

11 September 2026

Deputy Premier
Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning; and
Minister for Industrial Relations
Queensland Government
PO Box 15009
City East QLD 4002

Delivered by email: WBBRIPSubmissions@dsdip.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister,

SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT WIDE BAY BURNETT REGIONAL PLAN AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN 2026

This submission outlines Q Shelter's input to the Draft Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026.

Background

Q Shelter is Queensland's peak body for the housing and homelessness sector. We work with government, Community Housing Providers (CHPs), Specialist Homelessness Services and other partners to strengthen Queensland's housing system and improve access to safe, secure and affordable housing.

Q Shelter welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026. Regional plans play an important role in shaping Queensland's housing system. They help determine where new housing is delivered, the types of homes that can be built, and how growth connects with employment, services and infrastructure.

As Wide Bay Burnett grows, planning for sufficient housing supply must go hand in hand with planning for housing diversity and choice. A healthy housing system provides homes across different forms, tenures, price points and locations, responding to different incomes, household types and stages of life.

Q Shelter supports a planning system that enables the homes we need, where they count. This means making better use of existing infrastructure and services, enabling a broader range of homes in established communities and ensuring new growth is well located and efficiently serviced.

Regional planning is one part of a broader housing system, but it has an important role in shaping the conditions for better housing outcomes. Clear expectations for housing supply, diversity and location, together with effective monitoring, can help translate planned growth into the homes and communities people need.

Demand pressure

Wide Bay Burnett's population is projected to grow from 310,730 people in 2021 to between 359,190 and 414,775 people by 2046. The Draft Plan identifies a corresponding increase in dwelling supply of between 25,800 and 48,945 dwellings by 2046¹.

The region's housing needs will also evolve alongside its changing demographic profile. The Draft Plan points to an ageing population, smaller households and a growing number of single person households. While these trends vary across the region, they underscore the need for a broader range of housing types tailored to local community needs.

Affordability remains a significant challenge across the region. An estimated 10,500 households in Wide Bay had unmet housing need in 2021, representing 8.4 per cent of all households. This need was projected to increase to 14,100 households by 2041².

The private rental market provides a further indication of the affordability pressures facing the region. Of the 472 rental properties surveyed in Wide Bay for Anglicare Southern Queensland's 2026 *Rental Affordability Snapshot*, only three were affordable and appropriate for households on income support, while 76 were affordable and appropriate for households on minimum wage³.

The urgency of housing need is also evident in levels of homelessness across the region. On Census night in 2021, 1,835 people were experiencing homelessness in Wide Bay, including 361 young people aged 12 to 24⁴. While regional planning cannot address homelessness alone, these figures reinforce the importance of ensuring housing growth includes affordable and appropriate housing for households whose needs are not being met by the private market.

Supportive housing is also an important part of the housing response for people with complex needs. Analysis undertaken through the Homelessness Ministerial Advisory Council's Supportive Housing Sub-Committee estimates a future need for approximately 5,100–6,400 supportive housing places across Queensland by 2046. Further analysis is required to understand how this need is distributed geographically and to inform a place-based target for Wide Bay Burnett.

Housing pressures and delivery conditions are not uniform across Wide Bay Burnett. Growth is concentrated particularly in the region's coastal and larger urban centres, while smaller and more dispersed communities face different housing markets, infrastructure constraints and access to services. These differences reinforce the importance of locally responsive housing planning and monitoring, rather than relying on regional-level supply measures alone.

Together, these trends reinforce the need for sufficient housing supply, greater housing options that respond to different incomes and levels of need.

¹ Q Shelter notes a minor inconsistency in the Draft Plan. The text on page 50 refers to a high series population projection of 415,775 people by 2046, while Table 1 on the same page and the regional snapshot use 414,775. This submission uses the figure presented in Table 1.

² Van den Nouwelant, R., Troy, L., & Soundararaj, B. (2022). Quantifying Australia's unmet housing need: Regional snapshots. UNSW City Futures Research Centre.

³ Anglicare Southern Queensland. (2026). *Rental affordability snapshot 2026: Southern Queensland*.

⁴ Queensland Youth Housing Coalition. (2023). *Young people in Wide Bay: Facts & figures*. Based on 2021 Census data.

Q Shelter position

Q Shelter supports the overall direction of the Draft Plan, including its focus on housing supply, urban consolidation, housing diversity and well-located growth. We welcome the inclusion of dwelling supply targets for each local government area, the focus on different dwelling types and sizes, and the emphasis on housing close to centres and services.

