



Media Release

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Vote for urgent change to save the Environment

Queensland environment organisations have released a joint position on the key environmental priorities for the next Federal government. They have called for urgent action to arrest the decline of biodiversity, to tackle dangerous climate change and build a safe and healthy future.

Their call for urgency responds to recent statements from Australia's Chief Scientist, Professor Penny Sackett who stated in May this year;

'We are not acting with sufficient speed to reduce the large degree of risk that climate change poses to our health, our environment and our livelihoods.'

Environment groups have nominated four big priority issues for the nation and its regions; action on climate change, the conservation of nature, the protection of ground and marine waters and the transformation of urban communities.

'That means getting a price on carbon pollution that supports clean energy and jobs, a biodiversity plan to restore habitat and wildlife, the removal of threats from mining and associated activities and a sustainable population strategy to halt unhealthy urban growth.' said Toby Hutcheon, Executive Director of Queensland Conservation

'These are the priorities for the next term of Parliament.'

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Included in Queensland organisation priorities are:

- A price on carbon to shift investment towards clean energy. The Sunshine State should become a renewable State of Australia
- A Commonwealth/State Strategic Assessment on the impacts of increasing coal and gas exports on Queensland. The Shen Neng grounding on the reef and significant expansion of port facilities are major threats to the environment and these threats must be addressed
- The inclusion of groundwater and farmland as matters of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act.
- A National Sustainable Population Plan based upon ecological constraints to halt over-development and support the transition to low-carbon urban communities

Queensland Environment Organisations Election Platform

A joint statement from Queensland Conservation Council, Queensland Regional Conservation Councils and Wildlife Queensland

Australia must shift towards a more sustainable society. Our economy is too dependent upon polluting industries such as coal mining. Our communities are now witnessing the impacts of that pollution and overconsumption of resources. Water supplies are in crisis, the climate is changing and our natural environment is increasingly threatened.

This election we have the opportunity to vote for politicians who understand these challenges and will stand up for change.

Environment groups across the country agree that the key issues for this election are about effective action on climate pollution and the need to protect our natural environment from increasing threats.

Action on these issues will help build a strong economy for the future, provide a healthy environment for all creatures great or small and assist the urgently needed transformation to an ecologically sustainable society.

This is an election where a big start must be made for a better future for our children and our children's children. The next decade must become a decade of urgent transition and transformation-before it is too late.

Queensland environment organisations are calling for a Commonwealth Government to:

1. Take urgent action on climate change

- Introduce a price on carbon
- Replace coal generated electricity with solar, wind and other renewable energies
- Cut greenhouse gas pollution in the next term of Government
- Phase out fossil fuel industry subsidies and re-direct to renewable energy investments
- Support poor and vulnerable countries to tackle the impacts of climate change and invest in sustainable development

2. Protect nature on land and sea

- Implement a National Biodiversity Strategy that sets enforceable targets to reverse the decline of threatened species and ecological communities in the next term of Government
- Establish a \$1 billion per year Biodiversity Fund
- No mining in or adjacent to the National Reserve System of protected areas
- Include the Koala as a threatened species under the EPBC Act

- Progress delivery of Cape York World Heritage with Traditional Owner consent
- Establish the Coral Sea as a Marine Reserve

3. Establish healthy and ecologically sustainable communities

- Introduce a National Sustainable Population Plan based on achieving a stable population determined by regional carrying capacity constraints, quality of life and ecological sustainability indicators.
- Set zero emission and water self sufficiency building standards for all new buildings and developments by 2015
- Provide public transport infrastructure funding (*e.g. the Moreton Bay rail link or Planning for a public transport infrastructure spine on the Sunshine Coast*) and to be provided on the basis that two thirds of total funding is allocated for non-road infrastructure
- Phase out environmentally harmful agricultural chemicals, such as ametryn, atrazine, diuron, hexazinone, tebuthiuron and endosulfan

4. Protect surface, ground and marine waters

- Amend the EPBC Act to allow groundwater, prime agricultural lands and climate change to be considered as matters of National Environmental Significance
- Include the Great Artesian Basin on the National Heritage list and investigate including the Great Artesian Basin on the World Heritage list
- Instigate a strategic assessment (under the EPBC Act) on impacts to the Great Barrier Reef and other Matters of National Environmental Significance from any activities associated with the expansion of coal and gas exports from Queensland
- Deliver a Murray Darling Basin Plan that limits water extractions to ecologically sustainable levels and effectively returns water to environmental flows based on robust scientific assessment.

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