

Getting to Zero

Climate Action Points



Queensland
Conservation



The Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) wanted to find out if Queensland can deliver on its climate change commitments, including to achieve zero-net emissions by 2050. So, in August 2017, they began a 12-month project to do just that. This involved collaboration with experts, knowledge holders and community and environment groups to inform a critical analysis of the policies and actions in place.

QCC's analysis considered a range of questions to look over the detail behind Queensland's climate change mitigation policies. Here, we've aimed to provide concise responses to questions, or "climate action points," that can inform any conversations or correspondence with decision makers across the state.

Getting to Zero - Emissions

Climate Action Points



Question: Can Queensland's target for zero-net emissions by 2050 be translated into practice?

Answer: Absolutely! The global transition is happening, with or without us. We just need to make sure our government and businesses keep up. Many opportunities exist in Queensland's two largest emitting sectors (transport and electricity) to rapidly reduce emissions and deliver economic and social benefits.

To get started, we need:

- o The Queensland Government to provide a clear definition of "zero-net emissions"
- o And to outline criteria and actions for tracking progress against targets across the state.

Why?

That'll help all of us to get behind practical and proven actions and to carve out a place for Queensland in the future zero-net emissions global economy.

Once we've got clear criteria and definitions, we can get started on a transition that includes:

1. Adoption of good governance processes across all government departments to prioritise delivery of climate commitments and to monitor progress towards zero-net emissions;
2. Prioritisation of emissions avoidance and reduction before offsets, alongside the protection of nature;
3. Increased ambition to decarbonise the energy sector, including the adoption of a renewable energy target for total energy requirements (i.e. liquid fuels and gas);
4. Support of energy justice principles to ensure no one is left behind;
5. Acknowledgment and prevention of indirect emissions and emissions leakage from the economy, including exported fossil fuels and migratory emissions;
6. A commitment to no new or expanded fossil fuel developments;
7. Participatory development of transition pathways for fossil fuel communities with targets and timelines for the transition away from fossil fuels to low carbon alternatives;
8. Improved greenhouse gas emissions accounting with more frequent, transparent and credible reporting across the economy;
9. The inclusion of an independent third party to evaluate and report on progress against targets and inform policy updates at least every two years; and
10. A review of relevant legislation and development of state-based climate change legislation to ensure a robust regulatory framework is in place to support progress to zero-net emissions.



Getting to Zero - Energy

Climate Action Points



Question: What steps can be taken to achieve zero-net emissions energy in Queensland?

Answer: The Queensland Government needs to emphasize the link between the renewable energy target (50 % by 2030) and the zero-net emissions target (by 2050). Realistically, if we are to achieve zero-net emissions, Queensland needs 100 % renewable energy well before 2050.

To get started, we need the Queensland Government to:

- Provide a clear definition and criteria for what stands as renewable energy under the state's target (e.g. omits non-renewable fuel sources such as native forest wood waste, industrial and domestic waste);
- Set renewable energy targets that increase incrementally towards 100 per cent renewable energy well before 2050 to help map a pathway to zero-net emissions;
- Remove roadblocks and provide the right incentives under a consistent policy and regulatory framework; and
- Set a well-structured mandate for CleanCo to provide strong leadership throughout the transition.

Why?

That will help Queensland to capitalize on significant economic opportunities through promotion of best practice renewable energy projects and emissions reductions across the energy sector.

Once we have a supportive policy and regulatory framework, we can facilitate a smooth transition to renewable energy that includes:

1. Targets that apply to all electricity generated and consumed in Queensland (e.g. exports to NSW) and excludes external contributions (e.g. pro-rata share of the National Renewable Energy Target);
2. Mandated energy efficiency standards and other demand-side measures (e.g. minimum standards, building codes, appliances);
3. Energy efficiency and emissions targets for energy-intensive sectors (including steps to electrify where possible);
4. Support for renewable energy firming capacity (e.g. batteries and pumped hydro);
5. A renewable energy target that applies to total energy requirements (including gas and liquid fuels);
6. A commitment to no new or expanded fossil fuel capacity;
7. Just transition plans, including transparent timeframes for decommissioning of existing coal and gas generators;
8. Energy literacy programs, information on switching and tools such as smart meters;
9. Energy justice principles to ensure no one is left behind, including renters, low-income households, edge-of-grid and regional communities; and
10. Measures to support a fair, transparent and accessible energy market, including incentives for community-driven renewable energy projects.



Getting to Zero - Transport

Climate Action Points



Question: How can we transition Queensland's transport sector to zero-net emissions?

