



Department of
**Environment and
Heritage Protection**

Ref CTS 10499/17

5 MAY 2017

Dr Wendy Craik
Chair
Climate Change Authority
Email < submissions@climatechangeauthority.gov.au >

Dear Dr Craik

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Climate Change Authority's research into land sector abatement in emissions reduction.

The agriculture and land sectors are critically important to Queensland – socially, economically, ecologically, but also in terms of their emissions reduction potential. As outlined in the Queensland Government's attached submission to the Climate Change Authority's issues paper, 'Action on the Land: reducing emissions, conserving natural capital and improving farm profitability', the Queensland Government is supportive of national research, policy and programs that will enhance opportunities for Queensland landholders to participate in emissions reduction programs. The Government is also interested in work to improve recognition of the social, economic and environmental co-benefits that can accrue to landholders and the broader Queensland community from land management actions.

The Queensland Government is also preparing a submission to the Australian Department of the Environment and Energy as part of its national review of climate change policies. The Queensland Government would appreciate if that submission could be considered as part of the Climate Change Authority's review, as complementary to this submission.

Should your staff have any further enquiries, please ask them to contact Mrs Georgine Roodenrys, Executive Director, Climate Change Policy branch, of the department on telephone (07) 3330 5829.

Yours sincerely

Jim Reeves
Director-General

Att: Queensland Government submission to the Climate Change Authority issues paper 'Action on the Land'

Action on the Land: reducing emissions, conserving natural capital and improving farm profitability

Queensland Government submission

Introduction

The Queensland Government welcomes the opportunity to provide input to inform Climate Change Authority research into natural resource management, agriculture and land based emissions. Queensland's agriculture and broader land sectors are of key importance to our economy and our communities. These sectors are highly exposed to climate risk, account for a significant proportion of Queensland's greenhouse gas emissions, yet have significant adaptive capacity on both counts. The Queensland Government is highly supportive of strong national policies on climate change, and expanding opportunities for Queensland landholders to voluntarily participate in emissions reduction programs.

Globally, the world is undergoing a major economic transition guided by the 2015 Paris Agreement's central objective to keep global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius (°C), and to pursue efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C. The global momentum for this transition is accelerating. Without a strong climate change response, Australia runs a significant risk of negative economic consequence from inevitable shifts in the global markets driven by the transition responses of our major trading partners and international corporations, and from shifts driven by technology changes.

This submission provides a Queensland specific response to the Climate Change Authority's issues paper. The Queensland Government will include in its submission to the Australian Government's National Climate Change Policy Review references to economic opportunities of carbon farming and challenges for the land sector reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. This submission should be considered in conjunction with that submission, and those previously provided to the Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market (the Finkel Review), and the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Transitioning Regional Economies.

Queensland Government position on climate change policy

The Queensland Government supports the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement and is ready to play its part in the global efforts to achieve this objective in the interests of Queenslanders, our economy and our environment.

The Queensland Government is responding to climate change through the approach of **Understand – Adapt – Transition**. The Queensland Government seeks to ensure that Queensland is a leader in the global transition as well as being ready for the impacts of climate change that are occurring now and are locked in for the foreseeable future.

Queensland is uniquely vulnerable to climate and carbon risks. For example, climate change is the greatest threat to the Great Barrier Reef – the world's largest coral reef - which supports 69,000 jobs, attracts 1.9 million visitors and injects \$6 billion into our economy annually. This risk is clearly highlighted in the recent back-to-back mass coral bleaching events of 2016 and 2017.

In February 2017, the Queensland Government invited Australian federal, state, territory, and local government leaders to the Climate Action Roundtable in Cairns to discuss subnational collaboration on climate change action. Participants called on the Australian Government to use the national review to establish the foundations for a bipartisan approach to climate change policy to provide certainty to business, investors and the community on Australia's transition to a net zero emissions economy. The Roundtable communiqué is attached to this submission¹.

¹ <http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2017/2/24/state-leaders-demand-urgent-climate-action-to-protect-reef>

Industry and community representatives are also advocating for stronger and clearer long term policy measures for both climate mitigation and climate adaptation.

Queensland's Action on Climate Change

The Queensland Government is already tackling climate challenge through:

- **Queensland Climate Transition Strategy and Climate Adaptation Strategy Development** - the Queensland Government has committed to develop both a transition and an adaptation strategy to address climate change and adapt to the changing climate.
- **50% Renewable Energy target by 2030** - the Queensland Government is committed to increasing the uptake of renewable energy to drive jobs, investment, and cuts in greenhouse emissions.
- **1 million or 3000 MW solar rooftops** – our solar target will help deploy solar PV on the rooftops of businesses, community buildings and commercial or industrial sites including on public housing and schools (Advancing Clean Energy Schools program).
- **Queensland CarbonPlus Fund** - \$8.4 million to support the carbon farming industry and create jobs for Traditional Owners to deliver environmental, social and cultural benefits in Indigenous communities
- **Advance Queensland Biofutures 10-Year Roadmap and Action Plan** - the Government has set a vision for a \$1 billion sustainable and export-oriented industrial biotechnology and bioproducts sector.
- **Solar150** - providing long-term income certainty to support the development of up to 150 megawatts of large-scale solar power generation in Queensland.
- **Queensland EV Strategy** – to support the transition to electric vehicles (EVs).
- **Green Bonds** - the Queensland Government will support investment in environmentally responsible projects through Green Bonds issued by the Queensland Treasury Corporation.
- **Queensland Building Plan development** – the new Queensland Building Plan will draw on previous work to improve the sustainability of privately owned buildings and homes as well as Green Star ratings for government buildings.
- **Sustainability assessments for all government capital projects over \$100M** - As part of the State Infrastructure Plan, all state government projects of greater than \$100 million in value will undertake a sustainability assessment, including climate change considerations.
- **QCoast₂₁₀₀ program** - \$12 million over three years to support Queensland local governments impacted by existing and future coastal hazards to advance adaptation planning.
- **Queensland - Climate Resilient Councils (Q-CRC)** – A three year program that will strengthen internal council decision-making processes to respond to climate change.
- **Regional climate change impact summaries** - Queenslanders now have access to regional climate change projections, with the interactive, web-based climate change in Queensland map for thirteen Queensland regions now available online.

Queensland is already at the forefront of the domestic offsets market with a significant uptake of carbon farming projects under the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF). Approximately 84 million tonnes of contracted abatement under the ERF is taking place in Queensland.

However, with strong, long-term and complementary climate change policy at the national and sub-national level, there is significant opportunity for greater emissions reduction activities, maximizing co-benefits including economic outcomes, in Queensland. Furthermore, and specific to the agriculture and land sectors, agriculture or land-based emissions reduction policies should be additional and complementary to climate adaptation, biodiversity, natural resource management and agricultural land protection policies, and not result in perverse outcomes upon these matters, or other areas of the environment, economy or community. Consistent with an approach of ‘avoid, reduce, offset’, cutting carbon pollution should be prioritised over carbon sequestration as the first action towards achieving our climate goals and limiting future impacts.