

# Queensland's climate change strategy

## Toward a greener Queensland

Queensland's climate is naturally variable. As the climate changes, we need to change the way we interact with our environment and adapt.

Queensland is particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts such as sea-level rise, more frequent heatwaves and more intense rainfall events in some regions and drought in others. The physical impacts of climate change will affect our lifestyle and the industries that rely on our natural environment, such as agriculture, tourism and mining.

Economic modelling has found that unless we take action, climate change will pose far greater costs on Queensland than on any other Australian state or territory.



## Meeting the challenge

In August 2009, the Queensland Government released *ClimateQ: toward a greener Queensland*, to expand and strengthen Queensland's climate change response.

ClimateQ represents \$196 million in investments and policies designed to address Queensland's particular vulnerabilities to climate change, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in key sectors of the Queensland economy.

ClimateQ consolidates and updates the approaches taken in *ClimateSmart 2050* and *ClimateSmart Adaptation 2007-12*, drawing on the latest national and international science and policy. ClimateQ was developed following a detailed review of the latest science and policy to take Queensland's response into a new phase.

ClimateQ's 39 initiatives are designed to:

- lower the cost to households and businesses of becoming cleaner and greener
- support emerging technologies and industries that will help Queensland transition to a carbon-constrained economy
- protect and replenish Queensland's natural wonders that are vital to the productive future of key industries such as agriculture and tourism
- prioritise practical adaptation solutions, research and information to help communities adapt and respond to the impacts of climate change.

## Early action

Queensland's early response on climate change is beginning to pay dividends, with the 2008 National Greenhouse Gas Inventory data showing a significant decline in Queensland's total emissions.

In April 2007, Queensland committed to do its part in meeting the national greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 60 per cent below 2000 levels by 2050.

In addition, the government's *Toward Q2* commitment includes a target to reduce by one-third Queenslanders' carbon footprint by 2020, with reduced car and electricity use and waste to landfill.

Early actions achieved include:

- major investments in renewable and low-emission technologies, including carbon capture and storage
- promotion and expansion of energy efficiency programs for households, industry and government
- state leadership on national and global efforts to cut emissions. For example, Queensland's ban on land clearing was the main contributor to Australia meeting its Kyoto Protocol target.

## Adaptation and building resilience

To ensure the lifestyle and standard of living that Queenslanders enjoy is maintained into the future, we have to make adjustments to respond to our changing climate. This process is called adaptation.



*ClimateSmart Adaptation 2007-12*, was the first of its kind in Australia. Key inclusions in the plan were:

- raising awareness about the effects of climate change and tailoring expert advice and guidance to ensure climate change impacts are included in decision-making
- linking the latest climate change science research and projections with state policy responses and adaptation activities 'on the ground'
- improving our knowledge base on the risks to Queensland's regions and industry sectors from climate change
- providing 62 practical actions to enable government and businesses to consider the potential effects of climate change when they make decisions about: water planning and services; agriculture; human settlement; natural environment and landscape; emergency services and human health; tourism; business and industry; and finance and insurance
- aligning state-based activities with national initiatives on climate change adaptation.

## Taking action now

The Office of Climate Change coordinates whole-of-government implementation plans in tandem with partner agencies. Initiatives are well advanced across key sectors including energy; planning and building; Queensland business; community; primary industries; ecosystems; transport; and government leadership.

## Recent achievements

### Improved Traffic Flow for Reduced Emissions

The installation of new traffic management systems, such as Variable Speed Limiting, Lane Control Systems and Coordinated Ramp Signalling is underway on five key south east Queensland motorways.

Introduction of these systems will ease congestion and potentially secure significant emissions reductions of up to 30 per cent compared with congested traffic, while also improving safety on our roads.

### Facilitating Low Emission Energy Generation in Commercial Buildings

This initiative delivered a range of resources and guidelines to help building owners and developers to connect their distributed generation to the electricity and natural gas distribution networks.

Guidelines and resources were also delivered to help local governments to assess the amenity of impacts of onsite generation facilities.

Distributed generation refers to electricity produced at, or near the place where it is consumed via photovoltaic systems or small scale wind turbines mounted on rooftops, and standby generators.

### Supporting our Heroes

This initiative will boost the capacity of the State Emergency Service (SES) and the Rural Fire Service (RFS) to respond to natural disasters by providing additional equipment and resources. This includes rescue vehicles, flood boats, fire tankers and support programs. New emergency response vehicles have already been rolled out to SES groups across the State, with more equipment on its way to support the SES and RFS.

### Keeping our Mob ClimateSafe

Four Indigenous Field Officers are helping remote Indigenous communities prepare for the impacts of extreme weather in a changing climate through training, resources and exercises to promote and encourage volunteerism.

### Green Building Skills Fund

'Green' training for third and fourth year apprentices and newly finished apprentices and trainees is underway in partnership with Construction Skills Queensland. This project is on track to deliver green training to up to 3,500 participants by June 2013.

### Low Emission Bus Trial

The first diesel-electric hybrid bus trial is underway in Cairns, with a second due to start in 2012-13 in south east Queensland, following analysis of results from the first trial. This initiative could result in reduced emissions of up to 40 per cent over a traditional diesel bus, if American trial results are achieved in Queensland.

### Cleaner Greener Buildings

This initiative lifts environmental standards for all new homes, offices and government buildings and remove existing barriers to ClimateSmart development. Six star standards have been put in place for new houses, townhouses and major renovations, and new units are required to achieve a minimum five star energy equivalence.