Answer: Transportation is Australia's fastest growing source of emissions. Queensland's transport sector has seen a 26% increase in emissions over the previous decade. The good news is there are substantial cost savings and emissions reduction opportunities available thanks to falling prices for electric vehicles alongside the rapid deployment of low-carbon transportation initiatives around the world.

To get started, we need the Queensland Government to:

- o Follow the lead of international best practice and strengthen legislation, policies and programs to adopt emerging technologies and facilitate the transition to low-carbon transportation; and
- o Incentivise earlier uptake of electric vehicles and low-carbon alternatives.

Why?

That will help Queensland to invest in tried and tested technologies and adopt initiatives that will optimise emissions reduction and cost savings benefits offered by low-carbon transportation.

By taking advantage of the research and development from leading jurisdictions, Queensland can deliver a policy framework that works to:

1. Promote fuel-switching and electrification, including for road freight and passenger vehicles, with continued investment into Queensland's Electric Super Highway;
2. Fund electric bus and refuse truck trial programs (e.g. via waste-levy and Translink contracts);
3. Incentivise local council share services for electric bikes and scooters;
4. Increase investment in active and public transport to promote the shift from personal cars;
5. Support behaviour change and mode-shift programs, including awareness raising of the convenience, cost savings and benefits of alternatives to private vehicle travel;
6. Incentivise behaviour change across the freight industry via driver and vehicle loading training and optimisation of routing and scheduling via smart freight program upgrades;
7. Change land use planning, infrastructure and development codes to co-locate industries and form local supply chains and pedestrian catchments within urban and regional centres;
8. Continue the implementation of the Biofutures 10-year Roadmap, with a focus on production of best practice bio-based diesel for heavy vehicles, shipping and aviation;
9. Ban use of high-value conservation (including regrowth) and high-value agricultural areas for biofuel production;
10. Collaborate with the Federal Government and COAG to:
 - A. Improve fuel efficiency standards including for diesel engines, freight and aviation;
 - B. Enforce safe and efficient practices for heavy vehicles via electronic surveillance upgrades at weigh stations;
 - C. Assess options for inter-state High-Speed Rail (e.g. Brisbane to Melbourne); and
 - D. Review the Australian Design Rules to increase power limits (given appropriate safety considerations) for bicycle substitutes.



Getting to Zero - Legislation

Climate Action Points

Question: Can climate change legislation help Queensland achieve zero-net emissions?

Answer: Yes. By establishing stand-alone climate change legislation, Queensland can support long-term regulation of emissions and facilitate the rapid transformation of the energy sector. Existing national and state-based legislation is insufficient to promote the development and implementation of policies and practices that will deliver necessary emissions reductions.

To get started, we need the Queensland Government to:

- o Enshrine Queensland's existing policy-based emissions reduction and renewable energy targets under state-based climate change legislation.

Why?

This will provide greater certainty for the business sector, industry, investors, local governments, communities and the government's own agencies about the Queensland Government's intent to reach near and long-term policy-based emissions reduction and renewable energy targets.

In establishing stand-alone climate change legislation, the Queensland Government can:

1. Outline consistent principles and objectives that will help to guarantee cross-departmental commitment to delivering on the state's climate change commitments;
2. Set clear procedural requirements, standards and obligations for decision-makers to:
 - a. Consistently disclose the physical, liability and transition risks associated with climate change;
 - b. Integrate climate change considerations, including the achievement of emissions reduction targets, across all due diligence processes and policies;
 - c. Allocate duties for Departments to manage sector-specific carbon budgets and regularly monitor and report on associated policies and actions.
3. Provide criteria for a carbon budget that places limits on the total volume of emissions and incrementally tightens limits towards 2050 to ensure regular progress;
4. Strengthen the regulation and restriction of greenhouse gas emissions to encourage emissions reductions across the economy;
5. Prohibit new or expanded coal and gas-fired electricity generation developments;
6. Outline processes for the managed closure of emissions-intensive power plants and a just transition for impacted workers and communities under clear timelines;
7. Establish an independent statutory body (i.e. the Climate Advisory Council) to guide robust, integrated policy by undertaking regular and transparent monitoring, reporting and verification;
8. Provide citizen powers to help enforce the achievement of the targets;
9. Set provisions for a state-based carbon-offsets framework that prioritises biodiversity and social co-benefits; and
10. Support financial mechanisms that:
 - a. incentivise low-carbon alternatives across the economy; and
 - b. funds the decommission and transition away from fossil fuels, in both an extraction and use context.