Strategic frameworks and the ‘line of sight’
Strategic frameworks provide the structure through which the ‘line of sight’ of state and regional policy is implemented through development approval (or not) by the planning scheme. SPP, QPA and strategic frameworks require a paradigm shift in the way the local and state government delivers planning services in Queensland.

Prologue
In the indelible words of Sam Baker

Things change
They change a lot
Things change
They grow cold they grow hot
And if looking back is all you got
It doesn’t matter anyway.

Introduction and Qplan
Strategic frameworks are a critical component for a local government to align its plan making processes with the Queensland Government’s Qplan framework.

Qplan has two key themes—

- ‘Qplan. My street. Our state.’, which explains the levels of decision-making and some of the tools that sit at national, state, regional, local and individual site levels.
- ‘Qplan – smarter, faster, simpler planning for Queensland’, which explains the benefits for all of us when this system works well.

A key outcome of the Qplan framework is to shift the focus of plan making and plan implementation away from being process based and driven by reacting to development, to being strategic (forward looking) and outcome focused, so that development and development assessment responds to the strategic intent and outcomes expressed in the scheme refer Figure 1.

This framework requires that all participants in the Qplan framework think in a strategic way, plan in a strategic way and communicate in a strategic way. This may
sound like the same thing but there is considerable literature and social, organisational and psychological research which deliberately separates the three.

Strategic thinking involves seeking innovative and different ways of achieving outcomes.

Strategic planning is to realise the innovations developed through strategic thinking integrate these strategies into an achievable plan.

Strategic communication is the transfer of knowledge from thought; through planning; to implementation. If all parts of an organisation do not appreciate the direction (or change in direction) that the organisation is aiming for, the objective and outcomes can not be achieved. (see papers by F. Graetz; J.M. Liedtka; or locally be Ian Johnson)

Qplan calls for the right person in the correct organization to undertake the appropriate job, once.

- Where a policy direction is established by a State agency and the policy direction and appropriate assessment criteria are incorporated into a planning scheme the relevant proposal is to be assessed at the local government level with no subsequent referral to the State Agency.
- If an external assessment is required and it can be competently assessed by the local government it should be assessed at the local government level.
- Where a development application does not need a specialist report to determine the merits of the application, do not require the specialist assessment. This is especially the case if the proposal is to be refused for fundamental planning or sustainability grounds.
- If a State agency is simply going to refer a proposal or an aspect of the proposal to an external agent and this assessment can be reviewed by the local government the whole proposal should be assessed by the local government without referral to the State agency.
- If the local government does not have the necessary competencies to assess a proposal, referral mechanisms are to be maintained.

The strategic framework provides the conceptual and administrative link between the 'Our region' and 'My town' constructs as shown in figure 1 and described in Table 1. Within the Qplan 'line of sight', a strategic framework refines the relationship between high level state and regional strategic directions and the assessment of development through the local government planning scheme. The strategic framework therefore provides the continuity of strategic thinking from State and even national policy to the implementation of development on the ground.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Our state</strong></th>
<th><strong>SPA, Regulations and QPP</strong></th>
<th><strong>Achieve ecological sustainability</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our Region</strong></td>
<td><strong>Existing statutory regional plans</strong></td>
<td><strong>The key role of a regional plan is to help Queensland meet the challenges associated with managing rapid growth, population change, economic development, and protecting the environment and infrastructure provision across multiple local government areas.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our council area</strong></td>
<td><strong>Themes – DROs – QPP</strong></td>
<td><strong>The strategic framework is the local expression of regional outcomes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Strategic outcomes</strong></td>
<td><strong>SPP issues are resolved and signed off.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Resolution of themes / DROs – negotiate / resolve state and local government issues</strong></td>
<td><strong>Regional and sub-regional development resolved e.g. through agreed overlays.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>My town</strong></td>
<td><strong>Elements</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provide a narrative link between strategic and specific outcomes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Link strategic outcomes with specific outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>My town</strong></td>
<td><strong>Specific outcomes</strong></td>
<td><strong>The need for outcomes from structure plans, master plans or local plans are identified.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Localised expression of state interests, regional outcomes and local government policy.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Outstanding State agency issues are resolved.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Specific outcomes clearly articulate a preferred outcome which may be achieved with current development assessment</strong></td>
<td><strong>The need to manage land use through zones, precincts, sub-precincts and local development constraint overlays is resolved.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The general intent is for the level of assessment within a code can be resolved</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>My neighbourhood.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Land use strategies</strong></td>
<td><strong>There may be one or more land use strategy for each specific outcome.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>are developed from the outcomes (strategic and specific) sought; and provide direction about how the outcomes will be achieved and applied at a strategic level.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Equally, where the specific outcome provides sufficient clarity in the strategic intent for an element, there may be no land use strategy needed.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sustainable Planning Act 2009
The purpose of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 (the Act) is to seek to achieve ecological sustainability in three ways—

