The Mid North Coast Farmland Mapping Project Final Recommendations Report includes planning recommendations covering farmland. Below is a summary. For a copy of the Report, contact the Department of Planning on 66 41 66 00.

Land mapped as regionally significant farmland cannot be considered for urban or rural residential zoning unless the land is:

a) identified in a council rural residential strategy which has been agreed to by the Department of Planning as at the date of the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy, or exhibited by that time and subsequently agreed to; or

b) part of a Growth Area under the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy or

c) already zoned, subdivided or approved for urban or rural residential use under an LEP.

Councils' Local Growth Management Strategies cannot include regionally significant farmland in future rural residential areas.

In any review of the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy, regionally significant farmland cannot be included in a Growth Area unless:

a) the land forms an otherwise logical extension to the major regional centres of Grafton, Coffs Harbour or Port Macquarie, and

b) the land is needed for efficient urban development and

c) there is no practicable alternative, or

d) where the encroachment on mapped farmland is minor.

New urban or rural residential areas expanding towards regionally significant farmland must avoid compromising the farmland. Potential land use conflict or loss of transpiring services such as flood relief must be assessed, and buffers incorporated to protect farmland uses. The onus is on the land within the encroaching residential zone.

Where regionally significant farmland is zoned for environmental protection, the zoning should not be altered to rural.

The farmland map should be used as an information resource when councils and state agencies plan for public infrastructure.