

Northern Territory Strategic Planning Policy





Acknowledgement

The Northern Territory Planning Commission respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this country and recognises their continuing connection to the land, water and community on which we work, live and meet.

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultures, their Ancestors and Elders past and present, and all the leaders of today and future generations.

Please note: while we use the term 'Aboriginal', we respectfully acknowledge that it is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people.

Acronyms

AAPA	Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority
CUG	Compact Urban Growth Policy
DoD	Department of Defence
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTPC	Northern Territory Planning Commission
NTPS	Northern Territory Planning Scheme
PSA	Planning scheme amendment
SPP	Strategic Planning Policy
SLUP	Strategic land-use plan

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Planning Act 1999 (extract)

2A Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this Act is to establish a system to facilitate planning for the orderly use and development of land to achieve the following objectives:

- (a) to ensure that strategic planning is applied to planning schemes and implemented in individual planning decisions;
- (b) to ensure that strategic planning reflects the wishes and needs of the community;
- (c) to ensure that appropriate public consultation and input are included in the formulation of planning schemes and the making of decisions under planning schemes;
- (d) to ensure that the planning system is clear, comprehensive, effective, efficient and accessible to the community;
- (e) to promote the sustainable development of land;
- (f) to promote the responsible use of land and water resources to limit the adverse effects of development on ecological processes;
- (g) to maintain the health of the natural environment and ecological processes;
- (h) to protect the quality of life of future generations;
- (i) to assist the provision of public utilities, infrastructure and facilities for the benefit of the community;
- (j) to promote the good design of buildings and other works that respects the amenity of the locality;
- (k) to assist the conservation and enhancement of places, areas, buildings, other works and landforms that are of cultural, aesthetic, architectural or historical value;
- (l) to respect and encourage fair and open decision making.

Part 1 – Introduction

The Northern Territory's (NT) diverse network of urban, regional and remote communities are separated by vast distances that stretch from the wet-dry tropics of the Top End to the arid centre of Australia. Whilst the NT covers more than 1,300,000 square kilometres and would seem to have plenty of land for future growth, it is subject to many factors that limit and influence where growth can occur.

Strategic planning provides a long-term framework for future growth, land use change and built-form outcomes to help achieve the economic, environmental and social aspirations of our communities. It also enables government agencies to work together to deliver equitable and efficient solutions across all spheres of planning.

In the NT, the strategic planning framework is established by the *Planning Act 1999* (Planning Act) and consists of policies and land-use plans contained within part 2 of the Northern Territory Planning Scheme 2020 (NTPS). These strategic policies and land use plans guide the development of land and land use in a region, subregion or area. The strategic planning framework is the precursor to many other steps that can bring land to market and enable land-use change.

This Strategic Planning Policy (SPP) outlines how the objectives of the Planning Act will be realised through the development of strategic land use plans and policies - key statutory documents, which guide the long-term use and development of certain lands across the NT.

Whilst the application of the SPP will vary across regions, and depend on varying economic, environmental and social factors, the policy will promote consistency, efficiency and intergenerational thinking through strategic planning.

Purpose

Section 81N of the Planning Act sets out that the Northern Territory Planning Commission (NTPC) is to decide its own procedures. In this context, the development of the SPP serves as a procedural framework, offering high-level guidance to ensure the creation of strategic land-use plans and policies builds on and aligns with the objectives of the Planning Act (inset 1).

The SPP will be applied by the NTPC, when developing the strategic framework contained within Part 2 of the NTPS, to ensure that:

- strategic land-use plans and policies align with and promote the overarching objectives of the Planning Act
- strategic plans are developed with consistent guiding principles, leading to more cohesive and equitable outcomes across different scales and places
- land use decisions are made with a long-term vision in mind
- stakeholders in the land use and development process are working towards common goals, leveraging their resources to achieve efficient outcomes
- other government agencies, developers, and the community have a shared understanding of the priorities and processes guiding land use decisions.

Scope

The SPP will inform the development of the strategic framework contained within Part 2 of the NTPS. It will be used by the NTPC as it:

- creates new strategic land-use plans (SLUP) and strategic policies
- undertakes a review of existing SLUPs and strategic policies.

The SPP will shape outcomes by informing strategic land-use and development policy that will, in turn, inform changes to land-use zonings and the enhancement of development requirements under the NTPS.

The SPP has not been designed to be directly considered by consent authorities when assessing development applications.