- managing the process by which development takes place including ensuring the process is accountable, effective and efficient and delivers sustainable outcomes
- managing the effects of development on the environment (including managing the use of premises)
- continuing to coordinate and integrate planning at local, regional and state levels.

The Act emphasises the coordination and integration of planning at the local, regional and state levels—

- coordination of planning refers to the linking of planning activity within and between levels of government, and the community, and the linking of different aspects of planning such as natural resource planning, land use planning and infrastructure planning
- integration refers to the combination and rationalisation of planning outcomes and presenting them in an integrated way
- ecological sustainability is a balance that integrates the protection of ecological processes and natural systems at local, regional, state and wider levels; economic development, and the maintenance of the cultural, economic, physical and social well-being of people and communities.

Local government planning schemes are one of the key instruments for integrating and realising state, regional and local planning outcomes when considering development within a local government area.

The Strategic Planning Act 2009 is explicate in advocating strategic planning
The following identifies the relevant sections and clauses that refer to or address the need for a strategic approach to planning in Queensland.

88 Key elements of planning scheme
(1) A local government and the Minister must be satisfied the local government’s planning scheme—
   (a) appropriately reflects the standard planning scheme provisions; and
   (b) identifies the strategic outcomes for the planning scheme area; and
   (c) includes measures that facilitate achieving the strategic outcomes; and

89 Core matters for planning scheme
(1) Each of the following are core matters for the preparation of a planning scheme—
   (a) land use and development;
   (b) infrastructure;
   (c) valuable features.

(2) In this section—
   infrastructure includes the extent and location of proposed infrastructure, having regard to existing infrastructure networks, and their capacities and thresholds for augmentation.
   land use and development includes each of the following—
   (a) the location of, and the relationships between, various land uses;
   (b) the effects of land use and development;
   (c) how mobility between places is facilitated;
(d) accessibility to areas;
(e) development constraints, including, but not limited to, population and demographic impacts.

*valuable features* includes each of the following, whether terrestrial or aquatic—

(a) resources or areas that are of ecological significance, including, for example, habitats, wildlife corridors, buffer zones, places supporting biological diversity or resilience, and features contributing to the quality of air, water (including catchments or recharge areas) and soil;
(b) areas contributing significantly to amenity, including, for example, areas of high scenic value, physical features that form significant visual backdrops or that frame or define places or localities, and attractive built environments;
(c) areas or places of cultural heritage significance, including, for example, areas or places of indigenous cultural significance, or aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social or technological significance, to the present generation or past or future generations;
(d) resources or areas of economic value, including, for example, extractive deposits, fishery resources, forestry resources, water resources, sources of renewable and non-renewable energy and good quality agricultural land.

90 State, regional and local dimensions of planning scheme matters

(1) A matter, including a core matter, in a planning scheme may have local, regional or State dimensions.

(2) A local dimension of a planning scheme matter is a dimension that is within the jurisdiction of local government but is not a regional or State dimension.

(3) A regional dimension of a planning scheme matter is a dimension—

(a) about which a regional planning committee report makes a recommendation; or

(b) reflected in a regional plan; or

(c) that can best be dealt with by the cooperation of 2 or more local governments.

