure 10 and Figure 11. These lookouts were all visited during the fieldwork investigation for the TRSAS and are illustrated and described below.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Mount Kynoch Lookout ¹ | 19. Westbrook Lookout, Mount Peel Bushland Park ² |
| 2. Lions Scenic View Rest Area ¹ | 20. Drayton Lookout, Mount Peel Bushland Park ² |
| 3. Mount Lofty Lookout ¹ | 21. Stephens Lookout, Mount Peel Bushland Park ² |
| 4. Coventry Court Lookout ¹ | 22. Atherton Memorial Park Lookout ¹ |
| 5. Katoomba Point Lookout ¹ | 23. Mount Kingsthorpe Summit, Mount Kingsthorpe Bushland Park ² |
| 6. Prince Henry Drive Lookout ¹ | 24. Cooby Dam Lookout ¹ |
| 7. Redwood Park Lookout ¹ | 25. Lake Perseverance Lookout ¹ |
| 8. Jubilee Lookout ¹ | 26. Dams Lookout ² |
| 9. Webb Park Lookout ¹ | 27. Koonin Lookout, Crows Nest NP ² |
| 10. Bill Goulds Lookout ¹ | 28. Crows Nest Falls Lookout, Crows Nest NP ² |
| 11. Picnic Point Lookout ¹ | 29. Gus Beutel Lookout ¹ |
| 12. Tobruk Drive Lookout ¹ | 30. Haden Lookout ¹ |
| 13. Lockyer Lookout, J.E. Duggan Park ² | 31. Commodore Peak Lookout ¹ |
| 14. Flagstone Creek Lookout, J.E. Duggan Park ² | 32. Mount Basalt Summit, Mount Basalt Bushland Reserve ² |
| 15. Panoramic Drive Lookout ¹ | |
| 16. Scenic Lookout (New England Highway) ¹ | |
| 17. South Summit Lookout, Mount Peel Bushland Park ² | |
| 18. North Summit Lookout, Mount Peel Bushland Park ² | |

¹ These lookouts are relatively easy to access via 2WD vehicle and do not require visitors to undertake long walks or hiking trails.

² These lookouts are contained within bushland reserves and national parks and accessible via either walking trails of varying degrees of difficulty or via 4WD roads.



