

South East Queensland (SEQ): Area of open space land available for public outdoor recreation

Summary

Year	SEQ resident population	Public open space ¹ (ha)	Area open space (ha)/person
2001	2 465 000	415 806 ²	0.169
2007	2 780 000 ³	427 029 ⁴	0.154
2026	3 960 000	669 240	0.169
Additional area (ha) needed to maintain area open space per person at 2001 figure in 2026		242 211	

Area of additional publicly accessible open space needed between 2007 and 2026 to retain the 2001 area of public open space per resident of SEQ = **245ha/week**

SEQ Population Growth

The regional population increase predicted between 2007 and 2026 is **1,180,000** additional people (using the 2006 medium projection).

Using 2001 as a baseline for comparison –

To have the same area/person of publicly available open space (i.e. State &/or local government &/or, *with the landholders' voluntary consent*⁵, private land) for outdoor recreation in 2026 as was available in 2001, a 60.9% increase in the 2001 area of public open space (i.e. **242 211**) ha is required.

Source data

Reference 1

Table 1 – 2006 SEQ population projections (2001-2026)

Year	2006 SEQ population projection series (million people)		
	Low	Medium	High
2001	2.46	2.46	2.46
2006	2.78	2.78	2.79
2011	3.02	3.07	3.13
2016	3.25	3.38	3.52
2021	3.45	3.68	3.92
2026	3.64	3.96	4.32
Average increase/year 2001-2026	47,000	60,000	74,000

Source: Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation: Planning Information and Forecasting Unit 2006. Table from SEQ Regional Plan 2005-2026, Amendment 1 October 2006 page 10.

¹ 'Public open space' means the lands and waters for which there is a **legal basis** for public access for outdoor recreation. Public open space **land** includes the following **land tenures**: (1) state forest (2) state plantation forest (3) national park (3) conservation park (4) forest reserve (5) reserves for community purposes (7) stock routes and (8) freehold lands owned by local-governments or Qld **government-owned-corporations** which are designated as public open space. **Recreation areas** in SEQ are also included.

² 2001 and 2007 estimates of the area of **public land** in SEQ were calculated from data held by the Qld Government agency responsible for the **SEQ Regional Plan** - variously the Department of Infrastructure and Planning / State Development, Infrastructure and Planning / Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation and the Office of Urban Management. The 2001 is derived from Qld Environment Protection Agency (June, 2003) **Regional Parks for SEQ-Greenspace for Recreation Draft Discussion Paper** – see next page.

³ 2007 SEQ population from Table 1 (2.78 million) is lower than the **medium growth projection** used for the **SEQ Regional Plan 2005-2026**.

⁴ 2007 area public land in SEQ was calculated by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning in March 2008. Public land **includes** identified local government-owned free land, State reserves (dedicated under the *Land Act 1994*), protected areas (National Parks, Conservation Parks, Forest Reserves, etc), State Forests and State Plantation Forests but **excludes** (1) Commonwealth Department of Defence training areas at Greenbank, Canungra and Enoggera and (2) lands associated with major dams managed by **Seqwater**.

⁵ Private lands available for outdoor recreation include off-road vehicle parks, horse riding parks, mountain bike parks, camping areas, farm stays and eco-tourism resorts which are owned and operated by not-for-profit organisations (e.g. Scouts, Guides and churches) or by private landholders or corporations.

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Reference 2

Table 2: SEQ public lands area (ha) as at 2 January 2008

N or S of Brisbane River-Toowoomba (see Map 1 on page 3)	Area (ha) Jan 2008 data	Approx %
North	287,857	68
South	132,845	32
Total	427,028	100

Table 3: Area (ha) of various public land tenures in SEQ

Land Tenure	June	May	May	May
	2001	2003	2005	2007
National Parks ¹	111,772.28	113,446.40	113,818.91	129,147.09
Forest Reserves	Did not exist	118,749.63	122,401.48	108,254.98
State Forests	232,945.77	110,582.95	110,306.43	110,262.34
Reserves ²	42,831.92	42,852.24	43,735.02	44,617.04
State Land ³	28,255.78	28,611.32	30,532.27	34,747.30
Total	415,805.75	414,242.54	420,794.11	427,028.76

1. 'National park' includes all types of *protected areas* dedicated under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*

2. 'Reserves' means *reserves for community purposes* dedicated under the *Land Act 1994*

3. 'State land' means any form of State land other than protected areas or reserves for community purposes

Reference 3

May 2008, *Draft SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy*

Supply of places for outdoor recreation in SEQ

Most of the land or water areas which are available for outdoor recreation are owned and managed by Queensland Government agencies or local governments.