(4) A State dimension of a planning scheme matter, including a matter reflected in a State planning policy, is a dimension of a State interest.

91 Local government must review planning scheme every 10 years

(2) The review must include an assessment of the achievement of the strategic outcomes stated in the planning scheme.

Division 2 General matters about structure Plans

(3) The structure plan may—

(a) state strategic outcomes for the area; or

(b) state assessable development requiring impact assessment that a master plan may state is—

182 Restrictions on giving approval

(1) The local government can not approve the proposed master plan if—

(e) it compromises the achievement of the strategic outcomes for—

(i) the local government’s planning scheme area; or

(ii) the master planned area, as stated in the structure plan for the area; or

714 Local government may take or purchase land

(1) This section applies if—
In the transitional provisions

**778 Continuing effect of planning schemes**

(5) For this Act, the stated desired environmental outcomes are taken to be strategic outcomes for the planning scheme area.

### SPA and strategic frameworks

SPA and in particular strategic frameworks represent a paradigm shift in the way planning is has been undertaken in Queensland over the last decade.

Strategic planning is not new, although the term goes under may guises, the basic tenant is always the same … Where are we now, what is the consequence of staying on the current course (do nothing); where do we want to be; and how do we get there. Once a strategic framework is adopted all actions and decisions are tested against achieving the strategic and specific outcomes. This is a completely different approach to process planning where each proposal is assessed solely against the rule to determine compliance with the rule.

The regime established under the IPA was a highly process driven, application focused assessment process. In some ways the development of the IDAS model was a logical consequence of economic and management philosophies that developed through the 1990’s and the first decade of the 21st century. An emphasis on efficiency, minimisation of red tape and subservience to market pressure, ensured that planning was reduced to the assessment of development applications. Disputes and consequent court decisions revolved around determination of the application against explicitly enunciated rules and regulations.

Unfortunately these rules and regulations were generally a factor of past planning, social and political decisions. Decisions were being made on the rule for the sake of the rule, rather then what was the planning scheme attempting to achieve. Impact assessable and s316 applications were lodged and assessed ‘on their merits’. However, there were no broader contextual merits upon which to assess these applications. Thus the merits of the application were assessed on the internal efficiency of the proposal to the site, not what would be the consequence of the proposal against local, regional of state interests.

For example— A proposal is submitted for a large retail shopping outlet on the edge of an existing small neighbourhood centre.

Under the provisions of IPA the proposal can achieve all of the statutory criteria, i.e. site cover, plot ration, building height, setbacks, parking and economic justification, except GFA. Despite the fact that this proposal is completely out of context with the character, form and function of this centre most local governments would approve this proposal or if it was refused it would be on the grounds of inappropriate GFA. Legal argument would hinge on statutory criteria and economic justification.

If however, a strategic framework was in place and the document clearly articulated the strategic objective for activity centres that promoted a functional distribution of centres that—

- promoted compact mixed use centres;
- met the needs of the local community; and
• was orientated to foster active transport (walking and cycling) and public transport; as against a conventional car orientated retail centre.

The process that is undertaken in the assessment of this development is no longer about a purely technical matter such as GFA but rather, the appropriateness of this type of development, in this location, to service the needs of this community.

The proposal is refused not because it exceeds a stated GFA limit but because it does not meet the strategic intent for this community.

The art of planning is a process of place making. In many ways the philosophies that underpin the foundations of planning originates and continues to be firmly grounded utopian determinism. At its most basic planning hinges on a conceptual framework that through built design and urban form we can make a positive contribution to human existence. Processing development proposals in regulatory isolation is therefore anathema to the principles of achieving great, equitable and sustainable places to live.

A strategic framework provides the structure within which a comprehensive range of issues can be addressed. The strategic framework deals with issues that have been or are to be investigated and reviewed.

For example, a Strategic outcome contains broad policy intent that gives an overview of what a place will look like, whereas a Land use strategy of the same theme may name places where these outcomes will occur.

