Queensland Conservation

Going Climate Neutral in Queensland by 2050

A framework to reduce greenhouse gas (ghg) emissions in Queensland, to contribute towards a national reduction target of 50% by 2020 (based on 1990 levels).This can position Queensland to go climate neutral and achieve absolute cuts by 2050.

This necessary and achievable goal will place Queensland in the vanguard of positive action on climate change. The 2020 target can be achieved with a focus upon energy reduction, greater efficiency, support for renewable energy, by reducing transport sector emissions and making changes to land use and agricultural practices.

The target responds to the latest scientific scenarios which show global temperatures trending towards the upper end of IPCC projections. There has been too little effective action to date, making the requirement for greater and more immediate reductions aimed at the stabilisation of emissions within the next decade.

No net increase in ghg emissions

If Queensland is to reduce its ghg emissions, it must accept that ghg emissions cannot continue to grow. According to the Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO), Queensland ghg emissions will triple to 530 million tonnes (mt) per year by 2030.

We call for:

- **The establishment a *Climate Neutral Program* for all new developments (industrial, commercial and residential);**

- **A commitment to stabilise ghg emissions by (2010).**

Climate Neutral is the achievement of no net greenhouse gas emissions through a combination of emission reductions and the offsetting of residual emissions by the purchase of offsets such as renewable energy and, finally, through the use of carbon sinks.

Reduce Greenhouse gas emissions in line with a national target of 50% by 2020

Corporations, industry, small business, government and individuals must play their part by changing practices and behaviour in meeting a reduction target.

The key to achieving the necessary ghg reductions is to become more energy efficient, and to invest in energy sources that do not create ghg emissions. Queensland's ghg emissions remain high because of the State's over-reliance on coal power and an energy-intense industrial sector.

The Queensland Government has committed to a national emissions trading scheme (ETS).

We call for:

- **An ETS to be introduced by 1 July 2010**
- **A cap and trade scheme based upon a 50% reduction by 2020 (1990 levels)**
- **All permits to be auctioned**
- **No exemptions for energy-intense industries**
- **A minimum 70% emission coverage, which includes the transport sector. (Agriculture to be excluded from the first round. This refers to on farm practices, not other activities such as fertiliser production)**

Small-medium enterprises and households will not be captured by an ETS, but will be impacted by it, particularly through higher energy and transport costs. Achieving emissions cuts will require these sectors to reduce their emissions profile. A series of complementary measures must be introduced urgently.

We call for:

- **A *Climate Business Program* for small-medium business to set emission reductions and provide incentives to reduce energy use to be introduced prior to the ETS**

- **A *Climate Neutral Program* for all households, with a requirement for all new houses to be zero emission by 2014 and all existing to be climate neutral by 2014**

Renewable Energy

Queensland has considerable clean, renewable energy potential, most of it unrealised. These resources include solar, wind, geothermal, tidal, wave and biomass.

Power generation in Queensland is dominated by a centralised system, where large coal-fired generators provide electricity, often over large distances. This is inherently inefficient and wasteful. Distributed generation, involving smaller and more localised facilities, is an ideal opportunity for renewable energy investment. Distributed generation is tailor-made for Queensland's remote and regionalised populations in particular.

We call for:

- **A phase out of traditional coal-fired power stations by 2030 (or sooner) with the strategic introduction of clean energy to replace generating capacity**

- **A milestone 30% renewable energy target by 2020**

- **All publicly funded infrastructure (requiring energy to operate) to be powered by clean energy sources**

Government Leadership

We have proposed a climate neutral program for all new developments in Queensland, effective immediately, with a commitment to stablise ghg emissions by 2010.

We call for:

- **A State government commitment to include *all its operations* in a climate neutral 2020 program ;**

- **QLD Government to actively enlist the corporate sector in joining a climate neutral program.**

Adaptation Program

We support the implementation of a climate adaptation program in Queensland. Every community across the state will be impacted by climate change, whether emissions are reduced or not. Adaptation programs must be prioritised to protect high conservation regions and the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

We call for:

- **A fully funded Climate Adaptation Program to be rolled out as soon as possible**

Transport

The private motor vehicle remains the dominant form of transport in Queensland. According to QLD Transport over 80% of all journeys are conducted in private motor vehicles.

We need to reduce ghg emissions from this sector and set new transport priorities and options. This will mean a greater emphasis upon travel avoidance and upon alternative and public transportation. It will mean re-thinking the way in which towns and cities are designed and the means by which we transport products between producers and consumers and goods and services within, and between, urban centres.

Transport must be included in an ETS.

We call for:

- **All transport and vehicle investment prioritised towards modes that have lower emissions per person per kilometre**

- **Public Transport infrastructure/services to be developed to become the major transport mode by 2025**

- **Biofuels to be used exclusively on-farm or appropriate in-situ, small scale business purposes**

Agriculture and farming

Queensland's rural communities and primary industries face increasing challenges from climate change related impacts. More drought, less rainfall (in the Far north too much rainfall) will aggravate and marginalise productive. Food prices will rise as a result of an ETS, higher fuel prices and unpredictable weather will make supply more variable.

Mitigating and adapting to these changes will mean a change in culture and practice. With the development of ecosystem service payments, with hosting fees for renewable energy facilities and carbon offsets, with the clear benefits of ecological farming such as greater diversity of crops, resilience of farming systems, improved soils, less fertilizers and better water management and with the greater debate on food/product transportation the sector will be subject to some major transformation.

We call for:

- **The development of a *Rural Futures Program* to reduce agricultural sector emissions, improve emission-intense land practice, end all land clearing and the strategic phase-in of ecological farming**

- **The introduction of an *Urban Communities Program* to develop urban food production and set targets for increasing vegetation cover, biodiversity hotspots and regional open space in all urban centres**

- **Establishment of an agricultural and soil carbon offsets program to identify and regulate offset management**