These areas include Moreton Bay, other coastal waters, estuaries, beaches, local council bushland, lands around major dams, major rivers, public reserves, unformed roads, stock routes, State Plantation Forests, State Forests, Conservation Parks, National Parks, Recreation Areas, Marine Parks and Fish Habitat Areas. Some of these areas are identified on Map 1.

About 427,000ha (19%) of the total 2,229,500ha **land area** of SEQ is *public land* – much of which is available for one or more types of outdoor recreation. Of this 427,000ha, about 68% (287,857ha) is located north of a line from Brisbane west through Ipswich to Toowoomba. The remainder (about 32% or 132,845ha) is located south of this line.

These land and water areas have many values - forestry, scenic amenity, fisheries production, cultural heritage, nature conservation, extractive resources, mining, water catchment management, outdoor recreation, tourism and flood mitigation. In most of these public lands and waters, outdoor recreation is recognised as a legitimate and important, but *secondary*, use of these areas. Where outdoor recreation is a secondary use, outdoor recreation activities are managed to protect the primary values and to ensure safety and sustainability.

Access and proximity

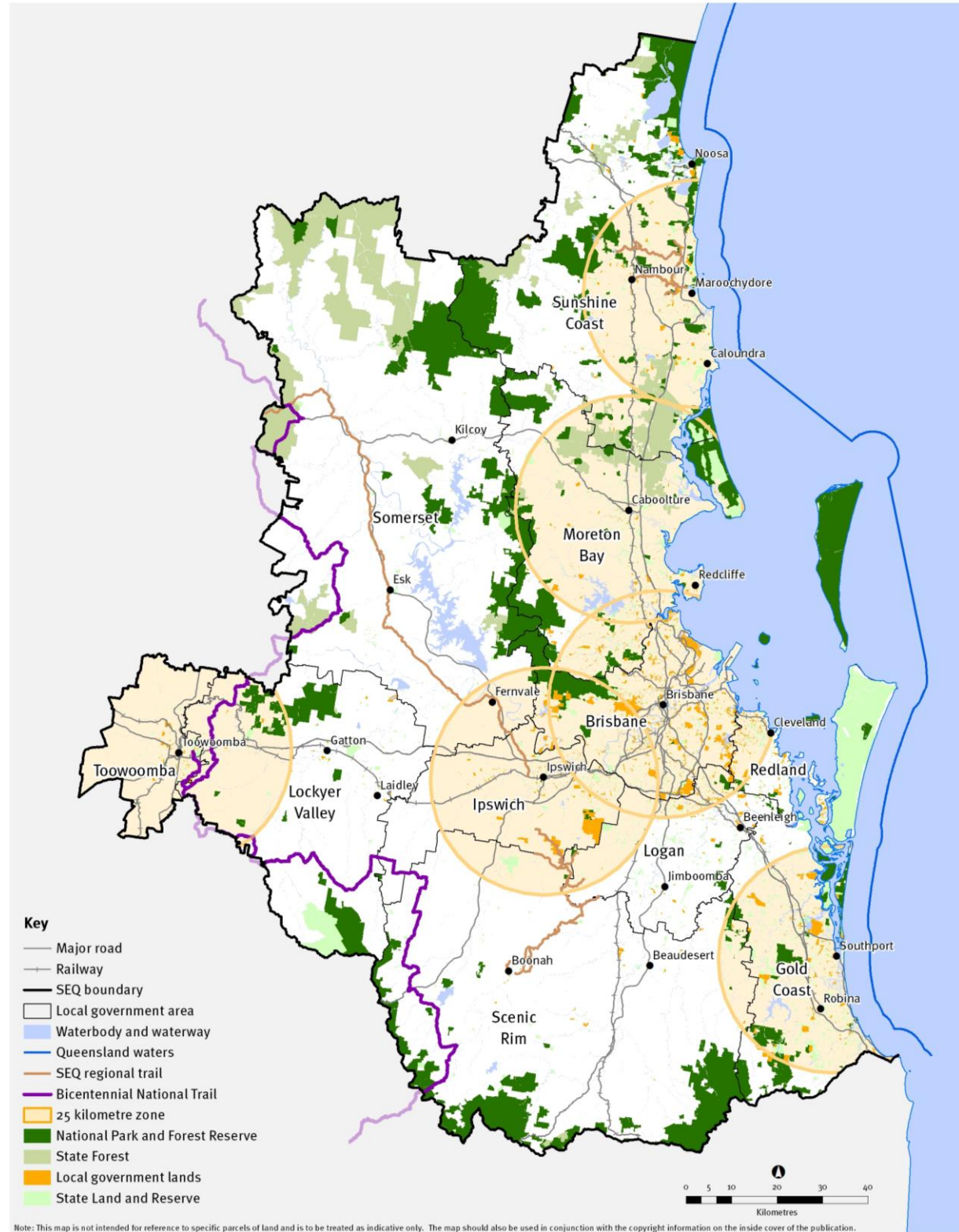
Public access is an important attribute of a regional public open space network. Currently, 68% of public land within SEQ (ie. the public open space available, under certain conditions, for outdoor recreation) is north of the Brisbane River (**see Map 1**) while 56.7% of the population lives south of the river. Planned growth to 2031 is concentrated south of the Brisbane River, where the proportion of the region's total population will grow to over 58.3% by 2026.