Some 40 local governments are currently in the process of or will commence the production of planning schemes by the end of 2011. A small number of these are modified IPA schemes. However, all will be produced under the QPP. DLGP is now in a position to assess the manner in which local government is responding to SPA, the QPP and the application of strategic thinking to scheme drafting. To be honest the response is patchy. DLGP through the statutory planning program and the regional offices are to provide local government with the support and inter-agency relationships to ensure that their planning schemes meets the expectations of SPA and the QPP.

**Utilising the strategic framework to reduce development assessment timeframes**

The SPA and QPP (refer to s26 of subdivision 1 of division 2 Part 3 Chapter 2 of the SPA and 2.1 Regional plan Part 2 State planning instruments of the QPP) stipulates that planning schemes reflect the requirements of a regional plan.

The regional plan

(a) identifies—
   (i) the desired regional outcomes for the region; and
   (ii) the policies and actions for achieving the desired regional outcomes; and

(b) identifies the desired future spatial structure of the region including—
   (i) a future regional land use pattern; and
   (ii) provision for regional infrastructure to service the future regional land use pattern, to inform—
      (A) local governments when preparing priority infrastructure plans; and
(B) the State, local governments and other entities about infrastructure plans and investments; and
(iii) key regional environmental, economic and cultural resources to be preserved, maintained or developed; and
(iv) the way the resources are to be preserved, maintained or developed; and
(v) for paragraph (b)(iii), regional landscape areas; and
(c) includes any other relevant regional planning matter for this Act.

Where the provisions of a regional plan have been appropriately reflected in the planning scheme and this is stated in the planning scheme, those elements identified are no longer used in the development assessment process under the Act and the development application is assessed against the planning scheme.

Note— state planning regulatory provisions will still be required to be assessed by the relevant state agency responsible for the SPRP.

Accordingly a well structured planning scheme containing a strategic framework and appropriate codes that address state agency issues could produce very significant reductions in the processing of development proposals as the referral process is effectively circumvented.

To ensure that there are no unsupported expectations by either party in the development assessment process, local government is required to provide a statement identifying how the planning scheme appropriately reflects the regional plan. It is therefore incumbent on each party that they engage in open and cooperative discussion to identify where local government can act as a referral agency under devolved or delegated powers to assess and decide a matter under SPA.
s282 Referral agency assesses application; of Subdivision 1 Assessment generally; of Division 4 Referral agency assessment; of part 3 of Chapter 6 of SPA states that—

(1) Each referral agency must, to the extent relevant to the development and within the limits of its jurisdiction, assess the application against each of the following—
   (a) the State planning regulatory provisions applied by the referral agency;
   (b) the regional plan for a designated region, to the extent it is not identified in the planning scheme as being appropriately reflected in the planning scheme;
   (c) for a concurrence agency—any applicable concurrence agency codes that are identified as a code for IDAS in this or another Act;
   (d) State planning policies applied by the referral agency, to the extent the policies are not identified in—
      (i) any relevant regional plan as being appropriately reflected in the regional plan; or
      (ii) the planning scheme as being appropriately reflected in the planning scheme;
   (e) the laws that are administered by, and the policies that are reasonably identifiable as policies applied by, the referral agency.

(2) Also, each referral agency must, to the extent relevant to the development and within the limits of its jurisdiction, assess the application having regard to each of the following—
   (a) the State planning regulatory provisions not applied by the referral agency;
   (b) State planning policies not applied by the referral agency, to the extent the policies are not identified in—
      (i) any relevant regional plan as being appropriately reflected in the regional plan; or
      (ii) the planning scheme as being appropriately reflected in the planning scheme;
   (c) the structure plan for any declared master planned area;
   (d) the master plan for any declared master planned area;
   (e) a temporary local planning instrument for the planning scheme area;
   (f) the planning scheme;
   (g) if the land to which the application relates is designated land—its designation.

(3) Despite subsections (1) and (2) a referral agency—
   (a) may give the weight it considers appropriate to any planning instruments, laws, policies and codes, of the type mentioned in subsection (1) or (2), coming into effect after the application was made, but before the agency’s referral day; but
   (b) must disregard any planning scheme or temporary local planning instrument for the planning scheme area if the referral agency’s jurisdiction is limited to considering the effect of the building assessment provisions on building work.
The Strategic framework—A Summary

The release of SPA and the QPP has stimulated extensive debate in DLGP, state agencies and across local governments that are currently preparing QPP compliant planning schemes on the structure and content of planning schemes generally and strategic frameworks in particular.