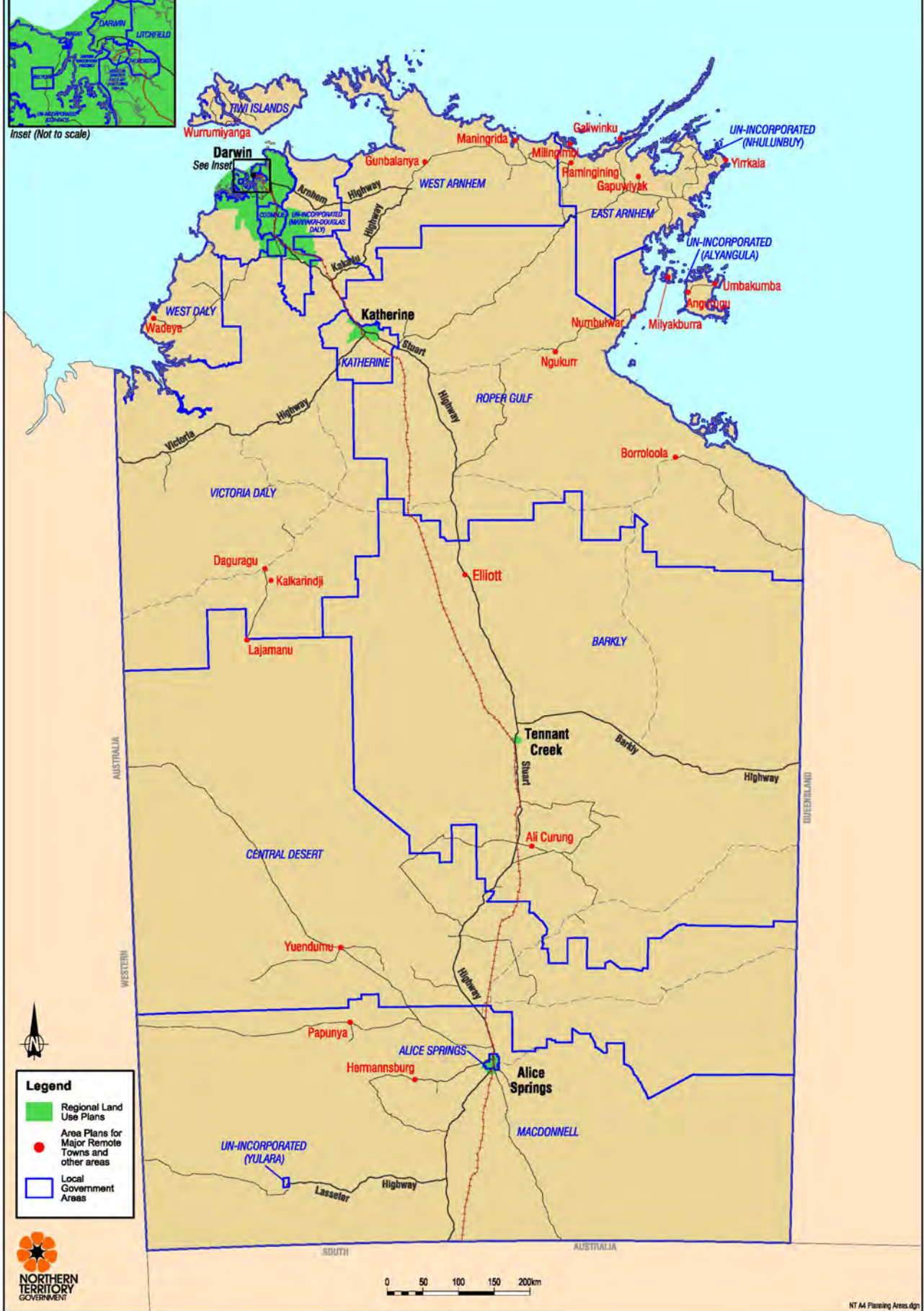


Image 1 – Areas currently covered by strategic land-use plans. The NTPS covers the whole of the NT, except for Jabiru, which has the Jabiru Town Plan. The strategic framework, contained within the part 2 of the NTPS, however focuses on the Darwin region; the centres of Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek as well as 23 ‘major remote towns and other areas’.

Part 2 - Guiding principles

Guiding principles have been developed to complement and support the making of strategic planning policies and land-use plans contained within the NTPS to ensure strategic planning:

- delivers on the objectives (a) (b) (c) and (l) of the Planning Act
- is recognised as a comprehensive and united statement of strategic land use and development policy for a region.

The guiding principles for strategic planning are:

- be inclusive by engaging all relevant stakeholders as early as possible to ensure stakeholder knowledge is incorporated to shape meaningful and effective outcomes
- understand and respond to the unique social, cultural, economic, and environmental characteristics of each area, drawing on local knowledge and expertise, to ensure responsive and tailored place-based outcomes
- consider relevant national policies and guidelines to support broader strategic objectives and align with the national agenda
- consider relevant local government council policies and guidelines to address place-specific issues and ensure a consistent, coordinated local approach
- promote an evidence-based approach to ensure that land use plans and strategic policies are grounded in reliable data and research supporting sound, transparent, and accountable decision-making
- take a forward-thinking approach that both addresses legacy issues, where possible, and focuses on long-term outcomes that provides lasting benefits for future generations
- review and update planning policies as necessary, allowing for adjustments as the Territory evolves and new challenges arise.

Part 3 – Themes

The SPP focuses on 5 related core themes, each with accompanying sub-themes, which build on the objectives of the Planning Act and relate to matters of importance to land use and development in the NT.

A set of strategic policy statements underpin each sub-theme providing an overarching policy setting for strategic planning across the NT.

The NT is vulnerable to the changing climate, particularly with regard to rising temperatures, bushfires, intensity of rainfall events and tropical cyclones as well as storm surge and sea level rises along the coast. Strategic policies permeate across all sub-themes to help the collective effort to respond and adapt to the impacts of climate change and to protect the quality of life of future generations.

Applying the themes

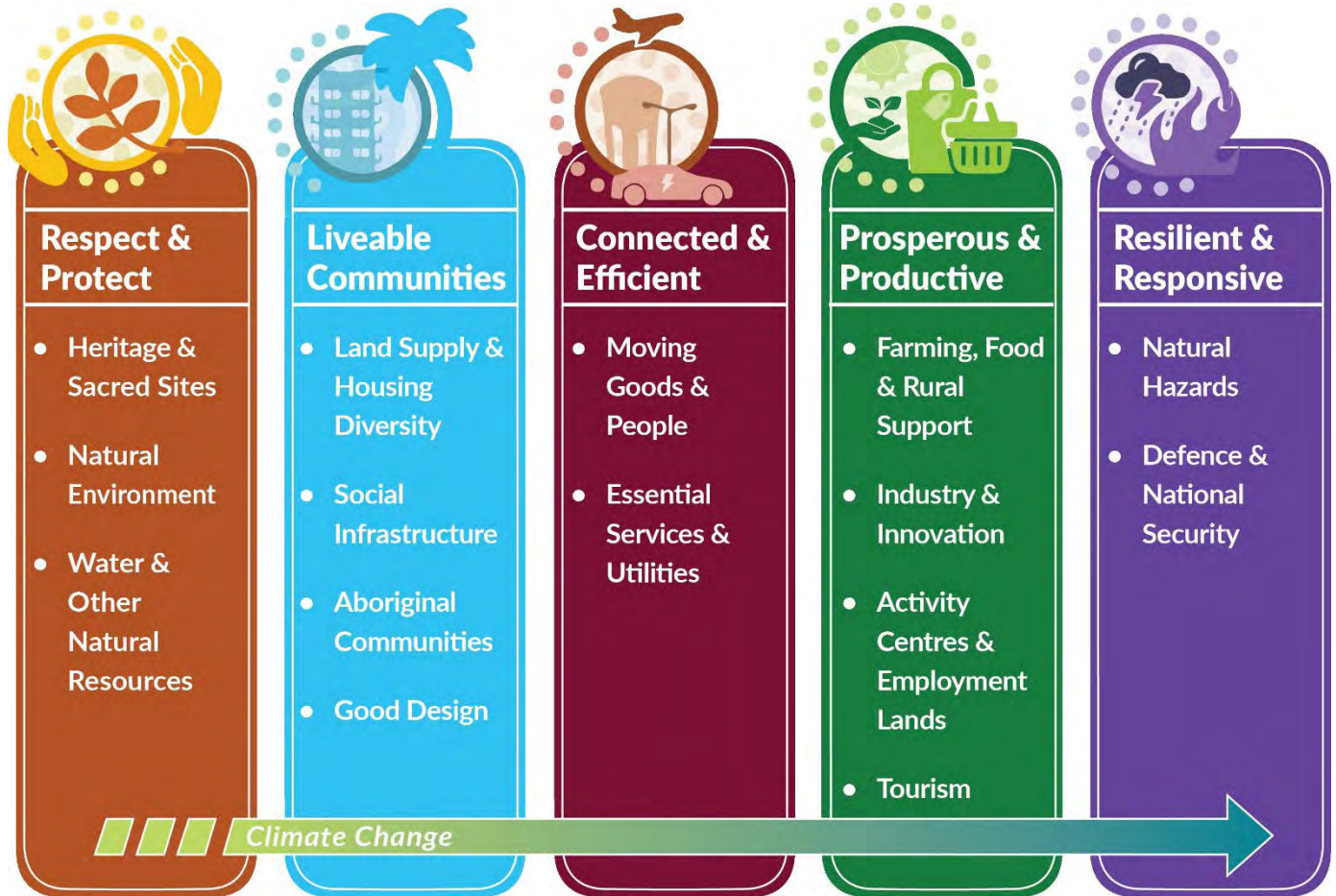
Whilst the themes and sub-themes are presented separately, they are not mutually exclusive. Many are interconnected and together share many common aspirations. Delivering on one policy direction can potentially deliver on other policy directions.