View towards Mount Tabletop and the Lockyer Valley from Tobruk Drive Lookout

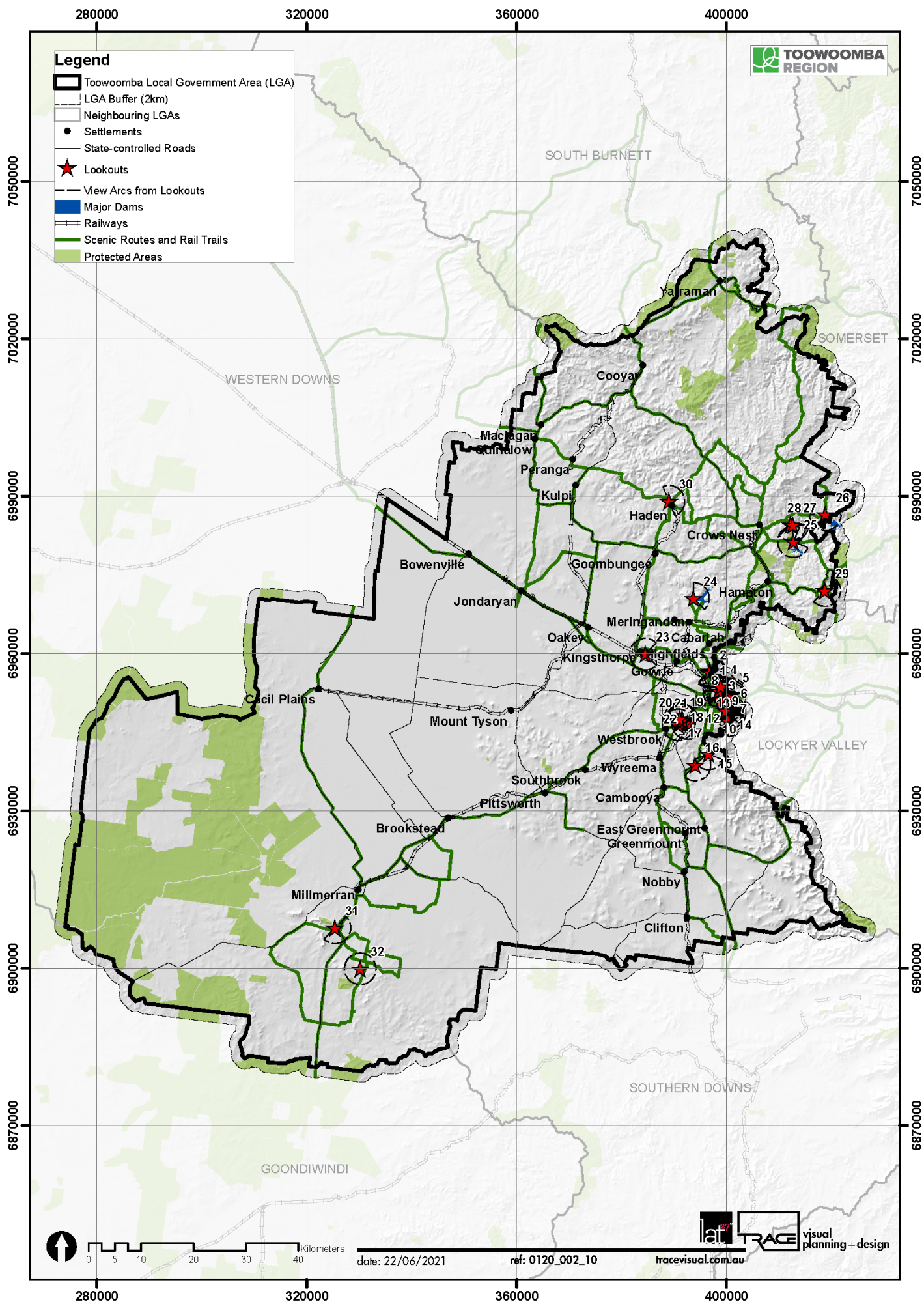


Figure 10: Identified scenic lookouts and routes within the Toowoomba Region

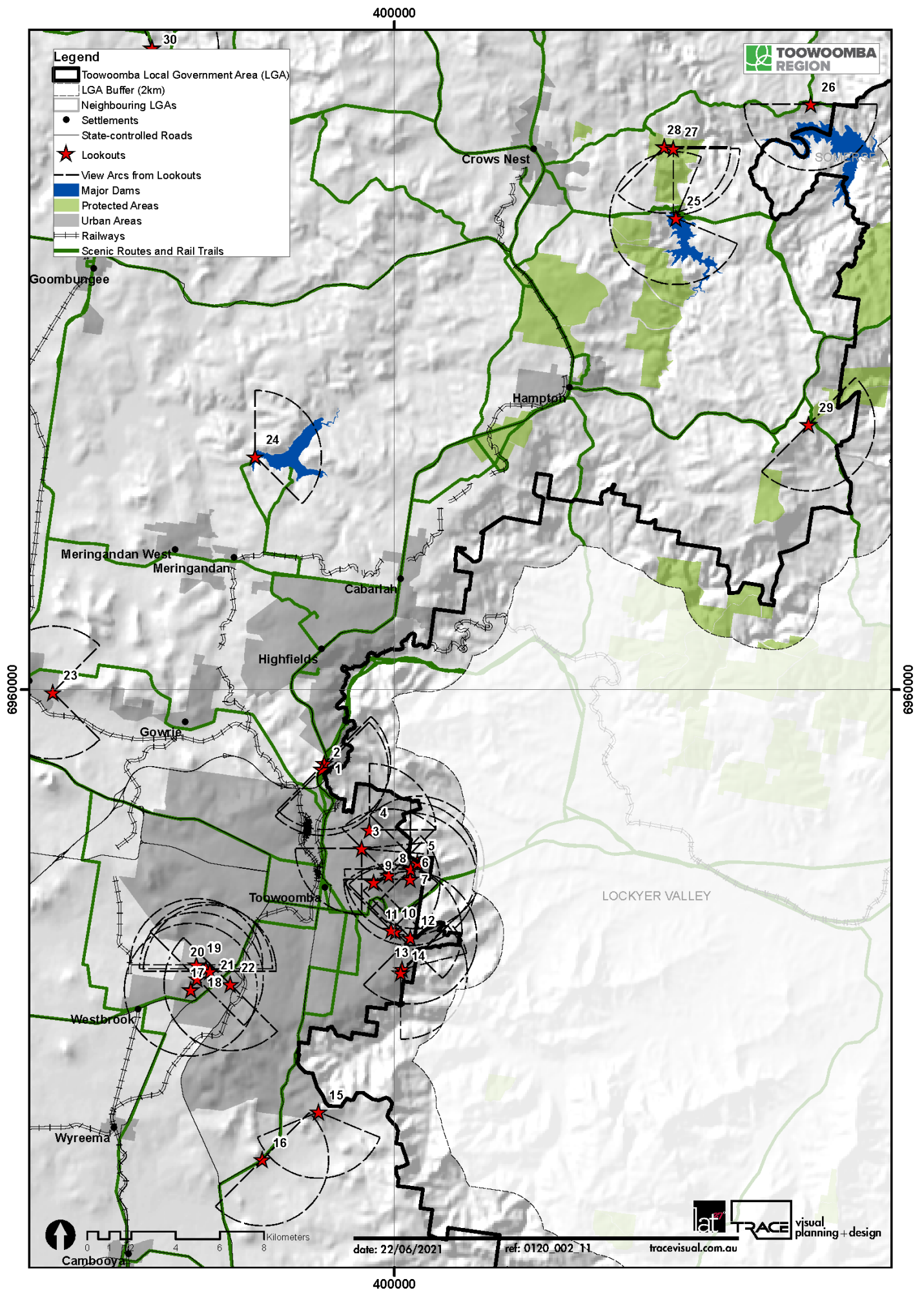


Figure 11: Identified scenic lookouts and routes near Toowoomba City



View towards Mount Tabletop and the Lockyer Valley from Prince Henry Drive Lookout