Q Shelter has identified several opportunities to further strengthen the Plan:

- **Strengthen housing diversity outcomes.** Q Shelter recommends that the final Plan establish measurable dwelling diversity sub-targets, informed by local housing need, projected household composition and changing demographic profiles. These should complement overall dwelling supply targets and enable progress to be monitored over time.
- **Explicitly recognise social, affordable and supportive housing.** Q Shelter recommends that Strategy 2.3 establish measurable social and affordable housing delivery targets informed by quantified regional need and support the development of a place-based supportive housing target for Wide Bay Burnett.
- **Reflect local housing needs in implementation.** Q Shelter recommends that implementation and monitoring reflect differences in housing need and delivery conditions across the region, with key housing indicators reported at the local government level where possible. This should include monitoring the mix of housing delivered alongside overall dwelling supply.
- **Strengthen the pathway from planned capacity to delivery.** Q Shelter recommends that the Plan's monitoring framework distinguish between planned capacity, development-ready supply, approvals and completed dwellings. Infrastructure readiness, development feasibility and construction capacity should also be monitored to identify barriers where housing delivery falls behind identified need.

Policy Outcomes and Strategies

Plan area	Q Shelter position
Policy outcome 1: Urban consolidation	Q Shelter supports greater housing supply in established communities. Well-located housing can improve access to employment, services and transport and reduce household transport costs. This is particularly important for people on low incomes, older people and people with disability.
Strategies 1.2 and 1.3: Development in established regional centres and future growth opportunities	Q Shelter supports appropriate infill and increased density in established communities. Growth in these areas should also contribute to greater housing diversity. Q Shelter recommends that the final Plan provide clear direction for local planning schemes to enable a broader range of housing types in suitable locations, particularly close to employment, services, transport and community infrastructure.
Policy outcome 2: Housing supply	Q Shelter supports the inclusion of dwelling supply targets. Implementation should ensure that planned capacity is translated into deliverable housing supply. Q Shelter also

Plan area	Q Shelter position
	notes that the dwelling supply targets exclude non-private dwellings, including worker accommodation. Implementation and monitoring should therefore consider these forms of accommodation separately where they are significant to local accommodation needs and housing market conditions, particularly in tourism and major-project locations.
Strategy 2.2: Range of dwelling types and sizes	Q Shelter strongly supports the intent of Strategy 2.2, which seeks a range of dwelling types and sizes in new and established communities. The Draft Plan projects that 63 per cent of households in Wide Bay Burnett will comprise one or two people by 2046, while 87.8 per cent of the region's existing dwelling stock is detached housing. Q Shelter therefore recommends measurable dwelling diversity sub-targets, informed by projected household composition and local housing need, including consideration of dwelling type, size and accessibility. These should complement overall dwelling supply targets and enable progress to be monitored over time.
Strategy 2.3: Housing options for all people and stages of life	Q Shelter recommends that Strategy 2.3 explicitly recognise social, affordable and supportive housing as part of providing housing options for people across different incomes and levels of need. The final Plan should establish measurable social and affordable housing delivery targets informed by quantified regional need and support the development of a place-based supportive housing target for Wide Bay Burnett.
Strategy 2.4: Future Growth Areas of Curra and Nikenbah Dundowran	Q Shelter supports the requirement for detailed local planning to determine whether the Curra and Nikenbah Dundowran Future Growth Areas are required and suitable for future urban development. This assessment should consider demonstrated housing need, infrastructure readiness and development feasibility, alongside the capacity of established urban areas to accommodate well-located growth. Future Growth Areas should be sequenced in a way that supports efficient infrastructure investment while maintaining opportunities for appropriate infill and consolidation in established communities. In assessing natural hazard risk, consideration should also be given to longer-term housing affordability and security, including potential insurance, maintenance and recovery costs.
Policy outcome 3: Managing growth in rural and rural residential areas	Q Shelter supports careful management of rural and rural residential growth. New housing should be planned with regard to access to employment, essential services and infrastructure, recognising that poorly located growth can increase household transport costs and disadvantage people with limited transport options. Planned or zoned capacity will also not necessarily translate into housing delivery where infrastructure, feasibility or construction capacity remain constraints. Implementation should support

Plan area	Q Shelter position
	local governments with the planning capability, infrastructure coordination and investment needed to enable appropriate housing delivery, including through mechanisms such as the Residential Activation Fund.
Cherbourg	Q Shelter welcomes the Plan's recognition that standard population and dwelling projections do not adequately reflect current and future conditions in Cherbourg. Future housing needs should be determined in partnership with Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland (Housing Queensland), as the state peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing, and relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled housing organisations. Local knowledge and community-led planning should inform safe, secure, affordable and culturally appropriate housing responses.
Policy outcome 4: Worker accommodation	Q Shelter supports appropriately located worker accommodation and recommends that the final Plan explicitly consider impacts on local housing markets and housing affordability when planning for major project workforces. Worker accommodation should be planned early to avoid additional pressure on local rental markets and, where appropriate, consider opportunities for accommodation or associated investment to contribute to longer-term housing supply or community benefit after major project demand has subsided.
Implementation and monitoring	Q Shelter recommends that implementation and monitoring track progress against the Plan's housing targets, with key indicators reported at the local level where practicable.

