



Policy Development Office  
PO Box 15185  
City East 4002

22 October 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Toward Q2 - Tomorrow's Queensland**

I have been directed by the State Council of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (WPSQ) to forward comments on Toward Q2 – Tomorrow's Queensland.

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (WPSQ) is one of the longest established and most respected wildlife-focused conservation groups in Queensland. With over 3500 supporters spread across 19 branches throughout Queensland, WPSQ is a strong voice for our wildlife and its habitat.

WPSQ is apolitical. Our aims include;

- Preserve the flora and fauna of Australia by all lawful means
- Educate the community in an understanding of the principles of conservation and preservation of the natural environment
- Discourage by all legal means, the possible destruction, exploitation and unnecessary development of any part of the natural environment.
- Encourage rational land use and proper land planning of existing and future development, and the use of the natural environment and its management.

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (WPSQ) commends the government for developing a plan which incorporates targets and encourages community consultation. Although community consultation is encouraged there remains some confusion on the way in which people should express their views and to what extent they will be acknowledged. A plan such as Toward Q2 is not legally binding and does not include formal commitments from the government. This brings into question the strength of this plan, one is left wondering just how committed the Government is in achieving these targets and what mechanisms would ensure that future Governments adhere?

WPSQ would like to make comment on the following ambitions set out in the document and the associated targets. Failure to comment on other sections should not necessarily be construed as support.

- Strong: We want to create a diverse economy powered by bright ideas
  - 2020 Target. Queensland is Australia's strongest economy, with infrastructure that anticipates growth.
- Green: We want to protect our lifestyle and environment
  - 2020 Target. Cut by one-third Queenslanders' carbon footprint with reduced car and electricity use
  - 2020 Target. Protect 50 percent more land for nature conservation and public recreation

- Fair: We want to support a safe and caring community
  - 2020 Target. Increase by 50 per cent the proportion of Queenslanders involved in their communities as volunteers.

**2020 Aim: We want to create a diverse economy powered by bright ideas**

**2020 Target. Queensland is Australia's strongest economy, with infrastructure that anticipates growth**

Renewable energy is the way of the future and our geography puts us in a great position to economically and environmentally benefit from this. Industry and Government must invest in renewable energy solutions. WPSQ is in strong support of the Government's decision to develop a new Office of Clean Energy and considers this a step in the right direction for the environment and economy of Queensland.

The Queensland economy will benefit from a Government that encourages consumers to buy local products. The general public are often unaware of the importance both economically and environmentally of buying locally.

**2020 Aim: We want to protect our lifestyle and environment**

WPSQ is concerned that the Government has only touched on the current issues that are affecting Queensland environment. It is disappointing that the marine environment is not even mentioned in the targets aimed at protecting the environment. Queensland has an array of nationally and internationally significant marine environments and thus has a responsibility to protect them for future generations.

If the Government aims to secure protection of the environment, targets must be set to address the following:

- Queensland's high greenhouse gas emissions and;
- The protection of biodiversity on both land and sea.

The following is a discussion of the targets set out in the document and WPSQ recommendations.

**Toward Q2 Target: Cut by one-third Queenslanders' carbon footprint with reduced car and electricity use**

Queensland has the highest greenhouse gas emissions in Australia-170 Mt per year (National Greenhouse Inventory 2006). Given the fact that Australia has the highest per capita emissions of developed countries, Queensland per capita emissions are amongst the highest in the developed world. These escalating emissions are largely due to

- new industrial development that continues to significantly raise emissions,
- consistently high energy use,
- an over-reliance on coal to generate electricity,
- our dependency on road transport and
- on-going broad scale land clearing in the State.

The Toward Q2 Target of cutting by one-third Queenslanders' carbon footprint with reduced car and electricity use only focuses on a fraction of these issues. WPSQ is of the opinion that if the Government is truly serious about reducing Queensland emissions, targets must be set to address each of the above issues.

## Recommendations:

Queensland Government must support a national greenhouse reduction target that contributes to keeping global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius.

WPSQ encourages the Government to complement this by adopting the following:

