



SPECIAL REPORT: Sardine City

No room at the inn for a million Coasters

by Geoff Chambers
council reporter

THERE is no room left at the inn, and the Gold Coast faces a million person overload and the death of the backyard shed.

A new 2031 target has estimated the city's population will swell to 937,000 leaving it with little breathing space.

Experts have told *The Bulletin* that the city could become like a 'can of sardines', even if the State Government releases more land on the northern patch.

The state has made a public declaration there will be enough 'room at the inn', but the cold, hard truth is that the city is not prepared.

The Government's approach is to manage the population boom rather than control it, which means that the council and developers will be left with the daunting task of building the infrastructure.

Griffith University urban management planning expert Professor Paul Burton said the Gold Coast would be at full capacity by 2031.

"To accommodate those types of numbers then, the local bodies had better start building the infrastructure immediately," he said.

"The basic physical engineering infrastructure is crucial ... the roads, water, social infrastructure, schools, shops, parklands and recreation. The link roads must be built, the sewer system must be sorted, as well as the drains. Do they need more water treatment plants?"

"It is fine to release land but if the market can't sustain it and if there is not enough workers to be employed on the sites then that isn't the practical solution."

He said the population boom could spell the end of the big Australian back yard on the Coast.

"We're going to see high-density living – the attached house and the 80 storey tower block in Surfers Paradise," he said.

"It will see the end of acreage property on the Coast, but high-density living could have problems and negatively affect the transport network and clog already busy hubs."

The review of the South East Queensland Regional plan has been

overhauled by the Government with pressure on council to accommodate the extra residents expected to spill into the region.

The original estimate of 250,000 additional residents by 2026 has been knocked on the head at George Street.

Sustainable City Future chairman Cr Peter Young said council had been informed that the extra heads would have to be accommodated after the State Government's latest calculations.

"The figures they had were hopelessly out of date and what has been indicated to us is that the Government can't control the growth. They're just managing it," said Cr Young.

"We have been told to shift our thinking to this new target by 2031 rather than the old figure.

"They want us to squeeze them in and we'll have to build the infrastructure to keep up with the growth. It's not practical and it's being rammed down our throats.

"We'll be absorbing at least a quarter of all of the growth in southeast Queensland."

During a three-day investigation *The Bulletin* has talked to senior development and council figures and compiled a 2031 infrastructure wish list.

The checklist would require, at least, the immediate construction of the six-lane arterial road along the intra-regional transport corridor running from Stapylton, south of Beenleigh, to Nerang-Broadbeach Road. At least a dozen new schools, pools, libraries, community centres and a cemetery would need to be built.

The Coomera Town Centre, which would be bordered by 80,000 new residents, would have



to be supported by a second shopping centre near Yatala.

Acting Mayor Daphne McDonald said the city could not sustain one million residents.

She feared the Government could rip up local area plans and allow unhindered development along the coastal strip.

"We wanted to do a Palm Beach local area plan and that was blocked by the Government. The only way they're going to fit that many people on the Gold Coast is to build high rises on the coastal strip," she said.

"Local residents don't want that but the Government has already shown they are ready and willing to step in and allow local area plans to be thrown out."

Developers, including Mirvac, Leda, Ingles Group, Young Land Corporation, QM Properties, Romanza and Heritage Pacific are progressing or planning housing projects at Pimpama and Coomera.

Senior development figures contacted by *The Bulletin* said the state land release of 3000ha at Coomera and 1200ha at Maudsland would not sustain

almost doubling the population.

A senior development figure, who did not want to be named for fear of political reprisals, said the infrastructure to sustain a one million person city was non-existent.

"There is so much dithering going on. This Coomera Town Centre has been stuck in the mud and they're going to need that right away and a second shopping centre further north near Yatala," he said.

"We're going to be packed in like a can of sardines. There won't be much breathing space because there's no land left on the southern or central Gold Coast.

"Council can't even get its act together with the Pimpama Wastewater Treatment plant so I'm not sure they're going to be up to building this type of infrastructure in time."

Cr Young said the extra population would have to also support the tourist numbers during peak season. "The population of almost one million would exhaust what is an already exhausted infrastructure with the tourism element," he said.