In addition, most of the public lands south of the Brisbane River (31.1% of the current SEQ total public land - **see Map 1**) are located along the Scenic Rim. The Scenic Rim area is located between 1.5 - 2 hours drive from major population centres within Brisbane's Urban Footprint. Most of this land

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is national park in very steep and rugged terrain with very high biodiversity, cultural heritage and catchment values. *Some* outdoor recreation needs cannot be satisfied in these existing public lands because these areas are too far from where most people live, the terrain is too rugged and/or they have important landscape values which constrain the range of outdoor recreation activities.

Map 1: SEQ Community greenspace – areas managed by State or local governments to which there is a general right of public access for recreation - in SEQ (Source: SEQ Regional Plan 2009-2031, Map 6, page 63)



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Reference 4

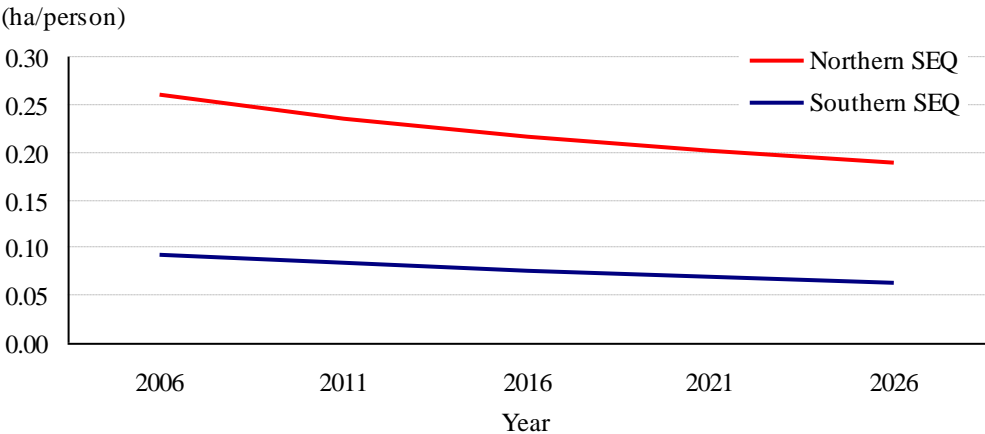
February 2008 *Investment in the SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy: Benefits and Costs* Marsden Jacob & Associates report

The principal benefits of the do nothing more scenario are that the State avoids additional costs. However, there are likely to be significant impacts, risks and costs associated with the do nothing more scenario.

As SEQ’s population grows, utilisation pressure on existing outdoor recreation space increases and existing sites (many unofficial) may be lost to alternative land uses (e.g. urban development, as has been the pattern for the past few decades). Population growth in SEQ is not uniform and the majority of the population growth is expected to occur in the southern half of the region, an area that already has lower levels of accessible open space per capita. Comprehensive data on public outdoor recreation space (State and local government land) is not available. However, using state and local government owned and accessible open space (e.g. reserves, forests etc) as a proxy indicates only 32% of the 460,000 ha of accessible open space in SEQ is in the southern regions of SEQ⁶, while that region accounts for 57% of the population.