The NT has diverse needs and demands across urban, regional, and remote areas, each with different settlement patterns and varying levels of infrastructure and services. Accordingly, the SPP allows for different approaches to be considered in response to regional differences and varying economic, environmental and social factors.

The SPP does not give more weight to any particular matter over another, recognising that regional and local context must always be considered when integrating and applying the policy.

Equally, depending on the circumstance, it may not be practical or necessary for a SLUP to address all directions and/or policy statements.

Care also needs to be taken to ensure that the approach to delivering on one theme does not unacceptably impact another theme.





Theme 1: Respect & Protect

To assist conserve and enhance the NT's cultural heritage, maintain the health of the natural environment, and promote the responsible and sustainable use of land and resources.

Sub-themes help deliver on objectives b, e, f, g, h and k of the Planning Act.

Sub-themes

- Heritage & Sacred Sites
- Natural Environment
- Water & Other Natural Resources

Heritage and Sacred Sites

Strategic planning is to assist in the conservation and enhancement of places that are of cultural, aesthetic, architectural or historical value to achieve objective (k) of the *Planning Act*.



The NT has a rich natural and cultural heritage. Collectively, this heritage enriches our sense of place and identity and gives context to where we are now. It includes historic places, objects and sacred sites. In the NT, there are a range of laws in place that recognise and protect this heritage legacy.

Sacred sites are cared for and protected by Aboriginal custodians, whose rights and responsibilities are defined through kinship systems and connections to Country. Protecting these sites includes keeping them safe, and ensuring they are used in accordance with tradition.

In this context, the planning system provides a supporting role in the protection of the NT's heritage and sacred sites. Effective strategic planning facilitates early and proactive engagement with relevant stakeholders, respects cultural obligations and avoids or minimises adverse impacts from development.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Aboriginal traditional landowners, custodians, and/or their representatives (Land Council's) are engaged at the earliest possible stage of planning to inform strategic planning to:
 - a) ensure that sacred sites are appropriately identified, protected, and managed,
 - b) avoid harmful impacts from land use and developments, and
 - c) uphold cultural obligations.
2. Heritage places, objects and sacred sites (including trees) are appropriately recognised (where possible mapped) and carefully considered to support the requirements of the:
 - a) *Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 (NT)*
 - b) *Heritage Act 2011 (NT)*
 - c) *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976 (Cth) (ALRA Act)*
 - d) *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018 (Cth) (UCHA Act)*
 - e) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 (Cth) (ATSIHP Act)*
 - f) *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*
3. Promote sensitive design responses and conservation management strategies to safeguard heritage places and objects and sacred sites against development impacts.
4. Promote the appropriate adaptive reuse or integration of heritage places to enable the continued use, conservation, and appreciation of such places.
5. Encourage innovative interpretation to improve the community's understanding and appreciation of heritage places and objects (where sensitivities allow).

NOTE: Publishing or sharing abstracts or certificate information from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority requires approval. Heritage Branch data may also have restrictions. Written permission is to be obtained before sharing any non-public information

Natural Environment

Strategic planning is to help maintain the health of the natural environment and ecological processes and promote its restoration and enhancement in order to maintain its value and resilience to achieve objectives (g) and (h) of the *Planning Act*.



The NT covers a large range of natural environments and climatic regions, with highly valued landscapes, a rich array of natural resources, diverse ecosystems and a unique range of native flora and fauna, some of national and global significance.

Our health and well being and our social, cultural, economic and environmental prosperity is deeply tied to the health of our natural environment and associated ecological processes. However, the needs of industry, agriculture and settlement all place pressure on, and present risks to, our natural environment. The resultant impacts can be direct, indirect and/or cumulative; planned and/or unplanned; and immediate or take longer to realise.