- **Ensure new developments do not add to the state greenhouse gas emissions.** This can be achieved by introducing a climate neutral standard in Queensland. A climate neutral standard requires that fugitive emissions and emissions from the direct use of energy and transport are mitigated. Those emissions are reduced by capture efficiencies and the use of renewable energy sources. Residual emissions must be offset through investment in verifiable off-site renewable energies or energy efficiency firstly, followed by investment in verifiable carbon sinks.
- **Reduce high energy use by introducing an energy savings target for SME's and households of 30% by 2020.** This should include:
  - An implementation plan for renewals featuring resource mapping, investment opportunities and incentives and be positioned to attract funding to Queensland from the ETS
  - Set a minimum 7 star rating for new residential building and 6 star for commercial buildings
  - An energy auditing scheme for all businesses must be introduced to provide incentives for initiatives with a less than 5 year pay-back period, with regulations imposed after 2013.
  - A zero emission standard for all new housing and climate neutral standard for all existing housing by 2014
- **Reduce dependency on coal-fired energy by introducing a renewable energy scheme.** WPSQ congratulates the Government for the recent development of the Office of Clean Energy and supporting the national renewable energy target. WPSQ encourages the Government to lead the way by immediately introducing a renewable energy scheme to source 25% of Queensland's electricity needs by 2020.
- **Improve public transport infrastructure to reduce reliance on private vehicles.** WPSQ is of the opinion that all public transport should be subsidised. WPSQ is in full support of the recent announcement for the development of an underground railway system; however this must be a priority and fast tracked. WPSQ also recognises that one of the key issues for rural communities is the provision of a basic level of transport especially for the mobility-disadvantaged members of their communities. This does not apply only to the elderly but to young people and people of any age without private transport. In small communities this need is often difficult to service due to capacity, cost efficiencies, low demand, dispersed populations and limited resources. In these instances a community based transport solution is required for a variety of legitimate reasons.
- **Address broad scale land clearing by strengthening the Vegetation Management Act and introducing carbon abatement for regrowth.** WPSQ suggests that the Vegetation Management Act (VMA) is amended. The VMA should apply to all land in Queensland but especially to land subject to degradation, riparian zones and wetlands and endangered/Of Concern regrowth vegetation. A scheme linked with the Queensland Herbarium should be introduced to assess and allow 'managed regrowth' vegetation to be used as carbon abatement.

### **Toward Q2 Target: Protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation.**

A target to protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation is both misleading and unclear. WPSQ is of the opinion that land for nature conservation should not be placed in the same category as public recreation. It is evident that there is a legitimate need for recreational space in our communities, however land set aside for conservation should not be used for this purpose. Separate targets are required for land conservation and public recreation.

Toward Q2 does not express clearly what percentage of land the Government aims to protect solely for conservation. One assumes that the Government remains focussed on their previous commitment to expand National Parks by 50% and double all Protected Areas by 2020. This is a step in the right direction, however falls far short of what is truly needed in Queensland considering that current national standards are 7% and international practice is for 15%. In addition, hectares alone are no measure of the effectiveness of such a program. There is need to set targets to capture a percentage of biodiversity in the protected area estate and as is the practice regional ecosystems may be used as surrogates for biodiversity.

### **Recommendations**

WPSQ encourages the Government to think seriously about increasing the protection of biodiversity within Queensland. Queensland has some of the greatest biodiversity in the world. Almost half of Queensland species are found only in this state and we have more native species than any other state.

WPSQ recommends the following mechanisms to increase biodiversity protection:

- **An expanded and fully resourced conservation estate on land and sea.** This would include increasing the National Park Estate to international standards of 15% and increasing the percentage cover of green zones within all Queensland marine parks to 30%. In addition WPSQ supports the commitment given by Premier Bligh to have 20% of Queensland set aside in the Protected Area Estate by 2020 but this estate must capture at least 80% of the state's regional ecosystems. The regional ecosystems captured must be comprehensive, adequate and representative. Furthermore resilience and connectivity must be encompassed in the protected area estate.
- **A \$50M Biodiversity Futures Fund** to fund the purchase of areas of high conservation value, to establish covenants and other devices to provide perpetual protection on private land and create vital corridors to form connectivity between landscapes.
- **An integrated State Biodiversity Package** to address the current uncoordinated and piecemeal approach to biodiversity protection. The package must be an integration of policy delivery and legislative reform, and:
  - Incorporate ESD principles in Biosecurity programs
  - Promote sustainable agricultural practices and ensure ecological processes are not put at risk
  - Include ecologically sustainable fire regimes
  - Remove development impacts on urban and peri-urban areas
  - Introduces ecosystem services
  - Educates the community on the importance of nature

- Manages fisheries sustainably

**2020 Aim: We want to support a safe and caring community**

**2020 Target: Increase by 50 per cent the proportion of Queenslanders involved in their communities as volunteers**

WPSQ commends the government for recognising the need for higher volunteering rates and encouraging Queenslanders to become involved in their communities. Community involvement helps develop a sense of belonging and unity and increases the quality of life. In general Queenslanders are working longer hours and living busier lives. As a result of this it is challenging for community groups to encourage individuals to take that extra step toward making a difference beyond their private lives. The Government must become involved in addressing this challenge. It is important to find ways to allow Queenslanders to volunteer while acknowledging their other work and personal commitments. One option is for the Government to deliver tax breaks to work places that implement incentives for employees to volunteer. Another option is to implement accredited volunteer programs at universities or schools to encourage the younger demographics to volunteer.

Money also should be invested into volunteer community groups so that they can focus efforts on attracting volunteers. This may be through a separate fund established for organisations that meet certain criteria.

**Conclusion**

WPSQ strongly supports the concept of a plan which incorporates targets and encourages community consultation. There are a number of amendments and recommendations discussed throughout this submission that need to be address if this plan is to achieve its objectives. On behalf of WPSQ I wish to thank you for the opportunity to make comment on Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Maxwell  
Community Conservation Officer  
Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland