

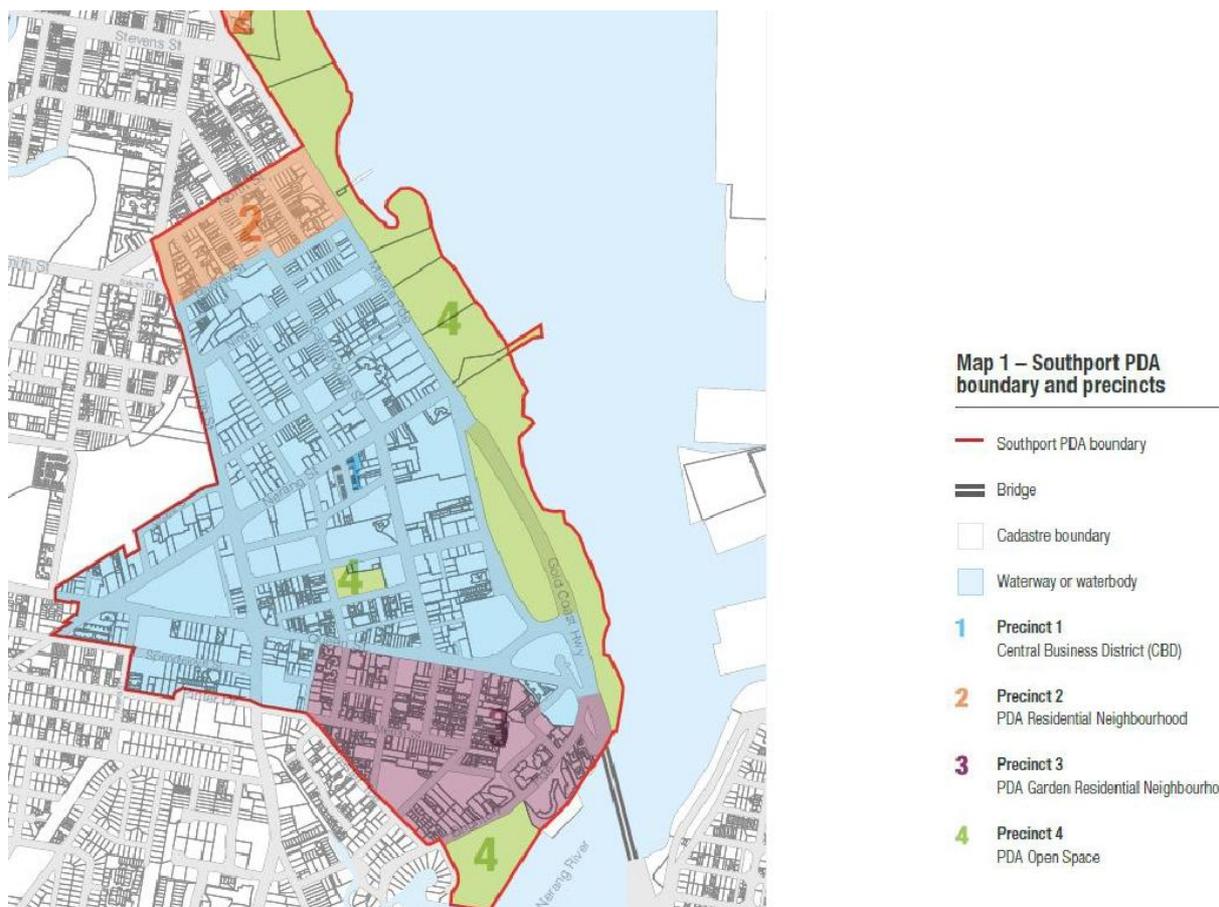
Southport population woes putting pressure on Broadwater suburbs like Labrador and Biggera Waters

The failure of the Southport CBD to attract more residents in new high rise towers is being blamed for putting development pressure on Broadwater suburbs.

Paul Weston, Gold Coast Bulletin
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AN inability to attract more residents in new highrise towers in the Southport CBD is putting development pressure on Broadwater suburbs such as Labrador and Biggera Waters, a council candidate says.

Division 6 hopeful Brooke Patterson believes the Southport Priority Development Area introduced in 2013 has been a failure and blames the banks for not backing developers.



The precincts under the Southport Priority Plan.

Under City Plan changes, by 2041 Labrador will increase by 10,500 residents, Biggera Waters by 1400 and Southport West by 9000, which has sparked a backlash from residents.

“If the PDA had succeeded, our population targets would be largely met and the City Plan would not need to be revisited to the extent it is now,” Ms Patterson said.

Council had been “lazy” in its planning by pushing highrise out into the suburbs to meet housing demands rather than build up density along the light rail in the CBD.

“It is all well and good for local and state governments to declare areas a priority, such as Southport CBD, but if the banks don’t come to the party lending finance it accounts for nought,” Ms Patterson said.

“Had the banks not black-listed large-scale residential developments in 4215 and 4217, the PDA would be fulfilled and population targets would be met. Instead we see properties and sites suited for development, many owned by foreign interests, being held over in order to secure bigger sales.”

When the PDA was launched, council received 29 development applications, worth at least \$1.96 billion, but much of it was for commercial space.



The area of Southport which is the focus of the Priority Development Plan.

The PDA covers 195.7 hectares in Southport. The area was divided into four precincts – the central business district, the PDA Residential Neighbourhood in the north, the PDA Garden Residential Neighbourhood by the Nerang River and the PDA Open Space.

In its latest report on land supply in the region, Urbis concluded “we have plenty of capacity for apartments and town houses but we’re not building them quickly enough and we aren’t building enough town houses and walk-ups as part of the overall mix”.

Ms Patterson, who wants to replace retiring councillor Dawn Crichlow at the March poll, said she had a five-point program to help reset the PDA and reignite Southport. It started with engaging with the banks’ lending decision-makers.

“The program includes reducing the area outlined in the priority development plan, currently covering 195 hectares, to make it more workable and effective, and moving

government departments to Southport, including a Supreme Court and permanent family law court,” she said.

Ms Patterson believes allowing public servants who currently commute along the M1 to hot desk in some of the CBD’s new shared office facilities a few days a week would make a difference to congestion on the M1.

Mayor Tom Tate has championed a legal fraternity precinct.

Ms Patterson, a financial adviser, also believes the Southport Central Committee should be given extra powers.



Division Six council candidate Brooke Patterson.

“These design committees already exist in both Sydney and Melbourne, and allow the appointment of experienced and knowledgeable groups to ensure that each new development meets the planning and community demand, and give each the clear pathway they require,” she said.

“The fact that there has been an increase of more than 40 per cent in approvals for ground-level retail space in recent years that simply isn’t required or used, is a major planning flaw. It leaves the CBD with street-level lease signs everywhere.

“Southport Central could be a mix of the best of places like Fortitude Valley and South Bank. It’s about linking our community and our town, which is what occurs in South Bank where you have the parks merging into the retail areas, into the education outlets, the entertainment and public offices.”