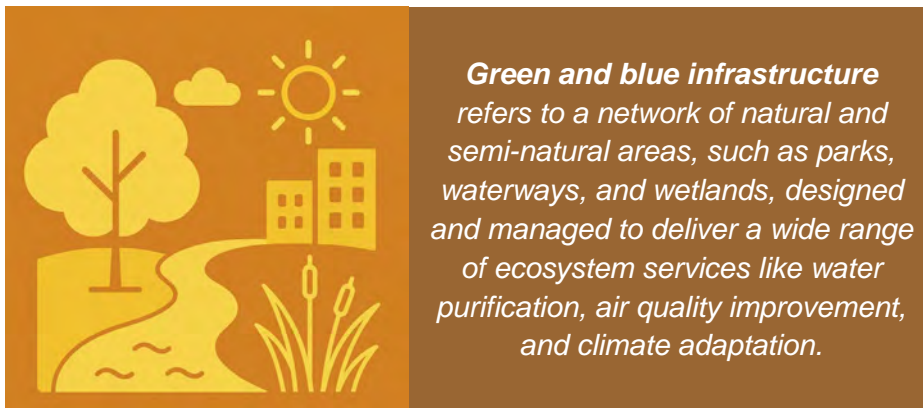
Whilst bespoke legislation exists outside the planning framework to regulate the impact of human activities on the environment, strategic planning plays a critical role in supporting the protection of our natural environment. Strategic planning that understands the richness and complexities of the natural environment can have a proactive role in ensuring land is developed in a way that protects the environment. It can also set a positive strategy to improve biodiversity within our urban environments.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Carefully consider the value and essential role played by the natural environment and the need for its care and protection.
2. Based on expert advice and advice from other relevant government agencies recognise and protect areas of high conservation and ecological value and plan for the sensitive use of the land around these areas. This includes consideration of:
 - a) threatened species as defined under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*
 - b) environmentally significant or sensitive vegetation communities such as rainforest, mangroves, vine thicket, closed forest, sandsheet heath or riparian vegetation;
 - c) areas of native vegetation and mature trees; and
 - d) river systems, coastlines and marine environments.
3. Consider potential environmental impacts, including cumulative impacts, at the earliest possible stages and over a broad scale.

Environmental impacts should be avoided wherever possible. Where these cannot be avoided those impacts should be minimised or mitigated to the greatest extent practicable. Where these cannot be avoided or mitigated the impacts should be offset.
4. Have regard to the capability of land to accommodate land use and development, including but not limited to soil type and acidity, erosion, soil salinity, water logging, potential for flooding (both storm tide and riverine); local geology and biting insects.
5. Promote habitat restoration efforts, biodiversity support and urban cooling by:
 - a) fostering habitat connectivity through encouraging the protection and retention of waterways and native vegetation corridors;

- b) fostering biodiversity in settlements by encouraging opportunities for retaining and creating habitat; and
 - c) encouraging the retention of and/or planting of suitable shade trees and native vegetation along pedestrian pathways, key transport corridors, open space, car parks and in private gardens.
6. Promote nature-based solutions and blue-green infrastructure to enhance ecological resilience and sustainable land use.



Water and Other Natural Resources

Strategic planning is to promote the sustainable development and responsible use of land and water resources to limit the adverse effects of development on ecological processes to achieve objectives (e) (f) and (h) of the *Planning Act*.



The NT's natural environment contains many natural resources which are critical to how and where we decide to live, do business and grow our industries. Finite resources such as water, soils, sand, gravels and rock (basic raw materials), mineral resources, gas and petroleum must be carefully managed for the benefit of current and future generations.

Legislation and policy guiding the use of these resources exist outside the planning framework. Notwithstanding, there is a clear imperative to incorporate resource management considerations into strategic planning processes to ensure important resources are protected and not inadvertently impacted by land-use and development outcomes.

An integrated approach also enables the careful management of conflicts between land use and natural resource extraction.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Recognise areas containing valuable natural resources, including water resources, minerals and basic raw materials, so that they can be considered and protected in the earliest stages of the planning process.
2. Based on expert advice and advice from other relevant government agencies promote and assist in the management and sustainable use of water resources by:
 - a) encouraging the protection of surface and groundwater catchments and recharge areas from land use and development that may compromise the quality and quantity of drinking water or water with environmental or cultural values
 - b) promoting future development that supports natural hydrological functions and mitigates adverse impacts on upstream and downstream environments
 - c) taking into account the availability of water resources in an area to ensure future growth areas can be supported by an adequate and sustainable water supply
 - d) encouraging water-sensitive urban design and whole-of-water cycle management to sensitively manage stormwater quality and quantity, and where practical, facilitate recycling and reuse.
3. Promote and assist in the management and sustainable use of other natural resources by:
 - a) protecting basic raw materials for construction close to established and developing parts of the NT to help keep down the costs of land development
 - b) planning for the land around extractive and mining sites to be used for compatible and agreed purposes that do not limit or constrain development opportunities, including access to resources

- c) supporting the development of a long-term closure plan for extractive and mining sites to enable the transition to an agreed post-mining land-use
 - d) promoting strategies that enhance resource use efficiency, reduce waste, and achieve nature-positive outcomes.
4. Enable the progressive transition to renewable energy by identifying and protecting land for renewable energy development, infrastructure and associated transmission networks.



Theme 2: Liveable Communities

Help deliver well-designed places with diverse housing options and assist in the provision of infrastructure and facilities to support people, communities and Country.

Sub-themes help deliver on objectives (b) (e) (g) (h) (i) (j) (k) of the Planning Act.

Sub-themes

- Land Supply & Housing Diversity
- Social Infrastructure
- Aboriginal Communities
- Good Design

Land Supply and Housing Diversity

Strategic planning is to promote the sustainable development of land to support the delivery of well-located and serviced land to accommodate a diverse range of housing to provide choice, affordability and culturally responsive outcomes to achieve objectives (b), (e) and (h) of the *Planning Act*.



The timely release of serviced land to enable development is a central issue for the NT's growth; it needs to address existing and future demand. Strategic planning guides where growth should occur to meet demand, shaping the way our settlements develop. This, in turn, influences our access to services, reliance on private cars, and how connected we are to each other.

We need to plan not just in our cities, but also in our regional towns and remote areas. Planning needs to address a range of housing options, including private housing, transient support, crisis accommodation and social housing.

There is no one-size-fits-all-solution to address the entire spectrum of housing needs and aspirations. Many Territorians continue to aspire to live in traditional houses in urban areas or rural lifestyle lots. Affordability and contemporary living expectations are encouraging some Territorians to consider alternatives such as apartment living or smaller lot housing. Strategic planning must strive to provide housing choice for different localities, demographics, lifestyles and household budgets.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Identify land, including infill, reuse and greenfield purposes, to ensure it is available to accommodate housing growth over the long term.

Residential land should be accessible and well-connected to services, employment and infrastructure; provide quality open space and recreation; and provide opportunities for people to reduce their transport costs.

2. Work collaboratively with the Australian Government, local government and other jurisdictions to identify and deliver on shared priorities for housing.
3. Identify opportunities for appropriate residential development in rural and regional centres and surrounding land to support anticipated demand.

Planning in rural and regional areas will need to be mindful of the limits of natural resources (such as water), the availability of supporting infrastructure and the need to maintain rural / regional character.

