

MB clearing halt

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CLEARING of land at Mission Beach will stop under the 2025 draft regional plan delivered in the Cassowary Coast Regional Council meeting on Thursday.

Higher density living and limiting urban sprawl were the main focus of the plan with special mention of limiting growth on the popular tourist beach to "ensure the natural values for the area will be protected for future generations".

The push, largely supported by CCRC Mayor Bill Shannon, will see earmarking for future development of greenfields ceased with only one already cleared rural residential block near Wongaling Beach approved to expand under the 'urban footprint'.

Cr Shannon said while residents

largely supported the idea of limiting future development, existing developments would have to become higher density to accommodate the growing population.

"A lot of infill will have to occur which may have an impact on the local environment and in particular the cassowaries," he said

"Clearly the council will need to remain very alert on the future growth of Mission Beach.

"What is good news is that people have recognised that Mission Beach is a very special place and by curbing future development we will be able to maintain that village feel without going down the same path as the Gold Coast and Noosa.

"We have the potential to make ourselves different."

Under the plan there is also a push to avoid development in areas of "general ecological significance"

with Innisfail and Tully set down to be the two main urban centres of the region. Cr Shannon said while he and other individual councillors supported the protection of ecological areas he was sceptical about the idea of boosting regional density to 12-15 dwellings per hectare to limit urban sprawl.

"We would want tougher rules on site coverage so we don't get wall to wall roofing that you see in other areas," he said.

"We need to limit development that sees bigger houses being put on smaller blocks."

Division 2 councillor Carmel Silvestro said the high density living would change the very thing that residents most loved about the area.

"We are dealing with a community who want rural living," she said. "And that has been taken away from us."