Without future investment in public space for outdoor recreation, the area per capita (ha/person) is likely to decline sharply over the next 20 years, potentially reducing access to and diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences. This is shown in the figure below.

Figure 3: Accessible open space per capita in SEQ - no additional acquisitions of open space land



Source: MJA analysis based on State population forecasts and OUM data

While area per capita only provides a rough proxy for recreation benefits from public land, this analysis demonstrates:

- That in the absence of new acquisitions, per capita areas would decline.
- The likelihood of greater congestion in public space over the next 20 years and associated declines in outdoor recreation diversity and quality.
- Reduced accessibility as residential development occurs in areas that have less open space available.

To maintain current per capita areas would require acquisitions of around 184,000 ha over the next 20 years (9,200 ha/year), but this would still result in significant differences between the northern and southern regions of SEQ. To achieve comparable per capita areas in the southern region of SEQ would require additional acquisitions of 387,000 ha in that region.

⁶ Data provided by the Qld Government, Office of Urban Management (OUM).

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While several local governments in SEQ have some form of green levy⁷ that partially funds expansion of outdoor recreation space, this is unlikely to be sufficient to maintain current per capita levels of public land.

For example, if a target of 9,200 ha/year was established to maintain current levels of public land within existing local government green levy revenues, average prices achieved under any acquisition program would need to be below \$4,600/ha (a highly unlikely goal given the current property market). This problem is further exacerbated as the suitable land available in the southern regions of SEQ is extremely limited.

⁷ Estimated collections totalled about \$42M in 2007.

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Reference 5: SEQ Local Governments - Greenspace Areas and Funding at August 2007*

Local Government	Total LG Area (ha)	State lands in NP, CP & Forest Reserves (ha)	LG acquired & Publicly accessible Greenspace (ha)	State land % LGA area	Public accessible LG-owned Greenspace % LGA areas	Annual Levy or Charge (\$/property)	06-07 total \$ received *	Levy or Charge Name
Gold Coast City	137,682	12,250	2,770	14%	2%	39.00	10.5M	Open Space Preservation Charge
Redland Shire						70.00	4.3M	Environmental Charge
Logan City						50.00	3.3M	Environmental Charge
Brisbane City	134,375	30,776	1,600	12%	1%	31.52	13.2M	Bushland Preservation Levy
Esk Shire	392,736	60,634	-	19%	-	12.92	100K	Environmental Levy
Maroochy Shire	116,111	29,197	1,480	25%	1.3%	55.00	2.75M	Environmental Levy
Caloundra City	109,622	27,954	N/A	29%	N/A	60.00	2.4M	Environmental Levy
Noosa Shire						50.00	1.4M	Conservation Levy
Pine Rivers Shire						30.00	1.6M	Environmental Levy
Ipswich City	120,154	429	4,600	0.35%	4%	31.00	1.8M	EnviroPlan
Toowoomba City						30.00	1.0M	Park and Bushland Levy
Gatton Shire						20.00	114K	Environmental Levy
Average						\$48.3		
Total of Local Government “Green Levies” (August 2007)							\$42.4M	

*Note 1: Figures are generally accurate although small adjustments may be required to reflect recent local government acquisitions and changes through the South East Queensland Forest Agreement Source: Sinclair Knight Merz report to ICC entitled 'Greenspace Targets' January 2006.

Note 2: Information was compiled from the following sources- (1) Ipswich City Council, 2007 draft Local Growth Management Strategy Table 4.5.1; (2) Esk Shire Council press release on "Environmental Levy for Esk" dated 25 October 2006 (3) Estimated # dwellings in LG (from SEQRP Table 6, page 66) X annual levy. Assuming the annual levy applies to each dwelling.

This assessment does not include information for Laidley, Beaudesert, Boonah, Caboolture, Redcliffe and Kilcoy because levies in these councils could not be confirmed.

*Green levies are spent across acquisition &/or management and maintenance. Proportions spent on acquisition &/or management and maintenance were not assessed.