4. Provide low, medium and high-density housing typologies to align with the diverse needs and aspirations of our communities by:
 - a) responding to demographic trends including changing household size and composition
 - b) catering for the ageing population, including facilitating ageing in place
 - c) facilitating social and affordable housing in areas located close to services, employment and public transport networks
 - d) being responsive to the needs and mobility of Aboriginal people across the NT
 - e) considering the needs of people living with disability, including the level of support and care required for different levels of dependent and independent living options

- f) considering opportunities for well-located student accommodation, particularly in proximity to educational institutions and transport hubs.
5. Provide opportunities for mixed-use and higher density residential development within activity centres and transport corridor catchments to achieve densities required to support the economic viability of these locations and the public transport services.
 6. Where possible, consider future temporary workers' accommodation for major projects and ensure such accommodation is located to create the most benefit for the local community.
 7. Promote housing development practices that mitigate risks associated with natural hazards and climate change, ensuring new housing is built in a way that protects both residents and the surrounding environment.

Social Infrastructure

Strategic planning is to assist the provision of social infrastructure and facilities for the benefit of the community to support Territorians to enjoy a healthy, supported and fulfilled life to achieve objectives (b), (h) and (i) of the *Planning Act*.



Social infrastructure is essential to the wellbeing of Territorians. It supports critical government services such as health, education, emergency management, justice and public safety. Social infrastructure also enhances our quality of life through the provision of aged and disability care, sporting facilities, arts, childcare, and culture and recreation opportunities.

Strategic planning sets the stage for the provision of a sufficient, equitably distributed and accessible network of social infrastructure.

A critical first step in this process is understanding the projected size and characteristics of the future population in both new and existing areas. Factors such as age, ethnicity, and demand offer valuable insights into the usage of existing facilities and emerging needs, helping to inform planning decisions that support sustainable community growth.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Undertake social infrastructure needs assessments, as appropriate, and engage with other relevant government agencies, service providers and local councils in order to:
 - a) align strategies and investments
 - b) match the needs of growing and changing communities
 - c) promote access to such infrastructure being fair and equitable
 - d) identify new infrastructure requirements (for both new and established areas) and possible synergies and shared use

Information gained from this should be used to provide and protect land for social, recreational and cultural facilities including but not limited to, open space, sport and recreational provision along with education, hospitals and criminal justice facilities.

2. Provide social infrastructure in a manner that:
 - a) guards against the unnecessary loss of land used for valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its health and well-being needs
 - b) maximises the use of existing well-located social infrastructure, including the re-use and multi-use of sites to meet the changing needs and growth of the community
 - c) facilitates the co-location of compatible facilities to maximise joint use and minimise duplication of facilities and infrastructure
 - d) supports the needs of growing and diverse communities by allocating new land for social infrastructure within established areas, where an identified need exists.
3. Promote the location of social infrastructure near public and active transport networks (where available) and close to, or highly accessible from, residential areas.
4. Protect social infrastructure from land use conflict by limiting the encroachment or intensification of surrounding incompatible use and development.
5. Support the provision of appropriately located and distributed open spaces throughout neighbourhoods in order to:

- a) ensure quality open space is within walking distance of all neighbourhoods
- b) link, integrate and protect biodiversity assets and natural habitats
- c) provide linkages to encourage walking and cycling to local activities, local activity centres and regional centres
- d) ensure open space is suitably sized for its purpose
- e) facilitate maintenance regimes.

Aboriginal Communities

Strategic planning processes are to work with Aboriginal Territorians to address housing needs, support their economic and social aspirations and sustain connection to Country to achieve objectives (b) (h) (i) and (k) of the *Planning Act*.



Aboriginal people have owned and occupied land in the NT for over 65,000 years. Aboriginal Territorians' relationship to land and water remains fundamental to their identity and way of life, with many continuing to speak ancestral languages and follow traditional cultural practices.

Today Aboriginal Territorians represent 30% of the NT's population. Whilst a large portion reside in remote communities a distinguishing feature of our urban areas are town camps. Town camps are an important part of the wider community and are highly valued by their residents and families, and continue to be visited by family and friends from connected remote communities.

As our population grows, in urban, remote and regional communities, there is a need for suitable and culturally appropriate housing and service systems to grow and diversify. Strategic planning processes can work with Aboriginal Territorians to help deliver housing and support social and economic development.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Recognise the role that Aboriginal people have as stewards of their country as conferred under their traditions and recognised in law, and the importance of participation by Aboriginal people and communities in strategic planning decision-making processes.
2. Promote inclusive processes to enable participation by Aboriginal traditional landowners, other Aboriginal peoples, and/or their representatives in order to:
 - a) enable the consideration of Aboriginal people's knowledge, culture and tradition
 - b) help Aboriginal people reach their aspirations with regard to land use and development opportunities in their communities.
3. Assist in the timely delivery of culturally appropriate housing and infrastructure that responds to the needs of Aboriginal communities.
4. Recognise and enable the mobility of Aboriginal people across the NT, which is integral to the maintenance of family connections, traditional responsibilities, and access to Country.

Good Design

Strategic planning is to promote the good design of buildings and other works that respects local amenity, enhance liveability, and strengthen community resilience to achieve objectives (b) (g) (h) and (j) of the *Planning Act*.



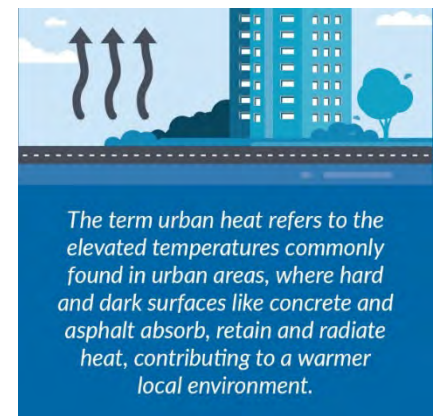
The way buildings and the spaces around them are designed can have a strong influence on the way people value and engage with a space. When done well, good design can foster a sense of place and stewardship; help enhance the perception of a place and, in turn, help attract investment, new residents and visitors.

Good design is more than just a matter of aesthetics or taste. Rather, it is derived from a range of complementary foundational considerations, including practical ways to enhance the function of a place; response to context and climate, inclusivity, and sustainability and safety.