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WHAT WE NEED BEFORE 2031

- Construction of a six-lane arterial road along the intra-regional transport corridor which runs from Stapylton, just south of Beenleigh, to Nerang-Broadbeach Road
- New roads from Pimpama to Hope Island
- Introduction of a dedicated east-west bus or rapid transit system
- To expand and finish Coomera Town Centre plus a new shopping centre at Yatala or Beenleigh
- Oxenford and Ormeau schools being built, but dozens more would have to be constructed or super schools built to cater for population boom in the north
- Local Area Plans scrapped to allow more high rises in central and southern Gold Coast
- Brisbane to Gold Coast ferry service – Jacobs Well would be the central hub
- A new cemetery
- A dog pound
- At least three new community centres
- Two new pools
- At least four new libraries
- TAFE facilities and new university serviced by Southern Cross
- New stadium and sports facilities
- New hospital and private medical facilities
- Revive Nature Link to Hinterland
- Revive cruise ship terminal project
- Fix the Broadwater and the Currumbin and Tallebudgera creeks
- Build new roads to Springbrook and Numinbah





Service centre site placed on market

GOLD Coast developer Mike Moorhead is selling a 1.55ha site at Pimpama that is approved for a service centre.

The land fronts the roundabout that connects Yawalpah Road and Attenborough Boulevard and is just off the Pacific Motorway.

It forms part of a 20.7ha parcel the developer bought for \$5.25 million in 2004 from a company linked to Patrick Buckler.

Since then, Mr Moorhead, via his company Romanza, has gained approval for a precinct with service station, cafe, carwash, drive-thru fast-food outlet, retail shops and a medical centre.

Mr Moorhead said Romanza would retain the remaining 19.1ha portion of the original parcel.

The land fronts Attenborough Boulevard and is earmarked for a commercial precinct and an aged-care facility with 88 two-bedroom units along with a community building and residents' amenities.

Romanza controlled more than 607ha along Yawalpah Road, including the Gainsborough Greens golf course, which it sold with adjoining residential development land to listed companies Mirvac and City Pacific.

It also sold a 17.2ha parcel near Pimpama's well known Strawberry Farm.

Developer Greg Wood paid \$16 million for the holding, which had approval for 320 lots.

Mr Wood has since begun work on the housing project, Strawberry Fields, which has been released to the market.

The site sits just east of the M1.

At Gainsborough Greens, Mirvac has initiated siteworks for a major residential estate to be developed on the 367ha golf course parcel, bought in 2006 for \$100 million.

The project, expected to be completed within five years, will have more than 4000 homes.

Mr Moorhead said the 1.55ha

Pimpama site had strong appeal due to its position and the widening of Yawalpah Road to four lanes, with room for six lanes in the future.

"Whether people are going to Calypso Bay, Jacobs Well or to Gainsborough Greens, they must go through the roundabout – making it an ideal convenience retail location," he said.

"The booming northern corridor of the Coast presents an opportunity to developers, operators of service stations, fast-food outlets and medical facilities."

The Pimpama community is forecast to grow to encompass more than 30,000 homes by 2026.

Developers Leda, Mirvac, Ingles Group and QM Properties hold major parcels in the area.

Agents Damian Hall and Steve Mutton, from Ray White Commercial Broadbeach, are marketing the service centre property via an expressions of interest campaign that closes on August 21.



A concept image of the service centre . . . earmarked for 'an ideal convenience retail location'



2008 Master Builders Awards: Sunshine Coast

Sunshine Coast construction, design and building companies battled for category titles at Saturday night's Master Builders Housing and Construction Awards. Those companies that won are listed below.

AARON L MINNE t/a Summerset Pools
ADVANCED SYNERGY t/a Protile
ALAN CAMERON t/a Alan Cameron
AUSMAR HOMES
BETTA PLASTA
BRAEDEN CONSTRUCTIONS
BUILDING MANAGEMENT QLD
SALTWATER CONSTRUCTIONS
CHARLTON HOMES
CRIBB CONSTRUCTIONS
EVANS HARCH
GRANT MARTYN CONSTRUCTIONS
HOTONDO (GYMPIE)
INGLES HOMES (QLD)
J HUTCHINSON t/a Hutchinson
MAL DOMBROW BUILDER
MARLKEN t/a Australian Garage
Supermarket
MAUDE CORP t/a Unique Structural
Company
MINKA JOINERY
MURPHY BUILDERS
OCEANIC DESIGNER HOMES
PETER L CURLEY t/a Peter Curley
PAYNTER DIXON
PJ BURNS BUILDER
RB DOUGLAS t/a Adenbrook Homes
REED CONSTRUCTION (QLD) t/a RCQ
REX D TICKELL t/a Emboss
Constructions
RGD CONSTRUCTIONS
RYAN DESIGNER HOMES
SABURI t/a Seacove Homes
DI HENSHALL INTERIOR DESIGN
TREVOR NOBBS HOMES
VANTAGE COMMERCIAL
WALTER IEZZI BUILDING GROUP