It is fair to say that many local governments are still not comfortable with the function of a strategic framework.

What is a strategic framework?

A strategic framework is the expression of a policy position that identifies the desired future land use, social structure, economy and sustainability outcomes for the whole of the local government area.

It is a tool that allows a local government to think broadly across and apply policy locally for the whole of the local government area.

The strategic framework is not a vague nebulous document. It defines a future that is real and achievable. It is actually a tool to eliminate choices and focus energy and resources on the selected outcome. It should not be a complicated and convoluted document. Rather it should be drafted to anticipate and focus on selected possibilities. Despite this every strategic framework needs to build in review and assessment of its successes and failures.

Principles for strategic frameworks

A good strategic framework:

1. describes the realistic aspirations of where a community wants to be in the future, and how it intends to achieve these aspirations throughout the next 25 years and beyond
2. integrates regional and state planning policy for the local government area (where appropriate, national and global strategies may also be addressed)
3. relates to, informs and is informed by, the local government’s community plan, corporate plan and financial plan etc.
4. clearly sets the planning policies, land uses and spatial development patterns of the local government, for the planning scheme
5. includes strategies at local government-wide, district and local scales, and where appropriate at site specific scales
6. clearly responds to context of the local government area including district or local scale contexts as appropriate
7. provides the policy position to consider development proposals, impact assessable development and proposals which are complex or innovative forms of development; or proposals which contest, question or dispute the outcomes advocated in the codes
8. uses mapping and graphics to direct growth and change and to illustrate how the land uses and spatial development patterns of the local government area will look in the future
9. ensures that there is a clear line of sight between strategic policy and:
   • the number and type of zones
   • precincts, overlays, local plans; or planning partnerships, as required
   • the level of assessment for development, including for specific locations
10. anticipates future strategies including place-based strategies
11. addresses the requirements of the QPP including the strategic intent; themes and strategic outcomes; elements, specific outcomes and land use strategies
12. is clearly written and is of a length and complexity appropriate to the planning context of the local government area
13. provides a basis for measuring performance over time.

There is significant research in the literature to confirm that the links between planning and performance is better in organisations with higher levels of communication within and between policy direction, scheme drafters and scheme implementation.

What is the purpose of a strategic framework?

A strategic framework gives the local government the opportunity to actively address the issues and opportunities that will shape the future.

Accordingly the strategic framework provides—

- the setting within which a comprehensive range of issues can be assessed; and
- deals with issues that have been or are to be investigated and reviewed; in order to
  - make a series of preferred scheme strategies; and
  - to ensure that state interests are dealt with in the scheme.

The strategic framework articulates the future development intent for the planning scheme area by setting the overall policy position, identifying the planning outcomes and the strategies to achieve them. In doing this, it provides the basis for decisions about, for example, where land uses are located, where expansion may occur, infrastructure needs, intensification of land uses and protection of special areas.

The strategic framework provides the scaffolding through which the ‘line of sight’ of state and regional policy is implemented through development approval (or not) by the planning scheme.

Because the strategic framework is fully orientated to the implementation of a desired future outcome, every development application, every planning scheme amendment, local plan, master plan or structure plan is referenced against how that action or decision will go towards the implementation of the strategic framework to create the desired and agreed community of the future. Every policy decision and development approval must be about how that decision contributes to the creation of place and of community.

Importance of a Strategic framework

- The strategic framework provides the organisational structure to ensure that there is a direct line of sight from state legislation and desired regional outcomes through to the implementation of development on the site.
- Each strategic outcome clearly identifies and expresses the negotiated outcomes between state and local government as an expression and application of local government land use policy, across the whole of the local government area.
- Planning schemes are to be drafted with a focus on outcomes that are sought to be achieved both broadly and specifically in the local government area.
• The strategic framework should be written before the range of zones that are to be used in the local government area are selected or supporting codes are even considered.

• Where the strategic framework is well considered, the number and type of zones should be clear and the need for precincts or sub-precincts will become self evident.

• The elements in the strategic framework provide the linking statements that provide a local context for strategic objectives.

• The specific outcomes are the practical application of localised and contextually specific expression of state interests, regional outcomes and local government land use policy.

• The mix of uses and assessment criteria within the tables of assessment for each zone will be a function of the elements, specific outcomes and land use strategies.

• Further, the codes and overlays are an expression of state and regional interests that are apparent in the strategic outcomes and for local issues articulated in the specific outcomes. These in turn will provide the logical foundation for the performance and acceptable outcomes.
Resources to assist in the drafting of Planning Schemes QPP
QPP sets out the mandatory content, format, font and styling of strategic frameworks anticipated by standard planning scheme provisions;

Queensland Planning Provisions
The Queensland Planning Provisions (QPP) are the standard planning scheme provisions made under the Act. The purpose of the QPP is to provide a clear and consistent framework for planning schemes in Queensland; to assist in the expression of state, regional, local and community expectations for areas and land uses; and to provide for the implementation of state, regional, local policies affecting land use and development in the local government area.

The coordination and integration of state, regional and local interests in the preparation of planning schemes is achieved through the preparation of a strategic framework. A strategic framework is a mandatory requirement of the QPP and is therefore required as part of a QPP compliant planning scheme. The requirements and drafting instructions for the preparation of a strategic framework are set out in the QPP.

The strategic framework—
• sets the policy position for the whole of the local government planning scheme area based on the integration of state and local government policy at the time the local government planning scheme was made/amended;
• identifies the future land use and development intent for the planning scheme area;
• appropriately reflects the desired regional outcomes of the regional plan where there is one;
• is used in the assessment of development where the development does not comply with the applicable code/s; and
• is used in the assessment of complicated code assessable development, impact assessable development; s242 preliminary approval applications and master plans.

Guidelines
Statutory Guideline 02/09 - Making or amending local planning instruments
Is the guideline that established the procedural and best practice of the process for making or amending a planning scheme; making or amending a planning scheme policy; and making a temporary local planning instrument under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. The guideline explicitly references strategic planning by describing:
• A planning scheme under the SPA is a local planning instrument that provides for development to be planned and undertaken in a strategic way encompassing the entire local government area. They are an effective tool at the local level to achieve the purpose of the SPA. They take a strategic view of an area and incorporate site provisions, such as zones and codes, to manage growth and change in the local government area.
• State entities have a role in assisting local governments in preparing their planning scheme. That role includes assisting in the development of the planning scheme strategic framework to ensure state and regional interests are appropriately integrated. It also involves formal state interest reviews, where the
state government reviews local government integration of state interests in a planning scheme.

- The intended outcomes of consultation between local and state governments are:
  - State interests are integrated into the proposed planning scheme early at the conceptual and drafting stages (particularly the development of the strategic framework of a new planning scheme);

**QPP user guide for strategic frameworks**

This user guide will assist to provide an understanding of the function, process and expected outputs of the strategic framework component of a local government’s planning scheme, to achieve better planning outcomes for the local government area and the community. The guide provides information on the purpose, preparation, and drafting of a strategic framework; provides information on incorporating Next generation planning into strategic frameworks and provides worked examples.

**Your guide to strategic planning in Queensland Qplan—My street. Our state.**

This guide provides an overview of strategic planning in Queensland, using examples of strategic plans from around the state. The guide outlines the benefits and characteristics of a strategic planning approach, and is a launching point for more detailed guidance by GMQ on particular types of strategic plans. The guide will be useful to planners, public officials and all those involved in creating or interpreting strategic plans in Queensland.

**Next generation planning handbook**

- Next Generation Planning is about new ways of planning for the suburbs, towns and cities of South East Queensland (SEQ). The Next Generation Planning handbook identifies four concepts:
  - Affordable Living
  - Smart Growth
  - Form-based Codes
  - SEQ Place Model.