Strategic planning can help foster a culture of good design in buildings, subdivisions and urban spaces through the promotion of these foundational considerations.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Consideration is to be given to the local context of a place, along with communal aspirations to ensure policy:
 - a) respects any existing distinctive character valued by the community
 - b) contributes to change in a managed, careful and quality way
 - c) integrates and responds to natural features such as topography, waterways and native vegetation.
2. The good design of buildings and other works is to be promoted by:
 - a) incorporating design principles to reduce opportunities for crime and improve community perceptions about safety
 - b) facilitating an interconnected network of quality green infrastructure, linking tree canopy,
 - c) open space, native vegetation and waterways to support a place's broader character and ecological context
 - d) considering the needs and abilities of all members of the community during the design process
 - e) encouraging active frontages in activity centres to enhance pedestrian engagement, improve safety and support vibrant, mixed-use environments
 - f) adopting climate-sensitive design responses to improve resilience, reduce urban heat and reduce reliance on mechanical cooling and heating
 - g) designing public spaces to encourage social interaction and cultural activities.
 - h) considering and aligning with the NT Subdivision Development Guidelines.





Theme 3: Connected & Efficient

Promote the importance of integrated land use, transport and physical infrastructure planning to enable well-located, accessible, equitable and efficient outcomes.

Sub-themes help deliver on objectives (e) (f) (g) (h) and (i) of the Planning Act.

Sub-themes

- Moving Goods and People
- Essential Services and Utilities

Moving Goods and People

Strategic planning is to integrate land use and transport planning to assist in the provision of safe and efficient transport networks that connect people, places, goods, and markets; and encourages sustainable transport outcomes to achieve objectives (e) (f) (g) (h) and (i) of the *Planning Act*.



Transport networks play an influential role in the dynamics and success of our settlements. These networks connect Territorians to each other, to activities and services, and to the rest of the world. They also provide critical linkages for Defence and moving commodities.

Over time, the NT has developed as a low-density, car-dependent region. Given the NT's vast size, low population, and extreme climate, vehicles are expected to remain the primary mode of transport for the foreseeable future. However, strategic planning can lay the foundation for compact, mixed-use areas that encourage walking, cycling, and public transport, supporting more sustainable travel options.

As the population and economy grows and diversifies, integrating transport and strategic planning is fundamental to protect strategic transport and logistics networks.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Strategic land-use plans are to be developed with the active involvement of transport infrastructure providers, operators, local councils and Defence (where necessary) in order to:
 - a) align strategies and investments and where possible support sustainable transport outcomes
 - b) match the needs of growing and changing communities and economies
 - c) identify new infrastructure requirements
 - d) identify the need for the preparation of Developer Contributions Plan
 - e) enable the delivery of infrastructure in accordance with the NT Subdivision Development Guidelines.
 - f) plan holistically for end-to-end connection of logistics to optimise supply chains.
2. Land for existing and future strategic transport infrastructure (including roads, ports, rail, air and associated infrastructure) for passenger and freight movements are to be identified and:
 - a) protected to allow for logical upgrades, network extensions and intensification; and
 - b) safeguarded from encroachment by incompatible land use and development that may impact its operation or expansion.
3. Support aviation safety outcomes by ensuring the requirements of the National Airports Safeguarding Framework and any applicable CASA (Civil Aviation Safety Authority) regulatory requirements for aerodromes in regional and remote areas are recognised in strategic planning processes.

4. Support sustainable opportunities to connect people, jobs, goods and services and reduce transport related emissions land use plans and planning policies by:
- a) promoting mixed-use and medium-to high-density development within a comfortable walking distance of:
 - i. activity centres where commercial and community facilities are available
 - ii. public transport routes (applicable in regions where public transport services are available).
 - b) planning for a choice of sustainable transport modes, including public transport, walking and cycling
 - c) planning for connectivity through urban design that considers the number and quality of connections to and from an area
 - d) promoting neighbourhoods, main streets and regional and town centres where place and people are given priority over vehicles
 - e) promoting the greening of pedestrian pathways, key transport corridors and car parks to provide shade support amenity and reduce the urban heat island effect
 - f) considering the needs of low emission vehicles and personal mobility devices and how they may reshape our urban environments.

NOTE: Opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between climatic regions and urban, rural and remote locations, and this should be taken into account in setting strategic policy.

Essential Services and Utilities

Strategic planning is to integrate land-use and infrastructure planning to assist in the provision of public utilities and infrastructure and facilities for the benefit of the community to achieve objectives (e) (f) (g) (h) and (i) of the *Planning Act*.



The NT has a far-reaching network of essential services and utilities - including water, sewerage, energy and telecommunications - across urban, rural and remote settings. These networks are critical to the liveability of our communities and the prosperity of economic endeavours.

The NT's relatively small population base, climatic extremes, demanding geography and the vast distances that separate communities from each other and from the rest of Australia, present considerable challenges in delivering such services. This is compounded by the pace of technological change and growing consumer expectations.

Effective integration of infrastructure provision in the early stages of strategic planning is crucial, as decisions made now can't be easily reversed and will impact social, environmental, and economic outcomes for decades. It also allows for the efficient planning of 'regional' and 'sub-regional' infrastructure, accounting for the long lead times required.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Strategic land use plans are to be developed with the active involvement of infrastructure providers, asset owners, operators and local councils in order to:
 - a) align strategies and investments and support sustainable outcomes
 - b) match the needs of growing and changing communities and economies
 - c) identify new infrastructure requirements
 - d) identify the need for the preparation of Developer Contributions Plan
 - e) enable the delivery of infrastructure in accordance with the NT Subdivision Development Guidelines.
 - f) sequence infrastructure funding and delivery to ensure development is timed to align with infrastructure delivery.
2. Maximise opportunities to make the most efficient and effective use of existing and planned infrastructure.
3. Identify and protect strategically located land and associated corridors to accommodate essential services and utilities to meet existing and future service needs for:
 - a) water
 - b) gas
 - c) electricity
 - d) sewerage
 - e) telecommunications infrastructure (fixed voice, broadband services and mobile coverage)
 - f) waste management and resource recovery facilities
 - g) hazardous waste.

4. Identify sites for waste consolidation to service multiple small and remote communities.
5. Locate and design community and essential infrastructure to maintain the required level of functionality during and immediately after a natural hazard event.
6. Safeguard existing and future essential services infrastructure sites and corridors from sensitive or incompatible land uses that would compromise their security or future operational integrity.
7. Protect public health and safety and the natural environment from potential adverse impacts that may arise from essential service infrastructure and utilities by:
 - a) ensuring possible impacts are considered at all stages of the strategic planning process;
 - b) promoting, where appropriate, the co-location of like uses to minimise the impact area;
 - c) adequately separating infrastructure, with any adverse off-site impacts and/or safety risks, from incompatible land uses.