Social and affordable housing

Regional planning alone cannot resolve housing affordability or homelessness. It can, however, shape where and what housing is delivered and create opportunities for a broader housing response.

The scale of unmet need identified above reinforces the importance of setting measurable social and affordable housing delivery targets. CHIA-commissioned research by UNSW City Futures estimates that meeting projected need would require around 700–800 additional non-market homes each year, including social and affordable housing. Q Shelter recommends that this evidence inform measurable regional delivery targets and a clear delivery trajectory, translated into locally responsive targets where practicable.

Delivery should draw on Local Housing Action Plans, government-owned land, local planning schemes and investment programs, with CHPs recognised as key delivery partners for social and affordable housing. Major growth and renewal areas also provide opportunities to plan for social and affordable housing alongside broader housing supply.

Affordability is shaped by more than the cost of housing alone. Location, transport and energy costs, housing quality, and access to employment and essential services all influence

the real cost of housing, with particular implications for lower-income households⁵. Well-located social and affordable housing can therefore support both housing affordability and longer-term housing stability.

Implementation and monitoring

The value of the Regional Plan will ultimately depend on what is delivered. Q Shelter recommends a monitoring framework that distinguishes between planned capacity, development-ready supply, approvals, completed dwellings and the housing outcomes ultimately achieved.

This distinction is important because planning capacity alone does not guarantee housing delivery. Research into regional housing markets identifies infrastructure, development readiness, construction workforce and supply-chain constraints as important barriers to housing delivery⁶.

Monitoring should assess whether new housing is responding to community need, including housing type and size, social and affordable housing, accessible housing and infill development. Progress should be reported against measurable housing diversity and social and affordable housing targets, alongside relevant affordability, supply and delivery indicators, to assess whether housing growth is translating into improved outcomes for local communities.

Implementation should draw on local knowledge and existing place-based housing planning, including Local Housing Action Plans where relevant, and input from local governments, CHPs, the housing and homelessness sector and First Nations organisations. This can help identify changing local housing needs, market conditions and barriers to housing delivery over the life of the Regional Plan.

Draft Infrastructure Plan

Q Shelter welcomes the integration of land use and infrastructure planning through the Draft Wide Bay Burnett Infrastructure Plan. Infrastructure provision and sequencing are critical to translating planned housing capacity into completed homes and ensuring new housing is well located, connected and supported by essential services.

Q Shelter supports the Draft Infrastructure Plan's focus on coordinating infrastructure planning, sequencing and investment across state and local governments. Infrastructure priorities should be closely aligned with dwelling supply targets and anticipated housing growth so that infrastructure constraints do not delay or prevent housing delivery.

This should extend beyond enabling infrastructure such as water, wastewater and transport to the social infrastructure needed to support growing and changing communities, including health, education and community services. Infrastructure planning should also respond to differences across the region, including the needs of smaller and dispersed communities and areas experiencing significant population and housing growth.

⁵ Crowe, A., & Rowley, S. (2024). *Measuring housing affordability: Scoping the real cost of housing*. AHURI Final Report No. 427. Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute.

⁶ Beer, A., Vij, A., Baker, E., Crommelin, L., Dodson, J., Gharaie, E., Li, T., & Horne, S. (2024). *Disruption in regional housing: Policy responses for more resilient markets* (AHURI Final Report No. 424). Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited.

Q Shelter recommends that implementation of the Infrastructure Plan identify and monitor infrastructure constraints affecting housing delivery and determine where additional investment or coordination is required to unlock development-ready housing supply. Infrastructure priorities and sequencing should be reviewed alongside housing delivery outcomes over the life of the Regional Plan, allowing investment priorities to respond where housing growth is occurring faster or slower than anticipated or where infrastructure constraints are preventing planned housing from being delivered.

Conclusion

Q Shelter supports the overall direction of the Draft Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026. Its focus on housing supply, urban consolidation, housing diversity, well-located growth and coordinated infrastructure planning provides a strong foundation.

Q Shelter considers that the final Plan should strengthen measurable housing diversity outcomes, establish social and affordable housing delivery targets, recognise supportive housing within the regional housing response, better align housing growth with infrastructure planning and sequencing, and monitor whether planned housing is ultimately delivered. Planning capacity alone will not deliver the homes the region needs. The focus should remain on what is built, where it is built and whether it responds to local community need.

Q Shelter looks forward to working with the Queensland Government, local governments, Community Housing Providers and regional stakeholders as the Plan is finalised and implemented.

Further contact

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input to the Draft Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026. For further information or questions, please contact our Policy and Strategic Engagement Lead, Maya Glassman, at Maya.Glassman@qshelter.org.au, in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Dean Griggs
General Manager, Policy & Strategic Engagement
Q Shelter