

Suburbs set to boom as population soars

New 20-year expansion plan aims to bring residents south of river

By **MELISSA GRANT**

melissa.grant@dailymercury.com.au

RICHMOND, Ooralea and Rosella are set to boom over the next 20 years to help accommodate another 100,000 people in the region, the State Government revealed yesterday.

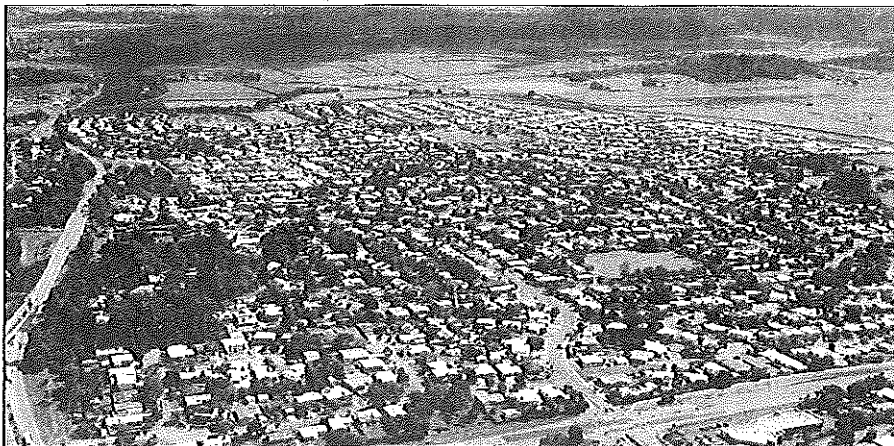
An industrial area has also been earmarked for Rosella in the Draft Mackay Isaac Whitsunday (MIW) Regional Plan 2011-2031, released exclusively to the Daily Mercury.

The Northern Beaches has long been the region's booming residential area; however, the plan aims to change that by encouraging the construction of more homes on the south side of the Pioneer River.

A whopping 66,000, or 68% of the region's new residents, are expected to live in Mackay while Ooralea and Richmond will also take in much of the growth.

Premier Anna Bligh said the plan aimed to limit urban sprawl and take pressure off land that was agriculturally productive, environmentally sensitive or had scenic value.

"We are ensuring there is



RESIDENTIAL EXPANSION: Richmond, the partially rural area, top, is set to expand as part of a 20-year blueprint for growth released by the State Government yesterday. The draft regional plan has identified the suburb as a key development area.

PHOTO: PETER HOLT

sufficient land for building new homes for future residents while protecting around 99.7% of this beautiful region from significant urban development," Ms Bligh said.

An extra 51,500 dwellings will be built to accommodate the region's growing

population, which is expected to explode from 180,417 to 280,417 people by 2031.

Ms Bligh said the region's growth would be generally focussed within existing towns, from Airlie Beach to Sarina, and adjacent land identified within the Urban Footprint.

She said residents could expect to see more mixed-use development, enabling them to live, work, shop and play in the same area, as well as open green spaces and pedestrian and cycle paths.

Member for Mackay Tim Mulherin said the Pioneer

River had long been an unofficial dividing line between resident's homes and workplaces - but that would soon start to change.

"Historically, Mackay's residents have tended to live north of the Pioneer River and work south of the river," he said.

MANAGING GROWTH

Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday region over the next 20 years:

- Population of 280,417 people, an increase of 100,000
- An additional 51,500 dwellings to accommodate the growing population
- Mackay to absorb about 66,000 (68%) of new residents
- Development areas for Ooralea and Richmond to accommodate much of the growth. Rosella identified as a growth area.
- Rosella, south of Mackay, is identified for long-term industrial expansion but is not expected to be developed until Paget is at capacity. However, this might happen sooner to cater for large footprint industrial activities.

"The draft regional plan aims to shift the balance by encouraging more residential development south of the river."

Residents can make comment on the plan until September 2. The plan will be able to be downloaded from www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/mliv