Theme 4: Prosperous & Productive

Foster industrial, business and other employment and wealth-generating activities to support economic and community prosperity.

Sub-themes help deliver on objectives (b) (e) (f) (g) (h) (i) and (j) of the Planning Act.

Sub-themes

- Farming, Food and Rural Support
- Industry and Innovation
- Activity Centres and Employment Lands
- Tourism

Farming, Food and Rural Support

Strategic planning is to help protect the productivity of agricultural lands and promote primary production activities to support the growth of the sector and those regional and rural communities it underpins to achieve objectives (e) (f) (g) and (h) of the *Planning Act*.



Farming, including agriculture and forestry, is a significant source of economic activity in the NT and is often the lifeblood of regional and remote communities. Farming also influences and interacts with other sectors of the economy, including retail and wholesale trade, manufacturing, transport and tourism.

The allure of living in a rural setting (particularly for those parcels in close proximity to urban settlements), water scarcity and climate change can place pressure on productive land. If not managed carefully this pressure can give rise to land use conflict, which can result in the permanent loss of productive land and consequences for our food security.

Land capable of supporting agricultural and horticultural activity is a relatively rare resource in the area covered by the strategic planning framework. Strategic planning must work to protect farming and primary production areas to ensure that this valuable land is not lost from production and to support the viability of those communities it underpins.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Recognise farming, including agriculture and forestry as a strategic land use that is fundamental to the economic resilience, food production capacity and community well-being.
2. Ensure land capable of supporting agricultural and primary production activities, is identified, through consideration of soil characteristics, water availability and appropriate lots sizes, and appropriately protected.

Any proposed loss of productive land should be accompanied by a robust strategic justification.

3. Support the ongoing use and productivity of farming land by:
 - a) preventing the encroachment of sensitive land uses or land uses that present biosecurity risks
 - b) avoiding or minimising the potential for conflict with existing agricultural uses through the provision of buffers, separation distance or other measures
 - c) avoiding fragmentation of land that may limit future production or expansion
 - d) accommodating opportunities for small-scale complementary land-uses, including agri-tourism, that can be integrated on site.
4. Identify synergies that agricultural and primary production activities have with other industries in order to holistically plan for supporting infrastructure and services.
5. Consideration should be given to the social and economic value of farming land and its importance to local communities.

Industry and Innovation

Strategic planning is to facilitate industrial activities whilst avoiding, mitigating or managing potential risks to the health and amenity of people and the environment to achieve objectives (e) (f) (g) (h) and (i) of the *Planning Act*.



Industrial land uses involve a range of activities including manufacturing, assembling, packaging, altering, repairing and renovating. Industrial land uses are critical to local, regional, NT and national economies and are a significant generator of employment.

Emerging industries, driven by global net zero commitments, have the potential to have a significant land use footprint and may place pressure on existing infrastructure and environments.

Strategic land use planning plays a crucial role in identifying and allocating land for industrial development. It can set policy to minimise conflicts with residential or environmental areas, optimise land-use and ensure efficient connections to markets. This can enhance the NT's competitiveness, attract businesses, and creates job opportunities.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Identify and protect a sufficient supply of strategically located and serviced land to allow future industry growth and/or expansion in general and light industries, and major strategic industries,
2. Identify and protect land for infrastructure and transmission corridors to support and safely connect general, light, and major strategic industries.
3. Support industrial innovation, growth and productivity and plan for amenity and interface issues by:
 - a) preventing conflict and encroachment between industrial and sensitive land uses through land use separation and buffers
 - b) planning a suitable land use transition between industrial land uses and sensitive land uses by providing compatible zones and land uses
 - c) promoting the co-location of like uses to minimise impacts, improve efficiencies and maximise infrastructure investment
 - d) enabling compatible land uses that provide a convenience, service or support role to industrial areas without undermining the primary industrial function
 - e) continuing to provide opportunities for a range of light industrial activities to establish and operate in proximity to their customers in urban areas.

4. Acknowledge the evolving nature of mining and the renewable energy industry, and promote such industries in preferred locations considering factors such as resource availability, infrastructure capacity, and proximity to markets.
5. Enable the transition to a circular economy that encourages the use of clean technologies, enhances resource efficiency, prevents waste and secures nature-positive outcomes.



Activity Centres and Employment Lands

Strategic planning is to support the vitality and viability of activity centres and employment lands to achieve objectives (e) (f) (h) (i) and (j) of the *Planning Act*.



Activity centres are places where people can shop, work, meet, relax and in many instances live. They range in size and form and are ideally well-serviced by various transport options. 'Employment lands' are also areas of economic activity but they tend to focus on specific land-uses such as universities, major health campuses, ports and airports. Tourism plays a vital role in many activity centres, boosting local economies and social vibrancy.

Advances in technology and changing consumer habits are transforming business operations and consumer interactions. However, communities still depend on a wide range of activity centres for shopping, work, and socialising, especially in regional and remote areas.

The establishment of a hierarchy of activity centres through strategic planning ensures that businesses and activities align with the needs and scale of each centre, while providing a clear strategy for the distribution of goods, services, and employment. Strategic planning can also shape the design, land-use mix and accessibility of activity centres in order to promote economic prosperity and opportunity, sustainability, safety, community well-being and tourism.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Maintain an activity centre hierarchy to support planned investment and the distribution of goods, services, employment opportunities and housing for varying catchments across both urban and rural areas of the NT.
2. Encourage the development of existing activity centres, and the planned growth of existing centres, that stimulates engagement, enhances productivity, optimises connectivity, supports innovation and tourism, and ensures the efficient use of infrastructure by:
 - a) reinforcing the hierarchy of activity centres by preventing out-of-centre development that may undermine the hierarchy of activity centres
 - b) strategically locate activity centres to ensure transportation, infrastructure, and services are optimised to meet the needs of their respective intended catchment
 - c) providing a rich concentration and mix of land uses to support the intended role and function of the activity centre
 - d) promoting urban activity centres as the focus of well-designed medium and high-density residential and mixed-use developments to improve land use efficiency and housing variety
 - e) carefully considering density and housing typologies, including social and affordable housing opportunities, in and around activity centres in order to maintain and increase the critical mass to support activity centres.
 - f) carefully planning for the growth of rural activity centres to strengthen local economies and services, while preserving the rural character and lifestyle that define these communities

- g) considering opportunities to increase activation on the street, sheltered pedestrian footpaths and places for social interaction
 - h) maximising access to and within activity centres by walking, cycling and public transport to reduce car travel
3. Explore opportunities to revitalise activity centres in established areas as a catalyst for urban and regional renewal.
 4. Identify and allocate accessible and well-connected employment lands that provides for the existing and emerging needs of employment sectors, supporting collaboration and innovation.
 5. Connect employment lands with activity centres to unlock synergies between such centres and with direct access to major freight routes where required.
 6. Explore opportunities for small-scale cafés and restaurants in appropriate locations within urban areas (along distributor roads and close to parks and public areas) to activate and service local communities.

