

**Springfield Submission –
Queensland Floods Commission of
Inquiry**

APRIL 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND.....	1
1.2 POLICY CONTEXT	1
2.0 RECOMMENDED LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS	1
3.1 REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRES NETWORK.....	1
3.3 DECENTRALISATION	2
4.0 KEY MESSAGES/CONCLUSIONS	2

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This report has been prepared to provide input on one aspect of the Queensland Floods Commission of Enquiry. Springfield Land Corporation (SLC) has reviewed the Terms of Reference and wish to make a submission in relation to the following:

'all aspects of land use planning through local and regional planning systems to minimise infrastructure and property impacts from floods'

This document seeks to suggest steps that could be undertaken to ensure best practice outcomes can be achieved following the floods. It will also explore how projects in Greater Springfield might assist the State Government realise its various policy agendas relating to orderly and managed growth within the Western Corridor.

This report addresses issues of interest to Greater Springfield and examines the planning merits of these issues. The specific items considered appropriate for review are particularly pertinent in light of recent events.

1.2 Policy Context

State and Local Government have undertaken significant work as part of preparing the South East Queensland Regional Plan (SEQRP). Some of the key pieces of work, completed or currently being completed, that are relevant to the South East Queensland region and the western growth corridor include:

- Growth Management Framework;
- Smart Cities: rethinking the city centre (Smart State Council, May 2007);
- Ipswich Regional Centre Strategy – Integrated Strategy and Action Plan (State government & Ipswich City Council, November 2007); and
- Information Paper No. 1 – Interim Criteria for Transit Oriented Development Location Identification (Office of Urban Management, July 2006); and
- Transit Oriented Development Resource Manual (2010).

These pieces of work provide a policy and growth management context for the Western Growth Corridor. The inclusion and recognition of these works in the updated SEQRP will consolidate the strong framework for growth already established by the SEQRP.

2.0 RECOMMENDED LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

As a consequence of the recent flood events, the State Government should consider reviewing the SEQRP to ensure all aspects of land use planning through local and regional planning systems minimise infrastructure and property impacts from future flood or extreme weather events.

3.1 Regional Activity Centres Network

The Regional Activity Centres network established in the SEQRP identifies the major growth areas for the region. With respect to the western corridor, the SEQRP identifies Springfield and Ipswich as Principal Activity Centres and Ripley and Goodna as Major Activity Centres.

Principal Activity Centres

The SEQRP states that:

Principle Activity Centres are intended to serve catchments of regional significance and accommodate key employment concentrations. They also serve business, major comparison and convenience retail, and service uses. These centres provide a secondary administrative focus, accommodating regional offices of health, education, cultural and entertainment facilities that have government and regional significance. Outside the Brisbane CBD, principal activity centres serve as key focal points for regional employment and in-centre residential development. As major trip generators, these centres typically have existing or planned, dedicated public transport, including rail, bus or light rail, and comprise key nodes in the regional public transport system. Residential development densities in principal activity centres should be around 40-120 dwellings per hectare (net) or greater.'

Given the importance of these centres, it is vital that they are not impacted on by floods. They serve an important regional function from an economic, social and cultural perspective and, accordingly, need to operate efficiently at all times.

To operate efficiently:

- People need to be able to access the Principal Activity Centres at all times. Therefore, major road, public transport networks need to be operational, even in times of crisis;
- Basic urban services, including electricity and telecommunications should be unaffected to ensure business continuity;
- Infrastructure and property investments in these Principal Activity Centres needs to be protected to ensure values are maintained.

Springfield and Ipswich are both identified as a Principal Activity Centre in recognition of their status as a residential and commercial node.

Due to its fortunate topographical formation and its height above the Q100 line, the Springfield CBD remained unaffected by the flood and open for business throughout the recent flood event. The early opening of the Richlands rail station and the extension of rail to Springfield will further increase its accessibility during a future crisis.

3.3 Decentralisation

The decentralisation of government employment provides opportunities for Government to support the provision of new infrastructure, particularly public transport. The State government has made a clear commitment to decentralisation, particularly in recent months, announcing that 15,000m² (out of 85,000m²) of government office space would be provided in the western corridor by 2012. It would be appropriate to reflect this intent in the SEQRP.

We submit that the State Government consider relocating a portion of this space to another part of Ipswich, such as Springfield. This could ensure improved business continuity during flood events without disadvantaging Ipswich ratepayers or the region.

Planned development and facilities at Springfield could provide unique opportunities for the State government, particularly in terms of health and access to high quality information technology services (i.e. the Polaris Data Centre) that compliment the Governments 'Smart State' initiative and remain free of any flood impacts.

4.0 KEY MESSAGES/CONCLUSIONS

There are some changes that could be made to the SEQRP to ensure that best practice planning outcomes are achieved for the western corridor, where there has been significant public and private

investment. Rebuilding the Ipswich CBD goes without question, but investing additional public and private money into a centre that is significantly effected by flooding should be considered very carefully. Public infrastructure which is essential needs to be evaluated against the objectives of a Principal Activity Centre.

In the context of Governments self insuring, it is in the public interest that there is no potential for assets to be compromised and the public having to pay to re-build them.

In particular, the following are identified as the key messages of this report for consideration by the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry:

- Principal Activity Centres and Major Activity Centre should be consolidated in flood free areas;
- Basic urban services, including electricity and telecommunications should be unaffected during flood events to ensure business continuity within Principal Activity Centre;
- Infrastructure and property investments in these Principal Activity Centres need to be protected to ensure values are maintained.

It is recommended that the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry consider the above key points, and other planning merits raised throughout the report.