Tourism

Strategic planning is to foster and enable tourism opportunities whilst safeguarding the unique social, cultural and natural values underpinning the land to achieve objectives (e) (f) (h) (i) and (j) of the *Planning Act*.



Nature-based and cultural tourism are key drawcards for holiday visitors to the NT, with holiday makers attracted to our natural landscapes, rich culture, warm climate and unique visitor experiences. These assets are also valued and utilised by Territorians, thereby contributing to broader liveability outcomes.

Tourism activity spans multiple industries and ancillary services, including the journey to, from and within a destination. It encompasses accommodation, attractions, facilities, and associated infrastructure, with some assets located in urban or regional centres, and others near natural or recreational areas.

The strategic planning framework can support the tourism industry by safeguarding tourism assets and identifying suitable locations for tourism development. It can also help set the stage for supporting infrastructure, such as transport, accommodation, and amenities, which are essential for a thriving tourism sector.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Recognise and protect significant tourism assets that support the tourism experience throughout the NT.
2. Understand the needs and motivations of tourists and operators so that strategic planning can support a positive strategy for its growth and development by:
 - a) enabling opportunities for the clustering of activities to take advantage of synergies between various uses, including value-adding activities
 - b) providing appropriate support infrastructure for tourism
 - c) promoting the location of tourist accommodation (including caravan parks)
 - i. in areas close to tourism assets
 - ii. with adequate separation from sensitive land uses (i.e. schools, childcare centres and lower-density dwellings)
 - d) considering tourism-related transport infrastructure needs, including the improvement of connections between tourist accommodation to key attractions, as part of broader strategic transport planning for a region.



Theme 5: Resilient and Responsive

Reduce risk and build communities resilient to risk and support Defence capability in the north.

Sub-themes help deliver on objectives (e) (f) (g) (h) (i) (j) and (k) of the Planning Act.

Sub-themes

- Natural Hazards
- Defence & National Security

Natural Hazards

Strategic planning is to reduce exposure and enhance community resilience to natural hazards and the projected impacts of climate change to protect the quality of life of current and future generations and achieve objectives (e) (f) (g) (h) (i) (j) and (k) of the *Planning Act*.



Natural hazards are an ever-present force shaping and informing where we settle, how we build and how we manage land in the NT. Our vulnerability to them is likely to increase and magnify as our climate changes.

Building a community's long-term resilience to these threats is a critical and shared responsibility, involving action from all areas of government, with responsibility also lying with individual households, the community and businesses.

Strategic land use planning can provide a policy framework that reduces our exposure to such risks along with complementary mitigation and adaptation strategies for reducing carbon emissions and preparing our communities for a changing climate.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Strategic planning is informed by an assessment of existing and future natural hazard and climate change risk using available data, scientific and scenario modelling, and multi-disciplinary expert advice.
2. Identify risks from natural hazards and how these may change as a result of climate change and changing land-use patterns, including:
 - a) riverine and stormwater flooding
 - b) sea level rise and storm surge
 - c) extreme heat
 - d) bushfires
 - e) biting insects
 - f) local geology
 - g) erosion
 - h) extreme storms, including cyclones
3. Locate new development away from high-risk areas to avoid community exposure to natural hazards as far as is practical. Where avoidance is not possible, risk should be mitigated to acceptable levels.
4. Where an existing natural hazard is likely to recur or intensify over time, strategic planning should adopt a position on planned retreat or include measures to reduce future risks such as build back better.
5. Locate and design community and essential infrastructure to maintain the required level of functionality during and immediately after a natural hazard event.
6. Operational planning for emergency service responders is integrated in strategic planning to support:
 - a) achievable response times that maximises public safety
 - b) the evacuation of vulnerable communities
 - c) accessibility for emergency services for fire suppression activities during an emergency fire response.
7. Ensure risk posed by known or potential contamination of sites is adequately acknowledged in strategic plans to enable appropriate land use and development responses.

Defence and National Security

Strategic planning is to set a positive strategy to support the Australian Defence Force in maintaining and expanding its operations in the NT whilst fostering beneficial outcomes for nearby communities in order to achieve objectives (e) (f) (g) (h) and (i) of the *Planning Act*.



Defence's presence in the north is integral to life in the NT, the security of Australia and the stability of our region. The ability of Defence and national security agencies to sustain operations in Australia and the Indo-Pacific region requires infrastructure and industrial capability to be in place to support these operations.

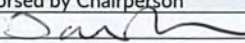
The presence of Defence personnel and their families also has a positive impact on the local economy, industry and workforce availability and the range of health, education and other social and lifestyle services available in the NT.

Commonwealth legislation regulates land use and development on major Defence sites. Early and ongoing collaboration with the Department of Defence is vital in strategic planning to ensure the long-term sustainability of Defence capability in the region whilst also ensuring satisfactory outcomes and, where possible, sustained benefits for nearby communities.

Strategic policy statements:

1. Strategic planning around the Defence estate should occur through continued engagement between the Territory Government and Defence to:
 - a) align relevant strategies and frameworks and leverage capabilities across government;
 - b) protect Defence sites and associated infrastructure and plan for the land around it to be used for purposes that do not limit or compromise Defence operations.
2. Mitigation strategies should be used to reduce a community's potentially negative exposure and vulnerability to the operations of defence sites and infrastructure.
3. Promote opportunities for the presence of Defence to complement and contribute to nearby communities through early and ongoing engagement.

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NORTHERN TERRITORY
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